"That We May Glorify Him in Our Bodies": William of St. Thierry's Views of the Human Body

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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Abstract

"THAT WE MAY GLORIFY HIM IN OUR BODIES": WILLIAM OF ST. THIERRY'S VIEWS OF THE HUMAN BODY

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The following dissertation explores the nature of the human body and its role in Christian life according to the twelfth-century monk, William of St. Thierry. William took a leading role in the ecclesiastical reforming movement of the twelfth century. Twelfth-century reformers sought a simpler form of life than the one practiced by the Benedictine Order. They established new orders designed to promote austerity and freedom from the social entanglements in which the Benedictines had become involved. Reformers also popularized the Ciceronian idea that the effect of a life of virtue was discernible in the beauty and elegant carriage of the human body. This bodily composure was perceived to echo the harmony of the original creation (as described in Genesis) in which no conflict between “spiritual” and “corporeal” desires distorted human spiritual equilibrium. Reformers expressed awareness that the body revealed in dramatic, “charismatic,” fashion the transformation of the person.

Adriaan Bredero has explored how William’s reform style reflected his decision to persevere with his life in the Benedictine Order rather than to leave it for the Cistercian Order founded by his friend, Bernard of Clairvaux. Prior to Bredero’s work, William’s role in twelfth-century reform had largely been uncritically assimilated to that of Bernard. In addition to exploring the new ground of William’s promotion of the charismatic quality of the human body, this dissertation also expands our knowledge of William’s approach to reform, thereby broadening our knowledge of the diversity of the twelfth-century reform movement.

Like Bernard, William perceived the body to reveal the reordering of the human person by grace. William emphasized more strongly than him that harmony between body and soul could be restored during the present life. William expressed bodily perfusion by grace as only one manifestation of a cosmic pattern of God’s presence within material being. He argues, for instance, that God changes Himself into the Eucharistic bread in order that He might insinuate
Himself into the bodies of the host's recipients. William also differs in using the evidence of twelfth-century medical sources to show that the body and soul were created for a life together. William wrote much more extensively than Bernard about the body's heightened ability to perceive spiritual realities corporeally, i.e. to "sense" bodily the holiness of other individuals in the community. He also proposed that sensitive devotion to Christ could enrich interior life. In many ways, therefore, William made the body central to spiritual life and expressed a notion that the person is body as well as soul.
Acknowledgments

My interest in William of St. Thierry began during my undergraduate years at the University of Notre Dame with a senior project on his anthropology. At that time I became acquainted with the work of Caroline Bynum and grew intrigued by her idea that the body brought late medieval people close to God in profound ways. Her book, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, emphasized the association of the body in the late middle ages with suffering, partition, and decay as well as with fertility and growth. She proposed that women, even more than men, experienced God in sensual mystical experiences of the humanity of Christ. Later, in her work on the resurrected body, she studied the medieval belief that one’s “self” would exist after the resurrection only if the identical bits that composed one’s original body were reunited. She suggested that this demonstrates a view that human individuality is expressed in body. Her work inspired me to look similarly at the sources of the central middle ages. All of the themes explored by her reappear in one way or another in this essay, with the exception of the comparison of differences in religious attitudes based on gender, a topic which I hope yet to pursue. Prof. Bynum has helped me more than she knows, not least by making some of her work available to me prior to publication through the kind intercessions of Brian Stock.

I wish to thank the members of the *Communio* discussion group organized by Tom and Janine Langan. Together we became familiar with the personalist philosophy of the Lublin Thomists that has shaped my philosophical view of the body. I especially wish to thank Tom McCormick for many conversations and for reading parts of this project.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my family. My gratitude goes to my parents, who have fostered me intellectually and spiritually and supported me emotionally through the long years of doctoral work. If I am ever half the teacher that each of my parents is, I will be well content. I am equally grateful for the love of my sister, Cathy, and brothers, Greg and John. To my patient husband I offer thanks for enduring with me the grind and frustrations of research and always offering encouragement. I would particularly like to recognize his ability to maintain a cool head in a computer crisis. I thank you for your love and understanding as we prepared to bring to birth our separate thesis projects and our first child.

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for challenging my reading of my sources. Thanks to all for your good humor and for responding with comments promptly. Any problems remaining in the work are entirely my responsibility and not theirs.
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"That We May Glorify Him in our Bodies": William of St. Thierry's Views of the Human Body

Introduction

The Pauline phrase in the title above1 evokes the goal of the following dissertation: to trace the role of the body in the Christian life according to the twelfth-century “Cistercian” reformer, William of St. Thierry. This study has implications for the broader history of the twelfth-century reform movement as well as for the understanding of William’s thought itself. One dimension of the project is the explanation of the role of the body in William’s agenda of monastic reform. The importance of the body within the twelfth-century reform movement has been discussed by medieval historians such as C. Stephen Jaeger and Giles Constable.² In perhaps the fullest treatment of the human body’s place in this reform, Jaeger’s work on eleventh and twelfth-century education has shown that the modus operandi of twelfth-century reformers was the physical manifestation of charismatic leadership.³ Reformers popularized a variation on the theme “actions speak louder than words”: the demonstration of the interior presence of God’s grace in the face and mannered comportment of the body. The Victorines and other houses of canons regular stressed that inner discipline could be restored by the pursuit of exterior discipline. Bernard’s approach moved less from the exterior to the interior of man, and stressed instead the outward perfusion and consequent transformation of exterior appearances by divine grace. The reformers thus adapted in different ways an ideal, in process of revival during the eleventh and twelfth centuries in the cathedral schools, of Ciceronian manners as an expression of interior virtue. As Constable has shown, the Cistercians

1 1 Cor. 6:20.
formulated their views in contexts that reveal their increasing sense that all of nature testifies to the grandeur of man and cooperates for his good.  

The role of William of St. Thierry in relation to his much more famous friend, Bernard of Clairvaux, in the spread of Cistercian reforming ideals is still not completely understood. Constable tends to assume that William’s views more or less echo Bernard’s, and most twelfth-century histories are content to treat the two figures as embodying a similarly mystical approach to the spiritual reformation of man. The work of Adriaan Bredero has, however, mitigated the historiographical tendency to leave William more or less in Bernard’s shadow. Painting William as Bernard’s counselor in the spiritual and practical arenas, Bredero notes with respect to the latter type of guidance that William encouraged Bernard to publish his complaints against the Benedictine order in his Apologia and initiated the intellectual crusade against Abelard. As William is not a figure treated by Jaeger, William’s view of the body is one place to begin to assess with greater refinement some of the differences between the role of the body in the spiritualities of William and Bernard of Clairvaux.

One feature of William’s thought that sets him apart from Bernard is his use of the notion of man as a microcosm, as revealing in his physical structure the divine order woven throughout the cosmos. In this William demonstrates his connection with philosophical currents popular within the twelfth-century schools. Unlike later twelfth-century cosmologists such as Bernard Silvestris, however, William treats the order evident in the human body not as a topic of study in itself but as a signpost of the human responsibility to order the self according to virtue. I suggest that William also differs from Bernard in his view of the importance of sensitive devotion to the body of Christ, a fact that has been overlooked by Constable in his study of twelfth-century devotion to the humanity of Christ.

By means of detailed study of a given aspect of William’s thought such as the body, we can begin to appreciate the distinctiveness of William’s historical role in the twelfth-century

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reform movement and the unsuitability of the traditional tendency to apply unreflectively the label "Cistercian" to William, given his late entry to the Cistercian order. When this point has been acknowledged, when the distinctiveness of William's formation due to his participation in the currents of early scholasticism and his many years in the Benedictine order have been more fully appreciated, our picture of the variety of influences within the twelfth-century reform movement will be further enhanced.

Apart from the narrower question of the role of the body in twelfth-century spiritual reform, this project also has a role to play in the broader historical quest to explore cultural differences in the conceptualization of body. Just as twelfth-century spiritual reformers were conscious of participating in a collective movement of renewal, so the twentieth-century historian of the body can hardly help but be conscious of participation in a broad intellectual undertaking. The "fuss about the body," as Caroline Bynum has described it, has aroused the interest of historians possessed of the most diverse methodologies. It would therefore be well to survey the path by which the study of the body emerged in the late twentieth century.

The historical study of the body is a relatively recent phenomenon, begun in the late 1970s with studies such as Michel Foucault's History of Sexuality. The historical study of body as a cultural symbol is in some sense the daughter of the anthropological study of the same topic that preceded it by some forty years. In the almost half-century that afterward elapsed, two schools of thought significantly altered the terms of the discussion by challenging the older assumption that the body is a "natural" entity. The first was the psycho-analytic school of thought associated with Freud and Lacan. Psycho-analysts assumed that the body is fantasized, a construction of the psyche. Both Freud and Lacan also assumed a reciprocal type

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5 Adriaan H. Bredero, Bernard of Clairvaux: Between Cult and History (Grand Rapids, MI, 1993) and Christendom and Christianity in the Middle Ages: The Relation between Religion, Church, and Society, trans. Reinder Bruinsma (Grand Rapids, MI, 1986).
of relationship between the body and the psyche, since they supposed that the ego attains unity in response to the need to organize the sensory stimuli of the body. The body is afterward invested with its erotic value by the psyche; Lacan additionally proposed that the fashion in which bodily drives are organized by the ego can be influenced by non-corporeal stimuli and relationships. The second school of thought was post-structuralist, which suggested that conceptions of body are entirely shaped by cultural and social conditions. That the role of the body in social experience and the interpretation of cultural symbols related to the body has achieved such wide attention at this time is largely due to its appeal to post-structural interpretation. The appeal of the body to post-structuralists is evidenced by the proliferation of its study throughout the disciplines. To name only a few studies treating the medieval period, there is the Yale French Studies volume on textual transfigurations of body from the medieval period through the seventeenth century and the collection edited by Sarah Kay and Miri Rubin describing constructions of body in twelfth- through fourteenth-century Europe. The articles in the latter volume treat subjects drawn from art history, arachaeology, literature and history. In the area of theology, as well, the body has received extensive treatment from a theoretical perspective by authors such as Margaret Miles, who argues that the female body was invested with all the negative associations of materiality by a male-dominated medieval Church, and Elizabeth Alvida Petroff, who discusses the role of the body in medieval female mysticism.

Other authors have remained on the fringes of the post-structural debate. They are primarily those who resist the notion that the conception of nature is entirely meaningless, or who simply doubt that human history can best be interpreted from the perspective of post-structural theory. In the former category are many writers who philosophically argue the case

11 Framing Medieval Bodies, ed. Sarah Kay and Miri Rubin (New York, 1994).
13 Margaret Miles, Carnal Knowing: Female Nakedness and Religious Meaning in the Christian West (Boston, 1989).
for "naturalism." In addition there are those, such as Francis Martin, who have joined the resources of theology to those of philosophy. Proposing that maleness and femaleness express two different ways of being bodily persons based on possession of a body that is biologically male or female, Martin argues that maleness and femaleness have a sacramental importance and reveal separate aspects of the divine economy. Among those who have resisted committing to any one theoretical perspective is the medieval historian Caroline Bynum. While she admits that her methodology demonstrates certain affiliations with the post-structural movement and contends that body is not just a biological given but is for the most part culturally constructed, she also argues that "we are more than culture. We are body." Her most recent work on the resurrection of the body explores how medieval writings on the body reflect the deep human desire to understand the body's materiality as the locus of the person.

The historical study of the body has underlined the diversity of past attitudes toward the human body. Largely banished, consequently, is the long-standing tradition that the middle ages was a time in which the body was simply despised or ignored. The work of Caroline Bynum on the later period has been especially helpful in this regard. This cannot be said of one of the foundational studies of the study of medieval attitudes toward the body, Peter Brown's Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity, for

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all its merits. In his epilogue, Brown simplifies the role of the body in Augustine's thought by implying that in his great emphasis on the will as the source of evil in man, Augustine severed the human body from its connections with nature and created an atmosphere of suspicion about the body that served as the basis of the early medieval agenda of corporeal asceticism. For a refinement of a number of Brown's positions, especially his views of Augustine's understanding of sexuality and marriage, one must go to the work of Glenn Olsen. Augustine did, of course, have a strong inclination toward asceticism, but reducing the medieval Augustinian heritage of thought about the body to its ascetic aspects leaves the reader impoverished as to the extent to which Augustine's thought, especially about the risen body, reveals a notion of the person in which body is a vital constituent and therefore entirely natural. Bynum has underlined this dimension of Augustine's thought in her study of the resurrected body in medieval Christianity.

The systematic study of the views of body of an individual twelfth-century figure such as William of St. Thierry has value at this stage of development of the historiography of the body in the middle ages. The major advantage of examining one thinker is that many different aspects of thought can be compared, including the views of Christ's physical and risen bodies, the ascetic discipline of the body, the relationship between body and soul, and the risen human body. All of these different topics are in some way relevant to the description of William's contribution to one of the major intellectual achievements of medieval thought about the body as described by Bynum: how the body expresses personhood. Through a careful analysis of William's various insights, the distinctiveness of his thought can be determined and compared with the assessments of William and Bernard made by Jaeger, Constable, and Bynum. I have judged six of William's writings to be most relevant to the topic: 1) the treatises on love, De contemplando Deo and De natura et dignitate amoris; 2) the Eucharistic treatise, De sacramento altaris; 3) the Meditationes; 4) the great anthropological treatise, De natura corporis et animae;

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and 5) the *Epistula ad fratres de Monte Dei*, a letter of instruction to the Carthusian monks at Mont-Dieu. Each of these five groups of texts functions as the basis of a chapter in what follows. With the aid of Stanislaus Ceglar’s work on the chronology of William’s works, and with reference to subsequent revisions by John Van Engen and Michel Lemoine, in the first section of each chapter I have established the chronology of the works relative to one another. In this way one can trace William’s interests as they shifted during different stages of his life. One such shift is the development in his latest works of a new awareness of the weakness of his aging body.

I make periodic reference to the debate which has dominated the study of William of St. Thierry during the past century, the question of his sources. Scholars such as Goulven Madec, David Bell, and John Anderson have suggested that the older view of J.M. Déchanet, that William read Plotinus and Dionysius in the original Greek, is difficult to support given, among other things, current understanding of the limited existence of Greek instruction in northern France in the twelfth century. Madec, Bell, and Anderson have examined many passages supposed by Déchanet to have been borrowed from Greek sources and have suggested alternate sources for them in Latin writers, especially Augustine. Regarding the question of Eriugenean influence, Bell and Anderson suppose John the Scot to have been less influential than Déchanet proposed.

On the other side of the debate, Thomas Tomasic has suggested that William’s thought reveals a type of Neoplatonism that is different from what Tomasic views as the primarily Platonic cast of Augustine’s thought, but he has not clarified the avenues by which such Neoplatonic ideas might have reached William. Tomasic characterizes as “Plotinian,” for example, William’s “ascetic,” as opposed to historical, view of the Fall as the soul’s departure from Unity. To adduce this example as a differentiating point between William and Augustine makes little sense given that Augustine uses this notion in his *Confessiones.*

22 *Resurrection*, 94-104.
Tomasic's statement fails to discriminate between the more Neoplatonic view of the Fall in the *Confessiones* and the historical account in *De civitate Dei*. Tomasic's characterization of Augustine overgeneralizes his lack of familiarity with Neoplatonic thought and pays insufficient attention to the process by which Augustine came to refine his knowledge of Neoplatonists such as Plotinus. This is not to say that William's thought does not consistently treat the Fall from an "ascetic" point of view, but one must be careful not to attribute his view to unspecified "Neoplatonic" sources. My view is that William could have taken his notion of the Fall from Augustine's *Confessiones*, Gregory the Great, or Origen, although certain typical features of the latter's treatment of the Fall are absent in William, as discussed in chapter 1. I suggest that while a certain school of pagan Neoplatonism with readily identifiable features can be identified, it makes little sense to characterize any of the Fathers as wholly "Neoplatonic." It is much more useful to examine the complicated ways in which all of them, from Victorinus, to Augustine, to Dionysius, to Eriugena, absorbed and transformed specific Neoplatonic ideas in their thought. In William's case, the question of his transformation of the thought of such Neoplatonic thinkers such as Dionysius and Eriugena needs greater attention.

From my study of one aspect of William's thought I advance the conclusion that William's theology of the body demonstrates that there is much merit in the older view of J.M. Déchanet that William was influenced by the thought of Eriugena and Dionysius. Nevertheless, heeding the example of Bell and Anderson, I have proceeded by a more rigorous method of showing William's dependence on these authors. If I have not always limited myself to showing exact linguistic parallels but have allowed as evidence of dependency similar patterns of thought expressed in William's own language, I have not explained such similarities by direct recourse to Greek sources. I have judged with David Bell that William's knowledge of Greek was fairly rudimentary, sufficient for him to devise Latin neologisms based on Greek words but not strong enough for him to penetrate the thickets of Plotinian or Dionysian materials. I have therefore assumed that ideas of Greek authors could only have passed to William if they were available in a Latin intermediary or translation. My work has successfully
shown that William's theology of body was influenced from the earliest stages by Eriugena, as demonstrated especially in William's suggestion in *De natura et dignitate amoris* that the vital life of man (i.e. the life of the body) is an image of the image of God in the soul.

My methodology is largely that of the intellectual historian. By studying a variety of types of texts, some literary, some philosophical, I have explored multiple ways in which William represented the phenomenon of body. While I have looked at how William's images and ideas reflect his social conditions, I have not considered his social context determinative of his thought. Where I have found that the theories of social historians illuminate some aspect of or tension in his thought I have used them, but generally I concur with Bynum that the complexities of historical development defy theoretical explanations.²⁴

In the course of developing my topic I show that while William clearly used the traditional Platonic/Neoplatonic paradigm of soul and body to express the dual nature of man, many of William's descriptions of his body defy the strict dualism of his model. In his treatise *De natura corporis et animae* William took great pains to uphold the philosophical point that the body is not the source of the soul's activity and that the soul is the prime mover of all psychic activity. His model of the unity of body and soul, borrowed from Gregory of Nyssa, suggests an unfathomable union and an insurmountable distance between the two principles in man. When he writes about his own experiences of his body in the *Epistula ad fratres de Monte Dei*, however, he stresses the influence that bodily states can have on the mind. William thereby undercuts the radical separation between the two dimensions of man and the impassibility of the spiritual part with respect to the lower part. Close inspection of William's terminology for body reveals that William thought of the body under two rubrics: "flesh (caro)" and "body (corpus)." The two terms are sometimes interchanged but have on the whole recognizably different fields of meanings. The monk of St. Thierry tends to use the term *corpus* when he talks about the physical structure of man. The term flesh often connotes the animated body, i.e. it denotes the body as locus for psychic activities such as sensation and desire. William

²⁴ Bynum, introduction to *Fragmentation and Redemption*, 16.
alternately describes the body in its association with psychic activity as both corpus or caro but is less likely to call the physical substance caro. We should not be too quick to attribute this association of psychic activities with body to a lack of clarity, to mere confusion about what body is; rather, William's twofold description of the body should stimulate further inspection.

One possible interpretation of his language is that he was attempting to describe a notion of selfhood in which the body and the psyche are more united than in the Platonic paradigm described above. William gives every indication of expressing a rudimentary notion of the modern "personalist" notion of the self. Personalism issues from the school of the Lublin Thomists, especially Karol Wojtyla. In the latter's The Acting Person Wojtyla combined the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl and Max Scheler with a Thomistic metaphysics of the person. This school of thought holds that the person is the source of permanence in the organically changing human entity. While the person cannot be reduced to body and while the body possesses an organic dynamism that is autonomous, the body is the grounding and expression of the person. William's term "body" would correspond to the "organic body," which forms the base of human personhood. It is gradually sublated into psychic life, corresponding to William's term "flesh." In the words of Francis Martin, "The integration of the human being is effected in the power of the vital and dynamic point of consciousness or interiority that as actually existing is the ground of the relationality that is personhood." William's two terms for body may in fact be a manifestation of his desire to describe the same integration of self as is expressed in the modern notion of personhood. I would interpret what Bynum has identified as the medieval desire to seek a stable basis for personhood in the materiality of the body as a manifestation of the same desire.

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26 Martin, Feminist Question, 396.
27 In "Material Continuity" and Resurrection, Bynum suggests that medieval culture expressed its concern that the identity of the person survives death intact through the resurrection of the same bits that composed its material body. She thinks that most medieval authors preferred metaphors for resurrection that express the reconstruction of the material body over its transformation. The elegance of the Origenistic and Thomistic solutions to the problem of the soul/body union is that they each allow for the organic change of the body (in Origen's case, he postulates a corporeal eidos, that, like a ratio seminalis, entails a pattern of organic growth and
Like Bynum, I view the post-structuralist phenomenon as having made a valuable contribution to scholarship on the body in that it has provoked scholars to examine the varied ways in which conceptions of body are influenced by culture, yet I reject the post-structural assumption that body is totally constructed. I take a position, similar in some respects to Bynum's, that ways of conceiving the body are subject to variability due to the conscious creation or unconscious acceptance of differing models and metaphors, but that these "constructions" are rooted in a biological structure that has a givenness about it. Since a medieval audience would have recognized neither the notion of modern biology nor the concept of cultural "constructions" I have chosen not to apply them in my treatment of William. The question of the application of the culture/nature distinction in understanding medieval conceptions of body and self is similarly problematic in that medieval culture tended to distinguish between nature as we know it now, as it was at creation, and as it will be in the resurrected life. That medieval people assumed the possibility of transition between these three states suggests that their notion of "nature," inasmuch as they thematized one, must have been more fluid than the one that is laden by the post-structural discussion as essentialist. Finally I have used the term "body" as the term of discussion, rather than the plural form "bodies" preferred by the post-structuralists, to express the partly given nature of my model of body.

To return to our point of departure, William's notion of the body was shaped by his belief that all of nature reflects the glory of God and that man is called upon to restore whatever distortions of God's plan for the body have occurred as a consequence of the Fall. In these areas William undoubtedly held views similar to Bernard's concept of the body. He was similar to Bernard in subordinating the role of the ascetic discipline of the body to the cultivation of charity in the task of human restoration. Where William differed from Bernard was first in the intensity of his belief that the natural order reveals divine order. William distinguished himself in this respect in his use of notions such as man as microcosm and his willingness to study the body from a medical point of view. Second, anticipating the spiritual change; in Aquinas' case, the underlying matter has its own laws of change) as well as the unity of the person
method of Ignatius of Loyola, William integrated the use of corporeal images into his paradigm of the mystical life so as to rehabilitate both the roles of the imagination and the body in the Christian life. For William corporeal images serve to draw the soul’s attention to the love of God for man; this immersion of the self into an interior imaginative life is the beginning of a new conceptualization of spiritual life that will culminate in the lives of the later medieval visionaries. William’s approach is different again from these latter in his lack of emphasis on the near-obliteration of the self in God. For William the self expresses itself in body, discovers itself and God through bodies, and realizes itself deeply in the body through service to the Church.

(guaranteed for Origen by the soul and for Aquinas by the soul-as-act).
Life and Writings

William of St. Thierry was born at Liège of noble parentage during the last quarter of the eleventh century. He left Liège with a companion, Simon, to study, apparently at Reims. After studying for some time, he entered the Benedictine monastery at St. Nicaise at Reims. John Van Engen has suggested that William's compilations of Ambrose's and Gregory the Great's exegeses of the Song of Songs and his collection of Sententiae of Augustine date from this period. It was probably around 1112/14 at St. Nicaise that William wrote a private letter to Rupert of Deutz criticizing his theology of the Eucharist. William began to compile his own treatise on the Eucharist, De sacramento altaris, after this exchange, and his labor most likely extended until 1122/23. Although some historians have suggested that he may have achieved the position of abbot at St. Nicaise, Milis discounts the possibility, since none of the primary sources for William's life mentions it. Around Easter, 1121, he was promoted to the abbacy.

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1 The birthdate of William of St. Thierry has excited a great deal of scholarly controversy. The best review of the debate is the article by Ludo Milis, "Guillaume de Saint-Thierry, son origine, sa formation et ses premières expériences monastiques," in Saint-Thierry: Une abbaye du VIIe au XXe siècle, Actes du Colloque international d'Histoire monastique Reims-Saint-Thierry, 11 au 14 octobre 1976, ed. M. Bur (Saint-Thierry, 1979) 261-78; republished as "William of Saint Thierry, his Birth, his Formation, and his First Monastic Experiences," trans. Jerry Carfantan, in William, Abbot of St. Thierry, A Colloquium at the Abbey of St. Thierry, Cistercian Studies Series 94 (Kalamazoo, MI, 1987) 9-33, esp. 16-20. Milis suggests a birthdate between 1075-1080. In John Anderson's introduction to his translation of The Enigma of Faith he notes that there are six important sources for William's life: his own writings; the Letters of Bernard of Clairvaux; the necrologies of Signy and the Carthusian house of Mont Dieu; the Chronicle of Signy; and the anonymous late twelfth-century Vita antiqua (also known as the Vita Willelm) edited by Albert Poncelet in 1908; see introduction to The Enigma of Faith, vol. 3 of The Works of William of St. Thierry, Cistercian Fathers Series 9 (Washington, DC, 1974) 1-7.

2 Simon later became abbot of St. Nicolas-aux-Bois in the diocese of Laon; the date of his death is unknown according to Albert Poncelet, "Vie ancienne de Guillaume de Saint-Thierry," Mélanges Godefroid Kurth, 2 vols. (Paris, 1908) 1: 85-96, esp. 89. According to the Vita Willelmi, Simon died "full of days" in 1133.

3 Poncelet, "Vie ancienne," 89. On William's monastic career, see Ambrogio Piazzoni, Gugliemo di Saint-Thierry. Il declino dell'ideale monastico nel secolo XII (Rome, 1988).


5 On the date, see Van Engen, "Rupert of Deutz," 335. William's letter is found in Migne as Epistula ad quendam monachum qui de corpore et sanguine domini scripserat PL 180, 341-4.


Sometime early in his career at St. Thierry, William made the acquaintance of Bernard of Clairvaux. The friendship was cemented when William went to visit Bernard at Clairvaux during a convalescence from an illness and the two shared a lengthy discussion of the meaning of the Song of Songs. This visit probably took place before 1123 or 1124. According to

Mabillon, Poncelet, and Adam for a date of 1119 or 1120.

9 Fundamental works on the chronology of William's works include: André Wilmart, "La série et la date des ouvrages de Guillaume de Saint-Thierry," Revue Mabillon 14 (1924) 157-67; and J.M. Déchanet, Guillaume de Saint-Thierry: l'homme et son oeuvre (Bruges, 1942); republished as William of St. Thierry: The Man and his Work, trans. Richard Strachan, Cistercian Studies Series 10 (Spencer, MA, 1972). With the recent revisions by scholars such as Milis and Stanislaus Ceglar to numerous assumptions about dates connected with William's birth, formation and so forth, the chronology of William's writings is in need of further attention. John Van Engen has pointed out that the order of works given in William's letter to Haymo, sent as a preface to his Epistula ad fratres de Monte Dei, is not necessarily a reliable guide to the chronology of William's corpus. Since the work was written to edify the brothers of Mont-Dieu, William may have composed his list with a view toward what he considered most edifying for the Carthusians; see "Rupert of Deutz," 329-30. On the medieval lists of William's corpus, see Déchanet, Oeuvres choisies de Guillaume de Saint-Thierry (Paris, 1943) 38-9; cf. Anderson, introduction to Enigma of Faith, 8.

10 He went to visit Bernard who was ill and in seclusion, under the orders of William of Champeaux, at Clémentinpré, a branch of the Saint-Bénigne abbey in Dijon. The date is contested. The Vita prima says that the seclusion occurred not long after Bernard became abbot in 1115, and some authors have favored the years 1116-7 as the date of his seclusion, Ceglar, Chronology, 33. Ceglar thinks that William's phrase "not long afterwards (modico post tempore transacto)" cannot bear much weight since he was recalling at some remove an event at which he had not been present; see Chronology, 34 and Vita prima 32 PL 185, 246. E. Vacandard has 1118 or 1119, Vie de Saint Bernard, vol. 1, 2d ed. (Paris, 1897) 76-7, esp. 66, n. 1. Ceglar argues that because Bernard witnessed the charter of the founding of Fontenay on Oct. 29, 1119, and presumably took an active part in the arrangements beforehand, it seems unlikely that his seclusion occurred in 1119. Ceglar proposes the period between summer 1119 and October 1120 for Bernard's seclusion, Chronology, 40, based on a number of considerations, including Bernard's absence from the council called by Calixtus in Reims in October, 1119. William also tells us that he went to visit Bernard with "another" abbot (cum quodam abbatte altero). Whether this implies that William himself was already abbot has also been the subject of some debate. Some have proposed that William meant his altero in reference to Bernard, not himself; cf. Milis, "First Monastic Experiences," 26. If one accepts Ceglar's dating of William's ordination as abbot at St. Thierry (and reject the idea that he was abbot elsewhere prior to his tenure at St. Thierry) one must explain his reference to "another abbot" according to this explanation or else assume that William had forgotten that he was only a monk at the time. Bredero suggests that, based on the medieval emphasis on social hierarchy, William would not have been admitted on such intimate terms with Bernard had he not already been an abbot himself, but this point seems overgeneralized and unprovable. If one insists that William must have been an abbot at the time of the seclusion, then the visit would have to be placed after 1121 (assuming Ceglar's dating of William's ordination as abbot), but Ceglar has shown the difficulties with such a late date for the seclusion, Chronology, 42, n. 56. Bredero himself accepts the traditional date of 1119 for William's ordination. Cf. Bredero, Between Cult and History, 118-29. I find Ceglar's dating of William's ordination to be the most probable and the dates for his seclusion 1117-8 or 1119-20 to be equally possible. Since either year precedes William's ordination according to Ceglar's reckoning, I conclude that William must have meant the altero with reference to Bernard and not himself.

11 The Vita Bernardi 59 PL 185, 259BC describes the conversation.

12 Ceglar suggests a date of 1121-22 in Chronology, 59-60, 157-8.
Stanislaus Ceglar, after this visit William composed the *Brevis commentatio*, once argued to be merely a summary of Bernard's first fifty-one sermons on the Song of Songs, but believed by Ceglar to show the distinct imprint of William's thought. Bernard's character so impressed William that by 1124 he had begun to petition to follow his friend into the Cistercian order. Bernard responded negatively to his request; his letter to William on the matter does not make the motives of the author explicit, but one could conjecture that he did not want his defection to be a further source of tension between the two orders. Accordingly William remained at St. Thierry. He was finally released from the Benedictines in 1135, when, old and sick, he retreated to the newly-founded Cistercian abbey at Signy. There he composed two works for the brothers at Signy, the *Speculum fidei* and the *Aenigma fidei*, probably some time after 1140. William died in September 1147 or 1148.

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14 This was Mabillon's opinion; cf. Jean Leclercq, "Études sur saint Bernard et le texte de ses écrits," *Analecta Sacri Ordinis Cisterciensis* 9, fasc. 1 (1953) 106-7, 216.


18 On the circumstances of the composition of these treatises, see William's letter to Haymo, prior of Mont Dieu, which serves as the preface to the *Epistula ad frates de Monte Dei*. Cf. John Anderson's introduction to *Enigma of Faith*, 8-9.

19 The necrologies of Signy and Mont Dieu give the date of September 8, according to Charles LeCouteulx, *Annales ordinis cartusienis, ab an. 1084 ad an. 1429* (Montreuil-sur-Mer, 1887) 2: 91. Another document in the archives of Mont Dieu says that William died at about the time of the Council of Reims held in March 1148; see LeCouteulx, *Annales*, 90. Vacandard, *Vie de Saint Bernard*, 1: xx hesitates between the years 1147 and 1148. Ceglar thinks that he died in 1147 since the *Vita Bernardi* never mentions the Council of Reims, *Chronology*, 241.
The Chronicle of Signy tells us that William learned the seven liberal arts, but according to Ceglar, his works do not betray great familiarity with the subjects of the quadrivium. His acquaintance with the classics can generally be accounted for through access to secondary sources, such as Jerome, Augustine, Isidore, florilegia, and the citations of classical authors that accompanied Latin instruction.

The place of William's schooling has been the source of much debate. In the early part of this century, several scholars held that his training took place at Laon, beginning with André Adam, who reconstructed a lacuna in the Vita antiqua to reveal a reference to the school of Laon. Although J.M. Déchanet and M.M. Davy rejected his interpretation as paleographically impossible, Déchanet nevertheless persisted with the idea that William's writings breathe the spirit of Laon, its theology, and its exegetical method, and he assumed that William made his acquaintance with Eriugenean writings at Laon itself. More recently, in the absence of conclusive proof otherwise, scholars have assumed that his training took place at Reims, as the Vita antiqua suggests.

John Williams does not think that William's theology reflects the theological concerns or the exegetical method taught at Laon. Eriugena's patent influence on William, which the present author re-affirms, does not necessarily entail time spent at Laon, since a copy of the Periphyseon was also present at Reims in the twelfth century. Ceglar argues that William...
schoolmaster, at Reims from 1079-1094.\textsuperscript{26} One question which has not yet been asked is where and when William acquired his knowledge of anatomy and physiology. Relevant to this question are the observations that William demonstrates his knowledge of Constantine the African's medical works in the second part of his treatise, \textit{De natura corporis et anima}, which was written prior to the first book and at a time when he also had access to a manuscript of Eriugena's translation of Gregory of Nyssa's \textit{De opificio hominis}. Efforts to date William's treatise have as yet been unsuccessful. More research needs to be done on the study and availability of manuscripts of the works of Constantine the African in early twelfth-century France.

At what stage of his career William obtained his knowledge of patristic authors is also not fully understood. Ceglar says that neither theology nor philosophy was likely pursued extensively at Reims. William entered St. Nicaise soon after its restoration by the monks of Chaise-Dieu. Ceglar attributes William's ready ability to summon references to the Scriptures and the Fathers, especially Augustine, Ambrose, Hilary of Poitiers, Boethius, and Gregory the Great, to time spent as schoolmaster at St. Nicaise, since both his busy student years before this as well as his later involvement in monastic administration after would have precluded extensive study in patristic thought.\textsuperscript{27}

Whether obtained at Reims or St. Nicaise, whether pursued concurrently or separately from his studies of patristic authors, William's considerable knowledge of Neoplatonic philosophy is attested in his earliest works, i.e. those written during or prior to the early 1120s. The following study will propose that William had acquired his knowledge of Eriugena by the time that he composed two of his earliest original works, \textit{De contemplando Deo} and \textit{De natura et dignitate amoris}. In these works he reveals his acquaintance with various important themes in Neoplatonic philosophy, such as the triad of remaining, procession, and return, as well as the Eriugenean notion that the body as well as the soul reveals a certain likeness to

\textsuperscript{26} See John R. Williams, "The Cathedral School of Rheims in the Eleventh Century," \textit{Speculum} 29 (1954) 661-77, esp. 671.

\textsuperscript{27} Ceglar, \textit{Chronology}, 19-20.
God. Eriugena’s *Periphyseon* was available to him at Laon and Reims, which were proximate to both the monasteries of St. Nicaise and St. Thierry. Finally, the knowledge of Dionysius demonstrated in his penultimate work, the *Epistula ad fratres de Monte Dei*, while not substantial, is significant enough to suggest a fresh pursuit of the topic of Dionysian influence on William’s earlier works.\(^{28}\) In my introduction I stated that William’s knowledge of Dionysius must be accounted for by his recourse to Latin translations or commentaries on the works of Dionysius.\(^{29}\)
I. De contemplando Deo and De natura et dignitate amoris

The rationale for treating De contemplando Deo and De natura et dignitate amoris together is obvious: though written in different styles, both treat the nature of the contemplative life, and they consistently appear paired in the manuscript tradition. Scholars have generally considered both works to date from the earlier period of William of St. Thierry's literary activity. De contemplando Deo thematizes the body less than do his later treatises, but the body does appear briefly in connection with William's struggles to devote his mind wholly to God in contemplation and in his depiction of the body of Christ as one departure point for the contemplation of God. Moreover, this work contains basic theological presuppositions that are foundational for all of William's later works. Therefore it deserves first attention.

A. De contemplando Deo

1. Dating

De contemplando Deo is a soliloquy about the proper way to love God. The work has traditionally been considered to date to the earliest phase of William's literary career. It appears first both in William's list of works in his letter to Haymo, the dedicatory letter to the Epistula ad fratres de Monte Dei in which he lists works of his that he plans to send to the Carthusian house at Mont Dieu, as well as in all the instances in which it appears paired with

2 Two modern editions of the work exist: Guillaume de Saint-Thierry, Deux traités de l'amour de Dieu: De la contemplation de Dieu, De la nature et la dignité de l'amour, ed. M.-M. Davy, Bibliothèque des textes philosophiques (Paris, 1953), and De cont. Deo SC 61. Both editors consider to be the most faithful witness of the tradition by Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, m.s. 776, f.1-23v. On this manuscript, see the introduction to Davy's edition, 8-10, and to Hourlier's edition, 21-22; cf. Hourlier's introduction to On Contemplating God, in The Works of William of St. Thierry, vol. 1, On Contemplating God, Prayer, Meditations, trans. Sister Penelope, Cistercian Fathers Series 3 (Spencer, MA, 1971) 15, n. 21. Davy's and Hourlier's discussions could probably stand revision in light of Ceglar's work on the same codices, outlined in his study of De natura et dignitate. See below, n. 152. While Ceglar also views Mazarine 776 as the most faithful witness of the text, he has postulated another intermediary between it and the autograph, which makes the process of evaluating alternate readings more complicated than his predecessors imagined.
4 William of St. Thierry, preface to Epistula ad fratres de Monte Dei. This work has been edited and translated by J.M. Déchanet as Lettre aux frères du Mont-Dieu (Lettre d'or), SC 223 (Paris, 1975) 136.
De natura et dignitate amoris in the manuscript tradition. Van Engen has pointed out that the order of works given in William's letter to Haymo cannot be considered an infallible witness to the chronology of William's corpus, because he may have composed it with a view toward what he considered to be most edifying for the Carthusians. William casts his treatise as a temporary contemplative interlude after which he must return to the "clamoring lads," i.e. his community. William's paternal attitude indicates that he was a figure with some authority, probably an abbot. If so, the treatise was probably written at St. Thierry during or after 1121. Remarkable by their absence are citations of the Song of Songs, which suggests that this imagery had not yet made its impress on him. The only bridal imagery is in a reference to the bridal gift, or arrah, given to William by God as evidence of his eternal faithfulness. This might be an indication that the treatise pre-dates William's extended conversation with Bernard of Clairvaux about the Song of Songs, which had probably taken place by 1123 or 1124. If so, the treatise was likely written during the period 1121-22.

Ceglar argues for three reasons that De contemplando Deo and De natura dignitate were both written after the Brevis commentatio. First he notes that the terms gradus and status are "vague and wavering" in the Brevis commentatio in comparison to the usage of the other two works, which he says is more precise. In the latter two works status seems to indicate horizontal progress and gradus indicates vertical progress. However, if, as he further suggests, the imprecision of the terminology is due to the influence of Bernard, which was probably not inconsiderable as he was the speaker being commented, this tells us little about the development of William's thought. Another argument involving textual comparison of the two works is similarly weak. Ceglar proposes that since that the phrase "ista

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5 Hourlier, introduction to De cont. Deo SC 61, 17, n.1.
7 De cont. Deo 12 SC 61, 116.
8 Déchanet, Oeuvres choisies, 39.
9 De cont. Deo 5 SC 61, 74.
10 Ceglar, Chronology, 377-8.
11 Ibid. 356.
12 Ibid. 377, n. 77.
necessitas...illa suavitas" from the *Brevis commentatio* \(^{13}\) is closer to its source (*Augustine, De civ. Dei* 19.19: "illa suavitas...ista necessitas")\(^{14}\) than another borrowing of it in *De contemplando Deo* "vestra necessitas...illa suavitas,"\(^{15}\) the citation in the *Brevis commentatio* must be earlier. Closer dependence on a source tells us nothing conclusive about the chronology of William's thought; for instance, the first chapter of *De natura corporis et animae*, which I will argue to be later than any of the above-mentioned works, is full of word-for-word citations of patristic and medical writers. Ceglar's last argument is equally problematic. He notes a passage from the *Brevis commentatio* in which the phrases *dispensationem conversationis* and *conversationis humanae* appear separately:

Cum enim <de> thalamo virginali processit Sponsus, exsultavit ut gigas ad currendam viam\(^{16}\) per omnem *dispensationem conversationis* suae, quasi quamdam vivendi viam nobis stemens et ordinans...Tempus maturitatis est, cum in Christo et Evangelio *conversationis humanae* apparuit maturitas...\(^{17}\)

Ceglar notes that in *De sacramento altaris, De contemplando Deo, De natura et dignitatis amoris*, and the *Meditationes* William usually speaks of Christ running the way of *dispensatio humana*, and he believes that William had compressed the two phrases found in the *Brevis commentatio* into the more economical phrase found in the other works.\(^{18}\) However, since the two phrases cited by Ceglar are twelve columns apart in the Migne edition, it seems somewhat difficult to believe that this contraction of thought would have been the product of conscious editing on William's part. It is equally possible that *dispensationem conversationis, conversationis humanae*, and *dispensatio humana* were all ways he chose in his early works to express Christ's choice to live a human life, and that *dispensatio humana*, perhaps first appearing in *De contemplando Deo*, in which he does not refer to the *currendam* of Ps. 18 but

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\(^{13}\) *Brev. comment. PL* 184, 420A.

\(^{14}\) *De civ. Dei* 19.19 CCSL 48, 687.

\(^{15}\) *De cont. Deo* 1 SC 61, 58.

\(^{16}\) Ps. 18:6: "In sole posuit tabernaculum suum; et ipse tanquam sponsus procedens de thalamo suo, exsultavit ut gigas ad currendam viam."

\(^{17}\) *Brev. comment. PL* 184, 420C-432A.

speaks of *pertransueuntem dispensationis humanae*, was the phrase he came to favor. The present author is inclined to view *De contemplando Deo* as William's earliest work due to the dearth of citations of the Song of Songs. As negative evidence is never as persuasive as positive or internal evidence, however, it seems safest to place the date of *De contemplando Deo* somewhere in the early 1120's.\(^{19}\)

2. Spiritual Progress in *De contemplando Deo*

a. Contemplation as Liberation from Body and Charity

The first five chapters of *De contemplando Deo* outline a program for the attainment of the vision of God. The treatise begins, "Come let us go up the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us his ways. Intentions, strivings, desires, thoughts, and affections, all that is within me, come and let us go up to the mountain or place where the Lord both sees and is seen."\(^{20}\) He pictures himself as a new Abraham, ascending the mountain with Isaac (his mind), leaving behind the ass, which he identifies as his body.\(^{21}\) In his sixth homily on Judges Origen describes those mounted upon asses as those whose souls command their bodies and master them; in these men the body performs the work on account of which it was entrusted to the soul.\(^{22}\) Many patristic writers discussed "face-to-face" visions and used the image of the mountain to evoke the idea of a sanctified place; it was frequently associated with the holy space of the monastery or the Holy City.\(^{23}\) One writer who associates

\(^{19}\) This is the conclusion expressed by Bell in his introduction to *The Nature and Dignity of Love*, trans. Thomas X. Davis, Cistercian Fathers Series 30 (Kalamazoo, MI, 1981) 27.

\(^{20}\) Ibid. 1 SC 61, 58: "Veniite ascendamus ad montem domini, et ad domum dei Jacob; et docebit nos vias suas. Intentiones, intentiones, voluntates, cogitationes, affectiones, et omnia interiora mean: venite ascendamus in montem vel locum ubi dominus videt, vel videtur."

\(^{21}\) Ibid.: "Curae, sollicitudines, anxietates, labores, poenae servitutis, expectate me hic cum asino, corpore isto...postquam adoravimus, revertamur ad vos." Cf. a more pejorative association between the ass and human flesh in a passage in *The Nature and Dignity of Love*, in which the spirit of dissipated man is compared to beasts and cattle and his flesh to asses' flesh (a reference to Ezek. 23:20). References to the *Nature and Dignity of Love* will be given to the edition of Davy. Here, cf. *Nat. et dig. amor*. 8 ed. Davy, 78 (PL 184, 383C).


the mountain with the apogee of monastic contemplation is Cassian.24 Like Cassian, William desires in contemplation to forsake temporarily the present world, including his body, though not his "intellectual faculties (yearnings, strivings, etc.)," since these latter are the means for his ascent. His abandonment of body seems to be a figure also of his abandonment of all the worries and toils associated with his "enslaved condition," since they must, he says, stay behind with the ass. The tension here is between both body and soul and between the active and contemplative lives. Here the active life is associated not so much with life in the world as with life in the monastic community, apparently following along the lines of the later Cassian, for whom the active life consists in the pursuit of virtue within the monastic community, as distinguished from the contemplative life pursued by the individual hermit.25 That William's enslaved condition has to do not only with body but also with his community responsibilities is later reinforced by the following passage describing his anxious anticipation of eventual descent and re-immersion into his monastic cares. Having bidden farewell to his worries, he instructs them to stay behind with his body while he departs to worship alone on the mountain for a little while. He knows that his solitary respite will be brief: "For we shall come back, and, unfortunately, all too soon. For love of the truth does indeed lead us far from you; but for the brothers' sake, the truth of the love does not permit us to reject or deny you."26 This passage seems reminiscent of a section from the Aeneid, 6.719ff., in which Anchises explains to Aeneas that souls return into bodies both in cooperation with the will of God and out of a certain desire for embodied life, after being purged of all connection with the body and drinking at the river Lethe.27 Anchises implies that the regeneration of souls is the lifeblood

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24 The Conferences have been edited as Conférences, ed. E. Pichery SC 42, 54, 64 (Paris, 1955-9)); they have been translated in their entirety by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace in Sulpicius Severus, Vincent of Lerins, John Cassian, vol. 11 of A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, 2d ser. (Grand Rapids, MI, 1973) 293-545. For Cassian the ascent up the mountain symbolizes the abandonment of the active life in favor of the contemplative search for the Lord in solitude. See Conf. 10.6, SC 54, 80.
25 See Philip Rousseau, Ascetics, Authority and the Church in the Age of Jerome and Cassian (Oxford, 1978) 177-82.
26 De cont. Deo 1 SC 61, 58: "Revertemur enim. Et heu quam cito. Abducit enim nos a vobis caritas veritas; sed propter fratres abdicare et abjurore vos non patitur veritas caritatis."
supplying Rome with a constant flow of new political leaders. William recasts this idea in terms of the Christian notion that service to others is the reason for the continued sojourn in the body. He thereby displays a strong awareness of the complementary dimensions of the active and contemplative spheres of life, illustrated by his phrases "the truth of the love" and "the love of the truth." 28

For the most part the western medieval tradition was in agreement that the contemplative life is superior to the active life. As Jean Leclercq has written "the whole organization of monastic life is dominated by the solicitude for safeguarding a certain spiritual leisure, a certain freedom in the interests of prayer in all its forms, and above all, authentic contemplative peace." 29 Though William emphasized that charity on behalf of neighbor is important, the dominant theme of his theology is the restoration of the image of God through mystical union.

(Cambridge, MA, 1970) 264–8, in which Scipio Africanus the younger has a dream in which he sees his grandfather in the celestial homeland as a reward for his service to Rome. Macrobius juxtaposes the two scenes, one from Cicero, one from Virgil, in his Commentarii in somnium Scipionis when he suggests that public life is the arena in which the pursuit of virtue is won and the return to the celestial homeland is attained; cf. Comm. in somn. Scip. 1.8.1-11 in Ambrosii Theodossii Macrobii, Saturnalia, Commentarii in Somnium Scipionis, ed. I. Willis, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1963) 2: 36–9. Though Cicero and Virgil are treating slightly different questions, both authors make similar points about the value of terrestrial existence, i.e. embodiment, in terms of political service. For Cicero the issue is why souls of heavenly descent would voluntarily choose reincarnation in a body. Cicero is attempting to justify the value of political activity by recourse to ideas that ultimately go back to Plato, Republic 519dff, who taught that philosophers must abandon the contemplation of truth and the Good because of their obligation to serve the polis and the common good. According to Ceglar, citations of Virgil elsewhere in William’s writings can be accounted for through dependence on florilegia or the excerpts of Virgil used by the grammarians. As for Cicero, C.C.J. Webb has argued that either copies of De republica or extracts from it most likely existed in the twelfth century, based on ideas from that work used by John of Salisbury but not found in Augustine or Macrobius; cf. Joannis Saresberiensis Episcopi Carinotensis Policraticus (Oxford, 1909) 2: 126.7-13. In the passage under consideration here, there is no need to make recourse to Cicero’s work itself, since so many other possible intermediaries exist. Macrobius is a more probable source for William. Augustine refers to Cicero’s teaching that souls naturally desire to return to their bodies at De civ. Dei 22.26-8. In an Easter sermon, in the context of refuting Porphyry’s claim that “all body should be fled,” he alludes to the scene from the Aeneid in which Anchises shows Aeneas the souls of great Romans that will one day go back into bodies; cf. Sermo 241 PL 38: 1133-8. In Sermo 241 and Sermo 240 PL 38, 1130-3 he discusses the improbability of the pagan author’s claim that purified souls would desire to go back to their former enslavement. While the theme of the soul’s enslavement by the body would certainly have been accessible to William through Augustine, the thrust of all these Augustinian writings is against viewing the soul’s desire to reside in a body as unnatural or perverse; moreover, Augustine makes no explicit commentary on the pagan authors’ view that public service lends value to embodied existence.

b. The Restoration of Likeness

William's doctrine of the image of God, which has its roots ultimately in the Platonic notion of like returning to like,\(^2\) has many features which are common to the whole of the patristic tradition: the image of divinity within us defines man as being in relation to God, establishes man as participating in the Father and the Son, and is a source of knowledge of and assimilation to God.\(^3\) The terms "image" and "likeness" have a long history in Christian thought and have been the subject of extensive study. Gerhart Ladner follows the tradition from its Pauline beginnings through the early medieval period. Beginning with Clement and Origen, the idea of image, as that which was received by man at creation, was distinguished from the likeness, considered to be a dynamic concept indicating the progressive assimilation to God. This assimilation was conceived of in various terms. Clement and Origen both call it the imitation of Christ (or the imitation of God).\(^4\) For Gregory of Nyssa (d. 395) this imitation or assimilation to God is above all purification, or the pursuit of the virtues.\(^5\) The development of likeness means a return to human beginnings, to our original happiness in Paradise.\(^6\) This notion of assimilation functioned as the basis of a characteristically eastern notion of the reform of man that was emphatically mystical in nature.\(^7\) For Origen and Gregory, who tends to use the two terms "image" and "likeness" interchangeably, the notion of assimilation entails deification through the vision of God. The deepest vision of God, according to Gregory, is a movement or tension of the soul that pushes the soul ever further into God.\(^8\) Augustine distinguishes between the two terms differently, since he begins his consideration of the difference between the terms with reference to their ordinary Latin


\(^3\) On the theme of likeness in Origen, see Crouzel, *Origen*, 92-98.


\(^5\) Ibid. 86.

\(^6\) Ibid. 85-93.

\(^7\) Ibid. 101-06.

\(^8\) Ibid. 107.

\(^9\) Ibid. 104-5.
meanings, according to Robert Markus.37 While Augustine thought that a likeness expresses similarity between any two things, he said that image conveys a relationship of production between that which is an image and its exemplar. For Augustine a likeness has a lower rank than a truly similar image and Augustine tends to speak about the reformation of the image within man.38

Though Augustine's conception of the Christian life may in one sense have been forward looking toward the end of time, in other ways his vision is more concrete and world-centered than that of the eastern fathers.39 Ladner contrasts Gregory of Nyssa's view of the eternal progress of the soul, which never terminates in the full apprehension of the divine nature, with the perception of Augustine, so fundamental in the western history of reform.40 On the one hand Augustine, being ultimately more optimistic about the extent to which we will see God in heaven, accentuates the notion of final rest in God much more than Gregory does but is more reserved about the degree of vision possible on earth. As McGinn has shown, however, Augustine's view of the final rest of the soul is not static, but involves a certain dynamic growth: as he says in his Homily on Ps. 104, in heaven we will continue to search for the one who has been found.41 The key difference between the two is that for Augustine the process of reformation is less a mystical journey than a ceaseless project of re-educating the will to act in accordance with our nature as images of God, though he does at times speak of

37 See R.A. Markus, "'Imago' and 'Similitudo' in Augustine," Revue des études augustiniennes 10 (1964) 125-43, for a review of the important texts and a careful exposition of Augustine's intellectual development.
39 Unlike Clement and Origen, for example, Augustine did not think that likeness to God was contained in creation only in potency, waiting to be released in the future. He thought that it was fully present within the creational image. On Clement and Origen, see Ladner, Idea of Reform. 85-88.
40 Ladner, Idea of Reform, 190-1.
the mystical purification of the soul.\(^{42}\) Christian life is a pilgrimage, an ever greater deepening of perseverance in the midst of suffering and temptation and an orientation toward rest in God at the end.\(^{43}\)

Both writers contributed in their own ways to the reassessment of the role of the physical world in the project of reform and the effect of reform on the psychosomatic whole that is man. The extraordinary achievement of Augustine was his reassessment of the implications of creation \textit{ex nihilo}. Augustine saw all creation, in the first moment of creation \textit{ex nihilo}, not only as flowing forth but as necessarily converting or turning back to God. This conversion of formless spiritual matter was a \textit{formatio};\(^{44}\) the recalling of the will of man, when it moves toward evil, verges once again toward nothingness, requires a similar reformation (\textit{conversio} or \textit{revocatio}) through penance.\(^{45}\) It is vital to note that for Augustine the formation applied to the realms of matter and spirit, so that his order of reform includes a place for the material: to paraphrase Ladner, the reformation of man was not an undoing but a continuation of the formation of a spiritual-corporeal compound. Augustine’s view of reform "evinced sufficient interest in the material world to allow for the gradual emergence and the frequent repetition of attempts at including ever larger areas of human terrestrial life in the idea and reality of reform."\(^{46}\)

Gregory of Nyssa has the same strong sense that man is a psychosomatic unity, a mixture of nutritive, sensitive, and intellectual souls. While Adam’s body and soul were created virtually at the moment of simultaneous creation, as a unity they traversed three stages, corresponding to the three kinds of soul, in temporal succession thereafter in the six hexaemeral days\(^{47}\) until they arrive at rational perfection.\(^{48}\) Man’s creation is mentioned last in

\(^{42}\) On the relation of the psychological trinities within man to the project of reform, see Ladner, \textit{Idea of Reform}, 197-203. On the cleansing power of the vision of God, see Augustine, \textit{De Gen. ad litt.} 12.28 CSEL 28, 422-3.

\(^{43}\) Ibid. 161.

\(^{44}\) Ladner points out that creation, originally lacking all form, cannot be a \textit{reformatio}.

\(^{45}\) On the use of the terms \textit{convertere} and \textit{revocare} to describe the reformation of man in the \textit{Confessions}, see Ladner, \textit{Idea of Reform}, 170-1.

\(^{46}\) Ibid. 185.

\(^{47}\) My discussion of Gregory’s anthropology is dependent above all on Gerhart Ladner, "The Philosophical
the creation story for "nature makes an ascent as it were by steps (διὰ βαθμῶν)... from the lower to the perfect form." In Gregory's hands, man remains forever a link between the physical and the material and the body has a special dignity as an image of the image of God in the soul. When the body is properly ordered by mind, it offers wonderful evidence of its own about the dignity and rationality of man's nature: his upright form reveals his dignity, his hands have freed his mouth for the uniquely human form of communication, speech. The close connection of body and soul means that the body can drag the soul down, but (and this is a critical point) Gregory ultimately came to view the mutability bestowed on man, which he associated especially with the body, as the condition of his ascent to God, for without it man

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48 According to Lader, "Philosophical Anthropology," 74-5, Adam's creation may be viewed as a paradigm for the temporal evolution of human embryonic development, since "the actual union between the human soul and body took and takes place anew in every individual case. In Adam it occurred when 'from the clay of the ground the Lord God formed man, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and made man a living soul (Gen. 2:7)'; in later men this union is realized at the moment of their conception."


51 Gregory of Nyssa teaches that created nature, which had its source in the change of creation, has a kindred connection with mutation, *De opific. homin. 16* PG 44, 184C-185B, trans. Schaff and Wace, 405-6. When he speaks of the body pulling the soul down, he does not mean that the body actively leads the soul toward vice, but that the body offers the occasion for the soul to take inordinate pleasure in material things and appearances; the role of ascetic practice is detachment from the "mixed" pleasures of the body and the restoration of purity of heart. Cf. Mark D. Hart, "Reconciliation of Body and Soul: Gregory of Nyssa's Deeper Theology of Marriage," *Theological Studies* 91 (1990) 450-78, esp. 462-8; on Gregory's asceticism cf. Werner Jaeger, *Two Rediscovered Works of Ancient Christian Literature: Gregory of Nyssa and Macrobius* (Leiden, 1954). Peter Brown describes how for Gregory the undue love for material things and the need to overcome the specter of death exert a stranglehold on mankind in the form of obsession with familial wealth and dynastic continuity; asceticism for him had the opposite, restorative effect on not only the individual, but society as a whole. Cf. *Body and Society*, 285-304. Bynum argues that Gregory's valuation of asceticism shaped his entire view of the resurrected body, since for him the body of the ascetic was the paradigm of the human body, *Resurrection*, 83-6.
would have been unable to return to God,52 a theme that was later to be repeated by Gregory the Great.53

For William human likeness to God is progressively developed in virtue of our possession of an image of God: "we make progress in our likeness to God and recover his image, which, by acting contrarily, we have partially lost."54 The idea that the image of God is something that can be lost to some extent is less marked in Augustine55 but more pronounced in Gregory the Great and Origen.56 William, like Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory the Great, and the fifth-century Gallic writer Claudianus Mamertus, sometimes treats the two terms "image" (imago) and "likeness" (similitudo) as synonyms.57 How William's notion of likeness, and bodily likeness in particular, features in his anthropology and his understanding of human reform will be a major focus of our work. Here, at the beginning of his career, William gives a notion of reformation through mystical love. He says that beholding God will cleanse a soul as yet unfit to see Him. This contrasts with the teaching of Cassian and Gregory the Great, who associate purification more with the attainment of passionlessness that precedes contemplation.58 However, Augustine had spoken in his literal commentary on Genesis about

52 Human mutability, which he associates primarily with the body, was actually a gift to man, according to Gregory, because without it he would have remained permanently turned away from God after the Fall; Ladner postulates that Gregory thought that the original body of the first man was spiritual and sexless. See "Philosophical Anthropology," 82-94.
53 Gregory the Great sees the mutability of the soul to be caused by its association with a body. He thought that the mutable soul is restored through its mutability, its ability to change its course and direct its desire wholly to God. Carole Straw, Gregory the Great: Perfection in Imperfection (Berkeley, 1988) 141-2.
54 See his Expositio super Epistolam ad Romanos 7.12.2 ed. Paul Verdeyen CCCM 86 (Turnhout, 1989) 166: "per quod ad similitudinem Dei proficimus, et eius recuperamus imaginem, quam contrària agendo ex parte amisimus."
55 Augustine says at De Gen. ad litt. 6.38 that the image may be lost. He later retracted this view (Retr. 2.24.2 CCSL 57, 110 and ibid. 1.26 CCSL 57, 84-5), but he still speaks in later works of the image being partially lost (De spirit. et litt. 28.48 CSEL 60.4.1, 202: "non omni modo deletum est").
57 Bell, Image and Likeness, 116; on Gregory of Nyssa see Ladner, "Philosophical Anthropology," esp. 63-4; on Gregory the Great, see Straw, Perfection in Imperfection, 43, n. 67; on Claudianus, see Philip Lyden Reynolds, "God, Cosmos, and Microcosm: Comparisons Between the Relation of God to the Cosmos and the Relation of the Soul to Man, from Greek Philosophy to the Thirteenth Century," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1986) 277.
58 Cassian, Conf. 1.7 SC 42, 84-5. Straw, Perfection in Imperfection, 150.
the power of contemplation to cleanse the heart stained by its association with corporeality.59
Like Origen, Augustine, and Gregory the Great, William stresses the role of desire in the ascent to God.60 For Gregory, it is desire, second only to penitence, which pushes the soul towards God "like an engine."61 Desire serves to awaken the hardened soul; the unexpected visitations of God soften it, that it may recall itself and return to God.62 Following Augustine, William teaches that desire and possession alternate in the progress of the soul.

c. The Body of Christ as Devotional Object

William struggles to discern the reason for his quest and his own motives, but he concludes confidently that though he cannot be sure of what he is looking for, because he has never seen it, he is sure that he is drawn forward by the love of loving God, that is, by desire itself. He first seeks God with the eyes of faith, and is occasionally rewarded by a vision of the "back of God," or the incarnate Christ.63 He says that he attempts to approach to Jesus to see and touch

to see and touch the whole of him and, not only that, but to approach the most holy wound in his side,64 the door of the ark that is there made,65 not only to put my finger or my entire hand into it, but enter as a whole into Jesus' very heart, into the holy of holies, the ark of the covenant, the golden urn,66 the soul of our humanity that contains within itself the manna of the divinity.67

59 On the cleansing power of the vision of God, see Augustine, De Gen. ad litt. 12.28 CSEL 28, 422-3.
60 Origen taught that desire for physical things coarsened the soul and that this type of desire had to be transformed into the proper desire for spiritual things. Physical beauties, however, are an echo of the true harmony of the spiritual realm and have a role in awakening the soul to the true nature of reality. Cf. Brown, Body and Society, 172-3. On Augustine, see below, n. 88, and for Gregory the Great, see Leclercq, Love of Learning, 24-36.
61 Mor. 6.37.38 CCSL 143, 328. The Moralía has been edited by Marcus Adriaen, CCSL 143, 143A, 143B (Turnhout, 1979-1985).
62 Ibid. 18.21.45, CCSL 143A, "Ex quo adore scilicet et emolliitur ad adorem, et roboratur ad operationem."
63 De cont. Deo 3 SC 61, 62. The phrase posteriora Dei comes from Ex. 33:21ff. Augustine uses it to refer to the flesh of Christ at De Trin. 2.17.28 CCSL 50, 117-9.
64 Jn. 20: 24ff.
65 Gen. 6: 16.
66 Heb. 9:3f.
67 De cont. Deo 3 SC 61, 62-6: "totum eum desidero videre et tangere, et non solum, sed accedere ad sacrosanctum lateris ejus vulnus, ostium archae quod factum est in latere, ut non tantum mittam dignum vel totam manum, sed totum intrem usque ad ipsum cor Ihesu, in sanctum sanctorum, in archam testamenti, ad
The image of the holy of holies, the ark, and the golden urn containing manna come from Heb. 9:3f. Bede, who likens the soul of Christ to an ark containing the manna of God's divinity, is almost certainly an influence here. Cassian uses a similar litany of Scriptural imagery to describe another sanctified place: the soul of the spiritual man which is purified through constant meditation on the Scriptures. For Cassian the spiritual man encounters Christ in his own heart through meditation. Here William seems to be interpreting this text in a related sense. Like Scripture, Christ's body is a source for meditation: the entrance into the heart of Christ is like an encounter with divine Wisdom through the penetration to the interior meaning of Scripture. Like the apostle Thomas, William wants to touch the wound in Christ's side, and even to crawl inside it. Playing on the two senses of "heart," William says that crawling into Jesus' side, William encounters the "heart of Christ": the fleshly beating organ becomes the symbol of interior divine life and love. The wound is a place of contemplative repose, while the "door" of the wound opens directly onto a mystical vista. In this early treatise William expresses a sense of the purpose of sensitive devotion to the Incarnation similar to that of Bernard of Clairvaux. Bernard emphasized that it was necessary for the spiritually immature to see God physically and experience his love for us even to death on the cross as a visible image of the proper moral order that Christ had come to restore. Gilson has written that Bernard always viewed sensitive devotion to the humanity of Christ as less essential for the spiritual man, who is united to God in spirit, than for the animal man. The fact that William's physical

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70 It is called the ark of the convenant and a golden urn containing within it the "everlasti\[...\]“

71 Bonaventure would later penetrate to the mystical through the visible image of the wound as well; however, what he finds is the suffering and love of Christ rather than the divinity of God. Cf. Bonaventure, Vita mystica 3.5 in S. Bonaventurae opera omnia, 10 vols. (Quaracchi, 1882-1902) 8: 164.


73 E. Gilson, Mystical Theology of St. Bernard, Cistercian Studies Series 120 (Kalamazoo, MI, 1990) 78-84. Bernard's sermons on the Song of Songs are replete with references to this idea. See Serm. Cant. 43.2.3 in Sancti Bernardi opera, ed. Leclercq, 2: 42-3, and ibid. 20.5.6 ed. Leclercq, 1: 118-9; and ibid. 20.5.8 ed. Leclercq,
meditation here fails to achieve more than fleeting contact with God may indicate that he thought it inferior to contemplation of His divinity. We will see further on that William feels he has to "apologize" for his love of contemplating the physical Christ. Nevertheless, even if in this early work William tends to place sensitive devotion to Christ below contemplation of God's divinity, his devotion to the body of Christ connects him to the wider twelfth-century interest in the humanity of Christ as described by Giles Constable and others. In making his point of departure Christ's body, in his loving desire to handle Christ's body, in his two-sided image of the heart, which evokes a smooth transition from corporeal to spiritual realities, William demonstrates his interest in the body of Christ. His reverie ends abruptly, however, when he is told "Touch me not" and he hears the phrase from the Book of Revelation, "Dogs outside." When William is rebuked by God, he retreats to his rock like a hedgehog. Reviving, he presses forward in his hope that he can in some way deserve to see this divinity. For, he asks, "Who loves what he does not see?"

Having noted that William’s view of sensitive devotion is tentative and that it bears a similarity to that of Bernard of Clairvaux, it is advisable to take this opportunity to make a brief comparison of the early anthropologies of the two writers. Bernard’s anthropology is typified

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76 Jn. 20:17.
77 Rev. 22:15.
78 The image of the hedgehog (Ps. 103:18) was used by Cassian to describe the simple man, who is protected from devils by the rock of meditation on Scripture, particularly the memory of the passion of Christ; in contrast to the hedgehog is the deer, or the spiritual man, who penetrates to the highest spiritual teachings of the Scriptures in order to arrive at wordless, imageless prayer. *Conf.* 10.11 CSEL 13.2, 303-6. Gregory the Great compares the reaction of a sinner, when rebuked for his sinfulness, to a hedgehog curling up in self-defense, *Mor.* 33.29-53 CCSL 143B, 1719-20. William borrows elements of both interpretations.
79 *De cont. Deo* 3 SC 61, 66: "Quis amat quod not videt?" Cf. 1 Jn. 4:20.
in I Deug-Su's view, by an early stage, in which the flesh is viewed both positively and negatively. On the one hand the realm of the flesh, which essentially obscures the rational order, is presented as a barrier to the internal ordering of man, but on the other, Christ's humanity is viewed positively as a means of escaping the realm of the flesh. The later Bernard may still have viewed sensitive devotion as inferior to spiritual devotion, but, as we will see below, he grew to see the realm of the flesh as to be transformed, not transcended, by spiritual union with the Word. For Bernard the sacramental nature of the realm of bodies as well as the soul's natural love for its own body grew ever more prominent in his thought. The older view of Bernard's vision of body, as thoroughly negative and merely incidental to man's essential nature, in the description of Wilhelm Hiss, must be nuanced by the work of I Deug-Su and John Sommerfeldt. The evolution discernible in Bernard's thought should prepare us to recognize possible variations in William's approach to the body between his early and his late works.

d. The Roles of Desire and Love

Having discovered that his meditation on the human Christ did not achieve the absorption into divine love for which he hopes, William takes another tack in chapter four. This time he tries to rise to God by reflection on the qualities of creatures, a theme familiar from Augustine and Gregory the Great. Depicting his mount through the goods of creation as ascent up a ladder, William says, "using your good and lovable things, as if I were

82 Ibid. and John R. Sommerfeldt, The Spiritual Teachings of Bernard of Clairvaux: An Intellectual History of the Early Cistercian Order, Cistercian Fathers Series 125 (Kalamazoo, MI, 1991) 13-20, 31-41. Sommerfeldt notes that Hiss does not attempt to distinguish different ways of describing the natural body and the body after sin, ibid. 18, n. 4. Bynum thinks that Sommerfeldt oversates the place of body in Bernard's view of the human person, Resurrection, 164, n. 29.
83 Augustine outlined a process of ascent through the levels of creation in De quantitate animae. See below, chap. 4, p. 239. Eastern mystical writers also have great confidence that creation is a manifestation of the divine. Stephen Gersh, From Iamblichus to Eriugena: An Investigation of the Prehistory and Evolution of the Pseudo-Dionysian Tradition (Leiden, 1978) 276-8.
84 William's vocabulary for the ascent may derive from Gregory the Great, who describes a "ladder of contemplation," beginning in the physical creation, of which each rung is more rational and spiritual than the one before. Mor. 15.46.52 CCSL 143A, 781. Gregory's idea of the ladder may echo Dionysius' conception of
struggling with hands and feet, with all my powers I reach up to you, into you, the highest love, the highest good."85 This tactic is insufficient, for the more that he reaches up the more he is thrust back into himself and below himself. And so he remains, facing himself. And then the doubts begin to gnaw again. He worries that what he loves is desire itself, "being in love with love" as a modern idiom has it.86 And a further specter looms: whence comes this desire if it is for a love which he has never fully experienced? The question of the *Meno* concerning the manner of the true acquisition of knowledge, treated by Augustine in *De magistro*, has returned in an altered form.

William's frustration approaches a level beyond endurance. He wants to be cleansed of his self-appropriation, to die to himself in order to live in God, to run into love's embrace.87 Then God accedes to his many requests and opens his blurred eyes. Lifted out of himself he moves without the steps of rational thought to God. In this moment of ecstasy he receives interior assurance that there is a difference between love of desire and love of love, another Augustinian insight.88 William outlines a progression in the spiritual life "The love of desire is sometimes rewarded with sight; sight merits delight, and delight earns the perfecting of love."89

ordered hierarchy. On Gregory's knowledge of Dionysius, see Claude Dagens, *Saint Grégoire le Grand* (Paris, 1977) 151, n. 40 and Joan Petersen, "Did Gregory Know Greek?" in *The Orthodox Churches and the West*, ed. Derek Baker (Oxford, 1976) 121-34. Petersen's claims should probably be skeptically viewed given G.J.M. Bartelink's criticism of her conclusions about Gregory's knowledge of Greek in "Pope Gregory the Great's Knowledge of Greek," trans. Paul Meyvaert, in *Gregory the Great: A Symposium*, ed. John C. Cavadini (Notre Dame, IN, 1995) 117-36, 137-45 (translator's appendix). In this article Bartelink examines several passages which Petersen suggests depend on Gregory of Nazianzen and Gregory of Nyssa's original Greek and rejects her conclusions. In light of Bartelink's findings, putative borrowings from Greek authors on Gregory the Great's part probably should be considered to have passed to him through some Latin intermediary.

85 *De cont. Deo* 4 SC 61, 68: "bonis et amabilibus tuis, quasi pedibus et manibus et totis inmitens viribus, sursum tendo ad te, in te, summe amor, summum bonum."


87 *De cont. Deo* 5 SC 61, 72.


89 *De cont. Deo* 5 SC 61, 74: "Amor desiderii meretur aliquando visionem, visio fruitionem; fruitio amoris
The perfecting of love, as he explains in the next section, involves an eternal spiralling from love to desire and from desire to love. Is the perfection of love something ever to be attained? He thinks that there must be perfection in heaven, for if there was any lack of love in heaven, then the unrighteous might inherit the kingdom. But this answer is too superficial for William. There must be degrees of love in heaven, he says, for certainly the capacity for love of the seraphim exceeds human capacity. Nevertheless, William thinks that the desire to love perfectly will be equal for all. Each will be filled to capacity, though those capacities may differ. The surfeit that God provides will not quench the desire, so that man spirals eternally in an endless progress from love to desire and from desire to love. He concludes, "This affection is perfection. To travel always thus is to arrive."  

e. Neoplatonic Conversio

Now William enters into a long discussion of the bridging of the gap that subsists between God and man due to the disorientation of man's affections, a theological problem that underpins the remainder of the work. Hourlier has noted that the tone of the work changes here from a more vehement, intimate manner of speaking to a more didactic, less abrupt style. William thinks that we rise up to God through the affection of love. He also notes that, paradoxically, we cannot love the unknown God unless he first makes himself known through love, a topic treated in numerous places by Augustine. As William goes further into the implications of how an unmoved, indivisible God can be said to "love" his creation, William asserts the traditional view that God can not be understood to possess emotions, if these are interpreted to be changeable or extraneous to him. Therefore, he is not "affected" in his love...
of humankind. God loves us not through emotion but, as Augustine says,\textsuperscript{95} by sending Himself to us in the person of the Holy Spirit.

When we love you, our spirit is truly affected by your Holy Spirit ...and when your love...the Holy Spirit...dwell in us, He is to you that which He is--love, He converts to Himself (\textit{in se convertens}) all the 'captives of Zion,' that is to say, all the affections of the soul, and sanctifies them.\textsuperscript{96}

William wants to assert that God is Himself our love in some sense, yet he cannot hold that our affections are this divine love, because they are fleeting and changing. What he argues is that while human beings love "with affection," God loves "as a cause": "\textit{Amas tu te in nobis, nos affectu, tu effectu.}"\textsuperscript{97} He is distinguishing the divine and human aspects of the human response of love by the contrast of loving \textit{affectu} and \textit{effectu}.

The fact that William is preoccupied with finding terminology that preserves God's unchanging nature while expressing his immanence in creation in human love suggests that he may have had contact with Christian Neoplatonic thought on God's causality. William's coupling of the statement, "\textit{Amas tu te in nobis, nos affectu, tu effectu}" with the notion of conversion (\textit{in se convertens}) makes one wonder whether William is evoking Eriugena's paradigm of causality, in which a cause brings back its effects into itself. William may be suggesting that the love of God flows into human love and returns it back to God as its end.

Eriugena used the term \textit{redire} to express the return of an effect to its cause; when the causal process was viewed from the point of view of the cause, he used the term \textit{converti} to express return.\textsuperscript{98} For example, Eriugena writes, they call God "simple, moved by Himself, active in


\textsuperscript{96} \textit{De cont. Deo} 11 SC 61, 104: "\textit{Sed cum te amamus, afficitur quidem spiritus noster, spiritui tuo sancto...Cumque amor tuus...spiritus sanctus habitans in nobis ad te est quod est id est amor omnem captivitatem Syon id est animae nostrae omnes affectiones in se convertens, et sanctificant.}"

\textsuperscript{97} \textit{De cont. Deo} 11 SC 61, 104.

\textsuperscript{98} For a description of Eriugena's view of the role of the cause in the Neoplatonic scheme of causality, see 1954) 247-54. In the twelfth century this principle was still firmly established according to Gillian Evans, "A Theology of Change in the Writings of St. Anselm and His Contemporaries," RTAM 47 (1980) 53-76, esp. 53. Cf. Bell, \textit{Image and Likeness}, 144, n. 76, on William's use of the Aristotelian phrase "unmoved Mover." This phrase was used by twelfth-century commentators on the Boethian \textit{Opuscula sacra}, according to Evans, "Theology of Change," 62.
Himself, pre-existing in the Good, flowing out from the Good into visible things, returning them again into the Good."99 William would not have found the notion of causal change expressed as conversio in Augustine. Augustine uses the term100 to express a change in moral or affective quality, what Ladner has called the reformatio.101 As Ladner also notes, Augustine uses the same term, conversio, to describe formless creation, or the formless in creation, returning to God to be formed.102 Ladner thinks that Augustine’s notion of moral reform parallels his notion of a creational formation. O’Meara suggests that Augustine’s use of the term “return” sometimes has an ascetic sense, in which the soul is seen to return to God from worldly distractions and other times an eschatological sense, which echoes Neoplatonic notions of final return to the Fatherland; sometimes both meanings are implied at once.103 It should be noted that in other passages William employs the word recurrere, a word used by Augustine

Gersh, From Iamblichus to Eriugena, 225-7. Gersh says that Eriugena uses reditus, reverti, and converti to describe the reversion of an effect, from the point of view of the effect, so to speak, while he uses the active form convertere to describe reversion from the point of view of the cause. Maximus the Confessor had distinguished between the soul’s return to God in the moral sphere from the reversion which is the realization of form through causal activity. Although Eriugena translated this distinction of Maximus, he did not follow Maximus’ teaching in his own writings. Gersh, From Iamblichus to Eriugena, 227. Eriugena attempts to get around the problem by positing a general return of all things to God and a special return for the elect, i.e. those who had achieved special prominence in the spiritual life. Cf. idem, “The Structure of the Return in Eriugena’s Periphyseon,” in Begriff und Metapher: Sprachform des Denkens bei Eriugena. Vorträge des VII Internationalen Eriugena-Colloquiums Wener-Reinertz-Stiftung Bad Hamburg 26-29 July 1989, Herausgegeben von Werner Beierwaltes (Heidelberg, 1990) 108-25, esp. 108.


100 See Conf. 6.6.9 CCSL 27, 79: “Nunc tibi inhaereat anima mea, quam de uscio tam tenaci mortis exuist. Quam misera erat! Et sensum vulneris tu pungebas, ut relictis omnibus conuerteretur ad te, qui es super omnia et sine quo nulla essent omnia, conuerteretur et sanaretur.” Cf. ibid. 5.2.2 CCSL 27, 57-8; Enn. in Psalm. 28.3 CCSL 38, 170.

101 Ladner, Idea of Reform, 169.

102 Ibid., n. 7. Ladner additionally suggests that his ideas about the return of the soul are radically different from the Neoplatonists’ notions of return. His views rest partially on a view of the difference between Christian views of creation and the pagan notion of emanation which is no longer widely accepted among scholars of Neoplatonism. Édouard Jeanneau, “The Neoplatonic Themes of Processio and Reditus in Eriugena,” Dionysius 15 (1991) 3-29, esp. 12, n. 39. The principle difference between Augustine’s notion of the soul’s return and that of the pagan Neoplatonists was his rejection of the hope for escape from the body and the cycle of rebirths implied in the Porphyrian conception of the return of the soul. Cf. J. O’Meara, “Porphyry’s Philosophy from Oracles” in Eusebius’s Praeparatio Evangelica and Augustine’s Dialogues of Cassiacum,” in Recherches augustiniennes 6 (1969) 103-39, esp. 128-31. After this realization, he tells us in the Retractiones, he desired to curtail his use of the term redire.
for return in the eschatological sense— but not included in the lexicon Gersh ascribes to Eriugena—to describe effects returning to God.\textsuperscript{105} It is William's linking of the verb convertere with his distinction between the divine and human roles in human love that indicates his familiarity with Eriugenean thought on God's causality. Hourlier has translated this phrase as "il convertit en soi 'tous les captifs de Sion;'\textsuperscript{106} but the Cistercian Fathers translation says that the Holy Spirit "turns toward Himself and hallows all the 'captives of Sion.'"\textsuperscript{107} I would argue that in the latter passage the sense of motion of the effect towards and into God, preserved in the French translation, is lost: the English version makes the motion seem completely self-reflexive on the part of God. As this work progresses we shall consider various passages of William's writings which have been as yet unconsidered in hopes of further understanding William's debt to Neoplatonism. His use of the term effectus bears watching,\textsuperscript{108} since it is possible that he is using it to indicate a motion of the effect toward the cause that is accomplished more by the cause than by the effect. It is also noteworthy that he uses a trio of terms (stare, procedere, and redire)\textsuperscript{109} to describe the behavior of created things, which seems

\textsuperscript{103} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{104} On Augustine's use of recurrere to describe the return of the soul to the Father in an eschatological context, see O'Meara, "New Light on Porphyry's 'Philosophy from Oracles'," 131.

\textsuperscript{105} The closing prayer of De cont. Deo 13 SC 61, 118-20, has "unum deum a quo sumus, per quem sumus, in quo sumus, a quo peccando discessimus, qui dissimilis facti sumus, a quo perire non permissemus sumus, principium ad quod recurrimus, forma quam sequimus, gratia qua reconciliamur, adoramus et benedicimus." This is taken directly from De vera relig. 55.113, CCSL 32, 260. At De cont. Deo 12 SC 61, 110, he says that man's righteousness returns (recursus) to God as his end: "A quo fons et origo, et in quem finis et recursus verae justitiae."

\textsuperscript{106} See the translation of De cont. Deo. 11 provided in SC 61, 105.

\textsuperscript{107} On Contemplating God 11 trans. Sr. Penelope, 58.

\textsuperscript{108} At De cont. Deo 11 SC 61, 104, William continues his thought by saying that God effects (efficiens) unity between himself and man through the Holy Spirit. Shortly afterward, at 12 SC 61, 108, he uses the same pairing of effectus and effectus to signify the two activities of the philosopher, love and action. In this context the term effectu does not appear to have the same technical meaning: "Philosophi mundi hujus olim eam coluere, et effectu amoris et effecto operis."

