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Early Medieval Minuscule Texts as a Subject of Study: Tentative Taxonomy, Codicological Contexts, and Related Social Practices

Abstract
This paper overviews early medieval textual additions, defined as minuscule texts, to Latin manuscripts produced before c. 900; when appropriate, it draws parallels with Petrucci's discussion of early medieval 'occasional microtexts' (*microtesti avventizi*). The overview is based on the corpus of early medieval minuscule texts assembled by the MINiTEXTS project and currently comprising more than 4000 entries. Thereafter, the paper outlines two typologies of early medieval minuscule texts: one based on their placement within the diachronic stratigraphy of a manuscript, as well as their other codicological features, and the other structured by their textual contents. The essay argues that their appearance in the margins of early medieval manuscripts was closely related with concurrent social, economic, religious, and cultural practices. The latter point is exemplified with three case studies of minuscule texts and their broader historical contexts.

Keywords
Minuscule texts; Textual additions; Pen trials; Codicology; Latin manuscript culture; Early Middle Ages

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Vat. Lat. 5359 is a Vatican manuscript well-known to students of early medieval liturgy and law because it preserves a ninth-century collection of the Lombard laws and Italian capitularies of Lothar I and hides the fragmentary palimpsest of an earlier psalter[1]. Standard descriptions of this manuscript also mention short prayers added to the final page and accompanied with a line of stylized letters[2], an identification ultimately deriving from a description two centuries ago by Georg H. Pertz, the first editor of the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*[3]. In reality, the final page contains a subversive textual charm with occult signs of Eastern origin (*charaktêres*), a Greek abecedary, and an exorcistic incantation deviating from normative Christian formulas[4]. Filling the blank space on the periphery of a legal manuscript and misidentified in codicological descriptions, these texts have been considered irrelevant by legal historians and too marginal to be of interest to specialists of early medieval culture. This story epitomizes the current situation with many short Latin texts that were added to empty spaces of early medieval manuscripts left blank after the copying of designated texts. Often devoid of headings in capital or uncial letters, transcribed in humble, and in some cases amateurish, minuscule script, and lurking at the edges of parchment books, sometimes in rather bad condition, such texts commonly lack a detailed description, transcription, and sometimes even proper identification in manuscript catalogues and standard codicological descriptions. Yet, if studied *en masse*, such texts may arguably offer a unique 'bottom-up' perspective on evolving early medieval social, economic, religious, and cultural practices and related assumptions, attitudes, and values of early medieval society as a whole.

1 CLA, no. 23; Gamber 1988, no. 1606.

2 Mordek 1995, pp. 881-883.

3 Pertz 1826, p. 246.

4 Garipzanov 2021.

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Early medieval minuscule texts: An overview

Such short textual additions lack a common designation in academic literature, having been described variously by manuscript scholars as 'additions'[5], 'microtexts'[6], '*marginalia*'[7], 'guest texts'[8], 'attachments'[9], and 'annotations'[10]. Due to the lack of a common scholarly term, I have chosen to refer to them as minuscule texts in order to underscore their two important features. Firstly, they are minuscule, that is, very short, in size. Thus, I also follow Andrist, Canart, and Maniaci in defining the text as «*une suite écrite de mots dans une séquence significative*» («a series of written words in a significative sequence»)[11]. Secondly, the vast majority of such textual additions, about 93%,[12] are transcribed in minuscule scripts, although some of them may use other scripts in their headings.

Another significant feature of such minuscule texts is that they lack a direct connection to the manuscripts' main texts. In this regard, they are different from marginal annotations, a type of additions that has been studied extensively in the past decades[13]. Minuscule texts are also different from texts added with the purpose of complementing the main texts, often with the addition of new leaves or a quire – in other words, in those cases whereby we deal with the purposeful augmentation of existing codices. By contrast, most minuscule texts are formally extraneous to the manuscripts' main texts, and their addition to such manuscripts was primarily due to the scarcity of writing materials and often motivated by the need to preserve some useful practical knowledge in a written form. Their existence bears witness to the need to maximize the use of available parchment surfaces in a world of limited economic resources. After all, from the eighth century onwards, papyrus was hardly available north of the Alps, and papermaking had not yet become known in early medieval Latin Europe[14].

5 CLA; Rudy 2016.

6 Maniaci 2002.

7 Fera 2002.

8 Gumbert 2004b.

9 Teeuwen 2017.

10 Lied 2018.

11 Andrist - Canart - Maniaci 2013, p. 51.

12 The numbers referring to data related to early medieval minuscule texts are based on the corpus assembled by the ERC MINiTEXTS project, which currently includes slightly more than 4000 entries.

13 E.g. Contreni 1978; Ganz 1990; Baswell 1992; Copeland 2012; Teeuwen 2014, 2016, 2017, 2019.

14 McCormick 2001, pp. 704-708; Bloom 2017. For more details on the transition from papyrus

Each quire and folio were counted in early medieval manuscript production, as can be illustrated by a short text added in the tenth century to a late ninth-century codicological unit from southwestern Germany (Fulda, Hessische Landesbibliothek, MS Aa 2, fol. 36r): «Sunt de nobilissimo pargameno quaterniones XV, de bono pargameno XX quaterniones ad actus apostolorum et apocalipsin, et VII epistolas XII <quaterniones> et IIII folia. Sunt inter omnes de modolo maiore XLVII quaterniones, et de minore modolo VIII quaterniones IIII folia ad regulam et martirilogium scribendum, de parvo modolo XXIIII quaterniones et IIII folia ad antifonarium»[15]. The text thus lists a precise number of quaternions and folios allocated to specific commissioned texts. 47 quaternions and 4 folios of good quality parchment and of a larger size (probably in folio) were allocated for the production of the texts of the New Testament. 8 quaternions and 4 folios of a smaller format (probably in octavo) were allocated for a monastic rule and martyrology, 24 quaternions and 4 folios of a small size (probably in quarto) were assigned for the production of an antiphonary. If in the process of the copying of such designated texts, a page or two remained empty, it was often furnished with a so-called 'filler' text or a later textual addition.

