

Rosamond McKitterick

*Minitexts as Informal Written Interventions:  
The Case of Cambridge University Library  
Kk.5.16, Vat. reg. lat. 1127 and Namur MS 11*

**Abstract**

This paper offers three case studies on ‘minitexts’ added to eighth- and ninth-century manuscripts and suggests that such informal interventions need to be recognized as part of a communication process between readers, scribes and their books in early medieval culture. The additions, comprising a vernacular poem, canon law, epistolary and homiletic material and kinglists suggest an association of ideas between main text and added minitexts. Yet they also expose a variety of sources for the minitexts, from a written record of oral memory, a summary of one aspect of a well-established text as in the case of Isidore of Seville’s *Etymologiae*, and the reproduction of papal rulings which were part of another widely-circulated collection of canon law, to some interesting chronological summaries which appear to reflect a reader’s engagement with the entire codex in which the minitext was inserted. They indicate too how much we can learn in general about early medieval intellectual culture from pursuing both the engagements with knowledge represented in readers’ additions to their manuscripts, and the questions they raise.

**Keywords**

Historiography; Canon Law; Consanguinity; Kinglists; Communication

Rosamond McKitterick, University of Cambridge and Sidney Sussex College (United Kingdom), [rdm21@cam.ac.uk](mailto:rdm21@cam.ac.uk), 0000-0003-1296-0569

ROSAMOND MCKITTERICK, *Minitexts as Informal Written Interventions: The Case of Cambridge University Library Kk.5.16, Vat. reg. lat. 1127 and Namur MS 11*, pp. 39-63, in «Scribeum», 21/2 (2024), ISSN 1128-5656 (online), DOI [10.6093/1128-5656/11413](https://doi.org/10.6093/1128-5656/11413)



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In this paper I offer three case studies of historiographical texts being supplemented by minitexts in the form of a vernacular poem, ecclesiastical legislation, and what may be either epistolary or homiletic material. One consideration is the degree to which there is any association of ideas between the main text of the host codex, and the added minitexts. Another is whether these additions are spontaneous, individual and original creations or adapted from already existing texts. A third is whether a minitext has an afterlife, either becoming a recognized short text in its own right or part of what is presented as the integrated text. These examples, furthermore, provide an opportunity to consider the interaction between texts, readers and scribes in early medieval culture.

The identification or categorization of what might qualify as a minuscule text or ‘minitext’ is not straightforward, and can be roughly summarized as ‘when is a minitext not a minitext?’. Ildar Garipzanov initially suggested that a minitext can generally be thought of as a ‘short text added to a Latin manuscript ... often of a liturgical, religious or didactic nature, occasionally practical ... seldom by an identifiable author or with a traceable history of textual transmission, or [which has been] neglected or compartmentalized within a specialized discipline’<sup>1</sup>. He has further refined the notion of minuscule texts in his suggestion that minuscule texts usually lack a direct connection to the main text of the manuscript to which they were added<sup>2</sup>. The first part of this paper, therefore, will look at possible examples of such minitexts, their manuscript context, the degree to which they are or are not related to the remaining contents of each codex, their possible textual sources, and the implications thereof. As will be seen, preoccupations with both chronology and consanguinity in these minitexts may reflect contemporary concerns on the part of subsequent readers of each of the manuscripts discussed. These examples, however, also raise methodological questions concerning processes of identification and the basis for our judgement of the minitexts’ purpose and significance. The con-

1 GARIPZANOV *Minuscule texts*.

2 See GARIPZANOV 2024 in this volume.

cluding part of this paper, therefore, will explore whether, or to what extent, these additions provide some understanding of the early medieval readers and users of these manuscripts.

### The ‘Moore Bede’: Cambridge University Library Kk.5.16

First of all, let us look at the additions made on the final leaf, fol. 128r-v, of the early eighth-century ‘Moore Bede’. This is the famous copy of Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum* copied in Wearmouth-Jarrow c. 737, later in the possession of Bishop John Moore of Norwich and bought by King George I, along with the rest of Moore’s printed books and manuscripts, for presentation to Cambridge University Library in 1715. The current shelf mark is Kk.5.16<sup>3</sup>. The additions on these pages raise useful questions about ‘minitexts’, both generally and in relation to my other two case studies of NAMUR, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS II and CITTÀ DEL VATICANO, BAV, reg. lat. 1127.

The last six lines on fol. 128r of the ‘Moore Bede’ comprise the short set of Northumbrian annals for 731-734 known as the Moore annals, unique to this codex and elucidated by Joanna Story. In her words they ‘seriously unsettle Bede’s harmonious narrative of the present state of Britain’, and they could be said to form an appendix after the *explicit* of Bede’s history<sup>4</sup>. The first three lines on fol. 128v are also apparently straightforward. Like the Moore Annals they have been very extensively discussed, for they provide an Old English text of Caedmon’s hymn for which Bede provides a Latin version in the story about Abbess Hild of Whitby in *Historia ecclesiastica* Book IV, chapter 24. Line 4 on fol. 128v confirms the attribution of the hymn to Caedmon<sup>5</sup>. The next eight lines offer a short Northumbrian kinglist and some calculations of the number of years that had elapsed since various Northumbrian events, such as sixty-three years since the foundation of the monastery of Wearmouth-Jarrow. These notes are all written by the same scribe who wrote the entire preceding text of Bede’s History, and make it plausible to date them, and thus the completion of the entire codex, to c.737 or soon thereafter. This is consistent with the palaeographical indications. The completion of the text of the history, as distinct from the concluding notes a little before that date, cannot be ruled

<sup>3</sup> In addition to CUL MS Kk.5.16 dig., <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-KK-00005-00016/1>, consulted 31.03.2023, this manuscript is also available in a facsimile, HUNTER BLAIR 1959.

