Studying Scripture in the Early University

In the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the teaching of Scripture assumed an institutional form invested with magisterial and judicial power. Fourteenth-century schoolmen took the results for granted. Around 1301 Master James of Viterbo, attempting to define the true character of “Christian government” in the midst of grave conflict between pope and king, confidently wove into his argument two similes: Spiritual power is to temporal, he explained, as the architectural art is to all subservient crafts and as the science of Scripture is to all ancillary and humanly constructed sciences. Just as learning in Holy Scripture (scientia sacrae scripturæ) sits in judgment on learning in the material sciences (quamlibet scientiam physicam), so spiritual power judges physical power. Three generations later, Pierre d’Ailly, a more famous Parisian master about to become university chancellor, set out the principles governing judgments rendered in matters of faith. Supreme judicial authority belonged to the pope, as did a lesser and subordinate judicial authority to bishops, each to define matters of the faith as judges (iudicialiter definire). Doctors of theology, by comparison, were to define matters of the faith as teachers (doctrinaliter definire) because the faith rested on Sacred Scripture and masters of theology had the task of teaching it (ad doctores theologos pertinet sacram scripturam docere). This made masters of theology and preachers of Scripture, as it were, the highest order in the Church (quasi precipuus in ecclesia). In an ideal world, bishops defining judicially and masters defining doctrinally would coincide in one and the same person. This same outlook informed Jean Gerson’s tractate


2 “Prima ergo conclusio est, quod ad sanctam sedem apostolicam pertinet auctoritate iudiciali suprema circa ea quae sunt fidei iudicialiter definire. ... Secunda conclusio est, quod ad episcopos catholicos pertinet auctoritate inferiori et subordinata circa ea quae sunt fidei iudicialiter definire. Tertia conclusio est, quod ad doctores theologos pertinet determinatione doctrinali et scholastica circa ea quae sunt fidei doctrinaliter definire. Et haec probatur, quia ad eos pertinet ea quae sunt fidei per modum doctrinæ determinare et doctrinaliter definire ad quos pertinet sacram scripturam docere ... Constat autem quod officium praedicatoris est maxime praecipuum theologiae, sicut et exposito scripturæ, et per consequens patet, quod doctorum theologorum officium est quasi praecipuum in ecclesia. Dicitur autem non simpliciter sed 'quasi praecipuum' propter officium episcoporum, quod maius est. Et ideo licet episcopale et doctorale officium convenienter si-
on the examination of doctrine in the Church, reviewed in the context of heretical groups assailing magisterial authority. The primary issue was whether a teaching conformed to Scripture; of this the *examinator authenticus et finalis iudex* was to be a general council, the *examinator iuridicus* the pope, the *examinator iuridicus et ordinarius* the local prelate, the *examinator partim authenticus, partim doctrinalis* a licensed theologian, and the *examinator per modum doctrinae* anyone sufficiently versed in Holy Scripture.

The minor premise in each of these arguments about judicial authority must be singled out for closer scrutiny in this essay: their assumption that scriptural learning came first in Church and university and that doctors of theology came first in scriptural learning. This assertion, treated as self-evident, sprang from the much deeper claim that Scripture authoritatively revealed and defined ultimate truth, speaking the very words of God authored by God’s own Spirit. That conviction, already a thousand years old, generated a new institutional embodiment in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. A licensed corporation of theologians, first formally recognized as such in extant documents after the year 1200, based its claim to status in Church and university upon its unique expertise in Scripture. For these masters of theology exegesis represented more than a spiritual gift or personal vocation: studying and interpreting Scripture inhered in a formal office endowed with specific powers and responsibilities.

Claims for the preeminence of scriptural study in Church or university turn out to work much like those made for spiritual authorities in medieval politics: the more high-sounding the claim in theory, the less realizable, often, in practice. Theologians, it now appears, were relatively few in number, far out-numbered by graduates from the arts and law faculties, probably as well by graduates from the medical faculty. After the thirteenth century they came almost exclusively from the ranks of proficient theologians.

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*Fortsetzung Fußnote von Seite 17*

...mul in una persona concurrent, quia valde conveniens sit, ut eadem persona simul possit iudicialiter et sciat doctrinaliter circa ea quae sunt fidei diffinire..."; Carolus du Plessis d’Argentre, Collectio iudiciorum de novis erroribus, Tomus I (Paris 1726) 76–77.

3 “Attendendum in examinatione doctrinarum primo et principaliter si doctrina sit conformis Sacrae Scripturae, tam in se quam in modi traditione... Examinator authenticus et finalis iudex doctrinarum fidem tangenti concilium est generale; deducitur haec consideratio primitio autortate generalis concilii Constantiensis... Examinator iuridicus doctrinarum fidem tangenti, papa est supremus in terris post generale concilium uel cum ipso; deducitur auctoritate can- nonum cum ratione morali praesupposita fide. ...Examinator iuridicus et ordinarius doctrinarum huiusmodi est praetatus quilibet in sua iurisdictione, cui communicat inquisitor; deducitur haec consideratio per canonicas monitiones et censuras praelatorum... Examinator partim authenti- cus, partim doctrinalis huiusmodi doctrinarum est quilibet in sacra theologiae facultate licentiatu aut doctor; deducitur haec consideratio per formam verborum quibus datur licentia magistralis.... Examinator huiusmodi doctrinarum est per modum doctrinae quilibet in sacris litteris sufficienter eruditus; deducitur haec consideratio per illam maxim a Philosopho positam, quod eorum quae quisque novit est iudex bonus.”; Jean Gerson, De examinatione doctrinarum; ed. Glorieux, Oeuvres complètes (Paris 1973) 9.465, 459–62.

4 Paul de Vooght, Les sources de la doctrine chrétienne (Bruges 1954); Hermann Schüssler, Der Primat der Heiligen Schrift als theologisches und kanonistisches Problem im Spätmittelalter (Wiesbaden 1977).
religious. Lawyers and medical doctors earned more income and thereby lured away many bright young men, a regular source of complaint. Lawyers generally exercised greater influence in the Church, filling many of the major posts and managing most day-to-day affairs. That is to say, the claim to status for masters of Scripture, however seriously intended, was not easily translated into social and institutional reality.

That claim, moreover, was also challenged from within. Roger Bacon, among others, issued a famous protest in the 1260s, just as the faculty of theology reached full strength in Paris:

The fourth sin in the study of theology is that a master's summary (summa magistralis), namely, the Book of Sentences, is preferred to the Text set for the faculty of theology. After lecturing on (legerit) the Sentences, the man presumes himself a master of theology, although he has not heard lectures (audiat) on a thirtieth part of his Text. At Paris and everywhere, a bachelor who reads the Text yields in position (succumbit) to the lecturer on the Sentences, who is honored and preferred in all things. For at Paris he who lectures on the Sentences has at will the main hour for lecturing, also a servant, and a room with the religious. But he who lectures on the Bible lacks both, and begs for a lecture hour at the pleasure of the lecturer on the Sentences.6

Smalley found Bacon “extremely conservative,” even a “reactionary rebel”7. But his complaint about the masters’ intellectual commitment to the text of the Bible, whatever its occasion or accuracy, sounds a useful warning. The study of Scripture may not have predominated in Church and university exactly as its proponents claimed. And yet Bacon’s very objections presumed the larger shift that underlies this paper: What did it mean to make of Scripture a set textbook for lectures and to locate exegetical expertise in a faculty of theology?

