



International Workshop

MINUSCULE TEXTS: RELATED PRACTICES AND MANUSCRIPT CONTEXTS

(10–11 November 2022)

venue: The Mary Sunley Suite,
St Catherine's College, Oxford

Organizer: Professor Ildar Garipzanov & Dr Samuel Ottewill-Soulsby
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ABSTRACTS

NOVEMBER 10TH

Anna Dorofeeva (Göttingen University), *The Social Logic of Early Medieval Compilation*

This paper uses a set of famous “vademecums” from the ninth and tenth centuries to bring out the specific ways in which multi-text manuscripts were compiled in the early middle ages, and to consider the implications these ways of making have for the sociocultural history of that period. Particular features include the relationship between text and material support, autograph writing, and the planning of (often very diverse and extract-filled) contents. Multi-text compilations such as vademecums challenge not only our understanding of the role of individuals in the production and use of manuscript books, but also foreground the essential heterogeneity of text (*écriture*, in its Derridean sense). The fractures thus revealed expose the systems of communication and power in which text was embedded. This social logic changes how we interpret medieval excerpting and collecting practices, whether for texts placed in the centre of the page, or on its margins.

Yitzhak Hen (Israel Institute for Advanced Studies, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem), *What Has Magic to Do with Prayer? Unorthodox Scraps in vade mecum Prayerbooks for Priests*

In recent years, a growing number of studies of small, simple and very tattered liturgical manuscripts that were produced for the use of missionaries, priests of small churches and itinerant preachers, have contributed immensely to our understanding of early medieval liturgy, and the real nature of pastoral care in the early medieval West. Many of these vademecum handbooks for priests also contain some small unorthodox texts of a magical nature. Notwithstanding the fact that throughout Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages such texts and the world-view they represented were repeatedly questioned, denounced and condemned by Christian authorities and policy makers, they were copied into, or attached to, Christian handbooks for priests. In this paper I shall look at a few examples of such texts, and attempt to explain their presence in liturgical codices by referring to the nature of magic and magical practices in the early medieval West.

Sarah Hamilton (University of Exeter), *The Afterlife of a Carolingian Pastoral Compendium: The Texts Added to London, British Library Ms Add. 19725*

British Library, Ms Add. 19725 is a collection of various pastoral texts, written at the turn of the ninth and tenth centuries in north-east Frankia. These texts constitute those which Carolingian legislation deemed necessary for local priests: they include a martyrology, computus, penitential ordo, episcopal capitula, as well as a theological textbook (Gennadius's *De ecclesiasticis Dogmatibus*) and an anonymous history of the early Church. Later additions in the margins by various tenth-



and eleventh-century hands include prayers for specific occasions, rites, medical recipes, obits, feasts, as well as pen trials. These point not only to its continued use but also help us to understand the needs of the community to which it belonged in the post-Carolingian period.

Michele Baitieri (University of Oslo), *Diplomatic Script and Pen Trials: The Case of Carolingian Lyon*

The scriptorium of Lyon represents a well-known case of uninterrupted learning throughout the early Middle Ages. Starting with the pivotal works of Tafel and Lowe, manuscript studies research has greatly broadened our knowledge of this privileged writing center. While further research is still needed to fully understand its Carolingian scriptorium, we do have a substantial number of ninth-century manuscripts convincingly ascribed to Lyon. My presentation looks at a handful of such manuscripts that preserve pen trials written in Diplomatic Script. By discussing both content and script of these so far neglected minuscule texts, this study aims to shed new light on the cultural and political history of Carolingian Lyon between the episcopacies of Agobard and Remigius.

Michelle Brown (University of London), *Minuscule Letters, Capital Intent: Sacralising Marginal Space in Insular Books of the High Altar*

During the 9th-11th centuries several earlier Insular Gospel books associated with the churches of important early saints had manumissions, documents and other marks of intent to make offerings to God added in margins and other blank spaces. These transactions were sacralised by the performative act of swearing on the Gospels, perhaps making your mark and by having the records recorded in the marginal sacred space of the book. This paper explores this phenomenon, focusing primarily upon the St Chad Gospels, BL Royal MS 1.B.VI and the Bodmin Gospels.