The minuscule size of such texts and their somewhat accidental relation to the manuscripts' main texts have ensured that they have attracted little attention from Latinists and specialists in early medieval manuscript culture. Our embryonic knowledge about minuscule texts is also due to their substantial diversity: some represent excerpts from well-known texts, whereas others preserve unique texts of varied nature that lack any substantial history of textual transmission and are often transcribed in faulty Latin. The sheer variety of such texts, ranging from a few lines to a few pages, has meant that textual scholars have seldom approached them as a single corpus, and the nature of their production, use, and transmission has almost never been examined systematically in early medieval manuscript studies.

One rare exception is Armando Petrucci's discussion in 1999 of 'occasional microtexts' (*microtesti avventizi*) in blank spaces of early medieval manuscripts, which was based on the limited data assembled in the *Codici Latini Antiquiores*.[16] 'Occasional microtexts' as defined by Petrucci are similar to our minuscule texts in that both are extraneous to the main texts around which

to parchment as the main writing material in early medieval Western Europe, see Internullo 2019; Internullo 2023.

15 On the main codicological unit, see Bischoff 1998-2014, vol. 1, no. 1313.

16 Petrucci 1999.

they were written down, and, in that sense, they are different from peritexts and paratexts such as scholia, annotations, and critical signs. Petrucci distinguished among four groups of 'occasional microtexts': (1) purely graphical additions, namely, pen trials (*aggiunte meramente grafiche*); (2) additions with the full or partial record of a document, letter, or earlier literary texts, with a purpose of preserving them over time (*aggiunte di registrazione*); (3) memorial additions with a limited preservation purpose such as a list of names, goods, expenses, books, treasures, servile dues, or short annalistic entries (*aggiunte di memoria*); and finally (4) authorial drafts of textual passages or letters (*aggiunte di minutazione*)[17]. This is a valid differentiation with a focus on purpose and meaning of textual additions, but it does not take into account the external features of such texts and their location within manuscripts. Yet the codicological contexts of minuscular texts constitute an important parameter for their proper understanding. As argued by the proponents of Material or Structural Codicology[18], the place of a text within the codicological 'stratigraphy' as well as the form it takes in a given manuscript is significant for its proper understanding. This methodological perspective is especially relevant for minuscule texts, most of which can be described as 'guest texts' added into existing codicological units[19]. Their externality to the main texts is expressed not only by difference in subject matters, but also difference in exterior characteristics and their location in a codex.

If we are to classify minuscule texts with reliance on their exterior features, I suggest differentiating between four major types. **The first group** is not a part of Petrucci's 'occasional microtexts'. It is constituted by the so-called 'filler' texts added on the last pages of the final quire at the time of a manuscript's production, often by the hand that transcribed the main texts. Such 'filler' texts could take a page or two at the end of a manuscript or codicological unit. Minuscule texts that appear in the first codicological unit in Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz zu Berlin, MS Phillipps 1776, fols. 1-92v are representative of that group. This part of the manuscript was produced in France at the turn of the tenth century[20], and it contains the letters of late antique bishops, with those written by Roman popes constituting its largest part. Yet its final page (fol. 92v) is filled with two alleged excerpts from capitularies of the

17 Petrucci 1999, pp. 983-984.

18 Gumbert 2004a; Andrist 2013; Da Rold - Maniaci 2016.

19 Gumbert 2004b, p. 42.

20 Bischoff 1998-2014, vol. 1, no. 427.

Carolingian rulers, Charlemagne and Louis the Pious, dated to 779 and 826. In reality, these excerpts were created by the mid-ninth century, as part of the Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals (Benedict Levita, 1, 341 and 2.383). Both excerpts deal with acts of plundering by soldiers inside their own kingdom during military campaigns. Both have no direct connection with this epistolary collection, but they appear in the same sequence in the materials of the Council of Quierzy held in the West Frankish kingdom in 857[21]. The excerpts were important enough that, after finishing the commissioned texts, the scribe chose or was ordered to transcribe the two excerpts on the final page, which would have been left blank otherwise.

The second group is represented by texts of a similar size added at a later date by hands different from those used in transcribing the main texts. They appear commonly on flyleaves as well as blank pages or other blank spaces left between different texts in manuscripts. In some cases, such minuscule texts are similar to the manuscripts' main texts in that they are furnished with titles in capital letters and follow the original layout. Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz zu Berlin, MS Theol. Lat. Fol. 322 provides an illustrative example here. It was produced in Corbie in the second third of the ninth century and preserves the letters of Gregory the Great[22]. At the end of the tenth century, a list of bishops of Cologne was added on its final page (fol. 127v), following the layout of original texts in that manuscript; this list was updated with new names in the following centuries. Moreover, in this particular case, a late-tenth-century scribe intentionally emphasized the identity of the added text by placing it on the final, separate page even though, at this point in time, there was blank space available on the preceding page (fol. 127r). That blank space was filled in with a list of abbots of Werden later in the high Middle Ages.

