Guibert of Nogent and the Bishop's Murder in Laon (1112): Eyewitness, Participant, Dramaturge

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[trans. by Meg Leja and Courtney Booker, from Reinhold Kaiser, "Guibert de Nogent und der Bischofsmord in Laon (1112): Augenzeuge, Akteur, Dramaturg," in Natalie Fryde, Dirk Reitz, eds., *Bischofsmord im Mittelalter/Murder of Bishops* (Göttingen, 2003), 121–57.]

On April 25, 1112, on the Thursday after Easter, Bishop Gaudry of Laon (I am using the name adopted in English and French scholarship instead of the Latin "Galdricus" or the German "Waldrich"),[1] together with a number of high-ranking men of the city, was killed during an uprising by the townspeople, and the cathedral was burned along with several churches and houses. In the contemporary chronicles, this event made a resounding echo, above all in the western European lands and especially in the bishopric of Reims, as demonstrated in the map, "References to the Bishop of Laon's Murder from the Twelfth to the Fourteenth Centuries," and the evidence in the appendix. For the most part, however, the annal or chronicle entries do not mention anything beyond the time, place, instigators, and victims of the event.

The annals of Châlons-sur-Marne note for the year 1112: "Seven days before the first of May, the bishop was killed by a conspiracy of the people of Laon" (*Septimo Kalendas Maii conspiratione plebis Laudunensis interfectus est episcopus*).[2] The chronicle of Lobbes reports the usual facts but also includes the burning of the cathedral, the monastery, and the city: "The bishop was killed by the citizens of

[1] The Latin form of the name is Galdricus, Gualdricus, Gualdrius, Waldricus, Baldricup. Cf. the evidence in the following comments: for the English form Waldric, see, for example, H. W. C. Davis, "Waldric: The Chancellor of Henry I," *English Historical Review* 26 (1911) p. 84–89. More recent English translations of Guibert of Nogent, as well as the French translation by Edmond-René Labande, use the name Gaudry. In older French works, Gaudri(s) is found: see the *Chronicle of Cambrai* (n. 4), and Georges Bourgin's edition of Guibert's *De Vita sua* (n. 9). The German form Walderich is used by Georg Misch, "Geschichte der Autobiographie," vol. III: *Das Mittelalter*, Part 2: *Das Hochmittelalter im Anfang*, Erste Hälfte, Frankfurt 1959, in his chapter on "Die Autobiographie des Abtes Wibert von Nogent," p. 103–162, here: p. 156. More recent German literature prefers the English or the French form Gaudry; see, for example, Knut Schulz (n. 8).

[2] *Annales Catalaunensis*, the year 1112 (MGH SS 16, p. 489).

Laon; the church of the blessed Mary, the whole monastery, and almost all of the city was set on fire; everywhere was touched by fire" (*Laudeunensis episcopus* [Gualdricus] *a civibus interficitur, sanctae Mariae templum et omnia monasteria cum tota pene urbe succenduntur, multa ubique contingent incendia*).[3] The chronicler from Cambrai is laconic: *En icel tamps fu occis Gaudris Evesques de Laon des Bourgois de sa Cité.*[4] In contrast, Anselm, the continuator of Sigebert of Gembloux's chronicle, supplies more details. He says that Gaudry tried to prevent the citizens from swearing an unjust alliance, that the bishop was slain with a sword by the rebels, and that during the riots, the cathedral, the convent of Saint-Jean, and other adjacent churches were burned to the ground. Finally, Anselm states that the king exacted revenge and set an example.[5]

Employing a fictive speech, Abbot Suger of Saint-Denis (1081–1151) also summarizes the event in his life of King Louis VI, written ca. 1138–1145. He, more clearly than the annalists and chroniclers, identifies the causes and effects—namely, the abolishment of the Laon commune by the king. He mentions a few further details—the naked body of the bishop was left abandoned on the street, exposed to animals; the finger with the bishop's ring was cut off. Finally, he allocates blame and innocence, light and darkness—the perpetrators were the greatest criminals, who deserved nothing but perdition; the cruelly-murdered victim, the bishop, was the anointed of the Lord, the sacred defender of the Church; the nobles of the city were true martyrs, killed as they fulfilled their obligations as vassals by coming to the aid of the bishop.[6]

The documentary tradition, as is so often the case in the early and high Middle Ages, is as good as silent. The 1128 "institution of peace," when Louis VI granted the city a charter, and the "destruction of the city" are hardly mentioned.[7] In contrast, modern descriptions are much more

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[3] *Chronicon Lobiense*, the year 1112 (ed. Martin Bouquet, *Recueil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France*, vol. 13, Paris 1786, p. 581).

[4] *Chronique de Cambrai* (Bouquet, *Recueil*, vol. 13 [see n. 3], p. 149); cf. the *Chronicon Remense*, the year 1112: *Baldricus Lauduni episcopus occiditur* (ed. Martin Bouquet, *Recueil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France*, vol. 12, Paris 1781, p. 275).

[5] Anselm of Gembloux, *Continuatio Sigeberti chronographiae*, the year 1112 (MGH SS 6, p. 375).

[6] Suger of Saint Denis, *Vita Ludovici grossi regis*, ed. Henri Waquet, *Suger: Vie de Louis VI le Gros*, Paris 1929 (^{2}1964), c. 24, p. 176–178.

[7] *Recueil des Actes de Louis VI, roi de France (1108–1137)*, ed. Jean Dufour, vol. II, Paris 1992, p. 93, n. 277, c. 15. That the documentation offers an excellent complement to Guibert's work with regard to the constitutional,

detailed. From the time of Augustin Thierry, who, in his *Lettres sur l'histoire de France* (1827), characterized the uprising of Laon's commune as a precursor to the civic freedom movement, to the most recent research concerning regional and city history and the development of European towns (see, for example, Knut Schulz or Alain Saint-Denis), Laon has been considered the prime example of a commune established through violence.[8] And the central feature of modern descriptions is always the uprising and the bishop's murder on the 25th of April, 1112. However, it is not the sparse notes of the chronicles or the fictive speech in Suger's *Life of Louis VI* that underpin the descriptions of this event—characterized as passionate in Thierry's work, and more reserved, but no less lively, in the works of more recent authors. Rather, the source is the more detailed, more personal account given by Guibert of Nogent in the first eleven chapters of the third book of his autobiography, *De vita sua sive Monodiae*.[9] This is understandable, as we will see, because Guibert was—permit the expression—an indirect eyewitness; he was a contemporary involved in this affair.

Guibert was born in 1055 in Picardy, and when he was around 12 years old, he entered the monastery of Saint-Germer-de-Fly (in the diocese of Beauvais), where he received a thorough education in literature and theory from Anselm of Le Bec. In 1104, he became the abbot of the Marion-cloister in Nogent, a monastery founded around 1056/76 by [the lord of] Coucy. This house, which was not far from Laon, he governed until his death. In his numerous theological works, which include an extensive commentary on Genesis, a guide to composing sermons, writings on virginity

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social, and economic context of the uprising is demonstrated in the examination by Alain Saint-Denis, "Pouvoirs et libertés à Laon dans les premières années du XIIe siècle (v. 1100–1200)," in: *Pouvoirs et libertés au temps des premiers Capétiens*, ed. Elisabeth Magnou-Nortier, Paris 1992, p. 267–305.

[8] Cf. Augustin Thierry, *Lettres sur l'histoire de France*, Paris 1827, Lettres XVI–XVIII refer to Laon; cf. Knut Schulz, *"Since they love freedom so much…" Kommunale Aufstände und Entstehung des europäischen Bürgertums im Hochmittelalter*, Darmstadt ²1995, p. 60–61; cf. Alain Saint-Denis, *Apogée d'une cité: Laon et la Laonnaois aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles*, Nancy 1994, p. 91–108.

[9] Cf. Guibert de Nogent, *De vita sua, sive Monodiae*, III, 1–11. Guibert de Nogent. *Autobiographie*, ed. and trans. Edmond-René Labande, Paris 1981, p. 268–376 (this edition is used in the following citations); an older edition: Guibert de Nogent. *Histoire de sa vie* (1053–1124), ed. Georges Bourgin, Paris 1907; English translation: John F. Benton, *Self and Society in Medieval France. The Memoirs of Abbot Guibert of Nogent (1064?–c. 1125)*, New York, Evanston 1970; Paul J. Archambault, *A Monk's Confession. The Memoirs of Guibert of Nogent*, Pennsylvania 1996; Italian translation: Franco Cardini and Nada Truci Cappelletti, *La "mia vita" di Guiberto di Nogent* (Medioevo. Facciamo parlare I protagonisti) Novara 1986. There is no German translation. It is being prepared at the moment by the author of the series *Fontes christiani*.

dedicated to the praise of Mary, writings against the Jews regarding the Last Supper, and writings about the cult of relics, he emphasizes the allegorical-moral interpretation of meaning, and uses the rational-critical approach of his teacher Anselm of Canterbury. In his history of the First Crusade (*Gesta Dei per Francos*), written around 1108, a nationalistic tone permeates the work, alongside an interpretation of salvation history.[10]

Guibert's autobiography, written in the style of Augustine's *Confessions*, is a typical example of a *genus mixtum*: in the first book, an autobiography; in the second book, a monastic history of Nogent; in the third book, a history of the uprising of the Laon commune, which then develops into a regional history.[11] The work is littered with miracle accounts, visions, exempla, and sermons, which are tied together by its autobiographical elements, the connection of the books, and possibly the moral aim of depicting the omnipotence of God in the actions of men, forming the unity of the whole. It is no wonder that only one aspect [at a time] of so polymorphous a work is typically handled [by scholars]. Scholarship on city and regional histories has exploited the third book for two centuries, autobiographical and psychohistory has exhausted the first, and demonology finds noteworthy material in all three books.[12]

The bishop's murder—incidentally, the only "historical fact" in the entire work to be precisely dated—belongs to the domain of city-history scholarship, and has been continuously examined within the context of political, social, economic, church, and constitutional history. In the following discussion, a totally new perspective will be taken, the one through which Guibert of Nogent wanted the event to be observed. For he says at the beginning of the third book not only that he wishes to speak now of the people of Laon, but also that he wishes to stage her tragedy (*de Laudunensibus* [...] *iam modo tractaturi, imo Lauunensium tragoedias acturi*).[13] In this "staging," Guibert

[10] Synopses of his life and work can be found in the introductions to the editions and translations in note 9; there is a short summary by Neidhard Bulst, Art. "Guibert von Nogent," in: *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, vol. 4, München 1989, col. 1768f.