This essay, too broad in scope but thereby true perhaps in some larger way to the spirit of Beryl Smalley, will propose that what is represented in her book as a more or less continuously developing story might better be construed as two major cultural shifts. The first, from about 1050 to 1200, involved the search for an adequate form whereby to transform divine truth into a university discipline and Holy Scripture into a university textbook; the second, between 1225 and 1275, worked out forms of interpretation and application after textbook knowledge of Scripture became the norm and theology a recognized “science”. Too much of this history has been written backwards, assuming the result and overlooking its novelty. Beryl Smalley, who challenged an English tradition that said only politics made history, a Protestant tradition that rated the medieval study of Scripture, a Catholic tradition that favored philosophical expressions of theology, and a Christian tradition that ignored Jewish interlocutors, nonetheless herself took for granted the place and claims of “divinity,” and assumed an identity between these medieval exegetes and the historical-critical exegetes of her day, leaving monastic lectio to bear the burden of modern prejudice against the medieval churchman’s reading of the Bible.

5 Beryl Smalley, The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages (Oxford 21952) 253 n. 2.
7 Smalley, (n. 5 above), 330.
Just a hundred years ago, Denifle created a stir by proving that the Bible remained the basic textbook in the medieval theological curriculum, a point reemphasized recently by William Courtenay. But apart from the circle of Peter the Chanter in the latter twelfth century, what we know about a corporate faculty of theology rests primarily on later medieval evidence: an “order of reading” for each Parisian faculty dated about 1335, provisions for a new faculty of theology at Bologna in 1362 based on statutes prevailing at Paris, the same for Toulouse in 1366, an additional collection of statutes (possibly produced by a reform commission) from 1388–89, followed by those of all the new theological faculties formed at the end of the fourteenth century. At Paris in the thirteenth century — so one may extrapolate — a theology student, aged 21 or 22, was to hear lectures for four years on Scripture before advancing to two years on the *Sentences*; at Oxford students first read the Sentences and then the Scriptures. Regular clergy (particularly Dominicans) were to hear lectures on the entire Bible; secular clergy on only selected books of the Old and New Testaments. As bachelors they were themselves to give “overview” courses on the Bible (*ursoriē*) for two or three years, on the Sentences for two years. Theological masters, whatever else they taught or wrote, were to hold their ordinary lectures on the Bible. The Bible, that is to say, remained the set text for theologians, even if the evidence — because it was so obvious? — is sometimes indirect.

Teaching Scripture, scholars have frequently intimated, was nothing new in itself. It built on a long tradition beginning with Augustine’s influential *De doctrina christianana* and Cassiodorus’ *Institutiones*, carried forward in the Carolingian reform by Rhabanus Maurus’ *De institutione clericorum* and come to fruition in the early twelfth-century program outlined in Hugh of St. Victor’s *Didascalicon*, with re-statements of such ideals everywhere in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, both by a Benedictine like Rupert of Deutz and a mendicant schoolman like Bonaventure. But scholars should not glide too easily from ideal programs outlined in late antiquity to institutional practice in the high Middle Ages. Such programs might well serve as a schoolmaster’s way of venerating the sacred Book, but before the twelfth century rarely determined in practice the exact approach to teaching its text or even prescribed treating the sacred book

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10 Thus in the De clericorum institutione 3.1,2: PL 107.377, 378: “Nec enim eis aliqua eorum ignorare licet cum quibus vel se vel subiectos instruere debent, idest, scientiam sanctorum scripturarum, puram veritatem historiarum, modos tropicarum locutionum, significacionem rerum mysticarum, utilitatem omnium disciplinarum, honestatem vitae in probitate morum, elegantiam in prolacione sermonum, discretionem in exhibitione dogmatum, differentiam medicaminum contra varietatem aegritudinum. . . .Fundamentum autem status et perfectio prudentiae scientia est sanctarum scripturarum, quae ab illa incommutabili aeternaque sapientia profuens...”.

as a text. To argue that the arts be directed to the elucidation of the scriptural text takes on new meaning when that text predominates mostly in prayer and preaching rather than in school.

There was another problem too, acknowledged already by Augustine, central for these masters. Scripture was not only the source of all truth and wisdom; it was also, as Rhabanus Maurus further instructed his clerics, difficult, and so obscure in many places that those reading it brashly (temere legunt) would get lost (literally, “covered over”: obducunt) in the densest of fogs\textsuperscript{12}. Four hundred years later Bonaventure expressed the very same concern to his young clerics by way of another image, that of a dark and tangled wood (n. 69 below). A book put at some remove from the ordinary classroom by virtue of its sacred character, perceived additionally as confusing for the uninitiated, Scripture hardly seemed the right book for the ordinary classroom. Neither in celebrating Scripture’s authority nor in warning about its difficulty had Rhabanus invited clerics to make of it a public textbook. During the Carolingian era, in Riché’s view, the higher faculties barely developed in any systematic fashion\textsuperscript{13}. Monks carefully copied the text of Scripture, assembled the relevant teachings of the fathers in running commentaries, sometimes inserted questiones taken over from Augustine, and occasionally reflected independently. But the teaching of Scripture, beyond the most fundamental forms, remained a protected enterprise pursued within the privileged confines of abbey and cathedral, exceptionally, perhaps, at the royal court.

Consider, then, the dimensions of the cultural shift suggested by this letter from the 1080s. A German student wrote home urging a friend to re-join him, presumably in France, where their teacher had just completed a course of lectures on the Psalms and was about to take up the Epistles, on which he was reputed to be abler than all others. The friend that had left, the addressee, planned to take up arms in Saxony\textsuperscript{14}. Imagine this choice: join the army or hear lectures on Scripture. This passage, from a letter preserved in the Hildesheim collection, should impress us more than it has. Cathedral schools in the Empire had produced a number of distinguished teachers, their attainments rendered public in prose epistolae and in poems. Imperial monasteries inherited from the Carolingian era and themselves produced, as Margaret Gibson has shown, early forms of glossed Bibles with the sayings of the fathers recorded in carefully ruled margins\textsuperscript{15}. Why should a German student, probably associated with a cathedral school, boast about what he had discovered elsewhere, presumably in a French cathedral town? Had he found better teachers, new texts, an entirely new culture of education – or all three, with books of Scripture counting as new texts?

\textsuperscript{12} Rhabanus Maurus, De institutione clericorum 3.3: PL 107.380.
\textsuperscript{13} Pierre Riché, Écoles et enseignement dans le haut moyen âge (Paris 1989) 280–84.
\textsuperscript{14} Briefe, Hildesheim no. 48, ed. Carl Erdmann and Norbert Fickermann (MGH Briefe der deutschen Kaiserzeit 5, 1950) 95. In the next letter (no. 49, p. 96), this same “H” invites another friend to join him: “possis venire et nobiscum de divinis legere, legendo proficere, hec differri tibi non videtur utile.”
For monks to meditate on Scripture and sing the psalms; for canons to read daily an office comprised largely of scriptural passages; for priests to read the prescribed gospel and epistle texts; for deacons to carry the holy book in procession, to kiss and incense it at the altar— all this was essential to worship and strengthened conviction that the Bible was indeed God's own book. Hugh of St Victor, moreover, taught the Bible in a setting as cloistered— or uncloistered— as that of Rupert of Deutz in Liège, one professed religious explaining Holy Scripture to others. Even a figure like Anselm of Laon is traditional enough if he taught future churchmen within the cathedral precinct— as Smalley also recognized. But to carry that Book out into a dusty street, to explain it word by word and argue over its difficult passages in the same way teachers of the liberal arts handled books written by pagan authors— this was new. For someone to choose between arms in Saxony or biblical lectures in France signaled a new era, perhaps in personal choice and social mobility, certainly in the culture of teaching the Bible.