\textsuperscript{109} The trio occurs in the course of a negative description of the effects of sin on the created world and on man. De nat. et dig. amor. 40 ed. Davy, 120 (PL 401A): "nichil stare in loco suo, nichil procedere ordine suo. Videbat hominem abisse in rgionem dissimilitudinis tam longe, ut per se nec posset nec sc[]ret redire." This trio of terms does not appear in the table of triads found in Augustine's writings that is appended to Du Roy, L'intelligence de la foi, 537-40. Augustine is fond of the terms redire and stare; they appear frequently in the first books of the Confessions. At Conf. 4.10.15 CCSL 27, 48, he uses the flux of temporal things as a metaphor for the disorder of the soul which takes pleasure only in corporeal things. Of the latter he says, "in illis autem non est ubi, quia non stant." At ibid. 4.12.18 CCSL 27, 49-50, he contrasts this disorder with the stability of souls once they have returned (redire) to God and stand (stare) in him; the theme of the return also
to echo Eriugena's terminology for procession and return: *remanere, procedere* and *redire* or *converti*.

f. William's Knowledge of Neoplatonism

The extent of William's knowledge of Neoplatonism has been a hotly debated issue. The founders of modern scholarship on William, André Adam and J.M. Déchanet, viewed William to have been imbued with Platonist philosophy and eastern Christian theology. More recent scholars have questioned the extent of William's knowledge of Greek and have refuted Déchanet's claims that William had read Plato, Plotinus, Basil, Athanasius, Evagrius, Origen and Gregory of Nyssa in the original Greek. David Bell has conceded the influence of Origen and Gregory of Nyssa on works such as the *Epistula ad fratres de Monte Dei*, his *Expositio super Epistulam ad Romanos*, among others, but he argues that William had read the two Greek writers only in translation. A number of authors, such as Goulven Madec, have sought to portray William's thought as fundamentally Augustinian and to locate through textual comparison the sources of his ideas in western patristic writings. In the book which proceeded from his doctoral research, *The Image and the Likeness: The Augustinian Spirituality of William of St. Thierry*, Bell contests Paul Verdeyen's claim that William's Trinitarian theology could only have derived from eastern sources. He argues that William's

appear at ibid. 3.8.16 CCSL 27, 36.

10 Gersh, *From Iamblichus to Eriugena*, 225-7; idem., "Structure of the Return."


12 In "Guillaume et Plotin," Déchanet suggests that William may have possessed a fragmentary text of the *Enneads*, but he leaves open the question of whether William read Greek. Others think that William possessed only the most limited knowledge of Greek. Cf. David Bell, "Greek, Plotinus"; cf. John Anderson's introduction to *Enigma of Faith*, 16.


14 Ibid. 16-7.


16 Ibid. 17, and n. 16; Paul Verdeyen, "La théologie mystique de Guillaume de Saint-Thierry," *Ons Geestelijk
theology of the role of the Holy Spirit in union of spirit developed out of his reading of Augustine. McGinn has subjected the older view that William was strongly influenced by Dionysius to serious scrutiny.\footnote{117} While McGinn allows that William's use of the phrase *nomina divina* may indicate a limited amount of familiarity with Dionysian teachings and that William may have used Dionysius to elaborate themes which he drew fundamentally from Augustine, he concludes on the basis of the terminology that Dionysius was not an important source for William. John Anderson has furthermore shown that William's analysis of the Divine Names in the *Aenigma fidei* looks more Augustinian than Dionysian.\footnote{118}

Two scholars have made studies of Eriugena's influence on William. Bell scrutinized all passages which had been attributed by his predecessors to Eriugenean influence.\footnote{119} He identified two passages that probably derive from the *Periphyseon*,\footnote{120} and seventeen passages


\footnote{118} See Anderson's introduction to Enigma of Faith; cf. idem, "The Use of Greek Sources by William of St. Thierry, Especially in the Enigma fidei," in One Yet Two, ed. Pennington, 242-53.


\footnote{120} One passage, from De cont. Deo 8 SC 61, 88, contains a definition of love that seems to be borrowed from Eriugena: "amor animae rationalis sicut dicit quidam servus tuus, motus, vel quieta statio, vel finis, in id ultra quod nil appetat: vel appetendum judicet voluntatis appetitum," see Periphi. 1 ed. Edouard Jeanneau CCSL 161 (Turnhout, 1996) 106: "Amor est naturalis motus omnium rerum quae in motu sunt finis quietaque statio, ultra quam nullus creaturae progrediur motus." Bell notes that Eriugena presents the definition as a quotation, but, as Eriugena attempts to support the definition with passages from Dionysius, it may just as well be the case that Eriugena is paraphrasing and condensing a number of ideas of Dionysius in this definition. See Bell, "John Scotus Eriugena," 26. Bell's point is nevertheless important: if indeed, Eriugena took the definition from someone else, then it is possible that the latter individual, and not Eriugena, is William's source. Honorius of Autun quotes Eriugena's text word for word, and it seems unlikely that he borrowed the definition elsewhere; see \textit{Clavis physicae} 67 ed. P. Lucentini, Temi e testi 21 (Rome 1974) 46. Thomas Tomasic thinks the definition comes from Dionysius, but he does not say why, "Just How Cogently Can One Argue for the Influence of John Scotus Eriugena on William of Saint-Thierry," in Erudition at God's Service, ed. John R. Sommerfeldt, Studies in Medieval Cistercian History 11, Cistercian Studies Series 98 (Kalamazoo, MI, 1987) 183-94, esp. 193. Another passage from William's Expositio domini Willetmi super Cantica Canticorum gives an etymological derivation of *deus* from the Greek words *θεῶρημα* and *θεός*, and both Bell and Tomasic think that the passage is similar terminologically and doctrinally to Periphi.1 CCSL 161, 18, which depends on Gregory of Nyssa, In Cant. PG 44, 862. See Exposé de dom Guillaume sur le Cantique des Cantiques 2, str. 1, 152 ed. J-M. Déchandet, trans. M. Dumontier SC 82 (Paris, 1962) 322. Cf. Bell, "John Scotus Eriugena," 26; cf. Tomasic, "Influence of Eriugena," 188-90. Many manuscripts of Isidore give the etymology of *deus* as "*θεός...id est timor;* *θεός* is probably a scribal corruption of *δεός*. While William does borrow this derivation in the *Aenigma fidei*, it is evidently not the influence here; cf. Ceglar, Chronology, 286-7. References to the first book of the *Periphyseon* will be given to the CCSL edition of Édouard Jeanneau; references to books two and three will be given to both the PL and the edition of I.P. Sheldon-Williams, trans. John J. O'Meara and I.P.
wherein the similarities were deemed too ambiguous to be conclusive. Bell concedes that William's use of the word *theophania* may indeed show some contact with Eriugenean thought, but he notes that the word appears in other authors, and that William's understanding of theophanies as referring to the mystical experience of the presence of God in the soul is somewhat removed from Eriugena's description of them as "the species of all things visible and invisible, by the beauty and order of which it is made known that God exists, and it is found not what He is but that He is." Thomas Tomasic compared all of William's works with all of Eriugena's works and translations by means of computer analysis. Tomasic found no parallels with the translations of Dionysius and Maximus. In the case of Eriugena, however, he discovered between six and twelve "assimilated borrowings" from *Periphyseon I*, in William's *De contemplando Deo, Aenigma fidei*, and *Expositio super Cantica Canticorum*. These passages represent, according to Tomasic, transformations of ideas from the *Periphyseon* into William's own language. One of the passages detected from the *Expositio super Cantica Canticorum* employs the terms *theoria* and *theophania*.

Sheldon Williams, *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 9 and 11 (Dublin, 1978-1981); references to the fourth book will be given to the PL and to the edition of Édouard Jeannin, trans. John J. O'Meara, *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 13 (Dublin, 1995); references to the fifth book will be given to the PL.

121 Bell, "John Scotus Eriugena," 25-6, and n. 99.
theophania. He also found a passage from the Enigma fidei that seems to echo four points in a small section from Periphyseon I. Tomasic says that he designed the program to detect not only word-for-word parallels but also conceptual similarities. He himself notes that such computer searches are only as reliable as the method which the programmer devises for the search. The present author is extremely skeptical that it would be possible to anticipate all the possible ways that a twelfth-century author could transform and assimilate older ideas; therefore, I do not consider Tomasic's project to have eliminated the need for continued careful reading of William's texts for Eriugenean or even Dionysian influences. At best his research can point us toward passages to be examined. Tomasic's research reinforces the impression of the present author that William indeed absorbed notions of Eriugena that he subsequently sought to re-express in his own language.

Current research would therefore suggest that William derived his Neoplatonism primarily from Latin authors such as Augustine, Claudianus Mamertus, and Eriugena. He read Origen in the translations of Rufinus; and Eriugena's translation of Gregory of Nyssa is known to have been used by William in his later work, De natura corporis et animae. From the research of the present author into the question of Dionysian influence on William, it can be concluded that William's penultimate work, the Epistula ad fratres de Monte Dei, demonstrates contact with Dionysius's De hierarchia coelestia, probably through the commentaries of

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125 Tomasic, "Influence of Eriugena."
126 Although the text quoted by Tomasic seems to be from the PL, he gives his reference to the critical edition by Dénanet: Exp. sup. Cant. 2, str. 1, 153 SC 82, 324-6. The section of the Periphyseon in question is Periph. 1 PL 122.448D-9D.
127 Tomasic compared Aenigma fidei PL 180, 421B-34D and Periph. 1 PL 122, 456A-58D.
129 In an article published a year after his comparison of the texts of William and Eriugena, Tomasic performed a similar computer analysis of William's texts and Gregory of Nyssa's De opificio hominis. See "Influence of Gregory of Nyssa." In that article he notes that the possession of passages which are literally identical to those of a given source may not be used as the sole criteria to establish the influence of that source, ibid. 75-6. He admits that quantitative analysis must be evaluated for qualitative influence. Presumably Tomasic would therefore concur with my insistence that computer analysis can sometimes be a useful tool but should not be used as a substitute for the reading of texts.
130 William cites Origen as a source for his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. See the preface to his Exposition on the Epistle to the Romans, ed. John Anderson, trans. John Baptist Hasbrouck, Cistercian Fathers Series 27 (Kalamazoo, MI, 1980) 15. Rozanne Elder thinks that William may have used Rufinus' translation of the Peri Archon and his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans in the Aenigma fidei; see "William of St.
Eriugena or Hugh of St. Victor. The question of Dionysian influence on William's earlier works demands more treatment, but this would require space beyond what is permissable here.

We said that in the moment of unity with God, we love Him with affection (affectu) and he loves us as a cause (effectu). Here William emphasizes God's role in the experience by the term effectus; by this term he makes it clear that ecstasy is not achieved by man alone. In his later writings William will emphasize more strongly the passive nature of the ecstatic experience; as he writes in the Epistula ad frates de Monte Dei, at the height of mystical experience "we are not so much affected as perfected." Nevertheless, in his later writings William also uses the term affectus to describe the experience of being passively rapt to God. William employs the term affectus in many senses, the standard practice of the middle ages. Sometimes affectus is simply "a movement of the will." It is possible for an individual to direct his or her affectus wrongly by failing to rely on God, because God gives human beings freedom of choice, although he also gives them a certain basic grace, called by William creative grace, in virtue of their creation in His own image. If an individual chooses to actualize the potential given by God, then God bestows illuminating grace, which enables human affectus to cooperate with God. At a third stage the will becomes entirely passive, and the soul is rapt into God in ecstasy. William's terminology for this ecstatic experience is not entirely consistent. In the commentary on the Song of Songs we find that the term affectus is used; in the Epistula

Thierry and the Greek Fathers," 260.
131 Ep. frat. 257 SC 223, 348: "Unitas vero spiritus cum Deo, homini surnsum cor habenti, proficienitis in Deum voluntatis est perfectio, cum jam non solummodo vult quod Deus vult, sed sic est non tantum affectus, sed in affectu perfectus, ut non possit velle nisi quod Deus vult."
134 See Bell, Image and Likeness, 127-31. William contrasts affectus with the affections, which are unstable and varied at De nat et dig amor. 17 ed. Davy, 92 (PL 184, 389AB). Elsewhere William does not adhere strictly to his own distinction. On Bernard's use of the terms affectus and affectio see E. Gilson, Mystical Theology, 101, n. 131.
135 For the terms ex gratia creante and ex gratia illuminante, see his preface to the Exp. sup. Cant. 22 SC 82, 98.
136 Exp. sup. Cant. 2, str. 4, 170 SC 82, 352.
In both cases William is trying to distinguish an ecstatic experience from the more permanent state of being continually in grace (status or actio gratiarum). Finally, and most confusingly, William sometimes uses the term unitas spiritus to describe both the ecstatic experience and the state of persevering in charity.138

g. Incarnation as Divine Pedagogy

One final point of interest should be noted before we conclude our discussion of De contemplando Deo, and this is William's incorporation into his spirituality of a more "sensitive" or "passionate" type of devotion to the humanity of Christ, involving intense identification with the sufferings of Christ and a desire to imitate his life.139 The ways in which the spirit of eleventh- and twelfth-century spirituality reveals development in this area from those of earlier centuries requires extremely delicate handling of the sources, and Constable has written masterfully of the way that a certain warmth toward the symbol of the cross and Christ's crucifixion marks early eastern Christian and medieval Celtic devotion140 and the manner in which eastern writers, such as Origen, and western writers, such as Augustine, hold up the qualities of Christ's obedience, humility and compassion as models to be imitated;141 one could add that another affective aspect of early Christian piety was a focus in some writers, such as Basil, on the way in which meditation on and imitation of Christ's virtues prompts an interior disposition of love, a theme that appears also in a ninth-century canon from the Council of Mainz,142 and on the consolation (Basil says "assurance") such mystical devotion affords to man.143 Undoubtedly the early Church was not without a semblance of affective piety, but it was more or less animated always by an ultimate focus on

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138 Bell, Image and Likeness, 196.
139 Constable, "Humanity of Christ."
140 Ibid. 172-3, 176.
141 On Origen, see ibid. 170; on Augustine, see ibid. 174-5.
142 Ibid. 177.
the theology of salvation and a subordination of meditation upon Christ’s humanity to Christ’s divinity.

The transition to an affective model of piety began, according to Constable, about the time of the composition of the Rule of St. Benedict, with its interest in particular aspects of Christ’s earthly life, such as his simplicity and poverty. It flowered in the eleventh and twelfth centuries to the increasing exclusion of other models of piety. Twelfth-century “Cistercian” writers seem to represent an anomaly within this pattern of development. William of St. Thierry shows a strong influence from older models of piety, which emphasize the divinity of Christ and human divinization according to the image of Christ, and, although one senses that a devotion to the suffering of Christ is a central feature of the affectivity which animates his approach to divinization through mystical love, he also expresses some ambivalence about the propriety of his “sensitive” devotions in the Meditations.

Nevertheless, in De contemplando Deo one sees that he views the Incarnation as a demonstration to man of God’s love for us: “you loved us so that we might love you. And that was not because you needed to be loved by us, but because we could not be what you created us to be, except by loving you.” Moreover he focuses on Christ’s physical life as the pedagogical means by which God crosses the divide created between God and man through sin: “Everything he did and everything he said on earth, even to the taunts, the spitting, the

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144 This is Constable’s assessment of Augustine, “Humanity of Christ,” 174, 177.
145 Constable again judges Augustine to conform to the general pattern of the early middle ages, ibid. 174-5.
146 I have placed the term “Cistercian” into quotation marks to highlight the fact that a term that is useful for describing writers who shared a great deal among them in their spiritualities (Bernard, William of St. Thierry, Aelred of Rievaulx) can obscure the circumstances of William’s ecclesiastical career: he remained a Benedictine monk until almost the last decade of his life.
147 On Augustine’s emphasis on the divinity of God, see above, n. 145; on Origen, who sees the pattern of God’s descent of God in self-revelation, from divinity into his incarnational form, as reversed in the gradual development of man’s spiritual understanding, which begins with the Incarnation and progresses into the divinity, see Karen Jo Torjesen, Hermeneutical Procedure and Theological Method in Origen’s Exegesis, Patristische Texte und Studien 28 (New York, 1986) 84.
148 Bernard’s acute awareness of the awesomeness of God makes him hesitant to endorse the view that “imitation” of God was a proper orientation for the spiritual life; see Constable, “Humanity of Christ,” 189.
149 De cont. Deo 10 SC 61, 92: “Et sic plane sic est, amasti nos prior, ut amaremus te; non quod egeres amari a nobis, sed quia id ad quod nos fecisti esse non poteramus nisi amando te.”
blows, the cross and the grave, were nothing except yourself speaking to us in the Son, inciting us by your love, and raising up our love to you.”

3. Summary

In summary, De contemplando Deo introduces the reader to several key themes in William’s spirituality. William’s thought moves ever toward the time when the human soul will be entirely “affected” to God by the Holy Spirit. William is insistent that the Holy Spirit initiates the experience of ecstasy by converting the soul to himself (in se convertens). His language in the phrase “nos affectu, tu effectu” stresses the active role of God and the affective role of man in conversion. Thus God circles round through his created effects so that they might revert to him. That William’s understanding of reversion of created effects onto God depends on a Neoplatonic source, such as Eriugena, is revealed in his use of the threefold pattern: stare, procedere, and redire.

The affective strain of William’s spirituality was, as has been said, also found in a variety of patristic writers, such as Origen, Augustine, and Gregory the Great, who tended to view the power of desire as awakening the soul from its spiritual sloth to awareness of the life of the spirit. William’s emphasis on the mystical search for union as the apogee of the spiritual life connects him more with writers such as Origen than Augustine, yet his conceptualization of union through the intervention of the Holy Spirit is conceived in terms drawn primarily from Augustine, according to Bell.

In De contemplando Deo William demonstrates the strengthened interest of many twelfth-century writers in the role of sensitive meditation on the Incarnation, although for William sensitive devotion to Christ is more of a means of spiritual awakening, a prelude to a spiritual union that takes place through the gracious visitation of the Spirit, than the focal point of spirituality that it was for others. For Bernard these images of Christ’s life served a dual purpose, as models for moral imitation and as a demonstration of divine sympathy and

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150 Ibid. 92-4: “Et quicquid fecit, quicquid dixit in terra, usque ad obprobria, usque ad sputa, et alapas, usque ad crucem et sepulcrum, non fuit nisi loqui tuum nobis in filio: amore tuo provocans, et suscitans ad te amorem nostrum.”
compassion for man. William echoes the latter aspect of Bernard’s thought more than the former. The body plays a role in the initial stages of William’s development as a spiritual writer as the medium through which Christ displays his love for mankind and teaches man how to return to him. The body of Christ is therefore one means for contemplative ascent. For William, one penetrates through the temple in which the divinity deigned to dwell to the Wisdom within, to the heart which beats with a divine pulse. While the notion that visible realities are sacraments of invisible ones of course had an earlier precedent in Origen and others, William’s reverent description of the torn body of Christ reveals the uniquely twelfth-century cast of his thought.

William’s own body, by contrast, was a source of trial to him. It is connection to the worldly cares that the body entails, more than body itself, that William wants to transcend at the beginning of De contemplando Deo in order to contemplate the Lord on his mountain. Symbolized as an ass, the body is connected with menial labor. William’s body is a millstone around his neck, because it will inevitably drag him back to the world of monastic administration, as the philosopher must descend back into the Cave.

The fragmentary picture of William’s views of body presented in De contemplando Deo contrasts with the wealth of information on the body to be found in another early work, De natura et dignitate amoris. The latter work develops the themes already seen as well as introducing a variety of new topics, such as the role of the body in the Fall and sin, and the capacity of the human body to reveal individual renovation.

B. De natura et dignitate amoris

1. Dating

De natura et dignitate amoris152 is the second item in the list of William’s works contained at the beginning of his preface to the Epistula ad fratres de Monte Dei. The treatise

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152 Two modern editions of the work exist in addition to the edition by Migne, PL 184: 379-408: M.M. Davy, Guillaume de Saint-Thierry: Deux traités de l'amour de Dieu: De la contemplation de Dieu, De la nature et de la dignité de l'amour; and Robert Thomas, Nature et dignité de l'amour Pain de Citeaux 23 (Chambarand, 1965). On the shortcomings of these editions, see Bell, introduction to Nature and Dignity of Love, 28-9 and
likely originated as a series of chapter homilies and was later revised into a literary treatise.\textsuperscript{153} Therefore it probably dates from the period after 1121. Bell suggests that in a number of areas the teachings of \textit{De natura et dignitate amoris} express ideas foreign to his mature thought as well as a certain admission of spiritual inexperience that characterize the work as early.\textsuperscript{154} Bell dates the treatise to sometime in the early 1120's.\textsuperscript{155} He has noted parallels between this work and passages of Bernard of Clairvaux's works, but the parallels could show either the dependence of William on Bernard or vice versa.\textsuperscript{156} Therefore these parallels offer nothing conclusive as to the date of the treatise.

Scholars are divided over whether \textit{De natura et dignitate amoris} was written prior to or after \textit{De contemplando Deo}. Bell reviews the debate in his introduction to Thomas Davis' English translation of \textit{De natura et dignitate amoris}. He notes Rozanne Elder's view that \textit{De contemplando Deo} is later because it describes a contemplative ascent which hesitates and wavers, whereas \textit{De natura et dignitate amoris} offers an uninterrupted ascent.\textsuperscript{157} As Elder says, the ascent is presented in \textit{De natura et dignitate amoris} as rational and tidy, in contrast to William's progress in \textit{De contemplando Deo}, which moves forward and falls back repeatedly. However, the nature of the two treatises might be enough to explain this difference. William might naturally have divided his material more neatly into discrete parts for a series of chapter homilies, while the more tortuous path of \textit{De contemplando Deo} might have been more easily

\textsuperscript{153} For evidence from the manuscript tradition that suggests that the work was edited by its author, see Ceglar, \textit{Chronology}, 318-20.

\textsuperscript{154} Bell, introduction to \textit{Nature and Dignity of Love}, trans. Davis, 11-4. The most notable way in which this work differs from all of William's later work is the emphasis on wisdom as the final goal of the spiritual life; later William never elevates wisdom over charity.

\textsuperscript{155} Ibid. 17.

\textsuperscript{156} Ibid. 25-7. William speaks of five spiritual senses which are varieties of love: physical love, social love, natural love, spiritual love, and the love of God. Cf. \textit{De nat. et dig. amor}. 19-23 ed. Davy, 96-8 (PL 184, 391A-393A). Bernard outlines a very similar scheme in his tenth sermon \textit{De diversis}, whose date is undetermined. On the origins of the notion of the spiritual senses, see below, n. 299. At \textit{De nat. et dig. amor}. 15 ed. Davy, 88 (PL 184: 388A) William describes created charity (charity given by God) as a quality whereas the charity that is God can be called his substance.

traversed by a reader rather than an auditor. It should be noted that the moment of union is described in both works as a sudden leap, a bound of the will that propels itself forward into love's embrace\textsuperscript{158} and over all obstacles.\textsuperscript{159} Bell judges that the simpler structure of \textit{De natura et dignitate amoris} may be compatible with later publication.\textsuperscript{160}

Another problem in dating the two treatises is that each contains elements popular in William's later writings that the other does not possess. \textit{De natura et dignitate amoris} contains allusions to the Song of Songs that are quite absent from \textit{De contemplando Deo}; and this might be cited as evidence of the posteriority of the former. However, on the side of the posteriority of \textit{De contemplando Deo}, Déchanet has argued that whereas William's doctrine that the human spirit is united to God through the Holy Spirit is quite evident in \textit{De contemplando Deo}, he seems to hesitate over the doctrine in \textit{De natura et dignitate amoris},\textsuperscript{161} qualifying his teaching that human love essentially is the Holy Spirit with the curious phrase, \textit{per emphasis}. As vital as the teaching of the Holy Spirit's role in \textit{unitas spiritus}--our union with God through the Holy Spirit--is in William's later theology,\textsuperscript{162} its omission would seem to be evidence of the theological immaturity of \textit{De natura et dignitate amoris}. Bell notes that the force and meaning of the phrase \textit{per emphasis} is obscure and concludes that we cannot be certain that it indicates the hesitation that Déchanet proposes. It is possible that \textit{per emphasis} translates the Greek \textit{kat' emphasin}. \textit{Emphasis} was used by Neoplatonists to render the idea of "imprint" or "reflection" and in William's passage \textit{per emphasis} could convey the concept of participation.

\textsuperscript{158} \textit{De cont. Deo} 5 SC 61, 72.
\textsuperscript{159} \textit{De nat. et dig. amor.} 13 ed. Davy, 86 (PL 184, 386D).
\textsuperscript{160} Bell, introduction to \textit{Nature and Dignity of Love}, trans. Davis, 19.
\textsuperscript{161} Déchanet's argument hinges on the following passage from \textit{De nat. et dig. amor.} 15 ed. Davy, 88 (PL 184, 387D-388A). William says "Illumined love is charity...Yet charity is God...Whatever can be said of God can be said of charity, although, when considered according to the natures of Gift and Giver, in the latter the name [of charity] is a substance, in the former a quality. But yet, per emphasis, the gift of charity is called God, in that the virtue of charity, more than any other virtue, adheres to God and is made like him." Déchanet argues that the little phrase, \textit{per emphasis}, which he translates as '\textit{par emphase}', indicates that what follows may be something of an overstatement, and on this he has been followed by later translators such as M.-M. Davy and Robert Thomas. Déchanet has seen in the phrase a hesitation over the expression of the doctrine that human love originates in the Holy Spirit. In William's later works he expresses the relationship between charity and the Holy Spirit as \textit{par nature}. In \textit{De contemplando Deo}, William says, "Ipse enim est amor noster, quo ad te pertingimus; quo te amplectimus (For He Himself is our love, by which we reach out to You and embrace You)," \textit{De cont. Deo} 11 SC 61, 104. Bell reviews the debate in \textit{Image and Likeness}, 138-40.
Victorinlus transliterates the term *emphasis*, according to Pierre Hadot.\textsuperscript{163} One could concede Déchanet's construal of the passage, and still hold to the posteriority of *De natura et dignitate amoris*, according to Bell, by postulating that materials which date from an earlier period were inserted into the treatise. The present author is inclined to view the *per emphasis* passage as construed by Bell and to judge *De natura et dignitate amoris* as the later treatise due to its ample citations of the Song of Songs. A date ca. 1123-24, contemporary with the *Brevis commentatio* and the final revisions of *De sacramento altaris*, seems persuasive.

2. Prologue

As the title of the work suggests, the treatise is about the nature and dignity of love.

William argues that love has been implanted in men by their Creator and teaches itself to them. It is the power by which the soul returns to its natural resting place in God. Love is "a power of the soul, leading her by a kind of natural weight to her place or end."\textsuperscript{164} William invokes the Aristotelian idea that all things naturally seek their proper place.\textsuperscript{165} The unfortunate soul can sometimes be led astray by the allurements of the flesh, and the natural motion of the soul is perverted into a bestial instinct. William underlines the ironic instability of the soul in

\textsuperscript{162} See *Image and Likeness*, 167-211.


\textsuperscript{165} William calls this the teaching of a certain "philosopher." He may be referring to Aristotle, as at *Physics* 4.1 208b11, ed. and trans. W.D. Ross (Oxford, 1936) 370. Davis refers the reader to this passage from the *Physics* and also to Augustine, *De civ. Dei* 11.28 CCSL 48, 348 in his translation of *De natura et dignitate amoris*. Augustine indeed paraphrases the view of Aristotle, but he does not attribute the idea to any particular source. William tends to use the term philosopher somewhat pejoratively. A survey of the entries under 'philosophus' in the indexes to the editions of *De contemplando Deo* and *De natura et dignitate amoris*, and *Speculum fidei* and *Aenigma fidei* by Davy and a search of the CLCLT holdings yields 11 entries. Six of them refer to heathen philosophers or the philosophers of this world. Like Augustine (*De civ. Dei* 8.6-8.11 CCSL 47. 222-8), William conceives that the ancient philosophers may have grasped the essence of the virtuous life, but he thinks they erred in relying too much upon themselves and upon reason. Lacking the wisdom of revelation, they did not sufficiently appreciate the importance of charity; see *Expos. sup. Rom.* 1.18-19 CCCM 86, 19-21. It seems unlikely that he would describe Augustine as a philosopher. The possibility that William read Aristotle's *Physics* in translation, however, is somewhat remote. The date of the earliest Latin translation of the *Physics*, produced by James of Venice in the second quarter of the twelfth-century, coincides with or post-dates the probable date of the completion of *De natura et dignitate amoris*. On James' translation, see *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, eds. Norman Kretzmann, Anthony Kenny and Jan Pinborg (New York, 1982) 75. William's knowledge of the notion of gravity probably came from some other classical or medieval intermediary. The idea was undoubtedly very common; cf. Theophrastus, *Fragmentum de sensibus* 83 in H. Diels, *Doxographi Graeci* (Berlin/Leipzig, 1879) 524. Cf.-Calcidius' *Timaeus a Calcidio translatus commentarioque instructus*, ed. J.H. Waszink, *Plato Latinus* 4 (London/Leiden, 1962) 339, 343, commenting...
comparison to the regular motions that govern the disposition of the physical body. Whereas the soul ought always to tend upwards to God, it frequently falls short of the mark. The body, which tends downwards because of its weight, unerringly follows the laws of the order to which it belongs. Each particle of the dead body of man unerringly seeks its proper place according to its elemental composition, as earth, fire, water or air. The downward motion of the body is a metaphor for bodily decay, after which the particles will be gathered up in good time to reconstitute the body.

a. Bodily Disorder as a Figure for Spiritual Disorder

Since man's spirit can forget how to love properly it needs a teacher to instruct it once again in the "art of arts," the true art of love, a teacher who is a man, i.e. Christ. This may show the influence of Anselm of Canterbury, who wrote that it was necessary that God become man, 1) so that man might reach his proper end as image of God; and 2) according to the order of justice, so that a man would restore the honor due to God. Anselm stressed that the redeemer had to be a man so that man, remade in God's image might rightly deserve to live on equal terms with God.

William underlines the dual capacity of the soul to ascend or descend. To this point William has been calling the seat of love by the names soul and spirit, but now, in a further explication of the "double-mindedness" of the soul, he switches to the Scriptural term "heart"

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In Tim. 52e-53a.
166 Nat. et dig. amor. 1 ed. Davy, 70 (PL 184, 380C): "Est quippe amor vis anime naturali quodam pondere ferens eam in locum vei finem suum."
167 Ibid. 53 ed. Davy, 136 (PL 184, 407A): "Et omnibus bene et secundum ordinem precedentibus, sicut in principio diximus, pondus suum unumquodque defert in locum suum; corpus in terram, de qua assumptum est, tempore suo resuscitandum et glorificandum."
170 Cur deus homo 2.1, 2.4 in S. Anselmi Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi, Opera omnia, ed. F.S. Schmitt, 5 vols. (Rome, 1940) 2: 97, 99. For more on Anselm in William's thought, see below, n. 355; chap. 2, n. 29; and chap. 3, n. 233.
for soul.\textsuperscript{172} Much has been written in recent times underlining the ways in which the patristic understanding of the “heart” as the center of man greatly expanded the notion of what was central to human nature beyond the mind of man.\textsuperscript{173} Perhaps the most provocative innovator in this area was Origen, for whom the “heart” connotes a “divine sense,” a concept that evokes the interior encounter with God.\textsuperscript{174}

b. Calcidius and the Degeneration of Reason into Passion

Thereupon follows an excursus on the heart,\textsuperscript{175} naturally placed in the middle of the body so that it may govern the fortress (\textit{arcem})\textsuperscript{176} of the higher senses and the outer territory of

\textsuperscript{171} Cur Deus homo 1.13, 1.19, 2.6, ed. Schmitt, 2: 71, 84-6, 101.

\textsuperscript{172} Cf. Lk. 10:27: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind;” cf. Mk.12:30. Many writers used the terms heart, soul, mind and spirit interchangeably in the middle ages, according to P. Von Moos, Consolatio: Studien zur mittelalterlichen Trostliteratur über den Tod und zum christlischer Trauer, 4 vols. (Munich, 1971-72) 2: 199.


\textsuperscript{174} J. Wilson Trigg, \textit{Origen, the Bible and Philosophy in the Third-Century Church} (Atlanta, 1983) 104.

\textsuperscript{175} The heart possessed a special governing role in the Stoic physiological tradition because it was the seat of the \textit{φρονήματα}, the "principle part of the soul," according to A.A. Long, "Soul and Body in Stoicism," \textit{Phronesis} 27 (1982) 34-57. The Epicureans taught that the animus is situated \textit{media regione in pectoris}, cf. Long, ""Soul and Body," 54, n. 5. Aristotle frequently speaks of the heart as the primary location of the soul, cf. Edwin Hartman, \textit{Substance, Body, and Soul} (Princeton, 1977) 138ff. William could have derived his notion of the primary role of the heart from a variety of sources. Tertullian speaks of the governing role of the heart, at \textit{De anima} 15.5 ed. J.H. Waszink, in \textit{Tertulliani opera}, pt. 2, \textit{Opera Montanistica}, CCSL 2 (Tournai, 1954) 802. In his anthropological treatise, \textit{De natura corporis et animae}, William speaks of all the corporeal powers coming forth from the heart; cf. De nat, corp. 1.28 in \textit{De la nature du corps et de l’âme}, ed. M. Lemoine (Paris, 1988) 101. This passage appears to depend on a passage in Gregory of Nyssa’s \textit{De opificio hominis} in which he emphasizes that the heart is the most important organ in the body; \textit{De hom. opific.} 30 ed. Cappuyns, 259 (my references to William’s use of Gregory will be given to the edition of Cappuyns for the reasons cited below, n. 176). The special influence of the heart is not a feature of Galenic medicine. Galen spoke of two primary centers in the body: the heart and the brain, cf. Danielle Jaccart and Claude Thomasset, \textit{Sexuality and Medicine in the Middle Ages}, trans. Matthew Adamson (Cambridge, 1988) 49-50. Augustine alludes to the brain as the center of sensation and the heart as the source of vital motion in \textit{Epist}. 137 CCSL 44, 106. At \textit{De opific. homin.} 12 ed. Cappuyns, 221-4, it becomes apparent that Gregory also had contact with the Galenic tradition. While describing at some length the physiological roles of all three organs, he denies that the ruling principle is in any of them, \textit{De opific. homin.} 12, 30 ed. Cappuyns, 221-4, 256-62; the soul, he says, has equal contact with the whole of the body, ibid. 12 ed. Cappuyns, 223. For more information on the philosophical debate over the ruling principle, see Tertullian, \textit{De anima} 15.5-6 CCSL 2, 802. On Gregory’s knowledge of Galen, see \textit{La création de l’homme}, trans. J. Laplace and J. Daniélou SC 6 (Paris, 1943), 137, n. 1, and 228ff. nn. 1ff. For Christian writers the heart had increasingly come to prominence as a metaphor because of an amalgam of influences, including its associations with Scriptural metaphor and Stoic thought, so that the task of locating the source for his metaphor is probably impossible. Here it is more important to discern that the metaphor of the heart had become transformed in Christian writers, such as Origen, Jerome, and Augustine, as an expression of the point of spiritual and intellectual contact with the divine. Cf. Olsen, “Twelfth-Century Humanism,” 44-8. Cf. Jerome, \textit{Epist}. 64.1 ed. I. Hilberg, CSEL 54.1.1 (Vienna, 1910) 587.

\textsuperscript{176} Ibid.: "In angusta quippe corporis parte ab auctore naturaliter cor locatum ubi quasi medium, superiorum
the lower body. When it melts at the fire of fleshly concupiscence, the heart occasionally falls from its middle position into the lower viscera ("that is, it relishes only those things which are visceral"), and even further into the lowest parts (i.e., sexual organs), thereby

sensuum arcem, et corporis inferioris, sicut populi humilioris, quasi quamdam regeret et dispensaret rempublicam, totamque circumquaque cogitatum et actionum regionem." The use of the Stoic term *arc* is interesting. It was a term found in authors such as Marcus Aurelius (but not Sextus the Pythagorean), and William could have obtained it from several classical and patristic sources. In the present case we are interested specifically in the *arc* as the home of the senses, and the further implication that it rules the body as a governor rules a commonwealth. The usage of the term *arc*, taken in connection with the expression of the psychic dissolution of man as analogous to the decreasing dignity of the bodily organs, means that the odds weigh heavily on Calcidius as William's source. See below, n. 181. Calcidius describes the head as a citadel, in his commentary on the *Timaeus*, *In Tim* 213, 231 ed. Waszink, 228, 245. Gregory of Nyssa notes that those who think that the brain is the ruling principle say that it has been built by nature as a citadel (arcem) of the whole body, *De opific. homin*. 12 ed. Cappuyns, 222. Eriugena translates αυρώπολις as *arc*.* The senses are compared to messengers who convey their information to the king, i.e., the brain, who dwells in the citadel. Given that William's later treatise, *De natura corporis et animae* borrows much of its material from *De hominis opificio* in the translation of John Scotus Eriugena and that the same work was possibly used in *De nat. et dig. amor.*, it is worthwhile to raise the question of possible Nyssan influence here. On William's use of Eriugena's version of *De hominis opificio* see Déchanet, *Aux sources de la spiritualité de Guillaume de Saint-Thierry* (Bruges, 1940) 25-79; idem, *Oeuvres choisies*, 59-74; and idem., *Guillaume de Saint-Thierry: aux sources d'une pensée* (Paris, 1978) 63-97. Eriugena's translation exists today in only two manuscripts. MS Bamberg B IV 13, ff. 88r-114r is a ninth-century manuscript probably written at Reims and taken to Bamberg during the reign of Otto III; see M. Cappuyns, "Le 'De imagine' de Grégoire de Nyssa traduit par Jean Scot Eriégène," *RTAM* 32 (1965) 205-62, esp. 205-6. The other manuscript is an eleventh-century manuscript from Cluny, now Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, nouvelles acquisitions latines, MS 2664; see E. Jeanneau, "Pseudo-Dionysius, Gregory of Nyssa, and Maximus the Confessor in the Works of John Scotus Eriugena," in *Carolingian Essays*, ed. Uta-Renate Blumenthal, Andrew W. Mellon Lectures in Early Christian Studies (Washington, DC, 1983) 137-49; republished in *Études érigéniennes*, ed. Édouard Jeanneau (Paris, 1987) 175-87, esp. 181. Déchanet discusses possible ways in which William could have obtained a copy of this treatise in *Man and his Work*, 39, n. 103. He notes there that Clairvaux possessed the version of Denis the Little; Denis translates αυρώπολις similarly at *Libri de creatione hominis interpretatio* 12 PL 67, 362A. In contexts in which I discuss William's possible influence by Gregory of Nyssa, I will cite the translation by Eriugena in the edition of M. Cappuyns. Cecgar makes a good argument that Lactantius is the source of another use of the term *arc* at *De nat. et dig. amor.* 23 ed. Davy, 98; a third use of the term at ibid. 5 ed. Davy, 76 ("in ejus quasi auadam arce virum memorialem collocavit") could be compared with Lactantius, *De opificio Dei* 8, PL 7: 34AB: "Eius prope divina mens, qui non tantum animantium quae sunt in terra, sed etiam sui corporis sortita dominatum, in summo capite collocata, tamquam in arce sublimis speculatur omnia et contuetur." Cicero describes the head as a citadel, but he does not borrow Plato's tripartite schema; cf. *De nat. deorum* 2.140, ed. Arthur S. Pease, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA, 1958) 2: 606. Ambrose and Tertullian make reference to the head as a citadel, but not in the context of discussing the process of sensation. Cf. Ambrose *Exaeremon* 6.9 ed. C. Schenkl CSEL 32.1, 246: "Tamquam arcem inter reliqua urbis moenia. In arce hac regalem quamdam habitatire sapientiam secundum propheticum dictum: Quia ocult sapientis in capitae ejus (Eccl. 2: 14);" cf. Tertullian, *De virginitibus uelandis* 7 ed. E. Dekkers, in *Tertulliani Opera*, pt. 2, *Opera Montanistica* CCSL 2 (Turnhout, 1954) 1217. Cf. Augustine, *De civ. Dei* 14.19 CCSL 48, 441.

177 Borrowing an idea from Ps.22:14, he says that the disordered heart of the "fleshy man" becomes like wax melting away within the bowels. *De nat. et dig. amor.* 3 ed. Davy, 74 (PL 184, 381C). Gregory of Nyssa writes that the heart is moved in correspondence with the impulses of passion, *De opific. homin.* 12 ed. Cappuyns, 222, trans. Schaff and Wace, 397.

178 The association of the passions with sexual generation and sexual desire was a commonplace; cf. "Body and Society: The Early Middle Ages," epilogue to Brown, *Body and Society*, 428-47.
perverting the natural affectus of love into an animal appetite of the flesh. It thereby "confuses everything, causes everything to degenerate, adulterates everything and perverts the natural affectus of love;" it becomes a home for lusts and vice. Patristic writers commonly held that when the soul has an inordinate affection for material bodies, it will be made like to matter, formless and dissolute. However, the expression of this dissolution in terms of a descending hierarchy of psychic activities analogous to the decreasing dignity of the bodily organs probably comes from Calcidius. After this excursus William reverts to speaking in terms of the soul, saying that those who so pollute themselves soil "the place of their soul (anime sue locum)." They make the place of their soul into the seat of Satan. It is important to note that the downward trajectory of disordered love (the passions) terminates with love of things perceived through the body, but William does not blame the body or materiality for the disorder, for it is the "heart" (i.e. soul) which falls and perverts the natural affectus of love.

c. Patristic Views of the Passions

The disorder of the body becomes a figure for the disorder of the soul. All patristic writers, east and west, voice the notion that the passion for material things expresses a psychic disorder of some form. They differ, however, in their analysis of the problem posed by the

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179 De nat. et. dig. amor. 3 ed. Davy, 74 (PL 184, 381D): "omnia confudens, omnia degenerans, omnia adulterans, amoris naturalem affectum pervertens in brutum quemdam carnis appetitum."

180 See Augustine, Conf. 4.10.15 CCSL 27, 48. The idea that the flesh has a special connection with mutability may be found in, among others, Gregory the Great, who teaches that because the creature was created from nothingness, it tends toward nothingness. See Mor. 5.34.63 CCSL 143, 262. For Gregory the Great the human body is made of dust or clay, the lowest matter, see Mor. 6.15.18 CCSL 143, 296; ibid. 29.10.21 CCSL 143B, 1448; ibid. 14.15.17. CCSL 143A, 707-8; ibid. 9.50.76 CCSL 143, 510. Gregory of Nyssa also teaches that since created nature had its source in the change of creation, it has a kindred connection with mutation, De opific. homin. 17 ed. Cappuyns, 234-5, trans. Schaff and Wace, 405-6.

181 Calcidius also compares the three-fold division of the body (caput, pectus, cetera pube tenus et infra) to the three orders of society (that which commands, that which carries out, and that which is ruled and governed); cf. In Tim. 232 ed. Waszink, 246. On the medieval use of Plato's three-fold division of society, see Paul E. Dutton, "Illustrum civilitatis et populi exemplum: Plato's Timaeus and the Transmission from Calcidius to the End of the Twelfth Century of a Tripartite Scheme of Society," Mediaeval Studies 45 (1983) 79-119.

182 Ibid.

183 Thomas Davis notes that William talks about the devil only infrequently, see pp. 111-2, n. 1, of his translation of Nature and Dignity of Love. Davis cites three other instances. On Gregory the Great's use of the theme of the devil's presence in the human soul and body see Straw, Perfection in Imperfection, 124.

184 Augustine repudiates the view that the flesh is the cause of moral failing, as in De civ. Dei 14.3, 14.5
passions and their solutions. For Evagrius the soul is ostensibly at fault; as he says in the *Praktikos*, it is distracted by passionate thoughts (in the mind, or rational part of the soul) and sense experiences of the body (in the lower part of the soul). The spiritual man must deny physical desires and cultivate virtue through ascesis: by this means the mind can be taught not to love its passionate thoughts. Evagrius denies that the (admittedly weak) body is to blame for human lustfulness. Nevertheless at other times he implies that the removal of the body is a sufficient solution to the problem of vice: he says that virtue separates the soul from the body much as God separates the soul from the body at death..."for our Fathers called by the name, "anachoressis," the training for death and the flight from the body." Evagrius says positively that the body is a gift to the soul in the present life, because through it is derived a basic type of knowledge, the knowledge of the world's Creator that leads the mind back to God. However, this basic type of knowledge, and thus the necessity for possessing body, will be superseded when the soul is released from the body at death for eternal contemplation of God. Thus, as Caroline Bynum notes, Evagrius stood outside the mainstream of the tradition in rejecting bodily resurrection outright. Even during the present life the healthy soul ultimately ceases to perceive the lower soul and the senses (which stir up the passions) in its highest contemplative knowledge, that knowledge which succeeds the type of

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CCSL 48, 416-8, 419-20.
186 Ibid. 36, SC 171, 582. The lower part of the soul may refer to the concupiscent and irascible parts of the soul; cf. ibid. 86, SC 171, 676.
187 Ibid. 78, SC 171, 666.
188 Ibid. 49, SC 171, 610-2.
189 Ibid. 53, SC 171, 620.
190 Ibid. 52, SC 171, 618: "Τὴν γὰρ ἀναχώρησιν μελέτην θανάτου καὶ φυγήν τοῦ σώματος οἱ Πατέρες τημᾶν ὁνομάζουσιν."
191 Ibid. 53, SC 171, 620.
192 Ibid. 87, SC 171, 678-80 and n. 87.
194 Prak. 38, SC 171, 586.
195 Ibid. 87 SC 171, 678.
knowledge perceived through the world of bodies, whose result is formless, wordless contemplation of God.  

Whereas it is rather unlikely that William knew Evagrius directly, he probably had contact with his spiritual successor, John Cassian, whose Conferences were prescribed evening reading in the Rule of St. Benedict for the common hour before Compline. Since Cassian’s anthropology has been so sparsely treated, I will offer a brief summary of his important teachings before going on to finish discussing varieties of attitudes toward the problem of the passions. Cassian may have inherited the dualistic tendencies of his master, but, according to Owen Chadwick, Cassian’s Evagrianism inevitably was transformed in a western context. He notes that Cassian sought not the mortification of the body but of the flesh, in the sense of the evil desires of the spirit. In the course of discussing the passage "the flesh lusteth against the spirit: and the spirit against the flesh," Cassian denies that the physical body is an appropriate interpretation of the word flesh in this pejorative context. In the same place he reviews the various meanings that Scripture gives to the word flesh: the whole man, body and soul; sinful men; sins themselves; consanguinity and relationship. Chadwick remarks that in the tradition of Origen, Cassian presents man’s spirit as poised between material and spiritual realities, oscillating back and forth between them. When the spirit moves too far toward one or the other, objects from the other realm act as a counterbalance: so that, not only can the spirit preserve the soul against its bodily desires, but bodily weakness can prevent the soul from passing over into pride: the fervor of the spirit and carnal struggle between themselves, making "a sort of equitable balance in the scales of our

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199 Conf. 4.10-4.11 SC 42, 174–5. At 4.11 SC 42, 175, he says: "Quamobrem in hoc loco carmen non hominem, id est hominis substantiam, sed voluntatem carnis et desideria pestima debemus accipere, sicut ne spiritum quidem aliquam rem substantialem, sed animae desideria bona et spiritualia designare."
200 Gal. 5: 17.
201 Conf. 4.10 SC 42, 174.
202 Ibid.
body, which marks out the limits of flesh and spirit most accurately."203 The body is therefore the realm in which one experiences the struggle of holding to a middle course. One suspects that Cassian gradually developed an increasingly strong sense of a continuum between body and soul. He frequently mentions the need of the soul to escape a kind of carnal pollution.204 In ecstasy the soul may be able to transcend the weakness he associates with the fragile fallen body that currently imprisons the soul.205 Speaking more philosophically, in 420 Cassian wrote that even the human soul is not truly incorporeal but is a body much more subtle than the human body.206

Gregory the Great, a western writer influenced by the eastern tradition, tended to see sin, which was for him less a problem of the will than of faulty reason,207 as arising from a battle between body and soul.208 According to Gregory, the body is linked with the excessive love of pleasure: "While the flesh is caught up in pleasure, the spirit is also weakened and bent from its righteousness."209 Man's involvement with pleasure leads him to immerse his mind in the variety of worldly things instead of resting in God.210 Gregory writes about sin from an

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203 Conf. 4.12-6 SC 42, 176-81, esp. 177: "quandam aequitatis libram in statera nostri corporis conlocat, quae spiritus carnisque confinia iusto discernit examine." The notion of balance in the ethical realm is common in the classical world, in the Aristotelian, Stoic, and Neoplatonic schools of thought among others; see Straw, Perfection in Imperfection, 15-16. Cassian gives the body a role in the practice of discreto, or discernment, the power of recognizing an ideal and moderating one's conduct to obtain it. On discreto see François Dingjan, "Discretio": les origines patristique et monastique de la doctrine sur la prudence chez saint Thomas d'Aquin (Assen, Holland, 1967) 86-102.

204 Conf. 3.7 SC 42, 147. Cf. "Hic, inquam, finis totius perfectionis est, ut eo usque extenuata mens ab omni siti carnali ad spiritualia cotidie sublimetur, donec omnis eius conversatio, omnis volutatio cordis una et iugi efficiatur oratio (This, I say, is the end of all perfection, that the mind be so removed from all carnal sluggishness that it is elevated daily to the things of the spirit until its whole life and all the ponderings of the heart become one unending prayer)," ibid. 10.7, SC 54, 82.

205 Conf. 3.7 SC 42, 147.

206 Conf. 7.13 SC 42, 257-8. Cf. ibid. 1.17 SC 42, 98 "extenuata mens non terrena sapiat." Cassian may be suggesting here that the mind becomes "thinned out" when it turns its attention away from material things. Porphyry and Synesius had taught that the pneuma, or the fine body that the soul takes on as it descends from the celestial sphere, is ethereal when the soul is healthy and thick and coarse when it is in a sick condition. See Gerard Watson, "Soul and Bodies in Origen's Peri Archon," Irish Theological Quarterly 55 (1989) 173-92, esp. 189-90.

207 Straw, Perfection in Imperfection, 136.

208 Gregory the Great, Mor. 26.17.28 CCSL 143B, 1286

209 Ibid. 4.27.49 CCSL 143, 193: "Dum caro in delectationem rapitur, etiam a sua rectitudine spiritus infirmatus inclinatur."

210 Mor. 26.44.79 CCSL 143B, 1326, "Hinc est quod hoc illucque spargitur; et ab unaquaque re, ut diximus, fastidio impellente remouetur. Delectationis videlicet auida, quae rit quo pauset, unum uero quem sufficienter
ascetic's point of view; consequently, if the conflict between flesh and spirit was for him often
"reduced to a blunt conflict between body and soul, this is much the common sense of ascetical
experience...For those who have undertaken the solitary struggle for perfection, the body is the
soul's mortal enemy."211 The body provides the gateway for many temptations to reach the
soul through the five senses.212 Origen had written that in prayer man must shut all the doors
of the faculties of the senses, and Gregory speaks similarly of the soul of the righteous man as
like a "dove at the windows" (Is. 60:8) which refuses to be distracted by what is seen outside
but staunchly remains inside.213 David's glance at Bathsheba shows how dangerous it can be
to look incautiously upon the world.214 Since, for Gregory, sin is rooted in the body, his
"psychology of sin emphasizes the interconnection of body and soul: both will be tormented in
hell because both are involved in and tainted by sin."215

For Gregory the Great, the body must be voluntarily disciplined in order to make
restitution for the havoc it caused by its role in the transgression of the first parents. In his
exegesis of the fall, Eve, who stands for the flesh, took pleasure in the devil's harmful
suggestion, and seduced Adam, or reason, to consent to sin.216 In the *Moralia in lob,*
Gregory explains that God ordained that the source of man's punishment for sin be located in
the source of that sin, i.e. the body.217 His temporal sufferings purge man of his sin,218 as a

211 Straw, *Perfection in Imperfection,* 133-4. Gregory was not unware that sin can also arise from the mind.
Mor. 21.9.14 CCSL 143A, 1075. "Occasionally," says Straw, "Gregory sounds like Augustine, viewing
pleasure and sin as capacities of the soul and recognizing the goodness of the body," *Perfection in Imperfection,*
131.

212 *Hom. in Ev.* 2.36.4 PL 76, 1268.


214 Ibid. 21.9.14 CCSL 143A, 1075.

102. For the *Dialogues,* see the SourcesChrétiannes version, *Dialogues,* ed. Adalbert de Vogüé, trans. Paul


217 Mor. 24.4.7 CCSL 143, 459; Mor. 8.6.8. CCSL 143, 386.

doctor sometimes must wound to heal.219 (Similarly, God brings the mercy of human liberation through Christ’s assumption of body out of the evil of the suffering incurred by original sin.) God thus teaches by contrasts; this idea of a universal economy of contrasting pairs of opposites has a special place in Stoic philosophy, but of course is a commonplace.220 Through self-denial the rational soul must also learn to abandon the pleasures experienced in the passionate part of the soul through the body.

d. William and the Body’s Role in Passion

These traditions of denigrating the body for its role in vice are muted in William’s thought. William identifies the original Transgression with the mind’s distraction away from God toward the varieties of lower creatures.221 We see here echoes of Plotinus,222 Origen, Augustine’s Confessions,223 Gregory the Great,224 Eriugena,225 and others who emphasize the mind’s slide away from unity into multiplicity. Unlike Origen, he gives no explanation of the manner in which the mind became distracted from its proper sphere. In contrast to Gregory the Great, he does not advert to the prior role played by pleasure; in fact he does not give pleasure even a supporting role in sin. The possession of a body may be a precondition for sin, in that without it the soul would not have been distracted by external things, but one cannot be certain from William’s brief statement exactly how the soul became distracted from its proper sphere.

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219 Ibid. 26.47.87 CCSL 143B, 1330. Augustine also refers to God as a physician who allows ailments to restore the soul’s health. See De div. quaeest. 82.3 CCSL 44A, 245-7.
221 William of St. Thierry, De nat. et dig. amor. 5 ed. Davy, 76: "ne multiplici creaturum varietate illecta, abstracta, distraeta, creatua illa trinitas inferior a summe et creatricis Trinitatis unitate recederet."
224 See Mor. 26.44.79 CCSL 143B 1325-6: "illucque spargitum...Vnde nunc per multa dicitur, ut quia qualitate rerum non potest, saltum varietate satietur." Cf. ibid. 34.21.40 CCSL 143B, 1761-2; ibid. 29.8.18 CCSL 143B, 1446; ibid. 8.10.19 CCSL 143, 295.
225 Eriugena, Periph. 4 ed. Jeanneau, 218-20 (PL 835C-836A): "Sopor itaque ille erat animi intentionis, quo semper et inflexibiliter creatorem suum contemplari debuerat, ad defectiones rerum materialium reflexio...Quem soporem (hoc est ab aeternis ad temporalia, a deo ad creaturam mentis inclinationem) sequitur dormitus."
Elsewhere William suggests that men fell from an envious desire to be "too like" to God, i.e. equal to him in power, echoing an idea of Gregory the Great.\(^{226}\) We may take William's recourse to these traditional opinions as an occasion to summarize the role of the body in William's anthropology thus far. William's focus to this point has been primarily on the will, and so far he has given little thought to the body. The body just becomes visible when he contrasts the motion of the individual particles of the body with those of the soul: subject to a predictable, natural law, they always move downwards, not only because of their weight or mass, but also because the body is destined for fragmentation.\(^{227}\) He uses the image of bodily disorder to express the disorder of the soul; here overtones of the negative patristic association of matter with change and disorder may again be detected. As we will see, there is a certain sense in which William views the five senses as the gateways to destruction, but William thinks a remedy for the soul's attraction to physical things is the infusion of the will by God's grace rather than an intentional separation from or punishment of the body.

3. Four Stages of Spiritual Growth: Virtue, Love, Charity, and Wisdom

a. Virtue

Having outlined in the prologue the unstable nature of love, William proceeds to explain how the will can be trained in order to express its original upward motion properly. He pictures four stages in the the growth of love, stages that parallel the four stages of man's corporeal life: virtue, love, charity and wisdom. Augustine similarly parallels the process of

\(^{226}\) Straw notes that Gregory tends to conceive of the first human sin as progressing from the outside in: the suggestion of the enemy takes root in the flesh with the consent of the spirit and finally issues in pride. See *Perfection in Imperfection*, 115-6. This progression cannot account for the sin of the angels, and in *Mor.* 43.21.40 CCSL 143B, 1446-7 Gregory seems to follow Augustine's account of sin in *De civ. Dei* 12.1-9 in which he proposes that sin is the result of the will's choice of evil, or pride. Gregory explicates the verse from Is. 14:14: "I will be like the Most High" here and at *Mor.* 29.8.18 CCSL143B, 1446-7. Gregory does not seem to have synthesized the two views, as the former view stands side by side with the second in the *Moria* and appears again in his later *Regula Pastoralis*. On the dating of Gregory's works, see Straw, *Perfection in Imperfection*, 7, n. 25.

\(^{227}\) *De nat. et dig. amor.* I ed. Davy, 70 (PL 184, 380C): "Cum res bene et ordine suo procedit spiritus redit ad Deum, qui creavit eum; corpus in terram, nec in terram solum, sed in elementa, ex quibus compactum et formatum erat. Cum enim quiddam in eo terra, quiddam ignis, quiddam aqua, quiddam aer sibi vendicit, cum naturalis compactionis naturalis sit dissoluto, pondere suo unumquodque ad suum recurrir elementum: et tunc plena facta est dissoluto, cum horum omnium in locum suum plena facta fuerit restitutio. Que utrum corruptio, vel putredo, et non potius, ut dictum est, resoluto medius vocanda sit, judicet qui vult."
the corporeal growth of man (the "old" man) and the process of the regeneration of the soul.\textsuperscript{228} For Augustine the sixth stage of both growth processes is a period of "transition—later Augustine will say reform—to that perfect form of man which was made in the image of God."\textsuperscript{229} The progress of man in time encompasses corporeal decay and spiritual growth; spiritual growth extends, moreover, from the individual to the body of mankind as a whole, which Augustine represents in a similar sixfold schema of the six ages of history.\textsuperscript{230} Charity, which is love enlightened by grace, is a mixture of love and reason. Charity ultimately leads to the appreciation of God's Wisdom, Christ, sent for us to evoke our love for God. William contrasts the effort necessary with the stage of love with the greater passivity connected with the charitable stage: "Love at first involves effort and affectus; charity involves the effect (effectus)."\textsuperscript{231} Is there a parallel with the pairing of the terms affectus and effectus in the passage we took to be describing Neoplatonic conversio above?\textsuperscript{232} In the above passage the term effectus signifies the causal role played by God with respect to his effects. A similar notion of God's love circling back into Him may underlie William's notion of the passivity of human love at the stage of charity.

Chapter one begins by emphasizing that love is given to man by God alone, and the proof that the soul is intended to receive it is its creation in the image of God. The image lies above all in its triadic powers of memory, reason and will. In his exegesis of man's creation William introduces the notion that the whole man was created in the image of God. He has just described how the trinity in man might always have allowed him to adhere to God if man had not separated himself from God by attaching himself to lower created things instead. Next he


\textsuperscript{229} Ladner, Idea of Reform, 235-6.

\textsuperscript{230} Ibid. 236, and n. 41.


\textsuperscript{232} See above, 43-4.
recreates the moment of creation. God begins by infusing a twofold breath (an intellectual power and a vital power) into man and at the same time implants memory into him. The memory immediately begets reason and the two together produce the will. The passage tells us at the very least that the power of life is of great dignity in man, being created at the same moment as the higher created image of God in the soul. One could make the argument that by implication the vital power is thereby made part of, or remote echo of, the image of God in the intellectual part of the soul. Let us look further at his exegesis of the creation story in order to ascertain possible patristic influences on William's terminology for the two breaths.

i. The Body as Image of God: Influence of Eriugena

According to William, God infused with the breath of life a spiritual or intellectual power and a vital or animal power.233 Into the face of Adam God "infused the breath of life, a spiritual power (spiritalem vim), that is, an intellectual (intellectualem) power, which 'breathing' and 'breath' bespeak; and a vital (vitalem) power, that is an animal (animalem) power, which the name 'life' bespeaks."234 William's exegesis of the two breaths is unusual.235 Augustine devotes a chapter of book 13 of De civitate Dei 236 to an exegesis of the passage from Genesis (Gen. 2:7) upon which William's passage is also based.237 Augustine proposes that the outer man, or body, was composed of earth and was given a rational soul

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233 By the time that William wrote his treatise on the body and soul of man, he associated the adjective "spiritual" with the vital force and the term "animal" with the intellectual power. In the first chapter we saw the problem that the Pauline term "animal man" presented for Augustine, who first tended to equate it with an animated or live body, and only gradually came to replace this interpretation with the idea of a person untouched by the grace of Christ. William's use of the term "animal" in De natura et dignitatis amoris seems to follow Augustine's original intuition, and derives from the Latin term anima, meaning soul or principle of life.

234 De nat. et dig. amor. 5 ed. Davy, 76 (PL 184, 382C): "spiraculum vite, spiritalem vim, id est intellectualem, quod sonat spiratio et spiraculum; et vitae, id est animalem quod sonat nomen vite infudit"

235 It does not occur in the following exegeses of Gen. 2:9: Tertullian, De anima 16.1 CCSL 2, 802; Ambrose, De Noe 24.86ff ed. C. Schenkl CSEL 32.1, 474ff, or idem, Expositio psalmi cxviii 15 ed. M. Petschenig CSEL 62, 212; Jerome, Commentarii in Esaiam 12.42.5/9 in S. Hieronymi Presbyteri opera, pt. 1, 2A, Opera exegetica, ed. M. Adriaen CCSL 73A (Turnhout, 1963) 481; Gregory the Great, Moralia in Job 23.15.28 CCSL 143B, 1165; and Bede, In principium Genesis usque ad nativitatem Isaac et eiectionem Ismaelis adnotationum 1.27 in Bedae Venerabilis opera. pt. 2, Opera exegetica, ed. C. Jones CCSL 118A (Turnhout, 1967) 44-5.


237 In De homin. opific. 28-9 ed. Cappuyns, 252-6, Gregory denies that this Genesis passage can be used to show that the body is of greater dignity because it was created first. He does not perform an exegesis on the breath of God.
(the inner man). The composite being is an animal body, with the sense perception that comes through the possession of a soul. While William's passage has basically the same sense as Augustine's, in that both agree that the soul enables both rationality and bodily life, William describes powers of the soul that Augustine does not employ: a *vis spiritualis* or *intellectualis*, and a *vis vitalis* or *animalis*. (The term "animalis" in the latter phrase derives from the Latin term *anima*, meaning soul or principle of life.)

Other authors who describe powers of the soul in a way similar to William include Gregory of Nyssa, and, following him, Eriugena. Gregory describes a *vitalis virtus* or *vitalis operatio* as being composed of the power of nourishment, sense, and reason or intellect (*ratio* or *intellectus*). He continues to explain that the middle power, the *sensualis*, stands midway between the intellectual (*intellectualis*) and more material (*materialioris*) natures, and that it is a mixture (*concretio*) of both, for the rational principle could not be embodied unless it was blended with the more material principle. Gregory divides the living body into the material

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238 In his commentaries on Genesis to the Manichees, Augustine suggests that one way of understanding the breath is as the addition of sensation to the already existing soul, *De Gen. contr. Man.* 2.8 PL 34, 201-2. In his literal commentary on Genesis, Augustine discusses whether the soul was inherited from the first man or sent to the body from elsewhere. Describing the second scenario he says that the soul would have been fashioned in the senses of the mortal body; *De Gen. ad litt.* 10.6 CSEL 28.1, 303.

239 *At De opifc. homin.* 16 ed. Cappuyns, 231, Gregory notes that certain things are not really properly soul--intellectual, rational, and perfect--but are called soul equivocally. They really refer to a certain vital energy associated with the name soul: "Sic igitur est dum intellectuali et rationali perfectionem habet omne quod non haest, aequiuecum quidem animae esse potest, non tamen ure anima, sed quemdam operatio utialis uocatione animae contene." 240 At ibid. 8 ed. Cappuyns, 217, they are described as three parts of the vital or animal power (*uitalem animalemque virtutem*): the nutritive (*auctiua or nutrioria*); that which possesses sense and perception (* sensualem operationem perceptionenque*); and that which participates in reason (*ratio*) and is ordered by mind (*animus*). He calls the three parts the *nutritiam*, sensiunam, and *rationabilem* at ibid. 15 ed. Cappuyns, 230. This triad of soul divisions is Aristotelian/Peripatetic in origin (cf. Aristotle, *De anim.* 413b12ff.) and was extremely common among medieval Latin writers, according to David Bell, "The Tripartite Soul and the Image of God in the Latin Tradition," *RTAM* 47 (1980) 16-52, esp. 17-8 241 Ibid. 8 ed. Cappuyns, 217: "Nutrit enim secundum germinalem animae speciem, auctiae uero uirtuti sensualis cognata est, mediateam habens secundum propriam natuiram intellectualis, et materialioris essentiae tantum crassior hac quantum purior illa. Deinde quaedam fit societas atque concretio sensualis naturae ad subtile ac lucideum intellectualis essentia, ita ut in his tribus homo habeat constitutionem." 242 Ibid. "quod uero rationale est, non alter corpori inhereret, nisi sensuali contretum fieret." The idea that the senses are the locus for the joining of rational mind and lower man is to be found in Plotinus, who teaches that the disembodied soul communicates with embodied soul in the faculties of imagination and sensation, *Ennead* 4.3.23 in *Plotini Opera*, ed. Henry and Schwyzter, 2: 48-50. In *De opific. homin.* 18 PG 44, 145C, Gregory says that the more subtle element of the animal soul becomes associated to the higher principle by a certain *oikieia* and *dynamis.* According to G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1961), Gregory
and that which has vital energy. The sensual power thus mediates between the intellectual and material realms. Eriugena, who in the Periphyseon paraphrases Gregory, calls the vital power a *materialis vita* or *vitalis motus*. William's derivation of the pair *vis vitalis* and *vis intellectualis* may show the influence of the Nyssen/Eriugenean *virtus operatio vitalis* and *intellectualis*. The adjectives *animalis* and *spiritalis* most likely come from the Pauline uses the Stoic term *ἀνάκτος* to describe the interpenetration of spiritual and divine things in creation; in the mixture of divine and human natures in Christ; and in mystical union between God and the soul. The term *ἀνάκτος* was not always popular with patristic writers in Christological discussions. Cf. Lampe, s.v. *ἀνάκτος*, 2. In the soul-body discussions of the fourth century, the "mixture" of the soul and body was of vital interest. The term "asugchutos henouthai" (unity without confusion) was used by some Neoplatonist writers to describe the unity of a corporeal and incorporeal substance whereby the unity could be reversed, separated; it was coined to combat the Stoic assertion that a reversible blend could be possible only for two material substances, so that the soul must therefore be a body. Rist argues that the term probably originated after Porphyry, who most likely taught that the soul is present to the body by a certain relation (schesis) and that the soul and body have a "union" (but not mixture). Plotinus alludes to the idea that there may be a kind of special mixture of body and soul, and that in this union the soul is present to the body but not mixed (migrantai) with it as in the Stoic total interpenetration of bodies. Rist postulates a writer named Ps.-Ammonius, who wrote in Greek and was one source for Nemesius, as possibly the first writer to use the term "asugchutos henouthai." Writers such as Augustine and Gregory of Nyssa, who write about a mixture of soul and body, seem to be ignorant of this tradition. The Stoics said that the term "mixis" was appropriate for the soul-body relationship, and Rist thinks that Augustine may have been influenced by someone like Varro. See John Rist, "Pseudo-Ammonius and the Soul/Body Problem in some Platonic Texts of Late Antiquity," *American Journal of Philology* 109 (1988) 402-15. Gregory says that the intellect is neither within the body, for the incorporeal is not contained (ἀντι γὰρ ἐγκρατεῖται) by the corporeal, nor does it encompass the corporeal, for the incorporeal embraces nothing (reading ὀτ᾿ γὰρ περιλαμβάνει τι with PG 44, 177B, pace Schaff and Wace, 404, n.7. Gregory says that the soul is both in and around the body (ἐν σῶμα καὶ περὶ σῶμα). While Gregory's solution seems to show contact with the solution of Plotinus: that the soul holds the body together (*synochein*) and that the body is in soul (Ennead 4.3.22 and 5.5.9), he uses the Stoic language of mixture to express it. On Gregory's knowledge of Greek philosophy, see John M. Rist, "Basil’s Neoplatonism": Its Background and Nature," in *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic*, ed. P.J. Fedwick, 2 vols. (Toronto, 1981) 1: 137-220; repr. as Article 12 in *Platonism and its Christian Heritage*, ed. John M. Rist (London, 1985).

243 *De opific. homin.* 8 ed. Cappuyins, 217.

244 *Periph.* 4 ed. Jeanneau, 116-22 (PL 122, 790B-792D). Vital motion is a Neoplatonic notion used by Marius Victorinus, *Adversus Arium* 4.10-1 ed. P. Henry and P. Hadot, CSEL 83, 1 (Vienna, 1971) 240-1. Augustine describes the power of souls to animate bodies as a *vitalis motus* moving in accordance with the laws of number in *De mus.* 5.11 and 17 PL 32, 1169 and 1192-3, and *De vera religione* 42 CCSL 32, 239. In *De vera religione* 42 CCSL 32, 240, he also teaches that a vital motion impresses the souls of songbirds with the numbers that regulate their songs and governs the growth of plants from seeds. In human beings the vital motion radiates through the human body from the heart; see *Epist.* 137 CSEL 44, 106-7. Here Augustine seems to have fused the term with Stoic physical theory.

245 "The term vis was used by both Aristotle and Calcidius to describe powers or faculties of the soul, according to Bell, "Tripartite Soul," 21-3. The phrase, "vis vitalis" is used by Cicero in *De natura deorum*. Cicero reports that Cleanthes calls the active principle in the world the "vis vitalis" at *De nat. deor.* 2.24, ed. Pease, 2: 606. For Stoic variations on the concept of the active principle, as composed of pneuma or spiritus (air), see the note on *vim...vitalis* in *De nat. deorum*, ed. Pease, 2: 606-7 and Friedrich Solmsen, *Cleanthes or Posidonius? The Basis of Stoic Physics*, Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afd. Letterkunde, new ser., vol. 24, no. 9 (Amsterdam, 1961).
division of man into corpus, anima, spiritus. This triad turns up in De opificio hominis, where Gregory performs a further linking of the three types of soul with two other triads: that of 1 Thess. 5: 23 (corpus, anima, spiritus), describing the three parts of man; and 1 Cor. 3: 3, 2: 14-5 (carnalis, animalis, spiritualis) describing three dispositions of man; it would have been found among numerous other Latin Christian writers as well.

The primary reason for suspecting Nyssan or Eriugenean influence here is that William's exegesis of the two breaths occurs in the context of a discussion of the likeness of man to God: God creates the soul in likeness in these two powers, and the summit of the likeness is the created trinity of memory, reason, and will (memoria, ratio, and voluntas). For Gregory, the substance of man consists of mind, vitalis virtus, and the informed matter: the composite of matter and vital power is, as it were, an image of the image. The implication that the body of man is made in the image of God is stated in even stronger fashion by Eriugena. For Eriugena the vitalis motus is a kind of link between body and soul, praeter quandam copulam et iuncturam corporis et animae, through which the mind impresses a form on matter. Through the linking of the various parts, says Eriugena, "the whole man can be suitably described as fashioned after the image of God, although really and primarily it is only in the mind that the image can be seen to subsist." For Eriugena man is composed of three things—mind, vital life, and matter—or, alternately, of body and soul, each of which can be divided into three things. In the latter schema, the body is composed of being (matter),

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246 De opific. homin. 4 ed. Cappuyns, 118.
247 Jerome mentions it in his Commentary on Matthew 13:30, according to Bell, "Tripartite Soul," 28.
250 Periph. 4, ed. Jeanneau, 118 (791B).
251 Ibid. (790D): "Ac per hoc quadam ratione per humanae naturae consequentiam totus homo ad imaginem dei factus non incongrue dicitur, quamuis proprie et principaliter in solo animo imago subsistere intelligatur."
252 Ibid. (790C).
life or nourishment (*vitalis motus*), and external sensation; the soul is composed of internal sense, reason (*ratio*), and mind (*animus*).253

By including the *vitalis vis* in this discussion of the image of God in man, William is borrowing Gregory’s or Eriugena’s notion that the whole man can be said to be in the image of God, in at least a qualified sense, and he thus overturns the view of Augustine, who had taught, following Ambrose,254 that the body is in no way the image of God.

A second, later passage suggests that Eriugena’s anthropology exercised special influence on William. William describes a hierarchy of faculties within man: "the body also has its senses, by which it is joined to the soul, with life mediating."255 Important here are both the mediating function of life, which echoes Eriugena’s notion of the *materialis vita*, and William’s choice of the sensitive faculty as the one which mediates. In his *Periphyseon* Eriugena describes the following hierarchy: God; mind; reason; interior senses; exterior senses; vital motion; body.256 His schematization goes beyond Gregory of Nyssa who merely divides man into matter and *vitalis virtus* and the *vitalis virtus* into nutritive, sensual, and intellectual parts. One does not find a hierarchy of body, vital life, senses, and soul in Gregory’s *De opificio hominis*, however much Eriugena may have claimed to have found it there.257

William’s account of man’s creation reveals that he has borrowed the idea that the whole man is made in the image of God from Gregory of Nyssa or Eriugena. To return to William’s narrative, the reader will recall that William introduced the topic of man’s creation in the image of God in order to show that love takes its birth in the soul as part of God’s conscious designs for the destiny of the soul. In chapter two he proceeds to outline the instability of the will and the proper means of taming its unruly desires.

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253 Ibid. 4, ed. Jeaneau, 194-6 (824C-825C).
255 *De nat. et dig. amor.* 18 ed. Davy, 94 (PL 184, 390CD): “enim corpus suos quinque habet sensus, quibus anime conjungitur, via mediante.”
William explains that the will is a simple *affectus* that is attracted to both good and evil. It is attracted to the good when it is helped by grace; it is attracted to evil because it itself is deficient.\(^\text{258}\) Here we see the Augustinian idea that human evil results from a deficiency of the will.\(^\text{259}\) In the period of spiritual youth, then, the will must learn to constrain itself against its worst desires. If this self-ordering takes place, the will can then develop, or make progress (*proficere*)\(^\text{260}\) according to the "natural" order of its virtues.\(^\text{261}\) This Stoic confidence in the naturalness of the virtuous life is common to other monastic writers such as Basil and Cassian,\(^\text{262}\) though William's emphasis on the will is characteristically Augustinian.\(^\text{263}\)

b. Love

In the second stage of development, in which the love of the novice will naturally be fervent because of his youth, vices and impure desires must be rooted out and crushed.\(^\text{264}\) William distinguishes desire, which he views positively as the motive force of the soul, from concupiscence or passion. He regards concupiscences as adulterous or spurious branches that spring up spontaneously and suggests gently that if they are pruned away "the hope of progress (*spes proficiendi*) for the natural and true will will be increased."\(^\text{265}\) Though William undoubtedly places most of his emphasis on interior discernment, he occasionally speaks of the body as something that must be "humbled (*humiliatum*)" through discipline.\(^\text{266}\)

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\(^{258}\) *De nat. et dig. amor.* 6 ed. Davy, 76 (PL 184, 383A).

\(^{259}\) *De lib. arbor.* 2.20.54 CCSL 29, 273; *De civ. Dei* 12.7-8 CCSL 48, 362-3; ibid. 14.11 CCSL 48, 431-3; ibid. 14.13 CCSL 48, 434-6.

\(^{260}\) *De nat. et dig. amor.* 8 ed. Davy, 78 (PL 184, 383C). As noted in chap. 2 above, p 88 nn., Augustine uses this term to express the progress of the soul. The verb *proficere* was also used by Gregory the Great, *Mor.* 22.20.46 CCSL 143A, 1125-6: "Tunc uero in Deo plene proficimus, cum nobis ipsis suarum defecerimus."

\(^{261}\) *De nat. et dig. amor.* 7 ed. Davy, 78 (PL 184, 383B): "secundum naturalem virtutum suarum ordinem."


\(^{264}\) Desires must be crushed (voluntates *frangendi*), ibid. 10 ed. Davy, 82 (PL 184, 385B).

\(^{265}\) Ibid. 10 ed. Davy, 82 (PL 1814, 386B).

\(^{266}\) *De nat. et dig. amor.* 13 ed. Davy, 84: "corpus sanctis humiliatum disciplinis, ex consuetudine jam bona in spontaneum spiritus servitium transire." William mentions temperance in food and sleep, well-ordered speech, a moderate gait, bodily cleanliness, a disciplined gaze not distracted by one's surroundings, and he warns against laughing, which may bring forth the lust of the heart. He does not seem to be overly concerned with sexual sin here, nor does he mention self-inflicted corporeal punishment. William softens the ascetic concerns
i. Bodily Deportment Revealed by Interior States

The body plays a key role at this stage of monastic formation as an indicator of the monk’s interior state. William describes in great detail how properly restrained bodily comportment, temperance in food and drink, a stable gaze, all indicate that the monk is developing a loving heart.267 Proper bodily comportment had been a concern of Christian writers since ancient times. Clement of Alexandria treats the topic in extensive detail in the second book of his Paedagogus.268 Among other things, he exhorts both men and women to eat politely. Specific to women is his advice to wear modest dress, to use toiletries sparingly, and to restrain coquettish looks, while men are told not to preen or bathe themselves excessively. Here William echoes other patristic figures who had proposed that inner spiritual dispositions can be discerned through visible works.269 In the background is a long tradition of viewing the person of the saint270 or the monastic community as a place where invisible realities may become visible. Writers in the Augustinian tradition stressed that the monastery, like the Church, always remains a mixed body; nevertheless, figures such as Bede also had an increasingly strong sense that heaven and earth can to some extent converge during the present life.271 Bede could even see this phenomenon extended in time from the first community at

of his predecessors, such as Gregory the Great, who uses terms like cruciare, tormentum, mordere, maceratio corporis, castigare, afflicto to describe the disciplinary suffering of the body, according to Straw, Perfection in Imperfection, 48, n. 4. Gregory’s language reflects not an intent to harm the body physically, but his intense sense that the discipline of the body was necessary to keep pleasure, especially sexual pleasure, in check, so that it will not lull the reason to sleep, see ibid. 136-7.

267 De nat. et dig. amor. 13 ed. Davy, 82 (PL 184, 385A): "Studeat etiam habere hic talis et amplexatur cordis puritatem, corporis munditiam, silentium, vel verbum ordinatum; oculos stabiles, et non sublimes; aures non prurientes; victum et somnum sobrium, et qui faciat, non impediunt boni operis dietam; manus continentes, gressum mitem: non ridendo prodere cordis lasciviam, sed leniter subridendo, gratiam."


269 Gregory the Great, Mor. 31.8.13 CCSL 143B, 1559; Hom. in Ez 2.4.19, ed. Marcus Adriaen CCSL 142 (Turnhout, 1971) 308.

270 Gregory the Great warns his readers to be reverent to holy men, for they are temples of God, and if the holy man’s anger is aroused, it is likely to be the wrath of the temple dweller that is felt in retribution. Dial. 1.9.9 SC 260, 84.

271 On Bede, see Glenn Olsen, "From Bede to the Anglo-Saxon Presence in the Carolingian Empire," in Angli e Sassoni al di qua e al di là del Mare, Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull’alto medioevo 32, 2 vols. (Spoleto, 1986) 1: 305-82, esp. 376.
Jerusalem through to contemporary communities which modeled themselves on the precepts of the *ecclesia primitiva.* William’s thought is not so much backward looking to beginnings as forward-looking or eschatological. In his *Dialogues*, Gregory the Great describes the renovation to be undergone by human beings at the time of the resurrection, allowing that on that day "the flesh will cling once again to the spirit to be preserved by it for all eternity, even as the spirit itself is preserved in God by clinging to Him." For William, however, the time of the *renovatio* has arrived, for even now, he suggests, in the monastery the body can pass from submissive service, the product of habit, to the "spontaneous service of the spirit:"

C. Stephen Jaeger has discussed the medieval transformations of the Ciceronian idea that bodily conduct reveals an ordered soul. He has shown that in contrast to the way Hugh of St. Victor adapted these ideas to show that discipline begins with exterior deportment and moves inward, for Bernard virtue begins in the conscience and blazons outward, making the body into the image of the mind. William of St. Thierry, whom Jaeger does not discuss, holds views similar to those of Bernard. In the context of the Benedictine-Cistercian controversy, both writers display a moderate interest in corporeal discipline and view the external and physical prescriptions of the Benedictine Rule as important because they had a function in refashioning man in true humility. However, William is clearly more interested in the body’s expression of virtue than corporeal discipline.

William's choice of the image of the body's servitude demonstrates his awareness of its role in the ascetic project. The image itself is perhaps unremarkable, since from Paul onwards the solution to the problem of the disarray within man had been conceived to be humility and

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274 *De nat. et dig. amor.* 13 ed. Davy, 84 (PL 184, 386B). For the Latin text see n. 266 above.
276 Ibid. 244-68, 269.
service. Gregory Nazianzen, for instance, had spoken of the soul training the body as its servant. What is particularly interesting here is that William does not speak of the body as passive, as does Gregory Nazianzen, but, rather, speaks in the spirit of the passage from Gregory the Great’s Dialogues, which ascribes to the body its own activity.

c. Charity

i. Charity as Affectus and Effectus

The third stage of development is the charitable stage. Charity is typified by a strong affectus: "a kind of generalized force and perpetual virtue, firm and stable and maintained by grace." This permanent state of grace William also calls status, actio gratiae, unitas spiritus, as noted above.

