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Innominis / Omninominis

Bernard Silvestris's Catalogue Poem as Act of Divine Naming

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# Innominis / Omninominis\*

Jason M. Baxter

## 1. Introduction: The Alterity of the *Cosmographia*'s Catalogue Poem (1.3)

The second metrum in Bernard Silvestris's *Cosmographia* is a poetic depiction of how Noys arranged the previously disordered heap, known as *silva*, into the orderly arrangement of creatures of the visible world. Bernard Silvestris himself calls this section of his poem the *ornatus elementorum* (*summa operis*, 92),<sup>1</sup> while modern scholars call it the Catalogue Poem. Though less famous than other scenes, it is one of the two foci of the poem. What is described in the Catalogue Poem is the answer to Natura's tearful plea in 1.1; it is the fulfilment of what Noys promises to do in 1.2, and it is the object of the exegesis of 1.4. Thus, the Catalogue Poem occupies a central narratological position in Bernard's «Megacosmus.» But the passage is also referred to at numerous points in «Microcosmus.» Brian Stock has commented on the structural parallel between Megacosmus 3 and Microcosmus 3. The starry field described in 1.3.31–136 serves as the stage for Natura's celestial journey to find Urania in 2.3.<sup>2</sup> Further, the world as described in the Catalogue Poem is the text which Noys bids Natura, Physis, and Urania to study as a model for their own emulative work: *man* (2.10).

Given the centrality of the Catalogue Poem to the *Cosmographia*, its actual constitution comes as a surprise. Theodore Silverstein, though not denying the passage's importance, intimates his sense that the passage is somewhat slack when he comments on how «an elegant

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1. The critical edition used is Bernard Silvestris, *Cosmographia*, ed. Peter Dronke, *Textus minores* 53 (Leiden, 1978). All translations are my own, unless noted, although I did, of course, consult with profit Wetherbee's translation and notes in *Cosmographia*, trans. Winthrop Wetherbee (New York, 1990).

2. Stock 1972, 16-7.

poet like Bernardus» was «fond of the set descriptive pieces on trees, mountains, birds, animals, fishes, which furnished models to his literary contemporaries,» and thus he took his opportunity to «multiply metaphorical *décor*.»<sup>3</sup> Silverstein's opinion was not entirely unjustified. The section is the longest single part of the poem: constituting 482 lines of elegiac couplets. Bernard describes how Noys divided the indistinct mass of *Silva* into genera and species,<sup>4</sup> but he is not content with these generalizing comments. Rather, he goes on to state not just that Noys created angels, but he names each of the nine ranks in the angelic hierarchy (13–30). Bernard not only mentions that «the divine hand» (*divina manus*, 3) created stars, but he lists approximately fifty stars and constellations by name and mentions nearly thirty historical persons whose fates are contained within them (31–136). Indeed, in the long tradition of catalogue poems—dating back to Homer's Catalogue of Ships and Virgil's rallying of the Italian allies in the seventh book of the *Aeneid*—the list is comprehensive, and almost tediously exhaustive. Bernard names the seven planets and their properties (137–54), and he mentions by name the four winds set in opposition: «Boreas makes things stiff with cold, Notus makes them wet; as for Auster and Eurus, the latter brings storms, and the other peace.»<sup>5</sup> Thereupon, Bernard lists and characterizes some thirty animals, nearly twenty mountains, and approximately fifteen rivers. All together, within the Catalogue Poem there are hundreds of names of people, places, and species, each bearing an epithet.<sup>6</sup>

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3. SILVERSTEIN 1948, 106.

4. «Thus, the light aether was divided from stars, the stars from heaven, / heaven was divided from the air, and the land from the deeps»; Ergo sideribus levis ether, sidera celo, Celum secessit aere, terra freto (1.3.1–2).

5. Obriguat Boreas, manduit Nothus; Auster et Eurus, / Hic tempestates, ille serena facit (57–58).

6. See the notes in Wetherbee's translation and commentary, Stock's *Myth and Science*, and now, most recently, Mark Kauntze, who valuably summarizes the most recent work, including that of Javilet. KAUNTZE 2009, The catalogue, of course, enters the western literary tradition with the «feats of memory» of Homer and Hesiod, who are imitated by later Greeks and a range of Latin authors, some epic and some mock epic: Catullus, Virgil, Ovid, Statius, Martianus, Claudian, etc. Curtius traced the growth of the «rhetorical» approach to poetry by outlining the development of such literary lists from Virgil's attempt to structure «ideal» and «mixed forests» through Ovid's «bravura interludes» (such as Orpheus's evocation of twenty-six species of trees

The epithets contribute to making this passage a masterpiece according to the hellenistic aesthetic, a delight in the precious use of language and the treatment of the small as heroic.<sup>7</sup> The catalogue possesses a playful martial spirit in its treatment of the ordinary as epic. The multilayered onion receives the high-sounding epithet, «covered in togas» (*cepa repleta togis*; 371). The thorn, like a soldier, «deals out wounds, its body armed» (*armato corpore spina nocens*; 78). And the archangels are a military unit, whose numbers rival the stars («*celestis pars militie, numerosus ad astra / angelus obsequitur sub Michaelae suo*,» 27–28). All of these names, epithets, and descriptions make the list, on the most basic level, overwhelming in its particularity and in its plurality. And although it is true that the Catalogue Poem has traits in common with earlier medieval and classical poetic lists, Bernard's mannerist compilation goes beyond that of *any* predecessor.<sup>8</sup> The

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in *Met.* 10.90–106) which in turn influenced Statius (*Thebais* 5.98) and Claudian (*De raptu Proserpinae* 2.107) and have parallels in the Greek poetry of Nonnus (*Dionysiaca* 3.140). See CURTIUS 1953, 194–200. Much work has been done in recent decades—both by classicists and by comparativists—on literary lists and catalogue poems. For a basic orientation, and an exemplary method of procedure, see SAMMONS 2010. For Virgil, see MALAMUD 1998. On p. 123, no. 9, there is a bibliography on Virgil's Catalogue, including sources, meaning, and influence. For Ovid, see ZIOGAS 2013. On p. 1, no. 2, there is a bibliography on the influence of the Hesiodic catalogue of women.