[11] The last comprehensive evaluation: Trudy Lemmers, *Guibert van Nogents "Monodiae": Een twaalfde-eeuwse visie op kerkelijk leiderschap*, Hilversum 1998 (with an extensive bibliography).

[12] For a short overview of scholarship, see Lemmers, *Monodiae* (see n. 11), p. 14–20; cf. also Reinhold Kaiser, "Das Geld in der Autobiographie des Abtes Guibert von Nogent," in: *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 69 (1987) p. 289–314, here: p. 289–293.

[13] Guibert de Nogent, *De vita sua* (see n. 9), III, 1 (p. 268).

himself participates as an actor and as an observer. How does he handle such a polarizing event as the bishop's murder? How does he bring his own deeds and omissions into this course of events? Let us take Guibert seriously and try to answer three questions from this perspective:

1. Is the entire account, Chapters 1–11 of Book III, formally conceived of as a tragedy—that is, as historical matter that is represented in scenes, involves unavoidable conflict with a fatal ending, and has a moral, cathartic impact?
2. How does Guibert of Nogent set the scene of the murderous deed, and how does he characterize the victims and killers?
3. Which immanent and transcendent signs are seen to portend and elucidate the catastrophe?

Guibert's Narrative as Tragedy

Guibert of Nogent is an author exceptionally conscious of language. In his wild youth as a younger monk, he had secretly written poems in the style of Ovid and the bucolic poets, but, frightened by his own profanities (*obscaenula quaedam verba*), he finally destroyed them.[14] In his autobiography, he cites numerous late-antique Christian authors—Augustine, Gregory the Great, Isidore's *Etymologies*, Sidonius Apollinaris, Cassian, and Bede. From the profane authors, he cites the masters of rhetoric, Cicero and Quintilian, the poets Virgil, Ovid, Horace, Lucan, and Juvenal, the historian Sallust, and the dramatists Plautus and Terence.[15] He eagerly proves his classical education by using Latin and Greek words, such as the title of his work, *Monodiae*, originally a technical term from Greek theatre that meant "song of an actor" (in contrast to a song by the choir).[16] Whether

[14] Ibid., I, 17 (p. 136). For Guibert's literary composition of the murder of relatives through a woman and a church-theft in Chivy, a town near Laon, cf. Reinhold Kaiser, "Verbrechen und Strafe in Nordfrankreich um 1100: Zwei Wundererzählungen der Äbte Guibert von Nogent (gest. um 1125) und Hermann von Tournai (gest. 1147/48)," in: *Ecclesia et regnum. Beiträge zur Geschichte von Kirche, Recht und Staat im Mittelalter. Festschrift für Franz-Josef Schmale*, ed. Dieter Berg, Hans-Werner Goetz, Bochum 1989, p. 89–109, here: p. 96–99.

[15] Cf. the proof in the edition by Labande (see n. 9), p. 489–491.

[16] For Guibert's common vocabulary, see Eitan Burstein, "Quelques remarques sur le vocabulaire de Guibert de Nogent," in: *Cahiers de civilization médiévale* 21 (1978) p. 247–263, with a list of the common words in Latin and Greek, p. 258f.; *De vita sua* is a modern title for Guibert's text. He himself calls his work *Monodiae*: Guibert of Nogent, *Quo ordine sermo fieri debeat, Du bucella Iudae data et de veritate dominici corporis, De sanctis et eorum pigneribus*, ed. Robert B. C. Huygens (Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis 127) Turnhout 1993, p.

Guibert understood by this the subjective style of description, which he drew only from his own memory, without recourse to a foreign, textual model,[17] or whether he had in mind the single recitation of the psalms at the daily monastic psalm-reading outlined in the Benedictine Rule (38, 12),[18] cannot be determined.

In our consideration, it is more important that he was clearly familiar with the technical theatrical meaning of the word, as described in Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies* (VI 19, 6).[19] According to a new Dutch dissertation, the third book was written first, shortly after the events unfolded.[20] As mentioned, this book begins with a reference to the subsequent staging of the tragedy of the people of Laon (*Laudunensium tragoedias acturi*)—the reference also being a technical theatrical concept of classical antique literature. Isidore understands under the term *tragedy* every poet who renders in verse past events and the lamentable crimes of wicked kings ("king" would simply be replaced by "bishop") for a watching audience (*qui antiqua gesta atque facinora sceleratorum regum luctuosa carmine specatante populo concinebant*).[21] After the murder of the bishop, during the burial of the corpse, comes the speech by the rebels, the "originators of this tragedy" (*tragediae huius autores*).[22] From the beginning to the end of the text, Guibert refers to the event as a *tragedia* or, in the plural, as *tragoediae*. A conscious choice of title? Let us assume so.

According to common opinion, the Middle Ages produced no tragedies.[23] That does not mean, however, that Guibert did not use this term to designate a specific content and an artistic

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99: *Super quibus in libris Monodiarum mearum laciniosius dixi*. Recall here the Greek title of the work by his teacher, Anselm of Canterbury (died 1109): *Proslogion, Monologion*.

[17] Cf. Michel Zink, *La subjectivité littéraire*, Paris 1985, p. 181.

[18] Cf. Lemmers, *Monodiae* (see n. 11), p. 81f.

[19] Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, VI, 19, 6. *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum Libri XX*, vol. 1, ed. W. M. Lindsay (Scriptorum Classicorum Biblitheca Oxoniensis) Oxford 1911.

[20] Cf. Lemmers, *Monodiae* (see n. 11), p. 21, 84, where this is inferred from a back reference in II, 4 (p. 246) at the end of the chapter.

[21] Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, XVIII, 45; cf. VIII, 7.

[22] Guibert de Nogent, *De vita sua*, III, 10 (p. 356).

[23] It is significant that the *Lexikon des Mittelalters* lacks any reference to the tragic, tragic poets, or tragedy. The word *tragoedia* is used by late-antique Christian authors such as Tertullian, Ambrose of Milan, Augustine, Jerome, Boethius, Cassiodorus, and Isidore of Seville in the technical sense of the antique literary genre. This word is used in a similar fashion by the Venerable Bede, *De arte metrica* c. 25, and by Paschasius Radbertus (ca.

principle. The latter underlies the conscious composition of his text, including a structure with beginning, middle, and end, which he considered essential for a good sermon in his work on that topic.[24] We will soon see how Guibert followed this rule of his. For the structuring of the content, Guibert gives the key in the interpretation of a vision at the end of his text: the catastrophe results from the three crimes of the bishop—the *pravus introitus*, the murder of Gerard of Quierzy, and the offense against the people.[25] Thus, it is possible to read Guibert's account as a dramatic narrative, as a *Zieldrama* [= a drama in which the plot is not presented in chronological sequence, but begins at the point when events which took place before the drama started have reached their climax/catastrophe. The reader/spectator becomes familiar with the earlier events as the play progresses], which is arranged according to the following schema:

Prologue	c. 1–3	Causes of the catastrophe: the perversity of Bishops Adalbero Ascelinus

790–860), *Expositio in Matheo,* lib. 1 (line 267), lib. 3 (line 15), who, however, also uses the word for the beheading of John the Baptist: ibid. lib. 7 (line 1400, 1534), ed. Beda Paulus, Turnholt 1984 (CCCM 56), p. 734, 738. In the twelfth century, the term is applied to the Biblical and Jewish stories (Joseph and his brothers; Jerusalem: internal wars and conquest by the Romans) by Rupert of Deutz (died 1129/30), *De sancta trinitate et operibus eius* lb. 19, In Deuteronomium II, p. 1084, line 846; lib. 29, In Hieremiam. p. 1640, line 2689; lib. 38, *De operibus Spiritus Sancti* V, p. 1994, line 671, ed. Hrabanus Haacke, Turnholt, 1972 (CCCM 22) p. 1084; (CCCM 23) p. 1640; (CCCM 24) p. 1994. Otto of Freising uses *tragedia* several times in order to indicate the manner in which he wants to describe the cloudy and tumultuous times before Friedrich Barbarossa (*non am rerum gestarum seriem quam earundem miseriam in modum tragediae texuisse*), *Chronica sive Historia de duobus civitatibus*, ed. Adolf Hofmeister, Hannover 1912 (MGH SS rer. Germ. in us. schol. 45), p. 2f., or in the prologue of the first book, where antique history is described as *erumpnosas mortalium calamitatum tragedias* according to Orosius' view of history, Chron. I, Prol., p. 7. In addition, Otto calls the end of Henry IV, who, threatened by his son in Liege, turned to the French king and the Aquitainian duke in his distress, a *miseriarum eius tragediam*, Chron. VII, 12, p. 324. Otherwise, he understands *modum tragediae* to refer to the particularly poetic form of the description of a stroke of fate, Chron. VI, 31, p. 297; VII, 7, p. 317. In the *Gesta Frederici* I, 47, ed. Franz-Josef Schmale, *Bischof Otto von Freising und Rahewin: Die Taten Friedrichs oder richtiger Chronica*, Darmstadt 1965, p. 218, he compares the *tragedia*—that is, the representation of his chronicle—to the *iocunda hystoria* in the G*esta.* For Otto's understanding of *tragedia* as unfortunate history in the sense of Orosius, see Hans-Werner Goetz, *Das Geschichtsbild Ottos von Freising: Ein Beitrag zur historischen Vorstellungswelt und zur Geschichte des 12. Jh.s*, Köln, Wien 1984, p. 91f.