At the stage of charity, the soul attains to the vision of God by means of its two “eyes”: reason and love. The two eyes work together: "reason teaches love and love enlightens reason, and reason merges into the affectus of love and love lets itself be confined within the limits of reason." We see that reason helps love, and the two become one.

At section 16 he makes a reference to affectus passing over into effectus when love turns into charity: "Amor ergo prius habuit conatum, et aliquem affectum; caritas habet effectum." Can we connect this semantic pattern with the earlier contrast of effectus, as God’s active returning of his effect to him, with affectus, as human striving in love?

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279 Nat. et dig. amor. 17 ed. Davy, 92 (PL 184, 389A): “Affectus est qui generali quadam potentia et perpetua quadam virtute firma et stabili mentem possidet, quam per gratiam obtinuit.”
280 See above, 42-4. On the varieties of meanings of affectus to be found in medieval writers, see J. Chatillon, “Cordis affectus.”
281 William says that reason moves in the manner of negative theology: it discovers what God is only by apprehending what he is not; love, on the other hand moves freely in what God is. Reason advances by steps, love apprehends by its ignorance and through its shortcomings. Ibid. 25 ed. Davy, 100-2 (PL 184, 393AB). McGinn argues that William’s negative theology is more Augustinian than Dionysian, though he suggests that some Dionysian influence cannot be ruled out, “Pseudo-Dionysius and the Early Cistercians,” 226-8.
283 Ibid. 16 ed. Davy, 90 (PL 184, 388D).
284 See above, n. 97.
William contrasts the labor associated with the prior stage with the spiritual enlightenment attained in the second:

For the hand of charity works more easily as the enlightened eye helps it. For we work with our hands first, then we rub our eye with our hand. For this reason it is said, 'By your commandments, I have understood.' First one begins to understand his own works and to discern his own affections. Then one is so affected by virtues that, just as for God to be is to be good, so now for the righteous and holy soul to be is not to be other than holy and righteous and dutiful.

It is difficult to be sure what connotations are implied in William's term effectus in the above-mentioned contrast with affectus. It seems to be associated both with spiritual understanding and the re-ordering of the will but not, as above, with God's causality. William elaborates the notion of effectus shortly afterward in a passage in which he qualifies the notion that anyone's will could ever become totally perfect: "Sometimes, it is true, the effect of her affection or of her work (affectio\nvel operis effectus) staggers or deviates as long as charity in this life is unable to see except in part or through a mirror." Here the meaning of effectus is clearly not of a stage of pure tranquillity, for man's individual actions or effects may still go awry. What William might be saying is that while at the charitable stage the love of man becomes passive with respect to God, a theme already familiar from De contemplando Deo, the process of returning to God during this life is always incomplete.

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285 Ps. 119: 105.
287 On whether the inability to will anything other than what God wills is a characteristic of the charitable or ecstatic state, see Bell, Image and Likeness, 151, n. 99, 189-96, 213-5. Bell thinks that William depends on Augustine, who teaches that the sanctissimi are able to persevere in charity to the extent that they cannot commit a mortal sin. Cassian also teaches that at the summit of perfection mortal sin is no longer possible, at Conf. 11.9, SC 54, 110-1.
288 De. nat. et dig. amor. 16 ed. Davy, 92 (PL 184, 389A): "Aliquando quidam tiubat, vel deviatur affectionis vel operis effectus, quamdui in hac vita non potest videre caritas nisi ex parte et per speculum et in enigmate."
ii. Struggle Between "Old" and "New," "Exterior" and "Interior" Men

William does not want to say that at the third stage of development the monk might be incapable of sinning. He here tries to resolve the tension between Rom. 7, "I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh the law of sin," and 1 Jn. 3:9, "anyone who is born of God does not sin, for His seed abides in him and he cannot sin because he is born of God." He tries to explain how a person of good will can will bad action. William tries to shift responsibility for bad actions onto the "flesh," arguing that the soul sometimes suffers passively the sins that the flesh (carne, corpus mortis) commits: "et leditum mente interius dolente, et patiente potius quam agente, quod perperam foris in carne geritur...in quantum peccatum quod corpus mortis foris operatur, odit potius quam approbat." Echoing a number of passages from Rom. 7, he implies that the weakness of the flesh is responsible for the evil acts because it "often offends, often falls, often seriously wounds," while the inner man only endures evil acts, since they cannot penetrate "me who am within." William chooses the example of David's lust for Bathsheba as one example of a bodily sin that in no way affected the man's interior disposition. It is not evident that the body is in no way associated with his term "flesh"; the association of the Scriptural term "flesh" with the corporeal body was common among patristic writers. The use of the concept of an inner man is also problematic, for while William may mean merely that there is an "I" hidden by and constrained within the chains of sinful thoughts and desires, the idea that the body is a prison for the soul may also be operative at some level here.

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289 Cf. 1 Jn. 18.
291 De nat. et dig. amor. 17 ed. Davy, 92 (PL 184, 389B): "sepe offendit, sepe cadit, sepe ledit graviter." Cf. Mor. 14.15.17 CCSL 143A, 707-8: "Ex ea enim parte qua spiritus rationalis est conditus, non incongrue dicitur robustus; ex ea vero qua carnalis, infirmus est. Robur ergo est hominis anima rationalis quae impugnantibus utiis resistere per rationem valet (For from that part by which he was created a rational spirit, he is not unfittingly called strong; but from that part by which he is flesh he is weak. The strength of man is his rational soul by which he is able to resist attacking vices through reason)." Cf. Mor. 4.27.49 CCSL 143, 193, where Gregory says that the pleasure of the flesh weakens the soul; the Latin text is given above, n. 209.
292 Nat. et. dig. amor. 46 ed. Davy, 126 (PL 184, 403C): "ad me, qui intus sum, non pertingut."
293 Gregory the Great wrote that David's sin with Bathsheba stemmed from his lustfulness. See Hom. in Evang. 2.34.16 PL 76, 1256C.
iii. The Soul as Torn Between Internal and External Senses

William associates the Pauline ideas of the "old" and the "exterior" men, saying that "We become old through the senses of the body and are conformed to the world but through the senses of the mind we are renewed to the recognition of God, in newness of life." We noted above that Origen and Gregory the Great also suggest that the five senses are the roads by which the soul travels outside and falls below itself. For William the body is suspended from the soul in a relationship analogous, but only analogous, to that which pertains between God and the soul. In this series, the members of the hierarchy are linked through sensation: the body is linked to the soul through the five senses, with life mediating, just as the soul is linked to God through its five senses, with love mediating. The idea that the soul has spiritual senses is an old one, although William's interpretation of them here in terms of five varieties of love is an idea peculiar to himself and Bernard of Clairvaux. Rather than the positive series that we saw above, where the flesh moves toward the soul as the soul clings to God, here it seems that problems can arise if the soul turns its attention down toward the body.

295 Cf. Mor. 21.2.4 CCSL 143A, 1065-7, where Gregory says that when desire comes through the bodily senses and enters the mind, it is like "death comes through the windows and enters the palace"(Jer. 9:21). Like Augustine, William thinks that the soul is primarily active in sensation; as he says, "anima corpus suum sensificat (the soul sensizes the body)," De nat. et dig. amor. 18 ed. Davy, 94-6 (PL 184, 390C).
296 De nat. et dig. amor. 18 ed. Davy, 94 (PL 184, 390C): "per sensum corporis veterescimus, et huic seculo conformamur; per sensum vero mentis renovamur in agnitionem Dei, in novitatem vite."
297 Mor. 21.2.4 CCSL 143B, 1065-7; cf. ibid. 26.44.79 CCSL 143B, 1325.
298 This is a commonplace. For examples, see Augustine, De libero arbitrio 2.16.41, ed. W.M. Green, in Aurelii Augustini opera, pt. 2.2 CCSL 29 (Turnhout, 1970) 265; De civ. 13.2 CCSL 48, 385-6; cf. Gregory the Great, Dial. 4.5.7 SC 265, 36-8.
299 De nat. et dig. amor. 18 ed. Davy, 96 (PL 184, 391A): "Per quinque sensus corporis, mediente vita, corpus anime conjungitur: per quinque sensus spirituales, mediente caritate, anima Deo consociatur."
300 Origen, developing an idea present in a rudimentary form in Theophilus of Antioch, speaks of spiritual analogies for each of the five corporeal senses, spiritual sight, spiritual hearing, etc. Cf. Crouzel, Origen, 131-2, and K. Rahner, "Le début d'une doctrine des cinq sens spirituels chez Origène," RAM 13 (1932) 113-45. The idea spread in the west from the writings of Augustine and Gregory the Great. On the latter Straw, Perfection in Imperfection, 113, 129. For more on the spiritual senses, see the second complementary note to the Sources Chrétienne edition of Origen, Commentaire sur le Cantique des Cantiques, trans. Luc Brèsard and Henri Crouzel with Marcel Borret SC 375, 376 (Paris, 1991-2) 2: 752-3. The spiritual senses were a popular topic among twelfth-century writers, but William shares with Bernard a particular five-fold scheme of spiritual senses that are varieties of love: physical love, social love, natural love, spiritual love, and the love of God. See n. 74 above. On William's doctrine of the spiritual senses, see James Walsh, “Guillaume de Saint-Thierry et les sens spirituels,” RAM 35 (1959) 17-42.
iv. Severance of Soul from Physical Temptation in Ecstasy

Through the experience of ecstasy, the soul undergoes a kind of death. The final death of the body is used as a type for what happens to the soul in ecstasy: a love "as strong as death"\(^{301}\) cleaves the soul apart from the love of the world and kills it as death ultimately destroys the body.\(^{302}\) An underlying theme is the difference between the life of the mortal body, which is only temporary, and the permanent life of the soul. One is reminded of the way Eriugena underlines this idea by stating explicitly that the *vitalis motus*, the principle of life in the mortal body, comes to an end with the lift of that body.\(^{303}\) The idea that love for divine things banishes the love of corporeal things is very common in patristic writers. Bede compares the soul's severance from its attachments to material things to the finality of death's destruction of the body; he borrowed the metaphor from Gregory the Great.\(^{304}\) William exploits the metaphor so as to contrast the temporary "death" of ecstasy with the permanent death of the body: whereas the body is deadened to its senses in death, by its death (ecstasy), the soul progresses and is vivified by its spiritual senses.\(^{305}\) Given that William had said earlier that the soul grows "old" through the bodily senses, one wonders whether the liberation from body during ecstasy is not associated with the image of the deadening of the senses at death. If so, William follows in a long line of writers, such as Cassian, who view contemplation as a temporary release from the corruption of the mortal body.

Because this state is only temporary, the contemplative must return to the world, as charity for his neighbor will drag him back like a weight hanging from his neck.\(^{306}\) As we saw above, in the monastic tradition after Cassian, the active life indicates the pursuit of virtue

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301 Sg. 8:6.
302 *De nat. et dig. amor.* 26 ed. Davy, 102 (PL 184, 393CD): "dulci amoris gladio ab amore et affectu seculi sic occidens eam funditus et interimens, sicut mors interimit corpus."
305 *De nat. et dig. amor.* 26 ed. Davy, 102 (PL 184, 393D): "Sed corpus morte sua mortificatur ab omnibus sensibus suis; anima sua morte magis proficit, et vivificatur et roboratur in suis."
within the monastic community, as distinguished from the contemplative life pursued by the individual hermit. Returning to this state is seen by William as dreadfully depressing.

v. Glorification of Body after Ecstasy

Nevertheless, when the soul returns to the world, "she brings to men a face radiant with that oil of God's charity both in actions and in words, and even in a type of glorification and a grace of the outer man." This evocation of a glorified new man suggests that the temporal body can reveal the beginning of human restoration. William is part of a twelfth-century movement that placed an emphasis on body as "sacramental" or revelatory of divinity, a concept which had not been proposed with such clarity since the time of early patristic figures such as Irenaeus and Gregory of Nyssa. The general view, articulated by Claudio Leonardi, is that the asceticism/monasticism of the middle ages tended to diminish the theological appreciation of the importance of the body and while the justice of this view is not in question, it is also the case that the topic bears much more detailed investigation.

We have already noted that for writers within the monastic/ascetic tradition, such as Gregory the Great and Bede, for whom the adjective "carnal" could undoubtedly have many pejorative associations, the monastic community and holy man make spiritual realities concretely visible. In this same milieu a variety of philosophical ideas were in play which heightened medieval awareness that the visible world is a great theater for the divine. By the time of Gregory of the Great, corporeal things not only mediate God's wisdom, but they also

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306 Ibid. 102-4 (PL 184, 394B).
307 See Philip Rousseau, Ascetics, Authority, and the Church, 177-82.
308 De nat. et dig. 27 ed. Davy, 104 (PL 184, 394C). "Cum vero ad homines et humana redire compellitur, a lege vultus Dei, et exhilaratam faciem in oleo illo caritatis dei, tam factis quam dictis, et etiam glorificatione quadam et gratia exterioris hominis refert ad homines."
can contain spiritual power, as in the case of relics. Here or there some medieval figures may have amalgamated into their views the Eriugenean view that all created beings are theophanies, or revelations of God, or the Dionysian understanding that the visible world was established to lead the mind back to God.

The twelfth-century reform movement provided the opportunity for the articulation of the revelatory capacity of the body. As discussed above, both Bernard and William exploit Ciceronian notions that inner virtue will be reflected in external behavior. In his *Sermones super Cantica Canticorum* Bernard expresses this most fully in his teaching that the "clarity" of the spirit reflects the divine light and this *claritas* eventually transforms even the external appearance of man. Jaeger has described the self-awareness of twelfth-century authors about both their exterior manifestation of a kind of spiritual charisma and also the impact that religious could have upon one another. For William the physical body plays a role in the process of mutual encouragement in spiritual growth.

The ongoing restoration William claims to glimpse gives only an idea of what is to come, for William speaks subsequently about the bodily members "about to be transformed" through adoption, as if a fuller transformation is still in the offing: "To this end [mutual charity] they easily adapt everything, both the members of their body and their good will, to

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315 *De nat. et dig. amor.* 30 ed. Davy, 108 (PL 184, 396CD): "In communibus pietatis studiis, in quadam etiam vultum et corporum et habituum gratia invicem in se ipsis bonitatis divine videntes presentiam tanto se
whatever the highest law has ordained since they have received the token or the pledge of the Holy Spirit, to this service of creatures and of their own members shortly to be transformed into the adoption and revelation of the sons of God.316

d. Wisdom

i. Abandonment of "Active Life"

The final part of the work treats the soul that has progressed into wisdom.318 In venerable old age, the soul is allowed to put down the baggage of charity and solicitude for the brethren, and to retreat into contemplation.319 William's expression of his desire for solitude seems to herald his future attraction to the Cistercians. His hopes contrast somewhat, perhaps, with Augustine's vision of monastic life, for whom charity for one's neighbor must never be abandoned but must always be balanced with the quest for contemplation.320 We have seen that William is strongly aware of the need to observe "the truth of the love" and "the love of the truth," but for him the prerogative of old age is that one can devote one's time wholly to contemplation.321 He concludes that if the monk takes on any labors, he does not love the labors themselves.322

ii. Christ as Educator and Mediator

Christ plays a vital role at the level of wisdom. Here, as in De contemplatando Deo, we see a type of psychological speculation about the reason for the Incarnation that marks the

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316 Cf. 2 Cor. 1:22.
318 At ibid. 32 ed. Davy, 110 (PL 184, 397B), Williams says that we love God in four ways, demonstrating four affectus toward God, each corresponding to one of the terms from Lk. 10:27: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." To the mind belongs the enjoyment of wisdom.
319 Origen tended to place contemplation above service to the community in his hierarchy of human goods. See De princ. 2.11.1 SC 252, 294. He valued the contemplative life so highly that he theorized that in the risen life spiritual life would consist entirely of the activity of the mind. See Watson, "Souls and Bodies," 185-7.
320 Ladner, Idea of Reform, 334-40.
322 De nat. et dig. amor. 32 ed. Davy, 110 (PL 184, 397B).
Christology of the early Bernard, which saw Christ above all as a man, who comes to disentangle the snarl of human loves entangled through the false persuasion of pride. For Bernard, God could not show himself more merciful than by experiencing human misery for Himself. This demonstration of true selflessness is designed to attract human beings to God and away from earthly distractions. According to William Christ teaches souls how to leave the sinful world, in which nothing holds its place, nothing stays in its order, and how to return (redire) to God. William speaks of Christ "tasting in his mouth, that is, understanding in and through himself and then conveying to the body the things to be understood." The purpose of Christ's learning humility is that human beings might be zealous to imitate his humility. Étienne Gilson once suggested a slight difference of emphasis between the two writers on this point. In fact, Bernard has penetrated William's point, only more deeply. Bernard explores with precision the dynamics of humility: since humility is learning to acknowledge our weaknesses and to entrust them to someone else, the Incarnation benefits us because we can learn to entrust our weaknesses to one who has suffered the very same weaknesses. This view of the humiliation of the Incarnation differs slightly from the more ancient view of writers like Ambrose, who connect the humiliation undergone by Christ with a deliberate ruse to hide his divine nature from the Devil.

William's Christology emphasizes, on the one hand, Christ's educative role. He adds another feature to this more moral Christological approach, making Christ's role

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324 De nat. et dig. amor. 40 ed. Davy 120 (PL 184, 401A): "nichil stare in loco suo, nichil procedere ordine suo. Videbat hominem abisse in regionem dissimilitudinis tam longe, ut per se nec posset nec sc[ ][i]et redire." For some reason not evident to me, Davy uses square brackets, which indicate editorial interpolation, instead of the expected pointed brackets that indicate editorial addition.
327 Gilson, Mystical Theology, 234, n.100.
329 See below, n. 346.
simultaneously illuminative.330 Playing on the etymological similarity between the words wisdom (sapientia) and savor (sapor), William says we learn to savor, or taste, divine Wisdom in Christ.331 As Mediator, Christ makes divine things savory for us,332 in other words, he conveys to us something of the divinity as well as the fullness of human life.

Christ functions as a mediator between God and man.333 Symbolizing Christ as the sense of taste, he pictures Christ as the throat connecting the head and body of his Church.334 We had need of a mediator, he says, to ascend to the place where divine goods are and to bring them down; furthermore, through Christ, "our good things might approach God" just as the good things of God approach us.335 The theme of the mediator appears in a variety of patristic writers, including Hilary of Poitiers,336 Gregory the Great, and Eriugena.

William's view of Christ's role as Mediator shares some similarities with that of Gregory the Great and also differs in important ways. Christ's condescension enables us to return to Him, through imitation of him. Therefore his becoming man is a type of mediation: for while divinity becomes human, humans become divine:

But between the Immortal and Righteous One and us, unrighteous mortals, appeared the mortal and righteous Mediator of God and men, who shared death with men and righteousness with God. Since through our lowliness we were so remote from His heights, he joined into one in himself the depths with the heights, and through that

330 Ambrose taught that the incarnation had three purposes: illumination, instruction in virtue, and the ransom of captive humanity. See Dudden, Life and Times, 2: 603-5.
331 Isidore makes the same etymological connection in his Etymologies. See the edition by W.M. Lindsay, Oxford Classical Texts, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1911). As his edition is not paginated, references are given to book and section numbers. See especially Etym. 10.240, ed. Lindsay, vol. 1: "Sapiens dictus a sapor: quia sicut gustus aptus est ad discretionem saporis ciborum, sic sapiens ad dinocestiam rerum atque causarum.
332 De nat. et dig. amor. 36 ed. Davy, 114 (PL 184, 398D).
335 Ibid. 40 ed. Davy, 120 (PL 184, 401A): "Opus erat mediatore inter nos et Deum, per quem nostra propinquarent Deo, et bona Dei nobis."
336 Cf. Hilary of Poitiers, De Trin. 8.14-6 CCSL 62A, 326-7. Hilary emphasizes that by Christ's bodily Incarnation we are made divine in him just as he is made human by his participation in bodily nature.
[unity], by which he fastened together His heights and our depths, he became a way of return (redeundi) for us.\textsuperscript{337}

As Mediator, Christ condescends to bear our mortal nature.\textsuperscript{338} This is part of the pain he suffers, and in suffering converts the flesh to a means of righteousness.\textsuperscript{339} For Gregory human nature is exalted by the very fact that Christ took it on. Once lower than the angels,\textsuperscript{340} we are now made superior to them because man ascends by condescending to suffer.\textsuperscript{341} For Gregory there is a strong sense that Christ reconciles various contrarieties within himself and brings them to an equilibrium. This can be discerned from the following passage.

For who of the faithful can have doubt that at the very moment of the sacrifice, at the voice of the priest, the heavens open and choirs of angels are present at the mystery of Jesus Christ: the highest things are united with the lowest things, heaven is joined to earth, and the invisible and visible are made into one.\textsuperscript{342}

As we said, William too depicts Christ as the way of ascent from man to God. When asked how Christ mediates for us, he answers by directing our sacrifices and prayers through him, or by his bringing his divinity to us.\textsuperscript{343} The Gregorian idea that Christ allows our prayers to reach God by appeasing his wrath is likely one influence behind William's idea that Christ intercedes for us with God.\textsuperscript{344} In Gregory, however, there is a strong interest in the reconciliation of ontological differences, which William does not share to the same extent. William does not celebrate in the same way the unity of strength and weakness, mortal and

\textsuperscript{337} Mor. 22.17.42 CCSL 143A, 1122: "Sed inter immortalem iustum et nos mortales iniustos apparuit Mediator Dei et hominum mortalis et iustus, qui et mortem haberet cum hominibus, et iustitiam cum Deo; ut quia per ima nostra longe distabamus a summis, in seipso uno inunget ima cum summis, atque ex eo nobis via redeundi fieret, quo summis suis ima nostra copularet."

\textsuperscript{338} Mor. 3.14.26 CCSL 143,131.

\textsuperscript{339} Mor. 3.18.33 CCSL 143, 137.

\textsuperscript{340} Dial. 4.3.2 SC 265, 24.

\textsuperscript{341} Hom in Ez. 1.8.23 CCSL 142, 144.

\textsuperscript{342} Dial. 4.60.3 SC 265, 202: "Quis enim fidelium habere dubium possit ipsa immolationis hora ad sacerdotis uocem caelos aperiiri, iin illo Jesu Christi mysterio angelorum choros adesse, summis ima sociari terram caelestibus iungi, unum quid ex visibilibus atque invisibilibus fieri?" Gregory notes the unity of visible (clay) and invisible (spirit) in man at Hom in Ez. 2.8.9 CCSL 142, 343.

\textsuperscript{343} De nat. et dig. amor. 36 ed. Davy, 114 (PL 184, 398D-399A).

\textsuperscript{344} In lib. I Reg.1.2.48 ed. Patricius Verbraken CCSL 144 (Turnhout, 1963) 148.
immortal. When William identifies what Christ had from "the wretch groveling here below," he reports that it is faith, not weakness or mortality.345

iii. Christ's Flesh: Disguise, Humiliation, and Sacrifice

William does share at certain points Gregory's appreciation of the paradoxical nature of the strong fragility of Christ's flesh.346 He shares his view of the two-fold nature of Christ's sacrifice: on the one hand, by offering his innocence in place of our guilt, he restores justice and appeases the Father; on the other hand, he releases the hold of the devil over man.347 William suggests that by taking on flesh Christ deceived the great deceiver. The idea that Christ uses guile to counter the guile of the devil is an idea to be found in the Roman liturgy and many patristic writers:348 "Therefore, hiding the virtue of his divinity from him throughout everything and setting before him only the weakness of the flesh without sin, He took away the envy of the hostile wickedness by the righteousness of his life."349 Moreover, he clearly follows Gregory's idea that Christ reproves or appeases both God and man in his sacrifice.

Gregory portrays Christ as shaking his fist at both God and man:

By his suffering he reproved both, since he reproached the sin of mankind by inspiring justice, and he tempered the anger of the Judge by dying. He shook his fist against both, since he offered to men examples which they could imitate, and in himself he showed to God works by which God could be placated toward men.350

346 Ceglar reconstructs a lacuna to read, "his foolishness is wiser than men, his weakness stronger than men." See Nature and Dignity of Love, 95, n. 61. This sense of the paradoxical co-existence of strength and weakness in Christ's assumption of human nature may also be found in Ambrose, Epist. 39.5 ed. M. Zelzer CSEL 82.10.2 (Vienna, 1990) 29-30.
347 A valuable survey of the patristic tradition on original sin can be found in Lukken, Original Sin in the Roman Liturgy.
348 Dudden, Life and Times, 2: 608 says that Ambrose follows Origen in teaching the Christ tricks the Devil by assuming the form of a weak man. Gregory the Great, borrowing an image from Gregory of Nyssa (via Rufinus), says that God caught the Devil on the "hook" of Christ's humanity; cf. Straw, Perfection in Imperfection, 155, n.35.
349 De nat. et dig. amor. 44 ed. Davy, 124 (PL 184, 402D): "Per omnia ergo virtutem ei divinitatis occultans, et solam ei infirmitatem carnis absque peccato preferens, per justitiam vite sue invidiam suscitavit hostilis nequitiae."
350 Mor. 9.38.61 CCSL 143, 501: "Patiendo ergo utrumque arguit, qui et culpam hominis, iustitiam aspirando, corripuit et iram iudicis moriendo temperaut. Atque in utrisque manum posuit, quia et exempla hominibus quae imitarentur praebuit, et Deo in se opera quibus erga homines placaretur, ostendit."
William's image of Christ's sacrifice contains the same taut emotion:

Placing his own Body and Blood in his hand, he said: "Eat this! Drink this! And live by it! And presenting it to the Father he says: "behold, Father, the price of my blood. If you require a price for sin, see here is my Blood for it."²⁵¹

The idea that God gives powers over humanity to the devil, from whom man must be "ransomed," is an ancient idea to be found in Origen, Augustine, and others.²⁵² Gregory the Great also argues that the devil has a legal right over man.²⁵³ Elsewhere Gregory can speak of man's sin as a disharmony within the legal order set up between God and man.²⁵⁴ The latter point of view was expanded by Anselm of Canterbury, who rejected outright the tradition that the devil has any rights over man at all²⁵⁵ and proposed instead that satisfaction had to be made to God alone. William seems to follow in Anselm's tradition here, although he does not explicitly place man's sin in a context of dishonor done to God as Anselm does. William talks about a rather generic type of justice being restored through the innocent death of Christ, the price or ransom (pretium) paid to God.²⁵⁶ He does not imitate another of Anselm's arguments concerning the Incarnation, viz. that it was necessary for God to effect salvation²⁵⁷ because through sin man had proven himself unworthy of doing it.²⁵⁸

iv. Christ's Physical and Eucharistic Bodies Produce Mystical Body

William, like Gregory and countless other medieval writers, holds a conviction that human beings are mystically united to the person of Christ in the Eucharist. Gregory writes

³⁵² The image of a pretium, a ransom to be paid to God, was used by the Fathers metaphorically to convey the arduous nature of the Redemption. See Lukken, Original Sin in the Roman Liturgy, 67-200, esp. 172.
³⁵³ Cf. Straw, Perfection in Imperfection, 154, n.32.
³⁵⁴ Lukken, Original Sin in the Roman Liturgy, 223-4.
³⁵⁶ In the following passage of De natura et dignitate amoris the devil seems to be the tool of God rather than one to whom satisfaction is made: "Occisus justus injuste pro justitia novam de inimico obtinuit justitiam, mortis scilicet injuste sibi illate (The righteous man struck down unjustly for righteousness' sake, obtained a new righteousness from the enemy by the death unjustly inflicted on him)," De nat. et dig. amor. 45 ed. Davy, 124 (PL 184, 402D).
³⁵⁸ Ibid. 1.22 ed. Schmitt, 2: 90.
that Christ's act is completed only when we crucify ourselves, since "Christ suffers for you, leaving behind an example for us that we should follow his footsteps (1 Pt. 2:21)."\(^{359}\)

Perhaps William is reconfiguring this imagery in an original way when he follows his description of Christ's personal offering of his blood to God by saying "Lord Father, you have bestowed liberality, and the earth of my body has produced its fruit.\(^{360}\) Now righteousness will walk before you and you will place your feet on the path of human salvation."\(^{361}\)

Augustine had compared the fruit that comes forth from the dying seed to the death of Christ, which produces the power of virtue.\(^{362}\) Like Gregory the Great, who was interested in interior contrition and the internal sacrifice of self during the Mass,\(^{363}\) William alludes to the moral restoration that takes place through the reception of the Eucharist: "by having applied the seal of God's goodness, it [the Eucharist] imprints and conforms by this anointing everything soothed and gentled within us."\(^{364}\) For Gregory and Augustine, Christ's death gives us an example of true obedience and righteousness to follow. William takes a further step and suggests that Christ does more than prepare the way for man, his feet walk the path for and with us, implying that a type of mystical unity is established between Christ and man through Christ's participation in human nature. Shortly afterward William goes on to develop the theme of the union of man and God in one Body through the Eucharist,

\(^{359}\) \textit{In lib. I Reg.} 4.136 CCSL 144, 366.

\(^{360}\) Cf. Ps. 66: 6-7; cf. Ps. 84: 13.


\(^{362}\) \textit{Enn. in Ps.} 59.9 CCSL 39, 761: "\textit{Et Ephraem fortitudo capitis mei.} Ephraem fructificatio interpretatur. Mea, inquit, fructificatio, et haec fructificatio fortitudo est capitis mei. Caput enim meum Christus est. Et unde fructificatio fortitudo eius? Quia nisis granum caderet in terram, non multiplicaretur, solum remaneret. Cecidit ergo in terram, Christus in passione, et secuta est fructificatio in resurrectione. \textit{Et Ephraem fortitudo capitis mei.} Pendebat et contemnebatur; granum erat intus, habebat uires trahendi post se omnia. Quomodo in grano numeri seminum latent; abietum nescio quid appetet oculis, sed uis convertens in se materiam et proferens fructum abscondita est, sic in Christi cruce abscondita erat uitus; apparebat infirmitas. O magnum granum!"

\(^{363}\) \textit{Dial.} 4.61.1 SC 265, 202: "necessis est ut, cum hoc agimus, nosmetipsos Deo in cordis contritione matetur, quia qui passionis dominicae mysteria celebramus, debemus imitari quod agimus. Tunc ergo uere pro nobis Deo hostia erit, cum nos ipsos hostiam feceris." Gregory's emphasis on the Christ as sacrifice may be influenced by Augustine, see A. Krueger, "Synthesis of Sacrifice According to Saint Augustine" (Ph.D. dissertation, Santa Maria ad Lacum, 1950) 100-63; Leo I may also be influential, according to Straw, \textit{Perfection in Imperfection.} 173, n.62.

\(^{364}\) \textit{De nat. et dig. amor.} 37 ed. Davy, 116 (PL 184, 399B): "tunc apposito bonitatis Dei sigillo, omnia nostra pacata uctione illa et emollita imprimet et conformat."
Man has been satiated with the fruit of this work by the mediation of the Wisdom of God....He eats and drinks the Body and Blood of his Redeemer, the heavenly manna, the bread of angels, the bread of wisdom, and while eating he is transformed into the nature of the food that he eats. For to eat the body of Christ is nothing other than to be made the Body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit.

William is participating in this instance in a current of eucharistic mysticism that was growing increasingly strong during the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

Here William makes use of the Greek idea that Christ embodies in himself the great collectivity of believers: this collectivity is not only of a mystical, but of a physical nature.

According to St. Ambrose, Christ incorporates mystically the whole human race by taking on human nature. Origen said that the Eucharistic body is a figure of the physical body of Christ, while the physical body is a figure of the Church. In Origen the connection between a symbol and what it stands for is both a relationship of hiddenness and real presence. As we absorb the food we absorb the Life that is the Word; to be made into the body of Christ means to absorb him, and thus gradually likeness is restored through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. For Origen the physical body of the believer is symbolized by the temple in which

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365 Heb. 9:4.
367 Eccli. 9:11.
368 De nat. et dig. amor. 46 ed. Davy, 126 (PL 184, 403B): “De fructu ergo hujus operis satiatus homo, mediante sapientia Dei...Manducat et bibit corpus et sanguinem Redemptoris sui, manna celeste, panem Angelorum, panem sapientie et manducans transformatur in naturam cibi quem manducat. Corpus enim Christi manducare, nihil est aliud quam corpus Christi effici et templum Spiritus sancti.”
370 Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, De opific. homin. 17. ed. Cappuyns, 235-6, trans. Schaff and Wace, 406. He teaches that because all men are created in the same image they are associated together as one great body, one image of He who is. Cf. Kereszty calls this a physico-mystical unity, Fundamentals of Christology, 164-6.
371 Cf. Dudden, Life and Times, 2: 610-12. Ambrose also proposed that because it was the flesh that sinned, Christ's incarnation provides a suitable remedy for that sin, so that the flesh that sins redeems itself; cf. Ambrose, De incarnatione 6.56 PL 16, 868A.
372 Crouzel, Origen, 226-9.
373 Cf. ibid. 128-9.
the Holy Spirit presides as priest. William too focuses on the human transformation into God through grace during the Eucharist.

v. Spiritual Charisma Revealed in the Body

Near the end of his treatise, William returns to the theme of the exterior manifestation of restoration in the human body. He describes some holy men of his acquaintance whose bodies are beginning to be transformed by their sanctity. In this passage the body becomes a keyhole through which we glimpse the restored life to come, which begins even now. Wise men even communicate among themselves in an angelic tongue solely by means of their affectus and exterior glances. This gives a foretaste of the glorified life to come. He says that their senses, their bearing and their faces are all beginning to be transformed:

The senses themselves perceive near them some new and spiritual grace. The eyes are simple, the ears temperate. Sometimes in the fervor of prayer such a fragrance of an unfamiliar scent wafts forth; there is such a taste of untastable sweetness, and mutual touch is such an incentive to spiritual charity that they seem to produce within themselves a paradise of some spiritual delight. Their countenance and even the comportment of the whole body, with the seemliness of their life, manners, and activities, and their manifestations of mutual service, devotion, and gentle acceptance of one another, so join and unite them to one another in the pleasure of this grace that they truly are one heart and soul (Acts 4:32). Surely by purity of conscience and the grace of a common way of life they are here already beginning that future glory of their bodies to be possessed perfectly in the eternal life to come.

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374 Ibid. 137, 226-29.
375 De nat. et dig. amor. 46 ed. Davy, 124-6 (PL 184, 403AB).
376 Ibid. 51 ed. Davy, 132 (PL 184, 405D).
William compares the heightened capacities of their senses to that which they will possess in the risen life: "in that life, God will be seen by each person to be in all and by all in each person. Not that divinity may be seen by physical eyes, but the glorification of the body by some grace manifested through it will point out the presence of divinity."379 One precedent for the view that the bodily senses will continue to exercise a role in the risen life is Augustine’s proposal in the twenty-second book of De civitate Dei that the resurrection body will be capable of seeing spiritual realities.380

William hastens to add that the risen person will not be dependent on physical vision for spiritual understanding. The sacraments, for instance, are necessary for fallen man because our minds "understand scarcely anything except bodies and corporeal things while we are passing through as an image."381 The function of the sacraments is to "bind" us lest we draw away from God,382 just as religio is said to derive from religare, to bind.383 Even in this life, however, we should begin not to need physical things but should pass from physical to spiritual things.384

vi. Connection between Valuation of Social and Physical Aspects of Human Life

William holds on the one hand that the human body will be a vehicle for the mutual communication of grace and joy. In the passage just cited he suggests that the body has a role


380 De civ. Dei 22.29 CCSL 48, 856-62.


383 Cf. Augustine, De civ. Dei. 10.1 CCSL 47, 273; idem, De vera relig. 55.111 CCSL 32, 259; Isidore, Etym. 8.2.2, ed. Lindsay, vol. 1. Ceglar, Chronology, cites Cicero, Nat. deorum 2, as making the same connection between religio and religare. Ceglar does not give the edition he used, but the text he gives does not correspond to the edition of Pease for the text he is presumably citing (De nat. deorum 2.72, ed. Pease, 2: 738-40), which does not contain the verb religare.
in binding humans to one another. On the other hand, he also thinks that we will not need physical things to bind us to God in heaven. Just after William suggests that the soul should pass over from physical to spiritual things, he continues painting a vision of a very privatized spirituality for the wise soul: "for with the body and all bodily cares and hindrances left behind, she forgets everything except God and attends to nothing except God." All of the passages which celebrate the body occur in contexts in which the social aspects of human life, i.e. the bodily comportment of saints, are also exalted. It appears that the body is frequently connected thematically with community in a vision which sees the body as a means of a social communication of the realm of grace. That body should function in William’s thought in this way will come as no surprise to students of anthropology (in the modern sense), who have for years been examining the symbols connected with body as expressive of the aspirations of cultural groups. The work of John Gager on early Christianity has looked at the types of “bodily symbols” used to express views of incarnation, asceticism, and resurrection two types of Christian groups: those that emphasized submission to institutional authority and those of a sectarian character. He concludes that Christians who support the Church as an “established” institution tend to emphasize the subordination of the individual to the “society” of the Church through the use of bodily symbols that emphasize the mingling of body and spirit, while movements of protest and reform tend to use other symbols that portray the alienation of spirit and body. This generalization is only a paradigm by which one can attempt to analyze the complex tangle of bodily symbols and interpretations that are embodied in any

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384 Cf. Cassian, Conf. 3.7 SC 42, 146-50.
385 Ibid. 52 ed. Davy, 134 (PL 184, 406D): “Relicto enim corpore et corporeis omnibus curis et impedimentis, omnium que sunt preter Deum obliviscitur, nichilque preter Deum attendens.”
386 See Marcel Mauss, “Les techniques du corps.” Mauss argues that the human body is a social product and thus an apt basis for symbolization. Mary Douglas notes that Christian doctrines such as the Virgin Birth, the Incarnation, martyrdom, and monasticism are all what she calls “natural symbols,” metaphors whose primary point of reference is the human body. Cf. Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo (London, 1966) and Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology (New York, 1970). Among medievalists Caroline Bynum, Jacques le Goff, and Peter Brown have adapted the approach of the anthropologists in interpreting the body as allegory for community; for bibliography cf. Bynum, introduction to Fragmentation and Redemption, 19, and nn. 12-3.
one thinker. Individuals frequently show the influences of both the corporate and more privatized approaches to body. The Apostle Paul’s relationship with the Corinthians reveals that he simultaneously desired to be rid of his mortal body and to be united with Christ (1 Cor. 12.12-31) and that he firmly espoused the doctrine of the resurrection (1 Cor. 15: 36-50).

Gager interprets this to mean that at one level Paul’s thought expresses the ecclesiology of his age, in which the Church was conceived as an alternative to the established Roman religion, while at another Paul was concerned with the subordination of the individual within the society of the Church. The multiple symbols used by William to describe bodies reflect the tensions involved in living the twelfth-century spirit of reform, the dilemma of living “in but not of the world.” On the one hand, those symbols of alienation, which express his Pauline desire to be rid of bodily distractions, may express his criticisms of a worldly Church and particularly a monastic order (Cluniac) which was failing to be sufficiently set apart from society. On the other hand, those that emphasize the reordering of body and its participation in spiritual perfection reflect a strong commitment to the order and authority of the established Church as a whole.

vii. Transformation of "Flesh"

A final point of interest near the end of De natura et dignitate amoris is a brief mention of the body of the wise man. William is treating the growth of grace in holy men. As they develop in holiness they sense that “the contradictions of the flesh (omnes contradicitiones carnis) have disappeared, so that the general substance of the flesh is not in them, except as the instrument of good work.” 388 This statement presents a serious challenge to the interpreter. Is William using the term caro merely in synecdoche here? The Pauline idea that the sinful state of man will ultimately yield to a radically different life in the spirit seems to find an echo in the idea of the disappearance of the flesh. And yet the final clause introduces the notion of continuity between the old and the new state which would seem to be problematic if the notion of flesh that he began with was the Pauline notion of "flesh" as sinful man. Nor does he seem

to be saying that the material substrate of man's body disappears.\textsuperscript{389} We must seek another interpretation. Perhaps William is trying to describe a state in which the substance is radically altered while its identity remains constant. All that is dross is purified from the body/passions until only its originally intended use remains. The "flesh" here is not "sinful man" but "body" as originally constituted. William does not specify precisely how this change is manifested in the body's composition.

One finds an idea something like this at the end of Bernard of Clairvaux's \textit{De diligendo Deo}. Bernard is describing what the heavenly beings will be like, having attained the fourth degree of love in which man loves God for himself alone and, passing entirely into God, becomes one spirit with him.

Then each member of Christ can assuredly say of himself what Paul said of the Head:

'If we have known Christ according to the flesh, we no longer know him so'...\textsuperscript{390}

This does not mean that the substance of the flesh (\textit{substantia carnis}) will not be present, but that all carnal necessity will disappear, the love of the flesh will be absorbed by that of the spirit and our present weak, human affections will be changed into divine.\textsuperscript{391}

\textsuperscript{389} In the works thus far considered there are two instances of the term \textit{substantia} in \textit{De contemplando Deo}: 1) 11 SC 61, 26; and 2) 13 SC 61, 118; and five in \textit{De natura et dignitate amoris}: 3) 5 ed. Davy, 76 (PL 184, 382D); 4) 11 ed. Davy, 82 (PL 184, 385D); 5) 15 ed. Davy, 88 (PL 184: 388A); 6) 40 ed. Davy, 120 (PL 184, 401B); and 7) 51 ed. Davy, 152 (PL 184, 406A). \textit{De cont. Deo} 11 says that the Father and the Son are \textit{omousion}, of the same substance; \textit{De cont. Deo} 13 says that the three persons of the Trinity are three in one substance. Of the five passages from \textit{De nat. et dig. amor.} 3) refers to the Trinity as three persons, one substance; 4) reads "when the substance of the inner man has been softened by the long practice of discipline it will be able to be impressed and informed by their form" (trans. Davis, 62) (cf. Gregory the Great, \textit{Mor.} 18.28.45 CCSL 143A, 914); 5) contrasts the charity which is God and the charity that God gives: "charity considered according to the natures of the first and of the giver is the name of the substance in the giver and of the quality in the gift" (trans. Davis, 67); 4) echoes Heb. 1:3 which calls Jesus "the splendor of my glory and the figure of my substance" (trans. Davis, 95); and 7) is the passage under consideration about the flesh of the holy man. Augustine uses the term "substance" as an equivalent for essence (\textit{De Trin.} 5.8.9-5.9.10 CCSL 50, 215-17). A substance is something that not only exists by virtue of itself, but, more importantly, is the subject of accidents or qualities. See \textit{De Trin} 7.5.10 CCSL 50, 260-1. Because Augustine associates substance with mutable corporeal beings he deems the term technically inappropriate to describe God. William clearly uses the term frequently in connection with God. From 4 and 7 it appears that William's idea of substance is otherwise like Augustine's: a substrate capable of receiving accidents.

\textsuperscript{390} 2 Cor. 5:16.

\textsuperscript{391} \textit{De diligendo Deo} 15.40 in \textit{Trattati}, in \textit{Opere di San Bernardo}, ed. Gastaldelli, 1: 330: "Tunc pro certo singula Christi membra dicere poterunt de se, quod Paulus ait de captive: Et si cognovimus secundum carmem Christum, sed nunc iam non novimus...Non quod carnis illic substantia futura non sit, sed quod carnalis omnis..."
In Bernard we encounter the same ability to associate various senses of flesh in the same breath. Here Bernard interprets a literal statement of Paul's in an allegorical sense: the passage also builds on a preceding one which interprets the Pauline "Not what is spiritual comes first, but what is animal, then spiritual." Bernard's thought moves toward a vision of a risen man in whom the body is still present, but glorified and spiritualized. One senses in Bernard the notion that the corporeal body is replaced by an angelic body, whose substance is nevertheless the same as the animal body.

William's eyes, however, are not primarily on heaven, but on the cloistral landscape of twelfth-century France. He argues that the eschaton is to some degree already present and that this is made obvious to us in a beautiful way through bodily transformation. Some might argue that William's interest in bodily transformation might answer a need to assure himself about his own personal election by God. We will see that this anxiety indeed runs throughout the early Meditations. This explanation by itself, however, is too simple. William's theology, unlike Augustine's, is quite optimistic about the possibility of spiritual union with God in the present life: all of his writings present the unitas spiritus as a goal that is attainable now.

William seems to have possessed a simple assurance that with enough discipline, the body will follow the inclinations of the spirit and that it even possesses an inner dynamism that reveals God gloriously in its proper way. Rather than seeking comfort in bodily transformation as a mark of divine election, William rejoiced in it as a means of displaying the interior happiness given by God. He argued that physical manifestations of virtue were a joy to behold, in the spirit of Bernard, who claimed that they were an ornamentation that even angels might envy.392

4. Summary

For William of St. Thierry the body is rarely considered in isolation from the soul, that is, body is most often treated as a psychic/material composite. His description of the nature of the composition of the body is expressed most fully in his description of man in De natura et

necessitudo sit defutura, carnisque amor amore spiritus absorbendus, et infirmae, quae nunc sunt, humanae affectiones in divinas quasdam habeant commutari."

392 Epist. 113.5 in Epistulae, vols. 7 and 8 of Sancti Bernardi opera, ed. Leclercq, 7: 290.
dignitate amoris as created in the image of God in his *vis spiritualis* and *vis vitalis*. We have shown that this terminology likely stems from Gregory of Nyssa or Eriugena. The contextualization of the phrase *vis vitalis* within a discussion of the image of God suggests that William believes that the body is an image of the image of God, a theme borrowed from Gregory of Nyssa by Eriugena. With the vital life force the material/psychic composite of "the body" receives the impression of the soul's image. William does not give us much information about the material dimension of man; he thinks that the body is composed of elements, and that once the mortal body disintegrates, the elements wait to be gathered up into the new spiritual body.

One could perhaps best summarize William's early anthropology by reiterating the imagery at *De natura et dignitate amoris* 18 where he describes the hierarchy God-soul-body. There William describes the human soul as connected to the body through its senses and to God through its spiritual senses. The soul becomes dead to its body through the purgation of mystical union. Through this experience it learns not to love the world for itself. In this section, and in the final section on the aged wise man who transcends all concern for the world and for the afflictions of the body, there is a strong sense that perfect contemplation entails a radical transcendence of the body and the world. There are even overtones of a kind of Stoic *apatheia* when William describes the wise man as untouchable by the things and events of the body.393

William is unquestionably influenced by a type of Neoplatonic ethical theory common to Plotinus, Origen, Augustine, Cassian, and Gregory the Great. All of these figures ostensibly exonerate the body from primary blame in human vice, since they attribute vice to the soul's voluntary submission to the passions which reside in its lower part. Unlike Origen, who attributed the fall to the soul's cooling in its fervor for God prior to the soul's desire to immerse itself in multiplicity, William focuses only on the latter, an idea likely inherited from Gregory the Great. Like Cassian and Gregory the Great, William seems to view materiality as

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393 Here William adds that he has no personal experience of this type of wisdom, which perhaps means of this
the condition for vice, at least by implication. The body is viewed negatively by William, because it represents a source of temptation for the fallen soul. However, because he is confident that the will can order itself to love properly, we do not see the same emphasis on ascesis as the purgative factor in human life as one finds in a writer like Gregory the Great. William connects the soul's purgation above all with mystical ascent.

Ascesis is important in William's theology of the body, of course. The goal of the spiritual man's approach to his body is to be able to live with it but not for it. Since for him the properly ordered body best serves the spirit by not distracting it from its proper end, in certain instances his thought tends to suggest that the body plays a negligible role in the perfect activity of man. However, we have seen that this is not the whole story for William, for he also demonstrates an interest, if one stated in the barest of terms, in the way the body can begin to live a "spiritual" life even in the present. The transformed body in the monastic community not only begins to serve the spirit, it perceives things more subtly, and it helps the monks to communicate mutually their interior happiness one to another, so that their shared experience is larger and more powerful than their individual experiences. He says, moreover, that the body will participate in the beatitude of the whole person in the resurrection, and that the senses will have a new capacity to perceive spiritual realities, as Augustine taught.

William shows a great deal of originality in his theology of the transformation of the terrestrial body, though at times it seems that he does not really have either the confidence or the terminology to express his insights adequately. William writes about the body spontaneously serving the soul; his expression of the body as animate underlines the way that the psychic element of the body was not severed from its material aspect in the way that one frequently encounters among post-Cartesian writers. He expresses bodily transformation as entailing the disappearance of the "substance" of the flesh, but he does not explain what this entails. Remembering that William teaches that the elements that formerly composed the body wait to be gathered up at the end of time, one must conclude that material substance continues state of apatheia.
to play some role in the composition of man, even if the body is transformed into a more spiritual state. If, as one suspects, William was influenced here by Eriugena, William may have in mind a body that becomes subsumed into spirit while yet retaining some of the qualities that make it body rather than soul.\textsuperscript{394}

His interest in the transformation of the body through the action of grace on the will connects him to Bernard, who, as Stephen Jaeger has shown, shapes a common twelfth-century interest in the bodily revelation of interior states into a form that particularly emphasizes the perfusion of the body by the spirit. Both writers contrast with Hugh of St. Victor, who stresses the moral training of the soul through the discipline of the body.

One way of understanding the way that William’s thought almost looks past the body on the one hand and contains the most effusive language about the body’s ability to reveal spiritual realities is to connect these two tendencies with aspects of William’s social experience of which they may be functioning unconsciously as metaphors. Given William’s reforming sensibilities, he was doubtless caught on the horns of the dilemma of living “in but not of the world,” and these two tensions may also be reflected in his approach to body. John Gager has speculated that reform-minded individuals will express a certain alienation between the body and the spirit in their use of bodily symbols and expressions of bodily experiences, while those who are interested in the preservation of the status quo will use symbols that stress the integration of body and spirit. If one applies these assumptions to William’s historical situation, one could theorize that on the one hand William’s desire to be rid of bodily distractions may express his desire to live a life more austere than the Cluniac order was

\textsuperscript{394} In Eriugena’s anthropology, after death the body is reconstituted out of the four elements into which it had been dissolved by means of the spiritual body, or the essence of body that represents the form of the present terrestrial body. Cf. \textit{Periph.} 4 ed. Jeaneau, 140-2 (PL 122, 801BC); cf. Bynum, \textit{Resurrection}, 142-6. Then the body will revert into vital motion \textit{(motus vitalis)}; vital motion into sense \textit{(sensus)}; sense into reason \textit{(ratio)}; reason into mind \textit{(animus)}; mind into knowledge of all things which are after God; knowledge into wisdom; and wisdom into the divine darkness. \textit{Periph.} 5.39 PL 122, 1020CD. Cf. Gersh, "Structure of the Return," 119. In this reversion the character of the lower principles are not destroyed, their characters undergo a certain annulment and a certain preservation; Eriugena has a new sense that the stability of the higher hypostases depends on the stability of the lower, according to Gersh, "Structure of the Return," 113-8. On Eriugena’s anthropology cf. Brian Stock, "The Philosophical Anthropology of Johannes Scottus Eriugena," \textit{Studii medievali}, 3d ser. 8 (1967) 1-57.
pursuing at that time, while his emphasis on the reordering of body and its participation in spiritual perfection may reflect a strong commitment to the order and authority of the established Church as a whole.
II. *De sacramento altaris*

The last chapter touched upon a number of ways in which body is significant in William’s thought. We began by examining how the body of Christ was an object of affective devotion and pedagogical tool for William in *De contemplando Deo*. We saw that he nuanced this theme further in *De natura et dignitate amoris* by suggesting that as Mediator, Christ walks the path of human salvation for us. William stresses that, in addition to acting as a moral example, Christ gave us his Eucharistic flesh, so that we might become what he is. In the same work William also suggested that internal order and spiritual grace are manifested in outward comportment and that the bodies of monks can inspire others in the community to higher levels of holiness. The latter theme demonstrates his interest in twelfth-century thought about the way bodily comportment reflects a virtuous disposition. In the treatise on the Eucharist that we are about to discuss, *De sacramento altaris*,¹ a number of these themes receive fuller treatment. William continues to explore the way that Christ’s Incarnation (i.e. his physical body) reveals his love for man, noting that his Incarnation allowed his institution of the Eucharist, which functions as a means of restoring physical order to the human body. *De sacramento altaris* also reveals new themes. William teaches that the human body begins its resurrected life during the present life through the reception of the Eucharist. William reveals sensitivity to the ways that bodies act as vessels of grace and reveal its presence to a degree that is striking even for the twelfth-century milieu, wherein a variety of writers expressed strong awareness of the “charismatic” potential of the human body. The three main divisions of our narrative will treat three bodies emphasized by William (the physical, Eucharistic, and Mystical bodies of Christ). I will touch additionally on the topics of Christ’s risen body and the way in which Christ’s body is a paradigm for human bodies. Preparatory to this, I will describe the

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¹ I used the Migne edition of William’s Eucharistic treatise, *De sacramento altaris* PL 180, 345-66. This is the edition by Bertrand Tissier in *Bibliotheca patrum cisterciensium*, 8 vols. (Bonnefontaine, 1960-1969) 4: 130ff. The critical edition being prepared by Paul Verdoyen for the Corpus Christianorum series has not yet appeared. I also consulted a microfilm of the thirteenth- or fourteenth-century manuscript, Paris BN MS. lat. 2155, ff. 225r-228v.
contents of the treatise and the circumstances of its composition. At this point a word on
William's terminology for body is in order. In this treatise he uses the terms caro and corpus
as equivalent terms in reference to both the Eucharistic flesh and the physical flesh of Christ.²

A. Circumstances of Composition

In 1112 Rupert of Deutz finished a commentary on the divine office, entitled Liber de
divinis officiis,³ which expressed a form of Eucharistic theology that attempted to respond to
doubts among believers about Christ's presence in the Eucharistic food and drink after the
priestly consecration,⁴ doubts consequent to the Berengarian controversy.⁵ In order to
reinforce the idea that Christ fully united himself to the bread and wine during the consecration,
he developed the idea that the priest "re-presented" Christ's sacrifice each day. Many
contemporaries viewed Rupert's language of "re-presentation" as obscuring his intended goal,
leaving in question whether the bread and wine actually remained unchanged on the altar, and
charged him with holding a type of "impanation."⁶ John Van Engen has shown that Rupert's
theology issued from a salvation-historical spirituality that viewed the Eucharist as the work of
salvation continued into the present, a dramatic event, the re-enactment of Christ's sacrifice and
the history of salvation begun in the Scriptures. Rupert perceived the unity of Christ with the
Eucharistic food as analogous to His unity with human nature in the Incarnation.⁷ Rupert's
concerns were not always appreciated by those, such as William of St. Thierry and Alger of

² De sacr. alt. 9 PL 180, 355: "Sciendum autem, quod carnis illius vel corporis spiritualis, de quo jam supra
multa diximus, sacramentum est caro vel corpus Christi, quod in ara crucis et in altari sacrificatur, et corporaliter
 manducatur."
³ Liber de divinis officiis, ed. H. Haacke CCCM 7 (Turnhout, 1967).
⁴ For the history of early Christian thought on the Eucharist, see J.N.D. Kelly, Early Christian
Doctrines, 5th ed. (London, 1960) 440-55. On twelfth-century theologies of the Eucharist, see J. de Ghellinck,
"Eucharistie," DTC 5, 1233-1302; Brian Stock, "The Eucharist and Nature," in The Implications of Literacy:
Written language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries (Princeton, 1983) 241-
325; Gary Macy, The Theologies of the Eucharist in the Early Scholastic Period: A Study of the Salvific
Function of the Eucharist according to the Theologians c. 1080-c. 1220 (New York, 1984).
⁵ See Nicholas M. Hitting, "Berengar's Definitions of Sacramentum and Their Influence on Medieval
(Wilmington, DE, 1988) s.v. "Impanation."
Liège, who viewed his language of re-presentation to be dangerous because it could be interpreted to express both a form of "impanation" and also the view that the body of Christ, now present at the right hand of the Father, can be sacrificed again and again.  

William penned a personal letter to Rupert expressing concern about his views and suggesting specific terminology that should be altered. Van Engen has dated the letter to William's residence as a monk at St. Nicaise, perhaps between 1112-14 and in any case sometime prior to 1116, the year in which Rupert was put on trial in Liège for his views. Van Engen suggests that Rupert shows signs of clarifying his Eucharistic terminology along the lines suggested by William in texts dating from 1113-14. Sometime afterward William sent his Eucharistic treatise, *De sacramento altaris*, to his friend, Bernard of Clairvaux. The epistle to Bernard that prefaces it says that his "recent" (nuper) communications with Rupert had prompted a consideration of the patristic writings on the Eucharist. Evidence that the treatise was sent to Bernard in 1122 or 1123 appears in William's greeting to Bernard in the

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9 William of St. Thierry, *Epist. ad quendam monach.* PL 180, 341-4; Alger of Liège, *De sacramentis corporis et sanguinis Dominici* 1.6, PL 180, 754-6, 786-90.  


11 Ibid. 328-31. Châtillon expresses some reservation about Van Engen's conclusion in view of how little can be deduced about its dating from the letter itself, "Monasticism and the Schools," 163.  

12 Ibid. 331.  

13 Van Engen suggests that it may have been sent as a finished or nearly-finished piece right after the conversation about the Song of Songs held between the two friends during William's convalescence at Clairvaux in 1121 or 1122, "Rupert of Deutz," 333.  

14 William of St. Thierry, epistolary preface to *De sacramento altaris* PL 180, 343-6: "Cum nuper, re ipsa exigente, cuidam fratri [Rupert] breviter de sacramentis scripsissem, sumpto inde cogitandi exordio, rationes quasdam ex patrum sententiis sumptas coepi invicem confiere; et quaedam quae in libris eorum, et maxime B. Augustini, super hac re nonnullos turbare solent in unum colligens, tentare coepi utrum aliquid inde possem conficere. Cumque ex conflatione illa opusculum hoc nescio quomodo exisset..."
prefatory letter. In a letter sent to William around Christmas, 1120, Bernard addressed him as "Fratri G[uillelmo] frater B[ernardus] de Claravalle dictus abbas: salutem."¹⁵ In the letter that prefaces De sacramento altaris, William calls Bernard "Clarissimo suo electo ex milibus suus ille seipsum," a greeting derived from Cant. 5:10. Bernard uses a similar greeting, "Suo illi quod suo," in a letter that has been dated to 1123 or 1124.¹⁶ Bernard did not use this type of intimate greeting again in correspondence a few years after this period.¹⁷ Ceglar has surmised that the peak of intimacy in the friendship between Bernard and William dates from the period following the series of conversations about the Song of Songs shared by the two monks during William's convalescence from an illness at Clairvaux in 1121-22.¹⁸ These were to be the basis of William's later composition of the Brevis commentatio.¹⁹ Van Engen suggests that De sacramento altaris was probably sent in approximately 1122 or 1123. Considering whether a lapse of about a decade (from 1112/14-1122/23) is consistent with William's usage of the term nuper, Van Engen notes that William also describes Berengar of Tours as having recently (nuper) been condemned, and that the time-frame conveyed by the term, nuper, could vary widely in the middle ages.²⁰

Given that the composition of De sacramento altaris spans possibly a decade, it is difficult to know where to place it within the development of William's thought. My intent is to show that the bulk of De sacramento altaris reflects the type of anthropology that characterizes De contemplando Deo but also contains new anthropological insights, such that the human body has a special dignity conferred through Christ's Incarnation, and that the Eucharist plays a role in hastening man's physical glorification even during this present life. Since there are doctrines which appear "new" when compared to those of De contemplando Deo but which seem to mimic some of the developments of De natura et dignitate amoris, it

18 On the date, see Ceglar, Chronology, 59-60, 157-8.
19 Ibid. 350-79.
seems reasonable to place *De sacramento altaris* after *De natura et dignitate amoris* with the intention of comparing the similarities shared with the latter.

B. The Structure of *De sacramento altaris*

There is as yet no full-scale treatment of *De sacramento altaris*, and so a few words about the structure of this complicated work are in order. The treatise consists in Migne of twelve chapters and a short preface.21 The preface explains the proper method according to which a topic like the Eucharist ought to be treated. It argues that one cannot proceed simply by the standards of human reason. Without submitting oneself to the teaching of faith, wisdom or understanding will not be attained.22 Chapter 1 distinguishes between the unity of Christ and his body and between Christ and his Eucharistic body, in an attempt to clarify how Christ can be understood to be present now on earth in many places simultaneously in his Eucharistic body and also at the right hand of the Father. This was, of course, a facet of Eucharistic theology that had been brought into prominence by Rupert's emphasis on the analogy between the unity of Christ and human nature through the Incarnation and his unity with the bread in the Eucharistic food. Chapter 2 treats the reason for the institution of the Eucharist. The nature of the change of the bread into body, what would today be called transubstantiation, is the topic of the third and fourth books. Chapter 5 discusses the spiritual eating of the Eucharist. Chapter 6 is an exegesis of a teaching of Jerome on the connection between the physical body of Christ and the production of the Eucharistic body and the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church. In chapter 7 William shows that if one partakes of the Eucharistic body unworthy, the spiritual effect is not wrought, and one is not made part of the Mystical Body. The corporeal consumption of the host is the subject of chapter 8. Chapter 9

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21 More work on the manuscripts may indicate that these chapter divisions are not the author's. No break is indicated between chapters eleven and twelve in Paris BN MS. lat 2155, f. 228r.
22 Cf. preface to *De sacramento altaris* PL 180, 345A: "Cum Christianae fidei veritas hoc quasi speciali praemineat jure, ut non ipsa per intellectum, sed per eam ejus quaerendus sit intellectus." Here we see an echo of the Augustinian dictum that unless one believes, one will not understand (Is. 7:9) that inspires also the thought of Anselm. Cf. Augustine, *Sermo de tertia feria paschae* (*Sermo ex collectione Guelpherbyiana* 11) 4.3 in *Miscellanea Agostiniana*, vol. 1, *Santu Augustini sermones post Maurinos reperti*, ed. D.G. Morin, 2 vols. (Rome, 1930-1) 1: 476.
treats various signs, or sacraments, associated with the Eucharist: the unworthy communicant insults Jesus once again just as Christ’s persecutors had insulted him during his Passion; the breaking, lowering, and elevation of the bread signifies the death, burial, and ascension of the faithful in Christ; the manna and the rock struck by Moses, both described in Exodus, are signs of the Eucharistic body and blood; the unity of the many particles that compose bread and wine are signs of the Mystical Body. Chapter 10 warns the reader that it is wrong to think that the physical Body of Christ, as it existed formerly on the earth, is eaten during Communion. In this sense the sacrifice of Christ’s body cannot be repeated, and here a blow is struck against Rupert’s theology of "re-presentation" of the sacrifice. In chapters 11 and 12 William gives some instructions about the proper way of doing patristic exegesis. He admonishes the reader that, in seeking to understand contradictory passages in the Fathers, the reader should try to reconcile the contradiction by looking carefully at the circumstances under which the various passages were written. William notes that when the Fathers wrote their books, they could not foresee the subtleties of theological questions that would be raised in the centuries to come about topics such as the sacraments. In reading difficult passages of the Fathers, the prudent reader ought to remember to determine which of three senses of the body of the Lord is under discussion. The three senses are: the physical body assumed by Christ during his terrestrial life; the Eucharistic flesh; and the Mystical Body. At the end of chapter 12 William appends a list of patristic sententiae on the body of Christ, drawn mainly from Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine.

_De sacramento altaris_ has to some degree the appearance of an assemblage of disparate parts. At one level the specific points to which William objected in Rupert’s theology represent the foundation of the work. We will mention a few. Chapter 1, as just noted, treats the problem of the difference between the body of Christ united to the Word and the body of Christ present in the Eucharist, at issue in the controversy with Rupert. In chapter 3’s and 4’s attempts to reiterate the orthodox view that substantial change occurs during the Eucharist, one can read a condemnation of the specter of impanation raised by Rupert. In chapter 9 William
affirms that the visible bread both is a sign, a view Rupert opposed, and also contains, after the consecration, the thing it signifies (*res sacramenti*); he also opposes Rupert’s notion that the manna eaten by the Jews has no spiritual grace comparable to that conferred in the Eucharist. Finally, chapter 10 is a response to Rupert’s theology of the "re-presentation" of the sacrifice.

The bulk of the material at the middle of the treatise (chapters 5-9), which is of a fairly meditational, rather than dogmatic, nature, is a second unit, the product of William’s study of the Fathers. As Van Engen has suggested, this section was probably written over a long period of time. This section highlights the way in which William’s approach to the Eucharist is typical of eleventh- and twelfth-century intellectual culture, which was increasingly preoccupied with the interpretation of physical symbols through texts.

The final chapters of William’s treatise provide the reader with guidelines for the resolution of apparent contradictions between patristic authors, and here William demonstrates his interest in the personal, subjective acquisition of understanding from Biblical texts. He urges his readers that, when in doubt about how to reconcile contradictory opinions in the fathers, they should weigh and compare the relative merits of the texts and discover the historical context in which the texts were written. His method shows the imprint of his contact with those of the twelfth-century schools and of Abelard’s *Sic and Non*.

Tying together chapters 2 and 5 is the theme of the role of the Eucharist in God’s economy of salvation. Rupert of Deutz and Alger of Liège had similarly grounded their treatises within Christological considerations. This question is formulated explicitly in chapter 2, "in what way is the body of the Lord necessary for us?" The use of the term "necessity" may indicate that William is attempting to apply to the topic of the institution of the

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24 On Rupert’s opposition to the Eucharist’s signification, see Van Engen, *Rupert of Deutz*, 153. On Rupert’s objection to the spiritual power of the Old Testament manna, see ibid. 146-9.
27 Cf. Stephen Ferruolo, *The Origins of the University: The Schools of Paris and their Critics*, 1100-1215 (Stanford, 1985) 76-7. Ferruolo notes that William assumes that the authorities themselves will eventually yield the desired reconciliation of differences, while Abelard reveals a greater reliance on the critical capacity of human reason.
Eucharist the theological method of Anselm of Bec, which was to give intelligible "reasons" for the doctrines of faith.29 William shows that there is a parallel between the necessary occurrence of the Incarnation and of the institution of the Eucharist: "Just as the necessity of human salvation demands that it exist where it is needed, likewise it demands that his body be present just as it is needed."30 As we will see, the "reasons" formulated in chapter two consist largely of rehearsals of patristic wisdom to the effect that it was necessary to teach a bodily people through bodily means, and in this respect William’s thought shows great similarity to the first stage of Bernard’s Christology, as discussed in the previous chapter, and to Peter the Venerable, as we will see. The question of the reason for the necessity of the Eucharist surfaces again in chapter 5, in which a similar answer is given in fuller detail: it is necessary that we have this spiritual food for eternal life.31

Finally, chapters 1 and 8 explore the transformative effects of God on the human body in the Incarnation as a basis for understanding Christ’s ability to be present in many places simultaneously in the Eucharist. In chapter 1 William celebrates the miraculousness of Christ’s terrestrial body, which was born of a virginal birth, and suggests by extension that the risen body of Christ can no doubt be capable of things even harder for us to grasp, such as how he can be physically present in the Eucharist and at the right hand of God simultaneously. William builds an analogy between the omnipresence of the soul in the human body and God’s omnipresence in the world and then asks whether it is really difficult to believe that Christ’s

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28 Van Engen, Rupert of Deutz, 105-18.
30 Ibid. 2 PL 180, 348D: "Sicut enim exiguit necessitas salutis humanae, ut adsit ubi opus est; sic etiam exiguit, ut sic adsit corpus ejus, sicut opus est." In his Elucidarium, a work highly influenced by Anselm, Honorius of Autun had earlier suggested that the Incarnation is necessary to the transformation of man, paralleling man’s spiritual transformation to corporeal nourishment. Cf. Elucidarium 1, q. 182, in L’Elucidarium et les lucidaires: Contribution, par l’histoire d’un texte, à l’histoire des croyances religieuses en France au moyen âge, ed. Yves Lefevre (Paris, 1954) 395: "Sicut enim esca in carne comeditis vertitur...it quisque fidelis per comestionem hujus cibi in corpus Christi convertitur...per cibum corporis ejus et incorporamur, ut idoneus est ultra quo Christus est transferamur. (Just as flesh is turned into the flesh of the one consuming it, so each of the faithful is turned into the body of Christ though eating this food...Through the food of the body we are incorporated into him, and for that reason it is necessary that we might be transformed into that which Christ is)."
31 De sacr. alt. 5 PL 180, 351B: “omni diligentia considerandum nobis est quomodo ad veram vitam talis cibus sic nobis necessarius sit, ut sine hoc ad illam pervenire imposibile sit.”
risen body will be so united to the Word that it will be capable of such things as a type of ubiquity presently unimaginable. William hints tantalizingly that our risen bodies may have similar powers. In chapter 8 he suggests that by eating the Eucharist human beings are transformed into Christ in their bodies and that they enter thereby into the future glorification of their bodies. The lack of proper transitions between chapters 1 and 2 and 8 and 9 suggests that chapters 1 and 8 might have been late additions. In chapter 1 he extends three ideas proposed in chapter 2: 1) that God desired from all eternity to effect harmony by his presence in the material world; 2) that original sin destroyed this harmony; and 3) that Christ’s body is a means of conferring health on man’s soul and body. He expresses these points using the metaphor of Christ as the Good Shepherd. The Lord stands under his creation like the Shepherd lifts up the lost lamb. He bears it up through the “cures” of the Incarnation and his Eucharistic self-gift.

By suggesting in chapter 1 the Word/flesh relation as a paradigm for the coexistence of soul and body in man, William proposes that even the physical part of human nature is in Christ destined for the divine.

In conclusion, William seems to have been trying to achieve a number of purposes in De sacramento altaris. He expanded what began as a series of theological responses to Rupert of Deutz’s questionable Eucharistic theology to create a sort of résumé of patristic thinking about the Eucharist. William summons to his aid citations of patristic authors much as Durand of Troarn had done in the treatise composed by him during the eucharistic controversies of the previous century; Durand refers to Cyril, Hilary, Basil, Leo, and others. A treatise more organic than systematic, the product of sustained digestion of the fathers, De sacramento altaris weaves William’s own mellifluous voice into a collective narrative of the Church.

C. The Physical Body of Christ

We will begin with William’s treatment of Christ’s physical body, but as an introduction it will be helpful to summarize the anthropological context in which his ideas are enmeshed. The fullest treatment of William’s anthropological thought occurs in chapter 5.

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32 Stock, Implications of Literacy, 290.
William's thought moves parabolically, first downwards, to the plight of man lost amid his own sinful muck, ascending finally toward God, in whom our love becomes gathered again.  

Here William's thought moves in older currents when he expresses his contempt for the ease with which human beings become distracted from their proper end:

For this reason indeed he descended to us, that by displaying his generous love he might redirect toward himself our love dispersed and polluted among earthly things, reform us in newness of life, and raise us--withdrawn and cleansed from the filth of these same things, which cannot be loved equally with him--again to him.  

Here William's anthropology is rather similar to that of the early St. Bernard. For both writers, man is viewed negatively for the most part, as lost in a disorder of his own creation, for which humility is the only remedy; the physical world is viewed negatively as something that man fell into and from which he needs to be cleansed.

When William considers the phenomenon of Christ's human embodiment, he emphasizes, like Augustine, Christ's humility in consenting to be made weak, servile, as a moral example to man. Using a passage from the Confessions to illustrate his point, he states,

That highest majesty, rising above the highest parts of his creation, raised to himself those who had been brought low. Amid the lower parts he built for himself out of our clay a humble dwelling, through which he might lower those in need of submission by means of these same things. Checking their fear and nourishing their love, he crosses over to them in order that they may not go on further in self-confidence but rather may become weak and, seeing at their feet the Godhead, weakened by participation in our

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33 In a revision to Southern's work on twelfth-century humanism, Glenn Olsen has proposed that Southern's emphasis on the "optimistic" quality of twelfth-century humanism must be revised to take into account not only positive, "ascending themes" but also the continuing influence of "descending" themes, such as the misery of man. Cf. R.W. Southern, "Medieval Humanism," in Medieval Humanism and Other Studies (Oxford, 1970) 29-60, and Olsen, "Twelfth-Century Humanism."

34 De sacr. alt. 5 PL 180, 351D: "Ideo quippe descendere ad nos, ut amorem nostrum in terrenis dispersum et putrefactum beneficia pietatis exhibendo in se recolligere, et in novitatem vitae reformaret, et abstractum et emundatum a faece earum rerum, quae cum ipso pariter amari non possunt, secum levaret sursum."

'coats of skin,' in their weariness may throw themselves down upon it, while it arises and lifts them up.36

The humility of Christ’s Incarnation benefits us because we can learn to entrust our weaknesses to one who has suffered the very same weaknesses. God becomes a more accessible teacher in Christ because he becomes a friend to us, "so that we might know God to have been made similar, as it were, to us."37

Christ offers himself as a moral example out of compassion for the plight in which man placed himself due to his inability to remain directed toward God: "that he might be loved by us he labored to purchase us, as it were, by curing our weaknesses, by reviving our death, by choosing the poor of the world, by conferring his strengths, and by commending the hate of earthly things and the love of heavenly things."38 We noted above that a similar appreciation of the merciful and compassionate spirit in which Christ undertook his terrestrial mission surfaces in Bernard’s early Christological writings. Christ’s lowering of himself (the Pauline kenosis or exanitio 39) is therefore viewed by both writers as having its humbling and enabling dimensions. As Constable has shown, 40 twelfth-century writers were by no means the first to see the mystery involved in the simultaneous embodiment in Christ of the divine descent and human ascent, 41 nor were they the first to propose God’s compassion as the motive for Christ’s descent, 42 but they deepened affective meditation on the Incarnation and the humanity of Christ to an extraordinary degree.

36 De sacr. alt. 5 PL 180, 351D-352A: “Sic enim illa summa majestas superioribus creaturae suae partibus supereminens, subditos egress ad seipsam. In inferioribus enim edificavit sibi humilem domum de limo nostro: per quam subdendos deprimeret a seipsis et ad se trajiceret, finiens timorem, et nutriens amor em, ne fiducia sui progresseretur longius, sed potius infirmarentur, videntes ante pedes suos infirmatum divinum ex participatione tunicae pelliciae nostrae, et lassim prostermerunt in ea; illa autem surgens levaret eos.” Cf. Augustine, Conf. 7.18.24 CCSL 27, 108. On William’s dependence on St. Augustine in this passage, see Courcelle, Les Confessions, 286. n.1.

37 De sacr. alt. 5 PL 180, 352B: “ut Deum agnosceremus similem quodammodo nobis factum.”

38 Ibid. 351D: “ut amaretur a nobis quoddammodo elaborat mereri, infirma nostra curando, mortua suscitando, ignobilia mundi eligendo, fortia ejus confundendo, terrenorum odium, coelestium amorem commendando.”

39 Phil. 2: 6-7.

40 Constable, “Humanity of Christ.”

41 On older views of Christ’s mediation, see above, ch. 1, p. 79-81.

42 See above, ch. 1, n. 141.
William’s Eucharistic treatise reveals his affective approach to the Incarnation:

For whatever our Redeemer did in the flesh, he assuredly did it on this account: that he might be loved by us, not because he himself—who has no need of our good things, being sufficient in himself in all things—needed our love, but because he undertook to make holy those who were unable to be holy except by loving him.\footnote{De sacr. alt. 5 PL 180, 351CD: "Quidquid enim Redemptor noster in carne fecit, ob hoc utique fecit, ut amaretur a nobis, non quod egeret ipse nostro amore, qui honorum nostrorum non indiget, per omnia sufficiens ipse sibi, sed quia quos beatos ipse facere susceperat, nisi eum amando non poterant esse beati."}

As in De contemplando Deo, the Incarnation demonstrates a dramatic pedagogical technique,\footnote{See above, ch. 1, pp. 44-5.} for “he called forth in us that which on our account he revealed to us in himself, namely that we learn to love him—who loved us first to the point of, as it were, despising himself—to the point of despising ourselves.”\footnote{De sacr. alt. 5 PL 180, 352C: “propter nos provocat in nobis, quod propter ipsos nos in seipso exhibebat nobis, videlicet ut disceremus eum amare usque ad contemptum nostrti, qui nos prior amavit usque ad contemptum quodammodo sui.”} This technique is aimed, as Anselm emphasizes, at the realization of the potential proper to man due to his creation in the image and likeness of God.

In chapter 1 William notes that Christ had to become incarnate in order to offset the weakness of the human body. William offers a new facet of God’s divine compassion: he has mercy on man’s weak body as well as his soul. William states that one purpose of the Incarnation was to save man who presently suffers from mortality: “He thus glorified that nature in which he communicated—in order that the merciful priest might be made like to his brothers in all things—in flesh and blood, that he might not destroy it: he thus promoted it, that he might not waste it.”\footnote{Ibid. 346A: “Qui naturam illam, in qua carni communicavit et sanguini, ut fratribus per omnia assimilaretur misericors pontifex, sic glorificavit, ut non destrueret; sic provexit, ut non exinaniret.” Cf. Bernard who also speaks of Christ as man’s brother, as at Serm. Cant. 15.1.2 in Sancti Bernardi opera, ed. Leclercq, 1: 83.} And again,

when in virtue of his resurrection Christ made an end to those things which were possible and mortal in man, he promoted that form which was to be enriched by the increase of
such glory, by him in himself; just as the Apostle says, he exalted (exalteret) it (illam)
and 'gave it (illi) a name which is above all names.'\(^{47}\)

Here William seems to connect body especially with that in man which is mortal and
changeable. He subsequently makes it clear that he is thinking primarily of the body when he
talks about the “it,” which will be exalted, for he continues to say that the flesh’s unity with
Christ during his terrestrial mission, which enabled the divinization of the human during
Christ’s fleshly life,\(^{48}\) should tell us a great deal about how much “its” weakness will be
destroyed after death.\(^{49}\)

Secondly, standing in a long tradition, William views Christ’s embodiment as, at one
level, a trick by which Christ lured the Devil into a trap by disguising his true nature. To all
intents and purposes Christ appears to have been diminished to a status below the angels’
because he could suffer and die.\(^{50}\) This cunning trick was necessary "since he could not
otherwise have been crucified except on account of his weakness and unless he showed
himself, in the manifestation of the flesh and the articulation of the members, such as could be
crucified."\(^{51}\)

William views Christ’s sacrifice as righting the injustice effected through human sin by
paying a price on behalf of man. Again quoting Augustine’s Confessions, he says that
Christ’s innocent death acts as a balance against the weight of human sin on the scales of

\(^{47}\) De sacr. alt. 1 PL 180, 346B: “Cum in virtute resurrectionis suae ea quae erant passibilis et mortalis
hominis, finem fecit habere, formam illam quae diutius erat tanta glorificationis augmento, eo in semetipso
provexit ut, sicut dicit Apostolus, exalteret illam, et donaret ‘illi nomen, quod est super omne nomen.’” Cf.
Phil. 2: 9. The Philippians passage seems to have been commonly cited in Christological discussions; Rupert
of Deutz was criticized by Algar of Liège for suggesting that Christ only received the name above all names
after his Passion; cf. Van Engen, Rupert of Deutz, 113-4, 117-8.

\(^{48}\) De sacr. alt. 1 PL 180, 346C: “Et si natura carnis, ex quo illi naturae summae unita est, in tanta unitate ei
ab ipso conceptui Virginis est conserta, ut nec sine homine divina, nec sine Deo agenterum humana, et per hanc
unitatem etiam in diebus carnis suae homo Christus potuit divina; quanto magis cum exaltatione qua illum
exaltavit Deus, humilitas ejus mutata est in gloriam, infirmitas in virutatem, mors in vitam!” Following
ancient belief, William says that the joining of the two natures takes place in Christ through his conception
from Mary; cf. Augustine, Enn. in Ps. 98.9 CCSL 39, 1385.

\(^{49}\) De sacr. alt. 1 PL 180, 346C.

\(^{50}\) Ibid. 5, 352B: “Cedendo enim illi in passionibus, et moriendo, paulo minus minorari visus ab ipsis
apostaticis angelis, quia mori potuit; illi qui mori non poterat impotentem apparuit, et non formidabilis.”

\(^{51}\) Ibid. 2, 349A: “cum aliter crucifiigi non potuit, nisi ex infirmitate, et nisi in manifestatione carnis et
distinctione membrorum exhiberet se talem, qui crucifiigi posset.” On the assumption of human nature as a
cosmic justice, so that "the debt (chirographum) which was against us was cancelled."\textsuperscript{52} He continues, "The liberator tasted death on account of everyone and freed those who were rendered subject all their lives by the fear of death."\textsuperscript{53} William does not speak of a ransom paid to the devil; he is ambiguous about the recipient of the purchase paid by Christ. If he does not explicitly follow Anselm in rejecting the idea that the devil is owed a purchase price on account of human sin,\textsuperscript{54} William does not embrace the idea either.

Christ's embodiment is not only compassionate and humbling but also fruitful for mankind. William sees types of the fruitfulness of Christ's Eucharistic flesh in the Gospel descriptions of Christ's body as the seed falling to earth. For, as the Psalmist says, "'God brings forth bread from the earth (Ps. 103)."
\textsuperscript{55} From the earth, i.e. Christ's physical body, the Eucharistic bread proceeds.\textsuperscript{56} A possible source of William's association between Christ's body and earth is a patristic tradition of commentary on a passage of Psalm 98 beginning with Ambrose\textsuperscript{57} and Augustine.\textsuperscript{58} The latter writes in a homily on Psalm 98, "Exalt ye the Lord our God, and adore at his footstool, for it is holy,"\textsuperscript{59} that the footstool of the Lord could be interpreted as the earth, since, in the words of Isaiah, "Heaven is my throne, and the earth my footstool."\textsuperscript{60} Augustine interprets the earth/footstool as the flesh taken from Mary, flesh which God mysteriously converts into the food of our salvation. In this sense, then, the earth

\textsuperscript{52} De sacr. alt. 5 PL 180, 352A: "et sic evacuatum est chirographum, quod erat contrarium nobis." Cf. Augustine, Conf. 7.21.27 CCSL 27, 111. Augustine is borrowing a phrase from Col. 2:19. The term chirographum, which literally means "handwriting," was interpreted in various ways by the Fathers, and the historical discussion of the patristic tradition on this notion is large. For a survey, see Lukken, \textit{Original Sin in the Roman Liturgy}, 176-81. Here the term has the connotation of a contract drawn up on account of man's sin.