7. The interpenetrating phenomena of «hellenism», «alexandrianism», and «mannerism» are fascinating in this context because they provide both historical explanations (the transmission of ideas developed in the Greek-speaking world to Republican Rome and then to the Middle Ages via poets in Late Antiquity) and allow for the broader and more general reflection of the comparativist. For a basic introduction to the term «hellenism» and its original Alexandrian context, see the older but useful TRYPANIS 1947, 1–7. For updated bibliography, see the entry of Richard Brilliant and Elizabeth Asmis, «Hellenistic Aesthetics», in *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics* (KELLY 1998, 389–91). Curtius considered «Alexandrianism» or «Mannerism» an enduring phenomenon of western literary culture, which periodically replaced «classicism.» His outline of its legacy may be found in Chapter Fifteen, «Mannerism», of CURTIUS 1953, 273–301. For the Greek experience, specifically, see FOWLER 1989. For the Latin reception of the Greek practices, JOHNSON 2009. For the legacy of such rhetorical mannerism in late antiquity and the middle ages, see ROBERTS 1989. And for up-to-date treatment, MCGILL 2012.

8. SILVERSTEIN 1948, 106. But, for the poem nearest to Bernard's in time and in form, see BAUDRI 2002; translation, introduction, and bibliography in OTTER 2005. Like Bernard's Catalogue Poem, Baudri's *ekphrasis* aims at including within itself a completely exhaustive set of references to the creatures of physical creation. And

litany-like quality makes this passage an Aristotelian critic's nightmare, and, at the same time, a playground for the mind of an Umberto Eco, who would certainly place our passage, had it been selected for anthologization in *The Infinity of Lists*, into the same category as «the list of things in the drawer of Leopold Bloom's kitchen» and Homer's catalogue of ships, as an example of «the poetics of 'etcetera.'»<sup>9</sup>

A full treatment of this subject would involve three things, two of which I will do here. First (1.0), I will draw out the innovative character of the Catalogue Poem, and its intentional plurality, by identifying two important intertexts and showing how Bernard parts company with his authoritative models (Daniel 3 and *Consolation* 2.8m). Secondly (2.0), I would like to look at 1.4, the section immediately following the Catalogue Poem, and note how Bernard, to explain the nature of his world, draws on philosophical resources from two overlapping but distinct traditions of divine naming: Stoicism and Platonism. In this section of the paper, I will argue that on the structural level Bernard's Catalogue Poem represents a fusion of the positive and negative traditions of divine naming. And finally, there would need to be a philologically sensitive exploration, which focused not on the structural, but rather on *how* Bernard arrived at his highly original position through his attempt to be faithful to these competing traditions. The structural and philological inquiries are complementary. Each has its own advantages. On the one hand, the structural analysis enables us to perceive with clarity how original Bernard's poem is, and it gives a basic framework to begin addressing the alterity of the Catalogue Poem. Its disadvantage is that it is only possible to conduct such an analysis with scholarly tools Bernard did not have access to (critical editions, lexica, modern

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yet, while it is a fascinating *imago mundi*, while it hints obliquely at the fundamentally sexual nature of the cosmos, and although it contains interesting metacritical comments, the poem's digressive, dispersive tendency, its reliance on flattery, and its dismissive attitude towards its subject (according to the humility *topos*) serve all the more to put the highly ambitious philosophical and theological aims of Bernard in relief. See my discussion below on Bernard's philosophical and theological intertexts, in light of which Bernard's self-conscious pursuit of a more inclusive universality than had ever been achieved before becomes evident.

9. See Eco 2009. Eco's quirky book is more suggestive than scholarly, but hopefully it will give rise to scholarly inquiries into this fascinating intellectual and literary phenomenon.

inquiries into the precise characteristics of philosophical schools), and, as such, is anachronistic to Bernard's own approach to his *auctores*.

That Bernard lacked these tools and we possess them points to a more serious difference in mindset. As we know from studying his commentaries, Bernard approached his sources entirely differently from the modern historian. He did not go about with the intention to determine the specific differences in their thought-systems, but, rather, he attempted to discover their unifying characteristics. His image of one *auctor* was, as it were, superimposed upon another. Like a sheet of photosensitive film which is intentionally double- and triple-exposed, Bernard's authors tend to blur into one another and form one philosophical system. A philologically sensitive investigation would trace precisely such multiple exposures and show how, by combining a plurality of *auctores*, Bernard arrived at a dimly perceived originality, but this line of inquiry is beyond the scope of the present investigation.<sup>10</sup>

## 2. *Et sic, multis enumeratis, sequitur*: Two Intertextual Relationships with the Catalogue Poem

As Silverstein's remarks make clear, the nature of the Catalogue Poem has made it difficult for scholarship to digest. Peter Dronke described the Catalogue Poem as a kind of verse translation of a prose encyclopaedia, like Honorius's *Imago mundi*, and marvelled at the similarities between Bernard's verses and an ekphrasis of John Gaza, an elaborate rhetorical description of a painted *imago mundi*.<sup>11</sup> Coming from a different angle, Tullio Gregory found the passage and its explanation in 1.4 as illustrative of the twelfth-century passage from a view of the world as «un tenue e trasparente tessuto di simboli» to «un complesso di forze, un *vigor* che organizza e conserva il *cosmo*... fecondo campo in cui trova piena esplicazione una *ratio* prima ignota.»<sup>12</sup> Bernard's Catalogue Poem was for him an example of the «nuovo naturalismo»

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10. I am currently preparing my study of this subject for publication, tentatively titled, «*Inculcatio nominum*: how Bernard Silvestris arrived at *novitas* through fidelity to a plurality of *auctores*.»

11. DRONKE 1978, 24.

12. Tullio Gregory, «L'idea della natura nella filosofia medievale prima dell'ingresso della fisica di aristotele. il secolo xii,» in *Mundana sapientia: forme di conoscenza nella cultura medievale* (Rome, 1992, first appearing in 1964), p. 51.

of the twelfth century. More recent scholarship has advanced our knowledge of the *fontes* for this incredible accumulation of things, as well as the mysterious order which regulates their presentation. Christine Ratkowitsch and Mark Kauntze have written on how the creatures listed are not just a collection of things, but rather ordered according to grander schemes: «Bernard weaves elements of geography and history, sometimes arranging the material in an order progressing from east to west, and across the three providential timescales: *ante legem*, *sub lege*, and *sub gratia*. This method has drawn comparison with the principles of spatio-temporal representation employed in contemporary *mappae mundi*.»<sup>13</sup>

What has not been noticed before, however, is that one important intertext of the Catalogue Poem is the great biblical and cosmological hymn, the *benedicite*, found in Daniel 3.57–87; it is a hymn, a *canonicus* like Bernard would have known well, as it was an integral and ancient part of the liturgy, chanted in Matins on Sunday morning, at the rising of the sun, and thus the liturgical piece used to demarcate the seventh day of Sabbath rest from the rest of the week.<sup>14</sup> In any case, the *benedicite* is also a list. The canticle bids all things to praise God: «*benedicite omnia opera Domini Domino / laudate et superexaltate eum in saecula.*» And according to this formula, it proceeds to: «*benedicite, angeli Domini, Domino: / laudate et superexaltate eum*