[24] Cf. Guibert de Nogent, *Quo ordine sermo fieri debeat*, p. 52. For the conscious composition of the entire text with all of its subdivisions, see Lemmers, *Monodiae* (see n. 11), p. 77–87, 91–93.

[25] Guibert de Nogent, *De vita sua*, III, 11 (p. 376).

		(977–1030), Helinand (1052–1098), Ingelrannus (1089–1104)
Act I	c. 4	Gaudry's simoniac election and consecration (1106/07)
Act II	c. 5–6	The murder of Gerard of Quierzy (13.1.1111)
Act III	c. 7	The formation of the commune of Laon (1111)
Act IV	c. 7	The lead up to the catastrophe (18–24.4.1112)
Act V	c. 8–10	The bishop's murder, downfall of the *societas urbana*, burning of the city (25–26.4.1112)
Epilogue	c. 11	Disillusionment and setback

Conceived as a historical drama, Guibert's account does possess a chronological framework, although not in the style of annals or chronicles, which were often criticized from a historical aspect in Guibert's text; rather, its framework takes the form of a "time funnel," in which the course of time, ordered according to related intentions and calendar data, is allowed to lapse. The only absolute dating in the entire work is found in the epilogue of the tragedy—this occurred on the Friday after Easter, April 26, 1112 (*Facta sunt haec anno incarnationis dominicae millesimo centesimo duodecimo feria sexta paschali, sexton calendas maii*)—and it refers to the day after the bishop's murder, when Thomas of Marle was called into the city by the rebels.[26] Starting with this date, the remaining dates can be sorted out; given that the work was written three years after the events, this task was much easier for the contemporary reader than for us.

For the prologue, as the prehistory to the drama, the names of Gaudry's predecessors in the episcopal office suffice as approximate dates for their pontificates. In such a way, around one hundred years are passed by in a temporal compression. The first act is dated by a reference to the two-year vacancy of the bishopric between Ingelrannus and Gaudry;[27] the second act by mention of the date of Gerard of Quierzy's murder, the morning of the Friday after Epiphany (that is, January 13, 1111), and by this detail: approximately three years after Gaudry's consecration.[28] The time of the

[26] Ibid., III, 11 (p. 372).

[27] Ibid., III, 4 (p. 280): beginning of the chapter concerning Gaudry's election and consecration (1106/1107).

[28] Ibid., III, 5 (p. 296, 298): beginning of the chapter or the section concerning Gerard's murder.

third act is roughly set by reference to Gaudry's trips to Rome and England.[29] Then, for the fourth and fifth acts, as the prelude to and climax of the catastrophe, the days, and, for the day of the murder, even the hours, are precisely indicated, and the symbolic meaning of the time and days is underlined where appropriate. At the end of Lent, during Easter, God's judgment runs its course.[30] The day of the Last Supper, Maundy Thursday, April 18, 1112 (*pridie Parasceves, coena scilicet dominica*), the Judas day, is the day of perjuries, on which the bishop "betrays" the commune, just as Adalbero on this day once betrayed the last of the Carolingians.[31] Good Friday (*dies Parasceves quod interpretatur praeparatio*) is the day of trials, which lead to the conspiracy.[32] On Holy Saturday (*sabbathum sacrosanctum*), the souls are prepared for murder and perjury, rather than for receiving the body and blood of the Lord.[33] So passes the time up to the story's focus of meaning. Together, the dates mark the act and scene divisions; therefore, they stand mostly at the beginning or, less frequently, at the end of story units and give the whole drama a coherent time framework. The division schema of

[29] Ibid., III, 6 (p. 312); III, 7 (p. 316): beginning of the chapter.

[30] Ibid., III, 7 (p. 328/330): [...] *in supremo quadragesimae sacrosanctis passionis dominicae diebus*; for God's judgment, see the preceding prefatory sentence: *Videns itaque Deus magistros et subditos facto et consensu pari communicare nequitia, iam non potuit sua continere iudicia, permisit denique conceptas malignitates in propatulum devenire fuorem, qui, dum ex superbia praeceps agitur, Deo vindice, casu usquequaque horrendo confrigitur* (p. 328).

[31] Ibid., III, 7 (p. 330). Here is the back reference to Adalbero's betrayal, which Guibert had dated in III, 1 (p. 268): *Quod facinus die Coenae dominicae instar Judae patravit*. According to Richer, *Historiae* IV, 47, ed. Robert Latouche, *Richer: Histoire de France (888–995)*, Paris 1937 (^{2}1964), vol. 2, p. 216/218; ed. Hartmut Hoffmann, *Richer von Saint-Remi, Historiae* (MGH SS 38) Hannover 2000, p. 260f., Adalbero betrayed Karl of Lower Lorraine on Psalm Sunday (that is, the 29th of March 991); the depiction of the Eucharist scene (Karl in the role of Jesus and Adalbero the self-denouncer as Judas) may have facilitated the shift to the day of the Last Supper. For Adalbero of Laon's betrayal, see Ferdinand Lot, *Les derniers Carolingiens: Lothaire, Louis V, Charles de Lorraine (945–991)*, Paris 1981, p. 272–277; cf. Robert T. Coolidge, "Adalbero, Bishop of Laon," in: *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 2 (1965) p. 1 –114, here: p. 43–53; cf. Claude Carozzi, "Le dernier des Carolingiens: de l'histoire au mythe," in: *Le Moyen Age* 82 (1976) p. 453–476, here: p. 463–466: an interpretation of the betrayal scene in Richer, p. 466–471, in Guibert, p. 468f., concerning the shift from Palm Sunday in Richer's text to Maundy Thursday in Guibert's: "*Ce nouveau glissement ... recentre l'acte dans son contexte mythique ... Adalbéron est beaucoup plus Judas chez Guibert que chez Guibert que chez Richer, comme Charles est beaucoup plus le Christ, si la tahison a lieu le Jeudi saint*"; Carozzi, p. 472, points to the fact that Guibert probably did not know Richer's text; the time displacement must therefore have taken place within oral tradition.

[32] Ibid., III, 7 (p. 332).

[33] Ibid.

time periods in the various sections shapes this framework into the form—figuratively speaking—of an inverse funnel (see page 130).

The observation of the time funnel is detected in the finer details of the text's economy. In the prologue, Guibert uses 22 lines in the first chapter to describe the 53 years of Adelbero's pontificate. In the second chapter, he uses 41 lines for the 46 years of Helinand's pontificate and, in the third chapter, 109 lines for the 6 years of Ingelrannus'.[34] The inverse relationship between the length of the pontificates [and lines of text] clearly emerges, as does the common historical significance attached to the pontificates—one thinks of Adalbero's role in the empire's politics—a sign of the conscious formation of the text.

The structure of the *Zieldrama* becomes still more apparent with the breakdown of the entire work into acts and scenes. The strained relationship among the bishop, the nobles of the city and region, and the people, clearly surfaces as the main plotline, which finally spills over in the catastrophe of the bishop's murder. The scholarship on city history has repeatedly proven this primary, political plotline to exist.[35] I cannot repeat it here. Parallel to this plotline, the secondary or side storylines are played out. They are concerned with the introduction and characterization of the factions or the opponents of the bishop (such as Sibylle and Ingelrann of Coucy) or Thomas of Marle, and the subordinate officeholders of the bishop and king, including the castellan, viceroy, reeve, and provost. These secondary plotlines also serve to explain the underlying causes of the

[34] See ibid., III, 1–3 (p. 268–280).

[35] Since it is not considered here, see, apart from the titles in n. 8, Reinhold Kaiser, "Laon aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles," in: *Revue du Nord* 56 (1974) p. 421–426, with references to the older literature as well as the discussion by Suzanne Martinet, *Montloon, reflet fidèle de la montagne et des environs de Laon de 1100 à 1300*, Laon 1972; cf. eadem, "Le movement communal de Laon (1112)," in: *Les chartes et la movement communal, Colloque à Saint-Quentin, 1980*, Saint-Quentin 1982, p. 27–38; cf. Alain Saint-Denis, "Laon du XIe au XVe siècle," in: *Histoire de Laon et du Laonnais*, ed. Michel Bur, Toulouse 1987, p. 53–135, here: p. 76–82. Alain Saint-Denis underlines the exceptional quality of Guibert's text. "*Son récit est bâti avec soin et les événements sont bien enchaînés. Avec un souci de precision et de probité inhabituel chez un historien de cette époque, il recherche toutes les causes d'un fait, tente d'établir les résponsabilités, s'efforce de refléter la situation dans sa complexité, ajoutant maint detail précis pour mieux cerner la réalité.*" The author draws from that the following consequence for his own account: "*Conter une nouvelle fois, après tant d'autres, la Commune de Laon serait oeuvre inutile. Mieux vaut en revenir au document original*" and then produces the appropriate excerpts from Book III of the *Monodiae*; cf. idem, "Pouvoirs"; Dominique Barthélemy, "Lectures de Guibert de Nogent (Autobiographie, III, 1–11)," in: *Les origines des libertés urbaines, Actes du XVIe congrès des historiens médiévistes de l'enseignement supérieur (Rouen 7–8 juin 1985)*, Rouen 1990, p. 175–192, follows the newly delineated approach in Kaiser, "Laon".

conflict between the bishop and the citizens—see, for example, the story of the manipulation of coinage and the false mint.[36] Beside the dramatically constructed primary scenes, such as the one of the bishop's murder (about which I will speak later), stand the lively secondary ones. They characterize the various individuals, and include scenes such as the death of Ingelrann,[37] or the grotesque act in which Bishop Gaudry, dressed in full bishop regalia with the miter on his head, takes away a lance from an entering farmer and feigns an excellent jousting attack with it.[38] Secondary scenes also illustrate the situation of public uncertainty and anarchy—see, for example, the robbery of the dimwitted farmers, who were extorted by the crafty citizens while purchasing food in the city.[39] Primary and secondary scenes are sometimes interrupted by insertions that serve to explain or comment, or brief portraits like that of King Louis VI.[40] In addition, retarding elements are woven very effectively into the primary scene of the bishop's murder.