<sup>4</sup> STORY 2009.

<sup>5</sup> PLUMMER 1896.

out, but in terms of scribal activity this might just as well be counted in hours, days or weeks as in months or years<sup>6</sup>.

The added notes might themselves qualify as two or three minitexts, or perhaps as a connected set. The Old English text of the hymn serves as the sandwich filling for the annalistic entries; it is in the Northumbrian dialect (in the ‘*aelda*’ recension), and was added by the scribe of the main text. In the other eighth-century English copy of Bede’s text, the St Petersburg Bede (ST PETERSBURG, Rossiiskaia Natsional’naia Biblioteka MS Q.v.I.18), however, a slightly different Northumbrian version (the ‘*eordu*’ recension) of Caedmon’s text appears on fol. 107r as a marginal gloss to Bede’s Latin rendering given as part of the narrative<sup>7</sup>. The gloss is supplied by the same Wearmouth-Jarrow scribe (Parkes’ Scribe ‘D’), who wrote this final portion of the main text<sup>8</sup>. Caedmon’s hymn also appears as a marginal or interlinear gloss to the Latin text, but in a West Saxon dialect, in English copies of Bede’s History dating from the tenth century onwards<sup>9</sup>. Although the ‘Moore Memoranda’, that is, the added Northumbrian king list and chronological notes after the hymn in the Moore Bede, place the scribe’s work in his own specific location and historical context, they could have been added sequentially over an indeterminate period<sup>10</sup>. Yet they appear to reflect a train of thought, and now appear to form collectively an elaborate addition to the text in a format that is unique to this manuscript.

The relative chronology of the Moore and St Petersburg manuscripts proposed by Malcolm Parkes in 1982, in contradiction to the suggested dating hitherto of each codex – ‘not long after 737’ and ‘c. 746’ respectively – moreover, may need revisiting as far as the additions are concerned, despite the wealth of comment they have already generated. Parkes acknowledged that the apparent date indicators in each codex could have been taken over from their exemplars. His palaeographical analysis of the St Petersburg Bede led him to conclude that the work of Scribe ‘D’ (fols. 68v (*recte* 69v)-161 (*recte* 162)) predated that of the scribes of fols. 1-63v (*recte* 64v) and was ‘sometime after 731’<sup>11</sup>. The Old English

6 This is worth emphasizing, for too often ‘later additions’ are often assumed to be many years after the original, despite palaeographical contra-indications.

7 Illustrations in OKASHA 1968 and ARNGART 1952.

8 PARKES 1982, pp. 93-120 at p. 98, note 27, reporting a personal communication about the Old English then received from C.J.E. Ball.

9 CAVILL 2000; PARKES 1982, pp. 97-106 on the St Petersburg Bede.

10 The classic study is HUNTER BLAIR 1950.

11 PARKES 1982, p. 101. The alternative numbering is due to two leaves having been numbered 51.

of the Caedmon hymn in the gloss on fol. 107 of the St Petersburg Bede has been variously described. Parkes, for example, characterised it as ‘more consistent’ and Katharine O’Brien O’Keefe as ‘particularly careful’, whereas Olaf Arngart considered the Moore Bede version to contain ‘notable archaisms’ in comparison with the St Petersburg version which he regarded as consistently mid-eighth-century in its language<sup>12</sup>. That may indicate the copying of the Moore Bede version before the St Petersburg marginal note rather than after it as Parkes surmised; St Peterburg’s manuscript’s scribe may have regularised the first effort of the Moore Bede scribe. It may be significant that the later West Saxon versions of the hymn also appear as sometimes apparently fortuitous glosses to the story of Hild and Caedmon on the text rather than reproduced at the end of the manuscript. Alternatively, the gloss in the St Petersburg manuscript could have been adapted as a separate text in the Moore Bede<sup>13</sup>. It is also possible that neither scribe knew of the other’s rendering of the hymn.

The placing of the original minitext of the Caedmon hymn, therefore, reflects different individual interactions with the original text of Bede from which each of these codices was copied. It has prompted extensive discussion of the way in which the presumed oral memory of the original hymn was retained over the seventy years or so before the composition of the *Historia ecclesiastica*, and thus the process of the reception of the hymn. From its initial appearance as a minitext, the hymn itself in due course acquired its own status as a short vernacular text removed from its original narrative context<sup>14</sup>.

The Moore Bede served thereafter as the redaction of Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica* from an intermediary copy of which, made at the Frankish court, many Continental copies of it descend<sup>15</sup>. The unique set of supplementary texts written in insular minuscule in the Moore Bede, however, was not transferred either into the hypothetical intermediary copy made at the Carolingian court, or into any of its descendants.

The next few lines on fol. 128v of the Moore Bede are a very different matter as far as both their content and afterlife are concerned. They are written in a caroline minuscule. This script, once thought to be dateable to the tenth

12 O’BRIEN O’KEEFE 1990, pp. 23-46; ARNGART 1952, p. 31.

13 In contrast to the extensive discussion of the St Petersburg Bede, however, Parkes only refers to the Moore Bede in passing in three footnotes: PARKES 1982, p. 100 n. 35, p. 101 n. 42 and p. 111 n. 111.

14 Both are written in prose form and raise the issues of the ‘cultural movement from orality to literacy’: see again the enlightening discussion by O’BRIEN O’KEEFE 1990, especially pp. 32-46 and her account of earlier scholarship on the manuscript records of Caedmon’s hymn.

