Among the contemporary sources for the Norman attack on Paris in 885 one of the most important is the poem by Abbo, monk and deacon of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, who was an eyewitness of the events which he relates. Of the poet practically no more is known than what he himself tells us. He was a native of Neustria. The events chronicled in the first and second books of his poem, Bella Parisiacae Urbis, belong to the period 885-896 A.D., so that it has been reasonably supposed that his work was finished in 897 or thereabouts. Modern historians, with some justification, have lamented over the eccentric latinity which Abbo affects, which makes his poem difficult and tedious to read. Not content with introducing occasional « glossary » words in books 1 and 2, he added a third, to make his work a trinity, which does not deal with the war at all, but must be regarded as an exercise in misplaced ingenuity on the part of the poet and a sore trial for the monastic pupils for whom it was intended. The contents of book 3 have been correctly, though rather too solemnly, described by a German scholar as « Lebensregeln für einen Geistlichen ». The greater number of unusual words in this book are Greek, but the source from which this medieval Samuel Smiles derived his linguistic rarities has hitherto been doubtful.

In a recent article the present writer published a collection of notes from the lectures on Greek given by Martin, the Irishman, at Laon in the middle of the ninth century, which are preserved primarily in two Mss. of the late ninth century, Vat. Reg. 215 and Brit. Mus. Royal, 15 A XVI. It is these Scholica Graecarum Glossarum which Abbo has, in the first instance, used for book 3. The poem is short, — only 115 lines, — but over eighty of the rare words come from this one source. Abbo, to faci-
litate the reading of his work, added explanatory glosses in his own hand, — « propria manu linguis superieci » he says in the dedicatory letter addressed to his fellow-deacon, Gozlin, — and these glosses either correspond exactly to the explanations given in the Scholica, or are shortened forms of them. Nearly all the words from the Scholica occur in lines 1 to 66 of the third book, the only instances in the last quarter of the poem being anteceniam (1, 72) and agape (1, 73). A few words which occur in the dedicatory verses before book 1, and in books 1 and 2, may come from the same source, namely:

Matites (dedicat. verses, 1, 4; cf. Schol., M 8); balistae and catapulta (several times in Bk. 1; cf. B 9 and C 16); mac[e]rii (1, 174; cf. M 16); doma and domate (1, 208 and 534; cf. D 7); lagenam (1, 544; cf. L 3); hostar (1, 636; cf. B 27); Trophea (1, 645; cf. T 6); basilicam (2, 310; cf. B 2).

Some of these must however remain doubtful, e.g. balistae and catapulta, which were familiar words in any case, and basilicam, where the sense shows that a church and not an « aula regia » is meant. The two Mss. of the Scholica do not completely agree in the number of items that they present nor in their order; some entries are preserved only in V, others only in R. This suggests that the earliest version may have been somewhat fuller than that in V R. Now, in the letter dedicatory to Gozlin, Abbo uses the word cleronomos, which he glosses as follows:

Cleronomos : clericos. Cleronomia Graece, Latine decretitas, inde cleronomus, id est heres dei.

The form and character of the information is so very similar to what is found in the Scholica, that this entry can almost certainly be assigned to a fuller version of that compilation. Winterfeld long ago noted that most of Abbo's rare words begin with one of the first three letters of the alphabet. One reason for this is now obvious; words beginning with A, B, or C take up a third of the Scholica, if the additions which occur only in V are disregarded. The fact that books 1 and 2 of Abbo's poem are preserved in only a single Ms., while book 3 survives in half a dozen or so, is an interesting commentary on the monastic tastes of his time. At the same time we have thus acquired additional evidence for the popularity of the Scholica. Of the Mss. which contain book 3 two are now in the British Museum. In Harley 3271 (saec. x) the ordinary version of the poem is preceded by a word for word translation into Anglo-Saxon, and

1. The interpretation of anaboladin in line 88 comes from the Vatican glossary (see below), not from the Scholica. Note, moreover that Abbo uses the spelling which the author of the Scholica (A 71 ad fn.) reprobates.

2. Cf. The Addendum to my article in the Rylands Bulletin, where it is suggested that the Mss. evidence shows that Martin's notes found their way early to Spanish and German scriptoria.
such, doubtless, were the sources from which the majority of the earlier medieval writers derived a smattering of Greek, just enough to have misled many a modern critic into the belief that such knowledge of Greek was real and not sham. The poem is also to be found in Harley 3826 (saec. x). It is a curious coincidence that the same Ms. contains the *Grammaticae artis nomina* of which the earliest copy is in Paris 7530 (saec. viii), a collection of Isidore glosses on metric, of which many Mss. exist.1 For this compilation was known also to the author of the *Scholica* or, to be more exact, after the *Onomastica sacra*. It contains a number of miscellaneous notes, the bulk of which, it now appears, come from the source indicated. The following are from the Isidore glossary: Misc. 14 to 34; 38 to 45; 47; 54 to 59. The compiler of the *Scholica* used this glossary quite freely, for, apart from the fact that items from other sources are included, e.g. the line from John Scotus’ poem, he by no means follows the order of the glossary, and he also omits a good many of its items. It is, however, not uninteresting to have traced another work, humble though it be, to which Martin had access in the library at Laon.

