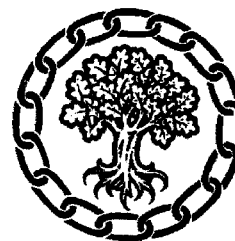


# Genealogists' Magazine

JUNE 1999



Vol 26 No 6

Editor: F L Leeson, FSG

---

*As the third millennium approaches there is naturally some curiosity about events at the beginning of the second. Written genealogies were rare at that period and their reconstruction now occupies a number of academic minds. Several interesting articles have already been offered to the Magazine on early medieval subjects and it is proposed that the best of these should be published over the next couple of years.*

---

## Abelard and Heloise

*Some notes towards a family tree*

BRENDA M COOK

*The story of Abelard and Heloise is possibly best recalled nowadays from the stage-drama of 1970 and it is perhaps inevitable that Diana Rigg stripping off for Keith Michell should be the most enduring image of this historic couple in some people's minds. The play was in fact a crude adaptation of the far better novel by Helen Waddell and contained, to our author's mind, a number of gross misunderstandings.*

THE publication of a new biography of the mediaeval French philosopher, theologian and lover, Peter Abelard (1079-1142), has prompted this writer to see what can be reconstructed of his family tree.<sup>1</sup> Yet in a world where the majority of people were baptised, married and buried without any written record being made, how can such a task be attempted? There may be no parish, far less civil, registers in twelfth century France, but a remarkably wide range of material with a genealogical component does survive. The following reconstruction has been done solely from the available *published* sources - the author is not a palaeographer - and may prove a useful example to readers daunted by the thought of tackling genealogy in the middle ages.

These sources may be divided into three groups.

1. The writings of Abelard, Heloise and their circle.
2. Contemporary narratives: monastic chronicles &c.
3. Charters, and other legal documents.

We are fortunate that Abelard wrote his autobiography,<sup>2</sup> but it must be used with caution. Its usual title, *The history of my*

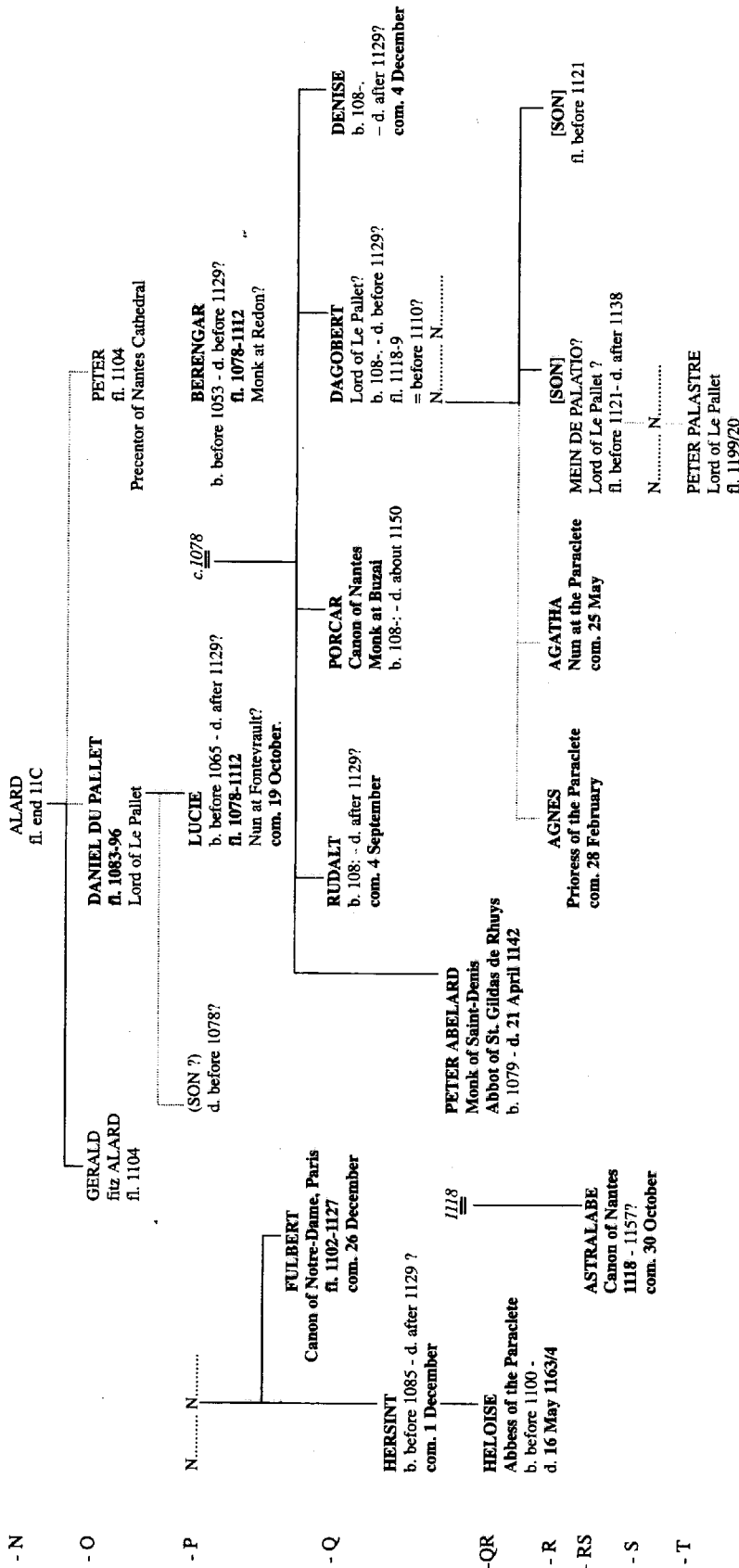
*calamities*, should sound a warning: the people whom Abelard chooses to mention will only be those who were connected with one of his many, mostly self-induced, disasters. In addition, the *History* appears to end around the year 1132 and so can provide no information about the last decade of Abelard's life. It must be augmented with information drawn from other documents reliably ascribed to Abelard, from the documents of the Convent of the Paraclete,<sup>3</sup> from other people's memories of him, and finally from the impersonal witness of charters surviving in Abelard's home district, the *Comté* of Nantes in Brittany.