15 BEDE, *Historia ecclesiastica*, pp. xliii-xlv.

century, was identified by Bernhard Bischoff, in his classic paper in 1965 on the ‘court library’ of Charlemagne, as written in a hand very similar to that of the Harley Gospels in LONDON, British Library, Harley 2788, that is, by a scribe associated with the court school of Charlemagne. This Carolingian addition is thus dateable to c. 800 and Bischoff suggested that it indicated that this copy of Bede’s History had been among the books available at the Frankish royal court by the end of the eighth century. Bischoff further postulated that the Carolingian descendants of the Moore Bede, written in West Frankish centres near Tours, probably Flavigny and Auxerre, in the Loire valley, as well as further north, possibly at Stavelot, were the outcome of distribution of the text from the court. Many of them include the Carolingian additions as well, as we shall see<sup>16</sup>.

The texts in caroline minuscule on this final page of the Moore Bede comprise, first of all, an extract from Isidore of Seville’s *Etymologiae* Book IX, 6: 28-29 on consanguinity. In manuscripts of Isidore this discussion is often accompanied by consanguinity tables (IX. 6, 28)<sup>17</sup>. The tables also appear in some Carolingian lawbooks. Two examples among many can be cited: the ninth-century law books now CITTÀ DEL VATICANO, BAV, Vat. reg. lat. 1127, fols. 3v-4r and LEIDEN, Universiteitsbibliotheek, BPL 114, fols. iv-2r each contain the tables in differing layouts<sup>18</sup>. In the Moore Bede codex, however, rather than the tables, the scribe has attempted a brief and highly selective summary description in his own words, and with variable spelling of the different degrees of relationship (particularly for the word and suffix ‘nepos’), as follows (indicating line changes and punctuation):

*Beatus hysidorus de consanguinitate sic loquitur cuius series vii grad  
ibus dirimetur hoc modo .i. filius & filia .ii. nepas et neptis .iii. pronepus  
& proneptis .iiii. abnepus & abneptis .v. adnepas & adneptis .vi. trinepos &  
trineptis .vii. trinepotis filius & trinepotis filia*

Blessed Isidore speaks thus of consanguinity, whose series of 7 grades can be set out in this way: .i. son and daughter .ii. grandson and granddaughter .iii. great grandson and great granddaughter .iiii. great great grandson and great great granddaughter .v. great great great grandson and great great great grand-

16 See BISCHOFF 1965-1981, pp. 149-169, at pp. 160-161. English translation: BISCHOFF 1994, pp. 56-75 at pp. 67-68.

17 ISIDORE, *Etymologiae*, ed. LINDSAY (not paginated).

18 For digital reproductions see [https://www.digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Reg.lat.1127](https://www.digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Reg.lat.1127) and <https://www.digitalcollections.universiteitleiden.nl>, accessed 21<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

daughter (OR son/daughter of an *abnepos*) .vi. great great great great grandson and great great great great granddaughter (OR son/daughter of the *abnepos*) .vii. son/daughter of the great great great great grandson and great great great granddaughter.

This comes before the quotation of Isidore's text from IX. 6, 29:

*Haec cumsanguinitas (!) dum se paulatim propaginum ordinibus dirimens usque ad ultimum gradum subtraxerit, et propinquitatis esse desierit, eam rursus lex matrimonii vinculo repetit et quodammodo revocat fugientem. Ideo autem usque ad sextum generis gradu consanguinitas constituta est [OMITS ut sicut sex aetatibus mundi generatio et hominis status finitur] ita propinquitatis generis toto gradibus terminaretur.*

While this consanguinity diminishes towards the last degree, as it subdivides through the levels of descent, and kinship ceases to exist, the law recovers it again through the bond of matrimony, and in a certain way calls it back as it slips away. Thus, consanguinity is established up to the sixth degree of kinship [so that just as the generation of the world and the status of humankind are defined by six ages] so kinship in a family is terminated by the same number of degrees<sup>19</sup>.

A similar attempt at summary is evident in the next section of this added text. It comprises extracts from Pope Gregory II's Synod of Rome 721 on prohibited marriages in which clauses 1-6 of the eight relevant original statements of this synod are reproduced. These raise questions about the social conditions in Rome in the early eighth century which made such specific prohibitions appropriate, and still more questions about why they should have attracted special interest at the court of Charlemagne at the end of the eighth century. The clauses chosen threatened anathema to anyone marrying women of different status. The first mentioned is a *presbytera*, which could mean the wife or former wife(?) of a priest, or a widow who had taken the veil. The other women mentioned are a nun (two terms are used), a spiritual co-mother (that is, the mother of one's godchild), a sister-in law, a niece, a stepmother, and a son or grandson's fiancée.

*HUCUSQUE HYSIDORI procedit sententia. Item ex decreto papae Gregorii iunioris, qui nunc romanam catholicam regit matrem ecclesiam, quid de hac causa quam inquiritis sancxerit sancta et vera auctoritas intimamus.*

*I Si quis presbiteram duxerit uxorem anathema sit.*

*II Si quis monacham vel Deo sacratam quam Dei ancillam appellant duxerit in coniugium anathema sit.*

*III Si quis cummatrem spiritalem duxerit in coniugium anathema sit.*

19 ISIDORE, *Etymologiae*, English translation, p. 210.



IIII Si quis fratris uxorem duxerit in coniugium anathema sit.  
 V Si quis neptam in coniugium sociaverit anathema sit.  
 VI Si quis novercam aut nurum duxerit in coniugium anathema sit<sup>20</sup>.