In Abelard's account, casualness increased the shock. On a dare and partly as a joke (nos scholares invicem iocaremur), he took up lecturing on a difficult book of the Bible, last treated authoritatively by Gregory the Great, as if that text were no less accessible, that act no less thinkable, than taking up some rare and abstruse logical tractate by Aristotle, even though he had no training in Scripture as such himself.16 Elsewhere students appear to have followed lectures in the arts or in Scripture with little sense of crossing important boundaries. John of Salisbury followed Gilbert of Poitiers in logic and in "divinity"; he had two other teachers only in "theology," and these he listed last— by way of suggesting some ordered progression to his studies, out of deference to theology's claims, or simply by accident? William of Tyre also began with teachers in the liberal arts, but listed his teachers in theology amidst others, including teachers of civil law. Students could apparently choose to hear lectures on Boethius' Arithmetic or St. John's Gospel according to inclination, all given within a few paces of each other on the Isle de Paris.

Was it a matter of opening wide the doors of abbey or cathedral, or was the Bible itself carried out into the noisy streets, taught in a public stall to those who paid? One essential pre-condition may have been the overwhelmingly clerical cast of learning in the north. These were nearly all people preparing to enter the Church, and their lectures in the early days often took place in or near churches or on properties connected to churches. This allowed for real ambiguity in what was taught in the language which was, after all, the sacred tongue. Yet this remained an unusual act, a profaning of the divine Word according to some conservatives, and for another two hundred years only at Paris—and Oxford by derivation—did a group of teachers form a separate faculty dedicated to the sacred page. It was the exception, even if it later became the rule or at least the model.

The new masters of Scripture presented the Holy Book as a text on which they read lectures (legere; lectura) meant for students to hear (audire). Their explanation of the text they called "glossing". The word appears everywhere in twelfth-century descrip-

17 John of Salisbury, Metalogicon 2.10: ed. J. B. Hall, CC CM 98.70–73.
tions of the new scriptural teaching, including Abelard's treatment of Ezechiel. Abelard described his own “reading” as “glossing” (secundum hunc nostre lectionis tenorem ad glossandum) and referred to students copying down his glosses (de transcribendis glossis)\(^\text{19}\). A method commonly applied to school texts at least since Carolingian times, glossing had as its chief point to explain a text word by word. As the canonist Huguccio put it in the later twelfth century, the gloss is “an exposition that attends not only to the meaning of a statement but also to its words”\(^\text{20}\). Some Carolingian scholars, working privately or in monastic circles, had begun to treat selected passages of Scripture this way\(^\text{21}\). As heirs to those Carolingians, German monks and clerics prepared Bibles with glosses usefully arranged in marginal columns. Between about 1050 and 1150, however, lecturing on Scripture, or as they said, “glossing” it, became a public affair in northern French schools, attracting auditors with no more difficulty than lectures on logic and rhetoric.

Scholars since Smalley have inevitably focused upon the remarkable material evidence: texts of the Bible, or rather of books of the Bible, with explanatory words affixed between the lines or in the margins\(^\text{22}\). This was the written digest of an exchange between master and student that contemporaries found intellectually stimulating: to learn Scripture as a text with words, sentences, and paragraphs requiring detailed explanation. Their perception of this text must have been quite different from that of the Scripture they had experienced as sung prayer or as church readings or as a repository of hidden meanings. The Sacred Page was for these young clerics at once too familiar and too unfamiliar. They would have heard parts of the Bible read or sung every day of their lives from earliest childhood; its language would have fundamentally shaped their Latin tongues. Yet they would never have read all the Bible through, or possibly even one book from beginning to end, and probably could not have listed books in some accepted order. What was all too familiar in the form of prayer, story, moral admonition, and sacred language remained all too unfamiliar as a text with a beginning and end, as words and sentences with specific meanings. It is striking that the Latin term for this systematic reading became \textit{in serie}. Robert of Melun, writing in the 1150s, gives us an angry and exaggerated, but altogether amusing, picture of masters lecturing away day and night, running through the text (\textit{paginam transcurrunt}) of both testaments, much preferring to know everything and where everything is rather than truly to know anything in its place\(^\text{23}\). He calls this new form of teaching, which has

\(^{19}\) See n. 16 above.


\(^{23}\) “Sed quomodo eos arguere aliquis audebit qui die ac nocte absque ulla intermissione lectioni instant atque utriusque testamenti paginam transcurrunt, earumque expositores a principio usque ad finem crebro revolvunt, a minimis inchoantes sine mora ad summos utpote nullum obstaculum invenientes conscendunt? Malunt quippe omnia scire quam aliquid et ubique esse quam
gained great popular favor, the stuff of boys, mere reciting (*est novum docendi genus nuper exortum, immo puerile recitandi studium, populari favore ... immoderate elevatum*). They prefer to read away publicly rather than to gain meaning (*sententia*) from the text. Challenged on a point of detail such as whether Moses or Ezra came first, they forget and can barely recite the number, order, and names of their texts.

Robert engaged in hyperbole, but he made an important observation. For all their fame and popularity, these new masters did not truly get at the biblical text as such, which for him meant its theological meaning. These first masters of Scripture were rather masters of manipulating glosses and expositors. Called such in his day ("masters of the glosses"), they gained their doctoral chairs and their fame by sorting out glosses, affixing each in its right order to its correct text, thereby overturning the proper order, putting first (the gloss) what should be secondary, and second what should be first (the text). These stubborn and impudent patrons of glosses (*obstinati patroni et propugnatores protervi*), ready to defend them with blood, even insisted upon reading and interpreting glosses when they made no sense, or opposed the text in sense, or were more difficult to understand than the text itself. They treated as the very "holy of holies" (*sancte sanctarum*) the glosses on the Psalter and the Epistles.

This massive attack on the glossators, those masters on whom Smalley spent so much of her labor, reveals much about the true character of biblical teaching roughly three generations after its beginning. Teaching the Bible publicly was novel in form, and perhaps in intellectual intent; yet in practice it was more tradition-bound than historians since Smalley often maintain. For the taught Bible, as distinguished from the sung Psalter or the read Gospel or the meditated text, was a glossed Bible, and remained so to the end of the Middle Ages, the distinguishing mark of the learned master. When masters taught the text, they taught it by way of glosses that directed its meaning; when students memorized the text, they memorized it with the gloss, as any...
reader of later medieval *summae* and sermons fully knows. For masters of the Sacred Page the biblical page became nearly unimaginable, even unthinkable, apart from its interlinear and marginal glosses. It was the glossed Bible, the prerogative of masters and students, that supposedly unqualified lay men and women were forbidden to read and translate in the later Middle Ages, not texts which the councils called simple devout books.

The masters presumed what they did, and rarely described it. In *Parens scientiarum*, 1231, Gregory IX admonished students and masters of theology at Paris to busy themselves worthily in the faculty they had professed, that is, not to make vain display in philosophical matters, not to take up questions that could not be resolved by way of theological books (*libri theologici*) and the tractates of the fathers. Pope Gregory probably meant in fact "biblical books" and "received authorities", even if his expression was not so clear as Clement VI's, who in 1346 admonished masters and students unambiguously not to abandon the *textus Bibliae* and the fathers for intricate and vain philosophical questions. For twenty years later (February 1252) the Parisian secular theologians declared that no bachelor could be promoted to a chair unless he had first proved himself by diligently lecturing on more than one book of "Theology glossed" (*aliquos libros Theologie glosatos*) and on the Sentences (*et Sentential*) in the classroom of a ruling master – an attempt at guild control over the right to lecture on the Bible and the Sentences. "Theology" meant the Bible, and the text taught was a glossed Bible. This is confirmed by the statutes of 1366 (which may well retain older features). There a biblical cursor is called a *cursor Theologie*, and he is instructed to lecture (read) in an orderly fashion, expounding the text and setting out the noteworthy glosses as had always (*antiquitus*) been done in this faculty – probably a phrase older than 1366 – became the first item in the oath required of bachelors, and it appeared again in a later set of statutes where it was aimed against those skipping ahead (*per saltum*) without having completed this program. Canon lawyers at Paris, it might be noted by way of parallels, also taught from a glossed text; their ordinary lectures on the Decretals (their basic text) were to treat in orderly fashion, text, gloss, and other pertinent material.