In other cases, scribes had no desire to present such textual additions on par with manuscripts' main texts, but still considered them important enough to be preserved for the record or for later practical use. They often lack titles, show complete disregard for original rulings, and were written in haste, as in Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, MS Vat. Lat. 5359, a ninth-century manuscript produced in Verona or nearby and mentioned at the beginning of this essay.

The third group is represented by shorter textual additions, often limited to several lines of words that appear on flyleaves or in margins. In the ninth

21 Hartmann 1984, p. 396.

22 Bischoff 1998-2014, vol. 1, no. 453.

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and tenth centuries, outer margins began to be quite consistently employed for annotations and critical signs, and in this period minuscule texts of this type appear more often in upper and lower margins as well as flyleaves and blank pages. In such cases, no attempt was made to incorporate such minuscule texts within the previous structure of a manuscript. They can even appear upside down or as a vertical line in outer margins, thus underscoring their disregard for the structural order of their host manuscripts. For this reason, codicological catalogues often label them pen trials, which is somewhat misleading. These texts commonly lack headings and represent excerpts from Latin texts or practical notes of various natures that their transcribers thought useful enough to be written down. Flyleaves added to Brussels, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, MS 9850-52, a late-eighth-century Carolingian manuscript associated with Soissons, are rife with this kind of minuscule texts. Added in the course of ninth and tenth centuries, the texts include an accounting note for specific amounts of rye and oats distributed to certain individuals, probably by a monastic cellarer, as well as liturgical verses with neumes, both written upside down by different individuals (fol. 3r).

The final, fourth, group of minuscule texts are proper pen trials that appear as a line or two of expressions or quotes familiar to scribes, sometimes repeated several times. Such textual snippets, which were written not only to try a pen but also as didactic, mnemonic, or devotional exercises, similarly appear on flyleaves, blank pages, and sometimes in upper and lower margins. Since most of them were left by monks and priests, many pen trials represent the beginning of psalms, prayers, and chants familiar to their transcribers from liturgy and readings. For example, cathedral priests in Würzburg often wrote a line about the sinner in Psalm 9.26, popular among Anglo-Saxon scribes: *omnium inimicorum suorum dominabitur* («he will rule over all his enemies»). Influenced by their own monastic school, monks of St Gall often wrote the first words of the mnemonic school verse *Adnexique globum zephyri freta kanna secabant*. This pen trial is a hexametric paraphrase from the work of Pomponius Mela, *De Chronographia*, meaning «The ash-grey straits cut through the bulk of the Zephyrium [mountains] attached [to Sicily]»[23]. Monastic students apparently memorized this verse while learning all the letters of the Latin alphabet.[24]

Not every early medieval manuscript contains minuscule texts. For example, lavishly decorated codices tended not to attract such texts for two main rea-

23 Schnoor 2013, p. 46.

24 For a detailed discussion of the connection of such pen trials with didactic practices, see Bischoff 1966-1981.

sons. Some of them, such as richly decorated Gospelbooks, were kept in church treasuries, in areas with limited access. Others belonged to owners whose high social status ensured easier access to parchment material compared to other book users. Research conducted by the MINiTEXTS project shows that, out of approximately 9500 Latin manuscripts and manuscript fragments produced before c. 900, over 1800 codices contain minuscule texts added before c. 1000[25]. A large number of relevant manuscripts feature more than one minuscule text, and, in exceptional cases, there could be more than ten such short texts added to different blank spaces in a single manuscript. As a result, the MINiTEXTS corpus currently includes over 4000 entries for such textual additions; some entries include several minuscule texts of the same kind. The data accumulated by the MINiTEXTS project also demonstrates that the overwhelming majority of minuscule texts (approximately 99% of all entries) were added after c. 700, and most of them in the ninth and tenth centuries (approximately 95% of all entries). These data correspond to Petrucci's earlier observations that the earliest 'occasional microtexts' of the sixth and seventh centuries were of a limited nature, and that the scribal practice of adding extraneous textual additions gradually spread in Western Europe in the course of the eighth century. Consequently, minuscule texts became a widespread phenomenon in Latin manuscript culture only in the ninth and tenth centuries.

Petrucci also argued that earlier 'occasional microtexts' were primarily derived from scriptural, liturgical, and patristic sources, and were produced in scholarly environments in which the practice of writing was separate from reading. After the transitional eighth century, according to him, the nature of such textual additions greatly expanded, with single letters, various lists of names, goods, objects, facts, and economic and administrative notes being added to manuscripts in the ninth and tenth centuries. In this later period, 'occasional microtexts' thus fulfilled memorial, conservative, documentary, and didactic functions, and they were produced within a scribal culture where reading and writing were intertwined[26]. Petrucci's general observations are certainly correct, but they may create a deceptive image of a profound change in the nature of textual additions in the Carolingian period, especially in terms of their content.

25 Latin manuscripts produced before c. 900 have been examined via their digital facsimiles online or *in situ* in most European and North American manuscript collections. So far, we have been unable to examine fewer than 200 non-digitized codices, including those in the larger manuscript collections in St Petersburg, Ivrea and New York.

26 Petrucci 1999.

In contrast to Petrucci's general picture, liturgical additions and pen trials played a major role throughout the early Middle Ages, and they constitute the largest group of the entire MINiTEXTS corpus (≈36%). The majority of minuscule texts of liturgical nature were made by people celebrating various forms of liturgy on a daily basis, which means that liturgical practice remained directly or indirectly the major driving force for many textual additions and pen trials. This is due to the fact that most surviving manuscripts were kept or circulated within ecclesiastic settings and their readers and 'occasional' writers were monks and priests for whom various liturgical performances constituted a crucial aspect of daily existence. The identified liturgical additions to non-liturgical manuscripts are highly diverse. Many of them preserve local liturgical rites and formulas that cannot be found in the surviving liturgical books of the ninth and tenth centuries, or they represent the earliest textual witnesses of new liturgical developments attested later in the high Middle Ages. What is clear so far is that the vast majority of them were created in response to actual liturgical practices to serve as practical guidelines, as memory aids, or as records of internalized liturgical knowledge.