Maximilian Diesenberger (Institut für Mittelalterforschung, ÖAW, Vienna), *Annalistic Marginal Notes in Easter Tables as MiniTexts: A Joint Venture of Chronological Particles*

The paper examines the question of minitexts in the chronographic concepts of Carolingian intellectuals and in particular in the manuscript environment of Easter tables, which formed the organisational centre of chronological compendia. The texts within these handbooks were closely interwoven thematically and intertextually, thus expressing a strong authorial attempt to reform chronology. Nevertheless, they opened up space for a variety of additions, including minitexts. Particularly annalistic marginal notes prove to be a worthwhile field of investigation, as they were very flexible textual particles in contrast to the schematic Easter tables themselves.

Rosamond McKitterick (University of Cambridge), *Annalistic Additions in Vat. reg. lat. 1127 and Namur MS 11*

The compressed world history and set of annals added by two different scribes to BAV reg. lat. 1127 and the king list added to Namur, Bibliothèque Municipale MS 11, again with additions made by a second scribe, are interesting in themselves and thus the first part of my paper will discuss these 'minitexts', their manuscript context, and the degree to which they are or are not related to the remaining contents of each codex. Both minitexts and their codicological context, however, also raise methodological questions of identification and about the basis for our judgement of their purpose. The second part of my paper therefore will explore whether these additions provide some understanding of the early medieval readers and users of these manuscripts.

NOVEMBER 11TH

Gionata Brusa (University of Würzburg), *Liturgical Culture in the Margins: The Case of Vercelli*

There are more than 40 manuscripts in the Vercelli Chapter Library that can be dated before the tenth century. Some of them are of local origin, others were produced in North Italy, others are of either Frankish or German provenance. These differences in production offer evidences of relationships that linked the bishops of Vercelli, mainly during the tenth and early eleventh centuries, with high-ranking ecclesiastical figures from beyond the Alps. Over the centuries several of these manuscripts received either annotations, or pen trials, often linked to the liturgical sphere, e.g. verses from the Psalter or short chants sung during the Mass or the Office. These micro texts can reveal more to us: through the analysis of their content, such as handwritings, textual variants, and musical notations, it is possible to formulate new hypotheses about the provenance of selected manuscripts among the Vercelli group, their history, and the route that brought them to Vercelli, even crossing other ecclesiastical centres. The aim of this paper is to sketch a brief account of some of these stories.

Henry Parkes (University of Nottingham), *Liturgical Voices in the Flyleaves of Fleury*

For historians of early medieval liturgy, the great Benedictine foundation at Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire presents an intriguing paradox. No remotely complete record of local practice survives before the early thirteenth-century ordinal (Orleans 129), and no bona fide liturgical books before the twelfth century, yet from the tenth and eleventh centuries we have an enormous corpus of liturgical jottings in the endleaves and margins of books from the monastery's library. Anselm Davril's 1990 survey counted almost 250, a total that would be exceeded comfortably were one to prepare an update today. There are so many examples, indeed, that in 1976 Solange Corbin was able to establish, against the odds, no fewer than three distinct types of early Fleury musical notation. In my presentation I shall talk through some of the most liturgically crowded pages. I am under no illusions about the difficulties of making historical sense of this corpus. However, with such a stark contrast before us – between the orderly listings of the later-medieval ordinal and the chaotic endleaves of a monastic scriptorium that surely had the resources to do better – I shall cautiously entertain the possibility that the Fleury situation is not purely a product of source survival, but also a window into the ritual, scribal, and mnemonic practices of a religious community at the height of its powers.