In sum, in keeping with inherited practice, that of the twelfth-century schools Robert of Melun described, teaching "theology" at Paris meant in the strictest sense teaching the Bible together with its noteworthy glosses. A rotulus from 1349, bearing the names of theology graduates for whom the University sought promotions and positions by way of the papal court, described a certain man as teaching Scripture at

29 CUP 1.138, 2.588.
30 "...et concorditer inhibitum, ne aliquis bachellarius in theologica facultate promoveatur ad cathedram, nisi prius seipsum examinaverit, saltem aliquos libros Theologie glosatos et Sententias in scolis alicuius magistri actu regentis diligenter legendo...". CUP 1.226. The editors, notably, also misunderstood, capitalizing "Sententias" but not "Theologie".
31 "...statuimus quod cursores Theologie suos cursus legant ordinate, textum exponendo et glossas notabiles declarando, secundum modum antiquitus in dicto studio approbatum." CUP 3.143.
32 CUP 2.705, 3.698.
33 "...bene temperate et deceter, et complere cum textibus, glosis, et materia recte occurrenti sine verborum superfluitate...". CUP 3.646.
Amiens in the manner of the Parisian university, lecturing on the Bible and its glosses *(legendo biblia cum glosis secundum studii parisiensis)*\(^34\). This affects what sort of book students would have brought to class, as Dominican statutes from the thirteenth century required. Theologians in 1366 stipulated that students bring or have brought the Bible\(^35\). But to follow lectures these beginners would need a glossed Bible, and so it was not just laziness or privilege that allowed such a great folio volume to "be carried" for them. Miethke doubts that students actually bothered with bringing the books\(^36\). However that may be, its pedagogical purpose is clear.

The teaching of the Bible, then, in its routine form, as distinguished from the work of exceptional persons, meant not so much arranging glosses, as Robert charged, but glossing glosses, interpreting or re-interpreting the interpretation provided by "saints" or "expounders" in order to wring better meaning from the text itself. This is exactly the way Peter Abelard, with all his bragging and claims to novelty, had already described his own teaching of Ezechiel. He had egged his fellow students on by marveling that the writings or glosses of the saints (*scripta vel glose sanctorum*) did not suffice in reading the Bible themselves, that they still needed a teacher. So they dared him to try. Abelard took up the *expositor* at once, which is to say, a text of Ezechiel glossed probably with excerpts from Jerome, and invited them to hear him lecture. They counseled him to take more time solidifying his sense of the inherited exposition (*in expositione rimanda et firmanda*). But Abelard stubbornly began glossing in their way (*me secundum hunc nostre lectionis tenorem ad glosandum compellerent*), trusting, as he said, more to genius (*ingenium*) than to custom (*usum*); by the third lecture students were so impressed that they hastened to transcribe his glosses\(^37\). This same pattern fits exactly Herbert of Bosham's description of the copy he had prepared of Peter Lombard's gloss on the Psalter and the Epistles, the very texts Robert of Melun mocked. Herbert distinguished between the slight words of Peter himself (*glosatoris verbula*), said to be expanded from the older gloss of Anselm of Laon, and the authentic sayings of the fathers which he explained or elaborated upon. Herbert additionally made these distinctions visible on the page because even famous masters frequently confused the one with the other, the glossator with the expositor -- precisely Robert of Melun's charge as well\(^38\). Robert himself -- this disappointed Smalley -- never argued for teach-
ing Scripture as a bare text, as only textus or series. His point was that the gloss should aid the understanding of this text, not be an end in itself or an obstacle to the text, not an impenetrable mass of materials like a “commentary”. Text and gloss together should yield a common meaning, the sententia of the text, the term used as well by Hugh of St. Victor. In sum, teaching Scripture publicly, though a novel act religiously and culturally, represented no absolute break with inherited tradition. On the contrary, tradition initially became more firmly attached to Scripture, on the handwritten page, in schoolroom teaching, in the memory. Glossing tradition was the approved means for teaching the text.

All this glossing and lecturing, so the story has usually been told since Smalley, culminated first in the production at Laon of that gloss which medieval masters came to treat as “standard” (Ordinary Gloss), then its elaboration and standardization at Paris in the following generation with the most manuscript copies produced apparently between the years 1175 and 1225. Margaret Gibson has tried to transfer much of the early work to Paris, possibly the circles influenced by Hugh of St. Victor. If Gibson and Froehlich are correct in viewing the 1480 printed edition as a relatively accurate reproduction of the first standard gloss, in that gloss the fathers (the sancti or doctores or expositores) predominated and the masters, rarely or never identified, had only to nuance or clarify. (The same pattern described by Herbert of Bosham regarding the larger gloss.) That is to say, some kind of purge thinned or eliminated glosses from many modern masters like Lanfranc, and placed a seal of approval – in the face of complaints from people like Robert of Melun – on the patristic and Carolingian inheritance.

Gibson has further argued that this glossed Bible “was always a library text, rather than in any sense classroom notes perpetually revised by masters and pupils alike”.

Whatever she means by a library text in the Middle Ages, this cannot be taken to mean it was not an aid to teaching, even the text for teaching. “Setting forth the main glosses” (glossas notabiles declarando) was exactly what bachelors swore to do, and teaching glossed books of the Bible was what seculars demanded of mendicants. Whether every medieval scholar used exactly the same glossed text (hardly likely or possible) is another matter. The manuscript evidence, not yet fully sifted, suggests variety. But henceforward familiarization with Text cum gloss became the work of biblical bachelors, cursores who could “run over the Text” with beginning students, what came to be called reading “textualiter” or “biblice”. Whether in giving or hearing a lecture, in personal reading or formal study, students learned the glossed Bible. Even if this was now the stuff of beginners – manipulating glosses would no longer make you

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39 De scripturis: PL 175.16–17.
40 Gibson, (n. 15 above).
41 Gibson and Froehlich, (n. 22 above), vii.
42 See nn. 30–31 above.
a doctor — arranging the gloss was still important work. Hugh of St. Cher and his Dominican brothers prepared an enhanced gloss in the 1230s, what came to be called a “postill,” apparently incorporating material from the 1180s and 1190s (such as the commentaries by Stephen Langton), and then Nicholas of Lyra prepared another in the 1320s incorporating, among other materials, sections from Thomas Aquinas’ *summa*. They sought to keep the taught text up to date in its glosses, reference materials, and framing interpretations.

Yet another issue complicates our picture of what teaching the Bible truly meant, what the cultural realities were. It may be expressed in an even more obvious question: what was *sacra scriptura*? At first glance the answer is obvious, and usually set out in discussions of Scripture and its authority. In his widely influential *De sacramentis fidei christianae* Hugh of St. Victor listed the books of the Bible at the very beginning. This was not a *pro forma* chapter, a mere concession to elementary education. The term *sacra scriptura* was far more ambiguous than the English ‘Holy Scripture’; it could also mean holy writing. That is, it could encompass the writings of the fathers together with the decrees of councils and popes. Hugh himself made reference to this meaning in his *Didascalicon*.