A further tool of dramatic construction is direct speech, which Guibert uses almost twenty times from the end of the prologue (the death scene of Ingelrann). It is commonly used to effectively end one of the larger sections within the frame of a scene (5x);[41] to tersely self-characterize the primary character, the Bishop Gaudry (6x);[42] to enliven side plotlines and secondary scenes (3x and 1x, respectively);[43] to make the rebels the centre of attention with the cry *Communia! Communia!*;[44] and finally, in the dramatic climax, to create dialogue between the killers and victim.[45] Direct speech also marks the author's presence, in open or hidden authorial commentary (2x),[46] or in discursive situations in which Guibert stages himself as the chief speaker or as a conversation

[36] Guibert de Nogent, *De vita sua*, III, 7 (p. 324/326); for that, see Kaiser, "Geld" (see n. 12), p. 307–314.

[37] Guibert de Nogent, *De vita sua*, III, 3 (p. 278/280).

[38] Ibid., III, 4 (p. 294).

[39] Ibid., III, 7 (p. 318–320). The scene is introduced as an *exemplum*; for the interpretation, see Kaiser, "Laon" (see n. 35), p. 423, n. 44.

[40] Guibert de Nogent, *De vita sua*, III, 7 (p. 330).

[41] Ibid., III, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, (p. 280, 314, 335, 344, 354/56).

[42] Ibid., III, 6, 7, 8, (p. 314, 322, 332, 336, 342, 344).

[43] Ibid., III, 9, 11 (p. 350, 354/56, 366).

[44] Ibid., III, 7, 8 (p. 334, 336).

[45] Ibid., III, 5, 8 (p. 302, 342).

[46] Ibid., III, 9, 11 (p. 354/56, 366).

partner. This is particularly evident in the negotiations with Paschal II over Gaudry's controversial election or in conversations with the bishop. This type of speech also includes Guibert's sermon, which he gave in front of the people at the invitation of the cathedral chapter for the reconciliation of the church defiled through the murder of Gerard of Quierzy.[47] Guibert appears as speaker and actor in the first through fourth acts. The fourth act, consisting of the lead up to the catastrophe, ends with his last intrusion. It is the final attempt to convince the bishop to relent; however, his answer is full of sneering arrogance, in the face of which Guibert admits defeat. He departs the stage in complete disagreement with the bishop, and the evil event takes its course. Guibert definitively leaves the city on Wednesday, April 24, the day before the bishop's murder. His role as participant and actor is finished; he is now in his cloister of Nogent and is nothing but an indirect eyewitness—that is, reliant on whatever people present at the affair (*qui illi negotio interfuerunt*) reported to him.[48] With that, we can continue to our second question.

How does Guibert stage the bishop's murder, and how does he characterize the victims and killers?

The tragedy of Laon is a tragedy of double murder. In Act II, the murder of Gerard of Quierzy is depicted, and in Act V, the murder of Bishop Gaudry: the latter murder being a mirror image of the former. It will not be the case here, as in many works, that the stories of the two murders are simply re-narrated or paraphrased according to Guibert's text. Instead, through a comparison of the two acts, the interpretive pattern that arises from this parallel that Guibert sees will be made clear. In order to do that, however, a few details must necessarily be mentioned. Guibert sketches the background to the first murder very tersely in a quick flashback. Gerard, lord of Quierzy, the well known Merovingian-Carolingian estate on the Oise River, and patron of the convent of Saint-Jean in Laon, was a short, lively, acerbic warrior who, having returned from the First Crusade, had fallen out with Ingelrann of Coucy. The manipulator of the quarrel was once again Sibylle, Ingelrann's wife, who should have had a loving relationship with Gerard. Through his cynical observations, Gerard also incurred the enmity of the bishop. Now the events took their

[47] Ibid., III, 4, 6, 7, (p. 288/290, 290, 292, 306–310, 314, 322, 336).

[48] Ibid., III, 9 (p. 356).

course. There arose a conspiracy against Gerard, encouraged by the bishop and including almost all the leading men of the city (*proceres urbis*); women also participated in it—here Guibert alludes to Sibylle's involvement.[49]

The conspiracy of the nobles against Gerard corresponds to the conspiracy of around forty rebels against Bishop Gaudry—a number that evokes the more than forty Jews who conspired against the Apostle Paul.[50] Gaudry's first trip to Rome provided the bishop with a spurious alibi (November 1110 – ca. March 1111).[51] Gerard's murder took place on the Friday after Epiphany (January 13, 1111), Gaudry's on the Thursday after Easter (April 25, 1112).[52] Gerard's murderers enter from the bishop's palace, coming up through a crypt (an underground passageway) into the choir of the church; in the middle of the church, they come across Gerard, who is leaning against a pillar in prayer.[53] Gaudry's murderers go the reverse way; they come through the bishop's church into his palace and use the same doors as Gerard's murderers.[54] The murderers of the lord receive reinforcements from the house of Guy, the treasurer; later, the people set fire to this house first, and the fire then spreads to the church and the rest of the city.[55]

A dialogue between the victim and the murderers precedes each of the decisive killings. Gerard, the victim, ridicules his killers: "Away with you, you dirty pig" (*Vade, obscoene leccator*);[56] as if in a mirror image, the killer Theudegaud mocks the victim, the bishop hiding in a wine barrel in his own cellar: "Stuck there, perhaps, Lord Isengrim?" (*Hiccine est dominus Isengrinus repositus*). The

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[49] Ibid., III, 5 (p. 296/298). For Gerard of Quierzy, see Dominique Barthélemy, *Les deux âges de la seigneurie banale: Pouvoir et société dans la terre des sires de Coucy (milieu XIe–milieu XIIIe siècle)*, Paris 1985, p. 77–78. William Mendel Newman, *Les seigneurs de Nesle en Picardie (XIIe–XIIIe siècle): Leurs chartes et leur histoire. Etude sur la Noblesse Regionale Ecclésiastique et Laïque*, Paris 1971, p. 16, 158.

[50] Guibert de Nogent, *De vita sua*, III, 7 (p. 332, 334): *Fuisse autem quadragenos qui iuraverint, tradunt*. See Act. 23:13: *errant autem plus quam quadraginta, qui hanc coniurationem fecerant*.

[51] Guibert de Nogent, *De vita sua*, III, 5 (p. 298). The Rome trip begins *circa festivitatem* [...] *sancti Martini*. Since Gaudry learns in Rome of Gerard's murder (III, 6, p. 304), his return can be expected, at the earliest, only around March 1111.

[52] Ibid., III, 5 (p. 298); III, 8 (p. 336).

[53] Ibid., III, 5 (p. 300).

[54] Ibid., III, 8 (p. 336).

[55] Ibid., III, 5 (p. 302); III, 9 (p. 346).

[56] Ibid., III, 5 (p. 302). For the curse-word *leccator*, old French "lecheor," see Labande, p. 302, n. 4.

murderer refers here to the nickname of a wolf from animal epics, which was given to him earlier by the bishop.[57]

While Gerard invokes Maria's help in the face of impending death (*Sancta Maria, adjuva!*), Gaudry, having been pulled out of his barrel by the hair, tries to escape death through a final negotiation: he offers his abdication and heaps of gold, and promises to leave the country—in both cases, to no avail. Gerard is killed by a blow between the nose and forehead; Gaudry receives an axe blow to the head and a deadly stroke under the eyes, across the nose.[58] The legs of the bishop's corpse are broken—here Guibert suggests a parallel to the two thieves on the cross (John 19:31 ff). Theudegaud, the ringleader of the murderers, cuts off the finger with the bishop's ring and takes it for himself. The stripped corpse is thrown on the street, mocked, and pelted with stones and feces. Made unrecognizable through such ill-treatment, it remains lying there.[59] Finally the chamberlain of the bishop recognizes it on account of a scar that Gaudry had received at a tournament.[60] Not until the third hour of the next day can Anselm, the famous scholar from Laon, receive permission from the rebels to recover the corpse. Subjected to more ill-treatment, the corpse is buried without

[57] Guibert de Nogent, *De vita sua*, III, 8 (p. 342). For a discussion of the naming of Isengrinus, the name of the wolf in "Reynard the Fox," see Labande, p. 342, n. 1. He looks to Lucien Foulet, *Le roman de "Renard,"* Paris 1914, p. 75–89, and to the fact that no known version of this story dates from such an early period; Gaudry (or Guibert), however, could have read tales that are now lost. It seems significant to me that Guibert resorts to words and names from vulgar speech and animal fables for the two dialogues. With the end of the tenth century, animal surnames and animal fables are brought into direct connection with political entanglements in the region of Lorriane, Champagne, and Burgundy—a point demonstrated by Karl Ferdinand Werner, Reineke Fuchs. "Burgundischer Ursprung eines europäischen Tierepos," in: *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 124 (1995) p. 375–435; and idem, "Politische und kirchliche Konflikte in Lotharingien und Burgund im Spiegel des lateinischen Tierepos (10.–11. Jahrhundert)," in: *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter* 61 (1997) p. 1–33, here: p. 18f. for the "first attestation" for Isengrinus supplied by Guibert of Nogent. In the above scenes depicted by Guibert, there exists a (conscious?) inversion of the image of the wolf (murderer) who eats the lamb (bishop), as it is used in hagiography such as the *Vita Landiberti* c. 13, ed. Bruno Krusch (MGH SS rer. Mer. 6) Hannover, Leipzig 1913, p. 367.

[58] Guibert de Nogent, *De vita sua*, III, 5 (p. 302): *inter ipsa eum nasi frontisque confinia vulneravit.* III, 8 (p. 342): *sub ocularibus per medium nasi ex transverso percussus occubuit.*

[59] Ibid., III, 8 (p. 342/344).

[60] Ibid., III, 9 (p. 354/356).

officium in the church cloister of Saint-Vincent.[61] So much for the course of events concerning the double murder.