\textsuperscript{53} De sacr. alt. 5 PL 180, 352AB: "Ille vero libens pro omnibus gustavit mortem: et liberavit eos, qui per totem vitam timore mortis obnoxii erant servituti."

\textsuperscript{54} See above, chap. 1, n. 355.

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid. 6 PL 180, 353B.

\textsuperscript{56} Commenting on Jerome's teaching that the body of Christ can refer to either the physical or the Eucharistic bodies of Christ, William sees the latter as proceeding in some way from the flesh of Christ which lived and died on earth; ibid.: "De carne enim illa priori, quae crucifixum est, haec altera procedit." Cf. Jerome, \textit{Commentarii in Epistulam Ephesios} 1.1 PL 26, 481A. He comments on Eph. 1: 7.


\textsuperscript{58} Cf. Durand of Troarn, \textit{De corpore et Sanguine Domini} 3.4 PL 149, 1383B.

\textsuperscript{59} Ps. 98: 5.
can truly be adored. For William the earth and the bread are similarly fruitful and vital for the sustenance of life. In fact, the Eucharistic flesh is compared to the “fatness” of the wheat⁶¹ (Christ’s terrestrial flesh) in that from it issues eternal life for man.⁶² William is quick to add that the natural sphere reveals a mysterious linkage between life and death. For unless the grain of wheat falls to earth and dies—meaning that unless the Lord had offered up his physical flesh for us—eternal life would not have been made possible. William uses the metaphor of the grain of wheat falling to earth to express not only the triumph of life over death but also a continuity between the materiality of Christ’s body and of the Eucharistic flesh.⁶³ Materiality seems to be viewed here as fruitful, teeming with the potentiality for life, and also as somewhat fluid, so that one thing can be transformed physically into another. As Bynum has noted, twelfth-century monastic authors use organic metaphors to describe bodies in a way that expresses bodily change and process in a positive way, and William is no exception.⁶⁴

William’s sense that the body of Christ has a pedagogical value and a certain fruitfulness affected his views of materiality in general in a positive way; this functions as a counterpoint to his darker view of materiality as both the source of impulsions that act as distractions to the mind, a view he shared with the young Bernard, and also as an important factor in man’s mortality.

Chapter 2 suggests that the effect of both the Incarnation and the Eucharist on man is more than merely moral. William finds a parallel in the effect of the Incarnation on human nature and the effect of the Eucharistic consecration on the physical bread, in that both scenarios represent a new state of existence in which God “stands under” his creation, or is

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⁶⁰ *Enn. in Ps. 98.9* CCSL 39, 1385-6. Cf. Is. 66.1.
⁶² *De sacr. alt.* 6 PL 180, 353BC: “Et sicut corpus Domini quod mortuum est, in Evangelio granum frumenti vocatur cadens in terram, sic in psalmo adeps frumenti vocatur illa mystica caro, ad quam Dominus hortans discipulos dicebat: ‘Nisi manducaveritis carmem meam, et biberitis meum sanguinem, non habebitis vitam in vobis manentem (Jn. 6: 54).’” The phrase *adeps frumenti*, “the fat of the wheat,” occurs several times in the Psalms. William may be indebted for his notion of the Eucharist as the *adeps frumenti* to some patristic exegesis on a Psalm such as Ps. 80:17. Cf. Jerome, *Commentariorum in Hieremia libri xiv* 13.44.8 ed. F. Glorie, in *S. Hieronymi Presbyteri opera*, pt. 1.4, *Opera exegetica* CCSL 75 (Turnhout, 1964) 651.
⁶³ Ibid. 6 PL 180, 353BC. See preceding note for the Latin text.
present to and in it as he originally desired to be. William makes this explicit using the image of the Good Shepherd rescuing the lost lamb in order to reunite it with the other ninety-nine sheep. While patristic writers frequently interpreted this parable from Luke straightforwardly in terms of the reconciliation of sinners to God, Gregory of Nyssa interpreted the parable on a more cosmic level as depicting the single body of humanity reunited to the multitude of the angels. Paschasius Radbertus in turn borrowed his image of the Shepherd reuniting the sheep which perished in Adam with the angelic multitudes, while Isidore adds that the sheep is raised up on the outstretched shoulders of the crucified Shepherd. William’s use of the parable parallels the restoration of humanity by Christ’s intervention in human history through the Incarnation with Eucharistic restoration, an association that is reminiscent of Augustine’s Sermo in Ps. 98.

With honor and love he deigned to lift up the lost sheep (Lk. 15: 3-7) on his shoulders, that is, to assume our corrupt human nature into the unity of his person: now taking up likewise the earthly substance of bread, he changes it into the truth of his flesh, in virtue of his divine power, by which he stands under and among all things as he would have wished to be possible.

The image of the lamb raised on the Shepherd’s shoulders involves the notion of the lost wanderer, corrupt human nature, safe in the custody of the Shepherd but also elevated from a lesser state. William implies that the restoration takes place not only by the Shepherd’s moral

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65 See the references in Hans Urs Von Balthasar, Présence et Pensée, Essai sur la Philosophie Religieuse de Grégoire de Nyssse (Paris, 1944) 25. Augustine transforms the image in his Sermo 173.2.2 PL 38, 938, in which the lost sheep refers to the recollection of dispersed limbs into an individual human body at the time of the resurrection.

66 Expositio in Matheo, libri xii 8.18.13 ed. B. Paulus CCCM 56A (Turnhout, 1984) 884: “Nam quae perdita est in Adam inuenta leuatur a Christo et propriis eius humeris ut dixi imposita quia languida ac lassa multis uexata morbis per se redire non poterat neque per liberum arbitrium ut quidam male sentiunt.”

67 Isidore, Allegoriae quaedam sanctae Scripturae 173 PL 83, 121B: “Homo habens centum oves, qui, relictis illis, ovem perditam quaerit, ac repertam humeris revehit, figuram Christi expressit, qui, relictis millibus angelorum in caelo, ovem quae perierat in Adam, ut bonus pastor, quaesitam in gentibus reperit, atque crucis suae humeris ad paradisum reportavit.”

68 De sacr. alt. 2 PL 180, 349C: “Qua igitur dignatione et pietate dignatus est in humeros suos levare ovem perditam, id est, in unitatem personae suae assumere corruptam naturam nostram: eadem nunc terrenam substantiam panis suscipientis, in virtute divinae potentiae, cui in omnibus, et per omnia subest cum voluerit posse, transmutat in veritatem carnis suae.”
example but also through his elevation of man’s nature itself, by emphasizing the continuity between the way the Shepherd stands under both the lamb and also his whole creation. By comparing the sublimation of bread in the Eucharist to human restoration in Christ’s assumption of flesh, William expresses his view that both transformations occur because of God’s intimate presence within created realities.

We turn finally to chapter 1. Several characteristics of this chapter suggest that it is a late addition. First of all, the topic of Christ’s risen body is discussed in detail only in chapters 1 and 8; it is not alluded to at all in the summary of the work, in which William mentions only the body that died, the one we eat, and the Mystical Body. The risen body is associated briefly with the body that died in William’s treatment of the various sacramental meanings of Christ’s body in chapter 9, but this does not undermine the theory advanced here that William gave great thought to the risen body only at a late stage and in connection with trying to understand how Christ’s body can be simultaneously present in heaven and on earth in the Eucharist. The possibility that chapter 8 was also a later insertion will be discussed below.

Further evidence that chapter 1 was a late addition are the rough transitions between ideas. At the beginning of the treatise there is almost a total lack of transition between his notion that the body of Christ exists eternally in unity with the Word (and is therefore not to be explained away metaphorically) and the subsequent proposal that Christ took on a body in order that the human body not perish through its mortality. Moreover, one could also adduce the rough transition between chapters 1 and 2. Whether or not chapter 1 was the last chapter to be written, it is undoubtedly the pinnacle of William’s anthropological thought in *De sacramento altaris*.

Chapter 1 begins by laying down some principles to be followed in treating the body of Christ. William says that, on the one hand, we must not think about it “according to the

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69 Ibid. 12 PL 180, 362A: “Aliter enim cogitanda est caro illa, vel corpus, quod pependit in ligno; et sacrificatur in altari aliter caro ejus, vel corpus, quod qui manducaverit, habet in se vitam manentem; aliter caro vel corpus ejus, quod est Ecclesia.” [I have altered the punctuation of the Migne edition.]

70 Ibid. 1, 346A.
Those who think according to the flesh are probably those who think overly literally, leading them to question whether the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ or to suppose that the Eucharist involves some species of cannibalism. Nor ought we, on the other hand, “to so attenuate the truth of the flesh by poeticizing spiritually that we seem to destroy by ratiocination the nature of the one nature united to the Word but not changed into Word.” Like Lanfranc, whose opponent was the “poeticizer,” Berengar, William advocates a mixture of interpretive and non-interpretive approaches to sacred mysteries. If one pursues a course between the two extremes of over-literalization and over-spiritualization, one can begin to understand the nature of Christ’s body.

If we guard against an overly literal approach, we can understand that Christ’s body is capable of things of which our own bodies are not yet capable. Since we know by faith that our bodies will be glorified beyond their present state, it should not be difficult to believe that we are not yet aware of all the capabilities which our human bodies ultimately will possess and which Christ’s body now possesses. In Christ’s case, his risen body can be simultaneously present at the right hand of the Father and in the Eucharist. He distinguishes between but sees as analogous the mysterious unity between the Word and Christ’s physical body, his glorified body, and his Eucharistic body. All these types of body are capable of doing things that seem “unnatural” by the standards of human reason: Christ on earth could walk through walls, in heaven he can be in many places at once. William celebrates the apparent paradox of the “natural” conception of the divine child in the Virgin’s womb, while suggesting that the paradox can be resolved by expanding our understanding of nature by observing with the eyes of faith. By looking at the omnipresence of the human soul in the human body and comparing

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71 Ibid. 1, 345D-346A: “Hac igitur consideratione in mysteriis Christi carne sapere non debemus secundum carneam.” Patristic writers commonly say that those who think only literally about spiritual things think “according to the flesh” or as an “animal,” “sensual,” or “carnal” man, echoing 1 Cor. 2:14 “The sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God; for it is foolishnes to him, and he cannot understand, because it is spiritually examined.”
72 Preface to De sacr. alt. PL 180, 345BC.
73 Ibid. 1, 346A: “Rursumque carnis veritatem non sic debemus quasi spiritualiter rimando attenuare, ut naturam ejus Verbo Dei uniam, non tamen in Verbum mutatam, quasi ratiocinando videamur destruere.”
it with God’s omnipresence in the world, he suggests that the nature of the soul/body unity in man is perhaps much more extraordinary than we imagine. He suggests that while Christ’s body slept in the tomb, his soul was in hell freeing its prisoners, yet in a way the unity of his person was not fractured. In an analogous way, he says, as noted above, the presence of Christ in the Eucharist offered many places daily does not fragment the unity of Christ with his assumed body, sitting at the right hand of the Father. He is careful to say that he does not mean that Christ’s physical body is present in the Eucharist in the same way as He is present at God’s right hand; the former takes place through the dispensation of the believers’ faith in the sacrament.

It should be noted that William affirms that the nature of Christ’s body can in some sense be understood as analogous to that of our own: “Thus should the body of the Lord be considered, of our nature but of a different glory.” On the one hand, William moves from the Christian belief in the transformation of the human body to explain the mysterious capacities of Christ’s various bodies. On the other, the key to understanding the mysterious dimension of both the bodies of Christ and of humans, as well as the relationship of creational dependence of the whole world upon God (to be discussed further below), is the enabling presence of spirit in

_75_ De scar. alt. 1 PL 180, 346D-347A.
_76_ Ibid. 347AC, esp. 347BC: “cur difficile videbitur naturam carnis illi summæ naturae sic unitam, ut ejus facta sint omnia, quae illius sunt, maxime post resurrectionis glorificationem in divina potentia posse, ut in diversis locis sit, non diverso tempore?”
_77_ Ibid. 348B: “Secundum hanc enim unitatem uno momento Christus Dominus cum in sepulcro quievit, et in coelo et in terra, et ubique fuit sed secundum divinitatem solam; eodem tempore momento in sepulcro quievit, sed in carne sola; eodem tempore erat in inferno suos liberans, sed in anima sola; eodem tempore in coelo ad dexteram Patris sedebat, sed in Deitate sola: et si de quolibet horum requiramus, Christus Dominus plane respondendus est fecisse; sed secundum proprietatem cujusque substantiae.”
_78_ Ibid. 348C: “secundum vero illam, de qua agere coeperamus adest uno tempore in diversis locis Dominus in corpore suo, incomprehensibili et inerrabili modo, certa tamen fide, ubicunque exigit res salutis humanae. Qui tamen in manifestatione illa corporis sui, in qua post resurrectionem suam ascendit...quicumque ille locus sit quem nemo velit investigando quaerere, qui non vult errare, futurus ibi usque ad tempora resurrectionis omnium...”
_79_ Ibid. 347C: “Nec tamen naturam illam corporis Dominici ubique esse dico; quia nec opus est, nisi ubi vult, et ubi certo fidei sacramento hoc operatur,” ibid. 348C: “Sed de hac corporis ejus praesentia non modo agiur.”
_80_ Ibid. 347C.
_81_ Ibid. 346A: “Sic enim est cogitandum corpus Domini, sicut est: nostræ scilicet naturae, sed alterius gloriae.”
body, and William’s ultimate paradigm for this is the presence of God to Christ’s body, the Word’s union with Christ’s human flesh.

William suggests that the transformation of the risen human body will take place through its assimilation to spirit, according to the model of unity between God (i.e. spirit) and flesh established in Christ from time immemorial: “For if the body of our humility glorified by the resurrection will be spiritual...so that what is now spirit, soul, and body, will then be totally spiritual or spirit; how much more spiritual will be the one who, from natures united into idipsum, is a thing of both natures.”82

By Christ’s taking on flesh the human becomes divine and the divine human in him, for “neither were divine things done without man, nor human things without God,”83 meaning that by sharing in human nature God as divine shared in human experiences such as crucifixion and suffering,84 while by sharing God’s divinity Christ was divine during his terrestrial life. If the flesh was exalted thus by its union with God, says William, surely nothing of humility and weakness can ultimately remain in body.

As for Ambrose, who teaches that adoration is due to the flesh of Christ because of its intimate association with the Godhead,85 for William the assumption of body in Christ is wonderful. Because of Christ’s assumption of a body, it is exalted above even pure spirits, such as the angels:

For although the rational spirit is indisputably of a more worthy and subtle nature than that of the body; nevertheless I think that that body which is in him, who is above all things, deserves to be exalted above the whole heavens86 and is more worthy, subtle,

82 Ibid. 346AB: “Si enim nostrae humilitatis corpus resurrectione glorificatum spirituale erit...ut quod nunc est spiritus, anima et corpus, tunc sit totum spirituale vel spiritus; quanto magis qui ex unitis naturis in idipsum naturae utrisque res est.”
83 Ibid. 346C.
84 Ibid. 348B. He does not say that he suffered in his divine nature, and this is probably due to a long patristic tradition that would not admit change or suffering into the Godhead. Cf. Leo, Tract.68.1 CCSL 138A, 414-5; Gregory the Great, Mor. 3.16.30 CCSL 143, 135.
85 Dudden, Life and Times, 2: 648.
86 Cf. Phil. 2:9.
and efficacious than certain spirits, not only inferior ones, but also those which deserve to be called by the name 'heavenly.'

When William praises Christ’s body as efficacious, this is presumably because it dramatically makes evident his compassion for man. In Christ body sits at the right hand of God, a dignity not bestowed even on the angels. Man therefore is exalted above the angels in Christ and the flesh and men are sublated beyond the status they held in the creational order. In teaching that man is exalted above the angels in the redemptive hierarchy William goes beyond Ambrose, but follows Leo I, Gregory the Great, and Eriugena, who teach a similar exaltation of man over the angels in the redemptive order. Here William reveals a peculiarly Western view of reform as in melius rather than a return to beginnings, as one tends to find in the Greek fathers. The traditional view was that angels were ontologically superior to man because of their spiritual natures, and it is possible that William, by contrasting the orders of creation and redemption and highlighting the role of the body in the latter, was consciously

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87 *De sacr. alt.* 1 PL 180, 347B: “Licet enim dignioris et subtilioris naturae spiritum rationalem constet esse, quam quolibet corpus; illud tamen corpus quod super omnes coelos in eo, qui supra omnia est, meruit exaltari, dignius, et ad omnia quae voluerint, subtilius et efficacius puto esse, quam sint alii qui, non solum inferiores spiritus, sed etiam omnes illis, qui coelorum nomine meruerunt appellari.”

88 We saw above that this was a feature of Bernard’s early Christology. See above, chap. 1, n. 80.

89 *De sacr. alt.* 1 PL 180, 347C: “Consedit enim, ut Apostolus ait, ‘ad dexteram majestatis in excelsis: tanto melior angelis effectus, quanto differentius prae ilius nomen haereditavit (Heb. 1: 3–4). Quae profecto dextra non alii geniis est, quam ea quae illa majestas habet potiora.”

90 Eph. 1:21 teaches that Christ was placed “above all principality, and power, and virtue, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.”

91 Gregory the Great says that the flesh is converted to righteousness through the suffering of Christ, *Mor.* 3.18.33 CCSL 143, 136-7.

92 According to Dudden, *Life and Times*, 2: 586, Ambrose says that angels are superior to men because they received a greater grace than men; however, Ambrose also sees man as achieving a final state beyond his created state through the *gratia renovationis*, cf. Ladner, *Idea of Reform*, 146-7. Ambrose speaks of men being made “equal to the angels” after the resurrection (Dudden, *Life and Times*, 2: 589), but this passage contains a common interpretation of Mt 22: 23ff as a reference to the virginal life that men will lead after death; cf. *De fide ad Gratianum Augustanum* 5.75 ed. O. Faller, in *Sancti Ambrosii opera* CSEL 78.8 (Vienna, 1962) 244-5. Gregory the Great teaches that there is a natural hierarchy between angels and men because men have mortal bodies, *Dial.* 4.3.2 SC 265, 24.

93 Leo I, *Sermo de Ascensione Domini* 2.1 SC 74, 139-40; Gregory the Great, *Hom. in Ezek.* 1.8.23 CCSL 142, 144; *Periph.* 2 ed. Sheldon-Williams, 112 (PL 122, 575CD). Rupert of Deutz teaches that man has gained in glory as a result of Christ’s suffering and passion, *Van Engen, Rupert of Deutz*, 114.

94 On the origins of the notion of reformation in *melius*, which Ladner sees as beginning with Tertullian, see *Idea of Reform*, 134-5.

95 On the development of the Western notion of reform from Ambrose onward, see Ladner, *Idea of Reform*, 142ff.
raising the theological importance of the body. His friend Bernard of Clairvaux focussed on a different dimension of the superiority of human beings to angels due to their possession of a body. In a letter to the virgin Sophia, he wrote that bodily discipline is an ornamentation to the soul which even the angels might envy. Therefore, although an angel lacks a body and may therefore be happier than man, he is not stronger because of it. In their own ways Bernard and William demonstrate a new interest in the way the possession of a body defines what is particularly noble about mankind.

At this point it is important to return to the parallels between the body/soul relationship and the God/world relationship mentioned above. William says

Since, according to the image of Him who created it, our spirit, in which we were created in the image of God, is situated, as it were, in the fabric of the body which it governs, even as the Creator is in his creation, so that just as he is everywhere, and is everywhere whole, so it is in its whole body and is everywhere whole (*ubique totus sit*).

The notion that the relationship between the soul and the body (the microcosm) is analogous to that between God and the world (the macrocosm) is part of a discussion about the relationship between intelligible and sensible that goes back at least to Plato. In the twelfth century parallels between the macrocosm and microcosm were quite common. This philosophical construct

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96 Augustine teaches that any body is inferior to a spiritual substance, see *De civ. Dei* 22.4 CCSL 48, 810: "Cur ergo eodem uolente Deo, qui fecit hoc animal, non poterit terrenum corpus in caeleste corpus attoli, si animus omni ac per hoc etiam caelesti corpore praestabilior terreno corpori potuit inligari?"


98 On this theme see Jaeger, *Envy of Angels*, esp. 270.

99 *De sacr. alt.* 1 PL 180, 347A: "spiritus noster, in quo ad imaginem Dei conditii sumus, cum secundum imaginem ejus qui creavit eum in regno machinae corporalis, cui praestet, sic quodammodo se habeat, quomodo Creator in regno creaturae suae, ut sicut ille ubique locorum est, et totus, est, sic iste in toto corpore suo sit, et ubique totus sit."

had evolved in the following way. Neoplatonists employed the analogy as they tried to explain how a spiritual entity could be present in a body without being spatially localized. The phrase *ubique totus* was first used by Arnobius, according to Philip Lyndon Reynolds, to describe God's presence in the world, and later the phrase was adapted by writers such as Claudianus Mamertus to describe the soul's presence in the body (Mamertus actually held the Plotinian position that the body is in the soul).

The idea that the soul is an image of God because of its integral omnipresence, which is implied but not stated outright in Claudianus Mamertus, appears in Eriugena, Remigius of Auxerre, and then floods into a variety of eleventh- and twelfth-century milieux. The sentences of the school of Anselm of Laon tend to distinguish between the rationality that marks the image of God in man and the likeness to God in the soul which is constituted by the non-local, incorporeal manner of presence of the soul in the body, though the terms "image" and "likeness" are occasionally interchanged; the sentences also note that the analogy of presence is a way in which God's nature can be understood. The early twelfth-century scholastic Robert Pullen stressed that there is an *image* in the soul's integral omnipresence in the body, or microcosm. Elsewhere during the twelfth century, the idea surfaces especially in treatises on the soul. In contrast to the Anselmian sentences and the early scholastic treatises, which say that the image teaches the soul something about God, Hugh of St. Victor and William of St. Thierry suggest that the image teaches the soul something about itself. William takes this approach in his treatise, *De natura corporis et animae*, as discussed in chapter 4 below. Hugh says in his *De sacramentis* that the relation of soul to body teaches the soul how it is to be.

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102 Reynolds, *God. Cosmos*, 280. The phrase was also used by Bede, *De ratione animae*, according to Reynolds, *God. Cosmos*, 305.
103 *De statu animae* 1.15 ed. A. Engelbrecht CSEL 11 (Vienna, 1885) 60.
104 Ibid. 334-42.
105 Robert Pullen, *Sententiae* 1.10 PL 186, 690A.
glorified by grace; Hugh of St. Victor says that the soul resides in the body, whose matter serves as a covering or dwelling place, as God resides in the soul of the blessed: if two such dissimilar things as body and soul can be joined, it should come as no surprise that God can join rational creatures to him despite their humble status. Reynolds notes that Hugh’s treatment of the body/soul relationship shows the way that the union of body and soul provides man with a communication of God’s goodness through the opportunity for merit entailed in it. Hugh compares the joy that we take in the presence of the spirit in the corruptible body to the joy occasioned in us when we contemplate the presence of God in the soul for eternity. Hugh’s emphasis is on the beneficence of God in giving us not only the opportunity to perfect ourselves in virtue, but also the opportunity to appreciate his power and glory. Both Hugh and William demonstrate a similar “ethical” motive in evoking the parallels between the macrocosm and microcosm. As Jaeger has shown, the focus of twelfth-century cosmology was always self-knowledge and human perfection.

In *De sacramentis* William’s thought about the microcosm/macrocosm parallel is different, for he uses it to show something about the human body, rather than the soul. As we said, based on his model of the mysterious unity of flesh and Word in Christ, he suggests that the body is capable of extraordinary things because of God’s presence to it. The risen body will be capable of even greater things. He says that after the resurrection the human body will be a spiritual body, i.e. what is now body, soul, and spirit, will be then totally spirit. That body will then “shine forth by its spiritual power and incorruption and glory.” The risen body of Christ will be glorified similarly beyond his terrestrial body. With the Word/flesh relationship of Christ as his paradigm, William understands not a disappearance of the flesh, but a transformation of it, a deeper sharing of body in some of the attributes of spirit along with

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106 *De sacramentis* 1.6.1 PL 176, 263-4.  
108 Hugh of St. Victor, *De sacramentis* 1.6.1 PL 176, 263D.  
110 *De sacr. alt.* 1 PL 180, 346B: “spirituali potentia et incorruptione et gloria praeminebit.”
the maintenance of its revelatory capacity. This view of divinization, in which the body is seen to persevere but to be simultaneously absorbed into a series of higher principles, is characteristic of writers such as Ambrose, Gregory of Nyssa and Eriugena. Compare the following passage from the *Periphyseon*:

> Whoever diligently examines the writings of St. Ambrose or Gregory the Theologian, or his commentator Maximus, will surely discover not a change from an earthly body into a heavenly one, but a complete transformation into pure spirit itself, and not into that spirit which is called ether, but into that which is called mind.\(^{112}\)

In *De sacramento altaris* William proposes that Christ’s incarnation in a body reveals an order that is creational as well as redemptive. Like Augustine and most of the western tradition, William viewed the Incarnation as intended to bring about through grace reform *in melius*, a state both different from our present state and somewhat unpredictable. On the other hand, he emphasizes the continuity of the redemptive order with that of creation by articulating parallels between the unity of the spiritual and the physical in creation and in the Revealed Word, implying that the creational order is based on the paradigm of Word and flesh in Christ. William thereby suggests that even the corporeal part of human nature is destined in Christ for the divine. By asserting that God’s compassion extends to the body of man, wounded by its connection with mortality, he expands the young Bernard’s vision that God acts compassionately through a body in the Incarnation in order to save mankind. William accordingly manifests a unique re-fashioning of the mold of thought peculiar to twelfth-century “Cistercian” writers: he undoubtedly focuses on divinization, but the material dimension of man is thematized within this framework of thought.\(^{113}\) We noted that the apparent haste with which chapter 1 was composed indicates that it may have been composed late. As we will see

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\(^{111}\) Ibid. 346BC: “Si enim nostrae humilitatis corpus resurrectione glorificatum spirituale erit, inquantum spirituali potentia et incorruptione et gloria praeminebit; quanto magis illud in quo habitat omnis plenitudo divinitatis corporaliter, ejus qui resurrectit a mortuis primitiae Christus?”

\(^{112}\) *Periph.* 5.37 PL 122, 987B: “Quisquis autem sancti Ambrosii Gregoriique Theologi, nec non et expetitoris ejus, Maximi dico, diligentius dicta inspexerit, inveniet profecto, non mutationem corporis terreni in caeleste corpus, sed omnino transitum in ipsum purum spiritum, non in illum, qui aether, sed in illum, qui intellectus vocitatur.”
in the next section, the discussions of Christ’s risen body in 1 and 8 are not alluded to in the summary of the three kinds of body (physical, Eucharistic, and Mystical) described in the final chapter of the work, and this may indicate that William’s interest in Christ’s risen body was developed late. As described in chapter 1, the risen body reveals the perfection of the paradigm of the God/body relationship expressed in the Incarnation: it is a body whose every wrinkle has been ironed out by the presence in it of spirit, or God. Chapter 1 refines and extends in new directions, rather than radically developing, a paradigm about the God/body relationship expressed in the Incarnation that is evident in chapter 2 in William’s image of the Shepherd raising up the lost lamb out of his desire to reestablish God’s proper presence to body. William’s treatise on the body of Christ is suffused with a great reverence for the miracle of the unity between the spiritual and the material and a sense that the mystery that this betokens about the “nature” of all bodies cannot in this life be plumbed to its depths.

D. The Eucharistic Body

As we said above, one of William’s primary objectives in *De sacramento altaris* is to illustrate why Christ instituted the Eucharist at his Last Supper. This theme appears early in the treatise, in chapter 2, in which William demonstrates why the presence of the Lord in the Eucharist is necessary for man. He says that the reason for the institution of the Eucharist was so that human beings might attain eternal life. He attempts to show that there was a continuing necessity for the Eucharist as a physical transmittor of divine life once Christ’s corporeal life was over:

It was fitting, however, that just as when it was necessary to us, his visible presence, invisible in his own things, was made visible in our things as the Word made flesh; so, when the king of our salvation demanded that his flesh be eaten, because it itself in its own nature was not flesh, it was made into another nature, namely, something edible.\(^\text{14}\)

\(^{113}\) See above, chap. 1, nn. 146, 147.

\(^{114}\) *De sacr. alt.* 2 PL 180, 349B: “Oportebat autem, ut sicut cum necessaria nobis fuit visibilis ejus præsentia, invisibile in suis, visibile factum est in nostris Verbum caro factum; sic cum rex exigit salutis nostrae, ut manducetur caro ejus, quod non est ipsa caro in natura sua, fiat in aliena, manducabilis scilicet.”
The language of “necessity” may, as noted above, indicate that he is trying, in an Anselmian manner, to demonstrate reasons for the institution of the Eucharist. Honorius of Autun may be another inspiration of William’s method.115

William says that it was suitable that Christ choose food to be a certain means for salvation because even at a natural level, “bread, before all edible things, strengthens the human heart and wine cheers us.”116 We saw in the last section that William implies that there is a parallel between God’s choice to become incarnate and to use food as another important means to salvation, in that in both cases the Shepherd “stands under” material realities, that is, he manifests his miraculous presence to and within all of creation. The Eucharist thus symbolizes Christ’s Incarnation, by which he effects the restoration of the whole cosmos, even its physical dimension.117

In chapter 2, he refers to the Eucharist as spiritual food. Quoting Jn. 6: 54, “Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you,” William says that the Eucharist confers eternal life to the soul.118 Bynum has pointed out that despite the fact that in the twelfth century man was commonly defined technically in Platonic fashion as “soul,” descriptions of man by twelfth-century writers frequently describe body as integral to the human being as well.119 Therefore William’s usage of the term “soul” to describe man does not necessarily indicate that at this stage his anthropology failed to take body into account as a vital component of the self. Chapter 5 treats the manner in which the Eucharist works its effect, which is largely by offering Christ’s example for meditation,

115 *Elucidarium* 1, q. 182, ed. Lefèvre, 395. See above, n. 30 for Latin text.
116 *De sacr. alt.* 2 PL 180, 349BC: “Nam etiam ad litteram prae cunctis cibus panis cor hominis confirmat, et vinum laetificat.”
117 This idea had its patristic roots in the doctrine of *apocatastasis*, an ideology that reformulated pagan ideas of cosmological and eschatological renewal in a Christian context. See Ladner, *Idea of Reform*, 70-1; on medieval transformations of this idea see Kereszty, *Fundamentals of Christology*, 179-82.
118 *De sacr. alt.* 2 PL 180, 349B: “Cibus enim hic ad vitam aeternam animae conferendam collatus est.” Cf. Gregory the Great, *Hom. in Ev.* 1.14.1 PL 76, 1127C, who says that Christ died “so that he could change his body and blood in our sacrament and satisfy the sheep he redeemed with the food of his flesh.”
119 Bynum, *Resurrection*, 135, n. 59. In his *Sermon ad clericos de conversione* 12.24 in *Sermones*, in Sancti Bernardi opera, ed. Leclercq, 4: 97, Bernard has the body say in a dialogue with the will “I am the body; your own self.”
thereby permitting self-reform: 120 “therefore when he betook himself into his lovable flesh, he supplied to our souls a great and wonderful material, the nourishment of life.” 121

Among patristic writers spiritual feeding can be interpreted more metaphorically, 122 expressing the soul’s mystical nourishment, or at a more literal level, the body may be seen to play a role in and benefit from the feeding. 123 In chapter 5 William does not suggest that the body either is affected by or has a role in the transformation of man. The thrust of William’s theology is for the most part toward the mystical benefit conferred by the Eucharist on the soul. He says, “[This nourishment] we then eat with greedy mouths, when we recollect sweetly, and we store up in the belly of the memory things which Christ did and suffered on account of us. And this is the banquet of the flesh and blood of Christ: the one who communicates with him has eternal life abiding in him.” 124 Here we see that William’s approach to the sacraments and ritual contains the same emphasis on the subjective appropriation of symbols that characterizes Bernard of Clairvaux. 125

He expresses this internal digestion of Christ’s mercies in a wonderful series of metaphors in chapter five. Comparing the life of the monk to the industrious farmer who rises

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120 A conscious awareness of the affective dimension of the liturgical reenactment of Christ’s death and Passion appears in the eleventh-century writer Durandus of Troarn, who says, “what speech sounds out, affection senses;” Liber de corpore et sanguine Christi PL 149, 1385C. Peter the Venerable stands out among twelfth-century writers for his explicit attention to the role of the visual appreciation of the Eucharistic spectacle, rather than the liturgical reenactment as a whole. See David Appleby, “Priority of Sight.”

121 De sacr. alt. 5 PL 180, 352C: “Cum ergo de carne amandi se tantam ingerit materiam, magnam et mirificam animabus nostris vitae alimoniam ministrat.”

122 Cf. Augustine, Enn. in Ps. 98.9 CCSL 39, 1386.


124 De sacr. alt. 5 PL 180, 352D: “Quam tunc avidis faucibus sumimus, cum dulciter recolligimus, et in ventre memoriae recondimus quae cum pro nobis fecit vel passus est Christus. Et hoc est convivium de carne Jesu et sanguine: cui qui communicat, habet vitam in se manentem.” Cf. Ja. 6:54: “nisi manducaveritis carmem Filii hominis et bibieris eius sanguinem, non habebitis vitam in vobis.”

125 Stock, Implications of Literacy, 405.
at dawn with his viruous wife (muliere fortii), William says that the monk rises up from the night of this world to “sift” the Word of God. With hands free from manual labor he takes on the vital work of the soul. The gradual process by which the Word of God yields nourishment in the life of the monk is again evoked when William refers to the digestion of the morsels which are stored up in the belly of the memory. The monk at the table of God remains as a guest of Christ “through the affection of pious love”; while Christ remains in him through the effect of “holy labor.” This description of mutual indwelling has the mystical tone of Augustine’s famous Eucharistic vision in book seven of the Confessions. The imbalance of the host’s generosity in comparison to the guests’ needs means that the participants at the banquet can do no more than humbly set what they have received on the table. Eating more and more, the guest loves more and more, and in loving, eats more again: this alternating process of seeking and attaining is reminiscent of the search for mystical union described in De contemplando Deo.

In chapter nine William describes some of the morsels that the monks could be expected to gather during the liturgy, associated variously with the three primary sacraments of Christ’s body (his physical, Eucharistic, and Mystical bodies) or with Old Testament typological imagery foreshadowing Christ’s salvific body. It should be recalled that at this time the notion of sacrament was just beginning to be discussed in scholastic circles and that, pre-dating the sophisticated notion of sacrament that was to be achieved in the work of Hugh of St. Victor, Peter Lombard and others after them, William’s notion of sacrament is basically the

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126 De sacr. alt. 5 PL 180, 352D-353A; cf. Ecli. 26: 2.
127 Ibid. 352D-353A: “In hoc enim convivio quicumque saginatur, nescit panem suum otiosum comedere, sed sollicitc cum muliere forii de nocte hujus saeculi consurgit ad incernam verbi Dei, ut labores manuum suarum manducet, ut beatus sit, et bene ei sit.”
128 Ibid. 352D. For Latin text, see above, n. 124.
129 Ibid. 353A: “Sicque in Christo manet bonus conviva Christi per piae dilectionis affectus; habetque Christum in se manentem per sanctae operationis effectum.”
130 Conf. 7.10.16 CCSL 27, 103-4.
131 De sacr. alt. 5 PL 180, 352D. Cf. Irenaeus, who notes that Christ has no need to give us the Eucharistic food, Adv. haer. 4.18.6 SC 100, 612-4.
132 Ibid. 353A.
Augustinian notion of a sacred sign. 133 The host is a sacrament of the body or substance of Christ which he allows to be eaten as Eucharistic flesh. 134 But it is also a sign of Christ’s physical body; 135 it is a reminder of the purpose of the Incarnation, Christ’s love for man. 136 In the priest’s threefold gestures of breaking, lowering and elevating the bread are evoked the death, burial, and ascension of Christ, but, because William’s mind turns always from the body of Christ to the reason why he became incarnate, these in turn act as a reminder of the death and resurrection of the faithful on account of whom Christ died. 137

In chapter 8 William reiterates the view that the renovation of the human person takes place primarily through spiritual meditation. Yet he introduces here a new theme, that the corporeal eating of the Eucharist acts to restore the physical dimension of man. The clear impression given by William is that the corporeal eating of the Eucharist has somewhat secondary status to its spiritual consumption, or mystical meditation. The latter suffices for those who retire fully from the world and the regular reception of the sacraments, but he says the corporeal eating should ordinarily not be neglected. 138 The corporeal eating is important because both parts of human nature are in need of redemption. William says that Christ uses food as a means of preventing the final destruction of the body that suffers from the affliction of mortality. He alludes to the angel of death that passed over the homes of those Hebrews who obeyed the Lord’s command to protect themselves from the divine slaughter of their captors by placing the blood of a lamb on their doorposts at the first Passover. William says

133 Ibid. 9, 356B: “Sacramentum enim est sacrae rei signum. Signum autem est, quod praeter speciem quam ingerit, facit aliquid in mentem venire.” Augustine used the term “sacrament” in a variety of ways, but the meaning that exercised the most influence on the later middle ages was the notion of sacrament as sacred sign; cf. De civ. Dei 10.5 CCSL 47, 277. On Augustine’s notions of sacrament see Johan Chydenius, The Theory of Medieval Symbolism, Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum 27.2 (Helsingfors, 1961) 1-42. On medieval notions of sacrament, see Joseph de Ghellinck, Pour l’histoire du mot ‘sacramentum,’ vol. 1, Les antécédents (Louvain, 1924); cf. N.M. Häring, “Berengar’s Definitions of Sacramentum.”

134 De sacr. alt. 9 PL 180, 355C.

135 Ibid. 355C, 356B.

136 Ibid. 356B.

137 Ibid. 356BC. Ambrose taught that the soul is crucified, buried, and restored to life in Christ, In Ps. 36, enmar. 37 ed. M. Petschenig, CSEL 64.6 (Vienna, 1919) 100. Leo I altered his imagery subtly to suggest that we bear witness in our bodies and souls to him in whom we have died, been buried, and risen to life, Sermo in Passione 12.7 SC 74, 84. Paschasius Radbertus writes that the breaking of the bread and other priestly gestures recall the Passion of the Lord, De corpore et sanguine Domini 4 ed. B. Paulus CCCM 16 (Turnhout, 1969) 28.
that the blood of the lamb (Christ) offers protection to the two doorposts of our individual tabernacles: the body and the soul. He goes on to explain that the reason that the body is in need of redemption is that it was vitiated in our first parents by their illicit food, in other words, that the sin of the first parents entered even into their physical composition. The Eucharist is a physical medium that addresses the need for a special restoration of man’s physical dimension. While William might have drawn from any number of patristic writings depicting the Eucharist as medicine for the Devil’s poison, he leaves the reader in no doubt as to his immediate source here, the Carolingian poet Sedulius Scottus. Ceglar thinks that William must have borrowed the following passage on the Eucharist from the *Paschale carmen* from some intermediary because it is preceded by a paragraph in which the *cursus* is rigorously observed:

> You who renew man, as he perishes by the sweetness of the forbidden apple, with a better food, you repel with the drink of his consecrated blood the poison infused by the snake.

It is reasonable to wonder what prompted William’s apparent interest in the Eucharist as a physical medium of grace. Considering William’s historical context, it may be that he began to focus his attention on the physical reception of the sacrament due to the Eucharistic controversy with Rupert. From the Carolingian Eucharistic controversies to Lanfranc’s

138 *De sacr. alt.* 8 PL 180, 354C-355C.
139 Rupert of Deutz also teaches that the blood of the lamb is put on both doorposts when it is eaten with the mouth for redemption and considered with the mind for imitation in *De sancta trini(ta)te* 11 ed. R. Haacke CCCM 21-24 (Turnhout, 1971-2) 2: 645. This work was completed by 1117, according to Van Engen, *Rupert of Deutz*, 131-4.
141 Ceglar, *Chronology*, 283. The paragraph and quotation at *De sacr. alt.* 8 PL 180, 355A read as follows: “Sede et natura nostrae carnis quae in primo parente suo cibo vitiata illicito, originali propagine, peccato et poena peccati tota erat infecta, et morti aeternae et corruptioni contradita; alterius cibi curanda erat antidoto, sicut pulcherrime Christianus poet a dicit Sedulius:

> Qui pereuntem hominem vetiti dulcedine pomi
> Instauras meliore cibo, porque sacrati
> Sanguinis infusioni depellis ab angue venenum.”
eleventh-century struggle with Berengar the emerging orthodox view stressed the presence of
the divine substance in the bread.\textsuperscript{143} A patristic tradition on the suitability of the material
element of the Eucharist as a means of human restoration existed from an early period. In
addition to Sedulius, another figure who influenced William on this topic is Hilary of Poitiers,
who had extensive contact with Eastern theology during his exile in Greece in 356 AD.\textsuperscript{144}
Compare William and Hilary of Poitiers on the "natural property" of unity contained in the
sacrament. William says, "For a natural property (\textit{naturalis proprietas}) through the sacrament
thus becomes a sacrament of perfect unity, when these things, once received and consumed,
bring it about that we are in Christ and Christ is in us. And therefore he is in us through the
flesh, and we are in him according to this: that which we are, is in God."\textsuperscript{145} Hilary, for his
part, tells us that,

These things once received and consumed bring it about that we are in Christ and Christ
is in us...He Himself testifies how \textit{natural} is this unity in us thus: "He who eats my
flesh, and drinks my blood, abides in me and I in him."\textsuperscript{146}

Patristic precedents for the notion that the Eucharist allows us to participate in Christ's
nature in the reception of the Eucharist existed in writers from Augustine to Hilary of Poitiers.
In the West, however, until the twelfth century few writers paid specific attention to the effect
of this participation on the human body. Perhaps William's own conflict with Rupert
occasioned meditations on the physical medium of the Eucharist that led him to speculate that
such a physical medium has as its intended end the restoration of not only the spiritual, but also

\textsuperscript{143} Aidan Nichols, \textit{Holy Eucharist, From the New Testament to Pope John Paul II}, Oscott Series 6 (Dublin,
1991) 58-67. Peter the Venerable suggests that it should arouse our adoration that God became flesh in order to
dwell in us. Sensing that Christ dwells in us corporeally warms the mind with the love of God, \textit{Contra
Petrobrusianos hereticos} 201 ed. J. Feams CCCM 10 (Turnhout, 1968) 119.
\textsuperscript{145} \textit{De sacr. alt.} 8 PL 180, 355B: "Sic enim naturalis per sacramentum proprietas perfectae sacramentum fit
unitatis, cum haec accepta adque hausta id efficient, ut et nos in Christo, et Christus in nobis sit. Est ergo in
nobis ipse per caruem; et sumus in eo, secundum hoc quod nos sumus, in Deo est."
\textsuperscript{146} Hilary of Poitiers, \textit{De Trin.} 8.14-6 CCSL 62A, 326-7: "Et haec accepta adque hausta id efficient, ut et nos
in Christo et Christus in nobis sit...Quam autem naturalis in nobis haec unitas sit, ipse ita testatus est: 'Qui
edet caruem meam et bibet sanguinem meum, in me manet et ego in eum (Jn. 6:57)." Cf. Gregory of Nyssa,
the physical. Whatever reasons led William to focus on the restoration of the body, he had a small but steady stream of patristic sources available to him on the subject.

In addition to viewing the body as in need of restoration through the Eucharist, William proposes that the consumption of the Eucharist facilitates the glorification of the human body during the present life. The following passage of *De sacramento altaris*, for instance, bears a loose resemblance to a famous passage from the *Confessiones* in which Augustine hears God saying to him in a vision that in eating the Eucharist he does not change it into him, rather, he is changed into Christ. Augustine expresses the idea that we become divinized through participation in Christ but does not explicitly mention that the human body in particular is changed. William, on the other hand, says "This is food which does not go into the body, because it is by no means turned into the nature of the body like other foods, but it turns our body into its nature, fitting and preparing it for future resurrection and perpetual incorruption, and it is both in us and where he has been, namely at the right hand of the Father." (When William says that the Eucharist does not go into the body, he is alluding in a compressed fashion to Mt. 15:17, in which he describes earthly food as going into the mouth and the belly and out into the privy, i.e. he is saying that the Eucharist is not like normal food.)

Occasionally voices, such as those of Ignatius, Irenaeus, and Tertullian, however, had proffered a stronger notion that the body of man is affected in the reception of the Eucharist. Irenaeus had said "as the Eucharist is made up of two elements, heavenly and earthly, so too

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*Elucidarium* that we are converted into the body of Christ by the consumption of the Eucharist; *Elucidarium* 1, q. 182, ed. Lefevre, 395.

147 Augustine, *Conf.* 7.10.16 CCSL 27, 103-4.


149 *De sacr. alt.* 8 PL 180, 355B: "Hic est cibus, qui non vadit in corpus, qu<><>a nequaquam sicut alii cibi, in naturam vertitur corporis, sed corpus nostrum in suam vertit naturam; et futurae resurrectioni et perpetuae incorruptioni illud praeparans et coaptans, et in nobis est, et ubi erat, scilicet in dextera Patris." I have interpolated the "i," so make the *qua* of Migne's text into *quia*, the reading contained in Paris BN MS lat. 2155. William is clear that he considers this food to be the flesh of Christ. He says at *ibid.* 355AB: "Sumpta ore carnis nostrae caro Christi nequaquam aestimando est lege communium ciborum."

150 See Bynum, *Resurrection*, 149, n. 110.
our bodies, once they have received the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, but contain within themselves the hope of resurrection.”

William’s notion that the consumption of the Body allows the human body to begin upon its resurrection in the present deserves further comment. Bynum has written that the usual twelfth-century Cistercian view of bodily resurrection treats it as exclusively a future event. In contrast to Bernard and Herman of Reun, however, William sees the human body as at least beginning its resurrection here and now through the Eucharist, through a process by which Christ incorporates us into Him by sharing with us His body which is sitting now at the right hand of the Father. William’s view was rather extraordinary even during this period when many thinkers were beginning to hope that the earthly labors of corporeal discipline would be rewarded in a harmoniously ordered body expressing the individuality of the person. Hildegard of Bingen’s Scivias, in which she records a series of mystical visions, gives the impression that she perceived some connection between consumption of the Eucharist and its effect on the human body. In book 2 she describes a vision in which the Lord impresses upon her the necessity of receiving the Eucharist in a respectful and worthy manner, which includes presenting a clean and presentable appearance to the Lord. She suggests that exterior appearance tends to reflect interior states, the implication being that pastors should examine the appearances of the recipients of the sacrament as they approach in order to identify those in need of special attention. Those whose interior lives are in order, however, are bright of body and fiery of soul, and the Eucharist nourishes their faith and strengthens their body. Moreover, she implies that the corporeal reception of the host has a permanent impact on the body, and that because of it the saints will be restored to their same bodies in heaven:

“Possessing the light of faith about the sacrament, these ones do not doubt that it is the true

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151 Adv. Haer. 4.18.4-6 SC 100, 606-14. The theme is more subdued in Gregory of Nyssa, Orat. cat., ed. Mühlenberg, 97-8, trans. Srawley, 112: “He plants Himself by the economy of His grace, in all believers by means of the flesh which derives its subsistence from both wine and bread, mingling Himself with the bodies of believers, in order that, by union with that which is immortal, man also might partake of incorruption. And this he bestows by power of the eucharistic prayer, transforming the visible elements into the immortal thing.”

152 Bynum, Resurrection, 163-76.

153 On Bernard, Herman, and other Cistercian writers see Bynum, Resurrection. 163-76.
body and blood of my Son, and therefore they perceive it by faith and are sanctified and strengthened in their bodies. Sanctified by this mystery they will appear in heaven in this same body after the resurrection.”

The nexus of ideas about the body here, as expressive of interior states, as restored by the Eucharist in the present life in order to be ordered toward its future glory, suggests that Hildegard, like William, had taken the twelfth-century interest in the ordering of the body in a new direction, seeing it as worked not only by moral discipline but also by the grace distributed through the corporeal sacrament of the Eucharist.

Given the insistence by William that the body of Christ, eaten corporeally, has an effect on the body of the believer, it seems like a striking omission to find in the next section that William speaks only of the spiritual consumption of the Eucharist. Chapter 9 addresses the various sacramental interpretations of the three bodies of Christ: that which was crucified and rose, the Eucharist, and the Mystical Body. The chapter begins by saying that the physical body of Christ is a sacrament of the Eucharistic flesh which is eaten spiritually. The lack of any reference to the corporeal eating seems unusual given that it is the topic that William has just finished treating. That this might be a mere oversight, as opposed to a sign of an earlier stage of composition, is possible, for the treatment of the corporeal eating as secondary or insufficient is a feature of even his most mature thought. When writing his Epistula ad fratres de Monte Dei he still emphasizes that the spiritual eating by itself is in a way sufficient, as he says that even monks meditating in their cells truly receive the Eucharist in this way. It is possible that the discussion of the corporeal eating (chapter 8) was introduced after chapter 9 was already written, but given the persistence of William’s adherence to the primacy of the spiritual eating of the Eucharist, one cannot confidently hold this view.

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154 De sacr. alt. 8 PL 180, 355B. See above, n. 159, for Latin text.
155 Hildegardis Scivias bk. 2, vision 6, chap. 52 ed. A. Führköter and A. Carlevaris, CCCM 43, 43A (Turnhout, 1978) 1: 273: “quoniam ipsi claritatem fidei ad idem sacramentum habentes, non dubitant quin uerum corpus et uerus sanguis Filii mei sit, et ideo illud haec fide percipiunt, in carne sua vegetantur et sanctificantur, ita ut per hoc mysterium sanctificati post resurrectionem in eodem corpore suo appareant in caelo…”
156 Epist. ad frat. 3.118 SC 223, 236: “res vero sacramenti, etiam praeter sacramentum, sumenti vita aeterna est.”
William’s notion of substantial change in the Eucharistic bread deserves final attention. William’s theology of the Eucharist was developed, as we said, first and foremost in response to Rupert’s readings of certain patristic texts, which were causing scandal among some of William’s brethren. The excellent work of Jean Châtillon develops fully the theological differences between William and Rupert and remains definitive. For our purposes it will be useful merely to survey the thought about the transformation that takes place in the consecration of the Eucharist and the way in which William developed his notion of the Eucharistic body in contrast to Rupert’s views. Rupert had wished to maintain both that the body of the Lord is really present in the Eucharist and that the Eucharistic feast is no species of cannibalism. To accomplish this goal he invented the term “the body of the Sacrifice,” which referred to the appearance of the bread, in no way the subject of the feelings and emotions we would associate with the sentient life of Christ. He argued that the Lord joined his “spiritual life,” as distinct from his “animal life” to the host in the consecration. For Rupert, then, the host is composed of two elements, a corporeal element, the host itself, and a spiritual element, Christ himself. William writes that such language is dangerous, because it leaves the impression that the substance of the bread is left unchanged on the altar. It seems clear that William’s intentions were the same as Rupert’s in the sense that he too stressed that the body of Christ that we eat is not the same body as the one that lived for a time on earth. Yet William believed that in a sense the fullness of Christ’s corporeal life is indeed present in the bread, to the extent that it is

157 Châtillon, “Monasticism and the Schools.”
158 Ibid. 165.
159 Ibid. 166.
160 Ibid. 167. The contrast between the spiritual and corporeal elements of the Eucharist was intended to convey a parallel with the unity of natures in the Incarnation and was typical of the Greek Fathers and the Carolingian Doctors, according to Châtillon.
161 De sacr. alt. 9 PL 180, 356C: “illa vero species panis non est caro vel corpus Christi per se considerata, nisi quod hoc nuncupatur ea consuetudine Scripturam;” ibid. “nursumque credere debemus, ipsam carnem crucifixam et sepultam sub suo item sacramento non occidi a nobis, non discerpi, non devorari more communis carnis.” Patristic writers wrote at length against the idea that the Eucharistic was a true form of cannibalism; on Tertullian, see Bynum, Resurrection, 41 and n.83; for Augustine see Enn. in Ps. 98.9 CCSL 39, 1386.
transformed into Christ’s own substance,162 and William therefore criticized Rupert’s
distinction between the animal life that the host lacks and the spiritual life that it contains.163

In opposition to Rupert, William put forward an understanding of Eucharistic
consecration that had been in process of development by thinkers such as Paschasius
Radbertus and Lanfranc of Bec, which stressed that the substance of bread was converted into
the substance of Christ’s body.164 Borrowing an Aristotelian teaching of Boethius, he says
that a natural change from one thing into another requires that they have a common type of
matter.165 A material thing such as wine, for instance, can become totally transformed into sea
water if it is diffused into a great quantity of ocean water.166 William argues that bread and the
body of Christ have in common their materiality, so that in this respect the change is natural.167
The change is supernatural in that accidents, such as whiteness, roundness, etc. are transferred
from the bread to the body of Christ. He says that the accidents cross over from the one to the
other. They do not mix with nor inhere in the transformed substance as in their own proper
substance, but by “veiling” the true reality of the body of Christ they make it touchable and
tastable.168 The language of veiling here refers back to an ancient notion that as mysteries, the
sacraments “cover up (tegere)” sacred realities; it persisted along with the notion of the
sacrament as sign into the twelfth century, when the latter began to overshadow the former.169

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162 De sacr. alt. 3 PL 180, 349C.
163 Châtilion, “Monasticism and the Schools,” 166.
165 De sacr. alt. 4 PL 180, 350B: “Sola quippe mutari transformarie in se possunt, quoae habent unius
materiae commune subjectum.” Cf. Boethius, Contra Eutychen 6 in The Theological Tractates, ed. H.F.
change described in Aristotle’s De generatione et corruptione. References to this work are given to the 12
167 De sacr. alt. 4 PL 180, 350D-351A.
168 Ibid. 3, 349D-350A: “non tamen insint: non tamen illud inficient, vel afficiant sicut accidentia
substantiam cui accident, sed exterius servientia ad corpus Domini quodam modo ostendendum, quod in forma et
natura sua vere persistit, unum quiddam quod pani inerat naturaliter, et non inerat corpori Domini, et in esse illi
exigebat res sacramenti, tegminis sui obsequio in illud facient transire, ut vere fiat secundum ritum mysterii
tractabile et Gustabile, quod non erat in qualitate naturae suae.”
169 See Seamus Heaney, The Development of the Sacramentality of Marriage from Anselm of Laon to Thomas
Aquinas (Washington, DC, 1963) 2-3. Heaney notes that Isidore refers to the coverings (tegmenta) of the
To a great extent William's solution to the problem anticipates the solution of Thomas Aquinas, who also decreed that the substantial change is not "formal," that it represents a change of the bread into Christ and not the introduction of Christ from "outside" (in contrast to what Rupert might have been construed as saying).170 Both William and Thomas see the substantial change as having a close parallel in the original act of creation,171 so that in a sense the change is not a distortion of nature,172 and equate the supernatural aspect of the change with the preservation of the separated accidents.173

We have seen that for William, the Eucharist was established in order to make eternal life continually present to the faithful. In the Eucharist, Christ unites Himself first with the bread and then with human beings. With the latter the unity is so intimate that it incorporates us, including our flesh, into Him even during the present life. William thereby expresses the eucharistic bread's mysterious capacity for change, and the human body's dynamism, its capacity for increasing transformation and deepening union with God.

E. The Mystical Body of the Church

The Eucharistic bread is a sacrament of the Mystical Body of Christ, of which Christ is the Head. The Eucharistic bread is a sign of the unity of the Church, in that from many grains one bread is composed, a traditional theme.174 An even greater sign is the mystical incorporation of the believer into Christ's Body, his very substance, given in the bread, a theme again with various patristic precedents.175

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170 Nichols, Holy Eucharist, 68-71.
171 William's progenitor on this point may be Durand of Troarn, who says that first creation is more remarkable than the substitution of a new essence, De corp. PL 149, 1385B.
172 De sacr. alt. 4 PL 180, 351A: "Et cui creare de nihilo et formatum et formam fuit facile, mutare formatum, et conservare formam, quomodo erit difficile?"
173 Nichols, Holy Eucharist, 72-3.
175 Ibid. 357D: "Et cum hoc simulituidinis sacramento in illo sancto mysterio simus, magis tamen per illum reciprocam naturarum communionem; quia factus hoc quod eramus nos, fecit nos quod erat ipse, caput nostrum
We noted above that William teaches that the physical body of Christ issues in the fruit of the Church. The Mystical Body proceeds from the body of Christ, since in giving up his life for her Christ became himself the life of the Church, especially through the sacraments.176

F. Conclusion

William's views of Christ's body and human bodies in general include both descending and ascending themes. In the case of Christ, the possession of a body, with its attendant mortality, entails weakness and humility. The weakness of Christ's body plays a number of roles. His assumption of body has as its practical object the facilitation of the crucifixion and the payment of man's ancient debt. Christ's body has a moral function in instructing men in humility. Lastly, it has a pedagogical role to play in demonstrating God's compassion and love for humankind. Thus, while Christ's Incarnation signifies his kenosis, his pouring out of himself, it also symbolizes the return of men to the Father by obedience to Christ's example.

William elaborates the notion of human ascent through Christ's Incarnation by means of the metaphor of the Good Shepherd. As the Shepherd raises up the lost lamb on His shoulders, so Christ raises up human nature, especially the human body. William suggests that Christ thus stands under creation according to God's providential plan.

William sees further implications of the union of Word and flesh in Christ. He suggests a parallel between both the union of soul and body and God and the world. He suggests that both find a model in the union of divine and human in Christ, according to which each participates in the other. William implies that this parallel demonstrates that body is so suited to spirit that eventually every bodily defect will be smoothed away and that body will then live harmoniously with spirit. Christ's own body demonstrates that the heaviness and recalcitrance that we now associate with our flesh is only illusory. As Christ's body was born

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Christus Jesus. Sic enim per unitatem naturae, per amorem Spiritus, ubicunque ille est, et nos sumus; et corpus ejus et plenitudo ejus effecti, hoc quod sumus ab eo accipimus, dum corpus ejus manducamus.” Augustine, Sermo 272 PL 38, 1247-1248; Leo I, Sermo in Passione 12.7 SC 74, 84; Honorius Augustodensis says that we are converted into the body of Christ by the consumption of the Eucharist; Elucidarium 1, q. 182 ed. Lefevre, 395.

176 De sacr. alt. 6 PL 180, 353BC.
of a virgin, as it could walk through walls, it reveals that body is capable of more than we presently imagine.

Ascending and descending themes similarly characterize William's vision of the human body. Just as Christ’s body, in its weakness, is a source of humiliation, and, in its role in the redemption of man, is a source of rejoicing, so the human body, in its mutability, is connected negatively with the Fall, and in its capacity to receive the Eucharist, is associated positively with man's restoration. William’s expression of the body’s role in human ascent through the Eucharist is tentative. He suggests, echoing Hilary of Poitiers, that through the Eucharistic meal we are in Christ and He is in us. Given William's great emphasis on the spiritual eating of the Eucharist, it is difficult to know precisely how important he regarded the act of corporeal eating to be in the mystical incorporation of the believer into Christ. Nevertheless he does express at least once that it is fitting that we take the physical medium of the Eucharist into our bodies. The reasons that William sharpened his interest in the Eucharist as a physical medium may never be entirely clear, but a possible catalyst is the Eucharistic controversy between himself and Rupert of Deutz. Perhaps in the process of reading though the ancient patristic sentences on the Eucharist he came into contact with sources he never mentions by name, such as Hilary of Poitiers (used by him elsewhere in his Aenigma fidel177), who provoked him to formulate a view of the the corporeal unification of the believer with Christ through the physical consumption of the Eucharist.

William is much more consistent in his view that the Eucharistic meal causes a change in the human body, and here he differs from most of the early western Fathers. While Augustine calls the Eucharist food that changes man into the divine substance, William specifies that the Eucharist renovates the body. Here William demonstrates similarity to Hildegard of Bingen, who proposed that those with spiritual vision could see the redemptive effects of the Eucharist in the believer’s joyful expressions and gentle carriage as he or she approached the altar for Communion. Hildegard also proposed a connection between the

corporeal consumption of the Eucharist and believers' later repossession of their earthly bodies in the resurrection. William signals his awareness of a similar connection between the temporal restoration of the earthly body through the Eucharist and the perfection of the healing process in the resurrection. His emphasis, however, is more on how the present renovation of body through the Eucharist anticipates the full corporeal restoration to come.

In the previous chapter I underlined the way that William demonstrates the point that has been made by scholars such as Constable, Bynum, and Jaeger about the role of the body in twelfth-century society. Body was increasingly viewed as a medium for encounter with God. God's indwelling was viewed by mystical writers such as Bernard of Clairvaux, William of St. Thierry, and Hildegard of Bingen to spill outward through the bodies of those in grace. In this chapter I have shown that William views the body as having always been intended by God for a close relationship with spirit and God, as the Incarnation demonstrates. William argues that body is elevated through the Incarnation and that through Christ human nature is given the name above all names. The surprising result of man's reform in melius is that the body is truly made the envy of the angels.
III. The *Meditationes*

The Scriptures provide the language with which William unfolds a dramatic tale in his *Meditationes* of the ebb and flow of his interior life. William's narrative weaves together typological images, the poetry of the Psalms, and New Testament parables into a seamless whole. The *Meditationes* reveal the depth of William's preoccupation with the challenges and benefits associated with possession of a human body. He illustrates, with a variety of new images, themes already encountered in previous chapters and introduces other ideas for the first time. In *De natura et dignitate amoris* William voiced his hope that body and soul will be restored to order through grace and the pursuit of corporeal discipline. In *Med. 4* he expresses using two new images borrowed from Hosea and Genesis his hope for the restoration of the order between body and soul. He suggests that when, with the help of grace, the distractions that the soul experiences through its presence in a body no longer impose themselves between man and God, the body will function in the spirit of cooperation with soul intended originally by God. He portrays the potential gentling of man's passionate dimension using the image of terrestrial harmony, depicted in Hosea 2, offered to the Israelites under the protection of God's covenant. William thereby reveals his confidence in God's ability to bring about terrestrial transformation and to draw out the goodness He implanted within creation. Man can become a new Adam who maintains stewardship over himself as Adam formerly ruled over creation.

If he thinks of the body as a gift given to man, William is also acutely aware of its weakness in its fallen state. When, in *Med. 9*, which depicts his rebellion against and ultimate reconciliation to God, William's internal resistance to God has finally given way, the monk casts himself before Him as a naked body. His nakedness represents the weakness and fragility of human nature in its present fallen state. His naked body is simultaneously a positive image, however, for it is reveals that only through humiliation can one attain to the transparency of self before God that enables relationship with Him. William's imagery thus evokes an echo of that time in which man was naked and not afraid. For William the body is therefore emblematic of both the grandeur and the misery of man.
According to William the monastery is a place in which the monk comes to self-awareness about his limitations and the many blessings bestowed on him by God. The later meditations reveal an increasingly powerful sense that despite its limitations, the body offers great blessings to the monk. In Med. 10 William promoted the function of images of the bodily life of Christ from a supporting to a leading role in spiritual life. He suggested that mental images provide an accessible way by which monks may appreciate the wonders done for man, and he explicitly stated that this kind of meditation has a value equal to contemplation of God’s divinity for those still weighed down by mortal bodies. In this way William increasingly shaped his spirituality to reflect reconciliation to, and even a measure of contentment with, man’s possession of a body.

A. Structure and Dating

The Meditationes follow De contemplando Deo and De natura et dignitate amoris in the list of works in the letter to Haymo prefacing the Epistula ad fratres de Monte Dei. The best modern edition is by Jacques Hourlier (based on MS Paris Mazarine 776, the treatise’s sole remaining witness).¹ Mazarine 776 inexplicably breaks off part way through the twelfth meditation; we know the remainder from early modern editions.² These early editions divided the work into twelve chapters, as now in Migne. Déchanet discovered another short piece written in an unsteady hand on an empty leaf near the end of MS Charleville 114.³ In this writing William asks God to strengthen his failing will and body, and it may reflect the trials that he suffered after his retreat to Signy, as recounted in the Vita Antiqua.⁴ It has been published by Hourlier in the same Sources Chrétiennes volume as the Meditationes. Hourlier gave it the Latin title found in the Charleville manuscript. By the time that he edited the English translation of the Meditationes for the Cistercian Fathers Series, Hourlier seems to have been

¹ Oraison Méditéatives SC 324.
² Idem, introduction to Oraison Méditéatives SC 324, 13-4.
³ See "Meditativa oratio n. XIII. Une page inédite de Guillaume de Saint-Thierry," in Collectanea Ordinis Cisterciensium Reformatorum 7 (1940) 2-12; his edition of the prayer is republished in Oraison Méditéatives SC 324, 218-26. It was copied at the end of the twelfth century or a little later in a hand different from that of the main scribe; the writing was undoubtedly inserted after the manuscript was compiled.
⁴ Poncelet, "Vie ancienne," 92-4.
won over to Déchanet's view that the work was no extract from the earlier *Meditationes* but of the same form as them and deserving the status of a thirteenth *Meditatio*.\(^5\) He signals its ambiguous relationship to the prior twelve by placing it immediately after them, with its own introduction, in view of its composition in apparent isolation from the rest of the treatise. Because this piece has some interesting ideas on the body, I will include a brief discussion of it at the end of this chapter. Hesitating to treat it as either an extract from the earlier *Meditationes* or as a thirteenth *Meditatio*\(^6\) I consider it a second prayer of William of St. Thierry, probably written during his old age. I will refer to it according to the Latin title given it by Hourlier in the Sources Chrétienennes edition: *Excerpta de meditationibus domni Wilhermi*.\(^7\)

The structure as well as the dating of the *Meditationes* are the subject of continuing speculation. In his letter to Haymo William offered his hope that the Carthusians would find the *Meditationes* of assistance to the formation of novices in prayer, something he does not say about either *De contemplando Deo* or *De natura et dignitate amoris*, both of which he simply describes as “treatises.”\(^8\) The traditional view of the work is that it is a series of prayers composed over time and later assembled into a whole; this theory has proved persuasive to many because of the seeming lack of thematic continuity of the *Meditationes*. Hourlier, for instance, proposed that it was produced between 1128 and 1132 from prayers written mostly prior to that time.\(^9\)

Challenging the traditional view that the *Meditationes* is an assemblage of disparate parts, Jeremy Worthen has proposed the hypothesis that the treatise is in fact a unified whole. Noting that early twelfth-century manuscripts of the work do not divide the work into

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\(^7\) *Excerpta de meditationibus domni Wilhermi*, in *Oraisons Méditatives* SC 324, 218-26.

\(^8\) Epistolary preface to *Epist. ad frat. 9* SC 223, 136.

\(^9\) Hourlier, introduction to *Oraisons Méditatives* SC 324, 30. Since he thinks that *Med.* 11 was most likely written at St. Thierry, Hourlier sees 1135 as the *terminus ad quem* for the work.
numbered and titled chapters such as one finds in the PL,\(^\text{10}\) he has argued that some kind of cohesion among its disparate chapters should be sought. Worthen argues that the text is unified not according to a common subject—and the subjects examined by the author are various—but by virtue of the fact that it tells a coherent story about the development of the interior life.\(^\text{11}\) We may sum up Worthen’s conclusions about the narrative of the Meditationes thus: the pattern of the spiritual life is alternating experiences of divine presence and deferral. The pattern continues, building in intensity, until that moment when time is transformed into eternity.\(^\text{12}\) Worthen has plotted a plausible trajectory for the narrative structure of the work.

If the treatise is to be considered a unified whole, can we isolate its period of composition? Déchanet proposed that the Meditationes represent a personal record of William’s spiritual journey and that many passages contain autobiographical material by which various sections can be dated. Hourlier rejects a number of Déchanet’s interpretations of supposedly autobiographical references as misconstruals of Biblical allusions. For instance, following Bertrand Tissier, Déchanet proposed that Med. 4 laments the hardships undergone by the aging monk in connection with manual labor undertaken at Signy.\(^\text{13}\) The context of Med. 4 shows that William is figuring himself as another Adam, undergoing the type of hardships visited on all men on account of their sin, and Hourlier insists that this is not to be taken as a reference specifically to his residence at Signy but as a type of a certain moment in the spiritual life.\(^\text{14}\) Scholars have viewed Med. 11, above all, as traceable to a particular time of William’s life. This meditation seeks the reason for William’s spiritual dryness, questioning whether his pastoral duties have led him away from higher things and blurred his spiritual vision. It takes the form of an interior dialogue between the various faculties of man on the question of freeing oneself totally for the contemplative life. It begins: “Gather yourselves meanwhile, my soul and all my inward parts; ‘for the word of God is living and effectual and

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\(^{10}\) Ibid. 295-6.

\(^{11}\) Worthen, “Self in the Text,” 298.

\(^{12}\) Ibid. 331-58, esp. 338.

\(^{13}\) Déchanet, Man and his Work, 41; on Tissier, see Hourlier, introduction to Oraisons Méditatives SC 324, 31.
more piercing than any two-edged sword; and reaching unto the division of the soul and the spirit, of the joints also and the marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."15 William undergoes division in the course of the dialogue as he probes his most interior thoughts and motives. In the end he is restored to unity, but the whole that has thus been cleaved apart by the penetrating sword of truth can heal only slowly though confession that slowly drains away the poison from the wound. The meditation concludes that "nothing remains, therefore, but confession of humility and striving after every virtue, so that, however unfruitful and useless we may appear without, within we may not be found wholly worthless and sterile."16

Déchanet and Hourlier have viewed this meditation as an interior debate about whether to leave St. Thierry, a debate composed preparatory to William’s request to Bernard.17 Worthen has proposed that the reference to exterior uselessness depicts a period of lethargy in comparison to one of some prior activity. He favors the view that no autobiographical reference is contained here but holds that if there were, it would be not to the period before his request to Bernard, but to his retreat to Signy where his monastic duties were much relaxed on account of his age and ill-health, and his activity was confined primarily to writing.18 A full consideration of the historical issues to be examined in trying to date this section will be included below, but for now I will note merely that based on William’s usage of the language of prodesse and praeesse, as noted originally by Ceglar,19 one cannot escape the conclusion that William’s eleventh meditation must be understood within an eleventh- and twelfth-century debate about the purpose and nature of abbatial leadership. This is presumptive evidence for a

14 Hourlier, introduction to Oraisons Méditatives SC 324, 31.
16 Med. 11.33 SC 324, 186: "ideo ni restat nisi confessio humiditatis, et omnis conatus uirtutis, ut quomodocunque infructuosi et utiles appareamus exterius, interius non omnino inanes inueniamur et steriles.”
18 Ibid. 289-93.
19 Ceglar, Chronology, 142, 144, 227. Ceglar suggests that William’s language in Med. 11 echoes that used in Bernard’s letter refusing to honor William’s request, placing Med. 11 at around September, 1124. Cf. Milis,
terminus a quo since it could not have been written prior to the time when William can reasonably be expected to have become interested in such debates. As we know that William made his request to Bernard in 1124, we may hypothesize that he would have been aware of the issues by then. I will argue that William employs imagery used in De sacramento altaris in such a way as to suggest that he was borrowing from the latter work and that his concern with the problem of sensitive devotion shows development from his treatment of that topic in De sacramento altaris. This would suggest that the Meditationes date from the period after 1123. It may have been composed either all at once or over a period of time. There is no way to decide the question.20

B. Body in the Meditationes

The theme of divine absence and presence is introduced in Meditatio 1 in the form of a meditation on the ultimate absence and presence of God to the elect and the damned, respectively. This device places the temporary abandonment which will afflict the speaker at intervals throughout the Meditationes into a broader perspective and reveals it to be a pedagogical tool by which the Lord conveys analogically the gravity of ultimate separation from the divine. As Worthen suggests, the experience of presence is a foretaste of eternal bliss that offers some certainty during the present life that one is among the elect: “The moment of certainty is a point towards which we strive, in which we find momentary rest, then to begin again the journey whose end is the certitudo salutis, the cognitio gratiae.”21

Meditatio 1 discusses the problems of divine foreknowledge and predestination. Quoting from Romans 11:33, William states that the mystery of divine election is never to be fully understood by men: “O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his judgments, and how unsearchable his ways!”22 William echoes the dilemma posed at Rom. 9: 16ff. Rom. 9 follows the mysterious hand of the Lord

21 Ibid. 353-8, esp. 356.
22 First Monastic Experiences,” 26-7. Milis accepts Ceglar’s reading, viewing Med. 11’s references to the prerogatives of old age discussed above as exaggerations designed to gain Bernard’s sympathy.
through salvation history, calling on the Jews to be his chosen ones yet not revealing the fullness of his law to them. The author assigns speeches to various representatives of the Old Testament peoples who might indeed wonder about their use for the instruction of later generations. William focuses on the perplexing problem of how those who fall short of perfection can be held responsible for actions which seem to be consequences of divine providence. Borrowing an image from Rom. 9: 21, William personifies one of the faulty pots made by God from the same clay as the perfect vessels, which laments “‘Why doth he then find fault? For who resisteth his will?’ And it continues: ‘Why hast thou made me The answer that William will unfold to the dilemma posed in the speech of the clay pot depicts damnation as just in view of God’s respect for his gift of free will to human beings. As Boethius and others had done before him, William explains that God’s foreknowledge involves no constraint on individual freedom. He implies that to “blame” God for one’s sinful action is characteristic of the sinful man. Borrowing an image from Ps. 11:9 he says,

‘The wicked walk round about.’ Draw back, o man, from the circuit of error to the center of truth. The earthen vessel thus turns to clay again not in order that the foresight of God compel it to do so because it was not hidden from him that it would. And yet in that God knew that it would happen thus, he predestined it to destruction.

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23 At Med. 1.4 SC 324, 42, William similarly interprets the Church as the earth held in being by the power of God: he uses an image from Is. 40:12 depicting the world weighed on the palm of God and supported by his three fingers (which stand for faith, hope, and charity, according to William). For the image of the potter and the clay, see Jer. 18:1ff.
26 Cf. Erigena, Periph. 5.36 PL 122, 968A-969B.
27 Ps. 11:9.
28 Med. I SC 324, 46: “In circuitu impii ambulant. Collige te homo a circuitu erroris ad centrum ueritatis. Vas luteum sic redigitur in lutum suum, ut non eum cogat ad hoc Dei praescientia, quia eum non latuit sic futurum. Quod tamen quia sic futurum preasciuit, in interium praedestinuit.”
Here we see that William embraced Augustine's strict doctrine of predestination, not commonly expressed this forcefully in the twelfth century, according to Worthen.29

William expressed in the strongest language the consequences of the final judgment of the damned. Unlike Dante, and much of the patristic tradition,30 he does not say that the damned will suffer eternal torture in bodies and souls; William's metaphors are of clay pots breaking apart and returning to the formless earth, or matter, whence they came. William says that this is a return to "nothingness": "Burn our reins and our heart31 by the fire of your Holy Spirit, and strengthen that which you have wrought in us, lest we be dissolved and reduced into our clay or nothingness."32 Does this demonstrate his awareness of a view expressed by some of the Greek fathers that damnation is literally the annihilation of one's very being?33 While one encounters this view among early writers, M. Richard's study of notions of hell does not suggest that later writers commonly held it.34 Moreover, in Med. 8 William speculates that the greatest torment of the souls in hell would undoubtedly be full awareness of the goodness that they had willingly rejected in disavowing God;35 this would seem to presuppose the continued existence of the damned. We must therefore seek another interpretation of the passage. Gregory of Nyssa has a similarly strong image about the effects of sin on the body of man in his De opificio hominis. He proposes that since, body, soul, and God are disposed in a series, the material part of man dissolves when the soul turns away from that which gives it, and the whole of man, its form (i.e. God) or when the mind of man turns toward man's material part, i.e. his body.36 If for either reason the series is interrupted, the mind fails to properly organize and support the body. William probably does not mean that the damned literally disintegrate into either matter or nothingness. He is using the notion of a

30 See M. Richard, "Enfer d'après les pères," in DTC 5.1, 47-83.
31 Cf. Ps. 25:2.
32 Med. 1.3 SC 324, 42; cf. ibid. 1.4: "Vre renes et cor nostrum igne sancti Spiritus tui, et confirma quod operatus es in nobis ne dissoluamur, et in lutum nostrum, vel in nihilum redigamur."
34 Ibid.
35 Med. 8.12 SC 324, 142-4.
36 De opiffic. homin. 13 ed. Cappuyns, 224-5.
dissolution into formlessness to convey not that the damned are destroyed, but that they remain less good than they were at their original creation. Most likely William is simply evoking a general Platonic notion that motion toward evil means motion toward the formless in comparison to our state when we are turned toward “that which gives form.”

In the remainder of the Meditationes anthropological themes are a continual undercurrent. The body and the production of distracting sensible images are first presented as an obstacle to William’s original goal, which is contemplation of God as He is in his nature. In Med. 8 William shifts directions gradually, embracing sensitive devotion to Christ and its role in Eucharistic piety. In Med. 10 he advocates sensitive devotion even more strongly as a form of prayer equally worthy as intellectual prayer. The last two meditations develop the notion that the whole of man, body and soul, journey together in a ceaseless process of purification that ends only in heaven.

In Med. 2 William expresses his desire to understand God’s Trinitarian nature, but he is prevented from doing so by his inability to think without images. William’s description of the crippling of the soul by mental images is very like a passage from De Trinitate 11. William continues to explain that because he is used to thinking about material things, he cannot discover a concept that adequately encompasses the mystery of God’s triune unity. Therefore his project fails, he does not gain a view of the face of God and he remains frustrated but still quivering with desire for his Beloved.

The literary function of William’s “failure” here is of great moment, reiterating, as it may, the conclusions about the limitations of mental ascent described by Augustine in De Trinitate. The evolution of Augustine’s view of mental ascent to God in De Trinitate is

38 Med. 2.9 SC 324, 58: “Nam ab usu uel ab oblectatione sensuum et sensibilium expergfactae animae prima occurrit imaginatio, quae assuetam sensibilius animam sensibus obturatis, sensibilium obscurat imaginibus, ut sit tota sensibus solebat uacare, sic nihil iam nisi imaginationem sensibilium cogitare sciat uel intelligere.”
39 De Trin. 11.1.1 CCSL 50, 333-4: “tamen, ut dixi tanta facta est in corporibus consuetudo et ita in haec miro modo relabens foras se nostra proiecto intentio ut cum ab incerto corporum ablata fuerit, ut in spiritu multo certiore ac stabiliore cognitione figatur, refugiat ad ista et ibi appetat requiem unde traxit infirmitatem.” At Conf. 7.1.1 CCSL 27, 92 Augustine also links his past inability to conceive of God except in bodily form to the throng of images produced by the imagination that clouded his vision.
complicated. In books 11-14 of *De Trinitate* Augustine embraces the possibility that one can advance smoothly from the *vestigia* of the Trinity in corporeal things to the truer image of God imprinted in the soul, and thence toward God. Augustine is much more reserved, however, about the potential success of mental ascent in book 15. At the beginning of book 1, along with book 15 one of the last sections of *De Trinitate* to be written,40 he recommends meditation on the Incarnation through the Scriptures instead. It is possible that William’s failure to achieve union here is a deliberate echo of *De Trinitate* 15, and that the subsequent exploration of other forms of prayer represents William’s attempt to discover other alternatives to mental ascent.