Furthermore, in his discussion, Petrucci did not mention liturgical additions with musical notation, which represent almost two fifth of liturgical minuscule texts (≈14% of all entries or ≈92% of minuscule texts with neumes). Most additions with musical notation (≈92% of minuscule texts with neumes) originate from the tenth century when, as Giulio Minniti's contribution to this volume indicates, textual additions with neumes were written in margins, flyleaves, and other blank spaces not only for didactic or mnemonic purposes, but also as unique records of musical innovation. Correspondingly, like other types of liturgical material, they often represent the earliest surviving witnesses to liturgical chants, sequences, and other forms of medieval liturgical music that resurface in liturgical manuscripts only in the high Middle Ages.

Another group of additions that Petrucci did not mention in his overview of 'occasional microtexts' includes texts that were related, in one way or another, to care for body and soul, which according to our preliminary data constitute about 10% of the entire corpus. These additions appear in various blank spaces and include medical recipes, healing charms and incantations as well as various forms of prognostication such as lists of Egyptian days (*dies Egyptiaci*) and prognostic spheres (known as *sphera Apulei* or *sphera Pythagori*), exorcistic formulas, and various forms of protective incantations. Many charms and incantations were created by priests and monks familiar with Christian liturgy and, hence, such minuscule texts often included Christian formulas and prayers employed in contemporary liturgy, such as the Lord's Prayer or the

Apostles' Creed. This heterogenous group of minuscule texts defy the modern clear-cut distinctions between medicine, religion, and magic, and it reflects the fact that care for soul and care for body were not easily distinguishable in medieval cultures of healing[27]. For example, many acts of exorcism in the early Middle Ages were directed against demonic possession manifested by insanity or some form of physical impediment. This group of minuscule texts offering practical solutions to various problems is also representative of early medieval focus on practical know-how over medical or liturgical 'theory'.

As to Petrucci's third and fourth groups of additions, namely, memorial additions and authorial drafts, they constitute only about 15% of the entire corpus. They include various kinds of socio-economic lists and notes of a practical nature such as lists of relics, treasures, books, and servile dues.[28] They also consist of a small number of authorial drafts and copies of letters and charters, which reflect the process of initial preparation or later utilization for such forms of texts. To the same two groups belong various historical and para-historical lists and notes such as minor annals and the lists of early medieval kings, popes, and bishops, as well as some short additions of historical nature.

There are four other groups of minuscule texts that deserve to be mentioned in this overview. The first group consists of additions and pen trials that can be loosely defined as 'encyclopedic' and didactic (≈13,7% of all entries). They include among other things encyclopedic excerpts and notes, expanded alphabets, and various didactic texts and pen trials. Another, slightly smaller group contains poetic additions and pen trials, which tend to appear at the beginning or end of manuscripts (≈11,6% of all entries). These two groups of minuscule texts mirrored the growth of cathedral and monastic schools in the ninth and tenth centuries, with both teachers and students leaving their imprints in the margins of manuscripts they gained access to. Another group consisting of various religious excerpts and pen trials that were primarily derived from the Scripture and the church fathers accounts for approximately 10% of the entire corpus. Finally, textual additions of legal nature account for about 3,4% of minuscule texts. These include chapters from capitularies, canonical excerpts, and various prayers for judicial ordeals. The appearance of the latter type of minuscule texts reflected the growing popularity of judicial ordeals starting from the early Carolingian period onwards. In the absence of an established textual tradition for the masses, prayers and blessings paramount for conduct-

27 Horden 2019; Leja 2022.

28 For a general overview of socio-economic lists and notes, see Garipzanov 2024.

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ing judicial ordeals, manuscripts' margins became the primary medium where the practical knowledge related to this evolving judicial practice was recorded.

All in all, this overview of taxonomy of early medieval minuscule texts added to Latin manuscripts produced before c. 900 suggests that Petrucci's focus on the changing relationship between writing and reading as the main explanatory model for the development of 'occasional microtexts' in the early Middle Ages is somewhat deficient. I would suggest instead that their intimate relationship with concurrent evolving social practices played a much more important role in the development of this textual phenomenon in early medieval manuscript culture. When minuscule texts were added to existing codicological units, they represented unique moments in the social lives or 'life cycles' of the manuscripts in which they were written[29], and many of them reflect the diverse, day-to-day personal and communal needs of their transcribers and/or broader social, economic, religious, and cultural realities. The following three cases of minuscule texts and their historical contexts will exemplify these points.

Case 1: A transaction note in Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS 1370 and an exchange pattern in Carolingian Bavaria

The first case relates to a pastoral miscellany produced in the Abbey of Mondsee in the first half of the ninth century. In the tenth century, according to Bernhard Bischoff[30], a simple economic note was added to the blank space of its final page, either in Mondsee or somewhere not far from it: «Truzonem, servum Gotesmanni, vendidit (Adalhart *added above*) pro uno caballo rubeo ad Uuieninam» («Adalhart has sold Truzo, a slave of Gottesmann, for one reddish stallion at Wienina»)[31]. This transaction was obviously of some importance for the people partaking in this event, which caused it to be written down in a margin of this manuscript. This short record of two lines involving two persons with Germanic names and a slave of a likely Slavic origin is interesting for three specific reasons.