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13. «To give two examples, Bernard's catalogue of twenty-four mountains (1.3, lines 175–98) begins with Olympus, the home of the gods, then moves through Lebanon with its cedars (cf Song of Songs v.15), to Sinai, 'where the blessed law was handed down to blessed Moses' ('Quo sacra sub sacro lex Moyeste data est', line 182), and on to the Monte Gargano, associated in the Middle Ages with the cult of St Michael, before concluding with the western European Alps. Likewise, Bernard's river catalogue (lines 257–64) begins with the Tigris and Euphrates (two of the rivers that flow out of Eden (Gen. ii.14), but here coupled to classical allusions), then proceeds to the biblical rivers of the Abana (II Kings v.12), the Shiloah John (ix.7–11) and the Jordan, before moving once again to western Europe, again concluding in Gaul with the Seine and the Loire, the river that runs through the poet's own city of Tours. The same dynamic is evident in the catalogue of notable woods and groves (lines 317–54).» KAUNTZE 2014, forthcoming. Many thanks to the author for so generously allowing me to look at the manuscript.

14. For a description of the religious institutions in twelfth-century Tours, and Bernard's affiliation, see Kaunte's chapter, «Bernard Silvestris and the School of Tours,» in KAUNTZE 2014. For the role of the *benedicite* in the liturgical life of the Church, see TAFT 1983.

in sæcula.» And then follow some two dozen more invocations of the different creatures made by God. If one allows for slight differences, like the transposition of the treatment of animals and plants, and the *abbreviatio* of the biblical author's invocations of "weather patterns" in Bernard's quick discussion of the winds and their effects (1.3.55–58), then it will be noticed that Bernard's list—as summarized in the *summa operis*—mirrors that of the biblical author's.

The Benedicite (Daniel 3)

Bernard's Catalogue  
(*summa operis*)

**angeli domini**

cæli,  
aquæ omnes,  
quæ super cælos sunt  
(= firmament),  
omnes virtutes Domini,  
sol et luna,  
**stellæ cæli**,  
omnis imber et ros,

**Nove gerarchiae angelorum**

**stellæ in firmamento**  
per zodiacum orbem septem  
planetarum

**quattuor cardinales venti**

**omnes spiritus Dei**,

ignis et æstus,  
frigus et æstus,  
rores et pruina,  
gelu et frigus,  
glacies et nives,  
noctes et dies,  
lux et tenebræ,  
fulgura et nubes,  
*montes et colles*,

(genesis animantium)  
*montes famosi*  
(proprietas animalium)  
*famosi fluvii*

universa germinantia in terra,  
*fontes*,  
*maria et flumina*,



proprietas arborum  
species odorate  
genera leguminum  
proprietas aristarum  
virtus herbarum

**genera natalium**

**cete,**

**et omnia quæ moventur in aquis,**

**genus aerivagum**

**omnes volucres cæli,**

(omnes bestię et pecora)

When we turn to 1.3 itself, however, we notice that, while the biblical author apostrophizes the stars, Bernard *amplifies*. Bernard does not just mention that Noys created stars, but goes into great detail, providing his readers with a complete star map of the night-time sky. Likewise, while the biblical author bids «all you winged things, praise the Lord,» Bernard expands by mentioning by name, the heron, the duck, gulls, the swan, the phoenix, the falcon, hawk, peacock, dove, cocks, turtle doves, finch, kite, kingfisher, owl, and on and on. Thus, Bernard constructs for us a picture of creation in all its multitudinous plurality. The fact that Bernard's poem is an *amplificatio* of what was already considered a cosmological hymn underscores the French poet's attempt to arrive at an encyclopaedic universality.

But it is particularly helpful to look at the Catalogue Poem in light of Metrum 8, of Book 2, of the *Consolation of Philosophy*. Indeed, this is a precious point of comparison, for we have Bernard's own thoughts on the Boethian poem, as recorded in his commentary to the *De nuptiis*.<sup>15</sup>

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15. For the authorship question see STOCK 1972, 37; Bernard Silvestris, *Commen- tum quod dicitur Bernardi Silvestris super sex libros Eneidos Virgilii*, ed. J. W. JONES and E. F. JONES 1977, p.~ix; JEAUNEAU 1964; PIKE 1988; GERSH 1992. And for a brief review of the authorship question with bibliography, see KAUNTZE 2014, p.~25, no.~4. I hold with Dronke, Jeauneau, Gersh, and GODMAN 1995 that the author of the *Aeneid* and Mar- tianus commentaries in question is the same as the author of the *Cosmographia*. The

There Bernard describes Boethius 2.8m as being the perfect counterpart to the opening of Martianus Capella: «Now 'Hymen' is the Greek for

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most succinct statement in favor of Silvestrian authorship is Peter Dronke, «Bernardo Silvestre,» in *Enciclopedia Virgiliana*, ed. Francesco Della Corte (Rome, 1984), pp. 497–500. The evidence for this position is that one manuscript (among five; *Parisinus Latinus* 1624) attributes the commentary to Bernard [*incipit commentum Bernardi Silvestris super sex Eneidos Virgili*], and a fifteenth-century catalogue of the contents of the library of Amplonius of Ratinck labels an *Aeneid* commentary *Bernhardi Silvestris*. Dronke argues that one may also find «molte suggestive risposdenze tematiche» between the *Cosmographia* and the *Aeneid* commentary: such as the *effectus stellarum*, the treatment of the *membra* of the city in an analogous way to Bernard's treatment of man at 3.13, etc. It has been accepted by all since Jauneau's "Note" that the author of the *Aeneid* commentary also wrote the later commentary on Martianus Capella. It is also known that the author of the commentaries is French (given the author's firsthand knowledge of Orleans, as found in the Martianus Commentary) and connected to the «School of Chartres,» based on his use of sources. That it was authentically written by Bernard Silvestris was not questioned until Jones and Jones—followed by Stock—who cast doubt on the late attributions, but, more importantly, argued that the philosophical opinions of the commentator are not in accord with those in the *Cosmographia*. As for the first objection, it must be admitted that "tenuous" attributions are nevertheless pieces of positive evidence, especially when they are independent of one another. As for the second observation, I agree with Godman («Opus consummatum,» p. 41, no. 100) that Gersh has effectively countered the objections of Jones and Jones, and, thus, I hold with Dronke that there is no need to doubt the attribution until further arguments can be mounted against it. But a few more observations in favor of the authorship of Bernard Silvestris can be added here. First, there are many textual parallels between the *Cosmographia* and the Martianus Commentary, so many, in fact, that they would need to be the subject of a separate study. Second, what Gregory (in «L'idea della natura») has identified as some of the most characteristic features of the *Cosmographia*—the manifest interest in magic and the hermetic—is also found in the Martianus Commentary, wherein the author, without precedent, gives "magica" as a branch of the mechanical arts, as well as shows a lively interest in magic throughout, and embraces such hermetic notions as the bisexuality of God. Thirdly, the author of the Martianus Commentary demonstrates an interest in technical questions of rhetoric and poetry (metrics, rhetorical figures, how poets achieve *auctoritas* through *emulatio*) for their own sake, and not just for lifting off the «veil.» Even more importantly—again without precedent—the author of the Martianus Commentary elevates poetry to the level of a science, equal to *theoria*, *practica*, and *mechanica*. The author's intense interest in poetry throughout makes it likely that the author of the Martianus Commentary was a not just a *glossator*, but a practicing composer. In the end, when we stack up all of the characteristics (a twelfth-century French poet associated with the School of Chartres who had a particular interest in magic, medicine, the elements, and hermeticism), we seem to have justifiable basis for embracing even those late attributions.