Gerard's murder had catalyzing effects: it created clear fronts in terms of friend-foe relationships. Guibert himself now appeared on the side of the bishop's opponents, although he had defended this man in front of the pope in 1107. Now he stood on the side of the scholar Anselm, and he remained there despite intimidation from the bishop, who wanted to draw him onto his own side or, at the very least, make him neutral.[62] Anselm and the cathedral canons invited the abbot of Nogent to give a sermon for the reconciliation of the church. Guibert spoke about the phrase in Psalms (68:2–3) [actually 69]: "Save me, O God; for the waters have risen up to my neck. I sink in muddy depths and have no foothold." He interprets these verses in the sense of a judgment of divine retribution that has befallen the city. On account of the anger of God, external battles (*forastica bella*) have been carried into the city—that is, civic peace has been broken through the conflicts of the regional nobility. Now lords fight with citizens, and citizens with lords; the monks antagonize the clergy, and the clergy the monks (*abbatiani in episcopanos*)—these are undoubtedly statements formed from impressions of the citizens' uprising of 1112. They lead up to one of the warnings prior to the civil war (*intestina bella*).[63]

At Guibert's request, at the urging of the clergy, and with the people's approval, the killers and their conspirators were pronounced excommunicate;[64] a mirror image to that is the excommunication of Gerard's avengers, which was pronounced by Gaudry as a counterattack, but repudiated and loathed by the clergy and people.[65] This excommunication of the murderers, their banishment, and the destruction incurred by many houses, leads to the undisputed assignment of

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[61] Ibid., III, 10 (356/358).

[62] Ibid., III, 6, 7 (p. 312, 322).

[63] Ibid., III, 6 (p. 306–310).

[64] Ibid., III, 5 (p. 304): the destruction of houses and exile of the murderers through the *praepositus regius* Yvo and the *hominess regii et abbatiae Sancti Johannis* [...] *burgenses*. Guibert proposes the excommunication to *clero iubente populoque volente* (III, 5, p. 310).

[65] Ibid., III, 6 (p. 314). First, Gaudry excommunicates those who had avenged Gerard's murder, *clero et populo excommunicationem talem detestantibus*. Only after awhile and with considerable pressure from public opinion—*diuturna itaque totius urbis et dioceseos simultas adversus episcopum fuit*—does the bishop also excommunicate Gerard's murderers (p. 314/316).

guilt and cleaves the civil society into two camps. On the one side are those supporting the bishop and Gerard's murderers, and on the other side are those who support Gerard or at least condemn his murder.[66] This tapering of a complex conflict down to two people is an effective dramatic simplification.

This simplification is reflected in the presence of the dead Gerard, who is repeatedly recalled to memory until the epilogue. For example, he is evoked in one of Gaudry's second atrocities—an atrocity Gaudry had his black slave commit against another man named Gerard (a foreman over the peasants). He had this Gerard imprisoned in the bishop's palace and then blinded. Suspended [from his office], the bishop departed to Rome for a second time and was reinstated thanks to his gifts. Nevertheless, God was not fooled, and he now gave his vengeance free rein—here begins the fourth act, the lead-up to the catastrophe.[67] The dead Gerard is always present in this catastrophe through the mirroring of his murder in the bishop's murder, as we have seen, and through the detail added about each of the murdered, attacked, or spared nobles, and which position each noble had taken against Gerard and his murder.[68] The head of the corruption in Guibert's eyes was Thomas of Marle, who patronized Gerard's excommunicated murderers as well as the rebellious citizens for a long time, and who surpassed Catilina in cruelty and wickedness.[69] Even dead matter retains the memory of Gerard's murder. Although it survived the burning of the cathedral, the nave pillar on which Gerard had leaned in prayer shortly before his death was later so completely destroyed by a lightning strike that it had to be torn down—in which event Guibert saw a sign of divine judgment (*iudicium Dei*) and its severity.[70]

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[66] Ibid., III, 6 (p. 310). Here is the speech by the two archdeacons and the *proceres qui ab urbana societate desciverant*; for this "urban community," which Guibert characterizes here as a unity with a promising socio-historical concept, see Kaiser, "Laon" (see n. 35), p. 423.

[67] Guibert de Nogent, *De vita sua*, III, 7 (p. 326/328).

[68] Cf. above, p. 135f, n. 50–58. Radulf *episcope discoforus* was a confidant of Gerard, Guibert de Nogent, *De vita sua*, III, 9, (p. 344/346); Wilhelm, son of Haduin, *qui non consenserat civibus in morte Gerardi*, III, 10, (p. 354); the castellans Guinimar and Rainer, to whom Guibert's father was related, belonged to the *societas interfectorum Gerardi*, III, 10, (p. 358).

[69] Ibid., III, 11, 14 (p. 364, 369).

[70] Ibid., III, 12 (p. 376/378).

In contrast to the sympathetically portrayed figure of Gerard, Bishop Gaudry embodies the absolute corruption of the bishop of Laon (*pontificum perversitates*).[71] His depraved character is the cause of his tragic demise, in the course of which he tears apart the city and society of Laon. Thus, we are dealing here with a character tragedy conceived as *Zieldrama*.

How does Guibert depict the bishop? After the brief characterization, in the prologue, of the three predecessors to the bishop's seat, and the short classification of the three failed candidates during its two-year vacancy—as warrior, womanizer, and simoniac respectively[72]—Gaudry is introduced as a bellicose prelate, former chaplain and chancellor, as well as the English king's minion, who was hurriedly promoted to subdeacon and canon of the cathedral of Rouen.[73] Gaudry loved to speak of military matters, hounds, and falconry, something he had discovered in England when he had fled there after receiving the tournament scar (Guibert's memory of the canonical ban against ecclesiastics [participating in falconry] and, at the same time, his slight dig at the English are unmistakable).[74] His love for martial affairs, his feigned lance attack, and, finally, his active participation in the defense of the bishop's palace against rebels armed with stones, arrows, and bows all justified Gaudry's death by sword. As Guibert writes, following Matthew 26:52 (the sword scene in the garden of Gethsemane with the capture of Jesus): "Because he improperly and falsely had taken up the sword, so did he also die by the sword."[75]

Gaudry's lifestyle and his extravagance required a lot of money, a topic that will be elaborated upon later.[76] That his wealth was acquired dishonestly Master Anselm had learned on a

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[71] Ibid., III, 1 (p. 268): *primum est dicere totius mali originem ex pontificum, ut nobis videtur, perversitatibus emersisse.*

[72] Ibid., III, 1 (p. 268/270): Adalbero; III, 2 (p. 270/272): Helinand; III, 3 (p. 272–280): Ingelrannus; III, 4 (p. 282) the two archdeacons Galterius and Ebalus and the *ecclesiae cantor* Odo. The reading *ecclesiae candor*, as in Labande, p. 282, makes little sense and can be amended to recognizable script with *ecclesiae cantor* according to François Dolbeau, "Deux nouveaux manuscrits des *Mémoires* de Guibert de Nogent," in: *Sacris Erudiri* 26 (1983) p. 155–175, here: p. 170. The *cantor* Odo is accounted for in the documentation up to 1104: cf. Saint-Denis, *Apogée* (see n. 8), p. 94, n. 1.

[73] Guibert de Nogent, *De vita sua*, III, 4 (p. 280–284), cf. Davis, "Waldric" (see n. 1), p. 87–89.

[74] Guibert de Nogent, *De vita sua*, III, 4, 9 (p. 294, 354/56).

[75] Ibid., III, 8 (p. 338/340). Translation: Misch, *Autobiographie* (see n. 1), III, 2, (p. 151).

[76] Guibert de Nogent, *De vita sua*, III, 11 (p. 372): *Et cum efficax videretur in elaborandis opibusus, totum subito expendebat in causis inutilibus*, cf. below p. 142f.

trip to England.[77] In his deeds and words, Gaudry was inconstant, frivolous, two-faced, proud, and cruel. Guibert calls him uncommonly unstable, uncommonly shallow (*mire instabilis*, *mire levis*), and talks of his fickleness (*instabilitas*), his insatiable greed (*inexplebilis cupiditas*), his mutability (*volubilitas*), his boundless frivolity (*infinita levitas*), and finally—the abstraction is relatively rare—his cruelty (*crudelitas*).[78] Guibert always gives vivid examples for these characteristics, often taken from personal experience or the experiences of those who were especially close to him, like his cousins. A newly-wed noblewoman who lived in the city Gaudry labeled a "stinking peasant woman" (*merdosam atque rusticam*) because she kept herself aloof from the episcopal milieu.[79] The common people, for their part, were not squeamish in their rage, and called Gaudry "not bishop, but rogue" (*non episcopus, sed furcifer*).[80] Respect for the consecrated personage has completely vanished here, just as at the murder and the mutilation, mistreatment, and slandering of the corpse, an expression of de-sacralization of which Guibert himself is aware. He tries three times to steer the narrative in the opposite direction. As Gaudry is wrenched by the hair from his barrel, Guibert mentions him in a reverse allusion to David's sparing of Saul [1 Samuel 24:11 – "I do not want to stretch out my hand against my lord because he is the anointed of the Lord" (*non extendam manum meam in domino meo quia christus Domini est*): "though a sinner, nevertheless the anointed of the Lord" (*quamvis peccator, christus tamen Domini*), and he speaks then of his "consecrated head, although that of a sinner" (*sacrum quamvis peccatoris verticem*)].[81] Guibert has the scholar Anselm beg the rebels for the corpse of the bishop with reference to the fact that Gaudry had, after all, had the title and the insignia of a bishop (*vel quia episcope nomen et insigne habuerat*).[82] Here the idea is clearly presented that personal aptitude, character, and actions do not correspond with an appointed office and its exterior markers, particularly in the case of the sacred pontificate. The God-given order is disturbed: name (*nomen*) and thing (*res*) diverge wildly.

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[77] Ibid., III, 4 (p. 294).