This interest in consanguinity is echoed in a note (part of it was cut off by a later binder) added in a Carolingian Tironian note to the margins of fol. 17v of the Moore Bede. There it forms a reaction (unfortunately not precisely dateable) to the *Historia ecclesiastica* Book I, 27 that is, the supposed response Pope Gregory I made to the questions about who might marry whom (the fifth of the queries addressed to Gregory by Augustine of Canterbury)<sup>21</sup>. This is Bede's version of the famous *Libellus responsionum*, which also had a separate transmission in two other formats<sup>22</sup>. The texts on fol. 128v have generally been understood as material related to this discussion. I propose in addition that this text, together with the Isidore extract, could even be described as a small dossier that a Frankish reader inserted in the book, addressing a particular topic discussed in Bede's history, namely, the prohibited degrees of marriage, which was regarded as pertinent at the time. In this respect, there is still more to be said.

As already noted, folio 128v in the Moore Bede is the final page in the codex. There was once an extra leaf to complete the quire (Quire XIII), but only the stub of what would have been fol. 129 is visible. Some text therefore may be missing. That it is missing becomes clear from the extant work of Frankish scribes making copies of the Moore Bede in the ninth century. They copied these Frankish additions as well, though as already noted, they chose not to reproduce either the Moore annals and the Old English version of the Caedmon hymn, or the Northumbrian king list and chronological notes.

In the copy of Bede's history in PARIS, BnF, lat. 5227A from Saint Julien de Tours, written in west Francia in the second quarter of the ninth century<sup>23</sup>,

20 Synod of Rome 721 (clauses 9-17 of this synod address other topics).

21 See STORY and WESTWELL Notes.

22 Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica* I, 27, pp. 78-103. See ELLIOT 2014: I am very grateful to David Wills and Kate Faulkner of the Squire Law Library in the University of Cambridge, and Yanning Rao of Cambridge University Library for their help in securing a copy of this article.

23 CAMBRIDGE, University Library MS Kk.5.16 was at 'St Julien' judging from the note on fol. 128v in a sixteenth- or seventeenth-century hand. This has always been assumed to be St Julien, Le Mans. The manuscript was acquired by Hautin and thereafter was bought by John Moore. But PARIS, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms (hereafter BnF) lat. 5227A has a ninth-century *ex libris* on fol. 217v a note in a ninth-century minuscule that it belonged to Saint Julien: *hic liber est sci iuliani*. One wonders, therefore, whether the Moore Bede actually was also at the monastery of St Julien of Tours in the ninth century where it and its appendix were copied, rather than the cathedral of Le Mans.

for example, the texts have become integrated continuations after the end of Bede's text. Here, moreover, this little dossier on consanguinity has been extended by adding, not only the remaining two of the clauses from the 721 Synod concerning marriage, but also a third short text, also related to marriage and degrees of consanguinity. These extra lines also appear in BERLIN, Deutsche Staatsbibliothek, Phillipps MS 1873, fols. 114r-114v (a Frankish codex possibly from the Trier region)<sup>24</sup> and LONDON, British Library, Harley 4978, fols. 148v-149r (a codex dated s.IX 2/4 by Bischoff, from central France, possibly Flavigny, subsequently at Reims)<sup>25</sup>. In the latter, Harley 4978, the texts on consanguinity even appear before the *Explicit* to Bede's History and are presented as if they are part of Bede's text<sup>26</sup>.

The extra text supplied by these Frankish copies of Bede's History comprise two from the Roman Synod of 721 forbidding marriage to first cousins and other relations, followed by a comment on the problems of marriage of people related in the fourth, fifth and sixth degrees, but insisting that those related in the second or third degree should not marry, and should be separated if they had done so. It reads as follows:

*VII Si quis consobrinam similiter in coniugium duxerit anathema sit.*

*VIII Si quis de propria cognatione vel quam cognatus habuit duxerit in coniugium anathema sit.*

*Hucusque ex decreto praedicti papae.*

*Invenimus etiam in aliorum decretis, quod si nescientes sicut et solet ecclesiasticam constitutionem*

<sup>24</sup> BISCHOFF 1998, no. 440, p. 93; ROSE 1893, no. 133, pp. 296-297.

<sup>25</sup> BISCHOFF 2004, no. 2483, p. 122, revises his opinion to 'central France'. BISCHOFF 1965-1981, p. 161, also noted how many manuscripts descended from this Tours copy: BERN, Burgerbibliothek MS 49 – Loire region which I have so far been unable to examine; BnF lat. 5227 – France; LONDON, British Library, Harley 4978 - Flavigny; BnF lat. 5226 - Loire (incomplete and breaks off in the middle of the list of Bede's own works); BERLIN, Deutsche Staatsbibliothek, Phillipps 1873 -Auxerre; BRUSSELS, Bibliothèque royale, MS II 2295 – Stavelot which I have so far been unable to examine. In an earlier study of the additions, MACHIELSEN 1963a, also noted them, or excerpts thereof, in the late eleventh-century codex BnF lat. 12943 and in three later ninth-century penitentials, KARLSRUHE, Landesbibliothek Aug. CCLV, fols 106v-107v, CITTÀ DEL VATICANO, BAV, Barberini lat. 477, fols. 72-72v, and FIRENZE, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Ashburnham 82, fols. 25-27.

<sup>26</sup> More texts, the first of which are credited to Jerome and Ambrose and comprise extracts from the former's commentary on Ezekiel and from a sermon of the latter, were subsequently added to the Harley codex by a different, slightly later, hand and occupy two further folios of the codex, fols. 149r-151v. The texts' identification is offered in the description accompanying the British Library digital version of the book: [https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Harley\\_MS\\_4978](https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Harley_MS_4978), consulted 24.03.2023; they would merit further work.