*confederation*. This universal music has many effects, which we take to be the offices of this god, and these effects are expressed in these verses here. For this reason they accord very well with those verses of Boethius.» He then quotes several lines from the Boethian poem.<sup>16</sup>

It will be remembered that in 2.8m Boethius represents what he explicitly calls «*rerum series*» bound together by *amor*; which is to say, he represents how the various seasons and times of the world are held together in the sacred embrace of *universalis musica*. Interestingly enough, Bernard refers to his own Catalogue Poem as *rerum series* (1.2.16). But what is of even greater interest is that Bernard, in his Martianus Capella Commentary, having quoted the first six verses of 2.8m, then inserts a brief comment, before quoting three more. The comment is a kind of editorial remark: *et sic, multis enumeratis, sequitur* (and thus, after many things have been listed, he continues...). What is remarkable for our purposes is that Bernard seems to see into the Boethian *rerum series* more than is actually there. In reality, what Bernard refers to as the «enumeration of many things» is only a couple of lines in Boethius, which mention night, dawn, and the sea. In his commentary, Bernard seems to have thought of the list less as what it actually *was*, and more of what it could be—what it *would* be in his own poem.

### 3. Deus omninominis: the Catalogue Poem and Stoic, Positive Divine Naming

That Bernard's Catalogue Poem can be read in light of the Stoic hymnic tradition is suggested by what I call Bernard's «auto-exegesis» in 1.4. In 1.4 the narration does not advance. Rather, the drama pauses to allow for a reflection on the section which has come before, the Catalogue Poem. The section begins with setting in motion, so to speak, what has been described statically. What had been simply listed is now bound together by a kind of organic syntax of life. In terms reminiscent of Thierry of Chartres, Bernard describes how individual

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16. Quod mundus stabili fide Concordes variat vices; Quod pugnantia semina Fedus perpetuum teneret; Quod Phebus roseum diem Curru provehit aureo. *Et sic, multis enumeratis, sequitur*: Hanc rerum seriem ligat, Terras et pelagus regens, Et celo imperitans amor. WESTRA 1986, 49-50.

species derive their vitality from the celestial fire; they drink it in (ethereum fomitem inibierunt; 1.4.1), to quote Bernard's evocative expression. Bernard now lets his static model begin to move within time. The world comes full circle from genera, to species, to individuals, and from individuals back out to their beginnings (1.4.3). He describes this heavenly fire (ignis ethereus) as a husband who pours himself out into the womb of his spouse the earth (gremio Telluris coniugis affusus). The line closely echoes one from Virgil (tum pater omnipotens fecundis imbribus Aether / coniugis in gremium laetae descendit; *Geor.*2.325–26), which Bernard could have taken upon the authority of Servius as embodying Stoic doctrine.<sup>17</sup> In 1.4, we also hear that vital heat is the seed of life (de calore suo producit ad vitam; 1.4.2), and this vital heat is also the *spiritus animantium* (1.4.2). Throughout, Bernard follows a Stoic tradition which revisited the more ancient, poetic “hieros gamos” in a philosophical key.<sup>18</sup>

In this way Bernard analyses his world-picture, as he gave it to us at 1.3, in a stoical light. For Stoics, of course, the Supreme God, whom they called Zeus to maintain connection with tradition, thoroughly penetrated all creatures in the world. God was all and in all. The Stoics read the old polytheistic tradition as fully compatible with their own monotheism. «The issue is therefore not *if* the Stoics considered the polytheistic and mono- or pantheistic strands of their theology compatible, but how they combined the strands, and how much coherence they

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17. In Virgil, *Aen.* 4.638: IOVI STYGIO hoc est, Plutoni. Et sciendum Stoicos dicere unum esse deum cui nomina variantur pro actibus et officiis. Unde etiam duplicis sexus numina esse dicuntur ut, cum in actu sunt, mares sint, feminae, cum patiendi habent naturam; unde est *coniugis in gremium laetae descendit*. Ab actibus autem vocantur, ut ‘Iuppiter’ iuvans pater, ‘Mercurius’ quod mercibus praeest, ‘Liber’ a libertate. Sic ergo et modo Iovem ‘Stygiū’ dicit inferis sacrificatura, ut alibi (6.148) *Iunoni infernae dicunt sacer*. Hinc est Iovis oratio *caelicolae, mea membra, dei, quos nostra potestas officiis divisa facit*. Cp. to Servius’s commentary on Virgil: Comm. In Virgil, *Georg.* 1.5: Stoici dicunt non esse nisi unum deum, et unam eandemque esse potestatem, que pro ratione officiorum nostrorum variis nominibus appellatur; unde eundem Solem, eundem Liberum, eundem Apollinem vocant; item Lunam eandem Dianam, eandem Cererem, eandem Inonem, eandem Proserpinam dicunt.

18. See DRONKE 1965. Chrysippus himself is said to have claimed that a certain cult picture representing Hera and Zeus in a particular sexual act «should be interpreted as a representation of how the divine *spermatikoi logoi* fertilize matter.» ALGRA 2003, 240.

achieved.»<sup>19</sup> As Christoph Jedan explains: «It is well attested that the Stoics called their divine principle Zeus. They admitted other divinities in the Greek pantheon as aspects or manifestations of the single divine principle and identified them as entities in—or rather, elements of—the world.»<sup>20</sup> Thus, there is a kind of Stoic «divine naming,» a *positive* stacking up of names, which is well illustrated in Diogenes Laertius. In one passage, he describes how the Stoics treated all the names of the gods of the Pantheon as aspects of the one, supreme god:

[God] as it were, the father of all, both in general and in that particular part of him pervading all things, and which is called by many names according to its powers. [Stoics] give him the name Dia, through whom are all things; Zeus, insofar as he is the cause of life or pervades life; Athena, because of the extension of his ruling part to the aether; Hera, because of his suffusion of the air; Hephaestus, because of his spreading to the craftsmanlike fire; Poseidon, because of his saturation of the water; and Demeter, because of his permeation of the earth. Similarly, they have given him his other names, by fastening on some particular attribute.<sup>21</sup>

Similar positions or doxographical summaries can be found in Philodemus, Cicero, Cornutus, and (Pseudo-?) Aristotle.<sup>22</sup>

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19. JEDAN 2009, 24. For Stoic theology, see also ALGRA 2003; GOULET 2005; MANSFELD 1999.