[78] Ibid., III 4 (p. 294): *mire instabilis, mire levis*; III, 7 (p. 336): *instabilitas*; III, 7 (p. 324): *inexplebilis cupiditas*; III, 8 (p. 344): *volubilitas* [...] *mentis et linguae*; III, 11 (p. 327): *infinita levitas*; III, 7 (p. 326): *crudelitas*.

[79] Ibid., III, 11 (p. 372).

[80] Ibid., III, 8 (p. 340).

[81] Ibid., III, 8 (p. 342).

[82] Ibid., III, 10 (p. 356).

The murderer of the bishop, Theudegaud, also embodies the destruction of order. Guibert portrays him as a social climber and, at the same time, as a most destructive man. The poll-tax payer (*capite census*) of the abbey of Saint-Vincent, Theudegaud was for a long time an official and provost in the service of Ingelrann of Coucy. Scholarship calls him a picture-perfect official. He oversaw a toll-bridge station in the north of Laon, and occupied his position rather in the style of a late-medieval robber baron. When Ingelrann fell into disgrace, he joined the commune and became the leader (*dux, incentor*) of the rebels and then the murderer of the bishop (*peremtor episcopi*).[83] As a mark of his role as ringleader, he wore on his finger the bishop's ring, which he had taken away from Bishop Gaudry when he cut off his finger (*episcopalem annulum digito praeferens se praesulem testabatur*).[84] The reversal of order is manifest. The murderer wears the marks of office, the insignia of the bishop, proving himself with it to be *praesul*—the word is known to denote predominantly the bishop or abbot in medieval Latin, but can also apply to the king or another secular officeholder, or, as is common in classical Latin, to the provost or leader. The sacred symbol of the bishop's ring becomes here a macabre sign of power. In the last scene in which Theudegaud appears, the reversal of order becomes particularly obvious, in the sense of a conscious denial of Christian order. Theudegaud was caught by Ingelrann's knights two years after the bishop's murder and hanged. It was during Lent, he had eaten and drunk just until vomiting, and then, stroking his stomach, he said blasphemously (*quod dici nefas est*, says Guibert) that he was full of the glory of God (*gloria Dei*). Without an indication of repentance before God or men, without showing any feeling, he walked along the street. Guibert immerses Theudegaud's end in the hazy circle of heresies that he describes more precisely in other places.[85]

The symbolism in Guibert's story becomes still clearer when we turn to the third question.

[83] Ibid., III, 8, 11 (p. 340/342, 366).

[84] Ibid., III, 11 (p. 366).

[85] Ibid., III, 14 (p. 396).

Which immanent and transcendent signs portend and, at the same time, elucidate the catastrophe?

Simony is the stigma of the wicked and evil. Helinand bought the bishop's office from Henry I with English gold. Ingelrann assigned church goods to the king and made all of his successors simoniacs, since they did not reclaim the goods.[86] The cathedral cantor Hugo promised the king a multitude of gifts should he be enthroned as bishop on a Sunday, but he suddenly died and his body was carried off for burial in the church, where the displayed corpse burst open and poured a stinking fluid into the choir of the cathedral. It was similar to what happened with the traitor Judas: his middle burst and all his organs poured out (*Crepuit medius et diffusa sunt omnia viscera eius*).[87] The *introitus* of the dead person is, so to speak, a reflective punishment: the decaying corpse exposes the simoniac as a traitor to Christ.

Guibert himself and Abbot Adalbero from Saint Vincent had offered their hands to the elected Gaudry for a simoniacal bargain, rendering 20 pounds sterling to the papal courtiers at the election investigation. One of the papal chamberlains, a Cluniac monk, took it a step further, offering the "gift of obedience" (*munus ab obsequio*) [= homage/subjection]; Guibert, however, indignantly refused to do so.[88] One fall from grace was sufficient for him.

Finally, in Guibert's eyes, a symbolic role belongs to the fire that destroyed the cathedral and the surrounding churches and houses, a fire that originated in the house of the simoniac archdeacon and treasurer, Guy.[89] Only with the second of Gaudry's successors, Bartholomaeus of Joux, was the election process legal (*legitime* [...] *eligitur*), that is, without simoniacal practices: signs of a new time, a new beginning. [90]

For the church reformers at the end of the eleventh century and the beginning of the twelfth, simony was unquestionably the evil of the time, which revealed most clearly the corrupting

[86] Ibid., III, 2, 3 (p. 270, 274).

[87] Act. 1:18; cf. Guibert de Nogent, *De vita sua*, III, 4 (p. 282). For the identification of the cathedral cantor Odo, see above n. 72.

[88] Guibert de Nogent, *De vita sua*, III, 4 (p. 290/292).

[89] Ibid., III, 9 (p. 346/348).

[90] Ibid., III, 14 (p. 396); for him and his surname "von Joux" instead of "von Jur" or "Vir," see Saint-Denis, *Apogée* (see n. 8), p. 112f.

power of money. Simony and money were inextricably linked in 1100. Behind this situation stood a monetary upswing, a ubiquity of money in all social relationships, and a moral ambivalence toward money, none of which escaped Guibert. Quite the contrary: as a proponent of church reform, as a Benedictine monk and abbot, and as a committed observer of the ideal of poverty, he develops a downright obsession with money. As a result, he becomes one of those authors who most keenly grasped, at the time, the historical changes to monetary economics and minting. For Guibert, money is not merely a neutral means of payment and storing value, a tangible thing such as a silver coin.[91] It has a symbolic meaning; it serves as an indicator for moral and political corruption as well as for moral consciousness. This is first due to the fact that it is so closely linked with simony, such as in the case of Bishop Helinand, who as chaplain to the English King Edward accumulated "mountains of money" and, with it, bought the bishop's office.[92] Then comes the example of Gaudry, who relied totally on his sterling during his election and the hearing before Paschal II over his consecration. Above all, however, money's symbolic meaning arises from the fact that it repeatedly surfaces in all forms of bribery and the perversion of justice. Gaudry's path toward the catastrophe is paved with money: promises of money and gifts of gold and silver are supposed to extricate him from suspicion over Gerard's murder.[93] In Rome, on the occasion of the murder of the second Gerard, he seeks to buy himself free from suspension with presents.[94] A heap of gold and silver leads him to accept the first commune established in Laon.[95] The king, bribed with presents and payments from the citizens, also endorses the first commune.[96] Finally, Bishop Gaudry and the citizens engage in a bidding war to win over the king: the citizens offer 400 pounds in order to save their commune; the bishop and the nobles offer 700 in order to have Louis VI abolish it. Since the king gives in to the highest bidder, he makes himself morally semi-responsible and also, on account of his perjury, legally semi-

[91] Cf. Kaiser, "Geld" (see n. 12), passim.

[92] Guibert de Nogent, *De vita sua*, III, 2 (p. 270).

[93] Ibid., III, 6 (p. 316).

[94] Ibid., III, 7 (p. 328).

[95] Ibid., III, 7 (p. 322).

[96] Ibid.

responsible for the consequent catastrophe.[97] Gaudry does not escape the catastrophe, even though, in the greatest need, he promises the murderers boundless coin (*infinitas pecunias*) in an attempt to save himself. They forgo the money because they want to take his life.[98]

From where does Gaudry's money come? First, from England, as we have already seen; secondly, from his rigorous taxation of the citizens and the fiscal exploitation of an abused jurisdiction;[99] thirdly, from the profits of the coinage manipulation. In a secondary plotline, Guibert discusses the coinage manipulation as one of Gaudry's political mistakes that explains the uprising.[100] From this relationship, money acquires its symbolic meaning. On the one hand, Gaudry's action corrupts justice (*munerum susceptiones totius judicii sequi solet eversio*); on the other hand, it brings about economic ruin because the money that the minter (*monetae percussores*) coins with Gaudry's approval is counterfeit. As such, it is a sign of inner falsehood. With its bishop's staff as a symbol of both the episcopal office and the bishop's minting prerogative, the new coinage, once exposed as inferior, becomes an empty and evil sign (*pessima caraxatura*), and thus, is derided by the people and not accepted as currency. The falsity of the coinage is a symbol of the falsity of the bishop. Guibert sees the economic effects of Gaudry's minting politics from a moral perspective. The miserliness of the rich leads to lies, perjury, and poverty, and robs the land of truth, justice, and wealth. Neither war nor robbery nor fire has afflicted the diocese more heavily than this coinage manipulation. The inherent falsity of the coinage extends to Guibert's moral interpretation. It becomes a sign of the bishop's and nobles' depravity, a sign of decline.

Transcendent signs, visions, dreams, unusual natural phenomenon, and mysterious analogies are inserted repeatedly by Guibert at critical points within the drama. They serve, as it were, as an explanation for the point that an inexplicable event, in mysterious but often also manifest ways, is subject to the will of God and is directed by the hand of God. Shortly before Gerard of Quierzy entered the cathedral where he was to be murdered, he described his nocturnal dream to one of those nobles sworn against him. Two bears had ripped his liver or lungs from his body—a clear

[97] Ibid., III, 7 (p. 330). Guibert's anti-Capetian bias is evident in the reproach against the simoniacal behaviour of Louis VI; see Saint-Denis, "Pouvoirs," (see n. 7), p. 273 and n. 46 (p. 273).

[98] Guibert de Nogent, *De vita sua*, III, 8 (p. 342).

[99] Ibid., III, 7 (p. 324), for the jurisdiction.