*per negligentiam nostri temporis sacerdotum in quarto vel in quinto vel in sexto gradu cognationis  
id est cum sanguinitas (!), in coniugium copulati fuerant, non separentur, sed tamen istud non legitime  
sed veniabiliter concessum esse noscatis. Idcirco prius cavendum est, ne hoc omnino proveniat. In tertio vero vel secundo quod absit gradu, si contigerit talis copula separari oportet. Videte, filii karissimi, quale nobis incumbit periculum si tacemus, absit. Absit ut nostrum silentium vestrum fiat exitium.*

In commenting on this third text back in the early 1960s, before Bischoff's study of Charlemagne's court library was published, and thus with the mistaken notion that the additions were tenth century and to be located to Tours, Lambert Machielsen considered all three parts of this addition to be a single text. He related them to discussions, at mid-eighth-century Frankish councils, of Christian marriage within the Frankish social context as well as what he regarded as a missionary context. Because of the address to the *fratres carissimi*, he suggested it/they might even be part of a lost sermon, or a lost letter. He ventured the further suggestion, accepted by many, that it could be credited to the circle of Boniface of Mainz, if not Boniface himself, echoing other extant letters of Boniface and the popes in the middle of the eighth century about marriage and the prohibited degrees of consanguinity<sup>27</sup>. Certainly, the assembly at Leptines in 743, presided over by the mayor of the palace Carloman (brother of Pippin III) and Boniface, refers to following the canonical decrees concerning adultery and incestuous marriages contrary to law<sup>28</sup>, and the Council of Rome in 743, presided over by Pope Zacharias, makes explicit reference to the decisions made in the time of Pope Gregory II<sup>29</sup>. The clauses of this synod, judging from the manuscripts recorded by Werminghoff, were widely distributed across the Frankish realm and in Italy but, like the clauses of 721, can occur in different contexts<sup>30</sup>. There are also similarities between the final part of the Moore Bede dossier and an anonymous homily on the degrees of consanguin-

27 MACHIELSEN 1963a and MACHIELSEN 1963b. See the summary of the discussions in UBL 2008, pp. 240-251. Compare Boniface's reference in 735 to the legality of marriages between Christians related in the third degree in a letter to Archbishop Nothelm of Canterbury with Gregory I's replies to Augustine of Canterbury (thus from independent knowledge of the *Libellus responsionum*), Ep. 33, ed. TANGL 1916, p. 57. But see the discussion by ELLIOT 2014, who establishes that Boniface misread the *Libellus responsionum* and thus needlessly doubted the authenticity of the chapter on incest in Pope Gregory I's method of counting the degrees of consanguinity.

28 *Concilium Liftinense*, c.3 ed. WERMINGHOFF, p.7.

29 *Concilium Romanum* 743, c.15, ed. WERMINGHOFF, pp. 19-20.

30 WERMINGHOFF 1906, pp. 10-11.

ity preserved in a canon law manuscript (CITTÀ DEL VATICANO, BAV, pal. lat. 577, fols. 8r-8v), written at the turn of the eighth century in ‘Continental-insular’ minuscule, possibly at Hersfeld, and later at Mainz<sup>31</sup>.

The third element could even be regarded as directed at future readers, though a homiletic origin is also conceivable. The court context is the more likely first of all, because the dossier itself, as well as all other witnesses to the third part of the text, date to the turn of the eighth century. Secondly, uncertainty, and therefore variable practice, persisted during the eighth and ninth centuries, about whether the ‘Roman’ or ‘canonical’/‘scriptural’ methods for calculating degrees of consanguinity or affinity should be the ones to use.

If we consider the context in which the decrees of the Synod of Rome of 721 are usually transmitted, moreover, the interest in consanguinity in the Moore Bede codex and its descendants is completely in accord with the extensive discussion of incest prohibitions that Karl Ubl has established were so prominent in Carolingian ecclesiastical legislation and early medieval Christian marriage law<sup>32</sup>. These discussions centred on precisely those degrees of consanguinity discussed by Isidore of Seville, and by Gregory I in the *Libellus responsionum*. The latter had its own transmission history independent of Bede’s version, for it had been included in many canon law collections since the seventh century<sup>33</sup>. The method of counting, whether according to the Roman method underlying the 721 synod’s decrees, or in the ‘scriptural’ (also known as ‘canonical’ way) that Gregory I favoured, is the crucial element<sup>34</sup>. Discussion of the marriage of relatives also included concern with the impediments of the spiritual relationships created by godparenthood<sup>35</sup>.

It is not only the Moore Bede’s dossier that suggest that this discussion can be more precisely associated with the Frankish royal court circle. That the 721 synodal clauses were widely distributed from the later eighth century onwards is clear from extant canon law collections. The first eight clauses of the Synod are to be found forming the concluding section of the canon law collection known as the *Dionysio-Hadriana*, sent to Charlemagne by Pope Hadrian in 774, but probably compiled in Rome before 731. This is suggested by its refer-

31 MACHIELSEN 1961 at pp. 496-8; *CLA I*, 97; MORDEK 1975, pp. 563, 774-779; and see also GLATTHAAR, 2004, pp. 88-91 and 388-9.

32 UBL 2008, especially pp. 217-383. See also D’AVRAY, 2012.

33 ELLIOT 2014, pp. 64-65, 94-101.

34 UBL 2008, pp. 17-18 and 237-240.

35 See LYNCH 1986, and JUSSEN 1991.

ence to Pope Gregory as Gregory *Iunior* who was succeeded by Pope Gregory III in 731. The *Dionysio-Hadriana* mostly comprised the earlier collection of oecumenical and African conciliar canons and papal decretals known as the *Dionysiana*, but also included Gregory II's Roman synodal decrees concerning marriage prohibitions<sup>36</sup>.