Strictly speaking, he explained at the beginning of his *De scripturis et scriptoribus sacris*, the term applied only to works inspired by the Holy Spirit in which all is true and good and sanctifies. However, within both the Old and New Testament canons he distinguished first-order and second-order books, that is, the Law from the prophets, the Gospels from the Epistles, and then listed as third-order the decreets of popes (which he equated with canons of councils), followed by the writings of the fathers. That is, he created both an absolute and a graded distinction. Twelfth-century scholars knew this way of thinking from Gelasius’ *De libris recipiendis*, which Peter Abelard reproduced at the beginning of his *Sic et non*. Abelard reinforced it when he intermixed different kinds of authorities in his questions, from scriptural texts to sayings of the fathers and conciliar decrees.

Despite all the high-sounding sayings about the authority of Scripture and this new effort to teach the text itself, there was in practice a prioritized list of holy texts that began with various books of the Old and New Testaments. This inevitably raised questions about ranking. In his *Concord of Discordant Canons*, Gratian reviewed the sources of church law in an innovative opening treatise (DD. 1–20), and concluded with a practical question: which has superior authority, the rulings of popes and councils or

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43 “Sunt praeterea alia quam plurima opuscula a religiosis viris et sapientibus diversis temporibus conscripta, quae licet universalis ecclesiae probata non sint, tamen quia a fide catholica non discrepant, et nonnulla etiam utilia docent, inter divina computatur eloquia.” *Didascalicon* 4.1; ed. Buttimer (Washington, D.C. 1939) 71.

the scriptural expositions of Church fathers? A practical theologian, Gratian argued that expositors might well surpass popes in learning (scientia) but popes and bishops surpassed expositors in the jurisdictional power to settle cases (causis diffiniendis); so rulings outranked commentaries in settling church matters. Scripture itself, however, identical for Gratian with divine law, stood above both: He cited it nearly 500 times to resolve conflicting authorities, but always within his own sayings (dicta) to help resolve a case, never as itself a disputed authority, quite unlike Abelard. Once Gratian’s book became the set text for canon law, every trained church lawyer worked through D.20 c.3, and memorized the pat lines of its Ordinary Gloss (as given in the 1584 edition) summarizing the canonist Huguccio. A certain order was to be followed: Scripture, the canons of the apostles and the councils, the decrees of popes, the writings of the Greeks, the writings of the Latin fathers, then the exempla of the fathers – and finally the views of seniors or superiors.

Teachers of Scripture surely knew the difference, instantly and visually, between the text of the Bible in large letters in the center of the page and all the explanatory texts scribbled around it. Yet in cultural practice the opening chapters of Genesis were nearly inseparable in their memories from Augustine’s or Bede’s rendering of those texts. This was another of Robert of Melun’s complaints, that in affirming or opposing some dogma glosses were cited as equal in authority or greater than Gospels or Epistles. Given the culture of teaching, of glossing the glosses, given the physical reality of glossed bibles as the required classroom text and basic reference manual, it took conscious effort to separate out the text itself, to go after textual meaning in its own right, to yield to its distinctive authority. There are two famous incidents involving Rupert of Deutz about 1116–17 in dispute with clerics in Liège, some probably trained at Laon. First on the question of Judas’ presence at the Last Supper, then on the question of interpreting the meaning of “light” in Gen. 1:3, Rupert departed from the teachings of Augustine, which these clerics held up against him. Frustrated, Rupert declared that Augustine was not in the canon of Scripture and deserved no such authority. This, these student-clerics proclaimed in horror, was an unheard-of heresy. Rupert held that heresy was to contradict the canonical Scriptures. But in the end he was saved only by uncovering a countervailing authority. At least in the case of the text on the creation of light, the masters almost certainly knew Augustine’s teaching more from glossed Bibles than from a careful reading of Augustine.

To see the Bible as singular in its authority, and as a text in its own right, was not an instantaneous achievement. It was only after 1200 that Parisian masters, with perhaps Stephen Langton leading the way, first decided to divide the text itself into units and

46 Martin, (n. 23 above), 19.
47 "At illi me ex hoc diffamare coeperunt tanquam haereticum, qui dixissem non esse in canone beatum Augustinum." "Haeresis, inquam, est contradicere sanctae et canonicae scripturae." PL 170.492, 496.
to number them consecutively for ease of reference. It was a generation later that the Paris stationers began to produce one-volume, hand-held (sometimes duodecimo size) texts of Scripture – a visual or physical testament, if you will, to this effort to recover the text alone and to put all its books and pericopes together as one text. Precisely because it was the authoritative source of Christian culture, it came to these masters weighed down, or if you like over-written, with centuries of tradition, which masters could gloss, amplify or nuance, but could hardly reject outright. The monk in his cell, meditating upon some massive codex of the biblical text, was in some sense freer.

The work of the twelfth century was to put in place the text itself as a taught text together with the glosses which, literally, framed its meaning. Scripture was not just a great repository of hidden meanings, the basis for preaching, the source of chants and prayers; it was a set text for lectures, its words and meanings disputed *seriatim* by university masters. But this only set the stage for the question of how licensed masters, as distinguished from contemplative monks or relatively unlearned preachers, were to derive meaning from this text. Masters both faced and finessed this interpretative question in the course of the thirteenth century. In keeping with the theme of institutionalization and its cultural impact, this essay will next – and briefly – suggest the implications for the taught Bible in deriving the literal, allegorical, and tropological senses.

A glossed or taught Bible, sometimes with the literal and the spiritual explanations intermixed, did not in itself yield a vision of Scripture as a historical text with a literal meaning, though achieving that as foundational was plainly a part of the masters' glossing intent. The principle was not new: Hugh of St. Victor took it over from Augustine and re-emphasized it, as did commentators outside the schools such as Rupert of Deutz. The first real attempt, however, to pull together what the letter of Scripture taught, its plain historical meaning, came with the work of Peter Comestor in the second half of the twelfth century. His fellow lecturers on Scripture urged him to construct an intelligible historical account from amidst the diffuse mass of Text and glosses they were lecturing on. Students found in his book, culled from available glosses and commentaries, including Victorine materials, the best opportunity yet to grasp the whole of Scripture presented manageably as a historical narrative. The original exegetical activity was hidden from sight in a relatively smooth narrative that did not visibly record the interweaving of text, gloss, and exposition – the exact opposite of what Herbert of Bosham had wanted to achieve. This re-arranged gloss of glosses itself became a taught text in the later twelfth and thirteenth centuries and sometimes acquired glosses. Its very name (*historia scholastica*) suggests how contemporaries and posterity construed it: This was the schoolmen's reconstruction of scriptural "historia".

The shift to the literal sense as foundational arose in part from a self-conscious exegetical program, a repudiation of endless "unscientific" spiritual interpretations, and in

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48 Laura Light, Versions et révisions du texte biblique, in: La Moyen Age et la Bible, 85.
part from the cultural shift that made of Scripture, hence its words and sentences, a classroom textbook. Genuinely original work, such as that by Andrew of St Victor, went on outside the school as such in commentary form. But the pedagogical point that lectures should rest on the primary sense of the words, that this was the text to be taught, gained general acceptance, even if later masters like Nicholas of Lyra complained that more still needed doing to achieve real comprehension of the letter. Peter the Chanter and Stephen Langton, who presumably had as yet no biblical bachelors working under them, still glossed the whole biblical text literally and spiritually. In the thirteenth century, however, or more accurately, under the aegis of the corporate guild of theological masters, bachelors usually assumed the task of taking students seriatim through the biblical “letter”. Masters commonly taught individual books at a more leisurely pace, but such a “reading” (lectura), focused on the literal or plain meaning, allowed relatively little space for detailed theological investigation. Many apparently glossed the Text cum gloss and thought little more of it, never bothering to perfect or publish such lectures much as professors today teaching basic courses.