20. JEDAN 2009, 24.

21. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, 7.147, as cited and re-translated by WHITMAN 1987, 32.

22. Philodemus: «Chrysippus, who traces everything back to Zeus, says in book one of his *On Gods* that Zeus is the Reason which administers all things and the Soul of the All, and that all things by participation therein [are in various ways alive . . .], even the stones, which is why he is called *Zena* ('Life'), and (he is called) *Dia* ('Through') because he is the Cause and Master of all things. The Cosmos itself is animate, and the Regent Part and Soul of the Whole is God; the argument valid in respect of Zeus also holds for the Common Nature of all things and Destiny and Necessity. And Lawfulness and Right and Concord and Peace and Love and so on are the same thing. And there are no male or female gods, just as there are no (male or female) cities or virtues, but they are merely given male and female names though they are the same, as for instance Moonness and Moon. And Ares pertains to war and either side in battle, and Hephaestus is fire, and Cronus is the stream of what flows, Rhea the earth, Zeus the aether—others say this is Apollo—and Demeter the earth or rather the *pneuma* in the earth. And it is infantile to describe and form gods with human shape, just as (infantile as to believe in) cities and rivers and places and passions (with human

The Stoics felt justified in practicing these allegorical revisions of the traditional ancient religions partly on account of their physics.<sup>23</sup> As Michael Lapidge has argued, the Stoics applied a biological metaphor to the operations of the cosmos.<sup>24</sup> The world is a *zoon*: a living, breathing, animate being. The founder of the school, Zeno, borrowing from Aristotelian biology, described how the “breath” (*pneuma*) within animate beings was responsible for conveying vitality to the members and communicating sensations to the soul’s “command center” (*hegemonikon*). Perhaps Cleanthes, but certainly Chryssipus, applied the biological, *pneuma* model to the universe. For Cleanthes, it seems, a «vital warmth,» a creative fire, penetrated all creatures within the sublunar realm; for Chryssipus, the penetrating, life-giving power was god, reason, mind, and breath (*pneuma*). Thus, the world was shot through by god, who penetrated and pervaded any individual creature in the cosmos. God, thus, was every living creature’s vitality, every

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shape). And Zeus is the air surrounding the earth, and the dark (air) is Hades, that in the earth and sea Poseidon. The other gods he combines with such inanimate things in the same way. And he believes the Sun and Moon and the other heavenly bodies to be gods, and the Law too. And he also affirms that humans change into gods. In book two he, like Cleanthes, attempts to accommodate what is ascribed to Orpheus and Musaeus and what is in Homer and Hesiod and Euripides and the other poets to their [the Stoics’] doctrines” (Philodemus, *De Piet.* 4.12–8.13; as cited in MANSFELD 1999, 461–2. Cicero: Although the speaker (Velleius, a follower of Epicurus) is hostile to the Stoic theology he expounds (Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* 1.39), his descriptions are in accord with sympathetic authors. Chryssipus, he says, taught that divine power resides in reason, in the soul, in the «all-pervading world-soul» (in *universae naturae animo*), fire, aether, Fate, water, earth, air, sun, moon, and stars. In the mean time, he also argues that the names of the traditional gods allegorically refer to parts of the cosmos. Thus, the picture which emerges is the familiar Stoic monotheism in which god manifests himself in a plurality of ways. Cornutus: see *Cornuti Theologiae Graecae Compendium*, in LANG 2009, p. 9.1–20, and *Cleanthes’ Hymn to Zeus*, in THOM 2005, p. 47, no. 21. (Pseudo-) Aristotle: εἷς δὲ ὢν πολυώνυμός ἐστι, κατονομαζόμενος τοῖς πάθεσι πᾶσιν ἅπερ αὐτός νεοχμοῖ. καλοῦμεν γὰρ αὐτὸν καὶ Ζῆνα καὶ Δία, παρὰλλήλως χρώμενοι τοῖς ὀνόμασιν...; «Though he is one, he has many names, according to the many effects he himself produces. We call him both Zena and Dia, using the names interchangeably...»; trans. D.J. Furley, in Loeb Classical Library, as cited in THOM 2005, p. 47, no. 22.

23. For Stoic physics, see HAHM 1977; JEDAN 2009; SAMBURSKY 1959; LAPIDGE 1978. And, for a brief overview for the non-specialist, along with an up-to-date bibliography, see SELLARS 2006, 81–106.

24. LAPIDGE 1978, 163.

moving creature's strength, and every existent thing's coherence and solidarity. Although god dwelt in each of these creatures, he dwelt in them to different extents, to differing degrees of density, or, to use the Stoic musical metaphor, in differing degrees of tension (*tonos*).

But what concerns us most directly is the *aesthetic* application of these Stoic beliefs. The belief that god was present in an infinite number of manifestations is related to the Stoic tendency to view the world, in my terminology, panoramically. In Cicero's *De natura deorum*, for instance, Lucilius provides a moving view of the complexity of the cosmos:

Again, consider the sympathetic agreement, interconnexion and affinity of things: whom will this not compel to approve the truth of what I say? Would it be possible for the earth at one definite time to be gay with flowers and then in turn all bare and stark, or for the spontaneous transformation of so many things about us to signal the approach and the retirement of the sun at the summer and the winter solstices, or for the tides to flow and ebb in the seas and straits with the rising and setting of the moon, or for the different courses of the stars to be maintained by the one revolution of the entire sky? These processes and this musical harmony of all the parts of the world assuredly could not go on were they not maintained in unison by a single divine and all-pervading spirit (*De natura deorum*, 2.19).<sup>25</sup>

Cicero promotes an aesthetic sensitivity to macro-patterns, to how the Stoic god governs diverse parts of the world. Seasons and continents, bodies of water and varieties of landscapes are all held in check by the supreme ruler who brings order and harmony to this astonishing diversity. The Stoic wishes to contemplate the whole of the "cosmic temple" in order to liberate himself from attachment to this or that creaturely attraction, as well as bringing himself to the point where he may worship the benevolence of the supreme governor. This passage is, of course, similar to another Ciceronian passage, at the end of his

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25. «possetne uno tempore florere, dein vicissim horrere terra, aut tot rbus ipsis se immutantibus solis accessus discessusque solstitiis brumisque cognosci, aut aestus maritimi fretorumque angustiae ortu aut obitu lunae commoveri, aut una totius caeli conversione cursus astrorum dispares conservari? Haec ita fieri omnibus inter se concinientibus mundi partibus profecto non possent nisi ea uno divino et continuato spiritu continerentur» (2.19). Text: Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, trans. RACKHAM 1933.