The *Dionysio-Hadriana* survives in a great many ninth-century copies of this collection copied throughout the Frankish realms, including a significant number which date to the late eighth or beginning of the ninth century<sup>37</sup>. Two late eighth- and early ninth-century examples are from the scriptorium which produced the 'a-b' script, that is, possibly Jouarre or Chelles which had close links to the Frankish court, and Freising respectively<sup>38</sup>. Of particular interest in relation to the Moore Bede additions, as Karl Ubl has noted, is the codex now KÖLN, Dombibliothek, MS 115, written in the time of Charlemagne's archchaplain Hildebold archbishop of Cologne, for it contains additional material – the Rome Council of 743 and an excerpt from Pope Gregory III's letter to Boniface of Mainz – relating to marriage prohibitions from the middle of the eighth century<sup>39</sup>. This codex reinforces the possibility that the *Dionysio-Hadriana* collection was indeed available for consultation by members of the court circle, and that it was a topic of immediate interest.

Further, marriage according to the norms of Christianity and Roman observance (*iuxta ritum et normam christianitatis et religionem Romanorum*) is also one of the issues alluded to in Pope Zacharias I's responses to Pippin III's queries in 747, preserved in the *Codex epistolaris Carolinus* compiled at the court of Charlemagne on the king's orders c. 791<sup>40</sup>. This makes it all the more compelling that there were concerns with Christian marriage laws at the Carolingian court at the time of the insertion of these 'minitexts' in the Moore Bede manuscript. We may imagine, therefore, that whoever compiled the short dossier on consanguinity on the last two leaves of the Moore Bede drew on a number of other texts to hand, probably at that stage in the royal library.

36 The *Collectio Dionysiana* in full has been edited from different manuscripts: STREWE, 1931, (from BAV pal. lat. 577) and JUSTEL, 1628 and 1643, from Oxford Bodleian Library e Mus. 103, reprinted in PL 67, cols 137-316. The *Dionysio-Hadriana* has not been fully edited. See also FIREY, Carolingian law project.

37 KÉRY 1999, pp. 14-17.

38 MCKITTERICK 1992 reprinted in MCKITTERICK 1994, Chapter VII.

39 BISCHOFF 1965, pp. 17-35; UBL 2008, pp. 295-297.

40 *Codex carolinus*, 3, c. 22, ed. GUNDLACH, *Codex carolinus* (MGH Epp. III), p. 485; *Codex carolinus* English translation, CC 5, c. 22, p.178.

Their subsequent repetition during the ninth century in both the additions to later Carolingian copies of Bede's history and of the *Dionysio-Hadriana* collection of canon law, as well as in other independent assemblies of ecclesiastical legislation, suggests a continued anxiety to observe the rules of consanguinity. LAON, Bibliothèque municipale Suzanne Martinet, MS 201, for example, is a codex dated to the middle of the ninth century and was given by Bishop Theoderic of Cambrai (831-863). It contains an independent compilation of canonical as well as capitulary and theological texts, namely, extracts from Isidore's *Etymologiae* VII, 9:15-18 and 28, and IX, 6: 102 on divination and *sortilege*, and the beginning of the discussion on paternal and maternal relatives, a glossary (fols. 31r-29v), canons from councils of Carthage, Vaison and Ancyra, excerpts from the council of Aachen 816, the *Collectio canonum Laudunensis*, fols. 38r-94v and excerpts from Carolingian synods. On fols. 110r-111, a different hand has added a 'minitext' in the form of twelve clauses in abbreviated form from Pope Gregory II's synod of Rome in 721<sup>41</sup>. Further, Mordek records a partial copy of the Laon manuscript's fols. 30r-112r in a codex that seems to be a priest's handbook, extant in ST PETERSBURG, Rossiiskaia Natsional'naia Biblioteka, Q.v.II.5 fols. 1r-53r. It too preserves the clauses from the 721 Synod of Rome on fols. 52r-v<sup>42</sup>.

Given the treatment of Isidore and the 721 synod in the 'minitexts' consanguinity dossier in the Moore Bede and its descendants, and despite the body of opinion favouring the mid-eighth-century Bonifacian context, the implications of the dating from the late eighth century onwards of all the manuscript witnesses need to be given greater weight. The Moore Bede dossier appears to be an instance of an independent, if very derivative, summary of opinions – little more than jottings – which can be associated with the Frankish court during the reign of Charlemagne. It subsequently enjoyed an afterlife in the course of the ninth century and beyond, possibly helped by the references to the authority of both Isidore and Pope Gregory II.

The Moore Bede's minitexts have thus provided a number of different types: the insular additions offer an individual continuation made by a scribe rather than the author of the original text but augment the text. The Old English Northumbrian version of Caedmon's hymn was presumably based on oral

<sup>41</sup> I am grateful to Sam Ottewill-Soulsby for bringing this manuscript to my attention. He has established that the Synod of Rome is a slightly later ninth-century addition to the manuscript. For a description and detailed list of contents, but without differentiation between stages of production, see MORDEK 1995, pp. 195-200. On the *Collectio canonum Laudunensis* see REYNOLDS 1983.

<sup>42</sup> MORDEK 1995, pp. 698-702 at p. 701 and KÉRY 1999, pp. 166-167.

memory of a text given in Latin by the original author and had some afterlife both as a gloss and, from the tenth century, in a West Saxon dialect version. The caroline minuscule consanguinity dossier reflects a reader's engagement with a particular aspect of the original text, drawing on other existing texts, two of which at least had a wide and independent transmission of their own, both at the time and subsequently, in contexts in which the permitted and prohibited degrees of marriage remained important considerations for the compilers.