For those who took seriously their responsibilities as doctors of the Sacred Page, deeper hermeneutical questions arose concerning what could be ascribed to the literal sense. This question proved crucial theologically, and Minnis has traced out the major teachings. Hugh of St. Victor had pleaded for a better and more extensive reading of the literal sense as foundational: do not despise the humble things which God has placed there for the carnal senses as a kind of image of things spiritual. But close reading of the biblical text by several generations of masters yielded many puzzles, even embarrassments — Albert the Great listed thirteen exemplarily near the beginning of his Summa. So the notion of what was entailed by the literal sense, by this first level of explication, had to be refined. After responding to various objections, Albert defined it as what an author intended (intentio dicentis expressa in littera est litteralis sensus), and Thomas Aquinas declared the literal sense of Scripture to be what God the author intended, though this could well include multiple significations since God himself grasped all things at once. To make Scripture true and theology a science, the master had to overcome all the confusions and distractions thrown up by its variety and its literal meanings to discern what the author intended; this counted as scientific exegesis. Since, for instance, God had authored the laws of the Old Testament, there could be nothing absurd or useless or irrational about them, William of

50 Whether Masters “read” a single book or the whole Bible, depended apparently on custom, which seems to have varied generationally; see now Courtenay, (n. 6 above).
52 “Ne forte haec prima doctrinae rudimenta despiciat. Neque contemnendam putet harum rerum notitiam, quas nobis sacra scriptura per primam litterae significacionem proponit, quia ipsae sunt quas Spiritus sanctus carnalibus sensibus...quasi quaedam simulacra mysticorum intellectuum depinxit.” De scripturis PL 175.14.
53 Albertus Magnus, Summa, Tractatus 1, q.5 c.4 ad 3: ed. Dionysius Siedler, Opera Omnia (Münster 1978) 34/1. 21.
54 “Quia vero sensus litteralis est quem auctor intendit, auctor autem sacrae scripturae Deus est qui omnia simul suo intellectu comprehendit...si etiam secundum litteralem sensum in una littera scripturae plures sint sensus.” Thomas, Summa theologiae 1 q.1 a.10.
Auvergne argued. But in explaining and defending the literal sense, he derived from it what he called a *sermo universalis*, meaning, its abiding intent, that is, the timeless teaching intended, say, when God prescribed circumcision or forbade idol-worship. Bonaventure told the masters at Paris in 1273 to study the text and know it virtually by heart, to understand what its “*nomen*” imparts. But this, he added, meant more than just the literal sense of the Jew, for Scripture is like a lute which makes melodious harmonies only when more than one note (more than one text) is sounded at once. The spiritual intelligence or timeless meaning of the text (beyond the plain letter), he added, would come only with the aide of the saints’ exposition (*originalia sanctorum*), and since these too often proved difficult, the *summae* of masters were needed for further elucidation; and since they in turn made use of philosophical terminology, the philosophical arts were required, if dangerous and distracting. That is to say, to render truly the text of Scripture in a master’s ordinary *lectura* and to make sense of the glosses or expositions of the saints, the full theological and philosophical program of the corporate faculty was demanded. Much the same message governed Bonaventure’s *principium* or inaugural lecture. The study of the Bible, he declared, is the ultimate *scientia* owing to its depth, authority, certitude, and so on, with Christ the *medium* of all the sciences, containing all their truths as the New Testament is already contained in the Old, that is, implicitly in the letter.

Lecture courses in the early university could therefore concentrate on literal exposition, meaning, all that God the author intended to convey by way of his text both at the time of writing and at the time of interpreting. This was not to forego many subtle distinctions, rendered in the language of multiple causalities, between the primary and secondary authors, the divine and the human, as Minnis has rightly emphasized. Yet, as Henry of Ghent put it in the introduction to his lectures on Scripture, the two testaments were “different parts of the same science” (*Distinctio diversarum partium unius scientiae*), though he too followed that declaration with a much more differentiated and complicated overview of the two covenants. Since the masters’ God was Triune, this bore upon what could be conceded to the Jews as the primary intent of the text, even of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob when, say, he gave the law or prophesied about a young woman with child. These masters were capable of historical differentiation and of honest respect for others, but they could not give up the meaning of the text they were licensed to teach, nor the exegeted truths which made their

55 “Apparet igitur ex omnibus his legem Moysi Deo authore et conditore editam esse, quare nihil in ea inutile, nihil supervacuum, nihil absurdum, nihil igitur in ea vel praeceptum vel prohibitum est, nihil vel statutum vel narratum, quod non habeat causam rationalem.” *William of Auvergne*, *De legibus*: Opera Omnia (1674; rpt 1963) 25, 47, 45.

56 “Similiter in sacra scriptura saepe, primo quis debet studere in textu et ipsum habere in promptu et intelligere quod dicitur per nomen, non solum sicut ludeus qui semper tendit ad litteralem sensum. Tota scriptura est quasi una cithara, et sicut chorda per se non facit harmoniam sed cum aliis, similiter unus locus scripturae dependet ab alio.” *Collationes* 19. in: Opera Omnia, ed. A. C. Peltier (Paris 1867) 9.122-23.

57 *Bonaventure*, *Principium sacrae scripturae*, ibid 9.1-16.

science preeminent in the university. This understanding of the literal sense had potentially the same hard edge over against heretics as well, those who read the text on their own and won from it a different meaning. Gerson, coming at the end of this development, made it explicit in a tractate directed against contemporary heretics. The "literal sense of Scripture", he argued, was clear in matters of salvation and rationally taught at universities or elsewhere with the help of trained theologians.

What implicitly worried these theologians, once they had acquired this overwhelming knowledge of the words and gesta in their Text, was their ability to make universal truth claims out of such a mass of particulars, a worry reinforced, it seems to me, by a sense of disjunction between the authority claimed for this book and the familiarity borne of routinely reading its text letter by letter. Masters and students were further confounded by the impact of an Aristotelian model of scientia, generating in most thirteenth-century summae the first question, whether theologia, meaning the study of Holy Scripture, could qualify as a science. How could science, Albert the Great wondered, be based upon gesta singularia which could not count either as intelligibilia or as universalia? Since the intent of theology (= Scripture) was to inform piety, he answered, it dealt more persuasively in particulars. These were potentially universal in nature, each historical particular, like one eclipse, teaching a more universal truth.

The summa ascribed to Alexander of Hales had been even more specific: Other texts recounting historical deeds intended to relate only particular deeds, but the gesta recounted in Scripture "signified universal acts and conditions instructing human beings in the contemplation of the divine by way of signifying the mysteries"; thus the suffering of Abel pointed to the suffering of Christ and the just, the malice of Cain to the perversity of the unjust, and so on. That is to say, the story line of Scripture (historia sacrae scripturae) – what the schools taught and Peter Comestor summarized – introduced singular deeds to signify universals, the basis of the science. These particulars understood as universals could yield the nodal points of theology as a science.

All masters agreed that Scripture was to be read at more than one level. Guy of Bazoches, in his famous description of Paris in the later twelfth century, celebrated the

59 “Sensus litteralis sacrae scripturae rationabiliter explicatur apud studia generalia et in ceteris dioecesibus nedum per totam ecclesiam, sed per dioecesanos sententiam cum consilio doctorum theologorum in eisdem studiis degenitum.” It was, moreover, “satis expressus in libris sacrae scripturae vel ex illis evidenter consequatur apud eruditos in eisdem libris”. Jean Gerson, De sensu litterali sacrae scripturae, in: Opera omnia, ed. Glorieux 4.336.