In *Med.* 3 William takes a second, negative, or “apophatic” approach to understanding God. He suggests that a certain understanding of God is offered to the soul which ascends to God by negation. He argues that neither perception, mental images, nor reason of themselves can achieve unity with God,41 but where the Spirit wills, a glimpse of God may occasionally be afforded.42 The “negative knowledge”43 of God is so sweet that the one who experiences its delicacy “will confess himself to have obtained eternal life if it should be perfected in him.”44 Here we see a reference to the theme of confirmation of divine election through meditative experience that was introduced in *Med.* 1. Finally, the soul is transmuted into the object loved in a process analogous to the interior changes undergone in sense perception.45

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41 *Med.* 3.13 SC 324, 74: “Quid his sensus, quid imaginatio ualet, quid ratio potest, quid intelligentia rationalis? Nam etsi ratio, Deus, nos ad te mittit, per se tamen te non attingit.”
42 *Med.* 3.14-4 SC 324, 74-6: “quando et quantum et quomodo uult Spiritus sanctus perstringit, ut orantes te unu contemplantes supergressi nonnunquam omne quod tu non es, per hoc ipsum quod tu non es, uideant aliquatenuus te qui es, quamuis non uideant te sicuti es...in neutro conturbet solitudo uel pluralitas, sed etiam ad hoc ei ualeant unitas trinitas et trinitas unitatis, ut pio et sobrio intellectu comprehendat non comprehendo maiestatem divinae incomprehensibilitatis.”
44 *Med.* 3.16 SC 324, 76: “ut si hoc in eo perficiatur, confidat se uitam obtinuisset aeternam.”
45 Ibid. 3.9-10 SC 324, 70-2. On William’s use of the metaphor of sensation to describe union with God, see McGinn, introduction to *Three Treatises*, 33-4. For a rudimentary form of the metaphor, see his early prayer, edited as *Oratio Domni Willelmni* in *Oraisons Méditatives* SC 324, 212-6. See *Orat.* 4-5 SC 324, 212-4.
To this point William’s narrative seems to run parallel to the theology of books 1 and 15 of Augustine’s *De Trinitate* and Augustine’s mature view of spiritual ascent. Ascent is occasionally made possible by the grace of God alone, but the vision conferred on the soul is always partial and incomplete. The narrative also corresponds in large part to the discussion of the knowledge of God at the beginning of *Aenigma fidei*, which is similarly dependent on Augustine, as Anderson has shown. There William denies that man can attain God in this mortal life by banishing the clouds of carnal notions that cloud his mind: “For this pertains to the other life; and whoever wishes to possess here everything which is to be possessed there shows that he does not have faith.” William continues to explain that during mortal life one customarily “sees” by faith, “fortified by the authority of the canonical Scriptures.” Faith affords partial vision to the pure of heart; purification is wrought by meditation on the corporeal life of Christ. Occasionally the reward of faith is vision, still partial, because temporary, in which the soul is rapt to God by the Holy Spirit and through this vision is made like to Him. William’s usual expression for this experience is “seeing the face of God.” The association of both the metaphor of sensation and also the notion of like being

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46 This work was written sometime between 1140-1148, according to Anderson, introduction to *Enigma of Faith*, 9. The notes to Anderson’s translation reveal William’s dependence on Augustine.
47 *Aen. fid.* 7 ed. Davy, 98 (PL 180, 400A): “Alterius enim vite hoc est; et quisquis omnia que ibi habenda sunt vult hic habere, ostendit se fidem non habere.”
48 Ibid. 8, ed. Davy, 98 (PL 180, 400A). Cf. ibid. 3, ed. Davy, 94 (PL 180, 397D); his source is Hilary of Poitiers, *Tractatus super Psalmos* 127.11 PL 9, 710A.
49 *Aen. fid.* 3 ed. Davy, 94 (PL 180, 398B): “sed fide, que canonicaarum scripturarum auctoritate muniantur.”
51 Cf. Augustine, *De Trin.* 1.1.3 CCSL 50, 30: “Et ideo est necessaria purgatio meritis nostrae qua illud ineffabile ineffabiliter uidere possit; qua non dum praedite fide nutrimur, et per quaedam tolerabilia ut ad illud capiendum apti et habiles efficiamur itinera ducimus.”
52 *Aen. fid.* 8 ed. Davy, 98 (PL 180, 400A); ibid. 10-14 ed. Davy, 100-4 (PL 180, 400D-403C). The sources of these passages are primarily *De Trinitate* and *De vera religione*; see *Enigma of Faith* 9-12 trans. Anderson, 42-6. Scriptural study has been shown by Stock to be a vital part of Augustine’s method of self-reforination from the *Confessiones* onward, *Augustine the Reader*, 207-42.
transformed into like with the knowledge of God are found in Augustine, although they had of course a longer history in the pre-Augustinian Platonic tradition and were relatively commonplace.\textsuperscript{55} In \textit{Med. 3} William suggests that ecstatic experience results in partial vision of God for the soul. The only theme from \textit{Aenigma fidei} not discussed thus far is the notion of purification of the soul through Scriptural meditation. William does not refer to purification in \textit{Med. 3}, but he does insist that his ardent desire to find Jesus in the Scriptures ought to earn him God’s mercy and the reward of faith, i.e. vision.\textsuperscript{56}

\textit{Med. 4} expresses William’s desire to be helped by the Spirit in prayer. Moving within him, the Spirit brings him consolation, which provokes grateful tears. After pouring out his remorse for his unworthiness in confession to God, William resolves both to correct his sins and pray ceaselessly for God’s sustenance.

William expresses his gratitude for the divine mercy that had brought him out of a long sojourn in the desert away from the light of truth. He depicts this state of spiritual dearth by comparing himself to Adam, who was originally given custody of all creation but destroyed the harmony of his primal existence by his sin. William says that his earth is now cursed, that when it is tilled, it brings forth thorns and thistles, and that he must eat his bread in the sweat of his brow.\textsuperscript{57} Eriugena relates a similar allegorical interpretation of the cursed earth told by Maximus the Confessor, in which the earth is interpreted as the flesh of Adam created in him through the passions of his mind.\textsuperscript{58} William says that God allowed him to eat of the tree of knowledge “so that I, like one grown weary of my interior blessings, might attempt that which I could do without, with the agreement of Eve, my flesh...For I was found in your sight stripped of all the things men thought that I possessed within myself...And I, who had

\begin{footnotes}
\item[Aen. fide. 5, ed. Davy, 96 (PL 180, 399AB).
\item On the Platonic William’s use of the metaphor of corporeal sensation see above, n. 43. Man is made like to God through his soul, in which the image of God resides. Cf. Augustine, \textit{Epist.} 92.3 in \textit{S. Aureli Augustini operum}, sec. 2, \textit{Epistulae}, ed. A. Goldbacher CSEL 34.1.2 (Vienna, 1895) 439..
\item \textit{Med. 3.11} SC 324, 72. William thinks of himself as thinking, speaking, and writing about the Lord: “Sed meditabitus et loquentibus et scribentibus de te, da queso sensus sobrios, uerba circumcisa et disciplinata, cor ardens de te, o Jesu, in apertionem scripturarum quae de te sunt.”
\item Cf. Gen. 3:17-18.
\item Periph. 4 ed. Jeanneau, 266-8 (PL 122, 857A-857D).
\end{footnotes}
received the charge of ruling others, was the one who needed a ruler." The nature of the sin to which William is referring is not made explicit. It is clear, however, that William feels that his "flesh" was an accomplice to the Serpent. Here William echoes Augustine and Ambrose, for whom Eve, or the flesh, can connote the passions, which distract the soul from spiritual things. It is possible that the outward action which he describes is the pride taken in his administrative career. The polarity of outward and inward may convey the Plotinian notion that the fault of pride is expressed in a turning outward from the inner world and the desire to control a little part of the world as one's own, an idea he could have read in Augustine. The flesh, or the sensual part of man's soul, is implicated in sin secondarily as a necessary, but insufficient cause.

William prays that the disorder within him will be healed by God:

You did not, indeed, make me on account of paradise, but paradise on account of me, when you made me a man [having power] over the earth. O Creator, do not rue having made me thus, but bid me to be a rational man, as at the beginning, having power over my earth, so that my body may be subjected to my spirit and my spirit to you.

59 Med. 4.6 SC 324, 82: "ut quasi bonorum meorum interiorum pertaesus, experirer quid foris possem, Eua mea, carne mea in hoc consentiente...inuenus enim sum in oculis tuis nudus ab omnibus quae intra me homines putabant...egens rectore, qui regendos alios susceperam."


62 Rist suggests that Augustine treats first matter, then sensuality, and finally primary otherness as necessary but not sufficient causes of human sin during the course of the evolution of his views of the nature of evil. See Augustine, 105-7.


64 Cf. Gen. 1:26; Gen. 34:10.
Here we have our first mention that internal order requires the discipline of the “body” rather than the restoration of the will. One suspects, however, that when William speaks about desiring to discipline “the body,” what he really desires is the cessation of the distraction of the mind by the love for sensible things. In this he would have found patristic precedent in, among other sources, Augustine’s *Confessiones*. In book 7 of the *Confessiones* Augustine discusses how the material world had seduced him for so long and prevented him from understanding God’s true nature. He says that God allowed these material seductions to bring his prideful torment to a feverish pitch which only the Gospel would finally allay. Eventually Augustine came to believe that obedience to the law of the Lord meant the subjection of the body, “This was the right mean, and the “very heart” of my salvation, to remain in your image, and by serving you to subdue my body.”

Augustine’s later works reveal that he was ever more haunted by his vision of body as it had been in the age of innocence, untroubled by the disfunction that later beset it, and as it was to be in the perfect age to come. It was undoubtedly with reference to a certain nostalgia for an imaginable “natural” state of harmony between the soul and the body that he intensified his view that the current situation of man was a distortion of what man had been intended to be. Yet this made him one of the most attentive of his day to the situation of man in the present. As Peter Brown has written, his great sensitivity to the many ways in which the soul’s love of bodies is presently distorted was grounded in his belief that the attachment of soul to body was entirely natural. In *Confessiones* 10 he describes his anxiety over nocturnal emissions. He expresses confidence that God in his mercy can prevent his soul from taking pleasure in the sensory images that provoke these unsettling experiences. While Augustine never thought that

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65 *Med.* 4.10-1 SC 324, 84: “Siquidem non propter paradisum me, sed propter me paradisum constituiisti, cum me hominem super terram fecisti. Non te paeniteat, o Creator, hominem me fecisse super terram, sed praepice, sicut ab inuino, ut sim homo rationalis, potestatem habens super terram meam, ut corpus meum subditum sit spiritui, spiritus tibi.”

66 *Conf.* 7.7.11 CCSL 27, 100: “Et hoc erat rectum temperamentum et media regio salutis meae, ut manerem ad imaginem tuam et tibi serviens dominar) corpore.”

67 *De civ. Dei* 14.10 CCSL 48, 430-1.
the disorder inherent in the body/soul relationship would disappear entirely in the present life, he did not despair utterly of the power of grace to soothe the “growing pains” of man.69

But now I have told my good Lord what I am at present in this type of evil of mine, ‘rejoicing with trembling’70 in that which you have given to me, lamenting that in which I have remained incomplete, hoping that you will perfect in me your mercies even unto the fullness of peace, which my inward and outward members will have with you, when ‘death is swallowed up in victory.’71

William also desires earnestly that he be given the strength to subdue his “creation” here and now: the beasts (the soul’s affections); the reptiles, birds and fishes (worldly thoughts); and the beasts of burden, the iumenta (the bodily senses), which, William says, were given to us to bear our burdens.72 He prays

Do not repent the dignity you have given to man in granting me dominion over the beasts of my earth...Grant to us, O you who gave them to us, that they might submit to the bridle of reason, the goads of holy zeal, and the stall of discipline, where they might feed on and be nourished by their own foods, to be led thence for exercise when occasion demands it, but might not be allowed to run wild in the broad ways of error.73


70 Ladner, Idea of Reform, has argued that the general direction of Augustine’s thought is directed toward reform to the better. This is true, of course, although he possessed no simple notion of unending human progress. On linear and circular conceptions of time in Augustine see Glenn Olsen, “Problems with the Contrast between Circular and Linear Concepts of Time in the Interpretation of Ancient and Early Medieval History,” in Masaki Miyaki, ed. Concepts of Time in Europe and Asia (forthcoming).

71 Ps. 2:11.

72 Augustine, Conf. 10.30.41 CCSL 27, 177: “Nunc tamen quid adhuc sim in hoc genere mali mei, dixi bono domino meo exultans cum tremore in eo, quod donasti mihi, et lugens in eo, quod inconsummatus sum, sperans perfecturum te in me misericordias tuas usque ad pacem pleniam, quam tecum habebunt interiora et exteriora mea, cum absorpta fuerit mors in victoriarum.” Cf. 1 Cor. 15:54.

73 Med. 4.11SC 324, 84-6: “bestias terrae meae, truces et indomitos motus affectionum animae; reptilia etiam cogitationum humi repentina, et de uneno terrae cui iugiter inhaerent noxia uel mortifera; piscis maris et vulores caeli, cogitatus scilicet de spiritu huili mundi, curiosa saeculi altitudinemque diei eius scrutantes et sectantes, iumenta etiam, sensus istos corporis, ad hoc ut secundum nomen suum iuent nos, nobis concreatos.”

74 Ibid.: “Non te paeniteat homini donatae dignitatis, ut sim super bestias terrae meae...Da nobis, qui ea dedisti nobis, ut patiantur frenum rationis, zeli boni stimulos, stabulum discipline, ubi cibis suis pascantur et nutriantur, producenda ad usum cum res exegerit, non autem situescribe permittantur in latitudine publici erroris.”
William includes the physical substance of body only by its instrumentality in corporeal sensation, which of course acts as a bridge between the body and soul. William does not specify how his individual creation is to be subdued, but judging from his discussion of corporeal discipline in Med. 12, he is probably thinking of night vigils, manual labor, etc. This underlines the way in which Benedictine monasticism influenced a view of the potential reform of man and his body that is more extensive than anything to be found in Augustine.

William nonetheless demonstrates some continuity with Augustine’s nostalgic hope for corporeal order. Like Augustine, and also like his contemporary Bernard, William compares the body as it is in the present with its “natural” state in the age of innocence. It would be a mistake not to see the nostalgia for an Eden-esque golden age in William’s image of Adam ruling the beasts of the earth, which describes his vision of the potential gentling of man’s interior faculties. Yet William also uses eschatological language to describe his vision of reform, and in this way he demonstrates continuity with the twelfth-century development of a forward-looking ideology of reform, as described by Constable. Using eschatological language from Isaiah and Ezekiel, William also connects the present possibilities of man’s psychosomatic nature with its future perfection. He speaks in anticipation of the time when the lion and the lamb will lie down together, of that internal harmony that will reign on God’s “holy mountain” when “the beasts of burden [i.e., the bodily senses] also will feed in fruitful pastures, being no longer the beasts (iumenta) of our weakness, but rather the instruments (instrumenta) of our blessed happiness.”

74 Ibid. 12.27, 208.
75 Augustine views the body as created originally as man’s ‘helpmate.’ For the Augustinian background here see Rist, chap. 4, “Soul, Body, and Personal Identity,” in Augustine, 110-47, esp. 108-12.
76 On Bernard, see Olsen, “Recovering the Homeland,” 105.
77 On twelfth-century usage of the image of the monastery as a corporeal paradise, see Constable, “Renaissance and Reform,” in Renaissance and Renewal, ed. Benson, 48-51.
78 Ibid. 38-9.
79 Is. 11:6.
80 Is. 11:9.
81 Ezek. 34:14.
82 Med. 4.11 SC 324, 86: “Veniet, dicit qui promittit, ueniet dies cum leo et agnus cubabunt simul, cum quae modo nocent, non nocebunt in omni monte sancto tuo, iumenta quoque pascentur in pascuis uberrimis, non iam infirmitatis nostrae iumenta, sed beatae felicitatis instrumenta.”
but agrees with Bernard, is in his use of the topos of man as *dominator*, as called to use the creation which was given to him to be governed. William might have been additionally influenced in the development of his notion that man possesses dignity as *dominator* by Gregory of Nyssa's *De opificio hominis*. Here William uses this imagery to express the dignity that pertains to man by virtue of the "education" of his body that is so distinctive of eleventh- and twelfth-century writers.

A philosophical notion which shaped William's approach to body here is the idea of man as microcosm. Ancient speculation on the microcosm had grounded the parallel between the larger and smaller world in the notion of divine immanence in the world. Lars Thunberg has outlined the various ways in which Christianity absorbed this notion. As the tradition came through Philo, it possessed a more Platonic appearance, de-emphasizing the idea that man is in the image of the material creation and stressing instead the ideal relationship of both man and the world to God. Although he uses the term, Gregory of Nyssa was one of Philo's heirs who took pains to stress that man's likeness to the universe is not the reason for his greatness, which is due rather to his creation according to the image of God. Nemesius of Emesa, however, stresses the parallels between microcosm and macrocosm in order to show that man's vocation is to *act* as microcosm, to order the various elements in himself. Man is called to use the lower things of the world for his service and to join together opposite principles such as spiritual and corporeal. Thus the notion of man as microcosm was joined to the notion of man as mediator by Nemesius, whence it passed to Maximus the Confessor and finally to John Scottus Eriugena. Ultimately man serves to unify the whole of creation, and after his resurrection, he will achieve a renovation of the whole world in which the disorder between body and soul is overcome and the two are completely and harmoniously united.

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83 Olsen, "Recovering the Homeland," 105, discusses Bernard on the dignity of man entailed in his role as *dominator* of this world.
85 The following depends on Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator*, 140-5.
87 Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator*, 150
Realizing that such a harmonious existence between body and soul lies only in the future, William says, “Meanwhile, Lord, ‘hear the heavens, and let the heavens hear the earth. Let the earth hear the wine, and the oil, and the corn, and let these hear Jezreel, that is the seed of God which you have sown in us (Hos. 2:21).’” This passage from Hosea evokes a time of perfect peace and security, in which all of nature is in harmony, for the Israelites in the land of Zion; William turns it into an allegory for the peaceful co-existence of body and soul in man. Guibert of Nogent shares a similar exegesis of Hosea, proposing that the phrase describes the voluntary submission of the flesh to the spirit. William thinks that he must banish all earthly distractions in order to enter reverently into the house of the Lord and to pray on his mountain:

And now, o desire of my soul, desiring to be free for you for a time, and to taste and see how sweet you are, o Lord, my soul itself entreats your bounteous mercy to give me peace and silence from all things, whether outward or inward. She beseeches you to preserve among those things which are in me the law which you have given me, but outwardly to make a covenant for me with every beast of the field, every creeping thing of earth, and every fowl of the air, and to destroy the bow, and the sword, and war out of my land.

William describes interior order and peace by means of the image of “covenant,” alluding to the one which God re-established in the book of Hosea with the adulterous wife, His people.

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88 Med. 4.12 SC 324, 86: “Interim, Domine, exaudi caelos, et caeli exaudiant terram, et terra exaudiat unum et oleum et frumentum, at haec exaudiant Iherzrael, id est semen Dei quod seminaisti in nobis.”
89 Guibert of Nogent, Tropologiae in Prophetas Osee et Amos ac Lamentationes Jeremiae 1.2 PL 156: 354. William and Guibert’s works contrast with earlier patristic exegeses of this passage by Jerome and Julian of Eclanum, who focus on the conversion of the people of God. Cf. Jerome, Commentarium in Osee prophetam libri iii ad Pammachium 1.2.18-24 in S. Hieronymi presbyteri opera, pt. 1.6, Opera exegetica, ed. M. Adriaen CCSL 76 (Turnhout, 1969) 29-32; cf. Julian of Eclanum, Tractatus prophetarum Osee Iohel et Amos 1.2.18-24, in Expositio libri Job, Tractatus prophetarum Osee Iohel et Amos, ed. L. de Coninck CCSL 88 (Turnhout, 1977) 143-5.
Israel, in order to welcome her back after her betrayal. This passage grounds William's belief that God will confer internal order upon him in God's eternal promise of succor for those who return to him, and neatly anticipates William's final theme: his return to the Lord and his re-conversion to God. He pictures himself abandoning the service of the world for God's service and entering triumphantly into God's holy city. "Teach me, O Lord, a country man who comes from the country of the world, the ordered ways of your city and the charming and elegant manners of your court." He visualizes his migration as not only into a new city, but into a new type of land. Borrowing an image from Revelations, he says: "And when I enter into the new order of your service, I seem to see a new earth and a new heaven, for behold, you make all things new."

It is evident now that William connects "externality" with that which provides distraction to the soul. It is worth noting that William conceives of himself as having an interior part, which follows its own laws, and another part, whose attraction to "externals" requires the restraint of a covenant. Since the second part of William has strayed far, like the adulterous wife, it requires a special covenant. By means of the covenant, the bodily senses can be ordered once again to bearing the burdens of the spirit rather than distracting it. It is also important to see that the covenant which is struck "outwardly" is made with thoughts, desires, and sensation. This shows that William's notion of body here expresses the psychic consequences of the soul's connection to a body, rather than the physical substance of body per se. William notes that the monk who enters into the new land will show it in his courtly manners, and here we see once again the popular twelfth-century idea that the re-ordering of the will is expressed in elegance of manner.

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91 Hos. 2:18.
92 Med. 4.16-7 SC 324, 90.
93 Ibid. 4.14, 90: "Doece me, Domine, hominem rusticanum de rure saeculi uenientem, ciuitatis tuae mores disciplinatos, et curiae tuae uenustas urbanitates."
If this covenant is made, William will be able to retreat into the wilderness, into the desert and onto God's holy mountain where, like Moses, he may see God in the burning bush. The references to the wilderness and the desert help to place in its proper context William's confidence that God will bestow on him at least temporarily, long enough for his prayerful interlude with the Lord, the strength to discipline his body and to attain internal order: twelfth-century monasticism. The desert, especially as Cistercian thinkers, with whom William would probably by now have been familiar, conceived it, was a place both otherworldly, in the sense that it is sanctified by supernatural grace, and yet a place where the order of nature is allowed to flourish. Above all, it was the worldly setting for the gaining of discipline. William's statement that when he puts himself into God's service he sees the new earth and heaven of Revelations alludes to the belief that the monastery is the New Jerusalem, the place in this world where the next takes form. As we shall see in Med. 5, William thinks that life in such a place may yield a certain degree of peace to the internal warfare between the will of the flesh and the spirit.

Med. 5 continues to develop the themes of contrition and confession. William agonizes over the realization that many of his sins were done with full knowledge of and consent to the wrong involved. He fears that even Jesus' sacrifice on the cross may not be enough to cancel such a debt. He recalls that Jesus prayed for his friends, his enemies, and those who crucified him without knowing what they did, but he can find no instance of Jesus praying for those who sin knowingly. At the same time the Apostle says, "For those who sin willfully, there is...

96 Med. 4.12 SC 324, 86.
97 Ibid. 4.15, 88.
98 An emphasis on corporeal discipline had appeared prominently, of course, in Eastern monasticism. On this see Brown, Body and Society, 213-338. Jerome inherited thence his confidence in the ascetic's ability to ease the drives of the body, ibid. 418.
99 The Cistercians held up the desert fathers as an example of fervor in asceticism and the simple life. The desert myth was used to support the White Monks' claim to follow a stricter form of life than that of the Cluniac order. Benedicta Ward has shown that the Cistercian "return to the desert" was tentative and selective, that the White Monks discarded the sides of desert monasticism that did not appeal to them and retained Western customs, such as liturgical life, unknown to the Thebaid. Cf. "The Desert Myth," in One Yet Two, ed. Pennington, 183-99, esp. 187. The desert myth was deployed in a spirit of resourcement, or a return to the authenticity of the sources, as discussed by Constable, "Renewal and Reform," in Renaissance and Renewal, ed. Benson, 58.
now left no sacrifice for sins."\(^{101}\) If so, William says, "Woe to the whole world, for it would seem that you have included very few!"\(^{102}\) William testifies that, like Peter's, his love for Christ never flagged, even when he failed to act as he ought, and he prays that his love may intercede for him as did that of the sinful woman who anointed Christ with perfume.\(^{103}\) William hopes that his love will mitigate to some extent the punishment that his deliberate malice deserves.

Finally, William asks that God fire his love and help him to manifest it in ceaseless confession. Like Augustine, he seeks to drive out the inner poison by combating the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.\(^{104}\) In a beautiful passage William describes himself as desiring to pour out his ointment on the feet of Christ, which he identifies as our humanity, and on his head, or Christ's divinity:

\[
\text{Lord, anyone who likes may hear me thus confessing, and may laugh at me! Anyone may see me lying with your sinful woman at your mercy's feet, washing them with the tears of my heart and anointing them with the ointment of pious devotion! Let me give my whole substance (whatever that amounts to!), in body and soul alike, to buy the ointment that will please you, which ought to be poured out upon your head, whose head is God, and on your feet, whose lower part is our humble nature.}^{105}\]

In this passage the polarity of head and feet, suggested by the Gospel passages describing the anointing of Christ's head and feet by the sinful woman,\(^{106}\) evokes the notion of Christ as God

\(^{101}\) Constable, "Renewal and Reform," in Renaissance and Renewal, ed. Benson, 56-61, esp. 60.
\(^{102}\) Med. 5.8 SC 324, 96: "voluntarie peccantibus iam non reliquitur pro peccatis hostia." Cf. Heb. 10:26.
\(^{103}\) Ibid. 5.9, 98: "vae uniuerso mundo quia paucissimos uideris inciuisse."
\(^{104}\) Ibid. 5.13, 100-2: "ut qui iust[e] me damnare habes pro tantillo amore quo tunc te amabam, accepta nunc ex gratia tua plenitudine amoris tui, ueniam in judicium tuum, et appaream in sancto tuo, et in oculis misericordiae tuae ea ratione qua apparuit peccatrix illa de qua dixist[ei]..." Domine, qui uult audiat et irrideat me confitentem, uideat cum peccatrice tua ad pedes misericordiae tuae iacentem, lauantem lacrimis cordis, et unguento piae devotionis ungentem. Eat omnis substantialia mea quantulacunque est, siue in corpore siue in anima, in pretium placit[t][i] tibi uengenti, quod effundam super caput tuum, cuius caput Deus, et super pedes tuos cuius pars ima humiliat[i]s nostrae natura est."

\(^{105}\) Cf. Lk. 7:47.

\(^{106}\) Ibid. 5.14, 102. On the three concupiscences see 1 Jn. 2:16; for one of Augustine's important uses of this passage see Conf. 10. 31. 43-36.59 CCSL 27, 177-87.
\(^{106}\) Med. 5.15 SC 324, 102: "Domine, qui uult audiat et irrideat me confitentem, uideat cum peccatrice tua ad pedes misericordiae tuae iacentem, lauantem lacrimis cordis, et unguento piae devotionis ungentem. Eat omnis substantialia mea quantulacunque est, siue in corpore siue in anima, in pretium placit[t][i] tibi uengenti, quod effundam super caput tuum, cuius caput Deus, et super pedes tuos cuius pars ima humiliat[i]s nostrae natura est."
\(^{105}\) Cf. Lk. 7:37-50 and Jn. 12:3-8, which describe the anointing of his feet; cf. Mt. 26:7-13 and Mk. 14:3, which mention the anointing of Christ's head.
and man. Bernard uses a similar image in several of his sermons. The pouring out of the ointment connotes the grateful prayers William desires to lavish on Christ for his merciful kindness to man and to himself. This ointment softens his hardened heart at the same time as it bedews the feet of Christ, and here we see the same expression of William’s awareness of the value of affective meditation on the Incarnation as in De sacramentum altaris. William also prays for perseverance in reforming his life in true contrition “so that neither my heart nor my body may draw back from doing your will in any particular.” Here again we see the same hope that internal order is possible here on earth as we encountered in Med 4.

Med. 6 reads rather like a compendium of the theology of De contemplando Deo. It begins with a prayer that William might escape the cursed earth and ascend to heaven. Ascent is made possible by our unity with God in love: Christ’s instructive example, which stirs up our love, and the intercession of the Holy Spirit, which bestows likeness, are both prerequisites for ascent. The Meditatio maintains an eschatological atmosphere throughout, beginning with the opening words from Revelation: “‘I saw a door opened in heaven,’ says blessed John, ‘and the first voice which I heard, as it were, of a trumpet speaking to me, said: ‘Come up hither.’” The festal day which William imagines to be found in heaven begins already in the joy he encounters whenever he sees two or more gathered in the Lord’s name: “their life together seems so good, so pleasant, so full of the unction of the Holy Spirit, that it is plain to all that there the blessing that you have ordained has been realized.” As in De

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107 Bernard of Clairvaux similarly emphasizes the grandeur of the head of Christ, i.e. God, in Sermo post octavam Epiphaniae 2.1 in Sermones, in Sancti Bernardi opera, ed. Leclercq, 4: 319. He proposes a series of anointings in his Sermons on the Song of Songs: Christ’s feet (his humanity), his head (his divinity), and his whole body, the Church. See Serm. Cant. 10 and 12 in Sancti Bernardi opera, ed. Leclercq, 1: 48-54, 60-7; cf. Stock, Implications of Literacy, 427-8.

108 Med. 5.18 SC 324, 104: “Praecipe quidquid uis, sed da mihi intelligere et posse quod praecipis, qui iam in hoc dedisti paratum cor meum, ut a facienda voluntate tua in nullo se subtrahat cor uel corpus meum.”

109 Here, unlike in Med. 4, William depicts terrestrial life, rather than flesh or sensual life in particular, as stamped with the curse of God. Since the earth was cursed in Adam’s sin and work, Adam’s heirs cannot avoid departing from the commandments and compounding their sin.


natura et dignitate amoris, William looks to the Christian community for assurances that the rewards of heaven are not merely reserved for the future but are present even now.

William explains that man can attain to the heavenly dwelling, which is God the Father, through the Son. The Son, through which the transcendent becomes immanent and the immanent makes contact with the transcendent, is the door to heaven. In his descent, Christ enables our love to ascend to him; quoting Paul, William says, “He who ascends is the same also as he who descended.” Here he stresses less the unity of human nature with the human nature of Christ than the notion that our love returns to God as to its source: “Who is he? He is love. For love in us ascends thence to you, O Lord, because the love in you comes down hence to us.” When the Holy Spirit is present in our hearts, we dwell in “heaven,” but not the heaven of heavens, which is God’s own eternity. As in Aenigma fidei, William stops short of saying that we achieve full likeness to God on earth. Echoing Augustine, William says that we are adopted now by grace, and that only in heaven will the Holy Spirit confer the sight of God.

The role of Christ is here, as in William’s earlier writings, primarily a pedagogical one. Christ teaches us how greatly we are loved by God. William conjures up a litany of Scriptural images to describe Christ, similar to the one he lavished on Him in De contemplando Deo: He is the ark of the covenant, containing the vessel of gold (again sheltering the manna, the soul of Christ in which “dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead corporeally”), the rod of Aaron, and the tablets of the covenant. He again makes use of the image of the wound in Christ’s side

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112 William inverts the Pauline teaching at Med. 6.7 SC 324, 110: “Qui ascendit, ipse est et qui descendit.” Cf. Eph. 4:10: “he that descended is the same also that ascended above all the heavens.”

113 Med. 6.7 SC 324, 110: “Quis hic est? Amor. Amor enim ad te, Domine, in nobis illuc ascendit, quia amor in te huc ad nos descendit.”

114 Ibid. 6. 11, 114.

115 Ibid. 6.13, 116: “Similitudinem autem ipsam Dei conferet nobis uiuis eius, qua Deum uidebimus, non quod est, sed sicut est, et ipsas est similitudo quae similis ei erimus. Nam uidere Patri Filium, hoc est esse quod Filius, et e contrario. Nobis autem uide Deum, hoc est similis esse Deo. Haec unitas, haec similitudo ipsum est caelum, quo Deus in nobis habitat, et nos in Deo.”

as the door of the ark, through which we may enter into even His holy soul. 117 He is also the way by which we go, the truth to which we go, and the life for which we go. 118 The humanity of Christ remains a means to the attainment of the divinity of Christ, if extremely sacred and efficacious through its demonstration of God’s love and his institution of the sacraments. 119 In one interesting remark William quotes one of God’s “servants” to the effect that those who perceive God as residing in a material heaven are mistaken, but at least they have placed Him in a more worthy place than the earth. 120 As the servant in question is Augustine, it seems fair to conclude that William has inherited his antipathy toward materialist ways of thinking. William will continue to demonstrate that heaven must be understood to be an entirely spiritual, not physical, “place.”

In Med. 7 William offers up his ardent wish to “see the face of God.” Doubt about the legitimacy of his desire troubles him because he can find so few Scriptural allusions to experiences of seeing God as he is—William’s primary source for them are the Psalms—and because Scripture seems to testify that even Moses and John the Beloved Disciple were denied them. David testifies, however, that the chosen people walk in the light of the Lord’s countenance and enter into their Promised Land only because of them. William suggests that

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117 Med. 6.20-1 SC 324, 120-2.
118 Ibid. 6.21, 122: “uideant et concupiscant, ardeant et currant, quibus factus es uia per quam illuc itur, ueritas ad quam itur, uita propere quam itur, uia exemplum humilitatis, ueritas puritatis, uita, uita aeterna.” Cf. Jn. 14: 6; cf. Augustine, Conf. 7.18.24 CCSL 27, 108. William continues to say that Christ was given to us as simple food for “spiritual children” (Med. 6.22 SC 324, 122): “Haec omnia factus es nobis, misericiors pater, suavis domine, dulcis frater, qui sumus filii tui, quibus dicebas: Filii mei adhuc modicum uobiscum sum; servii tui, quibus dices: Vos uocatis me magister et domine, et bene dicitis, sum etemum; fratres tui, quibus mandasti ut irent ubi te uiderent.” Cf. Augustine, Conf. 7.18.24 CCSL 27, 108; he combines the two notions that faith leads men along more accessible roads to the person of Christ and that he was offered as “food for little ones (paruulis)” (1 Cor. 3:1-2) in De Trin. 1.3.1 CCSL 50, 30; cf. In Io. Eu. Tract. 42.8 CCSL 36, 369, where he calls the humanity of Christ “that by which we go (humanitas eius qua imus).”
119 Med. 6.21 SC 324, 120-2.
120 Ibid. 6.8, 110: “Sed dicit quidam seruus tuus: Qui uisibilibus adhuc pulchritudinibus delectatur, nec possunt de Deo spirituale aliquid cogitare, quoniam terrae praefuerunt caelum, tolerabilius est eorum opinio, si Deum, quem adhuc corporaliter cogitante, in caelo potius esse credant quam in terra (But one of your servants says: those who still delight in the beauty of visible things cannot understand anything about God spiritually, because they prefer heaven to earth. Their opinion is somewhat tolerable, if they believe God, whom they still think about corporeally, to be in heaven rather than on the earth).” Cf. Augustine, De sermone Domini in monte 2.5.18 ed. A. Mutzenbecher, in Aurelii Augustini opera, pt. 7.2 CCSL 35 (Turnhout, 1967) 108: “et ideo qui uisibilibus adhuc pulchritudinibus dediti sunt nec possunt aliquid incorporeum cogitare, quoniam
man walks in the light of the Lord when he exercises his judgment properly: “I find that this face of yours, your countenance, is knowledge of your truth, in which, showing the face of good intention, your blessed people rejoice and delight in the Holy Spirit.” Knowledge of God is also possible through negation. William depicts negative knowledge as limited and therefore an aspect of the fallen condition of ignorance and blindness. Contrasting with this dark imagery, the saints dispel the haze:

Glowing and blazing from living so close to your light and your fire, by word and example they enlightened and kindled others. They announced to us the solemn joy of this supreme knowledge of you to be had in the future life, in which you will be seen as you are, that is, face to face.

Once again, William sees the persons of the saints as offering testimony to the possibility of seeing the face of God during the present life in a third, positive, and unsurpassable fashion. The *Meditatio* ends on a somewhat bittersweet note, since William notes that the glimpses of such human beatitude offered by the saints make the good rejoice but merely exacerbate the wrath of the wicked.

As if circling ever in upon the mystery of divine communion, William narrows his focus yet again, in *Med. 8*, to meditation on Jesus Christ, who is for us the way to the Father, as William had said in *Med. 6*. In Christ the soul can discern a brother, one who was offered to us that we might see our own similarity to God. Borrowing a metaphor from the

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necesse est caelum praeferant terrae, tolerabilior est opinio eorum, si deum, quem adhuc corporaliter cogitant, in caelo potius credant esse quam in terra.”
121 *Med. 7.8* SC 324, 130: “uultum tuum hunc, et faciem tuam inuenio esse notitiae veritatis tuae, cui beatus populus tuus, faciem exhibens bonae voluntatis, iubilat gaudium in Spiritu Sancto.”
123 *Med. 7.10* SC 324, 132: “de luminis et ignis tui contubemio lucentes et ardentes, uerbo et exemplo caeteros illuminabat et accendebat, et huius supereminentis notitiae tuae solenne gaudium in futura nobis uita denuntiabat, qua uideberis sicuti es, uel facie ad faciem.” Twelfth-century canons regular possessed a strong sense of the urgency of teaching by word and example, and this ethos was more formalized into the rule of life for their houses than for those of the monks. On this see Caroline Bynum, *Docere verbo et exemplo: An Aspect of Twelfth-Century Spirituality*, Harvard Theological Studies 31 (Missoula, MT, 1979); cf. Jaeger, *Envy of Angels*, 244-68.
Song of Songs, William suggests that this makes possible a communion as intimate as that between a bridegroom and his bride. Communion begins with the kiss of true confession on the part of the soul, to which God responds with the kiss of peace. This communion is at its most intimate during the reception of the Eucharist, when, recalling the images of Christ’s Passion and death, the soul may be visited by the Holy Spirit, bringing a taste of the divine communion between the three persons of the Trinity. William describes the communion between the soul and the Lord as a kiss, a “mingling of spirits.”

When the soul tastes the divine sweetness in the Eucharist, she is made that which she eats, bone of your bones, and flesh of your flesh that, just as you prayed to the Father on the threshold of the Passion, the Holy Spirit may work in us here by grace that which is between the Father and yourself, his Son, from all eternity by nature, and that, as you are one, so likewise we may be one in you.

The reference to the bride being made one flesh and bone with Christ certainly alludes to a deep unity between Christ and the soul in the Eucharist. One wonders whether it is also legitimate to see an allusion here to the corporeal transformation of the recipient of the Eucharist, as one finds in book 8 of De sacramento altaris. Since the preceding sentences of the passage speak only about the union of the spirit of the recipient with God by grace and the action of the Holy Spirit, it seems incautious to read such an allusion into this passage. It is, however, possible that William is making reference to the mystical incorporation of the believer into his Body.

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124 Med. 8.1 SC 324, 134.
125 Ibid.
126 Cf. ibid. 8.7, 140. William describes participation in the Eucharist as the reception of the Spirit itself: “Hoc est quod agitur cum facimus quod in tui commemorationem nos facere praecepi...cum manducantes et bibentes incorruptibile epulum corporis et sanguinis tui, sicut munda animalia tua, ab intestino memoriae cogitandi dulcedine, quasi ad os reducimus, et in nouum et perpetuum salutis nostrae effectum, nouo semper pietatis affectu ruminantes, rursum suauiter in ipsa recondimus memoria quid pro nobis feceris, quid fueris passus.”
127 Ibid. 8.7 SC 324, 138: “Sed et qui se dulcios osculatur, mutuo sibi suos spiritus infundunt...infunde mihi totum tuum, qui totus quod est redolet; ut de tui suavitate meas ultra non oleat, et tui dulcis odor, o dulcissime, semper ulterius in me permaneat.”
128 Gen. 2: 23.
129 Med. 8.8 SC 324, 140: “hoc efficitur quod manducat, os ex ossibus tuis, et caro de carne tua, ut sicut orasti Patrem iturus ad passionem, hoc Spiritus sanctus hic in nobis operetur per gratiam, quod in Patre in te, Filio eius, est ab aeterno per naturam, ut sicut uos unum estis, ita et nos in uobis unum simus.”
Med. 8 offers some of William’s most sensitive meditations on the physical body of Christ, torn and bloodied during his Passion and death, that we have encountered thus far. In the context of meditating on the true confession of the soul, William reflects that the whole of the Passion is itself a kiss from the Lord, by means of which Christ demonstrated his great love of humankind. In order that the bride’s face might be found worthy of his kiss, beautified, and made fair and lovely, his face was spat upon, bruised with blows from rods, and dishonored. Through a subsequent series of short, abrupt comparisons that batter the reader one after another, William manages to intensify even further the sense of pathos that the innocent lamb was not only bruised and disgraced on our behalf but even killed:

For my hands, Lord, that did what they ought not, your hands were pierced with nails, your feet for my feet; for my unlawful use of sight and hearing your eyes and ears slept in death. Your side was opened by the soldier’s lance, that, through your wound, out of my impure heart might finally flow all that in my long decline had burned and dug its way into it. Lastly, you died that I might live; and you were buried, so that I might rise from the grave.

As in the liturgical speeches performed by the congregation during the Palm Sunday and Good Friday liturgies, William’s speech makes him simultaneously the observer and the performer of these vile acts against the Savior, and at its conclusion his guilt hangs in the air, on account of both his individual sins and the part played in the collective sin of the human race, whose magnitude made human atonement impossible. William resumes in a gentler vein his

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130 Ibid. 8.4, 136: “Hoc est osculum sponsi et sponsae: cuius facies ut digna inueniretur osculo tuo, O Domine, tua facies conspota est; ut illius appareret decora et speciosa, tua facies alapis palmarum et arundinum ictibus factura est likuid; tua in oculis hominum saturata est opprobriis, ut illius pulchra et speciosa appareret in oculis tuis.”

131 Ibid. 8.5, 136: “Pro meis enim manibus, Domine, quae fecerunt quae non debuerunt, tuae manus claus transfixae sunt, pedes tui pro meis pedibus; ocult tui pro illicito uiui meo, aures pro auditu, in mortem obdormierunt. Lancea militis aperature est latus tuum ut de impuro corde meo per uulnus tum totum aliquando effluaret quicquid in eo longa labe fuerat incensum igni et suffossum. Ad ultimum mortuus es, ut ego iuuerem, sepultus, ut ego resurgerem.”

132 Ibid. 8.4, 136. Here William seems to emphasize the gravity of the sin, rather than, as Anselm does, the human incapacity to effect repentence because of human blindness: “horribilia pro nobis patientis, qui fecimus horribilia; pro quibus faciei summam iustitiae in nullo satisfacere potuisset facies cuiusuis paenitentiae, nisi ei quae pro nobis passus es addita fuisset tua innocentia, et quia cum esses Filius exauditus es pro tua reuerentia.”
meditation on the wonderful effect of the Passion, which can be seen in the most unlikely of conversions to the Savior, from that of the crucified thief to those of whole peoples of the Old Testament. These reflections on the mercy of the Lord lead William into his meditation on the Eucharistic mystery in which the Passion is to be relived again and again. The meditation concludes with a prayer that as often as the speaker lifts up his face in anguished confession, God may visit him with his mercy.

With Med. 9 we return to the theme of the distraction of the mind by the sensible world, a theme that was developed strongly in Meditationes 4 and 5 but receded slightly in 6-8. William describes an internal fog, a mass of misery, a mental blindness that prevents him from seeing or hearing God. The darkness of phantom notions, impulses, and longings that interchange ceaselessly with one another almost overcomes him. Though he desires to direct his gaze above himself to God, his wretched soul plunges into and below itself and can only look down at the dull earth. The reference to the direction in which evil souls direct their gaze emphasizes their connection with the animal creation, i.e. the irrational. This traditional contrast between the animals, who look down at the earth, and man, who looks upright to heaven is found in Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine, and others. Determined to locate the source of this cloud of unwelcome thoughts, he enters into the dark house of his

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133 Ibid. 8.5, 136-8.
134 Ibid. 8.13, 144-6.
135 Ibid. 9.4, 148.
136 Ibid. 9.1, 146: “phantasmata cogitationum, voluitatem, affectionum.”
137 Ibid.: “a te in me, a me subitus me.” Cf. Augustine, De Trin. 12.11.16 CCSL 50, 370: “Cupiditate uero experiendae potestatis sua quodam nutu suo ad se ipsum tamquam ad medium pronuit. Ita cum uult esse sicut ille sub nullo, et ab ipsa sui meditata poenali ad ima propellitur, id est ad ea quibus pecora laetantur.”
139 See below, chap. 4, nn. 113, 126, 129.
141 Augustine, De Gen. ad litt. 6.12 CSEL 28.3.2, 187.
142 Cf. Boethius, Cons. phil. 5. m. 5 CCSL 94, 100.
conscience. He successfully banishes the swarm of thoughts for a little while by calling for assistance upon the good thoughts that he has formerly drawn from the Savior’s wells.

Having banished his troublesome thoughts, he is now in a position to seek their source. Turning his attention to their origin, William finds that with the aid of love and because of the solitude to which he has fled, his thoughts’ entrances and exits into the things of the flesh are blocked. The terms in which the soul is described here is reminiscent of the image of the dove at the windows, an image that Origen and Gregory the Great used to describe the soul which closes itself to temporal distractions.

The origin of the unwelcome thoughts is the temporal world itself, and William’s only escape from it is via the visitation of grace. With the fog of distracting thoughts banished, William does not then proceed effortlessly to a spiritual contemplation of God; rather, only now can he begin to acknowledge his human vulnerability and his continual need for God’s mercy. William compares his present miserable state to Adam’s fall. Formerly established in paradise, William fled from God after he “almost” embarked upon the way of the flesh, though he maintains that his spirit always loved God even when his flesh neglected Him. God rescued him from the “whirlpool of the world,” and chastened him, breaking the soul’s bones within him. Finally he failed in mind

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143 Med. 9.3 SC 324, 148: “ingredior tenebrosam domum conscientiae meae, quasi peruisurus unde tenebrae istae, unde caligo odibilis, diuidens inter me et lumen cordis mei.”

144 William’s method is to assign the proper place to each kind of thought. Evil thoughts have no place at all: they are banished along with idle thoughts. Other thoughts concerning his daily business demand their proper consideration. William apportions them their “proper place and time,” and once their occasions have ceased, they vanish voluntarily. Cf. Ibid. 9.6, 150: “Admitto interim quasi rationabiliter audiendas et emittendas, negotiosae uel occupatorias, sua eis tempora suaque loca distribuen...Negotiosae, neglifi se uidentes et sicut causi suis cessantibus ad modicum utiles iam prope inter otiosas computari si erubescentes, recedunt.”

145 Is. 12:3.

146 Med. 9.7 SC 324, 150: “Sic ergo discassa aliquantisper cogitationum caligne, converto me ad earum originem, ad ordinandum scilicet affectuum disciplinam, et inuenio necessitate solituidinis in quam transfugi, obstructos eis aditus et exitus, in his quae carnis sunt.” William’s language may be reminiscent of Boethius, Cons. phil. 1 m. 3 CCSL 94, 4: “tunc me discassa liquerunt nocte tenebrae.”

147 See above, chap. 1, n. 213.

148 Compare with the discussion of Med. 4 above.


150 Med. 9.10 SC 324, 152: “et tu de saeculi uoragine me extraxisti.” Cf. ibid. 5. 19, 106: “Deforma me a saeculo cui me conformavi, forma et conforma me gratiae tuae ad quam confugi.”
and body and God withdrew him from the lake of misery.\textsuperscript{151} He portrays himself as a broken, wounded body in need of God’s restoration.

Shedding the garment of skin that you made for Adam to cover his disgrace and confusion, I show myself to you as naked as when you created me and say: Behold me, not as you made me, but as I have made myself to be by deserting you. Behold my wounds, recent and ancient. Nothing do I hide, I expose everything, both your blessings and my own bad actions.\textsuperscript{152}

The nakedness of his body expresses his desire to be stripped of all self-deception by which he might seek to escape the reality of his poisoned interior state. It expresses a vulnerability that the body at creation did not possess. William’s choice to symbolize his humble self-offering by means of his naked body gives further support for Bynum’s claim that twelfth-century thinkers conceptualized themselves as bodily beings even though their preferred term for self-identity tends to be “soul.”\textsuperscript{53} Here, in spite of whatever psychological division is attendant upon his possession of a body, William in no way desires to abandon his body. His corporeality, in fact, as revelatory of his vulnerability and humility, acts as a powerful symbol of the “road back” to God.

William confesses himself to have been restored to a state even more blessed than before, as Adam was restored by Christ \textit{in melius}.\textsuperscript{154} Though renewed, William still must call upon the Lord to continue to purge his sins and listen to his confession: “See before you now my face, whose name is misery, uplifted to your face, Mercy supreme. I do not hide its secret

\textsuperscript{151} Ibid. 9.11, 152-4: “Cum ad ultimum et corpore deficerem et mente, et de uentre inferi clamarem ad te, statim mihi adfuisti; porrexisti manum, de lacu miseriae me eduxisti.” Ps. 39:3.
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid. 9.8, 150-2: “proiecta ueste pellicea Adae quam ei fecisti ad protegendum opprobrium confusionis suae, nudum me sicut me creasti tibi exhibens aio: Ecce me, Domine, non qualem me fecisti, sed qualem ego me feci, ex quo a te defeci. Ecce uulnera mea recentia et antiqua. Nihil subtraho, omnia tibi expono, et bona tua, et mala mea.”
\textsuperscript{53} Bynum, \textit{Resurrection}, 135, n. 59.
\textsuperscript{154} Med. 9.11 SC 324, 154: “Restuisti in antiquum, et ampliorem quam prius salutaris tui laetitiam mihi reddidisti.”
nooks and corners from you. You know, o Truth, and I implore you, that this may be the truth before you.\textsuperscript{155}

From an anthropological point of view, the last three meditations in the collection form a triptych, revealing the glory and the misery entailed in man’s possession of a body. \textit{Med.} 10 advocates devotion to the humanity of Christ to a degree that is unsurpassed by any of William’s previous writings. Indeed, in one of his early prayers, William had cautioned that devotion to the humanity of Christ may hinder spiritual prayer.\textsuperscript{156} In \textit{Med.} 10 William advances slightly beyond the position taken in \textit{Med.} 6, in which the body of Christ is treated as a means to the contemplation of God’s divinity. \textit{Med.} 6 instructs the reader to proceed into the ark which is Christ’s body to taste the manna of his divinity. In the later meditation William implies that corporeal devotion is, in fact, more suitable for human beings still weighed down by corruptible bodies. William is making a concession to the view that Augustine holds at the beginning and end of \textit{De Trinitate}, that, since earthly vision is always partial, contemplation of Christ’s humanity is granted to man as kind of stop-gap measure; yet, William affirms in the strongest language that these corporeal “images (\textit{imagines})” that we contemplate facilitate the soul’s search for understanding of the divine nature.\textsuperscript{157} In doing so he strides definitively beyond Augustine, whose assumption that images distort true understanding probably hindered such a view.\textsuperscript{158} Of course, Augustine was not the only patristic writer to advocate the transcendence of sensible images in prayer: it is a prominent feature of Cassian’s thought, as well.\textsuperscript{159} The same view was held by Bernard of Clairvaux, as we will see. The extent to which

\textsuperscript{155} Ibid. 9.13, 154: “Ecce coram te facies mea, cuius nomen est miseria, ad faciem tuam, o summa misericordia. Angulos eius occultos et recessus non tibi occulto, tu scis, o ueritas, et precor te, ut coram te hoc sit ueritas.”

\textsuperscript{156} William of St. Thierry, \textit{Oratio domni Willelmii}, in \textit{Oraison Meditatives} SC 324, 216: “Sed et si in oratione nostra aliquando pedes Iesu tenemus et ad humanitatis formam eius, sicut unam cum Filio Dei personam, quasi corporeum quendam affectum formamus, non erramus, sed tamen spiritualem tardamus et impedimus orationem.”

\textsuperscript{157} \textit{Med.} 10.7 SC 324, 162-4. For Latin text, see below, n. 163.


\textsuperscript{159} Cassian, \textit{Conf.} 10.11 SC 54, 93: “quae non solum nullius imaginis occupatur intuitu, sed etiam nulla uocis, nulla uerborum processione distinguitur, ignita uero mentis intentione per ineffabilem cordis excessum
the *Meditationes* represent a challenge to the assumption that worship without images should be the primary goal of the monk will be explored as this chapter continues.

The beginning of Med. 10 quotes Gal. 6: 14: “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” William affirms that as great as are the mysteries of divine omnipotence, eternal wisdom, and so forth, equally great are those mysteries which manifest God’s power and wisdom in the temporal history of mankind. Therefore the *images* of the “mysteries of the condescension of your human dispensation (*humanae dispensationis*), also ‘fill the temple’ of all contemplation, however vast it may be.” He says explicitly that sensible images were providentially supplied by God for men:

> For I will assert boldly that in the sweet ordering of your wisdom this grace was provided for us from all eternity. It was not in your mind the least of the chief reasons for your Incarnation that your little ones (*paruuli*) in your Church, who still needed milk rather than solid food, who are not strong enough spiritually to think about you in your own way, might cherish in you a form not unfamiliar to themselves.161

The similarity to the discussion of the Scriptures’ provision of “food for God’s little ones” in the first book of *De Trinitate* here is marked.162 William suggests that images play an important role in this type of meditation:

> The effect of our redemption is celebrated in us as often as the love of the suppliant recalls it. But, since we cannot do it as we would wish, with even greater daring we place before our eyes a picture of your passion, so that our bodily eyes may possess

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160 *Med.* 10.2 SC 158: “Non despiciant me, Domine, super hoc qui merentur uidere te sedentem super solium excelsum et eleuatum diiunitas tuae, et maiestate tua replentem omnem terram, quia et ea quae sub te sunt humanae dispensationis tuae mysteria omnis contemplationis replent templum, cuiuscunque sit magnitudinis.”

161 Ibid. 10.5, 160-2: “Audacter enim dicam, in suae dispositione sapientiae tuae hanc ab aeterno prouisam nobis gratiam, et de praecipuis incarnationis tuae causis hanc apud te fuisse non minimam, ut paruuli tui in ecclesia tua lacte adhuc indigentes et non solido cibo, nec spiritualiter et tuo te modo cogitare praeualentes, haberent in te non ignotam sibi formam.” Cf. ibid. 10.3, 158-60.

162 Augustine, *De Trin.* 1.1.3 CCSL 50, 30.
something on which to gaze, something to which to cleave, adoring not the image in the picture (picturae imaginem), but the truth of your passion in the image.\textsuperscript{163}

William affirms that the body of Christ may be embraced as a newborn babe, kissed as a lifeless body hanging on the cross, and venerated as a risen body who restores hope to the Apostles after Pentecost.\textsuperscript{164}

We can see that William is explicitly making a place in his theology of likeness for sensitive devotion. As we said, his theology of likeness assumes that we become like God, or Christ, by love. Sensitive devotion has a valuable role in the achievement of likeness to God because it is far easier to love a man like ourselves than to love a distant, transcendent God.\textsuperscript{165}

For what better preparation, what more agreeable arrangement could have been made for the man who wanted to ascend to his God, to offer gifts and sacrifices according to the precept of the Law, than that, instead of going up by steps to the altar, he should walk calmly and sure-footed over the level plain of his own likeness, to a man like himself, who tells him on the very threshold: ‘I and the Father are one (Jn. 10:30).’\textsuperscript{166}

William is thinking especially of encountering God in the “sacrament of the altar,” as is borne out by the next sentence: “And gathered up to God in love straitway through the Holy Spirit, he receives God coming to him and making his dwelling with him, not just spiritually but also

\textsuperscript{163} Med. 10.7 SC 324, 162: “Totiens enim redemptionis nostrae in nobis celebratur effectus quotiens eam recolit supplicantis affectus. Sed quia neque hoc possumus ut volumus, ideo adhuc amplius audientes proponimus nobis formam passionis tuae ut habeant eiam oculi carnis quod uideant, cui inhaereant, non adorantes picturae imaginem, sed in imagine passionis tuae usitatem.” Cf. ibid. 10.4-5, 160-2.

\textsuperscript{164} Med. 10.4, 160: “Permittes et gratum habebis ipsa mentis imaginatione circa humilia tua infirmam adhuc animam meam suam indolem exercere, scilicet nascentis amplexit prae sepiet et sanctam adorare infantiam, pendentis in cruce lambere vestigia, tenere et deosculari pedes resurgentis, mutere manum in loca clauorum et examare: ‘Dominus meus et Deus meus (Jn. 20: 28).’”

\textsuperscript{165} William says that these images of Christ’s passion offer not intellectual understanding through human effort, but an experience of the love that Christ demonstrates thereby. Cf. ibid. 10.8, 164: “Cuius faciem in opere salutis tuae das nobis uidere, non iam quasi humano conatu extorta intelligentia, et trementibus oculis mentis et refugientibus lucem uam, sed placido amoris sensu et bono usu uidendi, et fruendi suauiitate, sapientia tua quae nostra sunt disponente nobis susauerit.”

\textsuperscript{166} Ibid. 10.10, 166: “Quid enim melius praeparatum, quid suauius potuit esse dispositum, quam quod ascensuro homini ad Deum suum offere dona et sacrificia secundum praeceptum legis, non sit ei ascendendum per gradus ad altare eius, sed per planum similitudinis, placide et pede inoffenso, eat homo ad hominem similem sibi, in primo ingressus limine dicentem sibi: Ego et Pater unum sumus.”
corporeally, in the mystery of the holy and vivifying body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ."  

As if his views demanded some apology, William implies that his joy in these bodily images reflects his spiritual immaturity when he says that he hopes that his simple devotions will not be despised by those who, like the angels, sometimes merit the contemplation of God in his divinity. William reveals a certain awareness that his assertions might be received negatively by those who held the traditional view that sensitive devotion has a lesser role to play in spiritual life than spiritual devotions. This was the view of Origen and Bernard of Clairvaux.

William’s awareness of the value of sensitive devotion may be linked to his presence in a monastic environment that emphasized the personal interpretation of texts for use in the reformation of life. Monastic reading of this sort depended heavily on sensory imagination of textual events. Although Bernard’s exegesis of Scripture consistently makes use of very sensory imagery, when he conceptualizes spiritual progress, he thinks of it as involving the gradual transcendence of material images. As Bernard instructed his monks in his sermons on the Song of Songs, the text of this Biblical poem can yield milk for babes or meat, the sacramental bread, for the perfect. Through amor carnalis the spiritually ignorant learn to despise the world by seeing what Christ did for us through the flesh; after passing through the stage of amor rationalis, their love becomes spiritualis. Bernard’s stages pass from the education of the mind to education of the will. The second stage, however, does not lack mental activity. At the stage of amor rationalis, through Scriptural meditation, one produces

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167 Ibid.: “statimque per Spiritum sanctum affectu assumptus in Deum, et ipse Deum in seipsum excipiatus unientes et mansionem apud eum facientem, non tantum spiritualiter sed etiam corporaliter per mysterium sancti et uiuifici corporis et sanguinis Domini nostri Iesu Christi.”

168 Ibid. 10. 1-3, 158-60.

169 On Origen, see above, chap. 1, n. 147; on Bernard, see discussion immediately below.


171 Bernard of Clairvaux, Serm. Cant. 20.5.9 in Sancti Bernardi opera, ed. Leclercq, 1: 120-1.

172 The following depends on Stock, Implications of Literacy, 438.
the "text" of one's life in which the Scriptural words are assimilated to the subject. For the perfecti the Song of Song speaks of a third stage, face-to-face vision, in which there is nothing of images, the cross, the flesh, or other corporeal things. In face-to-face vision the soul sees God "openly, without allegories or figures." The Biblical text can thus serve as a springboard to a realm in which the soul is conformed to divine words, which are beyond all human sense.

The terminus of William's spiritual elevation through sensible images is the same as it is for Bernard. When William says that through contemplation he sees God "as he is" and "face-to-face," I presume that he means that God is seen directly and not merely in imagination (Christ incarnate). The fuller discussion of the same theme in Aenigma fidei supports this conclusion. There he says that

No one has ever seen the God with these corporeal eyes; however, the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father makes him known by an ineffable speech.

The rational creature who is pure and holy is filled with an inexpressible vision and thus can understand the Word like a word: not a sound striking the ears, but an image making itself known to the mind. Later in the same work he says that he sees in the truth contemplated nothing which is mutable "spatially or temporally as bodies are; nor subject to change only temporally and quasi-spatially such as the thoughts of our spirits; nor only temporally, with no spatial image at all, like certain ratiocinations of our minds." Only the intermediate stages of Bernard's

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173 Stock suggests that Bernard called upon his monks to apply the words of Scriptures to their own spiritual experiences and from meditation on experience to new experience. As such, the life of the monk becomes a new text for meditation. See Implications of Literacy, 447.
174 Bernard of Clairvaux, Serm. Cant. 45.4.6 in Sancti Bernardi opera, ed. Leclercq, 2: 53.
175 Ibid.: "palam, non per aenigmata et figuras."
177 Aen. fid. 4 ed. Davy, 94 (PL 180, 398BC): "Deum enim corporeis oculis istic nemo umquam vidit; sed narrante Unigenito, qui est in sinu Patris, narratione ineffabili, creatura rationalis munda et sancta impletur de visione ineffabili, que sic potest intelligere narrantem, sicuti est verbum, non sonus auribus strepens, sed imago mentibus innotescens."
178 Cf. Aen. fid. 10 ed. Davy 100 (PL 180, 401B): "nec locis et temporibus sicut corpora; nec solis temporibus et quasi locis, sicut spiritum nostrorum cogitationes, nec solis temporibus, et nulla vel imagine
hermeneutic differs from William’s. Both writers begin with the Scriptural text, but whereas Bernard conceives of several intermediary stages in between the sensitive devotion which is the first product of meditation and the fruit of vision, William dispenses with *amor rationalis* and *amor spiritualis* as steps and states that the imaginations that issue from the Word of Scripture yield the fruit of vision immediately. William’s point is hardly that reformation of the will is unnecessary; such discipline accompanies meditative progress at all times in the form of his confession itself and his desire to discipline his flesh. He merely does away with the emphasis on purification from “sensible” ways of thinking and proposes instead that “sensitive devotion” is itself purifying. More precisely, sensitive devotion is purifying for us as we are now, weighed down by corruptible bodies, while in the beatific vision we shall, in fact, be lifted above it.

William’s eschewal of his previous conceptualization of ascent by steps and his proposal that vision is immediately possible through sensitive devotion are rather remarkable. If his conversation with Bernard on the Song of Songs had taken place by the time he wrote De sacramento altaris, and if the *Meditationes* are posterior to the latter, a possibility that will be discussed shortly, then he would certainly have known his friend’s views on the matter. Bernard’s emphasis on “spiritual,” as opposed to “carnal,” devotion was likely to have been common in the intellectual culture of which William was a part.\(^{179}\) True, William implies that it may be his own weakness that has prevented him, in particular, from gaining contemplative experience of God's deity with any regularity, but at the same time he expresses his conviction not merely in terms of his personal experience, but as statements of fact: the mysteries connected with the Incarnation “also fill the temple of contemplation.” Again, in the *Aenigma fidei* he recommends to those still weighed down by mortal bodies purification through the contemplation of Christ in the Scriptures. Like Augustine, William seems to have come to the

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\(^{179}\) Appleby says that Peter the Venerable held that the Incarnation was offered like milk to those not ready to contemplate God in his deity, see “Priority of Sight.”
conclusion that possession of a body has certain inescapable repercussions on the nature of human cognition.

My view is that the Meditationes explores a tension, also present to some degree within Augustine's writings, that may have been on William's mind as a consequence of his writing De sacramento altaris. The problem was this: how to reconcile a traditional view of the way images distort the perception of truth with growing contemporary insistence on meditation on the Incarnation and patterning oneself after Christ. In fact, William refuses to reconcile the two views and instead rejects the notion that images are to be avoided.

As in Med. 7, where the highest form of vision was had through glimpsing the saints' love of God in their persons, in Med. 10 vision is conferred through William's affective response to "viewing" God as made present in the singular person of Christ. David Appleby has shown that Peter the Venerable demonstrates in his approach to the Eucharist the same appreciation of the role of visual images in arousing love for the Savior.\(^{10}\) Whereas for Peter the Venerable such love renews memory and strengthens faith, hope and love,\(^ {181}\) for William, it does more than that. William says that meditation on the Passion "cleanses us"\(^ {182}\) and allows us to see God as he is, i.e. to see him face-to-face.\(^ {183}\) This gives "meditation" new dignity.

Where William differs from Peter is in reconciling sensitive devotion within his mystical theology. As Appleby notes, lacking a mystical dimension, Peter the Venerable's thought could only hover between the affirmation of the role of sensory images in affective piety, on the one hand, and a distrust of the opacity of the corporeal realm, on the other.\(^ {184}\) William's more synthetic mind has seen a way, while retaining traditional acknowledgment of the superiority of image-transcending contemplation, of integrating the senses and the bodily into mystical ascent.

\(^{10}\) Appleby, "Priority of Sight."
\(^{181}\) Ibid.
\(^{182}\) Med. 10.8 SC 324, 164.
\(^{183}\) Ibid. 10.9, 166.
\(^{184}\) Appleby, "Priority of Sight."
Giles Constable has portrayed William as always subordinating devotions to Christ’s humanity to those to his divinity. As we have just shown, in the Meditations William treats them as equally worthy forms of devotion, although he does so somewhat apologetically. That William was genuinely ambivalent about the role of sensitive devotion in the spiritual life, and that he was not merely invoking some kind of humility topos in Med. 10, is shown in his repetition of the same themes in his later Epistula ad fratres de Monte Dei, which is the primary source of Constable’s discussion. In the latter work William urges novices to make use of sensitive imagery because it is safer for those whose spirits are as yet weak, but he depicts spiritual meditation as the ultimate goal toward which they should aspire. The fact that William never moved definitively beyond contemporary prejudices against sensitive meditation should not obscure the fact that he attempted to do so.

Before continuing further in examining the implications of sensitive devotion for William’s vision of the Christian life we must digress for a moment to discuss William’s treatment of the body’s role in sensitive devotion. Having admitted that sensitive devotion is for those, like himself, who are more weak and immature of spirit, he openly desires that occasionally he may deserve to be counted among the number of those who receive spiritual refreshment from it: “Among these souls my spirit also, Lord, will be taught sometimes to worship you, who are Spirit, in spirit and in truth, and the flesh will not desire to oppose the spirit or will do so less readily.” One is reminded of the passage from De natura et dignitate amoris in which he refers to the substance of the flesh, which is in holy men only as the instrument of good work. As in Med. 4, he invokes a temporal state in which the body/passions are brought into order.

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185 Constable, “Humanity of Christ,” 190. On pp. 204-5 Constable suggests that Med. 10 describes sensible devotion as appropriate for those who had not progressed toward spiritual devotion; he seems not to have perceived the extent to which William presents this as the normal lot of men and the degree to which he consequently elevates corporeal devotion.
187 Med. 10.3 SC 324, 160: “Inter quas meum quoque spiritum, Domine, docebis aliquando te, qui spiritus es, adorare in spiritu et veritate, carne iam aduersus eum non concupiscens, uel lentius id agent.”
William's somewhat ambivalent attitude toward sensitive devotion marks him apart from the most enthusiastic twelfth-century proponents of devotion to the humanity of Christ. Constable has judged that both William and Bernard of Clairvaux distinguish themselves from those contemporaries, such as Gerhoh of Reichersberg, who argued that the humanity of Christ deserves worship equally with his divinity and who embraced to a new degree the ideal of the literal imitation of Christ's life. Constable notes that Bernard demonstrates a common twelfth-century desire to imitate Christ's life literally and allows that Christ's humanity stands as an exemplar to be imitated. However, Constable also characterizes Bernard as "ultimately less concerned with Christ's earthly life and body than with the eternal Christ, and how man can rise and conform to Him." Constable means that for Bernard the humanity of Christ has relatively little significance apart from the divinity of Christ, which allows the regeneration of human nature, and that, as the divinity of God is not strictly speaking imitable, for the monk of Clairvaux salvation is achieved more through the divinization of the soul than the *imitatio Christi*. Correctly noting that William's spirituality theoretically places sensitive devotion second to worship of Christ's divinity, Constable has not perceived the extent to which William consciously departs from the views of Bernard in making sensitive worship of Christ's humanity central to spiritual life.

*Meditatio* 10 offers a number of parallels with *De sacramento altaris*. William calls the body of Christ the footstool of God. Here, alluding to a passage from Ps. 98 that teaches that the footstool of God is to be worshipped, William identifies the footstool as Christ's body, following patristic tradition. We mentioned a similar passage in the fifth chapter of *De sacramento altiris* in which William equates Christ's body with the fruitful earth. Since the image of the footstool is absent from the *De sacramento altaris* passage, the influence of the medieval tradition of interpretation of the footstool image on this passage must remain conjectural. Here, in *Med. 10*, William's acquaintance with this tradition is certain. The

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188 Constable, "Humanity of Christ," 188.
189 *Med. 10.6* SC 324, 162.
190 Ps. 98:5.
description of Christ’s body as God’s footstool follows a treatment of how God exalted Christ’s humanity above the angels and gave it a name above all other names. That these two themes should appear in such close proximity merely by coincidence seems unlikely; I would speculate, rather, that William drew from De sacramento altaris when writing Med. 10. Moreover, Med. 10 seems to go beyond De sacramento altaris in its declaration that images and the imagination were given to men providentially. While De sacramento altaris certainly offers the general idea that contemplation of Christ’s passion provokes love in us, it does not focus on the role played by images or imagination.

William closes with a hearty injunction to go and sell all one has. By means of this one may merit the sight of Christ’s face turned toward oneself: “For then you will be blest and all will be well with you. Christ in your conscience is the treasure that you will possess.”

Med. 11 was discussed briefly at the beginning of this chapter. It begins with a lament over God’s inscrutable abandonment of William. He has followed Christ’s commandment to go and sell all he has and give it to the poor, he has turned his face away from fleshly things and the world: “Why then is it, pray, that when, searching for you with all my heart, I have joyously discerned your face, which alone my own face desires, I find myself suddenly cut off from you?...Can it be that you wish to destroy me for the sins of my youth?” William

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193 Ibid. 11.6, 170. William says that he gave nothing to the poor, because he had nothing to give. This could mean that William was not wealthy at the time of his entrance to the Benedictines, i.e. not from a wealthy family. Although the Vita says that William was of noble origins, Milis considers the possibility that this was a bit of hagiographical fiction, “First Monastic Experiences,” 15-6. Alternatively, William could be alluding more generally to all his years of service as a monk, through which he “sold his soul,” and his body, on behalf of God.
195 Med. 11.1 SC 324, 168: “Cum enim ex munere gratiae tuae, Domine, ad ea quae carnis sunt faciem cordis non habeam, sed posueris ea mihi dorsum, et mundum et quae cunctae eius sunt posueris mihi deorsum.”
196 Ibid.: “Quid est, obscoro, quod in toto corde exquirens te, cum faciem tuam apprehendisse me gratulor, quam solam facies mea desiderat, repente me inuenio seorsum...Numquid consumere me tu uis peccatis adolescentiae meae?”
pictures himself as the beggar at the side of the road, waiting for Christ to pass by, i.e., waiting to be granted understanding of his spiritual and temporal disappointments.

He next commences an interior dialogue on the question of freeing oneself totally for the contemplative life: "Gather yourselves meanwhile, my soul and all my inward parts; 'for the word of God is living and effectual, and more piercing than any two-edged sword; and reaching unto the division of the soul and the spirit, of the joints also and the marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart'." These words come from Heb. 4:12, which describes the final rest to which all Christians are heirs through Jesus Christ, and are a warning to the believer to take proper assessment of conscience in lieu of the judgment preceding that final rest. William’s thoughts, intentions, joints and marrow all announce that his shepherding of the flock had been the right course of action: for Jesus instructed Peter to feed his sheep. Then the intentiones (intentions) begin to speak, chipping away at his confidence about his prior decision. The intentiones rail against the current atmosphere in the monastery in which temporal affairs take precedence over spiritual ones and chastise him for succumbing to a certain enjoyment of his administrative duties. One can read between the lines here that he wishes he had foreseen that his own limitations would make him ripe for such temptation. The intentiones suggest that, wearied by the work, in his "old age" William should be released from his post; he makes repeated references to the prerogatives of old age by invoking Biblical figures such as Jacob, who did not receive the consolation of Rachel until he had spent his youth with Leah. Here William plays on the words prodesse and praeesse. William says: "It is a very serious thing for him to govern (praeesse), when he can no longer do any good (prodesse)."

As Jaeger has shown, from Ottonian times onward many writers tended to experiment with the traditional hierarchy of prodesse/praeesse as expressed in the Benedictine rule. The Rule instructs an abbot to do good (prodesse) rather than to govern (praeesse). These writers

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197 Mk. 10: 49ff.
198 Med. 11.12 SC 324, 174. For Latin text, see above, n. 14.
199 Ibid. 11.15, 174-5: "Sed grauisimum est ei praeesse ubi non potest prodesse."
tended to invert the hierarchy when they described episcopal power, though they generally continued to apply it to the authority of an abbot. Bernard of Clairvaux took a further step in suggesting that praeesse also had an important role to play in the management of abbeys. Bernard uses the pair of terms in his letter refusing William entry to the Cistercian order, as noted by Ceglar. Bernard says, "stude prodesse quibus praees; nec praeesse refuge, dum prodesse potes: quia vae quidem si praees et non prodes, sed vae gravius si, quia praeesse metuis, prodesse refugis." Ceglar assumes that William’s meditation followed shortly after the reception of this letter from Bernard. It is certainly tempting to read William’s meditation in the context of his exchange with Bernard, but there is no necessity to place it immediately afterward, as the language was common enough that William would not have needed Bernard’s letter to recall it. It could have been composed anywhere from months to years after the reception of Bernard’s letter.

Playing devil’s advocate, the compages (joints) respond that the joints are falling to pieces all over the body and partes are forming, suggesting that by following self-will William threatens the unity of the Church, Christ’s Body. Finally, the medullae (marrow) argue that self-deception can only be prevented when one’s affection is set on the truth. Leisure for God is always the most desired state, but it must indeed be sacrificed for the sake of the stewardship of the flock. William leaves himself one loophole, however, for he suggests that the assumption of leadership requires native ability: “the center of truth must be consulted as to whether he has the ability or not. If he has not, and yet presumes to act, he is not cleaving to the center, and so he destroys the perfection of the circumference.” William asks pardon for both his prior disposition and his action.

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200 Jaeger, Envy of Angels, 39.
201 Ibid. 275; on praeeese as applied to bishops and the pope, see 386, n. 6 and 444, n.46.
202 Ceglar, Chronology, 227.
203 Bernard of Clairvaux, Epist. 86.2 in Epistulae, in Sancti Bernardi Opera, ed. Leclercq, 7: 224.
204 Med. 11. 28 SC 324, 184: “centrum umeritis in umeritate consulendum est. Si non est et praesumit, non inhaeret centro; ideoque orbis exterioris perfectionem confundit.” On the image of the circle, cf. ibid. 1 SC 324, 46 and Ps. 11:9.
The soul and spirit support the conclusions of the *medullae*. The soul suggests that William is selfishly using the excuse of his own needs to avoid his continued service to the brethren,\(^{205}\) while the spirit echoes the soul by saying that William's affection (i.e. his desire for the contemplative life) is wrong-headed.\(^{206}\) The spirit concludes that "nothing remains, therefore, except humble confession and striving after every virtue, so that, however unfruitful and useless we may appear from the exterior, we may not be found wholly barren and empty inside."\(^{207}\) I concur with Worthen that the meditation appears to be a retrospective confession of a past act rather than a consideration of a future one. Worthen suggests that it could date from any period in which lethargy had overtaken the author; he says that it could describe his tenure at Signy when, we know, William was somewhat self-conscious about his inability to perform manual labor, but it could apply to many other periods as well.\(^{208}\) Another possible interpretation of the interior/exterior dichotomy presents itself. William complained bitterly at the beginning of the meditation about the lack of respect given to superiors who exerted themselves merely on behalf of doing good and troubled themselves less with the temporal management of their abbeys. It seems possible that William wrote the meditation as he tried to reconcile himself with his continued tenure at St. Thierry and the disrespect of the more worldly-minded of his brethren.

Several observations should be made about this meditation. The first is William's conceptualization of himself as a being composed of a body and a soul: he does not think of himself as essentially "soul." Not only does he express awareness that both his bodily and spiritual powers have been exhausted in his service to the Benedictine monks, but the "self" that is riven apart in doubt is composed of both body and soul. William underlines the duality of and the tension between the two parts, but the tension is not resolved from above by the

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\(^{205}\) *Med.* 11.32 SC 324, 186.
\(^{206}\) ibid. 11.33, 186; cf. ibid. 11.31, 186.
\(^{207}\) ibid. 11.33, 186: "Tdeo nil restat nisi confessio humilitatis, et omnis conatus uiritutis, ut quomodocunque infructuosi et inutiles appareamus exterius, interius non omnino inanes inueniamur et steriles."
soul’s control of the body or sensual nature, as was the case in Med. 4; rather, the body plays the role of counselor to the intentiones or the warped desires of the soul.

The compages and medullae play a vital role in the dialogue, essentially providing the voice of stability and reason. It is as though possession of a body helps to draw William back from the precipice by reminding him that his self-will cannot interfere with God’s larger plan for himself and the Church. William has developed an intuition expressed in De contemplando Deo in a discussion of why contemplation must always be ended in order to rejoin the world, i.e. that souls are always bound to their bodies and to service of the whole body politic.209 In De natura et dignitate amoris we saw that this ideal had a limit for William, since he hoped that the reward of monastic service might be, in old age at least, release from the obligations of charity. In the Meditationes William reveals an awareness that the body, and the service to the body politic entailed in life in a body, restrains spiritual pride. This is a kind of reformulation of Cassian’s idea that souls and bodies act as checks on one another.210 The body will always act as a connection to the other members of the Church and draw one’s attention forcibly to them.

By having the compages speak on behalf of the wider interests of the Church, William suggests that the large body of the Church can only be as healthy as its individual members and vice versa. His conceptualization of the body politic as a human body whose parts are interdependent may have its model in the ancient Greek parable of the body and the limbs211 that one finds in various classical Latin historians, including Livy.212 As told by Livy, the parable was used by the fictitious Menenius Agrippa to quell a plebeian rebellion in 494 B.C. Menenius is supposed to have compared the Roman Fathers to the stomach and the common people to the various other members of the body. The bodily members decided one day to protest the apparently parasitic relationship of the belly to the rest of the body by failing to

209 De cont. Deo 1 SC 61, 58.
210 Chadwick, John Cassian, 94.
211 For more on classical Latin usage of this parable, see R.M. Ogilvie, A Commentary on Livy, books 1-5 (Oxford, 1965) 312-3.
provide food to it. Of course, they soon discovered the vital role of the belly and the interdependence of all parts of the body upon each other. The common point of interest between the parable and William’s meditation is the demonstration of the relationship of the individual members of any social body to the whole, a relationship that frequently demands the suppression of the interests of the individual to those of the whole.

The final meditation returns to the topic of William’s need for mercy. William knows that his confession brings with it the possibility of ultimate rejection by God, and he believes that his only surety is Jesus Christ, who forgave the sins of those, like the sinful woman who anointed him, who truly loved him. William considers whether when God examines his heart the Lord will find that William truly loves him. William confesses that the only thing of which he can be certain is that he loves the love of God: “this is the witness of my conscience, when I call it out and examine it in the light of your truth: it seems to me to answer boldly about the love of your love.” Thus we are brought back to the question that preoccupied him at the beginning of De contemplando Deo, whether the love of the love of God is somehow reprehensible. Here he answers that if the love of the love of God is pure, it is not.

He contrasts the love of God’s love as bringing without fail some “perception, sight and taste of God,” while he finds that sight of God himself eludes him. He asks himself if there is anything he lacks in possessing the love of God’s love in contrast to God himself. He says that he tries to ascend this way. Recalling that if God’s love is perfectly simple and without form, then if the love of His love is to suffice, it must be sufficiently pure. He laments that since he still possesses sometimes a lack of affection for God, his love is not yet pure. He argues that he has the fullest sensation of love when he contemplates those holy men of God who radiate their sanctity:

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213 Med. 12.8-9 SC 324, 192-4.

214 Ibid. 12.14, 196: “Haec est conscientia mea coram uocata et discussa in lumine ueritatis tuae; intrepide mihi de amore amoris tui uidetur respondere.”

215 See above, chap. 1, p. 34.

216 Med. 12.15 SC 324, 198: “sentio, uideo, sapio eum.”
And if I love them in such a way that I love nothing except you in them and in their natural affection, because it is full of you, and never love my own affection in myself unless I find myself attracted to you by means of it, what then do I love save you in those whom I love in you, and in myself, whom I desire to love only in you.\(^{218}\)

If there is a difference between loving God and the love of God’s love, it is only a difference of degree, since William confesses that he finds God in his love.\(^{219}\) The love of God’s love is granted to him as a concession to his weakened state, for, oppressed by the corruptible body that muses upon many things (Sap. 9:15), the soul is bound to be distracted: “the soul is bound to become [by turns] weakened and proficient, however much it loves; and, if the affection did not comfort it at one extreme and restrain it in the other, it would be ruined in every kind of weakness.”\(^{220}\)

William’s description of the holy ones, God’s “simple servants,”\(^{221}\) in whom he contemplates the presence of the Lord, deserves further comment. The identity of these “simple ones” is difficult to determine since the period of the composition of Med. 12 is unknown. If it was composed not long after 1124, one might assume that William had Bernard and his confreres in view; if the composition of the work was after William’s release to Signy, he might have had the latter Cistercian community in mind. William’s description of the way the external deportment of these men conveys their holiness shares a variety of parallels with his earlier work, De natura et dignitate amoris.

William says that the transformation of these simple servants is the work of grace, by which not only their consciences but even their outward appearance is transformed. William again plays on the Timaean language of formation which stresses the interiority of the change:

\(^{217}\) Ibid. 12.16, 198.

\(^{218}\) Ibid. 12.28, 208: “Et si eos hoc modo amo, ut in eis et in affectu eorum naturali nil amem nisi te, cum ipsum affectum ob hoc tantum amem, quia plenus est de te, sed in meipso nunquam meum amem affectum, nisi cum ipso affectum me inuenio de te, in eis quos amo in te et in meipso, quem nonnisi in te amare uolo, quid amo, nisi te?”

\(^{219}\) Ibid. 12.29, 210: “Inuenio igitur te, Domine, in amore meo, sed utinam semper inueniam.”

\(^{220}\) Ibid.: “necesse est ut animae quantumuis amantis defectus fiat et profectus, quorum alterum nisi consolaretur, alterum conteretur iste affectus, in omnimodum ruetur defectum.”