### Namur, Bibliothèque Municipale MS 11

Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* prompted other associations. The composite history book, now NAMUR, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 11 was probably written at St Hubert and was dated by Bischoff to the middle or third quarter of the ninth century. It appears to be formed of two parts. Fols. 1-60v contain a copy of Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*, this time combined on fols. 61r-222r with the *Historiae* of Gregory of Tours in its 'C' version to which the fourth book of the Chronicle of (ps)-Fredegar and the Continuations have been added. Further, a chapter sequence starts at Book X chapter 1 of Gregory's Histories and continues through Fredegar and the Continuations to 'Chapter CVIII' and the death of Charles Martel. Charles Plummer used this manuscript as one of his principal four in editing Bede's History, under the impression that it was an eighth-century codex, but he stated baldly that 'for the settlement of the text it is quite worthless'<sup>43</sup>.

The Caedmon hymn in this codex remains in Latin (fol. 42v) with no Old English gloss, and the Moore Annals and other material added in the Moore Bede are also absent<sup>44</sup>. Helmut Reimitz is currently working on the version of Gregory's Histories in this manuscript, but the association of the narrative of the conversion of the English to Christianity with Gregory's particular emphases in his Frankish history by this scribe would also merit further consideration for which this is not the appropriate place<sup>45</sup>. It is in the portion containing

<sup>43</sup> PLUMMER 1896, pp. lxxxvi-lxxxvii.

<sup>44</sup> On fol. 60v there is an eleventh-century addition of an extract from Augustine's *Soliloquies* included in Books of Hours for the night office: «Deus pater noster qui ut oremus hortaris qui et hoc rogaris prestas siquidem cum te rogamus in melius vivimus. Exaudi me palpitantem in his tenebris et michi dexteram tuam porrige pretende michi lumen tuum revoca me ab erroribus et te duce in me redeam et in te. Per dominum nostrum iesum christum filium tuum».

<sup>45</sup> I am grateful to Helmut Reimitz for bringing this manuscript to my attention and for kindly sending me a complete set of photographs of it.

Frankish history that we find another precious indication of a reader's response to the main text in the form of a minitext. In this instance the writer of this minuscule addition actually includes information to be found nowhere else. If we turn to the final page, fol. 223v, the bottom portion of which is missing, a late ninth-century scribe has extracted information about the Merovingian and Carolingian rulers in order to form a kinglist from Clovis to Charlemagne with the length of their reigns, preceded by a brief note to record the number of years from the beginning of the world according to the Hebrew calculation as verified by Jerome, to the fourteenth year of Heraclius. The leaf is truncated, so that the detail about the number of years is missing. Similarly, whether any kings were added after the 46-year reign of Charles king and emperor is recorded is not known, for the bottom section of the leaf is also missing. A second hand has then inserted the names of the sons of many of these kings. It is as if a reader were trying to keep track of the complex succession pattern of the Frankish kings. Its position on the recto of the final leaf of the quire may have made it something the reader could jot down by moving back and forth in the text. The listing of so many sons makes this kinglist unusual and appears to be unique to this manuscript<sup>46</sup>. What kind of oral, even gossipy, information in circulation, or perhaps something more formal in local memory, might such an intervention signal? That is something that further investigation of any further minitexts in the form of kinglists may establish. The list as a whole is not to be classified as an appendix or specific location record like the list in the Moore Bede. It may nevertheless have been designed to aid the memory and to function as a crude index to the principal protagonists in the history. It certainly reflects readers' engagement with the main text of the codex.

### **BAV, reg. lat. 1127 and its implications**

One final example, CITTÀ DEL VATICANO, BAV, reg. lat. 1127, dated to the second quarter of the ninth century and of Angoulême provenance, prompts some observations about minitexts in general. This manuscript largely comprises conciliar decrees, papal decretals and an epitome of the *Liber pontificalis*. On fol. 10v, there is a brief world history which also seems to function as a dating clause. On fol. 11r is the first page of the unique copy of the *Annales engolismenses*, which are very well known but which were in fact bound into

<sup>46</sup> For the wider context see HLAWITSCHKA 1979, POHL 2016. For other examples see PERTZ 1829, WAITZ 1881, and KRUSCH, *Catalogi*.



the manuscript sometime after it was owned by Alexandre Petau in the sixteenth century. There are many references to attacks by the Northmen, and the Breton ruler Nominoë and the monastery of Angoulême are also mentioned<sup>47</sup>. These *annales* are not mentioned in Petau's list of contents and the structure of the book makes it quite clear that the leaf containing the annal entries and the following leaf comprise an inserted bifolium (fols. 111r-12v). This could of course have been an addition to some other codex of which we are now ignorant, and needs to be considered as a minitext that has become detached from its original context. There are, moreover, clues in connection with Ademar of Chabannes and his own manuscripts that could be pursued on another occasion<sup>48</sup>.

The short paragraph added on fol. 10v reads as follows.

*Ab exordio mundi usq; ad diluuium  
sunt anni duo milia. CCXL et duo  
Ad diluuius usq; ad natiuitate  
Abrabe sunt anni DCCCCXLII  
Passum autem dnm nrm ihm xpm  
p(er)actis ab ortu mundi quinque  
milia CCXX et VIII anni  
A passione dni nri ihu xpi usq; ad sedem  
beatissimi marcellini pape sunt anni  
CCLXXVI m VIII  
De apostolato iam facto xpi martyris  
marcellini usq; te(m)pus gloriosissimi  
dom karoli regis xxv anni regni eius  
Hoc est usque VIII kl April  
sunt anni CCCCXC Ɔ menses III<sup>49</sup>*

The note reproduces a standard calculation about the number of years from the Creation to the Flood, from the Flood to the birth of Abraham, the passion of Christ, and the years since the Passion. It apparently brings the reader to his own time and the 25<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Charlemagne, that is,

<sup>47</sup> *Annales engolismenses*, p. 5 and compare MGH SS 14, Hanover, 1883, p. 485; LÖWE 1973, p. 615, n. 506.