[100] Ibid., III, 7 (p. 324/326), for what follows.

reference to his two murderers, Rorigo and Hugo. Then follows a dilatory insertion, which also serves to explain that Gerard did not suffer death without fault of his own: he was excommunicated because he had kidnapped two young German nobles, who had come to learn French in the church of Saint-Amand in Barisis, and had demanded and received a ransom from them, including a valuable ermine jacket. This he now wore and, over it, a purple mantel—a criminal possession on the body, covered with a colour by which one could discern even from a distance the usurpation or, at least, the dishonest acquisition. The murder knife met, therefore, with no unsullied innocence.[101] Here is presented the idea of an immanent justice, which reveals itself in such symbolic correlations.[102]

According to Guibert, God's will reveals itself most explicitly in prophetic statements drawn from the Biblical readings at the beginning of both Gaudry's pontificate and that of his successor. At Gaudry's election, the Evangelist's word read: "A sword shall pierce through your soul" (Luke 2:35). Gaudry seeks to have this grim statement forgotten and replaced by the second reading, which he himself opened to during his entry into the cathedral of Langres [through the practice of the *sortes biblicae*] and which he regarded as a propitious omen: "Woman, behold your son" (John 19:26).[103] Nevertheless, the first reading is fulfilled, and Guibert picks up after the description of the bishop's murder just as if he were providing a justification for it. Namely, in a dilatory insertion, he describes a conversation that occurred two days earlier between the bishop and distinguished cathedral canons, among whom was likely the scholar Anselm. Gaudry solemnly denies ever having gossiped about the base parentage of the canons before the king. If he has ever done such a thing, the Eucharist he just received at the altar should bring about his doom and the sword of the Holy Spirit should pierce his soul (see Eph. 6:17).[104] Two days later, this self-denunciation and, at the same time, the word of the Evangelist are fulfilled.

God's justice is not always comprehensible to men. For Guibert, it is a mysterious and wondrous judgment of God (*mirabile mysticumque Dei judicium*) that the fire at the cathedral spread

[101] Ibid., III, 5 (p. 298/300).

[102] See also Guibert's reflections on the occasion of the collapse of the column on which Gerard had leaned in prayer: III, 12 (p. 378).

[103] Ibid., III, 4 (p. 292/294).

[104] Ibid., III, 8 (p. 344). For the problem of the base parentage of the canons, among whom the scholar Anselm also belonged, see Kaiser, "Laon" (see n. 35), p. 423.

through a spark to the convent of Saint-Jean, Notre Dame la Profonde, and Saint-Pierre.[105] In Guibert's view, the supernatural signs and visions that he collects together in the epilogue as an interpretive conclusion for the entire drama are undisputed and clear. Within that list belongs the moon that hung over the city and heralded its downfall; the birth of a monstrous boy in the shape of half a Siamese twin; the nightly noise of demons; and finally, the vision of a monk of Nogent, who saw three large, awkwardly laid parallel beams before the knees of the crucifix and the place, blood-smeared, where Gerard was murdered. This vision is, for Guibert, the key to the whole drama. He interprets Christ on the cross as the bishop (*eminentiorem ecclesiae personam*), and the three beams as the three obstacles that lay in his way as he approached his end: his simoniacal election, Gerard's murder, and his offence against the people. The blood signifies his unatoned crime.[106] In this way Guibert ends his drama: both nature and the supernatural have testified to the fact that a great evil (*malum maximum*) occurred here.

Conclusio

We have come to the end! Formally constructed as a character tragedy and a *Zieldrama*, Guibert's text sets out the conflict, the tragic discord between human passions, between human intention and design—plotting and murder on one side, and, on other, divine omnipotence, providence, judgment, and vengeance. A few good men, such as Anselm of Laon, *vir totius Franciae, immo latini orbis lumen in liberalibus disciplinis ac tranquillis moribus*, stand opposite many wicked men.[107] Anselm lets his arms drop before the superiority of the papal courtiers (*palatini*), since it is difficult to wrench the club from the hand of Hercules, as Guibert says with the words of Macrobius.[108]

Within this drama, the opportunities for entanglement are manifold. Guibert experienced this for himself; he confesses those times he erred, and shows how he came to right discernment and to recognition of divine providence in this struggle. He wrote his text in the time of the auspicious new beginning under the legitimate (that is, not elected simoniacally) Bishop Bartholomaeus;

[105] Guibert de Nogent, *De vita sua*, III, 9 (p. 348).

[106] Ibid., III, 11 (p. 376).

[107] Ibid., III, 4 (p. 284).

[108] Ibid., III, 4 (p. 290).

however, the future remains uncertain—during his election, did Bartholomaeus not open to the same Biblical passage as Gaudry for a prediction concerning his pontificate (Luke 2:35 "A sword shall pierce through your soul")?[109] The statement prompts cautious reservation, an attitude that the abbot of Nogent, a "sensitive, introverted observer," adopted the whole of his life.[110]

Guibert wrote the tragedy of Laon from the perspective of an observer embedded in the chain of events. He is often characterized as a memoir writer, a monkish journalist (*moine journaliste*).[111] I have tried to show him as a "tragedy writer," according to his consciously fashioned scenic subject material. His *Monodiae* develop into a *tragoedia* through his own connection to the contemporary historical events. His part, that is, his partial guilt in this dramatic event, becomes evident (compare his advocacy of Gaudry with his last, vain effort to move the bishop to relent). In this respect, this part of the text is also a "profession"—confession in the sense of Augustine. At the same time, the *tragoedia* is an attempt to generate a morally instructive effect through a description of the culpable actors and the omnipotence, providence, and judgment of God. For Guibert himself, the events in Laon under Gaudry had a cathartic effect. He now stands on the side of the good. They serve as cautionary examples to future bishops. Restrained hope under Bartholomaeus is permitted, but God's providence is ultimately unfathomable.

A last question can only be raised here, and that concerns the historical accuracy of Guibert's account—in the case of Thomas Becket, due to the especially generous source material, perhaps this question can be resolved. Guibert himself is aware of the problem concerning the translation of deeds into words. I would like to give him the final say with a quotation from the foreword to his *Gesta Dei per Francos*:[112]

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[109] Ibid., III, 14 (p. 396).

[110] Cf. Kaiser, "Geld" (see n. 12), p. 293, 314, concerning Guibert's observation of the changes to the money economy and minting technology of his time.

[111] Cf. Michel Parisse, "Guibert de Nogent, le moine journaliste," in: *Moines et religieux au moyen âge*, ed. Jacques Berlioz, Paris 1994.

[112] Guibert de Nogent, *Dei gesta per Francos*, ed. Robert B. C. Huygens (Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 127A) Turnholt 1996, p. 82: *Quid enim mirum si fallimur dum aliena facta referimus, cum nos ne nostra ipsorum quidem cogitations ac opera non dico verbis exprimere, sed ne colligere tacita saltem mente possimus? Quid de intentionibus loquar, quae adeo latere plerumque probantur, ut vix ab ipso interioris hominis acumine discernantur?*

"What wonder if we err during the retelling of strange deeds, when we cannot even find the right words to express our own thoughts and actions. What should I say first about the intentions (*intentiones*), which are buried so deeply most of the time that the gaze of the inner man (*homo interior*) is hardly able to discern them?"

References to the Bishop of Laon's Murder (1112) from the Twelfth to the Fourteenth Centuries

The uprising of the citizens of Laon, the murder of Bishop Gaudry, and the burning of the cathedral had a lasting resonance in the minds of contemporaries. This is demonstrated by the writings composed under the direct impression of these events, writing such as Guibert's *Monodiae* as well as the earlier incidental references in non-historiographic works, and, above all, the numerous mentions in chronicles. The (preliminary) list of evidence offered here to accompany the map traces back to a strategic perusal of sources, in which task I was aided by Ms. Karin Fuchs. The list includes 28 testimonies. This number can certainly be increased still more—for example, through supplements from the English regions. The relations between Laon and England were known to be very close, for which reason the clerics of Laon made one, and to be sure the longest, of their collection trips to England after the burning of the cathedral in order to finance the new building.[113] In England, a certain interest in Gaudry's fate was to be expected, given that he was Henry I's former chancellor.[114] The single attestation from England (n. 22) that I am aware of to date can, however, only be identified as English with certain qualifications. Radulph Niger had stayed for a long time in France before he returned to England after the death of Henry II (1189); he became a canon in Lincoln, and there he wrote his world chronicle, for which he drew on Anselm's continuation of Sigibert of Gembloux's chronicle concerning the events in Laon.[115]

[113] Cf. Reinhold Kaiser, "Quêtes itinérantes pour financer la construction des églises (XIe–XIIe siècles)," in: *Le Moyen Age* 101 (1995) p. 205–225.

[114] Cf. Davis, "Waldrich" (see n. 1).

[115] For his life and work, see Ludwig Schmugge, Art. "Radulphus Niger," in: *Lexikon des Mittelalters* vol. 7, München 1995, col. 394.

The initial overall impression remains, then, that the events in Laon received the most attention in the bishopric of Reims and the adjacent diocese of Liege, which included Flanders and the (romance-speaking) part of lower Lorraine—those regions with which Laon maintained strong contacts.

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Among the 28 references, the overwhelming majority are found in chronicles, in the narrow sense of annalistic works. These include the annals that, independently of one another, emerged from Reims (n. 10), Châlons-sur-Marne (n. 3), Saint-Médard de Soissons (n. 9), as well as the notes of the chronicle of Cambrai, the French version of the *Gesta episcoporum Cameracensium* (n. 13). That is the fallout of events in the historiography of the neighbouring diocese. Within that list may also rank the notes of the chronicle of Lobiense (n. 8), which seem to trace back to lost annals of Liege. However, the marginalia by Aegidius of Orval in the autograph of the *Gesta episcoporun Leodiensium* (n. 7), known as the short chronicle of Liege, is, in this passage, apparently extracted from the chronicle of Sigebert of Gembloux and its continuation.[116]

Most of the annal or chronicle references to the events in Laon go back to the continuations of this famous world chronicle of Sigebert of Gembloux (Oct. 5, 1112). Two of the 21 continuations and additions that L. C. Bethmann has published mention the bishop's murder in Laon.[117] Anselm, abbot of Gembloux (1113–1136), provided Sigebert's chronicle with an addendum for the year 1112 and a note about Sigebert's death, and then wrote his own continuation up to the year 1135. To Anselm's addendum belongs the fairly detailed text n. 25, which states the causes, circumstances, and date of Gaudry's murder (Thursday, the 25th of April, 1112); it mentions the destruction of the cathedral, the convent of Saint-Jean, and the adjacent churches, and finally, the exemplary punishment meted out to the instigators of the revolt. The second version is found in the *Continuatio Praemonstratensis*, which was written by a Premonstratensian, perhaps in the Prémontré monastery (in the diocese of

[116] Cf. Georg Waitz, "Über die Annales von Lüttich, Fosses und Lobbes," in: *Göttinger Nachrichten*, 1870, p. 302–309.