60 “Primus accipitur ex eo de quo est; est enim de gestis singularibus dei et sanctorum veteris et novi testamenti, quae gesta historialiter describuntur. ... Sed de his quae numquam intelliguntur, non potest esse scientia; omnis enim scientia ex intelligibiliis accipitur.... ...scientia omnis ex universalibus est; gesta autem historia particularia sunt per hic et nunc determinata.” Albertus Magnus, Summa theologiae tr.1 q.1: ed. D. Siedler, Opera omnia (Münster 1978) Vol.34, p. 5.


62 “Introducitur ergo in historia sacrae scripturae factum singularare ad significandum universale, et inde est quod eius est intellectus et scientia.” Alexander of Hales, Summa q. 11. (Quaracchi 1924) 2-3.
masters of the Sacred Page as teaching three senses. At the beginning of the *Glossa Ordinaria* and of nearly all systematic *summae* or sentence collections after the mid-twelfth century, some question was posed about the “modes” of reading Scripture, distinguishing the letter from the mystery and dividing the mystery, in effect, into faith (allegorical), charity (tropological), and hope (anagogical). Even so sober a source as Henry of Ghent’s introduction to the reading of Scripture linked the three “mystical” senses to the three Christian virtues.

But thirteenth-century masters brought to their study of the spiritual senses of Scripture more than a theological rationale. They also devised a division of labor which has received too little notice.

If Scripture were construed as universal truths rather than as textual particulars, it would yield “theology,” meaning now not the Book but the discipline that treated matters to be believed. Nearly all the summaries of theology written between the early twelfth and mid-thirteenth centuries explicitly identified this with the “allegorical” sense of Scripture, as would Henry of Ghent. Hugh of St. Victor’s *De sacramentis christianae fidei* represented, he explained by way of glossing his title and introducing his work, “allegory” or the second stage of learning (*eruditio*). It presented the faith derived from Scripture in summary form lest those reading or hearing suffer uncertainty and be caught up in disorder, become directionless in the midst of various books of the Bible and gaps (*divortia*) between lectures. Abelard, often credited with initiating or accelerating a more philosophical approach to theological truth, was clear that he prepared his “theology for scholars” as a brief summary introduction to the reading of Holy Scripture. The same holds for Peter Lombard who described his *Sentences* in its first sentence as a *tractatum sacrae paginae* concerning the *veteris ac novis legis continentiam*. He dealt first, drawing upon Augustine’s *De doctrina Christiana*, with the use and enjoyment of things as signs—what elsewhere counted as “allegory.” The connection of these “sentences” back to reading Scripture would have been evident to Peter’s readers. The authorities Peter gathered thematically around certain topics first appeared diffusely as marginal glosses on various texts of Scripture—a point we appreciate by way of Ignatius Brady’s critical apparatus, but which students who first read

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63 “Hic fons doctrine salutaris exuberat...dividit tripliciter intellectum sacre pagine spiritalem in hystoricum, allegoricum, et moralem.” CUP 1.56.


65 “Cum igitur de prima eruditione sacri eloquii quae in historica constat lectione, compendium volumen prius dicatsem, hoc nunc ad secundam eruditionem - *qua e in allegoria est* [my emphasis] – introducendis praeparavi, in quo, si fundamento quodam cognitiois fidei animum stabilissant, ut caetera quae vel legendo vel audiendo superaedificare potuerint, inconcussa permaneant. Hanc enim quasi brevem quandam summam omnium in unam seriem compegi, ut animus aliquid certum haberet, cui intentionem afigere et conformare valeret, ne per varia scripturarum volumina et lectionum divortia sine ordine et directione raperetur.” Hugh, *De sacramentis*, PL 176.183–84.


67 Ignatius Brady (ed.), *Magistri Petri Lombardi Sententiae in IV Libris Distinctae* (Spicilegium
their Scriptures *textus cum glossis* would have instantly recognized. He was simply organizing thematically *sententiae* which, read in the circumstantial order of Scripture, might seem confusing.

After the 1220's the *Sentences* itself became an established textbook, the object of teaching and commentary, and eventually, so Bacon charged\(^6^8\), overwhelmed the teaching of the Sacred Page. Indeed whether students should learn first the master Text and its glosses in all their multiplicity, or begin with the master outline, the allegorical teachings of the fathers systematically arranged, was a matter of difference between Paris and Oxford. In time the various master grids – Peter's Sentences, Thomas' Summa, or Bonaventure's Breviloquium – acquired a life of their own. This was a luxury and a necessity: a luxury because basic mastery of the text was now presupposed and generally in evidence; a necessity because thorough knowledge of the Text could confuse as well as edify. Bonaventure said so explicitly in justifying his own "Brief Word". The first necessity was a thorough familiarity with the text of Scripture, a virtual memorizing of it: only someone familiar with the text of Scripture could rise to its spiritual interpretation. But because beginning theologians frequently become terrified of Scripture as of entering some tangled, dark, and forbidding wood, and the teachings of Scripture and the doctors seemed so diffuse (*sic diffuse tradita est*), Bonaventure would provide a brief summary (*aliquid breve in summa dicerem de veritate theologiae*)\(^6^9\).

Learning at this more abstract level, what became known as theology as such, even sometimes as *sacra pagina* (a movement in meaning that paralleled that in *Theologia*), represented a philosophical ordering of the allegorical reading of the Bible, of what in the Text you were to believe. Bonaventure said this explicitly in his *De reductione artium ad theologum*. The first of the spiritual senses, treating allegory or what is to be believed (*allegoricus quo docemur quid sit credendum de divinitate et humanitate*), is properly, he claims, the study of theological doctors\(^7^0\). This was not to deny the primacy of knowing the text literally, as he ever insisted; whether, with Gerson, he thought that could suffice in refuting heretics, he never said. But among the spiritual senses, allegory, understood as yielding the theological meaning of the text, was properly the work of masters of theology. Allegory, in this view, was no longer – if it ever had been – some free spiritual interpretation for the edification of yourself or your hearers, some willful exercise of the imagination. Hugh of St. Victor already criticized sharply those "doctors of the allegories" who thought they could leap to spiritual

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\(^{68}\) See n. 6 above.

\(^{69}\) "...nisi per assuefactionem lectionis textum et litteram bibliae commendit memoriae; alioquin in expositione scripturem nunquam poterit esse potens. ...sic qui litteram sacrae scriptureae spernit ad spirituales eius intelligentias nunquam assurget. ...novi theologi frequenter ipsam scripturem sacram exhorrent tanquam incertam et inordinatam et tanquam quandam silvam opacam...". *Bonaventura*, Breviloquium, Prologus 6: Opera Selecta (n. 11 above) 14, 16.

\(^{70}\) "Circa primum [sensum] insudare debet studium doctorum." *Bonaventura*, De reductione artium 5: Opera Selecta (n. 11 above) 221.
meaning without grounding it in the letter. The new masters of theology like Bonaventure now laid claim to allegory as the systematic teaching (doctrina) of Scripture, rightly understood in Christ, grounded in but rising above the letter. Allegory is properly the scientific exposition of what the Text obligates Christians to believe, or theology. To comment on the Sentences, whether early or late, was to comment upon the thematically arranged interpretative gloss of the Text.