\(^{221}\) Ibid. 12.26, 206: “Ipsi enim sunt simplices serui tui.”
Your love itself, finding in them simple material, forms them and conforms them to itself in both affection and effect, so that, besides what is hidden within—namely the glory and riches in the house of good conscience—the inner light is reflected in their outward appearance, not by an artificial effort but by a certain connaturality.²²²

Here the pair of terms *affectus* and *effectus*, the one signifying righteous love and the other external behavior and appearance, seems to stress the polarity between inwardness and outwardness, spiritual and material, and not merely contemplation vs. action. As in his earlier writing, *De contemplando Deo*, William stresses the return of human love to Him as its end.²²³

As in *De natura et dignitate amoris* and *Med*. 4, the transformation is partly the result of spiritual discipline of the senses. The Spirit seems to blow successively through the spirit, senses, and body.²²⁴ In the end the body and the face show the transformation by their beauty, bearing and expression; “And so much is this the case, that a certain provocation of your charity proceeds from the charming simplicity of their expression and bearing.”²²⁵ In anticipation of the resurrected state, the body, along with the heart, even now begins to “thirst after the Lord”:²²⁶ “through zeal for good practices, their flesh that is sown in corruption now begins to rise again in glory;²²⁷ so that heart and flesh together may exult in the living God;²²⁸ and where the soul thirsts after you the flesh may also thirst in o how many ways.”²²⁹ William

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²²² Ibid.: “ipse amor tuus, simplicem in eis inueniens materiam, format eos et conformat sibi et affectu et effectu, ut absque eo quod intrinsecus latet, gloria scilicet et diuissi in domo bonae conscientiae, non artificiali conamine, sed quasi naturali quaedam complexione lux interior in uultu eorum exteriori relaceat.”

²²³ Ibid.: “redeunte natura ad suam originem.”

²²⁴ Ibid. 206-8: “cum spiritus eorum adiuuante infirmitatem eorum tuo Spiritu, in diuinam transeunt affectiones, spirituali quaedam disciplina modifactis sensibus, etiam corpora eorum spirituales quasdam induunt effigies (when, with the help of the Spirit who has compassion on their infirmity, their spirits enter into the divine movement and their senses are controlled by a certain spiritual discipline, a certain spirituality appears even in their bodies).”

²²⁵ Ibid. 206: “intantum ut de uultus et habitus eorum uenusta quaedam simplicitate, quaedam prouocatio caritatis tuae procedens;” cf. ibid. 208: “etiam corpora eorum spirituales quasdam induunt effigies, et facies plusquam humanas et singularem quamdam gratiam habentes.”

²²⁶ Ps. 62:2: “O God, my God, to thee do I watch at break of day. For thee my soul hath thirsted; for thee my flesh, O how many ways.”

²²⁷ Cf. 1 Cor. 15:42ff.

²²⁸ Cf. Ps. 83:3.

evokes a paradisial state in which the heart and flesh are no longer divided against one another but contribute in their separate ways to sanctification. He continues with a reformulation of an idea from Mt. 5:4 "the blessed meek possess the earth of their own body...earth made fruitful by the zealous practice of spiritual exercises." Eriugena uses this passage from Matthew to describe the general return of mankind, in which all will dwell in the land of the living and possess the double blessing of the body and the soul; his ideas seems to have influenced the eleventh-century author Arnold of St. Emmeram. An exegetical tradition of connecting the meek with those who had disciplined their bodies and their souls was established by at least the eleventh century with Anselm of Canterbury and Guibert of Nogent. Borrowing especially from this latter tradition, William says that the flesh thirsting after God bears its fruit through the practice of spiritual exercises in "fastings, in vigils, in labors, being ready for every good work, without contradiction or sloth." William describes the human body as made "fruitful" with such works. We saw that in De natura et dignitate amoris he characterized the earth of Christ's body as fruitful. Both passages probably make an allusion to the "fruitful earth" of Psalms 66 and 84. The notion of "fruitful earth" lends itself nicely to the quasi-eschatological tone which William is evoking in Med. 12. As in the Psalms, the notion of "fruitful earth" functions as a metaphor for the reign of peace in the hearts of the just.


231 Periph. 4 ed. Jeanneau, 270 (PL 122, 858C-859A).

232 Arnold of St. Emmeram, Homilia de octo beatitudinibus et sancto Emmerammo PL 141, 1091: "Et revera tunct mitas terram possident, quando in die judicii corporaliter resurgent, ut sicut divina corpore et anima observaverunt mandata, ita aetemaliter coronetur corporis et animae stola bina."

233 Anselm of Canterbury, Tractatus Ascecticus 4 PL 158, 1032: "Beati mitas, quoniam ipsi possidebunt terram' (Mt. 5:4). Non ergo aliter nostram possidebimus terram, id est, non alias ditioni nostrae rebellis hujus corporis terra subdetur, nisi mens nostra prius fuerit patientiae lenitate fundata." Cf. Guibert of Nogent, In Osee 9 PL 156, 384: "Terra Domini est corpus, quod evicitis passionibus ditioni rationis Deo subjectae subjectum est. In hac terra non habitant quia enim mitas non sunt..."

234 Med. 12.27 SC 324, 208: "quae spiritualium exercitiorum studii secundata, bono usu, etiam dimissa sibi et inculata, sponte fructificat in ieiuniiis, in uigiliiis, in laboribus, parata ad omne opus bonum absque contradictione uel pigriita." Cf. Cassian, Conf. 4.9 SC 42, 87, where he describes the works of the body as "labor ieiuniorum, lectionis instantia, opera misericordiae, iustitiae, pietatis et humanitatis."

William’s notion of ascetical reform is entirely monastic and contrasts with Eriugena’s notion of purgation through contemplation of theological mysteries.236

Finally, the *Meditations* conclude with a prayer to God both to reveal himself and keep himself hidden.237 In his self-revelation, God fires William’s soul with love, but in concealing himself he pricks the monk of St. Thierry’s soul with the goad of humility. As Worthen has argued, the conclusion befits a narrative that is about the travel of a spiritual pilgrim, never to be ended until earthly life has ceased.238 We might add that William’s view of the role of the body in the journey is similarly two-sided. On the one hand it can contribute something to the soul’s spiritual exercises and has a function to play in exciting love in the imagination of the Passion of the Lord; on the other hand, the corruptible nature of the terrestrial body is still viewed as the reason for the obscurity of spiritual vision.

C. Conclusion

In the *Meditationes* the terms “flesh” and “body” possess a variety of meanings. The terms are interchanged quite freely. As we mentioned in our general introduction, William can mean by body psychic activities that involve the body as instrument. In *Med. 4.*, for instance, William associates to body the faculties related to sense, imagination, and desire (the sensus, cogitationes, and affectiones). In this meditation he refers to the body as both corpus and caro. In *Med. 4* the somatic structure itself is barely evident, though it clearly lurks in the background as the instrument of the said activities and the means by which the soul turns from its proper sphere of activity into the problematic realm of “external activity.”

In *Med. 4* William describes the hierarchy of interior faculties in man as a good gift from God but presently disordered. William depicts himself as composed of one part, which follows its own laws, and another part, whose attraction to “externals” requires the discipline

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236 *Periph. 4* ed. Jeaneau, 268 (PL 122, 857C-858A). William seems to reveal a certain skepticism of Eriugena’s threefold schema of purgation through ethics, physics, and theology in *De nat. et dig. amor.* 49 ed. Davy, 128-30 (PL 184, 404-5), where he suggests that through such knowledge one can gain some understanding of God, but that those who attempt to ascend to such heights frequently fall the furthest from God. On medieval classifications of the sciences as well as the history of the term, theology, see Bernard McGinn, “Theologia” in Isaac of Stella,” *Citeaux* 21 (1970) 219-35.

of a covenant. Since through the thoughts, desires, and sensation of this second part, it has strayed into "adultery," it, like the false wife in Hosea, requires a special covenant. By means of the covenant, the senses can be ordered once again to bearing the burdens of the spirit and can cease to contribute to its distraction. This second part is the "flesh," or the faculties of the mind in close association to the body. William also uses the image of Adam as the steward of creation to express the unproblematic relationship God originally created between mind and body. Just as the birds and beasts were originally given to Adam for his use, so originally man's whole person, body and soul, was given to him in order that he might enjoy creation. In man's fallen state the flesh is no longer obedient to mind and requires constant discipline. William expresses the confidence of twelfth-century reformers in man's ability to reinstate the original harmony of creation in his notion that man possesses dignity as dominator, an idea probably borrowed either from Gregory of Nyssa or lifted from William's own cultural milieu. As in De contemplando Deo, so here in Med. 4 William connects the senses (the faculty most closely associated with the body) with the ass, the beast of burden. By means of this image he depicts the body as that which is given to the soul to ease its burdens.

Using the image of the meek "possessing" the earth of their bodies, William expresses his hope that in this life the body may be subjected to the soul through discipline. We saw that eleventh-century authors such as Anselm of Canterbury and Arnold of St. Emmeram commented that meekness expresses itself in the subjection of the body to the soul. Eriugena's exegesis of this Gospel passage was distinctive in that he used it to convey the radical transformation that the body will undergo after the resurrection once it has been restored into the primordial causes. Something of the eschatological spirit of Eriugena's interpretation of this passage may lie behind William's optimistic notion in Med. 12 that the body may "thirst after the living God," i.e. may with the help of grace bear its own particular kind of fruit (in vigils, labors, etc.) even during this life. William's notion of corporeal discipline is of course

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entirely monastic. It contrasts to Eriugena’s notion of man’s purgation through contemplation of theological mysteries.

For William the flesh or body is problematic because it is the source of images that impede spiritual contemplation. In *Med. 4* he depicts the body’s distractions as requiring to be silenced through the establishment of a special covenant. Using imagery borrowed from Hosea, he implies that peace will thereby be restored to the “land of Zion,” meaning that the “natural” harmony of creation (or of the final perfection) begins to be cultivated in the present.

Mental images of a specifically religious nature, by contrast, assume an increasingly prominent role in William’s notion of the spiritual life. His revision of traditional attitudes toward sensitive devotion to the humanity of Christ is most pronounced in *Med. 10*. There he proposes that image-free meditation is a rare experience and that contemplation of images of Christ’s body, Passion, and death should not be denigrated, since they can lead just as effectively to ecstatic experience. In doing so he seems to follow to some degree in the footsteps of Augustine, who suggests in the first book of his *De Trinitate* that God sent Christ in incarnate form precisely so that we might follow a more accessible road to Him. He departs from Augustine, however, in the conviction that mystical experience can be attained through these images. By integrating the faculty of imagination into his mystical thought, he also rehabilitates the body’s role in spiritual life. Of course, this should not obscure the fact that William thinks that contemplation of God’s divinity is still a superior form of devotion and, as he says in *Aenigma fidei*, the type of vision that will be proper to us in our resurrected state.

*Meditationes* 8 and 10 portray the Eucharist as a special locus for sensitive devotions, while *Meditationes* 7 and 12 suggest that William is directly aware of God’s love for man in a supreme fashion by viewing the bodies of the saints and God’s simple servants. Their visible beatitude sweeps the viewer into the source of their radiance.

In *Med. 11* William depicts an interior dialogue between various principles of his constitution: intents, joints, marrow, soul, and spirit (imagery borrowed from Heb. 4:12). The voices of the joints and marrow speak on behalf of William’s obligations to the wider
church and jolt him out of his self-pity. In a type of reformulation of Cassian’s idea that souls and bodies act as checks on one another, the somatic structure plays the role of spiritual guide, checking the self-will of the soul. William here develops an intuition he had expressed in De contemplando Deo, that individuals are always bound because of their bodies to service on behalf of the larger body, the Church. By having the bodily members speak on behalf of the Church, he suggests that the larger body of the Church can only be as healthy as the individual members and vice-versa.

The Meditationes yield abundant evidence that William thinks of himself as an embodied being and not merely a soul. On one occasion he offers himself to God as a naked body. The nakedness of the body connotes both the vulnerability of man’s present state and recalls the original state of creation, before man had learned to cover or hide himself from God. The theme of the fragility of the human body grew even more pronounced in William’s writings as he aged as we will see in the following appendix. His mature writings show his increasing conviction that the body should be treated gently since body and soul were created to be in association with one another.

Appendix:

Excerpta de meditationibus domni Wilhermi

In this prayer William asks God to succor him as he fails in mind and body. As such the prayer provides an interesting glimpse of one medieval figure’s attitudes toward the aging of his body and the specter of death.239 Hourlier thinks that it was written by William at Signy, where, as the Vita Antiqua records, William foundered spiritually and physically at the austerity

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of the Cistercian life. William says that he has exhausted his own strength and asks querulously what he has done that God has so abandoned him. The Lord responds that he has in no way abandoned William, for if he had, the monk of St. Thierry would have perished long ago. William's narrative bears some resemblance to his attempt to understand the problem of predestination in Med. 1. He records a similar series of emotional reactions to the perceived injustice of his situation. His first reaction is to blame God; his second is to find other reasons for his trials. Finally he attempts to formulate a suitable response to the situation in which he finds himself.

As if rebuking the monk for implying that his suffering is God's responsibility, a means of punishment, the Lord speaks to him and directs his attention to the way in which he is still spiritually incomplete. The Lord suggests that there may still be some sin remaining in William to be purged and further progress to be made in his development of charity: "Charity makes the sweetness of my yoke, the lightness of my burden." If you had charity, then you would feel that sweetness. If it loved you, your flesh would not labor; or, if it did, charity would lighten the work." William thereby shifts the responsibility for his sufferings onto his own shoulders, to his own peevishness and lack of spiritual insight. Once again we see William's confidence that the healing of the weakness of the body is reparable even now through grace. William's view of the potential of his body to be healed is not one merely of divine palliation of the natural inroads of time. For William hopes still that the powers of charity and grace may overcome the "unnatural" ravages of the mortal body or at least help him to bear them cheerfully.

He continues to ask how he might obtain the necessary charity. The Lord's answer is simply: through obedience. Chastened, William realizes that his spiritual and physical weakness offers an opportunity for obedience: "I know that, even if the body is weak and even if the spirit sometimes wearies, I shall not fail if I do not abandon you, but shall make progress

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240 See above, n. 4.
241 Cf. Mt. 11:30.
by means of my infirmities, provided you do not desert me by depriving me of patience."  

Here we see a greater resignation to the idea that his physical infirmities may persist and his consequent hope that divine succor will help him to bear them. Moreover, he sees his sufferings as an opportunity for spiritual growth.

William turns himself, body and soul, over to God and places himself entirely in his hands: “Help me and carry me, weak and feeble as I am in both mind and body.” He asks that God’s servants and sons help to support him, referring perhaps to the brethren at Signy.

He asks that God enlighten his spirit, but expresses some perplexity over what he should ask for concerning the body. William requests submission to whatever the Lord has in store for him regarding his body: “If it pleases you, let it be stout and healthy; or, if you so will, let it be sick and weak.” Again with the stamp of someone of mature years, he anticipates the possibility of death, and asks for acceptance of the death of his body. Finally, he asks for the wisdom to walk the fine line between disciplining the body and zealously over-taxing it: “teach me how to rule and guard it, while I remain alive, that I may assent to none of its passionate desires, and yet not refuse it anything of necessity.”

These words are from the mouth of someone who is all too familiar with his own bodily frailty and manifest a spirit of gentleness toward the body. This more indulgent approach to the body, absent from his early work, De natura et dignitate amoris, animates similar passages about caring for the needs of the body so that it will be able to perform its service in his Epistula ad fratres de Monte Dei and

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242 Excerpt. de med. 4 SC 324, 220: “Suavitatem iugi et oneris leuitatem caritias facit. Si haberes caritatem, sentires illam suavitatem. Si te amaret, caro non laboraret. Et si laboraret, caritas leugaret.”

243 Ibid. 11, 224: “Scio enim quia et si corpus infirmabitur, et si aliquando spiritus lassescat, si non defecero ab te, non deficiam, sed ex infirmitibus meus proficiam, si tamen tu me non deseris, sumendo mihi patientiam.”

244 Ibid. 12, 224: “adiuua me et porta me infirnum et imbecilem et mente et corpore.”

245 Ibid. “Inspira etiam diligentibus te, filiis et servis tuis, ut adiuuent me et portent me et in miseria mea lucrentur praemia patientiae suae et misericordiae.”

246 Ibid. 14, 224: “De corpore meo, Domine, quid te postulem, nescio.”

247 Ibid.: “sed tu scis quid mihi de eo expediat. Si sic tibi placet, ualeat et sanum sit; si sic uis, languescat et infirmatur.”

248 Ibid.: “ut doceas me quomodo, dum uiuo, regam illud et custodi, ut non acquiescam in aliquo eius voluptati, nec aliquod subtraham necessitati.”
Expositio super Cantica Canticorum and probably reflects the more mature age at which the latter were composed.\(^{249}\)

In this prayer the body is viewed as a physiological entity much more consistently than in William's other works, with the possible exception of De natura corporis et animae. William emphasizes above all the weakness and debility of his body. The physical weakness of his aging body is a source of frustration because it makes William a burden on the community at Signy. Moreover, his aging body presents a greater challenge to him as an ascetic because the proper balance between moderation and corporeal indulgence is more difficult to discern.

Shulamith Shahar has undertaken to describe medieval attitudes toward the old body. She concludes that scientific and religious writings provide very few positive types of the aging body.\(^{250}\) By and large, she argues, the old body functioned as a symbol of decay and mortality. The most positive aspect of bodily experience for the aging that Shahar identifies is what we see here with William, its role in expiation of sin and in spiritual growth. Shahar has been criticized for failing to define criteria by which to identify the "old body."\(^{251}\) Although she emphasizes the attention paid in her sources to the physiological aspect of body, she herself never suggests criteria, such as the number of years or the suffering of illness, by which the old body may be defined. Her failure to define precisely medieval notions of "old age" may in fact reflect the imprecision of her sources. We have seen in this chapter how unreliable William's self-descriptions of himself as "old" may be. Our study of the prayer written by William reinforces Shahar's conclusion that medieval writers were strongly aware of the interdependence between their bodies and souls, especially as regards the experience of corporeal suffering. It also suggests that the defining aspect of the old body for William is its physical weakness. What characterizes as unique William's approach to his aging body is his continuing contextualization of human nature within a view of nature as largely harmonious.

\(^{250}\) "Old Body," in Framing Medieval Bodies, ed. Kay.
\(^{251}\) Helen Solterer, review of Framing Medieval Bodies, in Speculum 72 (1997) 504-8.
The disharmony that presently besets him is therefore perceived as able to be transcended by the cultivation of charity and the ascetic life.
IV. De natura corporis et animae

William tells us that he wrote a treatise on the body and soul of man in order to treat the whole of man. His notion that the body is worthy of systematic treatment probably stems from his acquaintance with twelfth-century interest in the idea of man as microcosm and mediator, recapitulating the whole of the created order in himself, from the rationality he shares with the angels to the existence he has in common with inanimate creation. While William was certainly not the only one of his contemporaries to see that this teaching implied that the body is an important aspect of the human person, he is unique among monastic writers in devoting an entire treatise, the first part of his two-part work, De natura corporis et animae, to the topic.

William’s treatise on the body describes it from a medical point of view, using the new translations of Arabic medical material produced during the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries in Europe, especially in Italy. William asserts that the order revealed in the complicated workings of the human body reveals, to some extent at least, the dignity of man. His thought here is reminiscent of his description in Med. 4 of the dignity possessed by body as God’s provision for man’s stewardship of creation. Probably in reaction to individuals such as William of Conches, William demonstrates concern that the new study of medicine has caused certain contemporaries to lose sight of the fact that the dignity of the body is only an echo of true dignity of man—virtuous activity—that cannot occur without the participation of man’s spiritual part.

William’s interest in writing about the body was therefore to demonstrate what the best science of the day had to teach about the body and to show how the body reveals a certain order that partly indicates man’s dignity. He additionally desired to warn the reader that physiology does not itself reveal the essence of what man is. The language that William uses to describe the body is different from the sort we have seen to this point, as William tends to treat the body (corpus) as a physiological structure. One does not see the same awareness of the body’s intricate involvement in psychic activity as one does in the Meditationes. In fact, William’s model of the soul/body relationship in De natura corporis et animae emphasizes the
separation and unfathomable union of the two parts of man. William seems to have been driven to this position in reaction to two ideas he had read in ancient and contemporary medical writers: that the soul is located in the body; and that the soul is identical with the physiological activity of the brain or heart.

We shall explore William's teaching about the body and his reaction to the teaching that the soul is equivalent to physiological activities after we place William's work within its genre of twelfth-century anthropological treatises and discuss its placement within the chronology of William's works.

A. Twelfth-Century Treatises on the Soul

Anthropology, or the study of man, is one of the features of the new humanism of the twelfth century. R.W. Southern has characterized the humanism of this period as containing 1) a strong sense of the dignity of man; 2) a recognition of the grandeur of the physical universe; and 3) the apprehension that man has his own proper place in the orderly whole of nature.¹ This definition still has a certain value, although in certain respects it must be qualified. Even Southern admitted that his definition needs to be given further nuance if it is to adequately explain twelfth-century monastic thinkers like Bernard, in that Bernard has little to say about the dignity of nature. The primary drawback of Southern's treatment of humanism is that it paints an overly optimistic view of twelfth-century anthropology and conceals the reserve shown by monastic writers toward the ideas of the perfectibility of man or of society as a whole. Southern's point about the greater optimism of the twelfth century in comparison to the early middle ages holds true if what is meant is that the reason is increasingly seen as allowing the co-operation of man with God in the process of his own perfection.² It should come as no surprise that in the welter of modern study of the body it has become increasingly apparent that Southern's definition also needs to be expanded to take into account the new interest in the human body, not only on the part of the scientists but also the theologians.³

³ Ibid. 32-53.
Twelfth-century anthropological study took various forms, from the scholastic exploration of questions about the nature of human freedom, the origin of the human soul, and the transmission of sin; to the natural scientists’ study of the anatomy and physiology of man; to the revival of Greek patristics with Gilbert of Poitiers and his school; to the composition of systematic treatises on the soul. These descriptive categories represent the variety of types of source material available to twelfth-century intellectuals, and it is therefore not surprising to find individuals who cross boundaries and draw from many kinds of sources in their writings. William of St. Thierry is such an individual. As a composer of a treatise on the body and the soul, he fits most obviously into the last category, but shares as well in the revival of the Greek fathers and the new medical interests pursued by other contemporaries.

Bernard McGinn’s introduction to Three Treatises on Man: A Cistercian Anthropology remains a fundamental synthesis of the competing twelfth-century anthropological trends. The final part of his introduction compares the points of continuity between three treatises that he labels “Cistercian” : William of St. Thierry’s De natura corporis et animae, Isaac of Stella’s De anima, and the anonymous Cistercian treatise De spiritu et anima, formerly, but probably erroneously, ascribed to Alcher of Clairvaux. McGinn’s presentation of a “Cistercian” genre of anthropological treatises has numerous flaws, and the category should be abandoned. The

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4 Two useful introductions to medieval medicine are Nancy G. Siraisi, Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice (Chicago, 1990) and Jacquart and Thomasset, Sexuality and Medicine.

5 Introduction to Three Treatises, 1-93.


8 Isaac of Stella, Epistola ad quaedam familarem suum de anima PL 194, 1875-1890. The work has been dated by J. Debray-Mulatier to 1162 in view of the references to famine and heavenly signs mentioned in the epilogue, “Biographie d’Isaac de Stella,” Citeaux 10 (1959) 178-98, esp. 188, n. 65. C.H. Talbot dates it to approximately 1155 because a copy of De spiritu et anima, which depends on Isaac’s text, is found in a library catalogue for Prémontré Abbey in 1158; cf. his introduction to Ailred of Rievaulx: De anima, Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Supplement 1 (London, 1952) 49.

9 The long version of this text, to which my references are given, is available in the works of Augustine in the Patrologia Latina, PL 40, 779-832. An abbreviated version was included in a four-volume compilation on the soul, De anima, whose various parts were commonly attributed to Hugh of St. Victor and Bernard of Clairvaux. For bibliography on this anonymous De anima see McGinn, introduction to Three Treatises, 64-5, nn. 258ff.

10 G. Raciti makes the case against the authorship of Alcher in “L’Autore del ‘De spiritu et anima’,” Rivista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica 53 (1961) 385-401, esp. 392-4. McGinn argues against Raciti’s contention that the
above-mentioned treatises differ among themselves enough to make "twelfth-century treatises on the soul" the more useful category for historical analysis. The major problem with McGinn’s presentation is his assumption that Bernard of Clairvaux’s spirituality animates all three treatises in question. William’s treatise, like his other writings, may demonstrate contact with Bernard’s monastic agenda and theological views, but there are many points of discontinuity between the two authors’ anthropologies. William was interested from the outset in medicine, but Bernard was much less enthusiastic about medicine as a proper topic of monastic study.11 William’s use of medical sources connects him with numerous other contemporary anthropological treatises such as Hugh of St. Victor’s De unione spiritus et corporis, written between the late 1120s and the mid-1130s.12 McGinn’s thesis took its form from his assumption that William’s treatise dated from the period of his retirement at Signy. However, Michel Lemoine’s work, described in the next section, has shown that the work was composed in two stages. The second book was written first and could date from any point during William’s career, including his many years in the Benedictine Order. It would therefore be incautious to apply the label “Cistercian” to De natura corporis et animae.

12 On Hugh’s medical interests, see Vincenzo Liccaro, “Ugo di San Vittore di fronte alle novita delle traduzioni delle opere scientifiche Greche e Arabe,” in Actas del V Congreso Internacional de filosofia medieval, 2 vols. (Madrid, 1979) 2: 919-26. On the chronology of De unione spiritus et corporis see Ambrogio M. Piazzoni, “Il ‘De unione spiritus et corporis’ di Ugo di San Vittore,” Studi Medievali, 3d ser. 21 (1986) 861-88, esp. 872, n. 30. Piazzoni accepts the dominant view among scholars of the chronology of Hugh’s works that De unione was written at about the same time as his Commentarium in hierarchiam coelestem sancti Dionysii Aeropolitan. The latter falls between the Didascalicom and De sacramentis, according to R. Baron, “Note sur la succession et la date des écrits de Hugues de Saint-Victor,” Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique 57 (1962) 88-118, esp. 118. This places the work between one of the earliest and one of the latest of Hugh’s works, leaving open a wide time frame during which De unione might have been composed. On the date of the Didascalicom, which can only be dated by reference to De sacramentis, see Jerome Taylor, introduction to The Didascalicom of Hugh of St. Victor: A Medieval Guide to the Arts, trans. Jerome Taylor (New York, 1991) 1, n.1. Taylor dates the Didascalicom to the late 1120’s. On the dating of De sacramentis, see R. Baron, Science et sagesses chez Hugues de Saint-Victor (Paris, 1957) and Damien van den Eynde, Essai sur la succession et la date des écrits de Hugues de Saint-Victor (Rome, 1960) 95-7, 100-3. Baron thinks that the second book of De sacramentis was begun after 1130, while van den Eynde argues that it was composed after 1134.
We would do better to attribute the creation of this genre of treatises on the soul to the twelfth-century exploration of the self.\(^{13}\) The theme of self-knowledge appears at the beginning of the prologue to William’s treatise on the body and soul, in the form of the Delphic maxim, “Know thyself,” deployed in a context of ascent to God.\(^{14}\) Thus approached, the genre would include, in addition to the authors labeled “Cistercian” and “Cistercian-influenced”\(^{15}\) by McGinn,\(^{16}\) Hugh of St. Victor and his followers,\(^{17}\) and Hugh of Fouilloy.\(^{18}\) McGinn makes a distinction between Bernard’s moral-ascetical approach to self-knowledge and the intellectualist approach of the speculative treatises. Here again his remarks need qualification. The notion of ascent in Bernard’s early works, such as the *De gradibus humilitatis*, does indeed stress the internal ordering of self, but I Deug-Su has shown that Bernard’s mature anthropology did...
not confine itself to the moral sphere, as important as that aspect of religious life always remained for him. For the mature Bernard ascent takes place through mystical apprehension of God's love for the self; the means of ascent is meditation on Scriptural texts, through which the monk can be rapt to God in mystical ecstasy. The body plays a vital role in acquiring the knowledge of bodily things and symbols through which God reveals himself, though the highest type of mystical vision ultimately leaves all sensible images behind. Preparatory to ascent is the internal ordering of oneself, without which charity cannot flourish; moreover, as we said, the moral dimension of spiritual life is never severed from Bernard's mystical thought. Connected with this is a feature of Bernard's thought that is held in common with William, Hugh of St. Victor, and other writers influenced by twelfth-century monasticism: since man is poised at the midpoint between the spiritual and corporeal realms he may as easily descend as ascend.

William's Meditationes contain an approach to ascent that is similar to Bernard's. However, in the Meditationes William's point of departure is not only texts but also mental images of Christ's Incarnation, the holy persons of the saints, and God's "simple servants." As we have said, the Meditationes embodies a spirituality that is particularly affective and typical of the twelfth-century. In De natura corporis et animae, however, William's method is rather different. McGinn's characterization of the speculative treatises on the soul as embodying distinctive, more "intellectualist" notions of ascent is on the whole correct. In De natura corporis et animae William reveals the influence of an Augustinian interiority that characterizes Hugh of Saint Victor as well. That is, both William and Hugh have a notion that the soul progresses from contemplation of exterior things to interior things, and from

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19 See above, chap. 1, p. 33.
20 Cf. Stock, Implications of Literacy, 413.
21 Ibid. 420-1.
22 Ibid. 418, 449.
23 On Bernard see Olsen, "Twelfth-Century Humanism," esp. 50-1. On Hugh, see Piazzoni, introduction to "De unione spiritus et corporis," 871.
24 Hugh of St. Victor, De vanitate mundi et rerum transeuntium usu PL 176, 715B: "Ascendere ergo ad Deum hoc est intrare ad semetipsum, et non solum ad se intrare, sed ineffabili quodam modo in intimis etiam seipsum transire." On the dating of this work, see Worthen, "Self in the Text," 389-400.
inferior things upward to God. Hugh of St. Victor exhibits in his treatises on Noah's ark the ascensial pattern: awakening, purgation, illumination, and perfection or union, which depends on a triad (purgation, illumination, and perfection) borrowed from Dionysius but altered in certain respects in an Augustinian direction. In Hugh's thought, for instance, purgation involves less the purgation of corporeal images from the mind than the moral ordering of self.

We will return below to the nuances of William's notion of ascent. First we shall explore briefly the various images of God which twelfth-century authors discerned in the nature of the soul. These images are important in speculative treatises on the soul because of the Neoplatonic maxim that only like knows like and because, according to the principles of Neoplatonic mysticism, images attract the attention of the soul to itself, whence it can then proceed to God. William of St. Thierry and Aelred of Rievaulx emphasize the Augustinian triad of memory, intelligence, and will in the soul; Isaac of Stella points to a trinity originating with Hilary of Poitiers and also found in Augustine: essence, form, and gift. Hugh of St. Victor adds the soul's power of knowledge, the concept of likeness, and the soul's power of desire, to the notion of image. Isaac, who also thinks that the image lies in the soul's powers of both knowledge and love, says that these are what the soul is, and William of St. Thierry and Aelred of Rievaulx similarly affirm the identity of the soul with its powers. The role of the soul in these treatises is that of a participant in a cosmic drama. Poised between God and

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27 McGinn, introduction to *Three Treatises*, 89.

28 Hugh of St. Victor, *De sacramentis* 1.6.2 PL 176, 264C.

29 Isaac of Stella, *De epist. anim.* PL 194, 1887D.

30 Isaac of Stella, *De epist. anim.* PL 194, 1877B.
the corporeal realm, the soul is faced with the choice either to realize its nature as created in the image of God, by asserting its rationality, commanding its lower powers, and ascending to God, or, by ceding to the promptings of its concupiscent part, to abandon the image of God and put on another, more bestial image. William also sees an image of God in the soul's ability to choose its destiny for itself, which mirrors the absolutely free will of God. Here he shows contact with one of Bernard’s primary ways of conceptualizing the image of God in man.32

With these preliminary remarks, we can now turn to the different conceptualizations of ascent found in twelfth-century treatises on the soul. As he outlines a series of images of God in man, in book 2 of De natura corporis et animae, William moves from a certain form of remote likeness to God found in the body through a succession of spiritual likenesses found in the soul. The world of nature leads the mind always to the apex of that nature, man, and from the interior of man the mind progresses upward to God. William’s notion of ascent in book 2 is the Neoplatonic method of ascent depicted at the end of Augustine’s early work, De quantitate animae.33 According to Isaac of Stella, on the other hand, the soul ascends, in Dionysian fashion, through a ninefold hierarchy of its own spiritual and appetitive powers.34 Isaac borrowed his fivefold anagogical scheme of the power of knowledge (sensus, imaginatio, ratio, intellectus, and intelligencia) from Hugh of St. Victor.35

Given the variety of conceptualizations of ascent, it is not surprising to encounter in these treatises a similar variety of approaches to the body and the role of the body in spiritual

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31 Talbot, introduction to De anima, 45-6. On the identity of the soul with its powers cf. P. Künzle, Das Verhältnis der Seele zu ihren Potenzem (Freiburg, Switz., 1956).
33 De quantitate animae 33.70-6 ed. W. Hörmann CSEL 89.1.4 (Vienna, 1986) 217-25.
life. We have already mentioned that Bernard specifically acknowledges the role of the body in the early steps of the acquisition of knowledge, a popular topic among other authors as well, and that he stresses the necessity of disciplining the passions which arise from the "flesh." We will demonstrate that this latter theme was so important for William that it colored the way he read more ancient patristic texts on the role of the body in the spiritual progress of man.36

A sense that the body ought to be integrated into the depiction of the spiritual destiny of man became increasingly predominant during the course of the twelfth century. As we will demonstrate below, it is a more prominent feature of twelfth-century anthropological writings than it had been in those of previous centuries, those by Latin authors such as Claudianus Mamertus and Cassiodorus, for the latter of whom it was already of some importance. This fact might appear to stand in an odd contrast to the tendency of twelfth-century writings about man to bear titles possessing some version of the phrase "on the soul." McGinn notes that the tendency to speak of man as his soul has deep roots in the patristic tradition, going back to Greek thought, especially Platonism and Neoplatonism.37 He notes that influences that mute a spiritualized view of man were present in all periods. Christian writers, for example, usually were in some degree influenced by a Hebrew anthropology in which such "spiritualizing" tendencies were less pronounced. Many writers, both pagan and Christian, also embraced the notion of man as microcosm, as repeating the order of the cosmos. By the use of this concept and the related idea of man as midpoint of the universe, containing both the spiritual and material orders within himself, writers such as Nemesius emphasized not only the unity of corporeal and spiritual in man but also the obligation of man to set himself in order, and in governing himself to govern the cosmos in a certain sense. William's use of the microcosmic theory, borrowed from Nemesius probably through the translation of Alfanus of Salerno or some Latin medical commentary or set of extracts, shows that although he speaks frequently of...

36 Cf. below, pp. 219-20, 224. He alters the notion of Gregory of Nyssa that the body providentially provides the soul/body composite with the inherent mutability necessary that it might not remain eternally averted from God to a notion that the body provides the soul opportunity for spiritual progress through ascetic discipline.
man as soul, the corporeal dimension of man was of great moment to him. Probably the most prominent role of the body in his anthropology is its ability to reveal the dignity of the soul interwoven in it, an idea he took from Gregory of Nyssa.\(^{38}\)

One way in which this tendency to integrate the body into spiritual anthropology manifested itself in the speculative treatises on the soul was in the exploration of the philosophical problem of the union between body and soul. Three models were proposed: union through number and harmony; union in the person; and union through a medium of some kind.\(^{39}\) The first theory, held by William of St. Thierry, proposed that the soul can employ the body as an instrument as long as numerical harmony presides in it. The union in the person was advanced by Hugh of St. Victor in his most mature consideration of the problem in the second book of *De sacramentis*, in which he taught that the body shares in the personality of the soul;\(^{40}\) in contrast, William of Conches argued for a type of unity without confusion.\(^{41}\) The third theory was advanced by Hugh of St. Victor in his treatise on the union of the body and the soul, Isaac of Stella, and Aelred of Rievaulx. Hugh postulated that a medium exists between body and soul, a fine and fiery corporeal spirit.\(^{42}\) The corporeal spirit composes imagination, uniting directly with the spiritual soul in its operations.\(^{43}\) William of St. Thierry also held that there is a corporeal spirit by which the soul carries out its operations, and this spirit becomes ever finer as it progresses through various corporeal "digestions" (transformations to a more rarefied state) and eventually becomes the instrument of the rational faculty in the brain. However, William never called this spirit a medium. William’s model of the union between the body and soul was borrowed in part from Gregory of Nyssa. Like Gregory he said that the soul is neither inside nor outside the body but is simultaneously the

\(^{37}\) Introduction to *Three Treatises*, 1-19.

\(^{38}\) Cf. below, n. 146.

\(^{39}\) Cf. Talbot, introduction to *De anima*, 41-2. The three solutions to the problem of the union of body and soul in man have been described by H. Ostler, “Die Psychologie des Hugos von St. Viktor,” *BGPM* 15.1 (Münster, 1906) 62-89.

\(^{40}\) Talbot, introduction to *De anima*, 43-4.

\(^{41}\) Ibid. 43.

\(^{42}\) A useful discussion of the philosophical debates over the corporeal spirit as a medium between body and soul is Boyd Hill, “The Grain and the Spirit in Medieval Anatomy,” *Speculum* 40 (1965) 63-73.
causal force behind natural operations and completely permeated by nature. He did not teach, as Gregory did, that the fine particles of the animal soul mix with the intellectual nature. Rather than expressing the unity of body and soul through mixture, or like Hugh and others, through a medium, William devised an elaborate set of numerical parallels between corporeal and spiritual structures and powers.

Mention must finally be made of the medical origin of notions such as the corporeal power or medium, notions that are prominent features of some of the new anthropologies. William of St. Thierry is among those writers who demonstrate their willingness to make use of new translations of Greek and Arabic medical works in their explorations of the nature of the human body and its relationship to soul. In this he is similar to writers such as Adelard of Bath and William of Conches, whose interests were more directly concerned with philosophy and natural science. The infusion of Arabic medical works into the Latin west accounted for a revolution in medicine. In the early medieval period medical literature merely listed diseases and their remedies, as one finds in the late antique works such as the De medicina of Cassius Felix, but by the eleventh and twelfth centuries western medicine had begun to absorb the systematic Arabic study of anatomy and physiology as well as practical applications of medical theory. A major stimulus to the study of medicine was the establishment of the so-called school of Salerno, whose origins are shrouded in mystery. By the twelfth-century it was

43 Kleinz, Theory of Knowledge, 36-40.
45 For an introduction to the influence of Arabic medicine in the West, see Jacquart, "Influence of Arabic Medicine," in History of Arabic Science, ed. Rashed, 3: 963-84.
46 On the school of Salerno see the articles of Paul Oskar Kristeller, Studi sulla scuola medica salernitana (Naples, 1986); idem, "The School of Salerno: Its Development and its Contribution to the History of Learning," in Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters (Rome, 1956) 495-551. Piero Morpurgo has recently argued that Salerno was neither a "school," nor the origin of the corpus of medical writings later known as the articella, nor the birthplace of many of the twelfth-century commentaries on the articella that have traditionally been called "Salernitan." He argues that Salerno was merely a place at which scholars could exchange ideas and that certain shared ideas among the early commentators can be identified and used to describe various groups of writers. See L'idea di natura nell'Italia normanno-sveva (Bologna, 1993). In his review of Morpurgo's book in Speculum 72 (1997) 530-4, Charles Burnett suggests that Morpurgo's work makes some
making the transition to the theoretical study of medicine. From Salerno were diffused a number of works by Latin translators, among whom the most important was Constantine the African, a native of Tunisia who settled at the monastery of Monte Cassino in the late eleventh century. Five of the translations done by Constantine and his colleagues later achieved special prominence in the school at Salerno and formed the basis of the Salernitan canon that came to be known as the articella. These were the ninth-century treatise by Hunayn ibn Isahq, known as the Isagoge, Hunayn’s translations of Hippocrates’ Aphorisms and Prognostics, and the Greek treatises by Theophilus on urines and Philaretus on pulses. By the middle of the twelfth century a sixth text had been added, Constantine’s translation of a work of Haly Abbas known in Latin as the Pantegni. Associated with Salerno in the late eleventh century is Alfanus, Bishop of Salerno and translator of the Premnon physicon of Nemesius. Outside of Italy, a translation of another important Arabic work, Constabulinus’ De differentia spiritus et animae, was completed by John of Spain by the middle of the twelfth century.

In conclusion, De natura corporis et animae is one of a number of twelfth-century treatises that explore the nature of man’s “soul” in the context of relationship to God. For these writers the term “soul” includes the body of man in some sense. William’s anthropology in particular expresses, through the exploration of the numerical parallels between body and soul, that they were created for union with one another. William’s depiction of the union of body and soul through numerical parallels is only one way that twelfth-century authors approached this topic. Common to a number of anthropological treatises, including William’s,

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51 On Alfanus, see Kristeller, “School of Salerno,” 506-7.
is a willingness to borrow from the new translations of Greek and Arabic medicine in order to formulate approaches to anthropological problems.

B. Chronology of *De natura corporis et animae*

William's treatise, *De natura corporis et animae*, has not received the scholarly attention it deserves, partially because, until recently, a critical edition was lacking. Thanks to Michel Lemoine, we now possess one.\(^52\) One of Lemoine's achievements is his analysis of the stages of redaction of this work. In contrast to the development of interpretation of the *Meditationes*, which has abandoned the idea that the treatise was composed of parts, scholarship on *De natura corporis et animae* has focussed attention on the evidence that it was written in stages.\(^53\) Lemoine points out that in his letter to Haymo, William says that he wrote a work, *De natura animae*, which he prefaced with *De natura corporis* in the interest of treating man in his entirety.\(^54\) Lemoine further notes that the work contains much redundant material.\(^55\) He thinks that the first book was written as polemic against certain of William's contemporaries, such as William of Conches,\(^56\) whose approach to spiritual things William of St. Thierry viewed as too empirical.\(^57\) He notes that at the beginning of book two he contrasts what the philosophers of this world (*philosophi huius mundi*) teach about the soul with what

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52 William of St. Thierry, *De la nature du corps et de l'âme*, ed. Lemoine. While using the same base text as Tissier's edition in Migne, Charleville 172, copied between 1140 and 1174, Lemoine has eliminated Tissier's editorial interventions and compared variants with the later manuscript, Troyes 1262. See Lemoine's introduction, 5-56, esp. 33-56.


54 *Epist. ad frat.* 13 SC 223, 138.

55 Cf. Lemoine, introduction to *Nature du corps*, 24-5. In addition to the themes noted by Lemoine one could add his descriptions of the three major organs, at 1.10-28, ed. Lemoine, 81-101 and 2.51-61, ed. Lemoine, 128-43.


57 Ibid. 29.
ours (nostros, id est ecclesiasticos doctores) believe: the contrast here is between those who treat the soul as a part of natural science in contrast to those who treat it from the viewpoint of Christian teaching. Lemoine argues that William of Conches represents a contemporary thinker who displays the errors of the former approach to the soul.

William of St. Thierry exercised himself against William of Conches because of the latter's overly-philosophical approach to the interpretation of Scripture. William of St. Thierry learned of this by reading a copy of the Philosophia mundi brought to Signy in the baggage of a novice in the early 1140s. William penned a letter to Bernard of Clairvaux, De erroribus Guillelmi de Conchis, detailing the opinions that he considered to be dangerous. This letter reveals that William thought that William of Conches' exegetical method, colored by his rationalistic approach to nature and his adherence to the authority of the philosophi, failed to capture the mysteries described in Scripture. Describing his exegesis of the creation story, William of St. Thierry says that William of Conches "ridicules the authority of sacred history...by interpreting it from the point of view of physical science (physico sensu), he arrogantly prefers his own inventions to the truth of history and makes light of that great mystery." The views criticized by William of St. Thierry included the teaching that the physical creation and the creation of the human body of the first man proceeded according to the instrumentality of secondary natural causes, which follow their own immutable laws and employ their own proper mechanisms, such as the elements. William of St. Thierry ridiculed

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58 De nat. corp. 2.51 ed. Lemoine, 129: "Anima, sicut philosophi huius mundi dicunt, substantia est simplex, species naturalis, distans a materia corporis sui organum membrorum et uirtutem uiae habens. Porro secundum nostros, id est ecclesiasticos doctores, anima spiritualis propriaque est substantia a Deo creata..."

59 On the date, see Châtillon, "Monasticism and the Schools," 171.


62 De error. Guill. PL 180, 340AB: "irridet historiam divinae auctoritatiss...Et physico illud sensu interpretans, nimis arroganter veritati historiae suum praefert inventum, parvipendens magnum illud sacramentum."
this view thus: "describing the creation of the first man philosophically, or from the view of physical science, [William of Conches] says that [Adam's] body was made not by God, but by nature...by spirits, which he calls daemones, and by the stars."\textsuperscript{63} Due to his view of the immutable nature of the physical laws which supervised creation,\textsuperscript{64} along with his assertion of the eternal nature of matter, William of Conches depicts the cosmos as what we would today call a "closed system."\textsuperscript{65} Sometimes his divergences from received tradition were less subtle. Seemingly opposed to the notion that Adam’s corporeal integrity should be violated for the purposes of Eve’s creation, he proposed that Eve was created not from Adam’s rib but fashioned similarly to Adam’s formation, from nearby mud. This solution evidently accorded better with the notion of one rationalistic force presiding over the moment of creation. This proposition provoked William of St. Thierry’s derisive comments, as quoted above, about William of Conches’ contempt for Scripture.

If we can consider it established that William of St. Thierry indeed quarreled with William of Conches near the end of his life, is there evidence that a polemical motive animates book 1 of De nature corporis et animae? William evidently directed some of his comments in book 1 to some individual or group of opponents, whom he calls the physici and philosophers. Paul Kristeller has noted that in contrast to earlier centuries in which a physicus was simply a student of natural science, by the twelfth-century the term physicus could convey the meaning of “physician” due to the alliance between philosophy and the practice of medicine.\textsuperscript{66} Of course this “physician” would still thus remain a student also of natural philosophy. William of St. Thierry says that he has discussed certain things that are inside the body of man but not

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid. 339D-340A: “Deinde creationem primi hominis philosophice, seu magis physice describens, primo dicit corpus ejus non a Deo factum, sed a natura... a spiritibus, quos daemones appellat, et a stellis.”
\textsuperscript{64} On William’s teachings on creation, see J.M. Parent, La doctrine de la Création dans l’école de Chartres: Étude et textes, Publications de l’institut d’études médiévales d’Ottawa 8 (Ottawa, 1938).
\textsuperscript{65} Richard C. Dales, “Discussions of the Eternity of the World during the First Half of the Twelfth Century,” Speculum 57 (1982) 495-508, esp. 502-4, suggests that William backed away from the strong claim held by Aristotle, that time is infinite, but also thought that the world had no beginning.
\textsuperscript{66} Kristeller, “School of Salerno,” 515-7.
wholly perceptible to the senses;67 he is presumably referring to the various spiritual powers by which the soul carries out its operation (the nutritive power, located in the liver; the spiritual power, located in the heart; and the animal power, located in the brain). He criticizes those philosophers and physici who include the soul among these not wholly perceptible things in the body. Although they have been able to reach to the understanding of the interior workings of the human body in their search for the dignity of human nature, “they have failed most absurdly in this, that among these things they have thought to include that part of man by which man is the image of God...his rational soul. They simply commend and salute the beauty of man, how he naturally stands erect above other living things, showing that he has something in common with heaven; 68 how throughout the length of his body there exists a balanced unity in the distinction of members, with a beautiful equality of members on right and left; how the whole body is ordered by weight and measure and number.”69

In William’s mind those who hold a pastiche of ancient notions about the way the order of the human frame reflects cosmic order20 are clearly associated with the view that the soul is inside the body or is corporeal. His remarks could conceivably be directed at ancient and classical figures whose writings he would have known only by reputation, such as Plato, Aristotle and Galen. While both Plato and Aristotle thought that the soul itself was incorporeal, they both suggested in different ways that the soul dwelt in the body.71 Plato suggests in the

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67 De nat. corp. 1.48 ed. Lemoine, 123: “Haece de homine exteriori diximus, non tamen omnino exteriori, sed de quibusdam quae sunt in corporibus humanis, nec tamen subiecta sunt omnino sensibus hominis.”
68 The notion that man’s erect posture is the sign of his elevation over the animals is found in Greek writers from Xenophon onwards. Cf. the note in Pease’s edition of De natura deorum, 2: 914-5. Cf. Theodore Silverstein, “The Fabulous Cosmogony of Bernard Silvestris,” Modern Philology 46 (1948-49) 92-116, esp. 97, n. 28; cf. Southern, Medieval Humanism 39-40.
69 De nat. corp. 1.48 ed. Lemoine, 123: “sed ratione et experientia discemuntur a physicis et philosophis qui hucusque pertingere potuerunt, humanae naturae exquirentes dignitatem. Qui tamen absurdisse eam in hoc degenerauerunt quod in horum numero partem illam hominis putauerunt deputandum qua homo imago Dei est...animam scilicet rationalem. Hunc decorem tantum hominis exteriorem commendantes et salutantes, quomodo scilicet naturaliter prae cunctis animantibus in caelum erectus aliquid se cum caelo habere testatur...quomodo totum ipsum corpus in pondere et mensura et numero inveniatur compositum.”
Timaeus that the rational soul is located in the brain.\textsuperscript{72} Aristotle says that the soul is incorporate in a fiery substance in the heart.\textsuperscript{73} The physician Galen viewed the soul as divisible into the three Platonic parts (rational, spirited and appetitive) located respectively in the brain, heart, and liver.\textsuperscript{74} Although in one place professing his ignorance about the ultimate nature of the soul, he also identifies Nature and the soul with the corporeal heat of the soul.\textsuperscript{75} William’s knowledge of Galen’s teaching would of course have been indirect, through the Latin translations of Arabic Galenist works, and his knowledge of Plato and Aristotle would have come through intermediaries such as Calcidius. William’s reference to the demonstration of cosmic order through the erect stature and balanced equality of the members in man is expressed in language almost identical to that used in a passage at the end of \textit{De civitate Dei} in which Augustine speaks approvingly about the way the body demonstrates the dignity of man.\textsuperscript{76} The final triad \textit{mensura-pondus-numerus} comes from Wisdom 11:21, and was used often by Augustine as well.\textsuperscript{77} It can hardly be imagined that Augustine himself was the target of William’s anger. This leaves two possibilities, that William did not know his opponents’ arguments well enough to express them in their own language and chose to borrow related ideas from Augustine instead, or else his opponents themselves were expressing their ideas in traditional patristic language. In the first case, we have seen in \textit{De natura et dignitate amoris} that William was familiar with the Platonic idea that the parts of the soul are localized in the parts of the body, and that he probably read this in Calcidius. It is somewhat difficult to


\textsuperscript{74} Introduction to \textit{On the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body}, trans. Margaret Tallmadge May, 2 vols. (Ithaca, 1968) 1: 45.


\textsuperscript{76} \textit{De nat. corp.} 1.48, ed. Lemoine, 123. Compare the text cited above, n. 67, and Augustine, \textit{De civ. Dei} 22.24.2 : “Non enim ut animalis rationis expera prona esse uidemus in terram, ita creatus est homo: sed erecta in caelum corporis forma admonet eum quae sursum sunt sapere...Quanquam...omnium partium congruentia sit, et pulchra sibi paritiae respondeat.”

\textsuperscript{77} Cf. Lemoine, “La triade \textit{mensura-pondus-numerus}.”
believe that William could not have spelled out his objection to Calcidius' notion that the soul is in the brain, had he so desired. Let us consider the second alternative. One group of individuals who might have been using Augustinian and patristic language to embellish their Platonism were the Chartrains. William of Conches, for instance, refers in his glosses on Boethius to the erect stature of man as a sign that he should tend to greater things, precisely as Augustine says in De civitate Dei 22.24. The question is then, whether William of Conches made, or was perceived to have made, the argument that the soul is inside the body, using as his proof the way the human body reflects cosmic order.

I have found no part of William of Conche's writings in which all the themes mentioned by William of St. Thierry are combined to show that the soul is in the body. The triad of measure, number, and weight, for instance, does not appear in William's commentary on the Timaeus. However, there is ample evidence that William of Conches made statements in his writings that could be construed as affirmations of the principle that the soul resides in the brain. Commenting on the opening part of the Timaeus, in which Plato is talking about the political order, William uses Plato's reference to the different kinds of citizens as an opportunity to recount Calcidius' parallel between the order among the citizens of the polis and the order within the human soul. Calcidius hierarchizes the locations of the soul in the body following the lines of Plato's thought: the immortal part is located in the head, as in an arx or citadel, and the mortal part of the soul is located as its guardian in the heart and lower parts. William comments further that the worthiest part of the body, the head, contains perfect sapientia, consisting of three powers: understanding (vis intelligendi), discernment (vis discernendi), and memory (vis retinendi), located in the three cells of the brain. The source of William of Conches' idea that reason dwells in the head as in a citadel is Calcidius, the Middle Platonic thinker also explicitly says that the principle of the soul is located in the

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79 Glosae sup. Platon. 17C, ed. Jeannette, 74. The origin of the location of the three faculties in the three cells of the brain is Galen, according to P. de Koning, Trois traités d'anatomie arabes (Leiden, 1903) 9, n.2. De Koning cites De Locis Affectis 3.9 in Opera omnia, ed. Kühn, 8: 174ff.
brain. William may have thought that William’s identification of the three mental powers with sapientia was dangerous because it obviated, or at least failed to make explicit, the distinction between the powers of the soul and the soul.

We have seen enough to be able to surmise that William of Conches might have been perceived by William as having made an argument from the cosmic order in man to the presence of the soul in man in some physical sense. If we assume that William of St. Thierry was working from a copy of the Philosophia mundi and from reports from novices entering the abbey at Signy about William of Conches’ teaching, we could make a second proposal, that William of St. Thierry had heard that William of Conches was using Augustinian sayings (such as the one about the upright stature of man cited above) to elaborate his Neoplatonic vision of the world.

Indirect support for the hypothesis that William of Conches is the target of William’s comments comes from Ynez O’Neill’s work on the development of William of Conches’ teachings about the internal senses, i.e. the post-sensory powers of understanding, discernment, and memory. In his Philosophia mundi, William of Conches treats thought as an almost automatic process, without reference to causal agency and without specifying the instrumentality of any physical processes it might have. O’Neill suggests that in his Dragmaticon William of Conches revised his description of mental operations in order to emphasize that the soul initiates and directs the role of thought, and that he did so precisely because of criticisms advanced by William of St. Thierry.

Richard Lemay’s work suggests a second line of approach to understanding why William of St. Thierry might criticize William of Conches for holding that the soul is inside the body. It should first be observed that in places William of Conches assimilates the World-Soul to the vital powers of the body. In his Glosae super Boetium, for instance, he gives one

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81 Calcidius, In Tim. 231 ed. Waszink, 228, 245-6.
definition of the anima mundi as a natural vigor by which some things live, some live and feel, and some live, feel and discern. He thus equates the anima mundi with the force that enlivens the three vital powers of the body. Richard Lemay argues that what William of St. Thierry feared in his opponents’ teaching on the World-Soul was the postulation of a non-divine cause not only of generation, the traditional role of the World-Soul, but also of the mental functions in man. The latter became an issue because of the cosmological teachings of Arabic astrological texts. These texts taught that the planets, animated by their own souls, were the source of motion in the universe and of understanding in man. William may have believed that by using the metaphor of the sun’s light to express the permeation of the World-Soul through the universe, William of Conches was teaching that the anima mundi was corporeal and the instrumental cause of human understanding. William of St. Thierry’s fear was probably that the freedom of the will was threatened by a view that the movements of the celestial powers hold the key to understanding man’s thoughts and actions. Lemay notes that other Christian Neoplatonists, such as Thierry of Chartres and Raymond of Marseilles, tried to Christianize the notion of the World-Soul as generator by making it equivalent to the Holy Spirit, a tactic also adopted by William of Conches. William of St. Thierry made an official complaint only, of all of these individuals, about William of Conches. According to Lemay, in singling out William of Conches, whose description of the World-Soul as distributed through the universe like the light of the sun may have been interpreted as demonstrating a


physical and astrological interpretation of the World-Soul, William of St. Thierry may have been focusing his attention on one of the most powerful spokesmen for the new science.

William’s criticism of the way in which the evidence of the erect stature of man had been used by some philosophers contrasts oddly with his invocation of the doctrine, in book 2, to show the dignity of man, an idea borrowed from Gregory of Nyssa. If he had already written book 1 when he wrote book 2, one might have expected some reference in book 2 to the discussion in book 1. The lack of caution in using this teaching in book 1 may indicate that it was redacted after book 2.

Even if the target of William of St. Thierry’s peculiar rebuke associating those who prove the corporeality of the soul from the measure and order of the external man is William of Conches in particular, there is no incontrovertible evidence to prove that polemic aimed solely at him animates other passages of book 1 of De natura corporis. William of St. Thierry’s attack against those who teach the corporeality of the soul in book 1 coincides with a similar digression on the part of his source, Constantine the African, and his repetition of the same theme in book 2 has every appearance of being taken from Gregory of Nyssa. Overall, the treatise lacks a polemical tone. The circumstances of its production may be thought to be analogous to those described in John Anderson’s interpretation of William’s motives for composing the pair of treatises, Speculum fidei and Aenigma fidei. He argues that these treatises are not straightforward polemic but reveal a concern with some of the Trinitarian problems raised during the controversy with Abelard and William of Conches. The two works could be said to be an attempt to “set the record straight” on various contentious issues. This would agree with the reasons that William gives for spending his time writing at Signy. Adverting briefly to the need to fill his hours with writing lest he become idle, William also suggests that he writes in order that the novices, whose long commerce with the world has entombed them in spiritual darkness, might be exposed to the light of the true faith. He notes

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86 *Abu Ma’shar and Latin Aristotelianism*, 188-93.
88 *Ep. frat.* 16 SC 223, 142.
that he had a particular sympathy with their anxiety over instruction that they had formerly received in the schools and that they now perceived to be in contradiction to the faith. ⁸⁹

Even with that said, the question remains as to how to interpret book 1 of the treatise. It cannot be the case that William thought that all the knowledge of the physicians was dangerous, or he would hardly have added a long section drawn mainly from the medical writers to a work which already had described the soul’s activity in the body in some detail.

The cynical view of William’s motives would be to read book 1 as an attempt to show that he can compete with the philosophers of his day: for by demonstrating his familiarity with the best science of his day he cannot be ridiculed for possessing the ignorance of which William of Conches accused his detractors. ⁹⁰ And yet the treatise does not appear to be the product of one scrambling to learn a new subject, for, as we shall see, William already knew a considerable amount about medical theory when he wrote book 2. Alternatively, one could take him at his word, that he wanted to devote a treatise to each part of man in the interest of treating the whole of man, body and soul. While book 1 certainly is less effusive about the order and dignity of man’s body, and its conclusion demonstrates William’s anxiety to press on to the more urgent topic of the dignity of the soul, its tone is only partly dissimilar to that of book 2. I would speculate that the purpose of book 1 is to demonstrate the order in the human composite while correcting the disproportionate claims of William of Conches on this topic.

A second problem is whether it is possible to date either book. Because we have seen enough to suggest that book 2 was composed prior to book 1, we will begin with book 2, *De natura animae*. Van Engen has proposed that the entire work is early because it was written under a pseudonym, Theophilus, a practice which characterizes none of his other works. William addressed the work to a “John”, ⁹¹ in his description of his work in the later letter to

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⁸⁹ Ibid. 132-4.
Haymo, oddly enough, the names in the dedication of the work are reversed. This might suggest a considerable time lapse between the *De natura animae* and the letter to Haymo or that neither name represented any individual known personally to William. The most likely hypothesis is that William drew the names from those of the authors of the most famous medical texts of his day. Several other factors suggest an early date. The final section of the treatise explores the dual capacity of the soul to ascend to God and to descend to ruin. He uses a pair of terms to describe the ascent and the descent of the soul: *anabathmos* and *catabathmos.* Courcelle and Bell have noted that while *anabathmos* may have been suggested to him by the term *anabathmus,* which appears in Augustine and Ambrose, William seems to have invented the complementary term *catabathmos,* which depends on the Greek notion of *bathmos,* or step, grade, or degree. Such whimsical word-play may be the sign of the enthusiasm of a younger man.

By the time that William wrote book 2 of the treatise, he was probably familiar with the medical works of Constantine the African, since he uses his terminology to describe the four powers of the natural spirit and also Nemesius of Emesa, whom he read probably through the

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93 "Theophilus" may refer to Theophilus Protospatharios, a sixth- or seventh-century Byzantine doctor and one of three authors known to be represented in the earliest manuscripts of the *articella,* the foundation of the canon of the study of medicine in the West in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and still fundamental as a textbook in following centuries. On the history of the *articella,* see above, nn. 46, 49. Another Arabic author translated in the first collections of the *articella* is the author known as "Johannitius," the author of the *Isagoge,* and the latter may be the "John" that William has in mind. Lemoine notes in his introduction to *Nature du corps,* 64, n. 1 that Constantine the African dedicated several of his works to Johannes Afflatus Sarracenus (cf. H. Bloch, *Monte Cassino in the Middle Ages,* 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA, 1986) 1: 131-2, nn. 5,6, 12, and 23). Hugh of Fouilloy's *De medicina animae,* thematically similar to William's work, is likewise dedicated to a "John."
95 These powers are the *appetitüa,* *contentiüa,* *digestiüa,* and *expulsiüa.* Cf. Constantine, *De stomachi affectionibus* 1.1 in *Theorica,* ed. Petri, 219. There is as yet no twentieth-century edition of Constantine's *Pantegni,* which is composed of two parts, the *Pantegni Theorica* and the *Pantegni Practica.* A collection of studies of the manuscript transmission and the Renaissance editions of the two parts is available in *Constantine the African and 'Ali ibn al-'Abbás al-Magusi: The Pantegni and Related Texts,* ed. Charles Burnett and Danielle Jacquart (New York, 1994). Mark Jordan suggests that the best of the Renaissance editions of the *Pantegni Theorica* is the Basel edition by Henricus Petri of 1539, to which my references will be given. See Jordan, "The Fortune of Constantine's *Pantegni,*" in *Constantine the African,* ed. Burnett and Jacquart, 286-302.
same set of florilegia used by William of Conches in his *Timaeus* glosses.96 From Constantine, too, he seems to have taken the doctrine of the three corporeal powers (natural, animal, spiritual) which are not contained in Gregory of Nyssa’s discussion of the three primary organs. It is evident that William had already acquired a thorough acquaintance with the basics of the new Greek and Arabic medicine filtering into the Latin West by the time he wrote book 2 of the treatise.

A comparison of the doctrinal content of the work with William’s other works yields little additional help. William’s exegesis in *De natura et dignitate amoris* of the two breaths of Creation describes the life-giving spirit as the animal spirit (or vital spirit) and the intellectual spirit as the spiritual breath (or intellectual spirit). Here he reverses the terminology that he uses in *De natura animae* to describe the vital and intellectual powers of the soul, expressing them as the spiritual and animal powers, connected respectively with the heart and brain.97 The difference in terminology could be explained merely by a closer adherence to a theological source (Gregory of Nyssa or Eriugena) in *De natura et dignitate amoris*, in contrast to the medical sources, (e.g. Constantine the African) with which he was working in *De natura animae*. Therefore we cannot assume that at the time of writing *De natura et dignitate amoris* William did not know the medical tradition.

William’s advocacy at the end of the treatise of the mental ascent as the way to attain the vision of God poses difficult questions about the dating of book 1. Reiterating the seven steps of ascent which close Augustine’s *De quantitate animae*, William describes the soul’s ascent to God through the contemplation of its own nature—from contemplation of the powers which it exercises through the body; to its purgation by retreat from bodily things; to its upward

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96 Lemoine postulates that based on the similarity of Nemesian fragments shared with William of Conches’ glosses on the Timaeus they may have had access to the same florilegia, introduction to *Nature du corps*, 10. One of the medical commentaries on the *articella* would be a possible source. Mark Jordan has noted the similarity between the “Digby” commentary’s treatment of the cerebral localizations (MS Cambridge Peterhouse 251, fol. 53r) and William of Conches’ distinctive teaching on this topic in the *Philosophia mundi*, “Medicine as Science,” 136. This manuscript also contains substantial borrowings from Nemesius and might be worth comparing to the citations of the *Premnon physicon* by the two Williams. Dorothy Elford notes that both writers use a definition of perfect health using the term *eucrasia* that is also found in the Digby manuscript, “William of Conches,” in *Twelfth-Century Philosophy*, ed. Dronke, 325 and n. 94.
bounding into the embrace of God.98 This embrace of mental ascent stands in contrast to the more limited estimation of it in the Meditationes and the Aenigma fidei, which focus on the humanity of Christ and suggest that contemplative union is attained primarily through the eyes of faith. In the Aenigma fidei he emphasizes that the soul is only infrequently raised by grace to God. There is no mention of a final stage of rest as described in De quantitate animae. It is not impossible, however, that even after coming to espouse a more conservative view of mental ascent, similar to that of the mature Augustine, the attractions of using Augustine’s sevenfold structure outweighed any misgivings William might have had, given the prevalence of contemporary interest in self-knowledge99 and the stature that any work of Augustine’s undoubtedly possessed. Even assuming that De natura animae was written before the Meditationes and Aenigma fidei, this gives us little specific information with regard to date. As we know nothing about the date of the completion of the Meditationes but think that Aenigma fidei was completed between 1140 and 1144, we can say only that book 2 was completed by 1144. The date of book 2 must therefore remain open to discussion.

Our remarks on the dating of book 1 remain similarly speculative. Assuming that William of Conches is indeed the target of the concluding passage of the book, it should be assigned to the period of controversy with him, to the early 1140’s.

C. De natura animae

The most striking characteristic of De natura animae, as suggested above, is its extensive consideration of the relationship of body and soul. William had a variety of treatises on the soul available to him: Augustine’s De quantitate animae,100 Claudianus Mamertus’ De statu animae,101 and Cassiodorus’ De anima.102 The theme of the soul’s union with the body underpins the first part of Augustine’s work, in which it is proved that the soul is not extended

97 De nat. corp. 2.89 ed. Lemoine, 177.
98 Ibid. 2.108 ed. Lemoine, 199: “Sed considereremus gradus ab imo usque ad supremum, quibus anima ad perfectiorem contendens proficiendo ad suum conscendit autorem.”
99 See above, n. 13.
100 De quant. anim. CSEL 89.1.4, 129-231.
101 De statu animae CSEL 11, 18-197.
102 De anima ed. J.W. Halporn CCSL 96 (Turnhout, 1973) 534-75.
throughout the body; and the second part (chaps. 32-3), in which the seven levels of the soul’s power are discussed. While the soul exercises power through the body in sensation and animation, the soul can ascend to much more worthy operations by cleansing itself from corporeal things and directing itself solely to contemplation. In Cassiodorus’ treatise, written during the second quarter of the sixth century, \(^{103}\) the topic of the soul’s relationship with the body is even more prominent than it is in *De quantitate animae*, figuring in his discussion of the definition of the soul, in book 4; of the struggle of the moral virtues to cleanse the soul of corporeal impurity, in book 5; of the parallels between the moral virtues with the natural powers of the body, containing ideas borrowed from Lactantius and Macrobius, in book 8; of the body’s adaptation to serve the needs of the soul and its image-like quality, echoing primarily ideas of Lactantius, in chapters 10 and 11; \(^{104}\) and of the way the body reveals the interior state of man, whether good or evil, in the final two chapters. \(^{105}\) Like Augustine, Cassiodorus’ spirituality, as developed from about the time of writing the *De anima* onward, was grounded in a growing sense of the necessity of *conversio*, as the detachment of the unstable human will from temporal things and the direction of the soul toward God. In contrast to Augustine, he also reflects a more powerful notion of the body as image of God and of the disciplined body’s capacity for revealing sanctity. \(^{106}\) William’s treatise contains a similar blend of Augustinian assumptions about the body as well as other influences. William begins with a consideration of the body’s instructional role as image, using material drawn extensively from Gregory of Nyssa’s *De opificio hominis*. \(^{107}\) The central part of the treatise treats a series of Trinitarian analogies in the body and the soul, (the latter borrowed from Augustine via Claudianus Mamertus), suggesting that by knowing oneself one can begin to perceive the great

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\(^{103}\) James J. O’Donnell, *Cassiodorus* (Berkeley, 1979) 31, 105-116 suggests a date between 538 and 540.

\(^{104}\) Cassiodorus teaches that the chanting of the Psalms is the most dignified act of the body and soul as it is one in which man rises above the afflictions that beset his life in the body. *De anim.* 11 CCSL 96, 559.

\(^{105}\) *De anim.* 12-3 CCSL 96, 560-5. Evil men look morose, are easily distracted, and have an evil odor, while good men appear humble and have a pleasant odor about them.


\(^{107}\) Déchanet was the first to notice that William had used Eriugena’s translation of *De opificio hominis* rather than that of Dennis the Little, *Aux sources*, 26-59. References to *De hominis opificio* will therefore be given to the edition by Cappuyns.
dignity awarded the soul made in God’s image and to respond to the Creator in love. William proposes that union with God can be achieved by the type of spiritual exercise outlined at the end of De quantitate animae. He concludes by drawing a contrast between the rewards and punishments conferred on the bodies and souls of those who have respectively attained and rejected the virtuous life.

As we noted above, William begins De natura animae with a contrast between what the philosophers of this world (philosophi huius mundi) teach about the soul and what the ecclesiastical teachers (nostros, id est ecclesiasticos doctores) say about it. Here he paraphrases Cassiodorus, who labels the conflicting parties the magistri saecularium litterarum and the veraces doctores. William defines the soul in Cassiodorus’ terms as created by God as spiritual and its own substance, as life-giving, rational, immortal, and changeable in regard to good or evil. He elaborates the first point in the words of Cassiodorus: “It is said to be its own substance because no other spirit receives the flesh or body so that it grieves and rejoices through its passiones.”

By a ruthless process of editing of the opening passages of Cassiodorus’ De anima, William has focussed attention from the outset of his treatise on the soul’s relationship with the body. He proceeds to treat the topic of the soul’s remarkable and mysterious animation of the body, paraphrasing Gregory of Nyssa extensively.

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108 Cf. above, pp. 204-5. Cassiodorus, De anim. 4 CCSL 96, 538: “Magistri saecularium litterarum aiant animam esse substantiam simplicem, speciem naturalem, distantem a materia corporis sui, organum membrorum et uirtutem uitae habentem. Anima autem hominis est, ut ueracium doctorum consentit auctoritas, a Deo creatam spiritalis propriaque substantia, sui corporis uiuificatrix, rationabilis quidem et immortalis, sed in bonum malumque convertibilis.” Augustine similarly defines the soul as a substance ruling the body at De quant. anim. 13.22 CSEL 89.1.4, 158. According to O’ Donnell, Cassiodorus, 117, 122, this distinction between the things to be discovered about the soul in the worldly magistri and the ecclesiastical doctores has the appearance of a “straw man,” since Cassiodorus does not think that the explanation of the worldly magistri, in this case Calcidius and Aristotle, was wrong, but merely inadequate; later this distinction would be “the most fruitful (if not original) idea that Cassiodorus ever had, the one that moved to the center of his life’s work within a few years.”

109 De nat. corp. 2.51 ed. Lemoine, 129-31: “Quod autem propria eius dicitur substantia, ideo quia nullus alius spiritus carmem suscipit uel corpus, ut eius passionibus aut condoleat aut laetetur.” Cf. Cassiodorus, De anim. 4 CCSL 96, 339: “Propria est uirtutem illi substantia, quando nullus spiritus alter carmem suscipit ut eius passionibus aut condoleat aut laetetur.” As if by contrast, in his apparatus fontium Halporn refers the reader to two passages in which Augustine calls the body the prison of the soul. One could cite other passages from Augustine which are much more positive about the relationship between the body and the soul as well.
William begins by discussing briefly the soul’s vivification of the body. He says that there are three types of structure in the body: some, like the primary organs (brain, heart, and liver), are indispensable for life; some, like the organs of sensation, help us to live well; and some exist to provide opportunity for the “successionem futurorum bonorum.”

William echoes a traditional triad of the three ends of bodily life (to live, to live well, and to obtain immortality by perpetuation of the species) found in Macrobius and Gregory of Nyssa, but he alters the last item so as to eliminate the reference to reproduction. The motives for this emendation are not entirely obvious. Lemoine speculates that in view of his monastic audience William has altered Gregory’s “successionem futurorum (succession of future generations)” to connote the pursuit of eternal goods, and this is probably the case. If so, William obscures Gregory’s point that man’s collective development depends on his very physical composition.

For Gregory man’s possession of a body is vital for his historical development, i.e. his salvation, because once fallen, once capable of dying, the race of man would have ended with Adam. God’s plan to replenish heaven with souls could have been damaged if not for man’s ability to reproduce and so to overcome death. The possession of a body further opens the possibility of individual and collective restoration, since, once fallen, man would have remained eternally averted from God if not for the ability to change that is inherent in his irrational nature. William’s decision to omit this reference to the generative function of man may merely betray consciousness of the audience to whom he was speaking, or incomprehension of the vital role human generation plays in Gregory’s notion of the collective development of humankind, or disagreement with the latter. He could have found a precedent for his more spiritual interpretation of the three kinds of existence in a gloss (dependent on

110 De nat. corp. 2.52, ed. Lemoine, 131: “Nam quaedam propter uiuere tautum, quaedam uero propter bene uiuere, quaedam ad successionem futurorum bonorum opportunitatem habent.”


113 Ibid. 84. Cf. De homin. opific. 18 ed. Cappuyns, 236-7.
Maximus the Confessor) from the *Periphraseon* that teaches that well being (*bene esse*) is a type of bridge between natural life (*esse*) and eternal life (*semper esse*). For Eriugena the virtuous life (*bene esse*) is the product of free will and grace and terminates ultimately in eternal blessedness.  

Jeanneau notes that these three terms echo the Neoplatonic triad of remaining, procession, and return.

Having noted that the body possesses organs suited to the purposes of the three forms of existence possible for man, William marvels at the way the power of life is spread throughout all the diverse organs: “For the power of life is not drawn uniformly from some one thing in us, but, with the God-given soul as its source, nature breathes into many parts its life-giving causes and influences, making the whole necessary, wondrous, and almost inscrutable collection into one living being.” The notion that the power of nature moves throughout the collective whole comes from Gregory, but William has interpolated the comment that its power comes from the soul and nowhere else, perhaps rebuking those who hold that the World-soul animates the body.

William then begins to treat the three primary organs. Briefly, from the brain spirit travels to the limbs of the body and enables their motion; the heart provides a fiery and vital

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114 *Periph. 5.23 PL 122, 903D-904A.*


116 *De nat. corp.* 2.53 ed. Lemoine, 133: “Non enim uniformiter nos ex uno aliquo ad uiuendum uirtus deducitur, sed auctrice anima a Deo data, pluriris particulis natura ad utiae constitutionem suas occasiones et efficientias inspirans, necessariam quandam et mirabilem et pene inscrutabilem ex omnibus in unum uiuendi facit collationem.” Cf. *De opific. homin.* 30 ed. Cappuyns, 257: “Quia non uniformiter nos ex una ad uiuendum uirtus deducitur, sed plurimis particulis natura ad constitutionem nostram occasiones inspirans necessaria facit ad totum ex singulis collationem.”


118 William’s descriptions are drawn almost verbatim from *De opific. homin.* 30 ed. Cappuyns, 258.
spirit to the body;¹¹⁹ and the liver supplies food for the production of the heart’s heat. Like
Gregory, he allows that death occurs if the heart or brain ceases to function.¹²⁰

The order underlying the marvelous set of interrelationships governing the smooth
functioning of the corporeal body speaks by analogy of the order that God always intended to
underlie the psychosomatic whole of man. Here William displays his sensitivity to the
teleological thrust of Gregory’s anthropology, but perhaps not to all the dimensions in which
Gregory saw the same pattern repeating itself. A similar pattern of seminal progress
characterizes Gregory’s vision of creational, human embryonic, and human historical
development. Gregory illustrates the teleological development of the human being with the
analogy of an artist shaping a statue out of stone, showing that by stages a pattern is etched out
of the stone, more roughly at first, and then more carefully. This refers not to a two-stage
formation of the individual, where body is shaped prior to soul, but to a gradual perfection of
the form in the one medium by the artist. For Gregory, this image describes the development
of both the spiritual progress of the individual and of the race as a whole. The race was
maimed at its beginning by its participation in the world of mutability and change facilitated by
its possession of a body, yet Gregory sees that man overcomes this handicap precisely through
that same possession of a body because through sexual generation the race can continue,
learning gradually to mend its ways and perfect itself.

William’s transformation of his source here is very subtle. He clearly follows Gregory
in seeing that a single form accounts for the beautiful order underlying both parts of the human
composite: “And so the power for nourishing life and strengthening natural growth united to
the rational soul is immediately shown by this artificial and scientific formation, more
obscurly indeed in its first manifestation but then more clearly through the processes of nature

¹¹⁹ De nat. corp. 2.56 ed. Lemoine, 135: “uniuerso corpori igneum et uitalem spiritum administrant.” Cf. De
Cassiodorus, De anim. 8 CCSL 96, 541: “uitalem, id est, calorem animi naturalem, qui nobis propter suum
ferorem moderandum aut auras aetherias hauriendo atque reddendo uitam tribuit et salutem.”
¹²⁰ Ibid. 30 ed. Cappuyns, 258.
and careful study.”121 The scientific formation refers to a phrase from the previous section of his source, in which Gregory had described the formation of specific organs for specific bodily purposes. Gregory writes that the body/soul composite shows the seminal power within it, more obscurely in its first manifestation but shining forth with the perfection of the instrument.122 Unlike Gregory William describes two stages of development not of the form in the person but of gradual apprehension of the form through study. William suggests that at first glance the seminal power is not readily discernible in the body but becomes so through the process of scientific investigation; his emendation lacks Gregory’s emphasis on the historical perfection of man.

William’s emendation amounts to a minor discrepancy with his source, and the next sentence shows that William appreciates at least that the image describes the gradual development of the individual man. Echoing Gregory’s image of the stone-cutter, William describes the roughing out of the statue’s form followed by the delicate strokes of the final formation: in this way “God, the author of nature and creator of body and soul, formed man to his image and likeness, more obscurely in the beginning, more clearly and perfectly after the consummation of the work. And so according to the analogy of our subject the form of the

121 De nat. corp. 2.57 ed. Lemoine, 137: “Sic uitae nutriendae et confortandis naturalibus incrementis, per hanc artificiale et disciplinalem formationem statim coniuncta uirtus animae rationali ostenditur, obscurius quidem per primam manifestationem, deinde uero ex processu naturae et bonorum studiorum usu manifestus.” Cf. De homin. opific. 30 ed. Cappuyns, 262: “Nam propositum erat seminalem constitutionis nostrae causam ostendere, neque incorporalem esse animam neque corpus ex anima, sed ab animatis et uiuentibus animatum ad primam constitutionem innasci; accipiens uero humana natura ueluti quendam cibum proprioris escis eam dico causam nutrit, utramque uero partem, materiam uidelicet et uitam nutrit, et conuenienter in utraque parte incrementum manifestum habet, continuo quidem per hanc artificalem et disciplinalem formationem coniunctam ei animae ostendit uirtutem, obscurius quidem per primam manifestationem, deinde uero cum organi perfectione eluentem, sicut in lapidum sculpturis est uidendum.” [I have repunctuated Cappuyn’s edition]. Eriugena says that he had proposed to show that the seminal cause of our constitution is neither body nor soul alone, but that our constitution is born at the first an animated thing from animated living things—human nature nourishing it, i.e. the cause, with food proper to each component. Eriugena mistranslates Gregory’s τινα τροφήν as quendam cibum, and his translation subsequently goes briefly off the track. Cf. Gregory, De hom. opific. PG 44, 253B. Where Gregory says that human nature receives the newly constituted being and nourishes it like a nursemaid, Eriugena says that human nature nourishes the cause with food. The translator quickly comes back in line with his source, saying that the newly constituted being through its scientific formation thus reveals a power of the soul joined to it. William includes only this final sentence of Eriugena’s discussion in a translation which is reasonably faithful to both his predecessors’ thought.
soul is demonstrated in the sculpture of the instrument, imperfect in the imperfect but to be perfect in the perfect.”123 While it is unclear whether this reference to eschatological time means that William also has a sense of the progress of the whole race of man, he intends that the completion of the process for the individual is put off until the eschatological time.