[117] MGH SS 6, Hannover 1844, p. 375–474.

Laon) founded in 1120/21 by Norbert of Xanten approximately 18 kilometers west of Laon, or perhaps earlier by Bishop Bartholomaeus, in 1124, from the Premonstratensian monastery of Saint-Martin of Laon that was transformed into a church for priests.[118] The reference is extremely brief (n. 26), remarking only on Gaudry's murder by the citizens and naming his two successors, Hugo and Bartholomaeus.

Anselm's detailed version was adopted literally in certain parts, in other parts in a slightly modified form, and in other parts in a greatly truncated form. In total, at least nine textual attestations trace back directly to Anselm: n. 1, 2, 6, 11, 12, 17, 22, 24, 28; four refer to the *Continuatio Praemonstratensis*: Robert of Saint-Marianus of Auxerre (n. 23), William of Nangis (n. 16), the anonymous chronicler from Laon (n. 6), as well as Vincent of Beauvais (n. 28), with the last two referring to both continuations as templates. The wide dissemination of Sigebert's chronicle and its continuations contributed much to the events in Laon becoming part of historical tradition in the regions of lower Lorraine, Flanders, and France.

Considering the role that Norbert of Xanten, the Premonstratensians, and, above all, the abbey of Saint-Martin of Laon played in the work of restoring the diocese under Bishop Bartholomaeus, it is not surprising that the events in Laon were commonly referred to in the Premonstratensian historiography as, so to speak, a gloomy background upon which order had been established. This is the case in the *Continuatio Praemonstratensis* itself (n. 26), in the annals of the two adjacent monasteries, Parc and Ninove (n. 4 and 5), and also in the two world chronicles by Robert of Auxerre (n. 23) and the anonymous chronicler of Laon (n. 6). In the latter case, it is assumed that the author was an English-born Premonstratensian who lived in the abbey of Saint-Martin of Laon.[119] His text follows almost word-for-word the text by Anselm of Gembloux. This is all the more astounding, since, in the following sentences, he quotes Guibert of Nogent's scene with Gaudry's feigned jousting attack and his citation from Ovid, in the process making explicit reference to the *abbas Wibertus de Noviganto*.[120] Then there follows a story not transmitted in the contemporary

[118] Norbert Backmund, *Die mittelalterlichen Geschichtsschreiber des Prämonstratenserordens*, Averbode 1972 (Bibliotheca Analectorum Praemonstratensium 10), p. 252.

[119] Ibid., p. 267.

[120] Staatsbibliothek Berlin, Ms. Phillipps 1880, fol.125v°, cf. Luc d'Achery, *Venerabilis Guiberti abbatis B. Mariae de Novigento opera omnia*, Paris 1651, p. 646, reprint in J. P. Migne, PL 156, col. 1167A.

sources (Guibert and Hermann of Tournai) about a silk scarf that the English queen gave to Bishop Gaudry to take with him as a present for the French queen. Gaudry gave it to the Blessed Mother instead of the French queen. Confronted by both queens, the bishop answered that he gave the scarf to the *Reginae Franciae*, who is the pious mother of God (*quae est pia Dei mater*), upon which response both queens voiced their approval of the present. I do not know from when the association of the Blessed Mother of Laon as Queen of France dates. Here, in connection with Gaudry, it functions as a political-ecclesiastical defense of the bishop, who was harshly criticized by Guibert, and, in his wake, also by the anonymous author. The anonymous Laon author ends his lengthy chapter on Gaudry with the excerpt from the *Continuatio Praemonstratensis* (n. 26). To the events of 1112, he himself brings nothing that was spoken about in local tradition.

In the texts not drawn up as annals, recourse to the events in Laon and references to the bishop's murder have many different functions, such as a descriptive addendum in Orderic Vitalis' work (n. 20). In his *Historia ecclesiastica*, as he describes the battle of Tinchebrai (Sept. 28, 1106), Orderic relates how Gaudry, the chaplain of the English King Henry I, participated in the battle and took prisoner the Norman Duke Robert, the king's brother; then he proceeds with a reference to Gaudry's elevation soon thereafter to the bishopric of Laon and his murder.

In a totally different context, but likewise only as a descriptive addendum, Petrus Cantor (died 1197; before 1173, master at the cathedral school of Reims; 1183, cantor at Notre Dame of Paris) mentions Gaudry. In his tractate on the virtues and vices, *Verbum abbreviatum*, he places the example of Master Anselm (*exemplum magistri Anselmi*) alongside the Biblical story of Joseph and his brothers as a model of exemplary humility. Namely, when the seneschal Etienne de Garlande, after the events in Laon and the punitive expedition against the rebels, wanted to elevate to knighthood Anselm's nephews, whom he had initially imprisoned with the others, the master opposed this with reference to their peasant ancestry.[121] Textual attestation n. 21 thus serves only as an illustrative explanation for the temporal and political-social circumstances in which the *exemplum* is set.

For Hermann of Tournai, the events in Laon are also not really the subject matter of the *Miracula S. Mariae*. He touches on them only briefly, skimming over them quickly in the course of his prefatory chapter. The murders of Gerard of Quierzy and the bishop, as well as the burning of

[121] Migne, PL 205, col. 151A/B.

the cathedral, the churches, and houses, are offered as a summary (n. 18a), outlined as a somber background upon which reconstruction is carried out. The mention of the bishop's murder, at the beginning of the third book of miracles, serves only as a temporal classification—in a way, as a chronological fixation point (n. 18b).

The events are set apart in the work of Suger of Saint-Denis (1081–1151) through a literary technique. He integrates the account of the uprising and the bishop's murder into a fictive speech designed to incite the bellicosity of King Louis VI, who, early in the year 1115, advanced against Thomas of Marle and conquered his two castles, Crécy-sur-Serre and Nouvion-Catillon (also known as Nouvion-l'Abbesse, near Crécy) (n. 27). This literary device of Suger was included, but weakened to indirect speech, in the *Grandes Chroniques de France* (n. 14), where consciously, or through a translation mistake, blame for the abolishment of the commune was cleared from the king and attributed instead to the king's adversaries.

In the pages above, we have tried to demonstrate the strength of Guibert of Nogent's literary composition of the events (n. 15). He wrote his "tragedy' around 1114/5, and thus from a certain temporal distance and under the influence of a restoration already beginning to take hold under Bishop Bartholomaeus.[122]

This does not apply to the earliest chronological attestation of the bishop of Laon's murder, Hugo Farsit's *Liber Iocii*, written immediately after the trauma of the events, in 1112 in Soissons, a neighbour to Laon (n. 19). Hugo Farsit's attestation remained completely unnoticed in previous research concerning the uprising of Laon.[123] In his work, the clergy's shock over the atrocity is best

[122] Guibert's text (Book III, c. 7, 8, 9, 10) is borrowed, in large part, word-for-word in the *Martyrologium et necrologium ecclesiae Laudunensis* of the thirteenth century, partially ed. by Georges Bourgin, *Guibert de Nogent: Histoire de sa vie (1053–1124)*, Paris 1907, p. 235–239; see ibid. p. XLIIIf.

[123] The text of the four books of the *Otium Hugonis ad Heluuidem* has been ascribed to Hugues de Champfluery (from 1150–1172 chancellor to Louis VII and from 1159–1179 bishop of Soissions) by André Wilmart, "Les *loisirs* ou sentiments intimes d'un chancelier de France," in *Revue bénédictine* 51 (1939) p. 182–204, who also published Hugo's letter to Heluuide as a prologue (p. 194–204). A. Vernet, "*Loisirs* d'un chanoine de Soissons," in *Bulletin de la Société nationale des Antiquaires de France* (1959), p. 108–111, correctly draws on the *Histoire littéraire de la France*, vol. 12, Paris 1763, p. 294–298, here: p. 297f. for the identification of the author and ascribes the text to Hugo Farsit. The first book was written in 1112, the year of Gaudry's murder, as is apparent from the text excerpt above from chapter 56; the remaining books followed year by year. Hugo Farsit is known as the writer of the *Miracula B. Mariae Virginis in urbe Suessionensi*, ed. J. P. Migne, PL 179, col. 1777–1800, in which stories of wonders from the years 1128 to 1132 during the "mal des ardents" (1128), the ergot poisoning, were recorded

reflected. Hugo sees this shock in light of an eschatological prophecy: "for the end of the world presses upon us" (*Finis enim saeculi perurget nos*). This and other contemporary events cause him almost to give up on life: "we grow tired of living and of seeing contempt for the church" (*Tedet nos vivere et videre contemptum ecclesie*).[124] He does not yet know, like Guibert, the glimmer of hope for a new beginning, but instead suffers the experience of his present. The anguish from what he has witnessed robs him of his soul's strength.[125] Here one can discern, differently than in the sparse annal and chronicle accounts, the author's personal distress, which Guibert had overcome thanks to both the confessional structure of his *Monodiae* and his literary design.

(written after 1143). In addition, he wrote the tractate *De gratia conservanda* and a letter to the general chapter of the Premonstratensians who gathered in Koblenz in the year 1143. By letter correspondence with A. Vernet (April 14, 1993), I learned that François Dolbeau is preparing an edition of the text for the *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis*. François Dolbeau kindly sent me a copy of the transcript. I received microfilm copies of the handwriting through the kindness of the Bibliothèque municipale of Troyes. I would like to return to Hugo Farsit's text at a later date.

[124] Bibliothèque municipale de Troyes, Mss. 433, fol. 66r°.

[125] *Cuius* (i.e., contemptus ecclesiae) *dolor debilitate vires animae nostre,* ibid.