Four passages in the *History* contain genealogical information. In the first, Abelard tells us that he was 'born on the borders of Brittany, ... in a town called LePallet. ... My father had acquired some degree of literacy before he had knighthood conferred upon him, and later his enthusiasm for learning was such that he planned that all his sons should be educated in Latin before they were trained to arms. ... I was his eldest child, and ... I was so carried away by my love of learning that I ... relinquished my inheritance and birthright as the eldest son to my brothers ...'<sup>4</sup>

Abelard next recounts how he left Brittany for France and followed a stormy career in

**FAMILY TREE OF PETER ABELARD**

*N.B. Names, dates and relationships in BOLD are reasonably established: other names, dates and relationships are conjectural.*



Com. = Commemoration of death in the *Necrology* of the Paraclete.

various centres of learning, including Paris. In 1112 he returned home for a family occasion: 'Meanwhile my mother Lucie, who was very dear to me, begged me to return to Brittany, for after my father Berengar's entry into the monastic life, she was preparing to do the same.'<sup>5</sup>

Abelard now recounts how, after he had returned to Paris, he seduced Heloise, the niece of Canon Fulbert, one of his colleagues at the Cathedral of Notre-Dame. Although Heloise's uncle caught them together and separated them, it was too late: Heloise was already pregnant. When Abelard heard the news he took appropriate action: 'I sent her straight to my native place. There she stayed with my sister (*soror*) until she gave birth to a boy, whom she called Astralabe. ... We entrusted the poor little chap to my sister's care and returned secretly to Paris. A few days later ... we were married ...'<sup>6</sup>

The final item of genealogical information is towards the end of the document, and therefore probably refers to between 1130-32. Abelard was at this time the unpopular Abbot of St. Gildas de Rhuys, a Benedictine abbey in Breton-speaking Brittany. 'On another occasion, when I had gone into Nantes to visit the Count, who was sick [Conan III the Fat, Duke of Brittany and the overlord of Le Pallet] and was staying there in the house of one of my brothers according to the flesh, they [the recalcitrant monks of St. Gildas] attempted to poison me ...'<sup>7</sup>

This then is the full extent of the information which Abelard's autobiography provides:

*Father:* A knight named Berengar who became a monk in 1112.

*Mother:* Lucie who became a nun in 1112.

*Wife:* Heloise.

*Uncle-in-Law:* Canon Fulbert of Notre-Dame Cathedral, Paris.

*Son:* Astralabe, born in Brittany in about 1118 and fostered with his aunt.

*Sister or Sister-in-law:* She was in a position to shelter Heloise in 1118 and to foster Astralabe from that date onwards.