A second spiritual meaning derived from the text was the moral or tropological. Reading Scripture as a textbook raised an important question not encountered by the monk meditating Scripture or the canon singing the Psalms. Once Scripture had been reduced to the format of a textbook, the master text in the center and glosses filling the margins, the teacher or student could well wonder what made this text different from Vergil or Aristotle. Method and format had been taken over from the latter. The educational experience seemed the same: Get a Latin education, learn a text, get a job in church or chancery! Robert of Melun, at the very beginning of his Sententiae, asked explicitly what the difference was between the sacred writings and the writings of pagans, and why the writings of the Old and New Testaments are alone called sacred and holy. After all, he pointed out, some pagan writings also deal with divine topics, and yet they are not called “holy”. Scripture is holy because it alone, he asserted, of all writings is “unshakeable”, invulnerable to heretical assault. But it is holy chiefly because those who do what it teaches are made holy, participate in divinity, something never claimed for the teaching or learning of other written texts.

When monks meditated or taught Scripture in their cloisters they aimed at transformation. Rupert insisted that the contemplative life meant nothing less than reading or meditating on Scripture. The model in medieval Europe for nearly 600 years was Gregory the Great who aimed to wring from his teachings on the book of Job moralia, teachings encompassing nothing less than the whole spiritual life. But how was this second of the spiritual senses, tropologia, the Text’s teachings on what you were to do, to be appropriated by way of a classroom? Again the thirteenth-century masters introduced a note of specialization, a division of labor that pointed beyond the classroom itself, unlike monks in their cloister. Since these masters were to be preachers as well as teachers, this sense of Scripture (quid agas) came to expression primarily by way of sermons, even as the littera and historia did primarily in the form of lectures and the allegoria in the form of theological Sententiae. Bonaventure was explicit about it: Moralis, quo docemur quomodo vivendum sit... circa secundum [sensus] studium praedicatorum.

Just as the allegorical sense, the materials to be believed, yielded their own genres among professionalized teachers of Scripture, mostly summae and Sentence commentaries, so the tropological sense yielded various manuals useful to preaching, above all

71 Hugh, De scripturis 5: PL 175.13-15.
73 “Divina quidem hac de causa dictur, quia illos qui eam digne observant divinos effict, idest, ad divinitatis participationem perducit. Quod nulli alii scripture convenire nemo qui sane mentis sit concedit.” Ibid.
74 See n. 70 above.
distinctiones. Masters of the literal and historical text had begun to list parallel texts, aides so that one word or incident could explain another, the core of future concordances. Masters of the text morally interpreted created chains of texts in which similar images appear, concatenations of possible meanings associated with particular biblical figures. What had been buried in glosses and commentaries became separated out in distinctiones organized alphabetically for ease of reference. The existence of such chains of texts is evident in the preacher’s manual prepared for his Dominican brethren by Humbert of Romans, titled, appropriately enough, De eruditione praedicatorum. For each status in the Church he suggested pertinent biblical theme texts and useful images or figures. Thus the morally exhortative sense became built into the very exegesis of those texts. The point of tropological exegesis for these masters was application, not primarily to themselves as contemplatives, but to their hearers as those for whom the moral sense was brought to life.

For this paper I will draw upon a single instance. Nicholas of Bayard’s mid-thirteenth century Summa de abstinentia organizes images and texts around key moral ideas, such as abstinence, as the subjects of preaching. For each Nicholas provided a simple moral teaching with an exemplum or similitudo, sometimes biblical, sometimes more homely, followed with a scriptural text used to drive home the point. The section on the “Word of God” (De verbo dei), for instance, dealt with the subject entirely from a tropological or moral point of view, not as a problem of exegesis or scriptural authority, but of listening. The point in hearing the Word of God was its “effect” (efficaciter, idest, animi effectum). He followed with a simple similitudo and a scriptural text:


Item si aliquis haberet lapidem preciosum qui prevaleret omni auro et argento et omnem infirmitatem, non proiceret ilium set diligenter custodiret. Sic nec debet proiceretur verbem dei sed diligenter custodire quia prevaleat omni auro et argento sicut dicitur in Ps.: mihi lex oris tui super milia auri et argenti. Glōsa: plus diliget Caritas Dei legem quam cupiditas auri et argenti. 73

At the end of this manual Nicholas or his copyists provided a kind of index matching moral themes to the readings assigned for each Sunday, feastday, and saints day. The preacher had therefore only to look up the right theme for his sermon-text on a given day, and this little book would provide him with the images and scriptural texts he needed to address the moral sense. This is a far more sober production than the long chains of texts and figures found in Distinctiones; but in so far it may also come closer to ordinary practice of the moral sense in preaching. 76

This essay has attempted, in very brief space, to suggest the dimensions of the cultural shift that occurred when Scripture became a textbook and theology a university discipline. The thrust of this movement was to establish the reading of Scripture in the

73 Chapter 120. The work received three early editions: Cologne 1505?, Paris 1512, Straßburg 1518. I have made use of University of Notre Dame, Manuscript no. 15, unfoliated.
76 Compare now L.-J. Bataillon, Early Scholastics and Mendicant Preaching as Exegesis of Scripture, in: Ad Litteram (n. 15 above) 165–98, with bibliography and further examples.
schoolmaster’s way, the word by word absorption of Scripture with its marginal and interlinear glosses, of the Word of God, not just as divine oracles or sung prayer, but as a text. The striking historical reality is that overnight this approach became the standard for the mendicants as well, taught in their studia, and thence in some fashion for everyone in Christian Europe. Henry of Ghent asked in his *Summa* whether everyone was now to hear this science in order to know what to believe and what to do (*quilibet tenetur audire banc scientiam, ut sciat quid credendum et quid agendum sit*)? Not everyone by way of schools, he replied, alluding in effect to the specialized meanings associated with the schoolmen’s division of labor, but everyone in some broad fashion befitting their estate by way of public preaching77. Knowing from Scripture what to believe and what to do, if not in the professional sense of theology and preaching, had become in more general ways a higher mark for all, even the "mob" and the "simple" who needed to know what sufficed for their salvation.

There was in all this an objectifying or reifying effect upon the work of exegesis. The senses of Scripture yielded their own specialties: What you were to believe (allegory) reserved for theology as such in the *sententiae* or the disputation, what you were to do (tropology) reserved for preaching and its manuals. Indeed Bonaventure suggested that the anagogical sense, what you were to hope for, was reserved mostly for contemplatives, making all the meditational manuals of the later Middle Ages, in effect, the separated out teachings on the anagogical sense of Scripture. A Rupert or Joachim who enjoyed special revelation might still come along, but the spirits at work in those revelations were now to be checked by the *doctores*, those who had proved their professional mastery of Scripture and its meaning, whence their allotted role in rendering doctrinal judgement. In Nicholas of Lyra’s gloss on 1 Cor 12:28, which lists tasks in the church, he interpreted “apostles” as now *theologi*, and Paul’s *doctores* or teachers – glossing the Gloss, which suggested those who teach boys their letters – as now the doctors who provide moral precepts for life, possibly artists and lawyers. *Virtutes* represented in turn those who work miracles, or by extension those who preach. The *Doctores* precede the *virtutes* in Paul's list, Nicholas added in his gloss, because it is a greater thing to teach than to work miracles78. Nicholas, glossing the Gloss, made professionally trained teachers superior to those who worked miracles.


78 “...dantes præcepta moralia vivendi, vel ut dicit glo. qui pueros imbunt, per quos significari possunt artistae et legistae. Is. 33c Ubi est doctor parvulorum, ubi est verba legis ponderans.” “Ex hoc quod prius nominavit doctores quam virtutes est argumentum quod plus est docere quam miracula facere.” *Nicholas of Lyra*, Postilla ad 1 Cor. 12:28.