*Republic*, which relates the dream of Scipio Africanus, who was caught up into the sphere of the heavens. From that lofty view, Scipio could see all. And, in light of this panoramic view of the universe, he could note how miniscule his own beloved Roman Empire was in relation to everything else. Here Cicero calls the universe the «Temple of the Cosmos.» It is a vision which helps the beholder develop contempt for worldly goods as tiny fragmented portions of the Good.

We have already mentioned the “panoramic” view of the cosmos provided us in Boethius’s hymn, 2.8m. That hymn itself seems to have been inspired by Cleanthes’s famous «Hymn to Zeus.»<sup>26</sup> In the ancient text, the poet looks around on the creatures of the world and reads them as individual manifestations of the «poly-named» Zeus. Cleanthes provides this panoramic view of the world for ethical reasons. His goal is to help human beings free themselves of attachment to this or that worldly good. Cleanthes prays that Zeus may rescue man from his destructive ignorance (ἀνθρώπους ῥύου ἀπειροσύνης ἀπὸ λυγρῆς, 33), but that specific form of “destructive ignorance” Cleanthes has in mind is that ignorance of the ultimate good, without which knowledge man pursues «each after various things» (ἄλλος ἐπ’ ἄλλα, 26). Men pursue this or that worthless, worldly possession, profit, or pleasure, «carried this way, and now that» (ἐπ’ ἄλλοτε δ’ ἄλλα φερόνται, 30), like particles which do not partake in the cosmic order. The poet, then, by stepping back and showing that Zeus is fully immanent within the world (12), that he is the vitality which enables the universe to move and move to its proper place (15–16), and is thus «many-named» (πολύωνυμε, 1), tries to counteract the human tendency to fixate upon the part, as opposed to the system. The poet directs the mind’s eye to the whole of the universe (7), so that he may serenely let go of this or that part. Boethius, much like Cleanthes, at the end of his own cosmological hymn (2.m8), utters a plaintive cry that men live with an interior order analogous to that which regulates the motions of the cosmos: «O felix hominum genus, / si vestros animos amor / quo caelum regitur regat!» (2.8m.28–30).<sup>27</sup>

26. THOM 2005.

27. *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, MORESCHINI 2000. For more on the relationship between Boethius and Cleanthes, and a few provocative thoughts on the relationship between ancient philosophy and prayer in general, see SHANZER 2009.



#### 4. «*Maiestate caliginis abscond[i]tur incognitus*»: The Platonic Aspects of the Catalogue Poem

This Stoic positive naming, what I have called the Stoic aesthetic of the panoramic, what Pierre Hadot called «The View from Above,» represents, structurally speaking, one half of the inspiration for the Catalogue Poem. But, remarkably, Bernard also lays on top of this Stoicising grid, a Platonic one. While it is true that Bernard in his «auto-exegesis» (1.4) described the world as a great living organism (*mundus quidem est animal*; 1.4.8), in whose veins a divine force flows which gives life to individual creatures, in that same section we also find Bernard analyzing his world according to a Platonic paradigm. That “ethereal fire” which courses through the veins of the cosmos’s creatures is explicitly related to what is called the «primordial beginning of life» (1.4.3), which, as the context makes clear, is a way of referring to God in his simplicity, timelessness, and unity. Temporality is said to be born from primordial life, and the ordered movements of the stars are said to have their beginnings in the primal simplicity of eternity.<sup>28</sup> Number and motion are called the emanations of unity and rest: «from unity to number, from stability to motion there is a flowing forth. Moments of time: the instant of the present, the fleeing away of the past, the expectation of the future. By ever going and ever returning [time] continues along these paths» (1.4.11).<sup>29</sup> Time is called the image of eternity (*eternitatis imago tempus*; 1.4.13).

These are, generally speaking, Platonic features. The sensible world of flux and change is set in contrast to the world of stability. But the particular choice to show that *because* the sensible world is derived from the higher intelligible world, then it was constructed in the *likeness* of the higher and points to it, is an echo of the *Timaeus* and its tradition.<sup>30</sup> In Bernard’s words: «from the intelligible world the

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28. Ex eo incipientis vite primordio, cum volvente celo de motu quoque siderum substantia temporis nasceretur, que successerunt secula—simplici eternitatis initiata principio—cum sua numerus varietate suscepit (1.4.3).

29. De unitate ad numerum, de stabilitate digreditur ad momentum. Momenta temporis: presentis instantia, excursus preteriti, expectatio futuri. Has itaque vias itu semper redituque continuat (1.4.11).

30. Translations of Plato’s Greek are from MACDONALD COMFORD 1997. The quotations from Calcidius come from *Timaeus, a Calcidio translatus commentarioque*

sensible world is born: perfect from the perfect» (Ex mundo intelligibili mundus sensibilis perfectus natus est, ex perfecto; 1.4.11).

Even more specifically, these passages echo a famous passage in the *Timaeus* on time and the world's similitude to the invisible and eternal model: *Timaeus*, 37c–38c. There are many links between this passage and Bernard. Plato's Demiurge, having created the world, sets it in motion, makes it alive, and rejoices in it: «When the father who had begotten it saw it set in motion and alive, a shrine brought into being for the everlasting gods, he rejoiced and being well pleased he took thought to make it yet more like its pattern» (37c).<sup>31</sup> Similarly, at 2.1, Bernard's Providence invites Natura to rejoice in what has been made: «when at last Providence was pleased in the exceedingly well ordered and well crafted appearance of the sensible world, Providence called on Natura to join in admiring and rejoicing over the elegant ordering of these things which she had so longed for with such desire» (In predecoro longaeque artificii mundi sensibilis apparatu cum iam Providentie conplaceret, Naturam evocat, ut pariter conmiretur et gaudeat, ad quorum exornationem totis desideriis anelarat; 2.1.1).

In the *Timaeus*, the demiurge decides to make the world even more like the eternal pattern, which is known as the Living Being (Calcidius's "animal immortale") by imposing time on the world. It is this time which enables the world to resemble eternity.<sup>32</sup> At 38b, time is inextricably linked to the movements of heaven. After a lengthy discussion of the intricate, criss-crossing movements of the planets and stars (38e–39d), *Timaeus* says, «in this way, then, and for these ends were brought into being all those stars that have turnings on their journey through Heaven; in order that this world may be as like as possible to the perfect and intelligible Living Creature, in respect of

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*instructus*, WASZINK 1962. For the tradition of the *Timaeus*, see Introduction and Chapter One in SALLES 2009; GERSH and HOENEN 2002; MOHR and SATTLER 2010; REYDAMS-SCHILS 2003.