The next section is revealing for what William selects from his source. The text of De hominis opificio continues: “It would have been perfect in the beginning, if nature had not been corrupted in its beginnings through malice.”124 Gregory goes on to say that the possession of the generative function which we hold in common with the animals prevents the image of God from shining forth in us at once, but that, paradoxically, it also brings man to perfection “through those attributes of the soul which are material and belong rather to the animal creation.”125 We have mentioned that it was a view peculiar to Gregory that the sexual division of man was a benevolent gesture on the part of the Creator, that the entire race of man might not be lost but might overcome the mutability inherent in his animal nature. It is interesting that the Bamberg manuscript of De opificio hominis, upon which Cappuyns’ edition is based, excised this material altogether.126 Assuming that William did not in fact read Greek, he must have found this material in a different manuscript of Eriugena’s translation, one which may now be lost to us.127 Comparison with the eleventh-century manuscript from Cluny should be made to see whether this material is preserved intact there. For now we shall cite the passage in the version of Dennis the Little. After echoing the idea that the human composite

122 De opific. homin. 30 ed. Cappuyns, 262: “continuo quidem per hanc artificalem et disciplinalem
formationem coniunctam ei animae ostendit uirtutem, obscurius quidem per primam manifestationem, deinde uero cum organi perfectione elucenitem.” [I have altered the punctuation of Cappuyn’s edition.]
123 Ibid. 2.57-8 ed. Lemoine, 137-9: “autor naturae et corporis et animae conditor Deus hominem format ad imaginem et similitudinem suam, (Gen. 1: 26) obscuriores quidem in primo, evidentiores uero et perfectionem post operis consummationem. Sic ergo in scultura organi animae species secundum subiecti analogiam praemonstratur, imperfecta in imperfecto, in perfecto perfecta futura.”
124 Ibid. 2.58 ed. Lemoine, 139: “Quae ex principio perfecta esset, si in suo principio corrupta natura per malitiam non fuisse.” Dennis the Little’s translation of Gregory’s translation is printed in Migne, Libri de creatione hominis interpretatio 31 PL 67, 347D-408B. Cf. ibid. 31, PL 67, 407A: “Sed in exordio perfecta erat, nisi per malitiam fusset natura vitiata.”
125 See below, n. 128.
126 Déchanet implies in Oeuvres choisis, 71 that this material is in the Bamberg manuscript, but according to the edition by Cappuyns, 262 it was omitted.
would have been perfect from the beginning without the intervention of sin, William sees that the ravages of sin are expressed in man’s “animalistic” condition, but he does not clearly underline the generative function of man: “For this reason we are born like animals, nor can the image of our Maker shine in us immediately, not without long and powerful labors, but man is led to his perfection by a long way through the material and animal properties of his soul.” One wonders if, given the above-noted emendation of Gregory’s description of the generative function of man as one of the primary types of corporeal function, a similar process of editing is evident here, or even a basic misapprehension about the important role played in Gregory’s thought by the body and sexual generation. Certainly the ambiguity of William’s language does not preclude it. Given the great cultural and chronological distance between the two writers, it would not be unreasonable to assume that William is interpreting Gregory’s views from the viewpoint of his own milieu. Thus when William says that man is led to his perfection through the animal properties of his soul, he may have in mind not Gregory’s vision of the progress of man as a whole but a more individualistic notion that each man is led to perfection through the discipline of his corporeal dimension; the gradual freeing of man’s true corporeal nature from the ravages of sin through ascetic discipline that we have seen him discuss elsewhere may also be operative here.

William makes a transition to the hierarchical composition of man. Borrowing from Claudianus Mamertus’ De statu animae, William notes that man possesses in his beginnings (in primordiis) the perfection of the whole creation: he shares existence with inanimate things, seminal life with plants and trees, animal life with the beasts, and rational life with the

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127 This is noted by McGinn, introduction to Three Treatises, 37, n. 155 and 156. Cf. Tomasic, “Influence of St. Gregory of Nyssa,” 72-129.
128 De nat. corp. 2.58 ed. Lemoine, 139: “Propterea nascimur ut pecudes, nec continuo nec nisi cum magnis et diurnis laboribus relucere potest in nobis Factoris imago, sed longa quadam uia per materiales et pecuales animae proprietates ad perfectionem suam homo ducitur.” Cf. De opific. homin. trans. Dennis the Little PL 67, 407AB: “Ideoque communio, quae ad passibilem animalemque generationem nobis accessit, in confirmatione nostra non protinus elucere divinam facit imaginem, sed via quodam consequentia per materialies animae proprietates homo ad perfectionem consummationemque perducitur.”
angels.\textsuperscript{129} After treating briefly each characteristic, William concludes that none of the other gifts of creation can compare to reason.\textsuperscript{130} It is the perfection that comes from the gift of reason that makes man excel the rest of creation; here he echoes Gregory of Nyssa’s sense that nature proceeded in teleological fashion from the lesser to the greater members of creation.\textsuperscript{131} William is also presumably trying to suggest that the perfection of human development will be linked to his use of reason.

In moving next to the soul’s possession of reason, William is still following Cassiodorus’ list of the soul’s attributes; he began with the soul’s capacity to animate the body and proceeds now to its rational nature. Once again, however, William’s language depends heavily on Gregory’s \textit{De opificio hominis}. Having said that reason distinguishes man from the animal creation, he proceeds to state that animals possess not reason, but a greater power of sensation;\textsuperscript{132} they do not have the second type of power that man received \textit{in primordiis}.\textsuperscript{133} He distinguishes reason from sense as something that can bring order among the different senses while being identical with none of them,\textsuperscript{134} illustrating his view with a charming image of reason as queen\textsuperscript{135} of the city of the mind. She hears the familiar business of the court,

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\item De nat. corp. 2.58 ed. Lemoine, 139: "Gratias tamen creatori suo...qui \textit{in ipsis suis primordiis} omnis creaturae ei confert perfectionem, omnipotenti uirtute dans ei esse cum lapidibus, dans ei uiam seminalem cum herbis et arboribus, dans uiam sensualem siue animalem cum pecudibus, additus etiam uiam rationalem cum angelis [italics mine]." Cf. Claudianus Mamertus, \textit{De stat. anim.} 1.21 CSEL 11, 71-2: "Gratias ergo...creatori suo totus homo referat, qui illi ineffabili benignitiatis largitiae essentiam cum lapidibus, uiam seminalem cum herbis et arboribus, uiam sensualem eandemque animalem cum pecudibus, uiam rationalem cum angelis dedit." The phrase "in his beginnings" is an authorial interpolation, and may provide a link back to the prior section’s discussion of the contrast of the perfection of man at creation in comparison to what he afterward became.
\item De nat. corp. 2.61 ed. Lemoine, 143.
\item De opific. homin. 8 ed. Cappuyns, 217: "Uia quadam ad id quod perfectum est consequenter progradiente natura."
\item De nat. corp. 2.61 ed. Lemoine, 143: "Si uero quippiam aliuud uiam participet, abusiue dicitus animatum, qua non perfecta in his anima est, sed quaedam tantum operationes animalis actionis, quam in primordiis suis etiam homini constat esse ingenitas."
\item De nat. corp. 2.63 ed. Lemoine, 145; cf. De opific. homin. 11 ed. Cappuyns, 220-1.
\item William borrowed this image from Gregory, who, however, personified reason as a king rather than a queen. Gregory alludes to the classical notion that the soul points toward heaven as a citadel in which the king (i.e. reason) may dwell; cf. De opific. homin. 12 ed. Cappuyns, 222: "Qui uero cerebrum ratiocinationi offerunt ueluti arcem quandam totius corporis caput ab ipsa natura possideri dicunt in ipsoque ueluti quendam regem animum possidere." William probably personified reason as feminine here because the term he generally uses for soul in his treatise is \textit{anima}.
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receives the wares of foreign merchants, and marvelously puts each, the old and the new, into the proper compartment of the memory.136 Despite its ability to grasp multiple objects, reason is simple and noncomposite.137 William argues that reason is not located in any particular part of the body, such as the heart or the brain, and here again his wording is drawn practically verbatim from Gregory of Nyssa.138 In emphasizing reason's lack of spatial location, the wider subtext here for Gregory may have been his opposition to the Galenic notion that the soul has parts (the Platonic triad of rational, spirited, and appetitive parts) and that these parts may be localized in parts of the body. As Bell has noted, Gregory tends not to use the Platonic triad, preferring instead the Aristotelian triad of vegetative, sensitive and rational souls.139 In his discussion of the latter, he is careful to point out that the lower types of soul are not really parts but the operations of the rational soul through the body.140 The soul, therefore, is not located in but present to the body, neither within nor without it. As Gregory of Nyssa suggests: "in a certain manner which cannot be expressed or understood, it is both wholly permeable by nature and the agent of its own operations."141

Here William departs decisively from the structure that might have been suggested by Cassiodorus' list of attributes of the soul. Cassiodorus' third topic was the immortality of the soul, but William begins a series of sections on the glory and misery of man as demonstrated by the human body, using material drawn from De opificio hominis. William commences exuberantly with the statement that "nature constructs and fits the instrument of the body for the use of reason in everything."142 Like Gregory, he focuses especially on the how the upright

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136 Ibid. 10 ed. Cappuyns, 219-20. Gregory emphasizes the multiplicity of the objects that enter the mind and the mind's ability to identify a single object even as presented by different senses.
137 Ibid. 11 ed. Cappuyns, 220-1.
140 De opific. homin. 8 ed. Cappuyns, 216-8.
141 De nat. corp. 2.65, ed. Lemoine, 147: "sed modo quodam, qui nec dici potest nec intelligi, omnino naturae permeabilis est et ad suas operationes efficax;" cf. De opific. homin. 16 ed. Cappuyns, 231: "Sed quomodo non est dicendum neque intelligendum, praeter hoc quod iuxta proprium ordinem ipsius permeabilis naturae etiam animus efficax fit."
stature of man frees his mouth from the obligation to root about for food, permitting the uniquely human acts of speech and writing. 

William’s next topic is the image of God in man. He begins by noting several ways in which man is similar to God. He notes that the similarities are only analogies, for if the resemblance were absolute, there would no longer be an image in man, but an identity with God. Making use of a common classical and patristic topos, he says that the upright form of man, reaching up toward the heavens, signals an important aspect of his likeness to God: his ability to command through the use of reason. As he says,

The erect figure of man, reaching toward heaven and looking up, signifies the imperial and regal dignity of the rational soul. It shows that man has been entrusted by the Creator with dominion over all the beings that look down, and that he has much in common with what is above if he preserves the dignity of his inborn image, namely, that the intellectual soul rules reason and allows it to choose only what is useful.

The metaphor of corporeal uprightness is symbolic of the soul’s dignity for William, as it is in Gregory of Nyssa’s work, in that it underlines the fact that the image-likeness to God includes the instrumental relationship of man’s body to his mind. William explains further: “For

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143 Gregory compares the soul touching the vocal organs to musicians creating the motion of music on pipes and lyres, *De opific. homin.* 9 ed. Cappuyns, 218-9; Ladner thinks that this notion comes from a lost work of Galen’s, “Philosophical Anthropology,” 69. William adds his own contrast between the hands’ and the mouth’s services to reason. Both play an auxiliary role, the hands, by writing for future times or absent ones, the mouth, by speaking whatever reason interiorly suggests. Cf. *De nat. corp.* 2.69 ed. Lemoine, 153. Here, as at *Med.* 3.11 SC 324, 72, we see William’s reflection on the nature of writing.

144 He mentions that the soul can apprehend multiple objects and still maintain its own essential unity, noting that its apprehension differs from God’s in its use of instruments such as the senses. Cf. *De opific. homin.* 7 ed. Cappuyns, 215-6. The soul’s essence is incomprehensible similar to the way God’s is. Cf. ibid. 11 ed. Cappuyns, 221.


146 Ladner, “Philosophical Anthropology,” 66; he notes that Gregory’s connection of the mind’s instrumental use of the body with the image-likeness marks a departure in patristic thought, ibid. 69. Cf. *De homin. opific.*
God gave him the opportunities of a twofold formation, mixing soul with body, the earthly with the divine, and wished that through this relationship and association according to which he might possess both, man would enjoy the one and use the other, enjoy God through his more divine nature and use the goods of earth through the related senses."¹⁴⁷ We noted that in Med. 4, William repeats this theme that man's governance of the lower creation reveals his dignity, and that there, drawing either from Gregory or possibly from a handful of Carolingian authors, he also extended this metaphor to the proper governance of man's little earth, his body. In Med. 9 William bases his metaphor for men who choose evil on this notion that they thereby assume a similarity to animal creation; like the animals they look down at the dull earth.¹⁴⁸

Now William contrasts the dignity that God conferred on the soul in making him in his likeness with the loss of dignity that man experiences in sin.¹⁴⁹ In serving the passions, or disordered desires, the intellectual soul becomes the slave of those things over which it was given dominion.¹⁵⁰ William argues, with Gregory of Nyssa, that man's corporeal participation in the irrational is the source of passion in man.¹⁵¹ The passions have their analogies in the animal instincts, but whereas instincts serve a valuable purpose in the animal creation, in man

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¹⁴⁷ De nat. corp. 2.77 ed. Lemoine, 163: "Nam cui duplicis forma rationis occasiones constituit, corpore animum, terrenum diuinum commiscens, uluit ut per cognitionem et societatem qua ad utrumque potiebatur, altero frueretur, altero uero uteetur, Deo frueretur per diuinum naturam, terrenis uero bonis uteetur per cognatum sensum." Without having seen the manuscripts, I would query Lemoine's reading of "forma rationis," as this makes for a very awkward syntax; if the reading is clear, one wonders whether this is a scribal corruption of formationis, as Eriugena writes. Cf. De opific. homin. 2 ed. Cappuyns, 212: "Ac per hoc duplicis ei formationis occasiones constituit terreno diuinum commiscens, ut ambobus per cognitionem et societatem quae ad utrumque est potierit, deo quidem per diuiniorum natura terrenis uero bonis per cognatum sensum perfruens." The opposition between the things to be used and enjoyed probably derives from Augustine; cf. De civ. Dei 11.25 CCSL 48, 344-5.

¹⁴⁸ Med. 9.2 SC 324, 146: "facies miseriae meae stolidam super terram respiciens."

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. 2.73 ed. Lemoine, 157.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. 2.74 ed. Lemoine, 159: "Naturales enim in eis affectus carnis uel sensuum animus sequitur, minister eorum factus quorum dominus esse debuit et iudex." Cf. De opific. homin. 19 ed. Cappuyns, 238: "Saepae autem ratio perimittur ab ipsa inclinacione et affectione ad irrationabile quod id quod melius est, in deteriori abscondit. Nam cum quis ad haec intellectualem operationem adtraxerit ministrandum fieri passionem cogitationem coegerit." As in De natura et dignitatis amoris he depicts the soul as suffering the onslaughts of the passions.

the passions are perversions, and thus against nature.152 He further explains that the passions or vices often differ in quality from animal instincts because they receive the cunning help of reason.153 No trace of the original image remains in the soul which immerses itself in passion, for "such men have put off the image of the Creator and have put on another image, a brutish, beastly image that looks at the ground."154

William begins a long excursus on the misery of man’s bodily condition, which makes man vulnerable to nature: he lacks the speed or the power of flight by which animals escape predators; he has no natural weapons or means of protection, such as the animals possess in their horns and so forth;155 as an infant he is much less capable of self-defense than young animals.156 William concurs with Gregory of Nyssa that these apparent weaknesses actually signal the pre-eminence of man’s condition. Since man is born physically weak, he must compensate for his lack of brute strength by the calculations of reason. His weak body is a

152 De nat. corp. 2.74 ed. Lemoine, 159: “In his enim irrationalis vita ad conservacionem suam munita est a natura, ad homines uero translatæ passiones sunt animae. Et uere passiones, quibus homo factus ad imaginem Dei ad imaginem pecudum se patitur humiliari. Vere passiones, quia contra naturam sunt. Hinc Dauid: Homo, inquit, cum in honore esset non intellexit, comparatus est iumentis insipientibus et similis factus est illis. Nam, sicut dictum est, quae in bestiis sunt natura, in hominibus sunt vitia.” The gloss on the passions that precedes the quotation from Ps. 49:13 consists of an incomplete thought, but the force of the passage is clear. It says that whereas the “desires” of animals are ordered, those of men are disordered. The gloss is not contained in Cappuyns’ edition of De opificio hominis nor in the PL edition of Dennis the Little’s translation of the same work. Cf. De opific. homin. 19 ed. Cappuyns, 238: “In his enim irrationabiles uita ad conservacionem suam munita est haec ad humanam utiam transducta passiones factae sunt.” Cf. Augustine, De grat. Christ. 2.40.46 ed. C. Urba and J. Zycha CSEL 42.8.2 (Vienna, 1902) 204: “Tantae namque excellentiae est in comparatione pecoris homo, ut viuium hominis natura sit pecoris.”


155 Gregory discusses man’s lack of natural means of escape and defense, at De homin. opifis. 7 ed. Cappuyns, 215-6. Gregory’s observations about the physical superiority of the animals to man are probably dependent on the myth of creation told by Plato in his Protagoras 320dff, trans. Stanley Lombardo and Karen Bell (Indianapolis, 1992) 15ff. In this story the demigod Epimetheus was assigned the task of distributing gifts to the mortal races. Because the animals were created first, by the time man received his turn Epimetheus had run out of gifts. His brother Prometheus came to man’s assistance by bringing him the gift of intelligence.

providential gift on account of which man is forced to subject the animals to him for his needs and to create weapons for defense.157

Man’s participation in corporeal nature thus provides the opportunity for man both to perceive and to lose his royal dignity: to perceive it through its manifestation of his power of dominion and his faculty of reason and to lose it through complicity with sin. Like Gregory’s treatise, De opificis hominis, William’s treatise manifests a central preoccupation with the relationship between body and soul, with the paradoxical fact that although man was created as a spiritual-corporeal compound, his body is nevertheless the source of much suffering for him.158 Gregory professes not to understand how Scripture can affirm that the passible creature we know as man can be thought to have been created in the image of God as recorded in Genesis.159 Gregory’s solution, as Ladner has shown, revolved around his theory of the double creation, a first creation in which one sexless individual was created, and a second, in which the one man was divided into two separate, sexed individuals. Ladner believes that Gregory could have allowed that the first individual possessed a sexless spiritual body, but the philosophical problem left unexplained was why the addition of sexual differentiation, rather than just the possession of a body, should connect the body with mutability and passion. It is clear that Gregory never confronted this problem. For him the patristic tendency to consider sexuality as the mark of all that was antithetical to spirit, of lust, disorder, and so forth, sufficed for him to assume that sexual differentiation entailed mutability and passion.160 William, as we have seen, does not posit a double creation, nor does he identify man’s generative capacity as the condition of his corporeal mutability. Rather than probing such philosophical problems further, William accepts most of the assumptions made by Gregory about man’s nature and existential situation. Man’s body is problematic because it “drags down the soul” and therefore only the vigilance of reason can save man from certain doom.

157 Ibid. 2.82-4, ed. Lemoine, 169-71.
158 Ladner, “Philosophical Anthropology,” 62, 77-86.
160 Ladner, “Philosophical Anthropology,” 83.
William concludes his discussion of the dignity of man with a panegyric to the likeness man reveals to God, his exemplar, in dignity and name. As Gregory says, man’s dignity is not in the tokens that mark men of worldly rank and power, such as the purple robes, scepter and crown of a king. Rather, God vested man with virtue, bestowed the insignia of beatitude, and crowned him with justice. William notes a second characteristic of human dignity: “the intellectual soul is free from every necessity and subject to no natural power. It has a will in itself able to do what it desires, namely the power of free judgment (liberi arbitrii).” William interpolates the phrase libero arbitrio into the Gregorian passage on the freedom of the soul, and McGinn sees in this the influence of Bernard, who wrote his treatise De gratia et libero arbitrio before 1128. That William construes natural power as a faculty relating to corporeal life, harkening back to his insistence that the soul is confined to no part of the body, nor, by implication, to any power of the body, is shown by his conclusion to the section: “from God comes this intellectual soul (animus) or soul in general (anima), and from the soul comes our natural life.” In this passage we see that William was acquainted with an ancient distinction between the anima, a term used to describe the soul as possessed of a variety of psychic powers and desires, and the animus, or the soul as informed by reason.

William shifts from his discussion of the dignity of the soul to treat the nature of the soul from a philosophical point of view. Three philosophical questions about the soul suggest themselves: what it is, why it is, and how it is. The first question is the domain of natural

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161 De nat. corp. 2.84-5 ed. Lemoine, 171-3; cf. De opific. homin. 4, ed. Cappuyns, 213.
162 De nat. corp. 2.86 ed. Lemoine, 173: “sit liber omni necessitate animus nullique naturali potentiae subiugatur, sed per se potentem ad id quod desiderat habet voluntatem, utrumque scilicet liberi arbitrii.” Cf. De opific. homin. 17, ed. Cappuyns, 234: “in eo item quod omnium necessitate liberum nullique naturali hoc est materiali potentiae subiugatur.”
163 McGinn, introduction to Three Treatises, 40.
166 Cf. below, chap. 5, n. 122.
science (physica); the second of reason (ratio); and the third of morality (moralitas). These three divisions of knowledge correspond roughly to the Stoic-Xenocrates division of the sciences (physics, logic, and ethics), though William’s terminology for moral science, moralitas, probably reflects his acquaintance with the twelfth-century’s development of varied terminology and schematizations of the sciences. With the Neoplatonist tradition, William affirms that the question of what the soul is cannot be answered by natural science, for the soul is an immaterial thing. Man is absolutely compelled, however, to seek the answer to the question of why it exists, and here, as McGinn notes, the Delphic maxim that self-knowledge is true wisdom exercised prominent influence. The soul exists to live according to reason. How it exists comprises the remainder of the passage.

William makes numerous comparisons between the powers of the body and soul that indicate that each of these dimensions of man lives in its own way, but analogously. As he says: “Just as the life of the body is controlled and preserved by the powers in the liver, the heart, and the brain, and the effects of these powers...so virtues control and preserve the life of the spirit.” The blocks out of which all spiritual life is formed are the four cardinal virtues: prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice. Here he adapts a practice of early patristic thinkers such as Ambrose, who had borrowed from the Middle Platonists the practice of paralleling the powers (motus, affectiones) of the soul (the Platonic partes) plus the

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167 De nat. corp. 2.87 ed. Lemoine, 175: “Cum quid sit quaserimus, spectat ad physicam, quare sit, spectat ad rationem, quomodo sit spectat ad moralitatem.”

168 McGinn, “Theologia in Isaac of Stella,” 220-2. Jaeger, Envy of Angels, 118-79 has shown that during the eleventh and twelfth centuries the schools subordinated all the branches of learning to the one goal of developing man’s ethical sense and encouraging the pursuit of virtue.


171 De nat. corp. 2.91 ed. Lemoine, 179: “Sicut ergo in hepate, in corde, in cerebro, suae uirtutes...et uirtutum effectus corporalem utiam administrant et tuentur, sic ista spiritualis.”

διορατικός, or "presiding spirit") with the cardinal virtues. Jerome gives a similar parallel of the Platonic parts of the soul with virtuous desires: ratio with prudence; ira with hatred of vice; and desiderium with love of virtue. The early patristic trend is to parallel the reasonable desires of the virtuous man with the functions proper to each of the the "natural" divisions of the soul.

William departs from this patristic contrast between the natural and virtuous man. His method is to compare the body, composed of elements and powers, with the soul, made up of quasi-elements, the virtues, and its powers. He begins with the four cardinal virtues, which he calls quasi elements, because they are the foundation of spiritual life as the four elements are the basis of corporeal life. The consideration of these four virtues as basic to moral life is found in the De anima of Cassiodorus, who borrowed the theme from Cicero. These four elemental virtues give birth to many other virtues. Hence flow the four passions, hope, joy, fear, and sadness, which William parallels with the four bodily powers, the appetitive, retentive, digestive, and expulsive. Just as the whole of bodily life is animated by the three main natural powers, the natural, spiritual, and animal powers, so the soul acts through three

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175 De nat. corp. 2.88 ed. Lemoine, 175: “Ex his igitur quatuor quasi elementis rationalitas animae formatur, ea rationalitas quae uiuendi modus est secundum rationem. Nam per sua quasi elementa in plurimas partes deducta, multiplicia et varia gignunt in anima germina uirtutum quatuor aec uirtutum elementa.”
177 Here William contrasts with the slightly later work of Isaac of Stella, Letter on the Soul 5-6 who teaches that the four passions, or divisions of desire, are the source of the cardinal virtues, McGinn, introduction to Three Treatises, 53. The four passions in turn are produced by the three Platonic partés.
178 These four passions are a traditional set and can be found in Calcidius, Augustine, Nemesius and Boethius, according to McGinn, introduction to Three Treatises, 53, n. 215.
179 De nat. corp. 2.88 ed. Lemoine, 175: “Sicut etiam anima in administrationem uitae materialis quatuor uiritutus uitur in singulis corporalis organi principalibus partibus appetitui scilicet et contentiu, digestiu et exploisiua, sic administrationem rationalem quauor exercet passionibus, spe scilicet et gaudio, timore et tristitian.” The four corporeal powers come from Constantine the African. Cf. McGinn, introduction to Three Treatises, 31, n. 128. After his section on moral powers Cassiodorus has another on natural powers in which he mentions a set of five powers and a set of four; the latter four are the four corporeal powers, attractiva, detentoria, translatiua, expellitiiua, taken from Macrobius, Saturn. 7.4.14ff, ed. Willis, 410. Cassiodorus does not parallel the cardinal virtues explicitly with the latter. Cf. De anim. 4.8 CCSL 96, 551. William’s terminology also differs from Constabulinus, De differentia spiritus et animae 3 ed. Barach, 137, who has attractiu, retentiua, digestiu, and expuliua.
powers: anger; desire; and reason.\textsuperscript{180} Finally, he notes that each natural power produces a specific effect: the natural power producing vivification; the spiritual power effecting animation; and the animal power enabling sensation. In the same way from each of the spiritual powers of the soul arises one of the theological virtues: love, hope, and faith.\textsuperscript{181} The parallel here between the theological virtues and the Platonic \textit{partes} has an antecedent in Anselm of Laon.\textsuperscript{182} William expresses no hesitation over connecting faith with reason and hope with desire but labors somewhat over his justification of the association of love with anger. We noted above that Jerome, one of the first to try to Christianize the Platonic triad, had connected anger with the hatred of vice. Gregory the Great evinces greater delicacy about admitting this third member of the Platonic triad into Christian spirituality but concludes that there are positive types of anger that are an aspect of zeal which indeed have a legitimate role to play in spiritual development.\textsuperscript{183} William makes a similar distinction between licit and illicit forms of anger; as Lemoine has shown, his source ultimately is Nemesius of Emesa, either in the translation of Alfanus of Salerno or through some collection of florilegia.\textsuperscript{184}

As William has advanced in his hierarchy of natural powers from the material components of the body to the effects of the corporeal powers (nutrition, vivification, and sensation) so in his hierarchy of spiritual powers he begins with the cardinal virtues and ends with the theological virtues which perfect rational life. William’s intention is clearly to describe parallel structures between body and soul. He hints delicately at a great chain of being, extending from God, to the mind, to the body. In William’s chain the structure of the body is shaped like a mirror of the mind on which it depends although, paradoxically, it is from the

\textsuperscript{180} \textit{De nat. corp.} 2.89 ed. Lemoine, 177: “Et sicut tota corporalis utiae natura tribus se agit uirtuibus, naturali uidelicet in hepate, spirituali in corde, animali in cerebro, sic spiritualis uel rationalis usus in tres se exerit potentias, scilicet rationalitatem, concupiscibilitatem, irascibilitatem.”

\textsuperscript{181} Ibid.: “Et sicut tres illae uirtutes tres de se generant effectus sine quibus uita humana non subsistit, naturalis scilicet uirtus in hepate nutritium, spiritualis in corde iiuificatium, animalis in cerebro sensualem, sic ad spiritualem uel rationalem uiam ordinandum uel consummandam in rationalitate fundatur fides, in concupiscibilitate spes, in irascibilitate caritas.”

\textsuperscript{182} See Bell, “Tripartite Soul,” 39, n. 133 and 46-7.

\textsuperscript{183} Ibid. 31.

structure of the body that we learn about the soul’s activity in it.\textsuperscript{185} It might seem odd that William, unlike Isaac of Stella, does not consider the foundation of the spiritual life the more earthy passions (either desire-anger-reason or hope-joy-fear-sadness), so that the soul can be seen to advance from the less to the more spiritual.\textsuperscript{186} William’s motive does not appear to have been to parallel the four elements with another set of four items. Although this would have proscribed using the three Platonic \textit{partes}, it would not have excluded beginning with the four passions. In making his building blocks the four cardinal virtues, William underlines his view that the natural state of the soul is virtue: “Of these four quasi-elements, the rationality of the soul is formed.”\textsuperscript{187}

We drew attention to a similar hierarchy of being in \textit{De natura et dignitate amoris}, in which the members were linked not only through life but also through sensation: the body is linked to the soul through the five senses, with life mediating, just as the soul is linked to God through its five senses, with love mediating.\textsuperscript{188} It is not surprising, then, to find that William’s next topic is a comparison of the corporeal senses with the spiritual senses (\textit{sensus spirituales}).\textsuperscript{189} Drawing from Claudianus Mamertus’ \textit{De statu animae}, he says that spiritual vision is brightened by prudence, darkened by folly; the odor of equity is a pleasant odor while iniquity is foul; the soul grows stout on virtue and wastes away on vanity.\textsuperscript{190} These senses are evidently not the internal senses of Eriugena, which relay the impressions (\textit{phantasiae})\textsuperscript{191} from


\textsuperscript{186} See above, n. 178.


\textsuperscript{188} \textit{De nat. et dig. amor.} 18 ed. Davy, 96 (PL 184, 391A): “Per quinque sensus corporis, mediante vita, corpus anime conjungitur: per quinque sensus spirituales, mediante caritate, anima Deo consociatur.”

\textsuperscript{189} \textit{De nat. corp.} 2.92 ed. Lemoine, 179: “Habet autem anima sensus animales, habet nihilominus et spirituales.” On the origins of the teaching of the spiritual senses, see above, chap. 1, n. 300.

\textsuperscript{190} \textit{De nat. corp.} 2.93 ed. Lemoine, 181; cf. \textit{De stat. anim.} 1.21 CSEL 11, 76.

\textsuperscript{191} Eriugena teaches that there are two types of phantasia. The first are those of corporeal things and are born in the senses. The second type are generated from the first type. Eriugena says in book 2 of the \textit{Periphyseon} that production of the second type is customarily and properly called exterior sense. \textit{Perip.} 2 ed. Sheldon-Williams, 108 (PL 122, 573C). According to the cosmic hierarchy outlined in book 4 (see following note) the
the external sense to the reason\textsuperscript{192} nor those of Arabic philosophy, which linked psychology and physiology.\textsuperscript{193} Rather, they are part of Christian mystical theory developed especially in the thought of Origen.\textsuperscript{194} William’s use of the notion of spiritual senses shows that his interests are less in the soul’s union with the body than in the soul’s manner of mental unification with God.

William next explores the topic of the soul’s presence in the body, beginning with the question of whether the soul can be described by the Aristotelian categories which apply to the body. Unlike the divinity, of which no categories can be predicated, the soul possesses qualities because of its connection to a body. It has qualities because it is subject to changing desires\textsuperscript{195} and can either ascend to higher things or descend damnably to material things.\textsuperscript{196} Following Augustine and Mamertus, he says that the soul is not qualified by location,\textsuperscript{197} implying that herein lies a remote similarity of the soul to God.\textsuperscript{198} Thus the soul is in its body somewhat as God is in the world, present everywhere but not truly localized.\textsuperscript{199} The intellect may even temporarily be made insensible to its body and the senses in contemplation, so that in

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second type of \textit{phantasia} would seem to be more properly connected with what Eriugena calls the “interior senses.”

\textsuperscript{192} Eriugena describes the following cosmic hierarchy in his \textit{Periphyleon}: God; mind; reason; interior senses; exterior senses; vital motion; body; \textit{Periph.} 4 ed. Jeaneau, 198 (PL 122, 825D). The soul has three motions connected with its different modes of operation: 1) the first seeks the reasons displayed in the phantasies of sensible things by means of the interior sense; 2) the second perceives to the natural reasons which are formative of all things by means of the reason; 3) the third moves to God by means of mind or intellect. The second acts as an intermediate type of knowledge between the first and third types of knowledge. Cf. \textit{Periph.} 2 ed. Sheldon-Williams, 106-8 (PL 122, 572C-574A).


\textsuperscript{194} See above, chap. 1, n. 300.

\textsuperscript{195} \textit{De nat. corp.} 2.95 ed. Lemoine, 183; cf. \textit{De stat. anim.} 1.20 CSEL 11, 70.


\textsuperscript{198} With Augustine Mamertus held that non-local presence is a manifestation of the soul’s incorporeity, and that the incorporeity of the soul represents an image of God in the soul. Cf. Reynolds, “God,” \textit{Microcosm}, 270-333, esp. 278.

\textsuperscript{199} \textit{De nat. corp.} 2.95 ed. Lemoine, 183: “quia non clauditur in loco localiter non recipit localitatem. Cum enim sicut Deus in mundo, sic quodam modo ipsa sit in corpore suo, ubique scilicet et ubique tota.” Cf. \textit{De stat. anim.} 3.2 CSEL 11, 155.
this way it leaves them behind and ceases to be localized by them. He adds that the soul is present as a whole in sensation; echoing Gregory of Nyssa, he says that the soul lives, senses, and reasons as a whole. The soul carries out its own actions by means of its own substance, so that when it thinks and wills the willing and the thought are its substance.

Just as the soul is essentially one in its willing and thinking, so it loves by its substance, and here William spies a first way in which the soul is said to be in the image of God, for God himself is said to be love (1 Jn. 4:8). Unlike the body, the soul is an image of God; yet because human love is unstable, the image in it is not perfect. The soul sees itself as the mean between God and the body, stable in itself and moving the body in time, yet not as stable as God, who is absolutely unmoved, even by desire.

A second image lies in the soul’s ability to imagine and understand without the aid of the body. It can imagine and recall whole scenes and can understand corporeal things which it has never seen, such as the pathways of the veins and nerves inside the body. William

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200 De nat. corp. 2.96 ed. Lemoine, 185: “si quando per internum mentis obtutum in suprema et sempiterna se erigit, ita quodam modo corporeos deserit sensus, et ab eis illocalis discedit, ut coram posita non uideat, iuxta sonantia non audiat, percursam in legendo paginam non intelligat, mirabili et diuinae quodam modo consimili potentia hora eadem tota in intellectu contemplando caelestia, tota in sensu uel actu in agendo, cum tamen quod agit non sentiat, tota in corpore quod uiuificat.” Cf. De stat. anim. 1.23 CSEL 11, 82-3: “si quando in summa eademque semper adtoluitur, ita quodam modo corporeos deserit sensus ab hisdemque inlocaliter abscedit, ut coram posita non uideat, ut iuxta sonantia non audiat, ut percursam legendo paginam non intelleget.”

201 De nat. corp. 95, ed. Lemoine, 183: “tota in singulis sensibus, ut in signulis tota sensiat, tota in singulis partibus ut totum tota vegetat et sinsificet. Cf. De opific. homin. 15, ed. Cappuyns, 230. In different contexts Gregory both uses the metaphor of soul-division and maintains that the soul is essentially one. He uses the notion of soul-division in those contexts in which the soul’s activity is the body in under consideration. Cherniss thinks that in those instances in which Gregory is forced to attempt to reconcile the tension between the two views, he adapts a Platonic explanation of an intermediate set of feelings growing out of the association of soul and body, Platonism, 15. As discussed above, Gregory also assumes that the soul can mix with the material nature by the agency of the senses. Thus, although he does not borrow the Stoic notion that the soul’s desires are δυνάμεις exercised by the hegemonikon under the influence of the body and maintains the impassibility of the soul, as Cherniss contends, ibid. 16, Gregory is undoubtedly influenced by the problem, as formulated by Stoic thought, of the soul’s unity with the body.

202 De nat. corp. 2.97 ed. Lemoine, 185; cf. De stat. anim. 1.24 CSEL 11, 86.
204 William’s argument about the imperfection of the image in the soul comes from De stat. anim. 2.2 CSEL 11, 102.
206 The anatomical description here is drawn from De stat. anim. 3.11 CSEL 11, 174.
makes recourse to the Augustinian theory of illumination to explain this phenomenon—the soul sees in the light bestowed on it by God. 207

Finally, the soul possesses an image of the Trinity in its activities of thought and memory. Echoing another Augustinian theme which Mamertus also emphasizes, William writes that the soul is absolutely united in those acts in which it simultaneously thinks, remembers, and loves any object. 208 When the soul perceives this image in itself, it realizes that it is the image of its Creator. Superior to lower things, the soul realizes that it has an obligation to retreat from the more formless (minus formata), the less beautiful (minusque formosa), and to ascend to the Form that gives Form: "for you will receive more from that beauty the more the weight of charity presses you against it. From this you will attain an immutable condition as the image of him from whom you took your origin." 209

If the soul must avoid immoderate love of bodies, it is not soiled through possession of a body. William tells us that the soul has no reason to envy the angels, because all are one spirit, one in God. 210 Even beyond this, human nature has been exalted above the angels in Christ. 211 The body bears the insignia of the Trinity in its measure, number and weight. 212 And so the impression of the Trinity travels down the hierarchy of being: "For the image of the Trinity proceeds from the supreme being who is God, through the middle being which is the soul, to the lowest, bodies, impressing its mark on bodies while giving knowledge to

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207 De nat. corp. 2.101 ed. Lemoine, 191; cf. De stat. anim. 2.2 CSEL 11, 103.
209 De nat. corp. 2.103 ed. Lemoine, 193: "quia tanto ab illa specie amplius accipies quanto te illi maiori caritatis pondere impresseris. Ab illa enim obtinebis imaginis huius indemutabilibilem statum, a quo sumpsisti principium."
210 De nat. corp. 2.103 ed. Lemoine, 193: "non habet unde inuideat angelo, quia homo talis et angelus et Deus, unus iam sunt spiritus, secundum Apostolum (1 Cor. 6:17) vel unum sunt in Deo, secundum Evangelium (Jn. 17:21)."
souls." From this the soul can perceive that just as the body lives from the soul, so the soul was intended to live from God, sighing and breathing for him alone.

The physical world thus reveals that it is harmoniously ordered by spirit. Though William is aware of the seductions that the corporeal world presents to the soul, he looks toward a time when the soul will be caught up in spiritual rapture and will no longer be tempted by corporeal things. The culmination of William’s treatise is a paraphrase of the spiritual ascent outlined at the end of Augustine’s treatise *De quantitate animae*. Augustine’s ascent consists of seven steps. In the first three steps the soul perceives the powers that it possesses as the governor of its body: at the first step it grasps its ability to nourish the body; at the second it perceives its power of sense; and at the third it remembers all the cultural constructions, such as music, language, mathematics, etc., of which it is capable. At the fourth step it retreats above its association with body and purges itself of corporeal attractions and begins to pursue the life of charity. After its purification it seeks confidently contemplative union with God, which it may achieve at the sixth step. In these things the soul works through itself. Finally, at the seventh step, in its absorption into God, the soul achieves permanent union with the Father. By these seven steps, the soul striving for perfection ascends to God.

Concluding his long treatment of the soul’s nature, the final section of the treatise explores the dual capacity of the soul to ascend to God and to descend to ruin. He uses a pair of terms to describe the ascent and the descent of the soul: *anabathmos* and *catabathmos*. As

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213 *De nat. corp.* 2.105 ed. Lemoine, 195: “Permanat enim a summo quod Deus est, per medium quod est anima, ad imum quod sunt corpora, unitae specimen Trinitatis, corporibus signa sui imprimens, animabus uero notitiam tribuens.” Cf. *De stat. anim.* 2.6 CSEL 11, 119: “Permanat ergo a summo, quod deus est, per medium, quod anima, ad imum, quod corpora, unitae specimen trinitatis corporibus signa sui imprimens, animabus etiam notitiam tribuens.”

214 *De nat. corp.* 2.106 ed. Lemoine, 197: “Sicut enim corpus uiuit ex anima, sic ex Deo uiuit anima illa ipsi soli suspirans, ipsum solum iugiter spirans.”

215 *De nat. corp.* 2.114 ed. Lemoine, 205: “In his duobus gradibus uides quid se ipsa uae.”

216 Ibid. 2.108, ed. Lemoine 199: “Sed consideremus gradus ab imo usque ad supremum, quibus anima ad perfectorem contendens proficiendo ad suum conscendit autorem.”
stated above, Bell has noted that while *anabathmus* appears in Augustine and Ambrose, William seems to have invented the complementary term *catabathmos.*

William's language in this final section is by turns wildly optimistic and full of foreboding. William betrays the same optimism about the capacity of man to discipline the flesh through the order of charity as he does in works from *De natura et dignitate amoris* onward: "As long as it lives here, as long as it sees here in part through a mirror and in an enigma, it lives as one using its natural passion in such a manner that, though in the flesh, it does not live according to the flesh. It becomes almost impassible, since its very passions are not passions but virtues." The four passions are transmuted into healthy emotions: the soul does not fear except with a chaste fear; it is not sad except on account of its exclusion from the heavenly kingdom; it joyfully runs the way of God's commandments; and it hopes in and sustains all things with the help of the theological virtues.

The souls of the wretched, by contrast, dwell in the land of Naid, the region of unlikeness. They plunge themselves disgracefully into the pleasures of the senses and give themselves over to lust. They have only the gratification of their own passions in view: they fear nothing other than what might hurt or disturb them; they rejoice in their own benefits and are sad only when the latter are plundered. Their human desires become comparable to that of animals because they are thoroughly disordered.

Each type of life has its own type of final reward in which the body shares. The souls of the blessed will cease to be troubled by grief and sorrow. The theological virtues will

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217 See above, n. 35.
218 *De nat. corp.* 2.116 ed. Lemoine, 207: "Viuit etiam, quamdiu hic uiuit, quamdiu hic ex parte per speculum uidet et ae nigmate, naturalibus passionibus suis sic utens, ut in carne posita non secundum carnetm uiuat, et pene fiat impassibilis, cum passiones ipsae non passiones et sint sed uirtutes."
219 Cf. Ps. 118:32
220 Cf. 1 Cor. 13:13.
221 *De nat. corp.* 2.116 ed. Lemoine, 207.
receive a final transformation and the soul will be completely subsumed into charity. At that
time the blessed soul will rise again with its own proper body: “so that what shared in the
work may also share in the eternal life of glory.” Bynum writes that William reflects here a
traditional concern that the ascetic achievements of holy men and women be rewarded in the
afterlife. His vision of hell also includes the bodily dimension of man. The souls of the
damned experience no passion other than sorrow and the desire to sin with their bodies, having
lost their entitlement to the passions that confer some
joy. This corporeal vision of hell contrasts with the spiritualized depiction of hell as the
awareness of one’s separation from God that we encountered in Med. 8.

In William’s thought the hierarchical composition of man does not possess the same
upward dynamic, the same sense that body will be absorbed inexorably into spirit, as it does in
the theology of Gregory of Nyssa and Eriugena. Rather, William describes the soul as poised
between two realms, and connected strongly to each; it can easily tip toward either. There are
elements of a more optimistic attitude toward the destiny of the human soul at various points,
as, for instance, in his founding of the spiritual dimension of man in the cardinal virtues. This
is in some tension with the more ambivalent picture of the soul we have been sketching. In this
treatise, as in the rest of his works, he betrays the influences of competing schools of thought
that are not always completely reconciled.

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223 Nat. corp. 2.117 ed. Lemoine, 209: “...cum in ea regnabit et exultabit maiorum omnium caritas, destructo
timore et dolore, speque fideque transmissa.” Cf. 1 Cor. 13:13. Bell has noted that twelfth-century thinkers
such as Rupert of Deutz, Gerhoh of Reichenberg, and William of St. Thierry are less emphatic than Augustine
that two virtues, hope and faith, are *temporalia* and that the triad of theological virtues is therefore not a good
image of the Trinity. The latter says that hope must ultimately give way to fulfillment and faith to certainty.
Bell proposes that twelfth-century figures are more willing to see a Trinitarian image in the three theological
virtues. William’s notion that the two virtues are *transmissa* is echoed in his *Speculum fidei*, in which he
challenges the notion that the virtues are *temporalia* by stating that they do not entirely pass away. Cf.

224 Nat. corp. 2.117 ed. Lemoine, 209: “ut quod particeps fuit laboris, particeps etiam sit gloriae in uita
aeterna.”

225 On William, see Bynum, *Resurrection*, 166; for the patristic background, see ibid. chaps. 1-2, esp. p. 110.

226 De nat. corp. 2.120 ed. Lemoine, 213: “ad dolorem solum reseruata passibilis...passibilis ut puniatur uel
torquatur, uiuifica ut corpus iterum uiuificet, ut cum eo torquatur semper, cum quo libuisset si licuisset peccare
semper.”
D. *De natura corporis*

The prologue to William's work suggests that the first part of *De natura corporis et animae* is distinct from the second part in subject matter and sources. William draws upon the new Greek and Arabic science and amalgamates it with classical and patristic physiological lore to compose a brief overview of the vital bodily organs and powers.\(^{227}\) He begins with the four elements which compose the "earth" of the body: fire, air, water, and earth.\(^{228}\) Each element has a quality that is proper to it (heat, moistness, coldness, dryness). Following Constantine he teaches that each element also receives a second quality from an adjacent element.\(^{229}\) If man were not so composed of a diversity of elements, he would be unable to feel pain; here William seems to be elaborating a notion of Nemesius.\(^{230}\)

According to different arrangements the elements form the four humors, whose proper functioning is the key to the health of the body. When the qualities of the elements are in a good balance or mixture, *eucrasia*, the stability of the body is preserved; when they are out of balance (*distemperatus*) the body must adapt itself.\(^{231}\) The term *eucrasia* was derived from the Galenic notion of *krasis*. *Krasis*, or the Latin equivalent, *complexio*, refers to the balance of

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231 *De nat. corp.* 1.5 ed. Lemoine, 75: "Rebus enim naturalibus in temperamentum manentibus, impossibile est humanum corpus ab aliquo morbo infestari, si est, ut dictum est, eucraticum, id est bonae complexionis. His autem distemperatis, necesse est alterari corpus." The term "eucrasia" comes from the Greek εὐκρασία and "distemperatus" is the Latin translation of διστεμπέρας. Alfanus of Salerno translates the former as *eucrasia* in his translation of Nemesius, *Prem. phys.*2.49 ed. Burkhard, 35. The alternate form "eucrasis" used by William in his *Spec. fid.* 53 SC 301, 120, seems to be his own invention. Cf. Michel Lemoine, "*Neologismes dans le De natura corporis et animae* de Guillaume de Saint-Thierry," *Archivum latinitatis medii aevi, Bulletin du Cange* 44-5 (1983-5) 129-37, esp. 132.
the qualities of heat, cold, moistness, and dryness in the human body.\textsuperscript{232} In the middle ages men were distinguished in terms of physiological and sometimes mental characteristics according to their preponderant elemental qualities.\textsuperscript{233} William may have borrowed the term \textit{eucrasia} and the adjectival form "eucraticum"\textsuperscript{234} that he uses subsequently from a commentary on the \textit{Isagoge}.\textsuperscript{235}

The source of the humors in the body is the refined juice of digestion, which, after traveling through the bowel, arrives at the liver. In the liver material composed of one of each of the four elemental qualities produces its proper humor.\textsuperscript{236} The material on the digestion of food is taken from Constantine the African,\textsuperscript{237} whose \textit{Liber graduum}, William mentions by name\textsuperscript{238} and from Nemesius.\textsuperscript{239} He teaches, with Constantine, that the stomach operates by four natural powers: \textit{appetituam, contentiuam, digestiuam,} and \textit{expulsiuam}.\textsuperscript{240}

William introduces the theme of the parallelism between the microcosm and macrocosm in this context, saying "The elements work in the larger world in the same way that the four humors work in the smaller world that is man, the \textit{microcosmos}."\textsuperscript{241} Just as the four elements regulate and harmonize the greater world, so the humors produce a unity in the diversity of the

\textsuperscript{232} Siraisi, \textit{Renaissance Medicine}, 101.
\textsuperscript{234} \textit{De nat. corp.} 1.5 ed. Lemoine, 75. For Latin text, see above, n. 229.
\textsuperscript{235} Elford notes that William of Conches and the \textit{Prose Salernitan Questions} contain a definition of perfect health that uses the term \textit{eucrasia}. This definition is also found in the Digby manuscript, "William of Conches," in \textit{Twelfth-Century Philosophy}, ed. Dronke, 325 and n. 94. On the anonymous \textit{Prose Salernitan Questions} see Brian Lawn, \textit{The Prose Salernitan Questions} (London, 1979) 2-3. My only hesitation in accepting Elford's hypothesis is a note in Straw's \textit{Perfection in Imperfection}, 40, n. 49, that attributes to Isidore both the terms "eucrasia" and "dyscrasia," an alternate term for William's \textit{distemperatus}. She refers her readers to \textit{Orig.} 11.1.125-8, but I have not been able to confirm this reference.
\textsuperscript{236} The notion that the humors (reddish bile or \textit{cholera}, blood, phegm, and black bile or \textit{melancholia}) are produced in the liver is common to both Nemesius and Constantine, see \textit{De nat. corp.} 1.10 ed. Lemoine, 81, nn. 32-4.
\textsuperscript{237} Cf. notes to \textit{De nat. corp.} 1.6-11 ed. Lemoine, 75-81, \textit{passim}.
human body. We have already suggested that William’s use of the theme of man as dominator, in Med. 4, might reveal his interest in the notion that man is in himself a little world, and here we have confirmation that he viewed man to be a microcosmos, reflecting the beauty of the natural order, in unity created out of diversity. Here William diverges from Gregory of Nyssa who criticizes the doctrine of those who seek to magnify the stature of man by comparison of him to the elemental composition of the world. William draws his material on the various functions of the different humors mostly from the Pantegni.

The digestive juices in the liver produce not only the humors, but the first of the three spirits that William associates with the three primary organs, again following the monk of Monte Cassino. This reference to the spirit arising in the liver, called the natural spirit, offers William the occasion to discuss the nature of these spirits. He notes that in the body there are inanimate things which flow from nature and animate things which are generated from the soul and nature. In the latter, animation stems from a power (virtus) of soul and nature, a power mediating between the soul and nature and partaking, as it were, of both: “in animated things, it is necessary that some power of the soul and nature be present by which they are able to perform their actions.” Once again we see William’s interest that the separate levels of the

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242 De nat. corp. 1.11 ed. Lemoine, 81: “ex sua sibi diuersitate concordantia et per concordem diuersitatem facientia pulcherrimam ordinis sui uniatem.”

243 De opific. homin. 17 ed. Cappuyns, 232: “Quomodo parua et indigna magnanimitate hominis ex his quae extra sunt quidam imaginaerunt, comparatione ad hunc mundum, quasi in ipso existeret, homine magnificanties. Dicunt enim hominem parum mundum esse ex hisdem quibus uniuersum elementis consistens.”


245 For a discussion of the different versions of the chapter on the spirits in the manuscript transmission of Constantine’s Pantegni from the twelfth through the fourteenth centuries, with reference to Constantine’s source, Haly Abbas, and the latter’s other Latin translators, see Charles Burnett, “The Chapter on the Spirits in the Pantegni of Constantine the African,” in Constantine the African, ed. Burnett and Jacquart, 99-120.

246 De nat. corp. 1.18 ed. Lemoine, 89; cf. Constantine, Theorica 4.1 ed. Petri, 79. Cf. a further distinction made by Constantine between the natural power, which pertains to nature and the other two powers, which pertain more to soul (anima) at Theorica 4.1 ed. Petri, 79: “igitur uirtutes tres sunt generales. Vna atinens naturae quae vocatur naturalis. Altera solum uiuificans est animae, et vocatur spiritualis. Alia dans intellectum, sensum quoque et voluntarium motum simulile est animae et vocatur animata.”

hierarchy of being traversed by intermediate natures. Here William demonstrates similarity with Eriugena, who teaches that the vital power is a kind of link between body and soul. Both Eriugena and William advance on Gregory of Nyssa, who refers to the vital power animating the organs but does not specify how it relates to souls and bodies, other than to deny that it is identical to soul.

Thus we find both the concept of the spiritual medium (spiritus) and a mediating power (virtus). Following Constantine, William defines the spiritus as governing and augmenting the virtus, or the operative habit associated with each organ, but he also speaks of the spiritus as the power by which the virtus carries out its acts. Charles Burnett has said that Constantine affirms the active role of the spiritus, while the Isagoge of Johannitius teaches that the spirits serve the powers. However, I would note that the distinction between the roles of the two types of force blurs even for Constantine, who speaks in different places of the spirits and powers as proceeding throughout the body.

There are three powers: the natural, spiritual, and animal. The first power operates in generation, nutrition, and growth; the second in inhalation and exhalation; and the third in motion, sensation, memory, imagination, and reason. To each power corresponds its

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250 De nat. corp. 1.18 ed. Lemoine, 89: "Deinde ex ipsius digestione fenum quidam procedens generat spiritum qui dicitur naturalis. Hepar ipsum uiiuificans ad seruiendum naturae in quodcumque uirtus expetit naturalis. Tres quippe sunt uirtutes in corporis regime. Virtus autem est habitus operationis in membros, ad id quod efficietur." [I have altered the punctuation of Lemoine's edition.]

251 De nat. corp. 1.21 ed. Lemoine, 93: "Spiritus autem est uirtus uirutum, ad peragendas suas actiones. Est enim spiritus quaedam uiis animae per quam uirtutes suos actus operantur."

252 Cf. Constantine, Theorica 4.2 ed. Petri, 81: "Virtus naturalis est in epate, quae cum inde per uenas ad membra procedat alia"; cf. ibid. 4.19 ed. Petri, 96: "Naturalis [spiritus] in epate nascitur, unde per uenas ad totius corporis uadit membra, uirtutem naturalem regit et augmentat, actiones eius custodiens." Cf. Francis Newton's article on the evident confusion about the roles of the two powers in two eleventh-century Beneventan manuscripts of the Isagoge, "Constantine the African and Monte Cassino: New Elements and the Text of the Isagoge," in Constantine the African, ed. Burnett and Jacquet, 16-47, esp. 34-5. At ibid. 35, n. 73 Newton notes that Burnett's preliminary judgment is that in the Pantegni the opposite is true. It seems to the present author that Constantine is not as consistent as Burnett claims.

spiritus. The natural spirit is born from the fumes of the blood. In the heat of the digestion in the liver phlegm, or half-digested food, is broken down into blood and then rarefied into black bile. From this most perfect blood is produced a vapor (fumus) out of which the natural spirit is generated. The spiritual spirit is born in the heart and travels through the body by means of the arteries. Through a gradual process of digestion the spiritual spirit is refined into animal spirit.

As we shall see, the way that William articulates the transformation of spiritual spirit into animal spirit in terms of discrete steps differs from Constantine’s discussion of it in Theorica 4.19. Constantine’s text is not a model of clarity. First it suggests that the spiritual spirit is transformed into animal spirit in the brain. Then Constantine lapses back into speaking of the “spiritual spirit” as operative in the brain. As we will see, William fails to clarify Constantine’s ambiguity about the power operative in the brain and calls it by turns the animal and spiritual spirit. This is due to his use of a second triad of activities of the soul through the powers, in which the highest term is spiritual activity. This conforms more to patristic usage. A fuller description of the two texts is in order. Constantine’s text says that the juvenile arteries, rising up toward the brain, spread out at its base like a net. This web allows the digestion and purification of the spiritual spirit until it is turned into animal spirit.

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255 De nat. corp. 1.16 ed. Lemoine, 87.
256 De nat. corp. 1.18 ed. Lemoine, 89. Cf. Constantine, Theorica 4.19 ed. Petri, 96. Burnett notes that Constantine adds the term fumus to the passage from Haly Abbas which says that the natural spirit arises from the best part of the blood, “Chapter on the Spirits,” in Constantine the African, 108. Burnett notes that other authors in the Salernitan tradition speak similarly about “fumes” of the blood. Noting that this is also a feature of the De spermate, a text on the topic of the incorporeality of the soul which is interpolated into the chapter on the spirits in the Pantegni Theorica in several fourteenth-century manuscripts, he suggests that the De spermate originated in the twelfth-century Salernitan tradition. I would note that Gregory of Nyssa also speaks of a vapor arising out of digestion that causes sleep and the free transmission of the of the digestive vapors through the body. Cf. De opific. homin. 14 ed. Cappuyns, 226-7. This suggests that digestive vapors may be more common in the Galenic tradition than Burnett implies.
257 Theorica 2.13 and 4.19 ed. Petri, 42 and 96.
258 William identifies what we would call the carotid arteries as the arteriae juveniles. Jacquart and Thomasset suggest that the juvenile veins are the jugular veins, Sexuality and Medicine, 43.
259 Theorica 2.13 ed. Petri, 42 and 96. Constantine, Theorica 4.19 ed. Petri, 96: “Spiritus animalis in cerebri nascitur uturiculis, per nervos tendens at totius corporis membr...Hic ex spirituali spiritu procreatur, qui in corde generatur... Vbi multiplicantur divise, telant sicut rete subitus cranium dilatate. Deinde rete duae principales egrediuntur, quae retortae super idem rete protenduntur. Spiritualis uero spiritus cum a corde progreseditur in tela multiplicatatem
Constantine says that the spiritual spirit thereupon proceeds via two other arteries to the front part of the brain. There it is again purified and the waste is released through the nose.\textsuperscript{261} This one (\textit{ipse}), presumably the animal spirit, then goes to the back lobe of the brain producing the animal (i.e. mental) operations.\textsuperscript{262} We may note that in Constantine’s text the stages of digestion are not explicitly identified as such and only two digestions of the spiritual spirit are mentioned.

William’s discussion of the evolution of spiritual spirit into animal spirit differs from Constantine’s in that William identifies three distinct stages of the “digestion” of the spiritual spirit. To create three stages William combines material from books 2 and 4 of the \textit{Pantegni Theorica}. His first stage echoes \textit{Theorica} 2.13 in which Constantine teaches that the role of the contraction of the arteries is to expel the excess “fumes” of the humors from the blood.\textsuperscript{263} This is the first digestion of the spiritual spirit, not identified as such by Constantine.\textsuperscript{264} Beginning now his long borrowings from \textit{Theorica} 4.19, he says that the spiritual spirit (\textit{ipse spiritus})\textsuperscript{265} travels by means of the juvenile arteries to the arterial net under the brain and remains and is purified by digestion.\textsuperscript{266} From this digestion, William says, echoing Constantine, the animal spirit is produced and moves along into the brain after it is created.\textsuperscript{267} Finally, identifies a third diffusus, et ibi immorans implicitus, tamdiu ibi digeritur, quoad depuratus clarificetur, sicque animalis spiritus ab eo generatur. Ad hoc enim tantum rete illud contextur, ut a spiritu spirituali digestio animalis concretur.”

\textsuperscript{261} Ibid.: “Et post haec spiritualis spiritus rete per ambas arterias super rete retortas egreditur, et ad ventriculos prorae cerebri dilabitur. Vbi iterum subtilatur, quod depuratum super erat ejicit per suós meatus, id est palato atque naribus.”

\textsuperscript{262} Ibid.: “Ipse uero uadit ad ventriculos puppis per uiam medium medii ventriculi atque puppis...Spiritus autem qui ad puppim pertransit motum eibi et memoriam facit. In propra immorans sensum creat et fantasiam. Spiritu medii ventriculi intellectus siue ratio fit.”

\textsuperscript{263} \textit{Theorica} 2.13, ed. Petri, 42; cf. ibid. 4.5, ed. Petri, 87.

\textsuperscript{264} \textit{De nat. corp.} 1.23, ed. Lemoine, 95: “Et haec est prima spiritus spiritualis digestio.”

\textsuperscript{265} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{266} Ibid. 1.24, ed. Lemoine, 97: “Iuueniles ergo arteriae spiritum uitalem deferentes, craneum penetrantes, usque ad cerebri sedem sub ipso cerebro multipliciter in modum retis dilatatur, ut sub ipsius retis fomento spiritus iterum digeratur. Ibi enim spiritus spiritualis immorans, digerendo purificatur.”

\textsuperscript{267} \textit{De nat. corp.} 1.24, ed. Lemoine, 97: “De qua digestione spiritus animalis creatur, et post per duas arterias supra rete retortas egreditur, et ad ventriculum prorae cerebri dilabitor.”
digestion (*tertia eius digestio*), in which the spirit empties its contaminants through the nasal passages in the posterior part of the brain.²⁶⁸

The theme of digestion is found in Constantine²⁶⁹ and reflects a common medieval Galenic interest in the purification of the body through circulation.²⁷⁰ William’s analysis of the process into three stages, however, is not in Constantine. The first question to ask is whether he borrowed it from some other medical or philosophical source. Constabulinus does not outline three stages, but he comments that after entering the brain from the arterial net, the vital spirit produced in the heart is purified in the back lobe of the brain.²⁷¹ This purification has an interesting result in that it makes the spirit more suitable for the reception of the power of the soul.²⁷² The *Isagoge*, ascribed to Johannitius, is extremely brief in its discussion of the animal spirit and does not contain a discussion of its production from the spiritual spirit.²⁷³ William of Conches’ treatment of the production of the animal spirit in his *Philosophia mundi*, which relies fairly heavily on Constantine the African, does not identify three stages to the process.²⁷⁴ Until some other intermediary is discovered, it seems reasonable to conclude that the threefold

²⁶⁸ *De nat. corp.* 1.25, ed. Lemoine, 97: “Vbi iterum subtiliatus et depuratus, depurationes suas eicit per meatum palati et narium. Et haec est tertia eius digestio.”

²⁶⁹ According to Newton, “Text of the *Isagoge*,” in *Constantine the African*, ed. Burnett and Jacquet, 36. The verb *digere* features in the better eleventh-century manuscripts of the *Isagoge* and is a sign that the text they contain was redacted under the direction of Constantine. In others the preferred term is *dirigere*. On Constantine’s direction of this translation, see Danielle Jacquet, “L’*Isagoge* Johannitii et son traducteur,” *Bibliothèque de l’Ecole des Chartes* 144 (1986) 209-40.


²⁷¹ The spirit travels from front to back through a worm-like organ (*vermis*). The notion of a worm-like structure between the middle and back parts of the brain is found in Galen. Constantine includes it in his translation of the *Pantegni* and notes that its function was the regulation of the two-way flow of the animal spirit in the brain. See *Theorica* 4.19, ed. Petri, 96. On William of Conches’ use of the notion of the interventricular valve, see O’Neill, “Description of the Brain,” 208.

²⁷² See John of Spain’s translation of *De differentia animae et spiritus in Excerpta e libro Alfredi Anglici De moto cordis*, *item Costa-Ben-Lucae De differentia et spiritus*, ed. Carl Sigmund Barach (Innsbruck, 1878) 115-39, esp. 125: “Pulsus ergo subtiles, qui mittuntur a reti, quod est sub cerebro, ad interiore cerebri cum pervenerint, ad illum ventriculum, qui est in cerebro anteriori, perducent spiritum vitalem, qui, inde transiens ad altem ventriculum, fit ibi subtilior et purgatur atque aptatur ad recipiendum virtutem animae, et haec fit ei quasi digesto et converso in spiritum subtiliores atque clariorem.”


process is William’s own invention. It is worth noting that Macrobius breaks down the
process of the digestion of food (in the stomach, liver, veins and arteries, and the members of
the body) into four discrete moments or digestiones. Perhaps William’s attempt to
rationalize the digestions of the spiritual spirit has a precedent here.

The next section of William’s treatise contains a discussion of the operations of the
animal spirit in the brain. According to Constantine, and, we might add, Nemesius and
Constabulinus as well, the animal spirit creates memory and motion in the back lobe; sense
and imagination at the front; and intellect or reason (intellectus sive ratio) in the middle lobe. William reiterates this teaching, adding, following Constantine, that the possession of
reason, imagination and memory distinguishes the human brain from the animal brain. Next
William begins a short excursus on the distinction between the spiritual spirit and the soul. He
says that some philosophers called this spiritual spirit the spiritual soul, because they wanted
the soul to be corporeal. According to William, the soul is different from the spiritual spirit
because it is made to the image of God. He goes on to describe the soul’s relation to body
as being like God’s presence in the world, whole and entire at every point, and to specify that
the soul is present entirely undivided in the natural, spiritual and animal operations of the
body.

William’s excursus expands a short two-sentence comment by Constantine on the topic
of the incorporeality of the soul. This commentary closes the chapter on the spirits as one finds

275 Macrobius, Saturn. 7.4.11-26, ed. Willis, 411-2.
276 Nemesius, Prem. phys. 13, ed. Burkhard, 89, has dinoscibilis in the front, ratio in the middle and memoria
at the back. Constabulinus, De diff. spir. et anim. 2. ed. Barach, has phantasía in the front, cogitatio in the
middle, and memoria at the back.
277 Constantine, Theorica 4.19 ed. Petri, 96: “Ipse uero uadit ad uentriculos puppis per uiam mediam medii
ventriculi atque puppis...Spiritus autem qui ad puppim pertransit motum ibr et memoriam facit. In prora
immorans sensum creat et fantasiaim. Spiritu medii uentriculi intellectus siue ratio fit.”
278 De nat. corp. 1.25, ed. Lemoine, 97.
animalibus est propria, id est fantasia, ratio, et memoria. Nullum enim rationale habet haec perfecte.”
280 De nat. corp. 1.27, ed. Lemoine, 99: “Hunc autem spiritum spiritualem quidam philosophi animam esse
dicebant, qui corpopream animam esse uolebant.
281 Ibid.
282 Ibid.
After saying that the soul is ubiquitous in the body as God is in the world, William reiterates a point made in *De natura animae* to the effect that the soul is entirely present in the body’s natural, spiritual and animal operations. We have seen that on this point William echoes Gregory of Nyssa’s concern that the soul not be perceived as undergoing division because of the localization of its functions. Like Constantine, William thinks that the spirits are the instruments of the soul rather than the soul itself. William adds an interesting gloss on the soul’s presence to the spirits:

In natural matters it [the soul] works subtly, in animal matters more subtly, in spiritual ones with the greatest subtlety. It does some things naturally, some things, at the animal level, actively and passively, and some things through itself alone and according to its own nature, that is spiritually.

What is peculiar about William’s gloss is his hierarchy of natural, animal, and spiritual operations of the soul: it does not correspond to the hierarchy outlined in his just-completed discussion of the production of the three spirits, in which the animal spirit ought to possess the greatest dignity because it is connected with the mental operations. Since in this gloss William is now attributing mental functions to the “spiritual,” rather than the “animal” spirit, one suspects that the adjective “spiritual” no longer refers to vital spirit but to intellect or mind and that William’s interest has shifted from the physiological to the philosophical.

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283 Burnett notes that some fourteenth-century manuscripts of the *Pantegni Theorica* insert at this point a short treatise, called *De spermate*, containing a discussion, drawn largely from ancient philosophy, of the topic of the incorporeality of the soul. Burnett conjectures that the cause of the insertion of the *De spermate* was the intense interest in the topic generated among twelfth-century Christian writers such as William, Hugh of St. Victor, Isaac of Stella and the author of the Cistercian *De spiritu et anima*. Cf. “Chapter on the Spirits,” in *Constantine the African*, ed. Burnett and Jacquet, 105-7.


285 See above, n. 201.


287 *De nat. corp.* 1.27 ed. Lemoine, 99: “In naturalibus operatur subtiliter, in animalibus subtilius, subtilissime in spiritualibus. Quaedam enim facit naturaliter, quaedam actualiter et passibiliter, id est animaliter, quaedam per se ipsam, et secundum se ipsam, id est spiritualiter.”


The second sentence of the gloss reveals what William is getting at. His hierarchy is clearly based on those activities which require a corporeal instrument (apart from spirit itself) in order for the soul to carry out its activities. Going back to William's prior discussion of the localization of reason, imagination, and memory, we see that he had previously asserted that these three powers act "of themselves." He will say presently that the spiritual spirit produces imagination and memory of itself and sensation and motion through its functionaries, the five senses. William next warns the reader that he is going to postpone (permanently) the "difficult" discussion of the spiritual actions of the spiritual spirit in lieu of a discussion of sensation and motion. His intent here is clearly to assert a discontinuity between the physiological processes of thought and the causality of the soul, suggesting that the creation of animal spirit from corporeal nature implies only an explanation of how the instrument of the soul comes to be and not an explanation for the origin of thought itself. He attributes memory, imagination, and thought to the spiritual action of the spiritual spirit, i.e. as instrumental cause. William's treatise contrasts with William of Conches' Philosophia mundi, which treats thought as an almost automatic process without reference to causal agency and without specifying the instrumentality of the physical processes. O'Neill suggests that William of Conches' alterations to his description of mental operations, in his Dragmaticon, in which he emphasizes that the soul initiates and directs the role of thought, may have been the result of criticisms directed at him by William of St. Thierry, and this has some bearing on our argument that William wrote his treatise with an eye to correcting the anthropological misconceptions of his day.

290 De nat. corp. 1.26 ed. Lemoine, 99: "Quod autem per se facere dicimus rationem, memoriam et phantasmam."
291 Ibid. 1.29 ed. Lemoine, 101: "Diximus quia transiens spiritus spiritualis in posteriorem cerebri puppim memoriam in eo operatur et motum, memoriam per se, motum per officiales suos qui sunt nerui, sicut in anteriori prora phantasmam per se, sensum per officiales suos qui sunt quinque sensus."
292 Ibid. 101.
294 O'Neill, "Description of the Brain," 209, 213.
At this point we ought to return to the terminology expressed in William's hierarchy of the soul's activity in the powers (natural, animal, spiritual). What does William achieve by suggesting a hierarchy of powers of gradually increasing subtleness? One is reminded both of Constabulinus' teaching that the animal spirit becomes more subtle in its digestion in the brain so that it might become more suitable for the exercise of reason and also of Gregory of Nyssa's notion that the animal soul is of an intermediate nature between vegetative and intellectual souls so that the intellectual principle might mix with the more corporeal nature. And yet William emphasizes the unity of body and soul by means of neither the metaphor of mixture, as Gregory does, nor the notion of a corporeal medium, as do his contemporaries, Hugh of St. Victor, Isaac of Stella, and Aelred of Rievaulx. William connects the gradual increase in subtlety more with the way the soul works in the spirits than with the corporeal nature of the spirits themselves. The notion of a quasi-physical continuity between man's material and physical natures is not expressed to the same extent as it is by some of his contemporaries, nor does he focus on the moment of contact between the spiritual spirit and the rational soul. A brief look at the *De spiritu et anima* will underline this point. Echoing ideas of Hugh of St. Victor, for instance, the Cistercian author of the *De spiritu et anima* teaches that the vital or fiery spirit rises to the brain where it is purified. The spirit is transformed in the posterior part of the brain into sense and in the anterior part into imagination. Imagination is the medium between corporeality and spirituality: at one end the imagination is a corporeal spirit, and at the other it is something rational which informs the body and is in contact with rational nature. By the time that it moves to the medial part of the brain, where it comes into contact with the very substance of soul, it has been rarefied to such an extent that it is joined to

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295 See above, n. 272.
the spirit, i.e. soul, with no other substance intervening. In his emphasis on imagination the compiler resembles Hugh of St. Victor and Isaac of Stella more than William.299

William’s anthropological approach in *De natura corporis* is to sketch a model, in the barest of outlines, that expresses all the principles he wishes to uphold. The three-stage production of one spirit from another echoes Gregory of Nyssa’s view of the evolution of the psychosomatic whole of man through stages. Gregory expresses the view that the soul is continually entwined with the body through the three-stage evolution of soul; William rephrases his view in terms of spirits, which allow in unspecified fashion that same contiguity of body and soul. For Gregory the finest substance of the animal soul mixes with the intellect to effect union, while for William each type of spirit becomes gradually more subtle, as if preparing it for that union with soul which William later, in *De natura animae*, calls ineffable.

After his digression about the incorporeal nature of the soul and the introduction of his second hierarchy of activities of the soul in the powers (natural, animal, spiritual), he returns to his topic, the production of the three spirits. He identifies the common origin of the activities of the spirits in the heart300 as well as the interrelation between the natural and spiritual spirits. William’s first point contrasts with the way he had previously connected the corporeal spirits

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298 *De spiritu et anima* 33 PL 40, 803A: “in summo scilicet corporalis spiritus, et in imo rationalis, corporalem informans, et rationalem contingens.”

299 On the role of imagination in Isaac of Stella’s thought, see McGinn’s introduction to *Three Treatises*, 56-7. For Hugh see Kleinz, *Theory of Knowledge*, 36-40. Cf. on imagination M.-D. Chenu, “Imaginatio: note de lexicographie philosophique,” *Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati. II. Studi e Testi* 122 (Vatican City, 1946) 593-602. Plotinus teaches that the disembodied soul communicates with embodied soul in the faculties of imagination and sensation, *Ennead* 4.3.23, in *Plotini Opera*, ed. Henry and Schwyzer, 2: 48-50. Eriugena, in turn, teaches that in the middle of the hierarchy of man’s nature is the external sense and the internal sense; cf. *Periphr. 4*, ed. Jeanneau, 198 (PL 122, 825D-826A). According to its power the external sense forms a special kind of image (phantasia) of sensible things through the senses (these images are dependent on a prior sensible image formed in the senses), and above this, the internal sense refers the images to their rationes and thereupon transmits the latter back to the reason, and thence the reason refers them to mind. Cf. *Periphr. 2*, ed. Sheldon-Williams, 106-8 (PL 122, 572D-574A). The joining of the more earthly and more spiritual parts of man may reflect an idea of Dionysius’: that the ends of priors are joined to the beginning of secondaries by divine action, *De divinis nominibus* 7.3 ed. Suchla, 198. McGinn thinks that Isaac of Stella is getting at the same idea by proposing that the juncture consists of the blending of “two apt median realities,” i.e. sense and imagination, introduction to *Three Treatises*, 57 and n. 229. The interest in imagination as the median principle in man is therefore not new in the twelfth-century, but authors such as Hugh of St. Victor and Isaac of Stella innovate in identifying the internal sense of Eriugena with a physical medium.

300 *De nat. corp.* 1.28 ed. Lemoine, 101: “Hae itaque omnes spiritualium actionum rationes in corde fundantur et de corde exent.”
with separate organs. William’s notion of the heart as source of the spirits may come from Gregory’s De opificio hominis, which teaches that the heart is the most important organ of the body, since it gives the vital breath to the whole body. Gregory goes on to say that God providentially made the passage to the lungs and the passage to the stomach come together into one mouth before the passages enter the heart. In this way the heart and the vital spirit receive nutrients. William substitutes Constantine’s physiological account of how the vital spirit receives nutrition, suggesting that, emanating from the heart, in which the natural spirit is med into vital spirit, the latter courses throughout the body by means of the arteries. When the arteries come in contact with the veins, “by the abundance of pores which a provident nature created in them, they communicate with each other.” The veins give the arteries nutrients, and the arteries give the veins the vital or animal spirit (William’s terminological confusion continues with a new twist, for the spiritual spirit is called animal spirit, again presumably because of his introduction of his second triad of terms). In subsequent sections William turns to the activities of the spiritual spirit exercised through its functionaries: motion and sensation. Motion is exercised through the brain, the nerves, and the spinal cord and localized in the anterior lobe of the brain. Seven pairs of nerves descend from the brain and through subdivision extend through the middle part of the body and by means of the spinal cord, or nucha, to the lower part of the torso. The capacity to experience pain and sensation also depends on the brain, nerves and nucha. For this reason

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101 Gregory of Nyssa, De opific. homin. 30 ed. Cappuyns, 259.
102 De nat. corp. 1.28 ed. Lemoine, 101: “et per poros quos in eis prouida creauit natura de quibus abundant inuicem stibi communicant.” Cf. Constantine, Theorica 4.5 ed. Petri, 87: “Quaedam enim foramina uenae habent inter se et arterias per quae sanguis introeat.”
103 De nat. corp. 1.28, ed. Lemoine, 101: “arteriae scilicet uenis uitalem spiritum, uenae arterii nutrimentum naturale, nec unquam sanguis nutritius deest in arteriis, nec spiritus animalis in uenis.”
104 Ibid. 1.29, ed. Lemoine, 101: “Diximus quia transiens spiritus spiritualis in posteriorem cerebri puppim memoriam in eo operatur et motum, memoriam per se, motum peroffciales suos.”
106 Ibid. 1.30-4, ed. Lemoine, 103-7.
108 The term nucha is of Arabic origin but had been completely Latinized by this point. Cf. Lemoine, Nature du corps, 104-5, n. 55.
nature has provided the brain and *nucha* with a light protective membrane, called the *pia mater*, and a stronger one, called the *dura mater*.309

William subsequently explores the animal spirit or power. Here he treats the terms “spirit” and “power” as equivalent.310 According to the assumptions governing the language of his second triad of spirits he calls the spirit or power animal because it operates by means of a corporeal instrument. His first subject, the power of sight, receives disproportionate emphasis, as it does in Constantine. Like his section on motion, his treatment of vision depends largely on Constantine’s *Pantegni Theorica*, whose anatomical teaching he emulates in most particulars.311 One would expect little variation, since, according to Güil Russell, ocular anatomy, in contrast to functional anatomy and the physiology of the eye, varies little from the Greek period up to the Renaissance.312 The power of sight, equivalent to the Greek visual *pneuma*, travels from the brain through the hollow optic nerve, passes through a series of organs called sheaths (*tunicae*) and humors and, passing into the exterior air, is immediately changed in accordance with its contact with the colors of whatever is seen. The mind thereupon senses these changes and experiences vision. Like Constantine, William expounds a traditional pneumatic theory of vision found also in Galen313 and embraced by Latin Christian thinkers such as Augustine.314 The material on the senses of smell, hearing, and taste are

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310 *De nat. corp.* 1.34, ed. Lemoine, 107: “iam ad animalem uirtutem uel animalem spiritum transeundum nobis est.”


similarly dependent on Constantine.\textsuperscript{315} He concludes his section on the senses by noting that each sense is characterized by the preponderance of one of the elements in it, and as a gloss on this idea, proceeds to explain, borrowing a teaching of the \textit{Isagoge}, how the ages of man (\textit{adolescentia}, \textit{iuentus}, \textit{senectus}, and \textit{senium}) possess their corresponding humors.\textsuperscript{316} The tetradic parallel between the ages of man and the four humors showed to ancient and medieval people the way that the microcosm and macrocosm were bound together through number.\textsuperscript{317}

William closes his chapter on the body by saying that he is eager to press on from the topic of the exterior man to the soul of man. Here begins the above-mentioned invective against the philosophers who have, by postulating the corporeality of the soul, failed to distinguish adequately between the soul and body. We speculated above that the reference may be specifically to William of Conches.\textsuperscript{318} Among other things, William of St. Thierry complains that they merely commend the measure, number and weight in the body.\textsuperscript{319} He concedes that there is indeed a marvelous harmony in the body in its measure, number, and weight, and he gives a few examples of the measure and number in the body. Every structure in the body has a definite number, he says, from the nerves, which come in seven pairs, to the two hundred and forty one bones that characterize every human body. If a compass is placed on the navel of the body of a man lying on his back with arms and legs extended, it can be revolved in all directions without interruption, and this demonstrates the measure in man. William abruptly ends his discussion with the statement that it is time to pass on to the soul and to explore not what philosophers and \textit{physici} say about it but what the Catholic Fathers have to

\textsuperscript{315} Cf. \textit{Theorica}, 3.14-6, ed. Petri, 6-12.
\textsuperscript{316} \textit{De nat. corp.} 1.46-7, ed. Lemoine, 121-3. Cf. Johannitus, \textit{Isagoge} 18, ed. Maurach, 155. Cf. Klibansky, \textit{Saturn and Melancholy}, 106, who says that in the late imperial writings of Vindician, an excess of one of the humors is considered to be a pathological condition. In the course of the early middle ages, however, the presence of the preponderance of one humor became merely determinative of certain characteristics. On the notion that the ages of man are typified by a preponderance of one or another of the humors see Elizabeth Sears, \textit{The Ages of Man: Medieval Interpretations of the Life Cycle} (Princeton, 1986) and John A. Burrow, \textit{The Ages of Man: A Study in Medieval Writing and Thought} (Oxford, 1986).
\textsuperscript{317} Sears, \textit{Ages of Man}, 9.
\textsuperscript{318} Cf. above, pp. 204-12.
\textsuperscript{319} \textit{De nat. corp.} 1.48 ed. Lemoine, 123.
teach. Lemoine has noted that William is rather dismissive about the harmony of the body, and that this contrasts with his teaching in book 2 of the treatise that everything in the universe demonstrates a three-fold order, down to bodies, which reveal it in their measure, number and weight, an idea he gleaned from Claudianus Mamertus.

E. Conclusion

William’s treatise, *De natura corporis et animae*, is one of a number of twelfth-century treatises on the soul. The dedication of these treatises to the subject of the “soul” of man should not obscure their authors’ interest in the relationship between the body and the soul, the role of the body in the ascent to God, and the body’s participation in the ultimate reward or punishment of the soul.

Michel Lemoine has demonstrated that William’s treatise was written in two stages. He notes William’s own testimony in his *Epistula ad fratres de Monte Dei* that he prefaced his treatise on the soul, *De natura animae*, with a treatise on the body, *De natura corporis*, in order to treat the whole of man. The anthropology of the second book is replete with material from Gregory of Nyssa’s *De hominis opificio*. William borrows Gregory’s notion that the body reveals the glory of the soul interwoven in it through its upright position, its complicated physiological functions, and its technically elegant structure. William proposes that the whole of man, body and soul, is to receive a further perfection after the resurrection. The body’s perfection will be the transformation from the “flesh” into an almost impassible substance that will no longer live in disharmony with the soul, Here William captures the hopes of a Christian ascetic tradition extending from early Christian times.

In William’s other writings we have already encountered the notion that man possesses a certain dignity insofar as his reason allows him to preside over the lower parts of his nature, and we have seen him parallel man’s dominion over self, including body, with the dominion over the created world entrusted to man at creation. We saw in chapter 3 that this twelfth-century resurrection of the ancient theme of man as dominator was a feature of the exegesis of

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320 Lemoine, “La triade mensura-pondus-numerus.”
Hosea, both in William’s *Meditations* and in Guibert of Nogent’s commentary on Hosea. From *De natura animae* we can discern that William encountered a powerful expression of this notion in Gregory’s *De opificio hominis*. The teaching receives a parallel expression in William’s treatise, in a familiar Neoplatonic idea borrowed in this instance from Claudianus Mamertus, viz. that man possesses from his beginnings shared existence with inanimate creation, shared life with the animals, and rational life in common with the angels. Eschewing the concerns of his predecessor, Gregory of Nyssa, about the value of microcosmic/macrocosmic parallels, in his use of the notion of man as microcosm, William teaches that a similar order underlies the human and cosmic orders and that man has special dignity because he commands both spiritual and material orders in himself.