First, it must be one of the earliest mentions of Vienna in early medieval sources, which seems to remain unnoticed by Austrian historians. The standard histories of Vienna usually refer to the mention of *Wenia* in the Contin-

29 Johnston - Van Dussen 2015.

30 Bischoff 1998-2014, vol. 3, no. 7214.

31 Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS 1370, fol. 120v.

uation of the Salzburg Annals preserved in a mid-twelfth manuscript from Admont Abbey[32]. In 881, according to this set of annals, the Franks fought a battle against the Hungarians near this settlement on the eastern border of the Frankish realm[33]. The second known early mention of Vienna appears in a high medieval annalistic text, *Annales Altahenses*, under the year 1030 when this city was captured by the Hungarians[34]. The name of the settlement in our minuscule text fits the variability of spellings for the name of Vienna in this period, and this minuscule text therefore preserves not only the second earliest mention of that city in early medieval sources, but also the earliest mention in surviving manuscripts.

More importantly, the content of our minuscule text suggests that some kind of market existed at this settlement in the tenth century. This is hardly accidental since we know about thriving trade between East Francia and the territories to the east, and a Frankish toll station was located on the Danube at Raffelsletten, further west of Vienna. *The Inquisition on the Raffelsletten Tolls* compiled in the early tenth century testifies to slaves and horses being important staples of trade across the border along the Danube River. *The Inquisition* lists these staples side by side and mentions an identical toll of one gold tremissis for a female slave and a stallion, and one fourth of that amount for a male slave and mare[35]. Our note suggests that in the tenth century some male slaves could have been valued on par with female slaves.

Finally, this transaction fits the pattern of a somewhat limited use of coins east of the Rhine, and in medieval Bavaria in particular, in the ninth and the first two thirds of the tenth centuries. Those territories had only one active mint in the late ninth century, namely, in Regensburg, and the situation changed only after the development of silver mines in the Hartz mountains in Lower Saxony in the last third of the tenth century. Limited monetary exchange was compensated by barter transactions as the one testified by our economic note, which was probably recorded in the first half of the tenth century. Another possible option was the use of salt as a means of payment and exchange.

The latter suggestion can be corroborated by another minuscule text written in Carolingian Bavaria. It appears in a miscellany with an exposition on

32 E.g. Czendes 2014, pp. 62-65.

33 Admont, Benediktinerstift, MS 718, fol. 31r: «881. ... Primum bellum cum Ungariis ad Ueniam (corrected to Uueniam) ...». See also MGH, Scriptores, 30.2, p. 742.

34 *Annales Altahenses maiores*, p. 791: «1030. ... et Vienni *(corrected to* Wienni *above*) ab Ungris capiebatur ...».

35 *Inquisitio de teloneis Raffelslettensis*, cap. 6, p. 251.

Sunday orations and legal and canonical texts written in northeastern France in the third quarter of the ninth century, a codicological unit held in the library of St Emmeram of Regensburg by the fifteenth century (München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 14508, fols. 64-148)[36]. What is more important for our discussion is that, by the late ninth century, this codicological unit arrived in Carolingian Bavaria, since around that time a small list of payments was added to its final, originally blank, page (fol. 148v), by a hand trained in southern Germany[37]. The list seems to be an *ad hoc* list of payments in bags of salt, either to the Abbey of St Emmeram in Regensburg or another ecclesiastical foundation in this region[38]. In some cases, these are payments received for manufactured objects, probably produced in an ecclesiastical workshop, such as spears (*lanceae*), a sickle (*falx*), a golden vessel (*bacina*), and a veil (*calumma*). Alternatively, a half price was paid as assurance or advance payment (*wadium*) for objects such as a spear or decorated necklace (*musca*), produced in that workshop at someone's request. In other cases, payments are some kind of dues owed by various people. Some of them are identified by their profession, such as a baker (*pistor*) or artisan (*faber*), or by kindred relationship, such as «the younger son of Adelhelm» or «Perehtrih, brother of Chazon». Others are identified by the places they lived in, which suggests that their place of residence was rather distant from the ecclesiastical institution in which this minuscule text was recorded. One of them, a certain Gundolf, was from *Perindorf*, which has been identified as Pörndorf near Aldersbach in eastern Bavaria, about 90km southeast of Regensburg[39]. Another person, Perahart, came from *Hasalpah*, which probably

36 Bischoff 1998-2015, vol. 2, no. 3223.

37 Bischoff 1980, p. 243.

38 «Uuisiricus II sec. de sale (*to the right to this line* Insimul fiunt sec. LXXXVI.) / pro Ia falce II sec. de sale / pro I lancea II sec. (*to the right to this line* XXXVI) / pro altera lancea II sec. Uuihbricus II modii / pro I bacino III sec., similiter Fonamuntri / Erchanbertus II sec. / doletoris IIII et I secura sec. I / decoria sec. I / Reginolfus I sec. / Tephit sec. II de sale / Perehtrih frater Chazoni II sec. / Ceizolf II sec. II sec. / Deotmunt faber sec. I / Inno I sec. faber sec. I / Amulpert pistor I sec. / Stilzinc I calumma / filius Adalhelmi minor I sec. uuadium, lancea / Ata sec. I, uuadium I musca / Gundolf de Perindorf I sec. / Hrodmunt de Porta I sec. / Perahart de Hasalpah I sec.» The abbreviated units of accounts (*sec.*) probably refer to the *secel,* a unit of volume that glosses on measures written in Bavaria or southern Germany in the second half of the ninth century (München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 14747, fols. 88v) identify as *aimpre*/eimbari in Old High German. Du Cange lists *sechil/sekil* as an Old High German for *marsupium* and *pera* (bag, purse). I will discuss the Bavarian measures of volume used in this minuscule text and listed in the abovementioned glosses in a separate paper. It suffices to state here that the use of these unique measures of volume for accounting corresponds with references to unique Bavarian units of exchange in the *The Inquisition on the Raffelsletten Tolls.*