*Two (or more) brothers:* One of these became Berengar's heir in Abelard's place and

*Another(?) brother:* He occupied a house of his own in Nantes in about 1130.

Abelard's other works provide some additional genealogical information. In dedication to his *Dialectica*, (probably written before 1121) Abelard refers to 'my brother Dagobert' and my 'nephews'.<sup>8</sup> There is also a

commentary on the late Roman philosopher, Boethius, in which the author is described as *Petri Abaelardi Junioris Palatini Summi Peripatetici*.<sup>9</sup> We can therefore modify the above list to name one of Abelard's brothers (Dagobert) who, since he had (legitimate) sons, and therefore by implication a wife, was most likely to have been the brother who inherited the family property, and his wife the *soror* with whom Heloise and later Astralabe were sheltered.

The exchange of letters between Heloise and Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny, after Abelard's death, confirms that Astralabe had been educated for the church, was actively seeking a position in a collegiate church and was still alive in 1143.<sup>10</sup>

Also significant is the *Necrology*, or Death Commemoration Book of the Convent of the Paraclete.<sup>11</sup> Members of Abelard's family appear in this register, although their presence needs cautious interpretation. Certainly each person so commemorated must have supported the Paraclete in some way either with gifts of money or with prayers; and it is reasonable to assume that each person concerned was still alive at the time the Paraclete was founded in 1129. This however cannot be guaranteed, since it was one of the functions of a monastic house to pray for the dead and the earlier of the two extant manuscripts of the *Necrology* is dated to the latter half of the thirteenth century.

Relevant entries in this *Necrology* (translated) are as follows, and show how sparse and selective is the information supplied:

1 February: Agnes, Prioress, niece of our Master Peter

2 April: Anniversary of the death of our master Peter Abelard who founded this place and our religious house.

16 May: Our mother in religion, Heloise, the first abbess.

25 May: Agatha, a consecrated virgin, the niece of our Master Peter.

4 September: Rudalt, the brother [*germanus*] of our Master Peter

19 October: Lucie, mother of our Master Peter

30 October: Peter Astralabe, son of our Master Peter.

1 December: Hersint, the mother of the Lady Heloise, our abbess.

4 December: Denise, the sister [*germana*] of our Master Peter.

26 December: Hubert, a canon, uncle [*avunculus*] of the Lady Heloise.

This information expands the family tree considerably by naming some members previously known only by descriptive terms, and introducing new ones. It also give the dates when their deaths were commemorated but not the years in which they died.<sup>12</sup>

These entries also raise a number of problems:

**Agnes and Agatha.** We do not know who were the parents of these two nieces, or even if they themselves were sisters or cousins. However, since Dagobert is the only one of Abelard's sblings whom we know was married, they are likely to be his daughters. Their presence among the nuns of the Paraclete, and especially the fact that Agnes became the second prioress, underlines the 'family' quality of even a reformed abbey like the Convent of the Paraclete.

**Rudalt:** Here is the name of another of Abelard's brothers. There is no indication as to whether he is a layman or a cleric. No wife or child commemorated with him, although this does not guarantee that he was not married.

**Lucie:** Here is Abelard's mother but not his father. Does this imply that Berengar was dead before 1129, or simply that he made no contribution to the Convent of the Paraclete?

**Peter Astralabe:** It must be pointed out that this is the *only* known occasion when Astralabe is given the additional name of 'Peter'. When his parents refer to him, it is as 'Astralabe' alone. Did he in fact have the double name, or is this a scribal error by a pious nun who assumed he was named after his father, since 'Astralabe' is not a Christian name - there is no Saint Astralabe!

**Hersint:** Heloise's mother is named, but not her father. This is often taken to mean that Heloise was illegitimate especially as her only other known kinsman is on her mother's side of the family

**Denise:** It has been assumed<sup>13</sup> that this is the sister with whom Heloise sheltered and who fostered Astralabe, but no husband for Denise is mentioned. The implication of the fostering of Astralabe is that Abelard's 'sister' was a married woman in charge of her own household. However the word used to describe Denise is *germana* while the word Abelard uses is *soror*.<sup>14</sup> *Germana* (or *germanus*) is a very specific word meaning a sister (or brother) with whom you share a mother, that is a sister (or brother) of the full blood or a half-sister or brother begotten by a different father. The word

*soror* certainly means 'sister', but has a wider significance, covering such concepts as half-sister (a sister with the same father but a different mother), a step-sister, a foster-sister, a sister-in-law or even a sister-in-religion.<sup>15</sup>

**Hubert.** It is generally assumed that this is a copyists error for *Fulbert*, the name Abelard gives to Heloise's uncle in his autobiography. It is just possible that Heloise had two maternal uncles, [*avunculus* means 'mother's brother'] both canons, called *Fulbert* and *Hubert*.