Both Goetz and Winterfeld have pointed out in a general way that Abbo seems to have had at his disposal the *Liber Glossarum* or a similar dictionary. The compiler of the *Liber Glossarum* used the two oldest all-Latin glossaries (Abstrusa and Abolita) and also the so-called glosses of Placidus. A short analysis of the more important words in Abbo’s third book, other than those taken from the *Scholica*, shows that items from all these sources occur:

**Abstrusa items:** Blatta (14), Agagulam (18), Fraglet (52), Appodix (70), Anquirunt (74), Atratus (76), Aulaea (77), Aprilax (77), Bittunt (92), Brutescit (94), Bimetur² (95), Bidentat (98), Clandestina³ (106), Concinnas (112).

**Abolita items:** Brattea (14), Baratrum (36), Blatterat (93).

**Placidus items:** Ablundam (19), Hirundo (55), Ancile (79; perhaps!), Affurcillando (91), Buteonem (96).

**Lib. Gloss. items:** Codrus (22), Arsippio (67), Aregidiam (75), Agoniam (79), Cespit (104).

1. See Goez, C. G. L., I (1923), p. 102, which the writer had not seen when his article was written, and therefore was unable to identify the metrical glosses at the end of V. Vat. Reg. 215 should therefore be added to Goez’s list. This is a convenient place to add two notes to the *Scholica* proper; both are due to Prof. W. M. Lindsay. — P 25. Parthenias is no doubt an allusion to Vergil’s nickname in his youth. P 17. Cf. Greg. in Ezech., 2, 6, 2.

2. Bimator: duplicator. Abstr. It is a noun, which Abbo has misread and converted into a verb, and then conjugated it accordingly.

3. Perhaps in line 103 Abbo has formed a verb from the adjective clandestina; there is no trace of a verb clandestinat in Thes. Gloss., s. v.
Between lines 82 and 88 there occurs the following little group of words, to which may be added algeam (70): Architriclinus (82), Amineum (82), Antropus (84), Apoplexia (86), Amartetes (87), Anaboladalia (88). All these words are to be found in the little glossary published by Goetz in C. G. L., III (p. 506 sqq.) from a tenth century Ms. in the Vatican (Palat. 1773). It must remain doubtful, for the present, through what channel Abbo became familiar with these words.


Finally it may be noted that the epithet which Abbo applies to himself, Cernuus, is a favourite with glossary compilers. Abbo himself explains the word by humilis, so one cannot, in a desire for picturesque detail, deduce therefrom that Abbo was a hunchback or suffered from curvature of the spine. In Abol. Cernuus is explained as "in cervice praeceps" (cf. Verg., Aen., 10, 892), but the meaning attached to it by Abbo is clearly the accepted one in his time and after. This list of sources in no way claims to be exhaustive, for finality cannot be reached till the expected critical editions of the Abstrusa Glossary, Placidus, and especially the Liber Glossarum, have appeared. It is perhaps hardly necessary to add that in Abbo the cases of nouns or the tenses of verbs are changed according to his requirements; hence the words do not always absolutely correspond to the glossarial entries.

Abbo at times makes mistakes. His treatment of Bimator is a case in point, but even more striking is platon in line 50, which is explained as lutum, and this is, in fact, the meaning required by the sense. Platon (-yn), however, comes from the Scholica, where its correct equivalent, latum, is given. This suggests that in Abbo's copy of the Scholica an open form of the letter A occurred, and Abbo misread it through carelessness or unfamiliarity with the script. Similarly, Corcula in 3, 2 is a mistake for Coraula, unless, indeed, the poet has intentionally altered the word metri causa. At times he explains the unknown by the unknown; in line 13 offa is glossed massa. This seems in fact to be the Philoxenus gloss offa: μακα. Another trace of the early bilingual glossaries occurs in line 81, for δρεμενον: velum is a Cyrillus gloss.

Shortly before his death in 923, Abbo, at the request of the Bishops of Poitiers and Paris, composed thirty-seven sermons which have been preserved, though only five have been published. From these it would appear that, as they were intended for a "lector sive auditor, quicunque es mediocris loquacitatis dives, sed latinitatis indigens," the composer

1. Cf. footnote 7 above.
had pity on his hearers; for there are no traces of the eccentric vocabulary of his earlier years, which was the result of poetic, if not divine, inspiration. Truly, Abbo did his best "contra diaboli subreptiones illicitas calamato atramentoque pugnare!"

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