39 von Reitzenstain 1990, p. 46.

refers to Haselbach, a settlement located 50km east of Regensburg. *The Inquisition on the Raffelsletten Tolls* mentions foreign ships with salt coming up the Danube, with this mineral item being exchanged at salt markets located somewhere close to Linz, nearly 200km southeast of Regensburg. Bags of salt traded at such markets were probably used as a means of exchange and payment in this region, which would explain the content of the added economic list. In short, these two minuscule texts provide representative snapshots of socioeconomic practices in Carolingian Bavaria where monetary transactions were of little significance and barter and specific commodities like salt played a major role in economic exchange in the ninth and first half of the tenth centuries.

Case 2: Minuscule additions to early medieval manuscripts at the Rheinau library and the emerging cult of St Blaise

The second case takes us further up the Danube; it is related to minuscule texts reflecting the tenth- and eleventh-century consolidation of the cult of St Blaise (*Blasius*) in the early medieval monastery of Rheinau in modern northeastern Switzerland. This third-century Eastern physician and bishop became quite popular in Western Europe by the high Middle Ages, and he has been invoked against illnesses, especially against throat problems. His body was brought from Rome to Rheinau around 855 and placed in the so-called 'white cell' (*Albzelle*)[40]. His cult gained popularity in Ottonian Germany during the reigns of Otto II and Otto III, and by the mid-eleventh century *Albzelle* was transformed into an independent abbey of St Blaise in the Black Forest in Baden-Württemberg[41]. Yet it was Rheinau where the liturgical Office of St Blaise most popular in high and late medieval Germany was first documented in an early twelfth-century Ordinal[42]. Also, the early stage of the cult in Rheinau between the *translatio* of St Blaise's body from Rome and the establishment of the independent abbey of St Blaise in the mid-eleventh century is more obscure due to the fact that the surviving manuscripts from Rheinau with the liturgical Office of St Blaise postdate this period. In this perspective, a few minuscule texts that were added to Rheinau manuscripts before the mid-eleventh century provide us with unique glimpses at the earlier history of the liturgical veneration of the saint in that abbey.

40 Jakobs 1983.

41 Sauer 1911, p. 67; Eberl 2011.

42 Hänggi 1957, pp. 85-86; Altstaat 2021, pp. 4-5.

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The first such text appears in the Sacramentary of Rheinau (Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, MS Rh. 43), produced in northeastern France, probably at the end of the ninth century[43]. This manuscript was definitely in Rheinau by the early eleventh century when a list of relics from that monastery was added in the lower margin of the sacramentary's Canon of the Mass (p. 18): «Haec sunt reliquie quae (hic *added above*) continentur: sancti Blasii martyris et sancti Ypoliti, de lapide sancti Stephani, de corpore sanctae Waldpurge virginis, de mensa Domini, de monte Synai, / de lapide, de ligno Domini nostri Iesu Christi» («These are relics that are kept here: of St Blaise the martyr, of St Hippolyte, from the stone of St Stephen, from the body of St Walpurga the virgin, from the Lord's table, from the Mount of Sinai, from the stone,[44] from the wood of Our Lord, Jesus Christ»). It is noteworthy that the relic of St Blaise takes the first place in this list, thus indicating its elevated status in Rheinau at that time. The list includes the relic of St Hippolyte, which probably arrived from Rome too, precious relics from the Holy Land, and a relic of the Anglo-Saxon female saint St Walpurgis. The latter relic came from the cathedral of the Bavarian city of Eichstätt to which the body of that female saint was translated in the late ninth century. The fact that this list of relics was recorded in the margins of a manuscript kept in Rheinau and referred to as «kept here» suggests that, by the turn of the eleventh century, the White Cell and the cult of St Blaise were still under the firm control of Rheinau Abbey.

The translation of St Blaise's body from Rome to the White Cell led to a gradual development of his liturgical veneration in Rheinau, a process that also left traces in the margins of the manuscripts kept in that abbey. The first example is a ninth-century manuscript with the Rule of St Benedict from the Rheinau library produced in the Lake Constance area (Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, MS Rh. 111)[45]. Sometime in the late tenth or first half of the eleventh century, one of its monastic readers wrote a prayer to the Lord in the lower blank space following the last page of that rule, a prayer emphasizing the intercessory role of St Blaise: «Domine Iesu Chiste, verus Deus noster, per orationem sancti servi tui Blasii festina in adiutorium meum. Omnipotens Deus me benedicat et animam meam vivificet, Iesus Christus cor meum inluminet et visitat, et spiritus sanctus paraclitus sensum meum semper declaret, et in viam rectam me dirigat. Amen.»