Arthur Westwell (University of Regensburg), *Malediction, Divination, Dreams and the Ordering of Time. Marginal Texts in a Sacramentary from Sens (Vatican Library Reg.lat.567)*

Today, the manuscript under the shelfmark Reg.lat.567 preserves pieces of a late ninth-century calendar, material for computus and, most extensively, a series of masses and ordo for the Lenten scrutinies and baptismal rite. Localisation to Sens can be secured, thanks to local additions. However, the liturgical manuscript must have been taken soon into the scriptorium, for it was extensively used to harvest parchment, and by varied scribes to transcribe a bewildering range of texts in many margins. The varied prognostications for the weather and farming among them were perhaps implicitly related to the yearly cycle, but a number of these texts make strange or (to our eyes) unsettling additions to a Christian text, such as an extensive treatise on dream symbolism. Historical snippets attest the wide range of interests among these scribes. Such texts found no obvious home elsewhere, but were valued enough to be entered here. These



additions will be studied, including scribal features and layout. Among liturgical manuscripts, the Sens Sacramentary is unique in the number of additions, but a look at other examples will establish it was not singular.

Samuel Ottewill-Soulsby (University of Oslo), *A Life in the Margins: Honemundus and Autun France Bibliothèque Municipale S 129 (107)*

Autun France Bibliothèque Municipale S 129 (107) contains a large number of minitexts written in Visigothic cursive, many of which can be attributed to an otherwise unknown figure named Honemundus, who lived on the border between the Iberian Peninsula and Septimania in the early eighth century. This is time and place that has few sources, but which was defined by the dramatic events of the Arab conquest. This paper will use the Visigothic cursive minitexts found in the manuscript to shed light on this multifaceted and rapidly changing environment. The wide variety of texts, which range from devotional prayers to Frankish poetry to legal formulae, reveals a complex intellectual and practical world that this paper will explore.

Ildar Garipzanov (University of Oslo), *Accounting in Margins: Practical Minuscule Texts in Early Medieval Manuscripts*

Empty spaces in early medieval manuscripts were predominantly used for additions of liturgical, religious or didactic nature. But occasionally they were also employed for practical notes accounting economic transactions of various nature, listing payments owed to a monastery or an episcopal see, or serving as preparatory notes for polyptychs. In my paper, I will present such practical notes added to the margins of a medical collection of Laon, Bibliothèque Municipale MS 424, which is usually known for medical annotations added to its margins by Master Martin at the Cathedral Library of Laon in mid-ninth century. The socio-economic notes were added by an anonymous scribe later, in the early tenth century, and I will discuss them in the context of broader culture of socio-economic minuscule texts in early medieval manuscripts, as well as overlapping economic and legal practices in the Carolingian countryside.

Stefan Esders (Freie Universität Berlin), *Lists of Payments in Theological and Liturgical Manuscripts: Reconsidering Early Medieval Administrative Practice*

Lists of payments that had to be rendered regularly are not just found in early medieval polyptychs, but also occasionally in theological and liturgical manuscripts. In my paper I will discuss several examples of this, focusing on the nature of these payments and trying to find explanations for their insertion into manuscripts which at first sight appear to be written for a completely different purpose. Though I do not want to question the commonly held view, that in the early Middle Ages the administration of ecclesiastical property and income was far more advanced and professional than of its more secular counterparts (including the king's property), an investigation of such texts can lead us to rethink the notion of "administrative practice" in the Carolingian period and after. In contrast to polyptychs and land registers aiming to give an overview of the rights churches and monasteries had, these little texts shed some light on the mingling of religious, economic and social ideas both on a practical and a symbolic level.

Julia Smith (University of Oxford), *Inventorying the Sacred: Carolingian Relic Lists in Their Manuscript Context*

After a review of the modest pre-Carolingian evidence for listing and inventorying relics, this paper will focus on the uptick in evidence from c. 800 onwards, and will outline the great variety of formats and manuscript contexts of early medieval relic lists. These include tipped-in



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parchment scraps, display texts integral to the design of a book, additions on blank flyleaves, rotuli, and later copies (not to mention non-manuscript formats such as painted tituli and inscriptions on reliquaries). An important theme throughout will be relic lists as a method of knowledge preservation, including questions of how information about hidden relics might have been collected, collated, and transmitted.