Abailard’s corpus contains only two short works which deal specifically with the subject of ethics. These primary texts are: *Dialogus inter Philosophum, Judaeum et Christianum*, and *Scito Teipsum*, which is also known and referred to as the *Ethica*.\(^1\) A natural and perhaps fruitful approach to the study of Abailard’s moral philosophy would be to assess the development of his thought based upon a clear understanding of the sequence in which he issued these works. Unfortunately, as I will argue, this approach is not available to us in Abailard’s case. The mysteries surrounding the overall chronology of his writings are ones which continue to resist solution. As Marilyn McCord Adams notes: ‘the precise chronology of [Abailard’s] works remains a vexed question for several reasons: their author repeatedly revised them; not many manuscripts remain; and Abailard’s own cross-referencing is ambiguous.’\(^2\)

There are six extant manuscript copies of the *Dialogus*. Rudolf Thomas...

Two of these manuscripts are primary—the Vienna manuscript $[V]$, and the Balliol manuscript $[B]$.⁴ With the exception of $[L]$, the remaining Oxford and Cambridge manuscripts are derivative—likely later transcriptions of the Balliol manuscript.⁵ The Vienna manuscript is a twelfth century manuscript and according to Pierre Payer it was transcribed in later editions and is the basis of the Migne edition (PL 178).⁶ The Balliol manuscript is a fourteenth century manuscript which includes corrections and additions.⁷ Rudolf Thomas provided us with a critical edition of the Dialogus in 1970. As Payer rightly notes, Thomas’ use of the Balliol manuscript yields a text superior to that found in the Migne edition.

There are five extant medieval copies of Abailard’s Ethica.⁸ Two of these are twelfth century manuscripts and both are now located in the Bavarian State Library in Munich. D.E. Luscombe identifies these as: $[A]$ Codex Latinus Monacensis 14160 and $[B]$ Codex Latinus Monacensis 28363.⁹ These two copies contain essentially the same text and are similar in length. The fourteenth century Balliol manuscript (Balliol College, MS 296) is the most complete extant copy and Luscombe refers to it as

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⁴ Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS 819, ff. 1⁵-59⁵.
⁵ Oxford, Balliol College, MS 296, ff. 161⁵-189⁵.
⁶ Thomas provides us with the following stemma:

![Stemma Diagram](Diagram)

Thomas (op.cit., above n. 3), 29. $X$ and $Y$ are not extant.
⁷ Payer, Introduction to Peter Abelard, A Dialogue of a Philosopher with a Jew and a Christian, Translated by P.J. Payer, Toronto 1979, 5, n. 10.
⁸ According to Payer (op.cit., above n. 7), 13, the Balliol manuscript ‘corrects many homoioteleuta and incorporates several significant additions which suggest a later redaction of the work.’
¹⁰ Luscombe (op.cit., above n. 9), xli-xliv.