43 Bischoff 1998-2014, vol. 3, no. 7614

44 It is unclear a particle of which particular stone from the Holy Land this item refers to.

45 Bischoff 1998-2014, vol. 3, no. 7633.

The first sentence of that prayer appears as a pen trial in another manuscript from the Rheinau library, namely in a composite manuscript made of several independent codicological units (Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, MS Rh. 81), three of which, according to Bischoff, were produced in different Carolingian regions during the ninth century and were bound together in Rheinau, probably in the tenth century[46]. This compilation contained hagiographic texts addressed to monastic readership. Sometime in the last quarter of the tenth century or the first quarter of the eleventh, one such reader in Rheinau added the aforesaid sentence to the manuscript[47], and this sentence also happens to be a responsory verse for the feast of St Blaise, on February 3rd, attested in the early twelfth-century Rheinau Ordinal[48]. During the same period, another hand added an antiphon with neumes on the final page of that manuscript, the text of which has considerably faded away. This antiphon belongs to the second Vespers of the Rheinau Office of St Blaise, with East Frankish neumes typical of the Lake Constance area, which record melodic nuances lost in the later sources, such as *quilisma* and *episema*[49]. Around the same time or slightly later, chants with neumes (*O Blasi dilecte* etc.) for the same Office were added between two joint codicological units in another Rheinau manuscript (Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, MS Rh. 50)[50], and another eleventh-century liturgical manuscript from Rheinau also contains chants with neumes for the feast of St Blasius (Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, MS Rh. 132)[51].

In short, the liturgical additions discussed above provide unique witnesses to the early stage in the liturgical veneration of St Blaise, and monks of Rheinau utilized the marginal spaces in the manuscripts from their monastic library in devotional and mnemotic practices related to his Office. This process seems

46 Bischoff 1998-2014, vol. 3, nos. 7625-7627.

47 «Domine Iehsu Christe, verus Deus, per oracionem sancti servi tui Blasii festina in adiutorium meum, Domine Deus Iesu Christe verus Deus» (p. 328).

48 Cantus Database, ID no. 601100a, accessed at https://cantus.uwaterloo.ca/chant/334762.

49 «Haec eo orante vox ad eum de caelo facta est omnem pedicionem tuam adimplebo Blasi atdeta dilectissime mox spiculator eiiciens eum a praetorio cum duobus puerulis amputabit [capita] eorum foras muros Sebastiae urbis ita completo martyrio migravit ad Dominum sancte Blasi memento nostri» (p. 379). Whereas the presence of, at least, one *quilisma* is certain, the presence of *episema* is less clear due to a pure preservation state of this musical addition. I am thankful to Giulio Minniti for clarifying the neumatic peculiarities of that minuscule text.

50 Mohlberg 1951, pp. 180-181.

51 Mohlberg 1951, p. 224. Also, somewhat later, a folio from an antiphonary with chants for the feast of St Blaise was added as a flyleaf to a twelfth-century poetic compilation from Rheinau: Mohlberg 1951, p. 184.

to have been complete in Rheinau Abbey by the early eleventh century, before it was transmitted to other ecclesiastical centers and popped up in the earliest external manuscript witness that has been recorded in the Cantus Database, namely, a manuscript that was written in Würzburg in the late eleventh or the first half of the twelfth century (Köln, Erzbischöfliche Diözesan und Dombibliothek, MS 215). This also suggests that the Rheinau Office of St Blaise developed around the same time as a different liturgical Office of St Blaise was created in the Cathedral of Eichstätt in the late tenth century, in the decades when the relics of St Blaise were sent to different German cathedrals and when his cult received backing from the Ottonian rulers[52].

Case 3: A minuscule text in Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, MS Pal. lat. 52 and giving to the saints in the early medieval world

The third case relates to a minuscule text in a codex with Otfrid of Weissenburg's Old High German *Evangelienbuch* produced in Weissenburg Abbey around 870 (Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, MS Pal. lat. 52, fol. 202v)[53]. Later, in the tenth century, an anonymous scribe added what seems to be a list of saints with small amounts of money allocated to each of them. The manuscript catalogues do not mention this badly preserved note, which has no connection to the manuscript's main content. The recent German edition of the *Evangelienbuch* and its manuscript tradition transcribes it without any attempt to explain or contextualize it[54]. As Rudolf Schützeichel pointed out in 1982, the names on the list probably refer to churches dedicated to each particular saint, and since they are written in a dative case, they clearly represent recipients of sums of money following each name. He dated this addition to the second half of the tenth century, closer to 950, and associated them with churches in the Upper Rhineland and the Lake Constance area.[55] What he did not realize is that the name of the Holy Savior at the beginning of this list that he thought referred to a specific church is followed not by a mysterious «vallis [?] ...» but by an abbreviation •VAL•, indicated by dots on both sides. This seems to be a shortened form of the classical Roman abbreviation *votum animo libens* [*solvit*] referring to votive offerings, which were promised and given in the classical

52 For more details, see Altstaat 2021.

53 Bischoff 1998-2014, vol. 1, no. 1512.

54 Kleiber 2010, 12.

55 Schützeichel 1982, pp. 39-46.

world to specific deities. Such votive offerings were usually connected to matters of health or other urgent circumstances demanding divine intervention. This tradition was transferred to the Christian world in the form of votive offerings to saints as the holy intercessors of the Savior. For example, Einhard's text on the translation of relics of St Marcellinus and St Peter tells us about a certain Willibert who suffered from extreme feebleness in his body and lost any hope for recovery. Preparing for an imminent death, he then distributed his wealth among various holy places and promised the price of a pig to St Marcellinus and St Peter, whose relics were kept in a church nearby. After making this vow, he fully recovered, came to their shrine, and placed the price of a pig, that is, 40 denarii, into the crypt of these saints.[56]