In addition to the individuals commemorated in the *Necrology* of the Convent of the Paraclete, a number of monastic houses are named. Most of these are in France, but there are two notable Breton houses: Fontevrault and St Sulpice-de-la-Forêt, Rennes.

Fontevrault was the very famous four-fold monastery founded in about 1100 and St.Sulpice-de-la-Forêt was a daughter-house of Fontevrault founded in about 1124. Fontevrault is the convent to which the Duchess Ermengarde went in 1112, a short while after her husband, Alain IV Fergent, Duke of Brittany (1084-1112) became a monk *ad succurrendum* at the monastery of St. Sauveur, Redon.<sup>16</sup>

This brings us to a most extraordinary coincidence which appears never previously to have been noted: Duke Alain and Duchess Ermengarde both entered Religion *in the same year and in the same order* as did Abelard's parents. From the endowment charter for Duke Alain, it is clear that he took with him into the cloister a group of *ministres* (gentlemen-in-waiting).<sup>17</sup> It seems plausible, therefore, that Berengar became a monk as a companion of Duke Alain's and that his wife, in consequence, became a nun as lady-in-waiting to the Duchess Ermenegarde. This would certainly explain the curious interval between Berengar entering Religion and Lucie doing the same, an interval which gave Abelard the opportunity to come back to Brittany to bid his mother farewell. Entry into the monastic life in these circumstances does not presuppose any coercion. To be selected for such companionship would be perceived as a high honour, and we know from Abelard's reference to his father that Berengar was something of a *clerk manqué*.

If this deduction is correct, it suggests that Abelard's family were more intimate with the ducal family than has so far been supposed, but it would fit in with the throw-away manner in which Abelard mentions that the purpose of his

stay in Nantes (see above) was to visit Duke Conan III, the son of Alan and Ermengarde, who was ill.

Abelard certainly *behaves* as if he were the son of the lord of LePallet. He speaks of giving up his inheritance to his younger brothers as if this were a significant gesture. One of his nicknames is 'The Palatine' which is a pun on 'The man from Le Pallet' and 'Courtier',<sup>18</sup> but this would lose its point if he were not a member of the seigniorial family. If Abelard were on friendly terms with the younger Duke of Brittany and his parents had entered Religion with the old Duke and Duchess, this implies high social status in Nantes. Yet there are those who point out, quite correctly, that no document has yet been discovered in which Berengar is named as lord of LePallet. Equally, there is evidence that someone named Daniel du Pallet flourished at the end of the eleventh century. It is therefore maintained that Berengar could only have been one of the knights in Daniel's household.<sup>19</sup>

The trouble with this theory is that Berengar was a married man. As George Duby<sup>20</sup> has pointed out, (although this allegation has been challenged)<sup>21</sup> a knight might only marry and beget legitimate children if he were first possessed of a fief that would support him and his family. There were three ways a knight might obtain a fief: he could inherit it from a male kinsman; he could be awarded it by his overlord; or he could gain it by marriage to an heiress.

Daniel du Pallet appears in two Breton charters towards the end of the eleventh century. The earlier charter<sup>22</sup> relates to just after 1084. It is associated with a group of four deeds drawn up in 1069 by Duke Hoël II of Brittany (1066-84), granting gifts and privileges to the monastery of St. Croix at Quimperlé. The document which is witnessed by Daniel du Pallet is the confirmation of these gifts by the Duke's sons: the new Duke Alain IV Fergent (1084-1112) of Brittany and his brother Count Mathias of Nantes (1084-1101). It was drawn up in Nantes, where the new Duke's younger brother was now count and Daniel du Pallet's immediate overlord. We must therefore conclude that in about 1084-88, Daniel du Pallet was a member of the entourage of the new young Count of Nantes.