31. Compare to Calcidius's translation: «immortalis divinitatis genitor suus, hilaratus impendio multo magis ad exemplum eius aemulae similitudinis aliud specimen censuit excogitandum» (36c–d).

32. In Calcidius, the full sentence is: «Ergo neque iunior se neque senior nec fuit nec erit nec patietur eorum aliquid que sensibilis natura patitur, sed sunt haec omnia vices temporis imitantis aevum» (38 a–b).

imitating its ever-enduring nature» (39d–e).<sup>33</sup> Earlier, eternity was said to never grow older or younger, in contrast to those things which «have come into being as forms of time, which images eternity and revolves according to number» (38a). Thus, time seems to imitate eternity in two ways: 1) the heavens have a more enduring nature than the objects of earth; in this sense, time, through the heavenly bodies, imitates the “everlastingness” of the Living Being better than the lower world which is constantly coming into bloom or shedding its leaves; and 2) the incredible intricacy of the movement of the planets is the opposite of randomness; all is linked and moves in sync as if in a great cosmic figure-dance; thus, as a whole, the heaven possesses a kind of unity, in the sense that its parts are highly conformed to a single plan. The *form* is the resemblance of unity.

Like Plato in the *Timaeus*, Bernard says that the world’s perfection is due to the perfection of the maker: «perfectus natus est, ex perfecto.» But what is interesting to note is the nature of that perfection in Bernard versus the perfection in the *Timaeus*. The passage «perfectus natus est, ex perfecto,» continues: «thus, it was he who was full who gave birth. Plenitude established the plenteous. And as it becomes whole by the whole, and grows beautiful on account of the beautiful, so it is ‘eternalized’ according to its eternal exemplar» (Plenus erat igitur qui genuit, plenumque constituit plenitudo. Sicut enim integrascit ex integro, pulcrestit ex pulcro, sic exemplari suo eternatur eterno; 1.4.11). Amazingly, it is the «plenitudo,» the fullness and plurality of the world which is the point of analogy between God and his creation. It is God’s fullness which constitutes his beauty. And because he is “integral” he bestows on the world its self-sustainability, *in perpetuum*. This differs from what we find in the *Timaeus*: «Time came into being together with the Heaven, in order that, as they were brought into being together, so they may be dissolved together, if ever their dissolution should come to pass» (38b). For Bernard, however, hesitancy about the world’s enduring nature is gone: «Truly, the totality of creatures, the world, shall never grow decrepit from strengthless old age nor disbanded in some final setting, since the *ratio* of its per-

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33. For which Calcidius gives, «ut quam simillimum esset omne hoc perfecto illi quod mente perspicitur animali aevoque exaequatae naturae temporis socia natura nancisceretur imaginem.»

manence has been granted by a maker and an efficient cause—both sempiternal—and by matter and form, which are both perpetual. For primeval being, is eternal permanence; simplicity fecund of plurality; it is one; alone from itself and in itself is the total nature of god. Whatever is of place may not encompass his limitless essence or his boundary-less majesty» (Rerum porro universitas, mundus, nec invalida senectute decipitur, nec supremo est obitu dissolvendus, cum de opifice causaque operis—utrisque sempiternis—de materia formaque materie—utriusque perpetuis—ratio cesserit permanendi. Usque namque primeva, eviterna perseveratio, fecunda pluralitatis simplicitas, una est: sola ex se vel in se tota natura dei. Cuius quicquid loci est, nec essentie nec maiestatis infinibile circumscribit. Huiusmodi si virtutem, si salutem, si vitam diffiniendo dixeris, non errabis; 1.4.4). By emphasising the perpetuity of the world, Bernard effectively redefines the point of likeness between the world and God. This changes where and how we find God when we look for traces of him in sensible creation. Thinking about the world as uncircumscribed by time, as bringing forth an overwhelming number of creatures which eludes our intellectual grasp of classification, prepares us to think about God, who is also boundary-less (*infinibile*). The in-finite series of creatures, as listed in 1.3, is what gives us insight into the infinitude of God.

But this is not the only passage in which Bernard uses the language of aphaeresis. The *Cosmographia* is shot through with the language of negative theology. In many of the passages in which “deus” appears, the word is qualified with the language of transcendence. In the very next paragraph after the one we analyzed above, God is called *lux inaccessibilis*, and the world is said to be a beam of light which sparked out («ex ea igitur luce inaccessibili splendor radiatus emicuit,» 1.4.5). In «Microcosmus,» God is called «Unitas...simplex, intacta, solitaria, ex se in se permanens, infinibilis et eterna. Unitas deus...Primiparens deitas» (2.13.1). Elsewhere, God is «suprem[us]» (2.4.1), and, in one particularly exuberant phrase, which echoes Apuleius, he is «summ[us] et exuperantissim[us].»<sup>34</sup> Natura and Urania are described as entering into a «mansion of pure and uncontaminated light, much removed and

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34. Apuleius, *De Platone*, 1.12. See DRONKE 1978, 188. «Erat fons luminis, seminarium vite, bonum bonitatis, divine plenitudo scientie que mens altissimi nominatur. Ea igitur Noys summi et exsuperantissimi est dei intellectus...» (1.2.13).

withdrawn from bodily places. There is the *sacrarium* of the summus and superessentialis God, if you place faith in theological terms» ([...] *locis longe corpulentis sepositam et abstractam purgati defecatique luminis introeunt mansionem. Ibi summi et superessentialis dei sacrarium est, si theologis fidem prebeas argumentis; 2.5.1*). Later, when the two approach the most proper dwelling place of God, whom Bernard calls «Tugaton,» probably after Macrobius,<sup>35</sup> the two goddesses are blinded by the brilliance of the Supreme Good: «From that realm where Tugaton, the supreme divinity, has his dwelling place, a radiant splendour shines forth, nowhere partial, but everywhere infinite and eternal. This *lux inaccessibilis* so strikes the eyes of the beholder, so confounds his vision, that since the radiance shields itself by its very radiance, you may perceive that the splendour produces of itself an obscuring darkness» (*E sedibus quidem quas Tugaton suprema divinitas habitatrix insistit, splendour emicat radiates, non utique perfunctorius, sed infinibilis et eternus. Ea igitur lux inaccessibilis intendentis reverberat oculos, aciem preconfundit, ut, quia lumen se defendit a lumine, splendorem ex se videas caliginem peperisse; 2.5.3*). And later still, Urania explains to Natura that God is seen in his handiwork, although he «lies unknown and hidden on account of the majesty of his divine darkness.»<sup>36</sup>

God, then, is *lux inaccessibilis*, *extramundanus*, *superessentialis*, *exsuperantissimus*, *summus*, *supremus*, and *infinibilis*. Just as he did for the creatures of his catalogue, Bernard seems to have sifted his sources for such words of transcendence. He uses the richly textured adjectives of the Dionysian tradition, those exuberant polysyllabic

35. WETHERBEE 1990, p. 158, no. 19: Macrobius, *In somn. Scip.* 1.39. See also SILVERSTEIN 1948, 108, who points out that the phrase also appears in the *De sex principiis*.