Our list probably represents a similar kind of votive offerings when a vow was given to the Holy Savior, and money was promised to specific saints by a sick or dying person: «Sancto Salvatori •VAL• … [sanctae] Mariae solidum I et denarios II / et Sancto Urso ac Sancto Mar[tino sol]idum I et Sanctae Verenae denarios II / et Sanctae Cruci II et Sancto Petri II et Sanctae Margaretae II et Sancto Ypolito II / et iterum Sancto Martino II et Sancto Nazario II et Sancto Sulpicio IIII» («In the fulfilment of a vow to the Holy Savior, to St Mary 1 solidus and 2 denarii, to St Ursus and St Martin 1 solidus, to St Verena 2 denarii, to the Holy Cross 2, to St Peter 2, to St Margaret 2, to St Hippolyte 2, and again to St Martin 2, to St Nazarius 2, and St Sulpice 4»). As mentioned above, the names of saints refer to specific churches possessing their relics, and the total amount of money, namely, 3 solidi and 8 denarii (equivalent to 44 denarii), is surprisingly close to the sum mentioned in Einhard's text.

The fact that this manuscript was produced in the Abbey of Weissenburg and dedicated to Bishop Solomon I of Constance and Otfrid's friends in the monastery of St Gall, Hartmut and Heribert, in conjunction with the paleography of this minuscule text, suggests that the note was added somewhere in southern Germany or eastern Switzerland. The fact that St Mary is mentioned first on our list and her shrine received the highest sum, namely, 14 denarii, points to an ecclesiastic foundation of some prominence, and Constance Cathedral dedicated to St Mary fits this description. Its appearance at the beginning of our note's spiritual route corresponds to this church serving as a departing point for many later pilgrimage routes to Switzerland, and even further to Santiago de Compostela. This identification also suggests that the note was probably written down in Constance or its vicinity. St Ursus, an early

56 *Historia translationis Marcellini et Petri auctore Einhardo*, p. 249.

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martyr connected to the Theban legion, was venerated across Switzerland, and his body was kept in an early medieval collegiate church in Solothurn. Perhaps this church also possessed a relic of St Martin[57]. St Verena, also known as St Verena of Zurzach, is a female saint also linked to the Theban legion, and she was especially venerated in Switzerland. Her first *vita* was composed in Reichenau in the late ninth century, and her grave in Bad Zurzach was a pilgrimage destination point since the late Carolingian period[58]. A parish church of the Holy Cross exists in Sarmenstorf, about 37km south of Bad Zurzach, and the earliest foundation of that church derives from the Carolingian period[59]. Approximately 30km east of Sarmenstorf is the church of St Peter in Zürich, with an earliest church dated to the eighth and ninth centuries. About 45km northeast of Zürich is St Margaret's chapel in the municipality Münchwilen. This church can be traced back to the high Middle Ages[60], and its earlier foundation could possibly be as early as the tenth century. St Hippolyte may have referred to Rheinau near Constance, since, as noted above, a later list of relics from that abbey mentions his relic right after the relic of St Blaise. It is possible that the cult of St Blaise had not yet gained traction in southwestern Germany by the time this practical note was written down. The final three names are more difficult to attribute to specific churches in eastern Switzerland, but the amounts of money allocated to each saint suggest that they were rather smaller places, not the grand foundations that kept the bodies of those saints, namely, Lorsch Abbey (St Nazarius), St Martin of Tours, or the Abbey of St Sulpice of Bourges.

Two other important aspects of this list are worth mentioning. First, they all lay within the bishopric of Constance. Second, they seemingly omit Reichenau and St Gall, imperial abbeys independent of this bishopric, except the time of Bishop Solomon III (890-919). These features suggest that the list could have been composed, later in the tenth century after his term in office, by a cleric connected to the see of Constance, perhaps to its cathedral chapter. One may still wonder why such an unusual list had to be written down on a flyleaf of the manuscript with Otfrid's Old High German poetic rendition of the Gospels. Vows to the Savior were usually made orally and it is their fulfillment in practice that really mattered. The most logical explanation would be that

57 Schützeichel 1982, p. 41; Vogt 2007.

58 Schützeichel 1982, p. 42; Reinle 2014.

59 Wohler 2011.

60 Spuhler 2012; cf. Schützeichel 1982, p. 42.

someone, a sick person, perhaps even at his deathbed, made a vow to be fulfilled by another person or persons capable of visiting those prominent shrines lying within the bishopric of Constance. Such a note would have been written so that the money could be distributed according to a sick person's will in order to precipitate his recovery or make a posthumous charitable act for the salvation of his soul. In the latter case, the four lines served as a form of testament. Although the identity of its author remains elusive, the practical note itself clearly displays the importance of local shrines with saints' relics in the Carolingian and Ottonian periods, a point that can be overlooked if one places an excessive focus on well-known accounts of pilgrimages to Rome and the Holy Land. As this minuscule text displays beyond any doubt, one did not need to go so far to fulfil a vow to the Savior in the early medieval world. Ecclesiastical foundations with holy shrines were always within reach for those who needed them for spiritual and bodily well-being.

To conclude, the three cases presented above clearly underscore one important aspect of most early medieval minuscule texts, namely, their close connection to various social practices, and I use the term 'social' here in a very broad meaning of that word. Many minuscule texts preserved either explicit practical knowledge or otherwise elusive 'tacit knowledge', that is, knowledge employed in, and derived from, everyday activities and rituals and written down only occasionally. Minuscule texts thus have their own 'social logic' that sets them apart from manuscripts' designated texts, and they should be seen as 'signifying practices' that offer a form of indirect access to early medieval reality. For this reason, manuscripts scholars and historians should pay more attention to this largely overlooked textual corpus while studying early medieval society and its heterogenous culture.

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