The second document<sup>23</sup> records that Daniel du Pallet has agreed to remit the river tolls that he is entitled to collect at both Nantes and Champtoceaux (a fortified town a few miles up the Loire from Nantes)<sup>24</sup> to the monks of

Marmoutier 'for the salvation of his soul'. Of course, it is impossible to know how old Daniel was in 1096; but it implies an older, rather than a younger, man if he responded with such alacrity to the suggestion that a gift to Marmoutier would benefit his soul. It is possible that Daniel du Pallet died in 1101 when Count Mathias and a number of his knights were slain in rather disreputable circumstances.<sup>25</sup>

Although we do not know whether the marriage of Berengar and Lucie was a first marriage for either of them, they were married in or a little before 1078, since the year of Abelard's birth is reliably given as 1079 and he was their eldest child. We may estimate that Lucie was between 14 and 25 at the time of her marriage<sup>26</sup> and Berengar between 25 and 35. This would then give an estimated birth year for Lucie of between 1053 and 1064, and an estimated birth year for Berengar of between 1043 and 1053. From these figures, which are as wide as possible, it will be clear that although Berengar is too old to be Daniel's son, Lucie is a perfectly reasonable age to be Daniel's daughter.<sup>27</sup>

After Abelard's death, the chronicler, Richard of Poitiers, wrote an epitaph to Abelard which includes in the last lines a brief summary of Abelard's life:

'For his father came from Poitou,  
and his mother was a Breton,  
He went to school among the Franks,  
and died a monk at Chalons.'<sup>28</sup>

Poitou is the neighbouring *comté* to Brittany and indeed Le Pallet was a frontier town on the Breton/Angevin/Poitevin border. Richard of Poitiers' epitaph supports the contention that Berengar was Daniel's son-in-law. It also implies that Lucie had no brothers able to inherit: either she was an only child, or her male siblings had died before 1078. It may therefore be concluded that Abelard's father, Berengar, was most certainly a knight in the household of Daniel du Pallet at the time of his famous son's birth, but he was much more than that: he was his son-in-law and heir.

Can we fill in the names of any of the later members of the family from Le Pallet? There exists a charter of 1138<sup>29</sup> in which one 'Mein de Palatio' is named. He is one of the witnesses to an agreement between the nuns of St. Sulpice-de-la-Forêt and the monks of St. Sergius and St. Bacchus at Anjou. This is interesting in

view of the fact that this same nunnery is one of the Breton monastic houses commemorated in the *Necrology* of the Paraclete. It suggests that a kinswoman of the family from LePallet was a nun there and Mein (who, although we have no direct evidence for his parentage, is the right age to be Dagobert's son) is witnessing the deed as her legal guardian. Looking among the nuns listed in this deed, it is interesting to observe one named Agnes, and to remember that this is also the name of one of Abelard's nieces who became a nun at the Convent of the Paraclete. This is not to suggest that this is the same woman who moved from one nunnery to another, but rather that Christian names are apt to run in families and that this Agnes might be another member of the family: Dagobert's widow or Mein's daughter.

Another deed which gives more useful genealogical information about Abelard's family comes from the Abbey of Buzé, a Cistercian foundation on the south bank of the Loire a few miles down river from Nantes.<sup>30</sup> It refers to a dispute with the monks over the ownership of a vineyard. The findings of the ecclesiastical court were that the vineyard had belonged to Canon Porcar of Nantes who had given it to the monastery of Buzé when he became a monk there; and that following this his nephew Canon Astralabe, paid the monks five sous a year rent for it 'during his lifetime'.

Since the name 'Astralabe' is virtually unique, it is reasonable to assume that this is Abelard's son having obtained the prebend he wanted, but in Brittany where his father's family had influence. The deed is dated to between 1153 and 1157, so this may give us a date for Astralabe's death. If Canon Astralabe is Abelard's son, then Canon Porcar must be Abelard's brother; and surely here we have the identity of the brother at whose house in Nantes Abelard stayed, for the canons of Nantes Cathedral at that date had individual houses to the north east of the cathedral.<sup>31</sup>

If both Abelard's brother and his son were Canons of Nantes Cathedral, it suggests there may have been a tradition in the family living at Le Pallet of sending a son into the church. This kind of tradition was common in a great many seigniorial families.

The next significant deed concerning the lord of Le Pallet, dated 14 January 1199/1200,<sup>32</sup> is a rationalisation of assets between a Peter du Pallet (*Petrus Pallastre*) and the monks of the same Abbey of Buzé. This deed is witnessed by knights whose names include *Peter* and

*Berengar*. The names are inconclusive, but highly suggestive that the same family was still in residence two or even three generations later.