<sup>48</sup> One of the manuscripts of Ademar of Chabannes, BnF lat. 2400 (explicit fol. 102v) and partly in his own hand, is an early eleventh-century codex which also contains Amalarius of Metz, *Liber officialis*, the canon law collection known as the *Collectio herovalliana*, *ordines*, and Ademar's version of the *Liber pontificalis* among other shorter texts. Indeed, fols. 173v-182v also appear to have been copied from the *canones* section of BAV, reg. lat. 1127, fols. 52v-56v. See DELISLE 1896, pp. 296-301, and LANDES 1995, pp. 362-365.

<sup>49</sup> MAASSEN 1870, p. 614, edited this short note from BnF lat. 1451 where the papal list also ended with Hadrian †795.

793, but with an interesting extra marker before that, chosen to note the reign and martyrdom of the 30<sup>th</sup> pope Marcellinus (295-303). Why this pope is mentioned is a puzzle. If the note's date be correct, it is too early to be connected with the gift of the relics of Pope Marcellinus to Redon in 848-849 recorded in the *Gesta sanctorum Rotonensium*<sup>50</sup>. Perhaps the *Liber pontificalis* epitome's entry on Marcellinus in this same codex, with the report of his repentance after offering incense at a pagan sacrifice during the persecutions of the emperor Diocletian, and Marcellinus's execution may have prompted it. Alternatively, it may indicate some special reverence for Pope Marcellinus in the place where the book was written. The *Liber pontificalis* on Marcellinus is quoted in Conwoon's *Gesta sanctorum Rotonensium* after all.

In its position on the page, the paragraph looks a little like an afterthought. It is placed after a list of popes that ends with Paschal I (817-824). It could be that the empty column in the top right of the page was deliberately left blank to accommodate the names of subsequent popes. The disparity between the date at the end of this paragraph and the last pope in the papal list, suggests, however, that the 793 date was taken over from an exemplar, where it could have been either a marginal note or again a formal integrated note as it seems to be here. In fact, there are two other manuscripts containing most of the texts in this Vatican codex. These are DEN HAAG, Huis van het Boek. Museum Meermanno-Westreenianum, MS 10.B.4 of the second half of the eighth century from the ecclesiastical province of Bourges<sup>51</sup>, and PARIS, BnF, lat. 1451 from the Tours region and dated to the first quarter of the ninth century<sup>52</sup>. Both manuscripts contain the copies of the so-called Felician epitome of the *Liber pontificalis*<sup>53</sup>. Michael Eber has studied them in detail because they also contain the canon law collection known as the *Collectio sancti mauri*. It is the manuscript in The Hague which could have been the exemplar for the Paris and Vatican copies but unfortunately the relevant preliminary pages are missing<sup>54</sup>. One other Carolingian codex with this assembly of texts is now lost, formerly LAON, Bibliothèque municipale, Suzanne Martinet MS 36, but a record of it was made by Etienne Baluze<sup>55</sup>.

50 *Gesta sanctorum Rotonensium*, ed. BRETT, pp. 174-82, and SMITH 2000, pp. 333 and 336, SMITH 2001, and HERBERS 1996, pp. 320-326, 373-378.

51 Mistakenly identified as being from Reims in MCKITTERICK 2020, p. 197.

52 *CLA X*, 1572a and 1572b, and *CLA V*, 528.

53 MCKITTERICK 2020, pp. 195-198.

54 For full discussion see EBER 2023, pp. 172-229.

55 EBER 2023, pp. 319-321, and CONTRENI 1980.

The little chronological note perhaps originally had a similar function to the chronological notes added by the scribe of the Moore Bede, in that it was the way in which the scribe placed his own history in relation to the events reflected in the other texts he was copying, and in this case especially the papal succession. The fact that we can see the note being taken up and recopied, even though not updated, nevertheless may make a comparison of the same minitext occurring in different contexts possible. This, and perhaps also the inserted *Annales engolismenses*, alert us to the need, by checking the codicological contexts, to ascertain whether the minitexts are not themselves becoming part of the context rather than reactions to or comments on it.

### Conclusion

These case studies of Latin historiography supplemented by a vernacular poem, canon law, epistolary and homiletic material and kinglists, therefore, suggest an association of ideas between main text and added minitexts. Yet they have also exposed a variety of sources for the minitexts, from a written record of oral memory, a summary of one aspect of a well-established text as in the case of Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*, and the reproduction of papal rulings which were part of another widely-circulated collection of canon law, to some interesting chronological summaries which appear to reflect a reader's engagement with the entire codex in which the minitext was inserted. The dossier of minitexts on consanguinity had an afterlife, becoming a part of what is presented as the integrated text. The short chronological summary in BAV, reg. lat. 1127 appears in more than one manuscript as already integrated by the scribes, which may indicate that it started life as an independent minitext. These examples, moreover, have underlined not only the complex network of texts, interconnections and communication underlying the creation and transmission of a minitext, but also how sometimes they can be associated with an immediate context of contemporary preoccupations. They indicate too how much we can learn in general about early medieval intellectual culture from pursuing both the engagements with knowledge represented in readers' additions to their manuscripts, and the questions they raise. In the specific instances considered in this chapter, preoccupations with marriage prohibitions, consanguinity, and relative chronology in response to particular historical texts and events have been exposed. Minitexts, therefore, may be understood as snatches of conversations which draw on a great deal of other material current at the time, often remembered rather imperfectly and incompletely, and probably with no intention for them to continue to be copied. It may be imposing

too formal a status on particular texts if they are categorised too dogmatically as 'sermons' or sections in canon law manuscripts. Rather than solid bricks in the transmission of a text, they need to be recognized as more informal written interventions in a book as part of a communication process between readers, scribes and their books in early medieval culture.

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