36. The whole sentence is: «divine licet maiestate caliginis abscondatur incognitus, de suorum vestigiis operum perspicuis innotescit,» 2.7.3. Compare also: *Dico deos quorum ante deum presentia servit, Quos tenet in vero lumine vera dies, Pacis enim locus etheree, totoque tumultu Aeris exceptus, sepositusque sibi, Separat archanas sedes; super, immo superne, Extramundanus creditur esse deus (1.3.7–12)*. «I call [those angels] “gods” whose presence serves before God, they are held by the true day in the true light. Indeed, they are in a place of ethereal peace, entirely cut off from the boisterous tumult of the air, a place which marks out the most secret seats; high, no, rather high and lifted up, far beyond this world God is believed to be.»

coinages which point at what cannot be said. And he also uses the mystic's paradox, too. God is light which releases such brilliance that he blinds those around him and so is hid in darkness. In this way, he employs both modes of mystical speaking which Denys Turner discusses in *The Darkness of God*. Bernard's language is at once marked by the «sheer heaviness,» it is «linguistically *overburdened*» «deploying all the resources of language in the effort to express something about God,» his language is «straining to speak.»<sup>37</sup> And, on the other hand, he employs what Turner calls «the self-subverting utterance, the utterance which first says something and then, in the same image, unsays it.»<sup>38</sup>

But we can make two more, more particular comments regarding Bernard's link to the Platonic. Of the beautiful passages quoted, we can focus on 2.5 (1–3), which uses the key terms: caligo, superessentialis, arcana, incognitus, teologia, incommunicabilis, etc, within short succession of one another. Terms such as “superessentialis” reminded Dronke of Eriugenean thought, for good reason.<sup>39</sup> But I think we can be even more precise: Bernard might be relying on Eriugena's translation of Dionysius's *Mystical Theology*. The first point to make is that the term “superessentia” and its cognate forms are unique to Eriugena. Hilduin, for instance, preferred “supersubantia” to translate the Dionysian hyperousia. Secondly, we should point out that all the key terms provided appear, appropriately, in the single most poetic part of Dionysius, in the weighty philosophical hymn which opens the *De mysticis theologiis*. «Trinitas **superessentialis**, et superdeus, et superoptime Christianorum inspector theosophiae, dirige nos in mysticorum eloquiorum superincognitum et superlucentem et sublissimum verticem, ubi nova et absoluta et inconvertibilia **theologia** mysteria, secundum superlucentem **absconduntur occulte** docentis

37. Denys Turner, «The Cataphatic and the Apophatic in Denys the Areopagite,» in *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 20.

38. TURNER 1995, 21 For a general introduction to ancient and Christian tradition of apophaticism see Chapter One in ROCCA 2004. Gregory P. Rocca, *Speaking the Incomprehensible God: Thomas Aquinas on the Interplay of Positive and Negative Theology* (Washington, D.C., 2004). See also ROREM 1993; RIST 1964; and WILLIAMS 1999. For more on the strategies and rhetorical structures of the tradition, see BATTISTI 1983; BRETON 1994; GERSH 1978; SCAZZOSO 1967; BEGGIANI 1996.

39. On p. 83 of his introduction, in «The Background of the *Cosmographia*: Some Testimonies,» DRONKE 1978 provides a passage from Eriugena's *Periphyseon*.

silentii **caliginem**, in obscurissimo, quod est supermanifestissimum, supersplendentem, et in qua omne relucet, et invisibilium superbonum splendoribus superimplementem invisibiles intellectus.»<sup>40</sup> Two sentences later the author expressed his hope that Timothy will ascend «ad superessentialem divinarum tenebrarum radium.» We note how compactly the opening of the *Mystical Theology* contains all the key terms, and how closely certain phrases like «secundum superlucentem absconduntur occulte docentis silentii caliginem» are echoed by the Silvestrian «divine...maiestate caliginis abscondatur incognitus,» and how for both authors “theologia” is explicitly connected with looking into “superessentialis” God.

My argument does not really depend at all on identifying the Dionysian hymn in Eriugena’s translation as the source for these passages. But it does help me make one part of my major point: the Catalogue Poem is more than a mere collage of ancient lists, and more than even a proto-modern, scientific attempt to view the world without the lens of theology. Rather, the Catalogue Poem should be thought of as a fusion of two older traditions of divine naming, a union of the Stoic and Neoplatonic hymn.

## 5. Conclusion

Alongside the better known and better studied negative theology of the Pseudo-Dionysius, antiquity bequeathed to the Latin Middle Ages what I would like to call a positive form of divine naming. Although Dionysius admits in theory that «as Cause of all...[God has] the names of everything that is,» in practice, and in contrast to the Stoic wide-angle shot, Dionysius zooms in to focus his attention on the inadequacy of this or that *scriptural* name, in an attempt to get at the “namelessness” of God. Or, to change the metaphor, in contrast to the subtractive mode of sculpting, in which the theologian, with hammer and chisel, chips away all that can be said about God, the Stoics, when engaging in acts

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40. Eriugena’s translation can be found in Philippe Chevallier, *Dionysiaca: Recueil donnant l’ensemble des traductions latines des ouvrages attribués au Denys de l’Aréopage* (Paris, 1937), although I have used L. Michael Harrington’s *A Thirteenth-Century Textbook of Mystical Theology at the University of Paris*, Dallas Medieval Texts and Translations, vol. 4 (Paris, 2004).

of theological prayer, employed a kind of constructive form of sculpting. This “positive” tradition of divine naming aims to see God as reflected in the interlocking complexities of the world. These two approaches to divine naming are not mutually exclusive, but they do tend to different emphases. For the Dionysian, the most appropriate thing one could say of «many-named» God is that he is nameless (ἄνώνυμον, *Divine Names*, 865c); for the Stoics he is πολυώνυμος. Bernard’s Catalogue Poem is a fusion of these traditions. It is self-conscientiously universalizing, or panoramic. And, it is explicitly formulated as an attempt to treat the created world as an image for contemplating the “incircumscribable” divine nature.

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