This is as far as the existing documentation can safely take us and it will be seen even so that many of the statements are suppositions, even if suppositions based on a firm knowledge of how society in that period functioned, but there still remains to be explored the strange reference to 'Peter Abelard the younger of LePallet, the supreme philosopher' and the significance of the word *Abelard* itself..

The immediate genealogical response to the name 'Abelard' is to suppose it to be the patronymic 'Ab Alard',<sup>33</sup> but we know that Peter Abelard's father was called Berengar. However, if our Peter Abelard is the 'younger' of that name, then it suggest he had an older kinsman and namesake, presumably on his mother's side (since this man was also 'of LePallet'), and whose father's name really was Alard. At this period we are at the point when surnames are beginning to emerge as hereditary names and not just as patronymics, nicknames or epithets - but the distinction is often blurred, especially when occupations or physical characteristics were inherited.

A deed dated to 1104 contains two tantalising references among the men present in the Chapter House of Nantes Cathedral to witness a letter despatched by Bishop Benedict to a colleague in Tours.<sup>34</sup> They are 'Gerald son of Alard' and 'Peter the Precentor'. This Peter is a senior cathedral canon;<sup>35</sup> Gerald seems to have been a lay-man attached to the bishop's household. It would be very easy indeed to identify these men as Daniel du Pallet's brothers or brothers-in-law, and an unscrupulous compiler of genealogies might well be tempted to make such an identification. Certainly the relationship may be true, - this author thinks it is - but there is no proof. On the other hand, the name 'Gerald son of Alard' at the very least demonstrates that there was in Nantes during the late eleventh century a man named Alard who had at least one legitimate son.

All genealogical research is full of unanswered questions, but mediaeval family trees have a far greater share of question marks and 'probablys', and it is important to distinguish between the established facts, the probables and the possibles. Unhappily many readily available genealogical charts, especially those available over the internet, do not seem able easily to make this distinction.

Yet if this family tree for Peter Abelard has been compiled simply from the *published* charters and other documents of the twelfth century, who knows what corroborative information or new evidence may await discovery in the *unpublished* manuscripts of Nantes, Poitiers and Paris ?

#### Notes and References

- <sup>1</sup> Clanchy, M.T., *Abelard: a medieval life*. Oxford, Blackwell (1997).
- <sup>2</sup> Monfrin, J *Abélard: Hl storia calalmianum; texte critique avec une introduction*. Paris, Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin (1959).
- <sup>3</sup> The monastic house which he founded and of which Heloise was Superior from 1129 until her death in 1163 or 1164.
- <sup>4</sup> Monfrin. *Texte critique*. p 63.
- <sup>5</sup> Monfrin. *Texte critique*. p 64.
- <sup>6</sup> Monfrin. *Texte critique* pp 71-9
- <sup>7</sup> Monfrin. *Texte critique* p 125
- <sup>8</sup> Petrus Abaelardus: *Dialectica; first complete edition of the Parisian manuscript*. by L. M. de Rijk. Assen, Van Gorcum & co. (1956) Introduction and p 146, lines 25 & 27.
- <sup>9</sup> 'Peter Abelard the Younger of Le Pallet, the great philosopher.'
- <sup>10</sup> Radice, B., *The letters of Abelard and Heloise*. Penguin Books, (1974). pp 285-7.
- <sup>11</sup> *Obituaires de la province de Sens*. Tome IV (Diocèse de Meaux et de Troyes) ... Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, (1923) pp 387-429. and see McLeod, Enid. *Héloïse: a biography*. Chatto & Windus, (1971) Pp 253-4, 300-1.
- <sup>12</sup> Although dates in necrologies are frequently quoted as the actual date of death this is an unwise assumption as discrepancies between the dates recorded for the same person in different institutions will show. It is safer to assume, unless the person commemorated actually died at the monastery, that the day the death was commemorated was the anniversary of the first Requiem Mass, that is, the day on which the *news of the death* was received by the community. After all, no community was going to wait nearly a year to commemorate a patron on the right day.
- <sup>13</sup> McLeod. *Héloïse*. - (1971). pp 53-4, 63 & 259 n. 42, 43.
- <sup>14</sup> Monfrin. *Texte critique*, line 397 and line 559.
- <sup>15</sup> When Abelard calls Heloise his sister in Christ, he uses the term *soror*: 'Heloissae dilectissimae sorori suae in Christo.' Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 178, col. 187.
- <sup>16</sup> Bourdeaut, A.: 'Ermengarde, Comtesse de Bretagne', *Bulletin de la Société Archéologique et Historique de Nantes* Vol. 75, p 184. (1935).
- <sup>17</sup> Courson, A. de, *Cartulaire de Redon en Bretagne*, Paris, Imprimerie Impériale (1863) p 390.
- <sup>18</sup> Clanchy, M. T., *Abelard*, pp 130-1.
- <sup>19</sup> Berthou, P. de, *Clisson et ses monuments: étude historique et archéologique*. Nantes, Imprimerie de la Loire. (1910) p, 28.
- <sup>20</sup> Duby, G., *Love and marriage in the middle ages*. Polity Press, (1994).
- <sup>21</sup> Evergates, T, 'Nobles and knights in twelfth century France,' in Bisson, T. N., ed. *Cultures of Power*, University of Pennsylvania Press, (1995). Pp 17ff.
- <sup>22</sup> Morice, P. H., *Mémoires pour servir de preuves à l'histoire ecclésiastique et civile de Bretagne . . . Vol . 1*. Paris. Chares Osmont, (1742) col.431.