For William the notion that man is a microcosm entails both a certain dignity and a responsibility for man to order himself internally. The notion that ascetic discipline enables spiritual advance thoroughly penetrates William’s spirituality, and here he probably reflects centuries of monastic development. Following the lead of Maximus the Confessor, who altered Gregory of Nyssa’s triad of the three Platonic ends of human life, to live, live well, and achieve immortality through the production of offspring, to the triad *esse, bene esse*, and *semper esse*, downplaying the reproductive dimension of human life, William substitutes a version of the latter triad for Gregory’s in his treatise as well. For Maximus the second stage plays the traditional role of the middle term, connecting human life and human perfection through the life dedicated to virtue. William’s vision of human life similarly emphasizes the crucial role of the acquisition of virtue. Elsewhere William obscures Gregory’s interest in demonstrating that the generative function of man, emblematic of his possession of the mutability associated with the irrational, was the means of both his Fall and his ultimate ascent, enabling both the negative change of the Fall and the turning back away from sin. Where Gregory says that the generative function of man enables him to come to perfection through the material and animal properties of his soul, William offers the more generic observation “man is

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led to his perfection by a long road through the material and animal properties of his soul."^322 Here one senses less of Gregory's philosophical interest in the issue of the mutability possessed by the soul due to its connection with a body than an assertion of a monastic agenda in which the perfection of man occurs during his terrestrial striving to subdue the flesh.

William follows Gregory in suggesting that if the soul follows the instincts of the flesh, it puts off the image of God and puts on another, more beastly, image.

One of William's unique contributions to twelfth-century anthropology is his parallel between the structures of the body and of soul. He shows that each is composed of two things, its elemental or quasi-elemental properties and its powers. Each can be broken down into two levels, the lower consisting of two sets of four items and the higher composed of two sets of three items. His interest in devising numerical parallels overpowered any temptation to place the passions or the Platonic partes at the elemental level in the soul. This contrasts with his contemporary, Isaac of Stella. According to William the quasi-elements of the soul are the virtues, an assertion that accords uncomfortably with his affirmation that in the final analysis the soul can just as easily descend as ascend. For William, in contrast to Gregory of Nyssa and Eriugena, the lower dimensions of man will be not be subsumed inevitably into spirit. Rather, William emphasizes that the soul, poised between two realms and connected strongly to each, can tilt toward one or the other.

Though the vestigia of God evident in the body are the departure point for William's process of self-discovery, in that man's body reveals to him the dignity of his nature, the goal of De natura animae is of course the realization of the soul's greater possession of similarity to God in its image-like quality.

The second book of the treatise, De natura corporis, discusses the composition of the human body using material drawn from traditional patristic sources, such as Gregory of Nyssa and Claudianus Mamertus, and the new translations of Greek and Arabic medical works by Constantine, Johannitius, and possibly Constabulinus. The philosophical highlight of this

^322 De nat. corp. 2.58 ed. Lemoine, 139: "sed longa quadam uia per materiales et pecuales animae proprietates
section is William’s distinction between the soul’s operation through the corporeal powers and the corporeal powers themselves. William emphasizes that the soul operates as a whole in each of the individual powers. This echoes the view of Gregory of Nyssa. William’s anthropology emphasizes the permeation of soul by nature and vice-versa, but he does not express this permeation in terms of the unity of the higher and lower natures in man through a corporeal medium, as do some of his contemporaries such as Hugh of St. Victor. The notion that the soul is united to the body through numerical harmony is mentioned at the end of the treatise, where William alludes briefly to the number seven found in the seven pairs of nerves and so forth. As Lemoine has observed, the almost dismissive tone of this passage contrasts with his approving use in book 2 of the triad number-measure-weight as a Trinitarian vestigium left in the body and even more so with the structural parallels between body and soul that lie at the center of the second book. One suspects that in between writing the two parts of his treatise William had undergone a change in attitude toward viewing numerical symbolism in the body as an indicator of man’s dignity. I suggested that William’s ire had been aroused by his suspicion that William of Conches was veering toward the more astrological version of cosmological speculation as introduced to the West through Arabic writings. This is one possible explanation for William of St. Thierry’s tirade against those who argue from the harmony in man’s body that his soul is located in the body. As I said, there are two missing pieces here: first, the fact that William of Conches at times assimilated the anima mundi to the natural, spiritual, and animal powers in man; second, the fact that William may have believed that by using the metaphor of the sun’s light spreading through the universe to express the permeation of the World-Soul through the universe, William of Conches was teaching that the anima mundi was corporeal and the instrumental cause of human understanding. William of St. Thierry may have feared that the freedom of the will was threatened by a view that the movements of the celestial powers hold the key to understanding man’s thoughts and actions.

ad perfectionem suam homo ducitur.”
Perhaps this may also account for his seemingly diminished enthusiasm for the type of numerical speculation of which he had formerly demonstrated his approval.

The number of manuscripts of William's treatise copied during the later twelfth-century and beyond is not large, and, in contrast to his meditational writings, it seems to have lapsed into a certain obscurity after he delivered it into the hands of the Carthusians.\textsuperscript{323} Indirectly, however, it probably exercised much greater influence in its incorporation into the extremely popular \textit{De spiritu et anima}.\textsuperscript{324} The primary historical interest of William's treatise is in its reflection of the anthropological concerns that engaged twelfth-century writers. We can discern that William was at one stage of his life interested in the body's ability to reveal the glory of the soul but that he may have come to regret his use of his numerical parallels between the body and soul. Even though such may be interesting or suggestive as far as they go, they provide the departure point for a dangerous series of possible conclusions. For those whose minds are entirely consumed with the methods of physical science, numerical parallels may offer evidence that the physical world is controlled by instrumental causes and not by God directly. This said, William's treatise is testimony to the new twelfth-century interest in incorporating the body into the concerns of Christian anthropology.

\textsuperscript{323} Lemoine introduction to \textit{Nature du corps}, 33-49.
\textsuperscript{324} Cf. McGinn, introduction to \textit{Three Treatises}, 69-72.
V. *Epistula ad fratres de Monte Dei*

A. Structure and Dating

The *Epistula ad fratres de Monte Dei* is a work on the eremitic life dedicated to the Carthusian monks of Mont-Dieu. In the epistolary preface to the treatise William says that he wrote the book for the Carthusians after a visit there and that he now wishes to dedicate it to Prior Haymo, prior at Mont-Dieu from 1144-50. The letter to Haymo that prefaces the *Epistula* could therefore have been composed between 1144 and the time of William’s death in 1147 or 1148. Of the date of William’s visit itself there is little clear evidence; Déchanet places it in 1144. The treatise itself was probably written between 1144 and 1146. Déchanet judges that according to the manuscript tradition the first book on the “animal” man (*animalis homo*) may have originally circulated separately and that a second book on the *rationales* and *spirituales* was written later. He thinks that the treatise that was finally sent to Haymo had two parts, and his edition of the treatise is accordingly divided into two books. The first and longer book discusses the training of beginners or novices (the animal man), giving extensive detail about the proper treatment of the body, the place of work, and prayer. The second book presents a more schematic, less pragmatic discussion of the rational and spiritual stages of monastic formation. William’s letter also says that he is sending along a copy of the corpus of his works, which he describes individually. This list includes all of his known works excepting the *Vita prima sancti Bernardi*, whose first part he composed subsequently. We can therefore assume that the thought of the *Epistula* represents William’s mature views on monastic and spiritual life.

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2. On William’s relationship with the monks of Mont-Dieu see Déchanet’s introduction to *Epist. ad frat. SC* 223, 13-30.
4. The visit is recorded in LeCouteulx, *Annales*, 2: 90.
In his *Epistula ad fratres de Monte Dei* William offers a model for the spiritual life in three stages, for those who are beginning, those who are making progress, and those who are perfect. He labels the three stages with the terms 1) animal, rational, and spiritual, and explains that they are connected respectively with 2) the body, soul, and God.

William’s three initial categories of: beginners, those who are progressing, and the perfect, are most likely an adaptation of an ascetical commonplace which sees three moments in the development of the spiritual life, purification, illumination, and perfection. This was found in Origen and adapted by him probably from some Stoic or Middle Platonic source. In Origen’s prologue to his *Commentarium in Canticum Cantorum* he connected the three moments with the three traditional Greek disciplines (disciplinae): ethics (moralem), physics (naturalem), and logic (inspectivam). He associated purification with the ascetic life, illumination with the discernment of the causes of things, and contemplation with the experiential understanding of eternal things. More importantly, he spoke of growth in knowledge as a gradual, progressive transformation and divinization of the soul. William’s

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8 On this work, see “The Authors of the *Vita Prima,”* chap. 4 of Bredero, *Between Cult and History,* 90-133.
9 *Epist. ad frat.* 1.41 SC 223, 176. References to Déchanet’s edition are given to the book and section numbers but not to the chapter divisions and subdivisions.
10 Ibid. 1.44 SC 223, 178.
12 Rufinus’ Latin translation of this work is available in the Sources Chrétiennes series as *Commentaire sur le Cantique des Cantiques,* trans. Brésard, SC 375. At Signy William would have had access to Origen’s Old Testament homilies on Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, Kings, and the Song of Songs, in the translations of Jerome and Rufinus; his *Commentary on the Song of Songs* (Rufinus); *Peri Archon* (Rufinus); a fragment of his *Commentary on Matthew* (Bellator?); and *Planctus origenis* (?). These translations are available in a twelfth-century manuscript, Charleville 207, according to Elder, “Greek Fathers,” in *One Yet Two,* ed. Pennington, 259, n. 14.
13 For the three divisions of knowledge, see the prologue to *Comm. Cant.* 3.1 SC 375, 128. Origen says that the three books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Canticle embody ethical, physical, and logical knowledge. Cf. ibid. 3.6-7 SC 375, 132. The Canticle is to be read last when the soul has been purged in morals and has become learned by the awareness of the distinction between corruptible and incorruptible things: “Praemissis namque quibus purificatur anima per actus et mores, et in rerum discretionem naturalium perducitur, competent ad dogmata venitur et ad mystica atque ad divinitatis contemplationem sincere et spirituali amore conscenditur.” Cf. ibid. 3.16 SC 375, 138. On the medieval transformations of these divisions of knowledge, see above, chap. 4, n. 168.
14 Ibid. 3.14-6 SC 375, 136-8.
15 On these three stages see Torjesen, *Hermeneutical Procedure,* 77-84; cf. Daniélou, *Origen,* 304-6. Cf. Origen’s prologue to *Comm. Cant.* 4.22 SC 375, 22, where he describes the development in the three Scriptural books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Canticle as reflecting Jesus’ own progression through these stages:
triad of beginning, progress, and perfection, has a parallel in Bernard of Clairvaux’s twentieth sermon on the *Canticum canticorum*, discussed more fully below, and in his fourth, in which Bernard compares the three kisses of the bridegroom to the three stages of spiritual development: beginning, progression, and perfection.\(^\text{16}\) The three kisses are the forgiveness of sins; the grace to do good; and an experience of God as perfect as possible in the fragile mortal body.\(^\text{17}\) It is impossible to rule out the possibility that both writers did not separately adapt Origen’s terminology in very similar fashion, but, given the close relationship between them,\(^\text{18}\) some cross-fertilization seems likely here.

William’s notion of cumulative spiritual progression no doubt reflects the optimism of Origen about the possibility of re-ordering man through the re-direction of his vision from corporeal things to spiritual things. Yet, despite this and other points of contact with Origen, William’s conception of spiritual development reveals his cultural distance from Greek ways of thinking. The first set of terms (animal, rational, spiritual) that William connects with Origen’s three stages of beginning, progress, and perfection bears only a vague resemblance to Origen’s triad of progressive ascent in knowledge. William describes men in the animal stage as not yet governed by reason or love and therefore subject to the guidance of elders; the rational have acquired by means of natural learning knowledge of the good and desire for it but lack love; the perfect are led by the Spirit.\(^\text{19}\) His extensive discussion of the training and deportment of the body at the first stage contrasts with Origen, whose first stage consists of the interior conversion of the soul and the practice of virtue.\(^\text{20}\) William’s treatment of the second stage

\(^\text{16}\) *Serm. Cant.* 4.1.1 in *Sancti Bernardi opera*, ed. Leclercq, 1: 18: “In primo sane primordia dedicantur nostrae conversionis, secundum autem proficientibus indulgetur, porro tertium sola experietur et rara perfectio.”

\(^\text{17}\) Ibid. 1: 19: “aut de actis malis indulgentiam, aut de bonis agendis gratiam, aut ipsius etiam indultoris et beneficioris sui praesentiam, eo quidem modo quo in corpore fragili possibili est, obtinet intueri.”

\(^\text{18}\) On the two friends’ conversations about the Song of Songs, see Ceglar, *Chronology*, 350-79.

\(^\text{19}\) *Epist. ad frat.* 1.43 SC 223, 178: “Sunt enim animales, qui per se, nec ratione aguntur, nec tranhuntrunt affectu; et tamen vel auctoritate permoti, vel doctrina communiti, vel exemplo provocati, approbant bonum ubi inveniunt, et quasi caeci, sed ad manum tracti sequuntur, hoc est imitantur. Sunt rationales, qui per rationis judicium et naturalis scientiae discretionem, habent et cognitionem boni et appetitum; sed non dum habent affectum. Sunt perfecti, qui spiritus aguntur, qui a Spiritu sancto plenius illuminantur.”

places more emphasis on the will than on the mind; like Bernard, he suggests that reason and grace together free the soul from its bondage. For Origen the mind must be trained in secular knowledge before it can advance to contemplative knowledge; he also emphasizes that, by learning to look beyond physical things to the *intelligibilia* or *logoi* on which they depend, the soul perceives the emptiness of the world. Like both Bernard and Origen, William’s view of the culmination of spiritual development is the divinization of the soul and perfection of its likeness to God; the emphasis on the Holy Spirit’s role in *unitas spiritus*, also held commonly with Bernard, probably reflects their Augustinian heritage. William’s three stages reflect the centuries that have intervened between Origen and himself in their traditional Benedictine emphasis on obedience in the early stages of monastic formation and a lesser interest in the noetic aspects of conversion.

We have indicated that William’s monastic program converges with Bernard’s ideas about monastic life in important respects. By looking closely at two of Bernard’s *Sermones super Cantica canticorum*, one can discern how closely the monastic agendas of the two friends coincided. The first passage is from Bernard’s fiftieth sermon. He outlines three kinds of love: one that flesh (*caro*) begets; one that reason (*ratio*) controls; and one that wisdom (*sapientia*) seasons. The first is opposed to the love of the spirit; the second is a strong love that governs practical action but does not yet refresh the spirit because it is not affective; and the third tastes and experiences God. William parallels Bernard’s notion that the second stage of love is dry from a spiritual point of view, being more concerned with action than contemplation. The second passage is from *Sermo* 20, in which Bernard again describes different varieties of love. Carnal love which manifests itself in sensible devotion to Christ is the first variety. This type of love is good because by it carnal *life* is excluded, but it becomes better (*proficitur*) when it is rational and perfect (*perfectur*) when it is spiritual. The

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21 Cf. ibid. 82.
23 Ibid. 20.5.9 in *Sancti Bernardi opera*, ed. Leclercq, 1: 120: “Bonus tamen amor iste carnalis, per quem vita carnalis excluditur, contemnitur et vincitur mundus. Proficitur autem in eo, cum sit et rationalis; perfectur, cum efficitur etiam spiritualis.”
resemblance of these three stages of love to William’s three stages of life is striking, as is Bernard’s connection of them to the stages of beginning, progress, and perfection. The rational stage submits itself to the faith of the Church without deviation: this is loving God with the whole soul.24 At the third stage the soul refuses to act unjustly because it cleaves to God with the help of the Spirit with an unshakeable grip. Here we have a connection, if somewhat loose, to William’s final triad of body, soul, and God.

His second set of terms describing monastic development (concern with the body, soul, and God) probably demonstrates some contact with the Pauline triad from 1 Thess. 5:23, body, soul, spirit, which appears very frequently in the patristic tradition,25 as in Cassian and Gregory of Nyssa: carnalis, animalis, spiritualis.26 The latter argues that the carnal are busy with the body; the intermediate demonstrate an existence which rises above vice but stops short of full participation in virtue; the third perceive the perfection of a godly life.27 William’s substitution of the term “God” for “spirit” can be explained by the type of amalgamation of spirit with the end of spiritual life described in Gregory’s third stage. We have seen that the culmination of the spiritual life was conceived by Bernard and William as the unity of man’s spirit with God, or divinization: his use of the term “God” could be intended to emphasize that man’s spirit has its perfection only in its rest in its natural end.

William’s contact with one additional school of thought must be considered, and that is the Dionysian tradition. Each of the main divisions of spiritual progress (animal/beginning; rational/progressing; spiritual/perfect) is further broken down into three steps typified by the pattern initium-profectus-perfectio.28 This pattern of three triads bears a striking resemblance

24 Ibid. 1: 120-1.
26 Cassian, Conf. 4.19 SC 42, 182; Gregory of Nyssa, De opific. hominis. 8 ed. Cappuyns, 218.
27 De opific. hom. 8 ed. Cappuyns, 218: “Spiritalem uero eamque perfectionem conversationis secundum deum intuetur.”
28 Epist. ad frat. 1.45 SC 223, 178-80: “Initium boni in conversatione animalis, perfecta obediencia est; profectus, subigere corpus suum, et in servitute redigere; perfectio, usus boni consuetudinem vertisse in delectionem. Initium vero rationalis est, intelligere quae in doctrina fidei apponuntur et; profectus, talia praeparare qualia apponuntur; perfectio, cum in affectum mentis transit judicium rationis. Perfectio vero
to the pattern that typifies the angelic hierarchies of Dionysius. It is theoretically possible that
William had access to some unknown patristic gloss on Origen’s three stages of purification, 
illumination, and perfection that further divided each stage into an identical set of three terms, 
or that he devised such a formula merely from his reading of Origen. However, Paul Rorem 
has judged that any medieval gloss on the angels that divided each celestial level into three 
according to an identical set of three angelic functions shows Dionysian contact. By 
extension, one can conclude that an obviously enneadic structure such as William’s can only be 
attributed to Dionysian influence, an inference which has not previously been made.

It must be asked if there are features of Dionysius’ type of enneadic scheme which are 
specifically echoed in William’s ninefold model of spiritual life. In order to answer this 
question it will be helpful to note the purpose of the enneadic hierarchy for Dionysius. This in 
turn involves exploration of the origins of Dionysius’ enneadic structures in Neoplatonic 
thought.

Dionysius attempted to meld Christianity with many fundamental assumptions of 
Neoplatonism, including the notion that reality consists of a hierarchy of being held in order 
and governed by love. Since before Iamblichus, Neoplatonism had divided the levels of reality 
into triads of principles, hypostases, or ἄρχαι, the most well-known being the triad Being, 
Life, and Intellect. For later Neoplatonists such as Proclus, this triad was linked to the One 
through its reversion onto the One; this linkage expressed the causal relationship (the 
relationship through which something passes from potency to actuality) between the One and 
the first spiritual triad of Being, Life, and Intellect. The process of reversion onto the monadic 
cause consists of three stages: remaining, processing, and reversion. “Remaining” describes 
the identity of an effect with its cause. The effect proceeds because it begins to manifest an

rationalis, initium est spiritualis; profectus ejus, revelata facie speculari gloriam Dei; perfectio vero, 
transformari in eamdem imaginem a claritate in claritatem, sicut a Domini spiritu.”

29 Paul Rorem, *Pseudo-Dionysius: A Commentary on the Texts and an Introduction to their Influence* (New 
York, 1993) 75.

30 Gersh discusses the three terms in *ΚΙΝΗΣΕΩΣ ΑΚΙΝΗΤΟΤΑΣ: A Study of Spiritual Motion in the Philosophy 
of Proclus* (Leiden, 1973) 47-80 and in *From Iamblichus to Eriugena*, 45-81.
element of otherness with respect to its cause. The third moment of reversion occurs when the effect begins to strive after communion with its cause.

Iamblichus appears to be the first to have derived an enneadic conception of reality based on the subdivision of each term of the original causal triad into three terms, with each new triadic division mirroring the causal moments of the original reversion. Each of the subordinate triads therefore reveals within itself the interior pattern: remaining, procession, and reversion. These further subdivisions (i.e., the internal self-multiplication) were postulated in order to account for the internal activity of a given triad, or its self-reversion. Internal activity constitutes the process whereby the triad realizes its own perfection and also reverts on its prior. The internal activity of such a triad is inwardly directed. Dionysius transmitted the notion of an enneadic hierarchy into the Christian tradition with some subtle alterations. In his *De coelesti hierarchia* he describes nine choirs of angels ("first," "second," and "third," and identifies three functions of each choir: "purification," "illumination," and "perfection." Here, in contrast to pagan Neoplatonists, who use the triad of Being-Life-Intellect to describe both the original triad and its interior subdivisions, Dionysius attempts to obscure the strong mirror-like quality of the Neoplatonic cosmos by not repeating the terminology used to describe the three ranks or choirs of angels to name the three types of angelic functions.

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31 Gersh, *Spiritual Motion*, 19-20.
33 Inward activity is the process whereby a term in one principle that bears some similarity to another term elsewhere in the triad can revert upon it, i.e., the element of life in Intellect can revert on the element of life in either Life or Being, cf. idem. 143-9.
34 Idem. 127, 136.
35 Beyond the process of internal activity, a triad can cause effects in the external world; and those effects would bear a triadic structure and revert in the usual three-stage process onto the principles in which they participate. Cf. ibid. 131-2.
36 Idem, *Spiritual Motion* and *From Iamblichus to Eriugena*; Hathaway, *Definition of Order*, 47.
Gersh therefore judges that by disguising traditional patterns of hierarchical description, Dionysius demonstrates his interest in minimizing the causal connections between one angelic disposition and the next\textsuperscript{38} and in establishing divine power alone as the cause of each disposition, or each individual angel.\textsuperscript{39} Rather than causal connections between the various hierarchies, Dionysius stresses the active transmission of the functions from the higher angelic order to the lower and the passive reception of them by the lower.\textsuperscript{40}

The purpose of the enneadic structure for Dionysius is to be a metaphor for the way each spiritual level of the cosmos possesses an order analogous to the Divine motions of remaining, procession, and reversion. These analogies gradually diminish in clarity as one descends from the Divine, to the angelic, to the human. The order of the celestial and ecclesiastical hierarchies is to assure eventual union of each with God; it is communicated from the superior hierarchies to the inferior, i.e. from the angels to man, and from higher levels to lower ones within the same hierarchy.\textsuperscript{41} However, Dionysius eliminates the notion that each hierarchy reverts on its prior and suggests that each member of every hierarchy reverts individually onto God. The process of reversion for Dionysius involves both the activities of knowledge and grace, both \kappa\theta\sigma\omicron\omicron\sigma\varsigma and \the\omicron\omicron\alpha, and culminates in possession of \epsilon\pi\omicron\omicron\nu\omicron\mu\nu.\textsuperscript{42} In the final stage of purification the soul moves ecstatically beyond itself in deification and union with God. In sum, the purpose of hierarchy for Dionysius is to cause its members to be like God and to imitate him.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{38} The purpose of the enneadic structure in pagan Neoplatonism was to allow the different elements of various principles in a triad to participate in related elements in different principles, where participation is the possession by some being of a property in virtue of something different from itself. Dionysius assumes that the different angelic ranks do participate one another. He argues that the higher can participate in the illumination of the lower but not vice versa; \textit{De coel. hier.} 11.1 ed. Heil and Ritter, 41. He also assumes that the lower participate in the superior potency of the higher order only partially or analogously; Ibid. 12.1-2 ed. Heil and Ritter, 42.

\textsuperscript{39} Gersh, \textit{From Iamblichus to Eriugena}, 175.

\textsuperscript{40} \textit{De coel. hier.} 3.2 ed. Heil and Ritter, 18-19; ibid. 7.3 ed. Heil and Ritter, 30-1; ibid. 8.1 ed. Heil and Ritter, 33-4; and ibid. 10.1 ed. Heil and Ritter, 40.


\textsuperscript{42} Ibid. 86-103.

\textsuperscript{43} Cf. Rorem, 57-8.
To return to the question of Dionysius’ influence on William, we may begin with the assertion that the enneadic structure itself is a sure sign that William had read the *De coelesti hierarchia*, probably in the translation of Eriugena, or possibly through a commentary such as Hugh of St. Victor’s. William’s primary interest in using it may have been its emphasis on the parallels between different kinds of spiritual order. However, apart from using the Dionysian ennead as a suggestive structural device, his thought lacks specific Dionysian content, such as an emphasis on either negative or symbolic theology. Although the issue of Dionysian influence on William warrants much further investigation, the present author concurs with McGinn, that William is less influenced by Dionysius than was his contemporary Hugh of St. Victor, who himself tends to elaborate a basically Augustinian notion of ascent to God by occasional reference to Dionysius’ thought. William may indeed have believed that Dionysius’ three stages, of purgation, illumination, and perfection, complemented a general pattern of spiritual progress common to other writers by whom William was unquestionably influenced, such as Origen and Augustine. Unlike Hugh or Eriugena, who retain a Latinized version of Dionysius’ triad, William recasts the Origenist/Dionysian terminology into a rather different form, reflecting his cultural distance from his patristic sources: *initium-profectus-perfectio*.

Of further interest are the possible connections between William and Hugh of St. Victor in their conceptualizations of the spiritual life. William and Hugh both change Dionysius’

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45 See the discussion of Dionysian influence above, chap. 1, p. 40.

46 On the Plotinian roots of Augustine’s notion of ascent, see Suzanne Poque, “L’anabase plotinienne.”

47 This triad appears frequently in the *Periphyseon*. Cf. *Periph.* 1 ed. Sheldon-Williams, 54 (PL 122, 449D); ibid. 2 ed. Sheldon-Williams, 90 (PL 122, 565B); ibid. 2 ed. Sheldon-Williams, 164 (PL 122, 598BC). In book 2 he says that the soul is purged by action, illumined by knowledge, and perfected by theology. Cf. ibid. 2 ed. Sheldon-Williams, 108 (PL 122, 574A): “Animae igitur purgatae per actionem, illuminatae per scientiam, perfectae per theologiam.”
notion of mystical ascent in at least one notable way: at the initial stage of their triads they emphasize the purgation of images from the mind less than they do moral reformation.48 William’s thought has other features in common with Hugh. For instance, William states that the last stage of the middle level (rational) is the first stage of the last level (spiritual).49 Here he expresses the notion that the stages are not rigidly separated from one another, that they are diversely present in a single individual and in an institution such as a monastery, so that one who is spiritual can fall back to the rational state, and so that one who is rational may in fact possess very spiritual capacities. Similarly, Hugh of St. Victor includes at the fourth level of his Arca mystica the image of the reptile, one who lives simultaneously in and out of the water (and so in and out of the “flood” of worldly distractions and temptations that the perfect attempt to transcend), showing that it is possible for a given individual to retrace this progress from the middle to the final level and back many times during the course of a lifetime.50 In his Epistula51 and De natura et dignitate amoris52 William displays his awareness of the fluidity of the stages within the life of a single individual.

In sum, the stages, animal, rational, and spiritual, around which William constructs his work, represent the fusion of several traditions. The stages reveal a pattern of development (initium-profectus-perfectio) that William probably borrowed from Origen, as Bernard did elsewhere in his Sermones super Canticum canicorum. According to William, the monk progresses from the destruction of excessive concern with self, expressed in one way in overweening concern for his body; to an ordering of the soul (animus) by reason and love; to a life lived entirely for God. Though the notion of cumulative spiritual progress may have been inherited from Origen, the moral tenor of William’s conception of progress reveals the way his Augustinianism and monastic heritage colored his view of the spiritual life differently from Origen. William’s treatise also expresses the view, indicated in his ninefold hierarchic

49 Epist. ad frat. 1.45 SC 223, 180: “Perfectio vero rationalis, initium est spiritualis.”
51 Epist. ad frat. 1.140 SC 223, 254.
52 De nat. et dig. amor. 54, ed. Davy, 136 (PL 184, 408AB).
structure of monastic development, that the spiritual order within the individual monk reflects a universal spiritual order. In borrowing this construct from Dionysius, William seeks to portray spiritual beings as ordered naturally to God and as reflecting the same kind of spiritual activity as the angels and the Godhead itself. Rather than recapitulating, in his ennead, Dionysius’ terms for the spiritual functions of the angels, purgatio-illuminatio-perfectio, William used the above-mentioned triad of initium-profectus-perfectio. William’s independence from Dionysian conceptions of mental ascent is indicated in his linguistic pattern and in the absence of key features such as an emphasis on negative knowledge, symbolic knowledge, and the conception of purgation as the expulsion of corporeal images from the mind.

B. The Three Stages of Spiritual Development

1. The Animal Man

Having completed an outline of the sources of William’s monastic program, we can proceed to indicate the attitudes toward body as expressed in the treatise, beginning with the animal man.

According to William the animal man possesses neither reason nor affection and therefore must be led by the examples of his superiors. We saw that William connects this stage of life with the body, and the three further divisions of which this stage is composed all concern the discipline of the body through obedience. Beginners must learn perfect obedience; those progressing successfully control the desires of the body; the perfect take pleasure in the habitual performance of virtue. He initially presents this stage as involving activity that is “pre-conscious,” rote, the result of blind obedience to the prescriptions of the Rule and to the instructions of superiors, and it might seem that the body is only a passive object at this stage.

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53 William explicitly notes that his enneadic structure can describe the order within an individual monk and within the monastery as a whole at Epist. ad frat. 1.139 SC 223, 252.
54 Ibid. 1.43 SC 223, 178: “Sunt etenim animales, qui per se, nec ratione aguntur, nec trahuntur affectu; et tamen vel auctoritate permoti, vel doctrina commoniumi, vel exemplo provocati, approbant bonum ubi inveniunt, et quasi caeci, sed ad manum tracti sequuntur, hoc est imitantur.”
55 Ibid. 1.45 SC 223, 178-80: “Initium boni in conversatione animali, perfecta oboedientia est; profectus, subigere corpus suum, et in servitutem redigere; perfectio, usus boni consuetudinem vertisse in delectationem.”
It will emerge that this rather severe schematization conceals a somewhat more complicated view of the body's role in the spiritual life.

To take each stage individually, we may begin with the first stage, the *initium*. William commences his presentation of the beginning stage by giving an intellectual account for the necessity of the ascetic life. William diagnoses man's problem as the wrong orientation of the will, in this showing contact with his friend Bernard's analysis of the sickness of the soul as founded in its *voluntas propria*, or self will, the will curved back upon itself. He also shares his notion that the cure of the will consists of the action of charity and prudence. According to Bernard and William, at the heart of man's diseased condition is a slavery of the will, an inability to make truly free choices; reason and love are both important in the cure of the soul because both are involved in making informed choices. In a complicated interplay of cognitive and volitional concepts and images, William suggests that at the initial stage the soul turned away from God is foolish and that, turned toward the Lord, it is wise. Foolishness can take two forms. The soul turned totally toward itself is foolish in that it is wild and unmanageable. Torn out of itself toward the world, the soul affects a type of wisdom, which William calls carnal prudence, that may be greeted with simple-minded approval by the world. Whereas the first kind of folly is characterized as a volitional disorder, the second is more insidious because it is both rational and volitional.

William argues that in its present fallen condition the soul is drawn out of itself toward the world and sensible things; thus the soul becomes overly engrossed in the material things it loves. The instability of the human mind is aggravated by its connection to its body; one indicator of this condition is the animal man's inability to think spiritually, that is to think about God as other than a body, because it spends so much time and energy loving the bodies around

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57 *Epist. ad frat.* 1.48 SC 223, 182-4.
58 On the soul's seduction away from the world of interiority toward the external world, see Courcelle, *Connais-toi toi-même*, 256-7.
59 *Epist. ad frat.* 1.48 SC 223, 182: "anima quasi extra se per sensus corporis circa dilectorum delectationes corporum affecta."
This is a theme that William developed earlier in Med. 2. As in Med. 2, so here the negative effect of man's possession of a body and imagination is that swarms of images in the imagination can prevent the monk from concentrating properly on his psalmody, prayer, and spiritual exercises. "a wretched and harmful division is made in the miserable soul: while the spirit and the reason claim for themselves the heart's will and intention and the body's prompt compliance, the animal nature impudently carries off the affection and the intellect so that the mind often remains without fruit." Here one can imagine that William is thinking of a scenario such that the monk has risen promptly at midnight with no protest from his body but, kneeling at prayer, experiences an inability to concentrate on the verses. William speaks of this division as a type of conflict between the will and the body, on the one hand, and the affections and the intellect, on the other. The soul suffers division because of its connection to "animal nature," the element of irrationality possessed by it due to its connection with a body. William speaks of the irrational element in the soul introducing division, manifested in the activities of the "animal" powers of impulsion and imagination, into the soul itself, echoing the ancient Greek notion that the soul suffers division through association with a body. While the affections and mind are seduced by the "animal nature," the will and the body reveal a disposition for the rational and good. Here William is expressing his experience that the body can be trained by good habits to offer no opposition to the better desires of the soul.

The role of the body in spiritual life is thus considerably more complicated for a twelfth-century writer such as William than it had been for an ancient writer such as Origen. William's expression of the body as itself possessing a capacity for rational behavior has a

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60 Ibid. 1.46-7 SC 223, 182.
61 Courcelle has shown that William's expression of a swarm of images fluttering through his mind at 1.64 SC 233, 194, depends on Augustine, Conf. 1.1.1 CCSL 27, 92. Cf. Courcelle, Connais-toi toi-même, 256, n. 107.
62 Epist. ad frat. 1.64, SC 223, 194.
63 Ibid. 1.65 SC 223, 194: "Fitque miserabilis et iniqua miserae animae divisio, spiritu et ratione voluntatem cordis et intentionem, et corporis promptum obsequium sibi defendente, animal vero improbitate affectuum sibi praeripiente et intellectum, mente saepius sine fructu remanente."
certain precedent in Origen, for whom the passions can be soothed through their illumination by the Lord through the medium of the light of noûs.⁶⁵ For Origen, the soul is purified from sin through penance,⁶⁶ the mortification of the bodily senses, and moral virtue, but above all by realizing the folly of material desires in comparison to spiritual wisdom. Origen expects that the taste for material things will dwindle when the spiritual man tastes the bread of wisdom.⁶⁷ To some extent William demonstrates the same type of optimism that through the mortification of bodily desires, the force of concupiscentia will diminish, but the process is both lengthier and more complicated than for Origen. If William’s thought reveals this influence of his Platonist-influenced predecessors in describing the purgation of body as the restoration of the fleshly desires, or the lower part of the soul, it also diverges in another way. What is unique about William’s approach is his further isolation of the purgative effects of obedience on the body as opposed to the purgative effects of reason and love on the desires of the lower soul, the result being a body that can perform properly in spite of a disordered soul. “Body” for William is therefore a principle that can be simultaneously ordered and disordered in different respects.

The body thus possesses a dual-sided nature in William’s thought. On the one hand, it introduces the element of irrationality into the soul, and on the other, it possesses an order of its own that is rational and good. The latter theme will be explored further below. For the moment, let us examine the way that William elaborates the first notion in conceptualizing the body as a sick patient given over to the care of the soul:

He must be taught to regard his body as a sick person who has been committed to his care; the harmful things that it wishes must frequently be withheld while the beneficial things that it does not want must be forced upon it. He must treat it not as his own but as

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⁶⁶ One influence on Origen’s optimistic view of the possibility of human transformation is his understanding of the consequences of baptism as expressed in Paul. For Paul, baptism means less the remission of past sins than the transformation of the sinner into a new man free to live without sin. See Trigg, Bible and Philosophy, 191.
⁶⁷ Comm. Cant. 1.4.12 SC 375, 226.
his by whom we have been bought at a great price in order that we may glorify him in our bodies.\footnote{Epist. ad frat. 1.72 SC 223, 200: “Docendus est sic habere corpus suum, sicut aegrum commendatum; cui etiam multum volenti inutilia sunt neganda, utilia vero, etiam nolenti, ingerenda; sic de eo agere, sicut de non suo, sed de ejus a quo pretio magno empti sumus, ut glorificemur eum in corpore nostro.” Cf. 1 Cor. 6:20.}

Here one can perhaps see William extending the metaphor of God as physician to the soul’s relationship to the body.\footnote{Ibid. 1.74 SC 223, 200: “Ideoque durius quidem tractandum est corpus ne rebellet, ne insolescat, sic tamen ut servire sufficiat, quia ad servendum spiritui datum est. Nec sic habendum est, tamquam propter illud vivamus, sed tamquam sine quo vivere non possimus. Foedus enim quod habemus cum corpore, non quandocumque volumus, possimus abruptere, sed legitimam ejus resolutionem patienter nos expectare oportet, et interim quae legitimi foed eros sive observare.”} The soul is not to break the body, only to mortify it,\footnote{Ibid. 1.49-50 SC 223, 184-6.} because due care must be provided under the conditions of the contract (foedus) according to which it was given to the soul to serve it.\footnote{Ibid. 1.97-101 SC 223, 220-2; see esp. ibid. 1.101 SC 223, 222: “Medicus semper tibi praesto est, paratus est.” These passages instruct the monk to obey the prescriptions of the “doctor.” William tells the novices that the doctor can only counsel them properly if they do not hide any of their symptoms from him. He further instructs them that if the doctor is too gentle that they must demand cautery and the knife. Both Origen and Augustine speak of God as the physician of the soul. Origen speaks of God as the physician of the soul in his thirty-seventh homily on the Psalms, edited in Homélies sur les Psalms 36 à 38, ed. Emanuela Prinzivalli SC 411 (Paris, 199). See Hom. in Ps. 37.1.2 SC 411, 272-84. On the remedial function of life in the body cf. Origen, Hom. sur Éséch. 12 SC 352, 378-97; Peri Archon 2.10.6 SC 252, 386-90. Augustine also refers to God as a physician who allows ailments to restore the soul’s health. See De div. quaest. 82.3 CCSL 44A, 245-7.} This moderate approach to the care of the body may reflect the increased attention given to the care of the body in Benedictine circles over the course of the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries.\footnote{Gerdi Zimmermann treats the topic of eleventh and twelfth-century Benedictine attitudes toward the care of the body, including diet, clothing, hygiene, recreation, and disease in Ordensleben und Lebensstandard: Die Cura Corporis in den Ordensvorschriften des abendländischen Hochmittelalters (Münster, 1973).}

Because the sickness of man’s soul is aggravated by its connection to its body, Cistercian writers devoted extensive attention to the confinement of opportunities for sensible temptations, believing that by denying material satisfactions the desire for them would also cease. The result would be a will fastened wholly, or as William says, \textit{simply}, onto God.\footnote{William uses the image of the Divine Physician at ibid. 1.97-101 SC 223, 220-2; see esp. ibid. 1.101 SC 223, 222: “Medicus semper tibi praesto est, paratus est.” These passages instruct the monk to obey the prescriptions of the “doctor.” William tells the novices that the doctor can only counsel them properly if they do not hide any of their symptoms from him. He further instructs them that if the doctor is too gentle that they must demand cautery and the knife. Both Origen and Augustine speak of God as the physician of the soul. Origen speaks of God as the physician of the soul in his thirty-seventh homily on the Psalms, edited in Homélies sur les Psalms 36 à 38, ed. Emanuela Prinzivalli SC 411 (Paris, 199). See Hom. in Ps. 37.1.2 SC 411, 272-84. On the remedial function of life in the body cf. Origen, Hom. sur Éséch. 12 SC 352, 378-97; Peri Archon 2.10.6 SC 252, 386-90. Augustine also refers to God as a physician who allows ailments to restore the soul’s health. See De div. quaest. 82.3 CCSL 44A, 245-7.} William’s treatment of the animal stage devotes itself considerably to the theme of the hermit’s cell as an infirmary.\footnote{William uses the image of the Divine Physician at ibid. 1.97-101 SC 223, 220-2; see esp. ibid. 1.101 SC 223, 222: “Medicus semper tibi praesto est, paratus est.” These passages instruct the monk to obey the prescriptions of the “doctor.” William tells the novices that the doctor can only counsel them properly if they do not hide any of their symptoms from him. He further instructs them that if the doctor is too gentle that they must demand cautery and the knife. Both Origen and Augustine speak of God as the physician of the soul. Origen speaks of God as the physician of the soul in his thirty-seventh homily on the Psalms, edited in Homélies sur les Psalms 36 à 38, ed. Emanuela Prinzivalli SC 411 (Paris, 199). See Hom. in Ps. 37.1.2 SC 411, 272-84. On the remedial function of life in the body cf. Origen, Hom. sur Éséch. 12 SC 352, 378-97; Peri Archon 2.10.6 SC 252, 386-90. Augustine also refers to God as a physician who allows ailments to restore the soul’s health. See De div. quaest. 82.3 CCSL 44A, 245-7.} William constantly sets the monk whose gaze is turned outwards in opposition to the proper gaze of the novice, which should be turned only on himself. The
outward-looking monk has failed to assess the seriousness of his own sickness, and therefore spends his energy on frivolities, looking curiously at his confreres for evidence of their successes and failures,\(^7\) or demanding personal exceptions to the rules regulating work, activity, and reading matter.\(^6\) In this section William describes ascetic practices in traditional monastic language: doing penance for one’s past life;\(^7\) mortifying the desires connected to the flesh and the world;\(^7\) and deadening the passions.\(^7\) At certain points he reflects the heightened Cistercian concern with austerity, as in his subtle critique of Cluniac excesses in a passage that contains strong echoes of Bernard’s *Apolo gia*,\(^8\) and in his prohibition of excessive seasonings for food.\(^8\) William directs further criticism against luxurious or finely crafted cells.\(^8\) Bernard and William were opposed to these excesses because they both viewed corporeal care that extended beyond the bare necessities as a manifestation of human pride and *propria voluntas*.\(^8\)

It was the very interiority of the monastic life that, paradoxically, brought the monk’s relationship with his body into such sharp focus for William. His conception of its role in monastic life is far from simple. It should be noted at the outset that interiority as William conceived it was the nourishment of the life of the spirit in God especially through prayer and meditation. He makes the practical observation that worldly cares intrude on these goals, and he cautioned the Carthusians that they should take special advantage of the morning and nocturnal offices because those are the hours at which the monk is least likely to be distracted.

\(^7\) See esp. ibid. 1.97-101 SC 223, 220-4.
\(^6\) Ibid. 1.66 SC 223, 196.
\(^7\) Ibid. 1.67 SC 223, 196.
\(^7\) Ibid. 1.78 SC 223, 204.
\(^7\) Ibid. 1.66 SC 223, 196.
\(^7\) Ibid. 1.71 SC 223, 200.
\(^8\) *Epist. ad frat.* 1.133-4 SC 223, 246-8.
\(^8\) Cf. Gilson, *Mystical Theology*, 75-6. Zimmermann contrasts Cistercian asceticism with the increasing attention to the care of the body embraced by the Cluniacs between 1050 and 1150 as a result of a rising standard of living, *Ordensleben*, 196-240.
by temporal occupations. Physical activities such as manual labor are always to be subordinated to spiritual exercises, since carnal things exist for the sake of spiritual things, just as woman was created for man, and not vice-versa. The extent to which William's whole world-view was ordered according to the ideal of interiority is indicated in the manner in which he grades bodily activities according to their "spirituality": "Those are to be preferred which have the greater likeness and kinship to the spiritual; for example, meditating on something to be written or writing something to be read for spiritual edification." It should be noted that William's attitude toward the hierarchy of spiritual and bodily exercises was at times complicated by his evident regard for the Cistercian emphasis on the importance of manual labor and self-support. In the course of a gentle criticism of the laxity of the Carthusian community he is addressing, William echoes these Cistercian ideals, reporting approvingly that the desert fathers themselves never relied on the support of the Christian community and that Jesus instructed those who can to work (1 Thess. 3:10ff.).

Though hierarchical, the relationship between mind and body is far from adversarial or uni-directional for William. On the one hand, spiritual pursuits may have a corporeal benefit. For instance, he argues that spiritual meditations on Scripture performed at meals will aid in the process of digestion. Moreover, he notes that meditation just before sleep may cause the mind to turn over in its dreams the thoughts thereby planted in it, both refreshing the spirit and augmenting the tranquillity of one's sleep. Alternatively, the soul can also affect the body negatively, as when the soul's indulgence in the vice of sorrow destroys the health of the body,

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84 Epist. ad frat. 1.110 SC 223, 230.
85 Ibid. 1.85, 125 SC 223, 208-10, 242.
86 Ibid. 1.85 SC 223, 208-10.
87 As noted above, the Cistercians held up the desert fathers as an example of fervor in asceticism and the simple life; cf. chap. 3, n. 97. William, for instance, invokes a number of them at the beginning of the Epistula.
88 Epist. ad frat. 1.157-64 SC 223, 266-72. He is evidently aware of his own vulnerability on this point as well. After expressing his regret about his own inability to perform strenuous manual labor he concedes that the Christian community has the obligation to support those who can no longer work. Ibid. 1.165 SC 223, 272-4.
89 Ibid. 1.132 SC 223, 246.
what modern medicine would call the effect of depression.\textsuperscript{91} On the other hand bodily exercises such as fasts and vigils help the spirit if they are practiced with discretion.\textsuperscript{92} The nature of manual labor is particularly complicated. It can offer temptation to the soul in that it can become an end in itself.\textsuperscript{93} Performed in moderation, it relaxes the mind and makes it more eager for spiritual pursuits.\textsuperscript{94} Its greatest value lies in concentrating the senses; in this kind of activity the body, senses, and spirit are subjected to one another in a harmony that captures the paradisial harmony of man: "The senses are confined to one thing by the discipline of a good will: nor is there the leisure to shake off the weight of the work. Subdued and humbled in obedience to the spirit, they are taught to be conformed to it both in participating in the work and in anticipating its consolation."\textsuperscript{95} William's model for the relationship between spiritual and bodily exercises, the creation of woman from man, is instructive here, for though he emphasizes the hierarchical relationship between the two types of activities, he also notes that they were created "of the same substance," indicating their close relationship.\textsuperscript{96} Moderation in work is important, for only a reasonable amount of weariness has the beneficial effect of arousing the emotions to greater devotion.\textsuperscript{97} Very heavy labor exhausts the spirit, except in the case of agricultural labor, which frequently leads to great humility.\textsuperscript{98}

If William was aware of the extent to which physical activity could enrich spiritual life, he was even more sensitive to the ways in which the imaginative life of the soul is enlivened by corporeal images. Recasting a theme from Med. 10, he says that it is safer for novices to contemplate the corporeal images of Christ's life and acts rather than to aspire too soon to

\textsuperscript{91} This observation appears in the section on the rational man, ibid. 2.223 SC 223, 324.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid. 1.126 SC 223, 242.
\textsuperscript{93} This is implied in ibid. 1.87 SC 223, 210.
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid. 1.84 SC 223, 208.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid: SC 223, 210: "Coguntur enim in unum sensus a disciplina bonae voluntatis, nec lascivire eis vacat a pondere laboris, et subacti et humiliati in obsequium spiritus, docentur conformari eis et in laboris participatione, et in exspectatione consolationis."
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid. 1.85 SC 223, 208-10.
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid. 1.86 SC 223, 210.
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid.
facilitates the ascent to God. William adds that in daily Eucharistic devotion the monk even has an obligation to recall the events of the Passion in respect for Christ, the friend who left them behind as a memento of himself. 100

At the middle stage the animal man begins himself to discipline his body and not merely in obedience to his prior. 101 Setting good habits against bad, constraint of the flesh against the constraint of the mind, he begins to subject his natural powers to the spirit. 102 The animal man must learn that the proper use of all the branches of knowledge is the service of God. To use them otherwise is to distort the gift of inventiveness and skill that God left in man on the border of animality and reason. 103 Those who possess carnal wisdom glory in inventiveness as a reminder of man's natural dignity and of the lost likeness to God, while to the simple it serves as a help to recover that likeness. 104 William's point is that inventiveness is symbolic of man's superiority to creation, 105 which is subjected to his powers of skill. 106 Still by the exercise of inventiveness alone man will not fully develop his likeness to God. Here we see the familiar theme that, as dominator, man was intended to be the steward of creation. There is a parallel in the way he conceives the proper relationship between the monk and the body. For though the monk is instructed to gain control of his body, to treat it strictly, even mortify it, he is not to break it, for sufficient care is to be provided for it that it may be able to render its service to the spirit. 107

At the stage of perfection the animal man learns to possess his body as God possesses him. 108 In the restored man, once the rebellion of the lower part has been soothed, the soul has the leading role in determining the standards for human delight. As William says, we only

100 Ibid. 1.116 SC 223, 236.
101 Ibid. 1.78 SC 223, 204.
102 Ibid. 1.92 SC 223, 214-6.
103 Ibid. 1.55 SC 223, 288-90.
104 Ibid. 1.55 SC 223, 190: "animali vero superbo, in testimonium naturalis dignitatis, et similitudinis Dei amissae; simplici vero et humili, in auxilium recuperandae et conservandae."
105 Ibid. 1.57 SC 223, 190.
106 Ibid.
107 Ibid. 1.74, 127 SC 223, 200-2, 242-4.
transfer our pleasures from the body to the soul, from the senses to the spirit.\(^{109}\) William suggests that although a lower principle, the body makes a contribution to the ascetic life and does it freely: "When the spirit has begun to be reformed according to the image of its Creator (Col. 3:10) the flesh too soon flourishes again (Ps. 27:7) and begins to be conformed by its own will to the reformed spirit."\(^{110}\) We saw above that William also speaks of the body learning to love sharing the work of the spirit and looking forward to its reward.\(^{111}\) Thus in both the God/soul and soul/body hierarchies the higher principle does not merely subject the lower to itself but releases all of its potentialities. William evidently had found that the body sometimes seemed more prompt to obey the dictates of his conscience than his sluggish will, for he says, "Moreover, because of its [the body’s] manifold defects, the penalty of sin, it thirsts for God in many ways and sometimes even attempts to outdo its master."\(^{112}\) William suggests that the proof that the renovation of the body is taking place is demonstrated when, even contrary to its own inclinations, the body begins to take delight in whatever delights the spirit.\(^{113}\) He explains that the pleasures of the body are not lost, only simplified, so that the soul is satisfied with bare essentials.

Black bread and plain water, simple vegetables and greens are by no means delectable fare: but it is very pleasant to be able to satisfy a well disciplined stomach joyfully with these things in the love of Christ and the desire of interior delight...Indeed it would be very easy and enjoyable to live according to nature with the love of God to season it if our folly permitted us. When it has been healed, nature at once favors natural things.\(^{114}\)

\(^{109}\) *Epist. ad frat.* 1.92 SC 223, 214-6.

\(^{110}\) Ibid. 1.88 SC 223, 212: "ubi coeperit spiritus reformari ad imaginem conditoris sui, mox etiam reflorescens caro, ex voluntate sua incipit conformari reformato spiritui."

\(^{111}\) Cf. above, n. 95.

\(^{112}\) Ibid. 1.88 SC 223, 212: "insuper et pro multiplici defectu suo ex poena peccati, multipliciter sitiens ad Deum, nonnumquam etiam contendit praecedere rectorem suum." Cf. above, p. 13, n. 63; cf. *Med.* 12.27 SC 324, 208. Speaking of the flesh as an aid to the spirit, Bernard also says that it may "help" the spirit: at *Deo Deo* 11.31 in *Opere di San Bernardo*, ed. Gastaldelli, 1: 316: "Bonus plane fidusque comes caro spiritui bono, quae ipsum aut, si onerat, iuvat, aut, si non iuvat, exonerat, aut certe iuvat, et minime onerat."

\(^{113}\) *Epist. ad frat.* 1.45, 88 SC 223, 178-80, 212.

\(^{114}\) Ibid. 1.89 SC 223, 212: "Panis furpureus et simplex aqua, olera vel legumina simplicia, nequaquam res delectabilis est; sed in amore Christi, et desiderio internae delectationis, ventri bene morigerato gratanter ex his
Just in case the monks do not find his arguments persuasive, he adds a rebuke ever popular in reducing complaints of querulous children at table: “How many thousands of poor people meet the needs of nature with such things or with only one of them?” In William’s case, his awareness of what monks consume in comparison to the poor is also probably traceable to his connection to Bernard’s reforming ideals. As we said, one of Bernard’s aspirations was to rectify the imbalance of worldly possessions among Christians because he believed that material inequity was the direct consequence of human pride and *propria voluntas*. He hoped that monks would act as a leaven in society to facilitate the recovery of the primal equality of all men that has been disrupted by human sinfulness.

William’s attitude toward the body in his treatment of the animal man undoubtedly reflected his interests in the Cistercian agenda of living poorly and simply, yet it cannot be said to be wholly shaped by his ascetic agenda. The body was viewed by William as intimately tied to the life of the spirit and in this sense his views are as much the product of older attitudes toward the primacy of spirit as well as his personal convictions about the original harmony intended by God to pertain between the spiritual and corporeal dimensions of creation. His belief in this latter notion manifested itself in his use of the symbolism of the natural subjection of the created world to man’s intellect and in the notion that bodily and spiritual exercises were made “of the same substance.” It is this last element of his thought that gives William’s attitude toward the body its particular flavor and sets him apart from Bernard, who is more like Origen in emphasizing the body’s transformation as performed from above by the light of the soul’s *claritas* rather than as the restoration of a natural order of its own.

satisfacere posse, valde delectabile est...Facillimum quippe et delectabili esset, adjuncto amoris Dei condimento, secundum naturam vivere, si insania nostra nos permitteret. Qua sanata, statim naturalibus natura arrider.”

115 Ibid.

116 See above, n. 56.

117 Olsen, “Recovering the Homeland,” 105-6. Rudolph has shown that the gift of donations for the purpose of constructing elaborate artistic decorations in churches was both defended and criticized in the twelfth century, *Things of Greater Importance*, 80-103. Critics of decoration such as Bernard argued that the money could be better spent on behalf of the poor.
2. The Rational Man

In the sections of the Epistula ad fratres de Monte Dei on the rational and spiritual men there is understandably less material on the proper attitude to be displayed toward the body. In his treatment of the rational man, however, William continues to pay special attention to the fragile position held by the soul, poised between the corporeal and divine realms. Again displaying a strong echo of Bernard's anthropology, William muses that the soul's innate desire for the good was maimed in its participation in original sin, when it lost its true libertas.¹¹⁸ The soul's image of true rationality has been obscured, and the only image that remains to it is its freedom of choice.¹¹⁹ William uses some of his strongest and most dualistic language to describe the fall of the soul from spiritual stability into the world of change:

Man's spirit was created as a nature both powerful and keen in its desire for good. At the summit of creative Wisdom it excelled every body, shone brighter than all corporeal light, and was of greater dignity because it was the image of its Creator and capable of reason.

It was nevertheless involved in the crime attached to its fleshly origin and made the slave of sin, taken captive by the law of sin which is in its members.¹²⁰

The task of the rational man is to restore the soul's stability by restoring its freedom.

The process has a dual aspect: by grace the will is freed and by reason the spirit is liberated.¹²¹ This dual restoration produces one faculty, both affective and rational, which, following William, we will call animus.¹²² He describes the pattern of the rational man's progress thus:

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¹¹⁸ Epist. ad frat. 2.199 SC 223, 308.
¹¹⁹ Ibid. 2.200 SC 223, 308-10.
¹²¹ Epist. ad frat. 2.201 SC 223, 310.
¹²² Ibid. 2.196-8 SC 223, 304-8. The feminine anima becomes animus with the addition of reason. Cf. ibid. 2. 198 SC 223, 306-8: "Quae ubi perfectae rationis incipit esse, non tantum capax, sed et particeps, continuo abdicat a se notam generis feminini, et efficitur animus particeps rationis, regendo corpori accomodatus, vel seipsum habens spiritus. Quamdiu enim anima est, cito in id quod carnale est effeminatur; animus vero, vel spiritus, non nisi quod virile est et spiritualiter mediatatur." Cf. Eriugena, Commentum in evangelium secundum Johannem, ed. Édouard Jeanneau SC 180 (Paris, 1972) 304: "mulier itaque est anima rationalis, cuius vir intelligitur animus, qui multipliciter nominatur; aliquando enim intellectus, aliquando mens, aliquando animus, sepe etiam spiritus." It used to be held by Déchanet and others that William transposed Origen's ὄφελος, sertο,
"The beginning of the rational state is to understand what is set before it by the teaching of the faith; progress is to aspire to the things which are set out; perfection is when the judgment of the reason passes into an affection of the mind." Each stage possesses a corresponding kind of love: when the soul unites with truth at the first stage, mounting on high like fire, it has amor; when it is fed with the milk of grace it has dilectio; when it enjoys God in unity of spirit, it has, or is, caritas.

While William says that the soul lives by fixing its gaze above, on the source of its life, he does not omit to mention that the same soul that contemplates God in the memory, understanding, and will also regulates the life of the body: "Therefore although upon earth it [animus] rules the body which has been entrusted to it, it nevertheless loves always to dwell, by means of its better part, its memory, understanding, and love, in the place whence it knows that it has received whatever it is, whatever it has." He subsequently reintroduces the theme, seen above in De natura corporis et animae, that man's erect structure reveals the dignity of the body because it shows his kinship with heaven. Here he parallels the notion that the soul raises up the body with the upward motion of the soul's ascent to God:

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123 Ibid. 1.45 SC 223, 180: "Initium vero rationalis est, intelligere quae in doctrina fidei apponuntur ei; perfectus, talia praeparare qualia apponuntur; perfectio, cum in affectum mentis transit judicium rationis."
124 Ibid. 2.235 SC 223, 332: "Haec, cum sursum tendit, sicut ignis ad locum suum: hoc est, cum sociatur veritati, et moveatur altiora, amor est; cum, ut promoveatur, lactatur a gratia, dilectio est; cum apprehendit, cum tenet, cum fruitur, caritas est, unitas spiritus est, Deus est, Deus enim caritas est." The pattern amor-dilectio-unitas spiritus characterizes the three stages of the spiritual man as well, underlining William's claim that the end of the rational man's progress is the beginning of the spiritual man's development, cf. ibid. 2.257 SC 223, 348: "Magna enim voluntas ad Deum, amor est; dilectio, adhaesio sive conjunction; caritas, fruitor. Unitas vero spiritus cum Deo, homini sursum cor habenti, proficientis in Deum voluntatis est perfectio, cum jam non solummodo vult quod Deus vult, sed sic est non tantum affectus, sed in affectu perfectus, ut non possit velle nisi quod Deus vult." On the linguistic patterns in discussions of love in William's corpus, see Bell, Image and Likeness, 147-65 and in Augustine, ibid. 57. Origen similarly hierarchizes amor in comparison to dilectio and caritas in the prologue to Comm. Cont. cant. 2.20 ff. SC 375, 104ff.
125 Epist. ad frat. 2. 210 SC 223, 314-6: "Ideoque etsi in terris regit corpus sibi commissum, meliore tamen parte sui, memoria scilicet, et intelligentia, et amore, ibi semper conversari amat, unde quicquid est, quicquid habet, se novit accepisse."
126 De nat. corp. 2.73 ed. Lemoine, 157.
Just as it raises up the body which it animates in its natural state toward the heaven that by nature and place and dignity is above both all places and every body, so the spiritual nature itself loves to raise itself always to the things which are most eminent among spiritual things, to God and divine things.\textsuperscript{127}

The soul is to govern the body in a way similar to that mentioned in the last section: it must limit the amount of external activity;\textsuperscript{128} it must confine its use of material things to necessities.\textsuperscript{129} Although at this stage the monk largely acts as his own responsible agent, he may still wish to consult the advice of others with respect to the treatment of the body; for others frequently possess a more objective view of ourselves than we do.\textsuperscript{130} William suggests that the voluntary submission of one’s will and judgment in this way, as the product of charity, often cleanses the soul more than the obligatory submission practiced by the novice.\textsuperscript{131}

3. The Spiritual Man

The spiritual man’s development reflects his growth in likeness to God. Like the previous two stages, it comprises three steps: “The perfection of the rational state is the beginning of the spiritual state; progress in it is to look upon God’s glory with open face; its perfection is to be transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.”\textsuperscript{132} Here William reveals what many have noted to be the unique keystone of his spirituality, the teaching that man becomes one with God through his sharing in the inter-Trinitarian life through the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{133}

\textsuperscript{127} Epist. ad frat. 2.212 SC 223, 316: “Sicut enim corpus quod animat, naturali statu suo, erigit in caelum, quod natura, et loco, et dignitate, et loca omnia, et corpora omnia supereminet, sic spiritualis ipse natura, ad ea quae in spiritualibus praeeminent, hoc est ad Deum et divina erigere semper amat semetipsum.

\textsuperscript{128} Ibid. 2.231 SC 223, 328.

\textsuperscript{129} Ibid. 2.237 SC 223, 332-4.

\textsuperscript{130} Ibid. 2.240 SC 223, 334-6.

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{132} Ibid. 1.45 SC 223, 180: “Perfectio vero rationalis, initium est spiritualis; profectus ejus, revelata facie speculari gloriarm Dei; perfectio vero, transformari in eamdem imaginem a claritate in claritatem, sicut a Domini spiritu.” Cf. 2 Cor. 3:18: “Nos vero omnes revelata facie gloriarm Domini speculantes in eamdem imaginem transformamur a claritate in claritatem, tanquam a Domini Spiritu.”

\textsuperscript{133} Cf. Bell, Image and Likeness, esp. 234-5. Bell holds that the foundation of William’s ideas is entirely Augustinian.
The monk who makes himself available to God, banishing all temporal worries from his mind, understanding, and will\textsuperscript{134}, may occasionally be rewarded by the intimate breath of the Kiss of the Holy Spirit\textsuperscript{135}. This experience confers direct understanding of God, to the extent that mortal man is capable. When the soul returns to itself it constantly seeks to cleanse its heart for vision and its animus for likeness in order that it may again be admitted to the divine embrace\textsuperscript{136}. Thus good order is restored to man. As William says, according to its perception of eternal truth the animus:

forms for itself a heavenly way of life and a model of holiness...It conforms itself to that Truth, that Charity, and that Eternity and orders itself toward them. It does not fly above those eternal realities in its judgment but looks up at them in desire or cleaves to them by love...not without using the judgment of discernment, the examination of ratiocination and the decision of reason\textsuperscript{137}. 

Even at this level of spiritual development, bodily activity finds a place: “Making progress by lower things in this way, assisted by higher things, proceeding towards what is right by means of the judgment of reason, the assent of the will, the desire of the mind (mentis affectu), and the effect of work (operis effectu), [reason] hastens to burst forth in liberty and unity of spirit.”\textsuperscript{138}

C. Conclusion

William’s anthropology was at all stages shaped by his monastic experiences, but nowhere is this more evident than in his Epistula ad fratres de Monte Dei. In traditional Neoplatonic fashion, William argues that man, in his present fallen condition, is distracted from God by his occupation with the world and sensible things. As in Med. 2, so here the

\textsuperscript{134} Epist. ad frat. 2.251 SC 223, 344.
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid. 2.263 SC 223, 354.
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid. 2.270 SC 223, 360.
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid. 2.277 SC 223, 366-8: “exinde format sibi modum conversationis cujusdam caelestis et formam sanctitatis...Illi veritati, illi caritati, illi aeterinitati se conformans, in istis se ordinans, illis non supervolitans judicando, sed suspiciens desiderando, vel inhaerens amando...non sine discretionis judicio, non sine examine ratiocinationis et judicio rationis.”
negative effect of man's possession of a body and imagination is that swarms of images in the imagination can prevent the monk from concentrating properly on his psalmody, prayer, and spiritual exercises. However, in line with twelfth-century fascination with the self, he implicitly reshapes or departs from this Neoplatonic tradition, which had, in spite of the Delphic maxim, seen the self as finally something to be left behind in ascent to God. For William the self is less something to be abandoned than something to be ordered. William describes himself as being stretched in two directions: the spirit and the reason together pull the heart's will and the body's physical response in one direction, while the animal nature seizes the affections and the intellect so that the mind remains dry. This is a variation on the Pauline notion of the battle between the flesh and the spirit, for here William's problem is not simply that he has failed physically to do what he knows he should have done. Clearly William had experienced situations in which his physical body went through the motions that ought to have led to a fruitful experience of prayer and had found that half his mind was still occupied elsewhere. Still working in ancient currents, William attributes this spiritual disorder to the soul's connection to "animal nature," the element of irrationality possessed by it due to its connection with a body. Here William echoes Origen's and Gregory of Nyssa's notion that the higher part of the soul can be oppressed by the lower part of the soul.

In the Epistula William conceptualizes "body" above all as a set of desires that needs control and training in obedience; secondarily it refers to the physical structure. Body is a principle that can be simultaneously disordered and ordered in different respects. Its disorders include fundamentally its capacity to distract the soul through its "foolish" desires from a true estimation of self, one's needs, and the worship of God. When the monk's eye is turned outward on the world in curiosity he will most likely fail to keep his desires in bounds. The body is indirectly the source of internal disorder in the soul in another way—the images that the monk has learned to love because of his body can come unbidden to distract him from prayer.

Ibid. 2.286 SC 223, 374: "Sicque ab inferioribus promota, a superioribus adjuta, pergens in id quod rectum est, et judicio rationis, et assensu voluntatis, et mentis affectu, et operis effectu, erumpere festinat in libertatem spiritus et unitatem."
In this case the body is only secondarily the source of disorder. William does not see the body as exclusively disordered. It can respond obediently to the dictates of reason even when the mind is recalcitrant. Describing later stages of spiritual development in which bodily desires no longer obstruct rational behavior, William speaks of the body “enjoying” human labor and “anticipating” its common reward. By thus personifying the body, he portrays it as not totally passive, but as a principle that has a “mind of its own,” so to speak, and one which is capable of its own proper contribution to the life of the self.

Before man comes to a stage at which he realizes such a ready response on the part of the body, he must train it through careful control of its physical desires. To some extent William demonstrates the same type of optimism as Origen that through mortification of bodily desires, the power of concupiscence will abate, but the process is less dependent on gnosis than for Origen. The soul is to treat the body like a sick patient, not its enemy; it is not to break the body, only to mortify it.

William’s integration of the body into his notion of self is perhaps most evident in his sophisticated reflections on the mutual effects of body and soul upon one another. On the one hand, spiritual pursuits may have a corporeal benefit. He observes that if a monk thinks of a Scriptural passage just before sleep, the meditative process may continue in his dreams, ensuring the tranquillity of sleep. The mind’s attraction to images, in the properly ordered monk, can enliven spiritual life and facilitate the ascent to God. Alternatively, the soul can affect the body negatively, as when the soul’s indulgence in the vice of sorrow destroys the health of the body, what modern medicine would call the effect of depression.

William clearly hierarchizes daily activities according to whether they are more and less spiritual. Physical activities such as manual labor are always to be subordinated to spiritual exercises, just as woman was created subordinate to man. William’s attitude toward the hierarchy of spiritual and bodily exercises was rendered somewhat problematic by his regard for the Cistercian emphasis on the importance of manual labor and self-support. William
criticises the failure of the Carthusians to uphold this ideal of self-support by contrasting them with the desert fathers, who never relied on the monetary support of the Christian community.

In the restored man, the renovated body begins to take delight in whatever delights the spirit. William explains that the pleasures of the body are not lost, only simplified, so that the soul is satisfied with bare essentials. Here one can see that William was strongly affected by the Cistercian approach to corporeal asceticism, which set itself in opposition to the more liberal interpretation of the use of material goods and the care of the body of the black monks of Cluny.

The body is therefore by turns a sick patient, the soul’s possession, an obedient servant, and that which enables the enlivening of contemplative life. Most of these images draw attention to the fact that William was intimately aware of the inseparable connection of the physical body to the powers of desire and volition. This fact explains why William almost seems to represent the body as another person within the person. As such the body can sometimes inflict disorder upon the soul and at other times it suffers passively the disorders of the more intellectual principle. A question that William does not address is whether the disorders of the intellectual principle regularly come from within itself or from somewhere else, namely, the body. He frequently stresses, as he had done in his previous works, that the disorders of the body will disappear with the infusion of grace into the will, and then the body will enjoy making its own contribution to the life of the person. To put it in a more modern way, one could say that the end to which William looks is a cessation of the disjunctions between body, imagination, will, and mind. It is this hope that animates the whole of his monastic program and motivates his commitment to the ascetic agenda of the Cistercians.
Conclusion

William of St. Thierry tended to mean different things when he spoke about the human body under the rubrics of *corpus* and *caro*. He often used the term *corpus* in reference to the physical structure of man. William’s notion of body as *corpus* appeared most clearly in his treatise, *De natura corporis et animae*. The *corpus* ties man to the rest of material creation and was given to man in order that he might both subject nature to him and enjoy natural things. In using the new eleventh- and twelfth-century translations of Arabic medical material, William accepted that the contemporary study of the body of man is valuable, but he expressed concern that it not become an end in itself.

For William the body possesses a reflection of the order that is woven throughout the cosmos and is a partial indicator of man’s dignity. In book 2 of *De natura corporis et animae* he expressed his notion that corporeal order echoes the spiritual order in man by showing that the corporeal structure of man possesses numerical parallels with his spiritual dimension. Just as four elements serve as the basis of man’s corporeal construction, for instance, so the four virtues compose the foundation of spiritual life. Here William borrowed one twelfth-century model of the union between body and soul: the union of numerical harmony. The two models not used by William include union of body and soul through a corporeal medium and union in the person. One suspects that William chose his model because it best expressed the body’s instrumental relationship to the soul and preserved the causal role of the soul with respect to the body. Throughout *De natura corporis et animae* William made clear his concern that the soul not be confused with the primary organs of the body nor with the corporeal spirits that are their functionaries. Here he may have been reacting to what he understood to be William of Conches’ failure, in the *Philosophia mundi*, to emphasize the instrumental role of the corporeal powers. William of St. Thierry’s tirade, at the end of book 1, against those who adduce numerical harmony in the body of man as evidence of the corporeality of the soul suggests that William eventually developed an awareness that microcosmic speculation could be used in undesirable ways. One should not on the basis of this passage, probably written in the early
1140’s after his reading of the Philosophia mundi, leap to the conclusion that William totally rejected the value of microcosmic speculation. However, one could speculate that his enthusiasm for it was thereafter tempered.

William thinks that the weakness of the human body, in comparison to those of the animals, is an indicator that man’s dignity does not depend exclusively on his possession of a body. Moreover, the dual aspect of man’s body—its dignity and weakness—reveals to William the two great themes that dominate human life: the grandeur and misery of man. For William man has lost a great deal through sin and can only pray to regain his dignity fully through constant confession and reliance on God’s mercy. Here William echoed the ascending and descending themes that had permeated Gregory of Nyssa’s theology of the human body. William differed from his source in his failure to emphasize that the generative capacity of the body is a providential gift to man. Gregory said that generation was provided to man first, that he might not perish and second, that God’s plan for ultimate human union with God might not be spoiled by man’s permanent aversion from Him. Regarding the second point, Gregory thought that man’s mutability was facilitated by the possession of the generative function, connected in his view with the irrationality inherent in God’s division of man into sexed, “animalistic” beings at the second creation. According to Gregory, the generative function enabled man not only to fall but also to turn back to God.

William was not interested in the way that the generative function in man enables the salvation of the whole human race, but he did connect the body with conversion in a different way. William used the image of the naked body to express the grandeur and dignity of man in Med. 9. William’s theology of the body resonated with echoes of his monastic experience of interior conversion. Describing the outcome of a hopeless attempt to flee from God, he said that when he realized the misery of his sinful condition, William offered himself to God as naked as Adam was at his creation. The nakedness of the body described William’s vulnerability and simultaneously recalled the original state of creation, before man had learned to cover or hide himself from God. For William, this image of the human body revealed both
the innocent trust in God that man originally possessed (the grandeur of man) and expressed William’s consciousness that he was currently deprived of this confidence before God. William used the image of the body to describe both the weakness of his own condition and his awareness that acknowledgment of this weakness is the beginning of the road back to God. Here his image of the body expressed in a symbolic way return to God by means of interior conversion.

William’s notion of the grandeur of man emphasized man’s capacity to subdue the body and to free it from the afflictions that beset it due to original sin. William’s notion of corporeal discipline reflected traditional monastic practices (the satisfaction of the body with only the basic necessities and bodily exercises such as night vigils) but he did not advocate bodily chastisement. Rather, in *Epistula ad fratres de Monte Dei* he spoke of the body as a partner that should be treated prudently because it was given to the soul to ease its burdens. However, William’s strictness about measures to be taken in corporeal austerity, including the simplicity of housing and food, show his affiliation with the goals of the Cistercian reform.

When William treated the body under the rubric of *caro*, he tended to emphasize the distraction offered to the contemplative by desires, thoughts, and images. William conceptualized himself as a new Adam, who can put each of the faculties responsible for these internal experiences to their proper use if given the requisite grace by God. William depicted the subjection of his flesh, his external part, as requiring a special covenant. Borrowing imagery from Hosea 2, he suggested that, by means of such a covenant, peace might reign in his “land” (i.e. himself). His faculties might thereby dwell harmoniously together. The flesh tended to connote for William the soul’s disproportionate attention toward bodies and the external world. Although William implied that the corporeal body was clearly the instrument which enables these distractions to occur, he did not desire to escape his body permanently. Rather, he depicted man’s internal disarray as temporary, caused by sin, and remediable to some extent during the present life. In his early writing, *De natura et dignitate amoris* he
expressed his hope that mystical union would temporarily free him from the distractions of the senses and allow him to rest in the embrace of God.

While William always maintained the superior status of image-free meditation in the hierarchy of spiritual activities, he gradually integrated into his thought, as shown in his *Meditations*, a notion that corporeal images also have an important role to play, especially in arousing human love for the gracious gift of Christ's Incarnation. By integrating the faculty of imagination into his mystical thought, he also rehabilitated the body's role in spiritual life. William's spirituality was typical of the twelfth century in that he affirmed the importance of the interior life of the individual, in contrast to the later medieval mystics, who manifested a desire to transcend self in absorption into God.

One of the goals of this project was to identify the ways in which William demonstrates similarities and differences to the views of body of other twelfth-century reformers. William's interest in medicine and microcosmic speculation set him apart from his friend, Bernard of Clairvaux. Second, he differed from Bernard in his more positive view of sensitive meditation. Bernard estimates mental images, with their appeal to man's "carnal nature," as indispensable for beginners but thought that they were less important for the "spiritual" or "perfect," who mystically apprehend God in his divinity. There is a third difference. William suggested in *Med. 12* that the body may "thirst after the living God," i.e. may with the help of grace bear its own particular kind of fruit (in vigils, labors, etc.) even during this life. In the *Epistula ad fratres de Monte Dei* he suggested that the body is sometimes willing even when the soul is weak. He was probably describing a situation in which the body performed the proper gestures of prayer but the mind remained distracted by images and thoughts. In this passage body appeared under two rubrics, not explicitly identified as such by William. He referred to the willing body as the *corpus*, which the reason claims. The body and reason are disjointed from the desires and thoughts, the psychic activities which elsewhere he associated with man's "flesh." William's view was that with the aid of grace this type of disjunction can diminish or cease even during the present life. This theme permeates his thought to a greater extent than
Bernard's, though both writers can envision a terrestrial existence in which body is properly subjected to soul and soul to God.

In other ways the writings of the two monks demonstrate similar approaches to body. Ceglar has argued that Bernard led William to see that life in the Body of the Church entails responsibilities that supersede personal objectives. This lesson seems to be reflected in Med. 11, in which William presented a dialogue between members of a body/soul composite on the topic of freeing oneself for contemplative life. In this dialogue the bodily members (joints and marrow) stood for the bonds of obligation between different members of the Church. They represented a force of stability that counters the impetuousness of the spiritual faculty of the heart. The joints and marrow eventually convince the spiritual faculties that pursuit of contemplative life is not permissible when one's talents are still demanded on behalf of the Church.

Both writers argued that the body of Christ has a pedagogical value in instructing men about God's desire for human salvation. Bernard estimated mental images, with their appeal to man's "carnal nature," to be indispensable for beginners but thought that they were less important for the "spiritual" or "perfect," who mystically apprehend God in his divinity. As we mentioned above, William ultimately gave sensitive devotion an equal or nearly equal role in spiritual life. Both writers had a similar sense that the Word's unity to flesh has a transformational effect on human nature. William developed this insight in his treatise on the Eucharist. In this treatise he suggested that the Word/flesh union in Christ is the paradigm for the bodily transformation of the individual through the interior indwelling of God. God comes to us through the Eucharist and restores man in his physical and corporeal dimensions. He thereby lifts up human nature as the Good Shepherd raised the lost sheep on His shoulders. By these means God is present to and in the human person as he always desired to be.

William's insistence that the body of man is transformed through the consecration of the Eucharist is a departure from the older western tradition, which had tended to emphasize a rather generalized spiritual incorporation into the great Body of Christ in the Eucharist but had
paid little attention to specific effects on the body. Among William's contemporaries, Hildegard of Bingen showed a similar understanding that the consumption of the Eucharist affects the human body. In her case she suggested that those who consume the Eucharist will receive back their own bodies in the resurrection. William's eyes, more than those of Hildegard, were on the present restoration of body and less on the future implications of the consumption of the host.

If William is unique in understanding the Eucharist as playing a role in bodily transformation, he concurred with Bernard in his view the that interior graces of the spirit are reflected in the exterior beauty and refined conduct of the body. They voiced one version of the revival during the eleventh and twelfth centuries of the Ciceronian idea that manners reveal interior virtue. The two monks stressed the outward perfusion and transformation of external appearances by grace, in contrast to the Victorines, who, without denying the role of grace, thought that inner virtue could be restored by practicing bodily discipline.

To summarize the implications of this study for the history of twelfth-century reforming movements: Bernard and William did not simply possess unity of vision in all respects. In certain ways Bernard led William, as when he cautioned him that embodied life entails social obligations that outweigh personal interests. Bredero has suggested that while William acted in certain respects as Bernard's mentor and perhaps played a role in his decision to publish the Apologia against abuses of the Benedictine Rule among the Cluniacs, Bernard exercised his judgment independently of his friend's wishes in other instances. Therefore, it is best to see the two friends as pursuing related agendas of reform in different contexts. William had perhaps the harder task in being constrained to work within the Order that represented the obstacle to their reforms. Much of William's activity as a reformer at St. Thierry will never be known. We can, however, draw some conclusions from our study about possible avenues by which he pursued his reforms. William described the way that spiritual charisma is demonstrated in the body in his De natura et dignitate amoris, and we may therefore assume that this notion appeared in the chapter homilies upon which this was based. As abbot he
would undoubtedly have popularized other ideas such as the pedagogical importance of the humanity of Christ and the usefulness of sensitive devotion. In his *Epistula ad fratres de Monte Dei*, composed after his release to Signy, he shared his interest in sensitive devotion with the Carthusians at Mont-Dieu. We can assume that through his personal influence William exercised a distinctive influence on twelfth-century France that was more limited than Bernard’s but still significant.
### Abbreviations

#### Primary Sources

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aen. fid.</td>
<td>Aenigma fidei</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brev. comment.</td>
<td>Brevis commentatio ex. S. Bernardi sermonibus contexta, ubi de triplici status amoris</td>
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<tr>
<td>De cont. Deo</td>
<td>La Contemplation de Dieu, L'Oraison de Dom Guillaume (De contemplando Deo)</td>
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<tr>
<td>De error. Guill.</td>
<td>De erroribus Guillelmi de Conchis</td>
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<tr>
<td>De nat. corp.</td>
<td>De la nature du corps et de l'âme (De natura corporis et animae)</td>
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<td>De nat. et dig. amor.</td>
<td>De la nature et la dignité de l'amour (De natura et dignitate amoris)</td>
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<td>Ep. frat.</td>
<td>Lettre aux frères du Mont Dieu (Lettre d'or), (Epistula ad fratres de Monte Dei)</td>
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<td>Epist. ad quemdam monach.</td>
<td>Epistula ad quemdam monachum qui de corpore et sanguine domini scripserat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excerpt. de med.</td>
<td>Excerpta de meditationibus domini Wilhermi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exp. sup. Cant.</td>
<td>Exposé de dom Guillaume sur le Cantique des Cantiques (Expositio domni Willelmi super Cantica Canticorum)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exp. sup. Rom.</td>
<td>Expositio super Epistolam ad Romanos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Med.</td>
<td>Oraisons méditatives (Meditationes)</td>
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#### Secondary Works

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<td>AL</td>
<td>Augustinus-Lexikon. Ed. Cornelius Mayer</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADHL</td>
<td>Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge</td>
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<tr>
<td>BGPM</td>
<td>Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mitteialters</td>
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<td>CCAM</td>
<td>Corpus Christianorum, Autographa Medii Aevi</td>
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<td>PG</td>
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<td>SC</td>
<td>Sources Chrétiennes</td>
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--------. Epistula ad quemdam monachum qui de corpore et sanguine domini scripsaret. PL 180, 341-4.

--------. Excerpta de meditationibus domni Wilhermi. In Oraisons Méditatives SC 324, 218-26