<sup>23</sup> Morice *Preuves*, Vol. 1, col. 474.

<sup>24</sup> Rowe, V., *The Loire*. Eyre & Spottiswoode. p 82.

<sup>25</sup> Morice, *Preuves*. Vol.1, col.3. Duke Alain was away at the Crusades between 1096 and 1101, and it seems that his brother got out of control in his absence. Count Mathias and his knights are reported to have violated the premises of Nantes Cathedral and then died in circumstances which led the canons to credit this as being the result of divine intervention. From another source (the so-called Orleans poet) it appears that Mathias himself died from being, castrated, presumably by the angry kinsmen of a woman he had debauched.

<sup>26</sup> The lowest limit for Lucie's age is puberty. For the upper limit, we have calculated thus: Lucie bore at least five children who survived to adulthood, but the likelihood is that she bore other children who did not survive. (Shulamith Shahar in *Childhood in the middle ages*, Routledge, (1990) p 35, quotes figures stating that 36% of boys and 29% of girls, born live, died before their fifth birthday - and this was in aristocratic households who had the best access to nutrition and medical care.) If we calculate 2 to 3 years for each child, we get a fertile span of 10-15 years. Therefore it is very unlikely that Lucie was over 25 at the time of her marriage, and is more likely to have been under 20.

<sup>27</sup> Of course, this does not exclude the possibility that she was Daniel's granddaughter or niece, only that she was his heiress.

<sup>28</sup> Migne *Patrologia Latina* vol. 178, col. 104 translated by the author.

<sup>29</sup> *Gallia Christiana* vol. 14 col. 165-7.

<sup>30</sup> 'Charte mentionnant Astralabe, fils d' Abailard (1153-1157)' in *Bulletin de la Société des Bibliophiles Breton*. Vol. 4 (1880-1881). pp 50-51.

<sup>31</sup> These houses were demolished in the thirteenth century. See Bois, P. *Histoire de Nantes*. Paris, Privat p.72.

<sup>32</sup> Morice, *Preuves* Vol. 1 col. 734.

<sup>33</sup> E. Renan 'Sur l'etymologie du nom d'Abélard.' in *Revue celtique* Vol. I (1870) pp 265-8.

<sup>34</sup> Morice, *Preuves*. Vol. 1, col 507.

<sup>35</sup> A cathedral precentor is the canon responsible for the services and especially the music. Peter Abelard was also a musician and a compiler of liturgies. The two sides of a church choir are called *decani* (the Dean's side) and *cantoris* (the Precentor's side).

\* \* \*

Brenda M Cook, BA, MSc, ALA, of 74 Sandridge Road, St Albans, Herts AL1 4AR has been a member of the Society of Genealogists since 1990. She graduated with BA Honours from London University (Bedford College) in 1962 having read for a degree in English which included Old and Middle English as well as Modern. In 1974 she was awarded a MSc in Librarianship from Strathclyde University (Glasgow) for a thesis on the problems of classifying library books for archaeologists. Between 1969 and 1986 she was on the staff of Glasgow University Library. In 1987 she was appointed Librarian of the University of London Institute of Archaeology. She took early retirement in 1990 and now prefers to describe herself as an independent scholar. She lives in St Albans and edits the *Alban Link* which is the newsletter of the Friends of St Albans Abbey.