The Liber ordinarius of Nivelles

Liturgy as Interdisciplinary Intersection

Edited by
JEFFREY F. HAMBURGER
and EVA SCHLOTHEUBER

Spätmittelalter, Humanismus, Reformation
111

Mohr Siebeck

Spätmittelalter, Humanismus, Reformation

Studies in the Late Middle Ages,
Humanism, and the Reformation

edited by Volker Leppin (Tübingen)

in association with

Amy Nelson Burnett (Lincoln, NE), Johannes Helmrath (Berlin),
Matthias Pohlig (Berlin), Eva Schlotheuber (Düsseldorf)

111

The Liber ordinarius of Nivelles

(Houghton Library, MS Lat 422)

Liturgy as Interdisciplinary Intersection

Edited by
Jeffrey F. Hamburger and Eva Schlotheuber

Mohr Siebeck

Jeffrey F. Hamburger is Kuno Francke Professor of German Art & Culture at Harvard University MA, USA.
orcid.org/0000-0002-1103-1692

Eva Schlotheuber is Full Professor for Medieval History at the University of Düsseldorf.
orcid.org/0000-0003-3762-2818

ISBN 978-3-16-158242-4 / eISBN 978-3-16-158243-1
DOI 10.1628/978-3-16-158243-1
ISSN 1865-2840 / eISSN 2569-4391 (Spätmittelalter, Humanismus, Reformation)

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliographie; detailed bibliographic data are available at *http://dnb.dnb.de* abrufbar.

The book was typeset by epline in Böblingen using Minion typeface, printed on non-aging paper by Gulde-Druck in Tübingen, and bound by Spinner in Ottersweier.

Printed in Germany.

Acknowledgments

The editors are deeply grateful to the Radcliffe Institute of Advanced Study for having sponsored the exploratory seminar at which the contributors to the volume were first convened. Two days of intensive discussion and debate at Radcliffe laid the groundwork for this volume. We also owe a great debt of thanks to William Stoneman, then director of the Houghton Library, who with his characteristic good will regarding both the research and teaching missions of the University responded with alacrity and determination to Professor Hamburger's suggestion that the Library seek to acquire so extraordinary and unique a witness to the history of such an important institution. Essays originally written in German were translated into English by Jeffrey F. Hamburger and, in the case of that by Eva Schlotheuber, by Julie Hotchin (Canberra), whom we thank for her careful, conscientious translation. Last, not least, we wish to thank the Houghton Library for having made possible the acquisition and, no less, for having made the manuscript available to us and our colleagues on more occasions than we care to count.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Jeffrey Hamburger / Eva Schlotheuber

In the collection of his papers, *Liturgica Historica* (1918), published almost exactly a century ago, Edmund Bishop, the famous historian of Catholic liturgy, posed the question: "Is the subject 'An Old Prayer Book' a 'dull' one?" Tongue-in-cheek, Bishop wrote that he would prefer the dullest form possible, namely, a tabulation of its contents, adding that "any subject is sure to prove dull to somebody". By Bishop's sardonic definition, a *Liber ordinarius*, which itself offers little more than a list, albeit a complicated one, constituting the *ordo* or order of the liturgy for a given church or community, itself would be a very dull book indeed. This collection of essays, however, devoted to a single, if outstanding, example of the genre, seeks to demonstrate the contrary.

To judge from the recent outpouring of scholarly publications on *Libri ordinarii* – books that, much like the script of a play, lay out the order of the liturgy, complete with instructions regarding its performance, props, staging and setting – such documents, of which a great many survive, currently enjoy a renaissance of interest across a wide array of academic disciplines, including not only the history of liturgy per se, but also of music, monasticism, art and architecture, and religion, in particular, religious institutions. Consisting of little more a seemingly endless series of cues, organized in various ways according to the liturgical calendar, the contents of *Libri ordinarii* are by their nature skeletal in character. Yet they offer a sufficient wealth of information to have permitted those who used them in the past and those who study them in the present to flesh out that skeleton and lend it life. Read attentively, these books provide far more than a mass of raw information, itself a goldmine for scholars interested in the basic historical challenge of reconstruction, whether of the liturgy itself or the architecture and liturgical furnishings of a particular community. More broadly, they also provide critical insight into the history of ideas, attitudes, and mentality as well as the relationships among the various groups that constituted a given community and the liturgical interactions among them, all of which were freighted with social as well as religious significance. In the case of female monastic communities, such as that at Nivelles, a *Liber ordinarius* also sheds light on constructions of gender and conceptions of ritual as they related to gender in the social, political and religious spheres. Detailed descriptions of how ceremony unfolds in time and space, they permit at least a partial reconstruction of elements of historical experience that are otherwise inherently ephemeral.

The *Liber Ordinarius ostendens qualiter legatur et cantetur per totum anni circulum in ecclesia Nivellensis* (i. e., The *Liber ordinarius* showing how [the liturgy] is read and sung through the entire cycle of the year in the church of Nivelles) or, for short, the *Liber ordinarius* of Nivelles (LON), which was acquired by the Houghton Library at Harvard University in 2010 and assigned the shelfmark MS Lat 422, served as a guide to the corporate prayer of a community, in this case, the canonnesses of the abbey of St Gertrude in Nivelles in modern-day Belgium. Located between Brussels and Charleroi and no more than about twenty miles from the border with France, the abbey, which today still dominates what is now the rather sleepy town of Nivelles, was, through much of the Middle Ages, a strategically located center of power, closely associated in turn with the Merovingian, Carolingian, and Ottonian imperial houses. Among extant manuscripts, that purchased by the Houghton Library, which had previously been privately held, is the oldest known to survive from an institution that exercised tremendous power and influence over the course of many centuries.

Nivelles was founded in Gaul in the middle of the seventh century, by Ida, the window of Pippin the Elder, and her daughter, St Gertrude. For its time, the foundation was a typical initiative for a widow of the high aristocracy acting under the influence of Irish missionaries. The two female founders mandated the adoption of a fixed rule and enclosure. Among the principal duties of the community were the care of strangers and administering to the needs of the poor, widows, and orphans. The charitable ministration associated with the various hospitals linked to Nivelles had a significant and lasting impact on the abbey throughout its history. Founded on lands that had belonged to the powerful Austrasian *major domus*, Pippin the Elder, Nivelles evolved into one of the most important dynastic monastic houses of the later Carolingian dynasty, which was deeply involved in the Pippinids's retention of power during the difficult period following Grimoald's so-called coup d'état in 656. Nivelles thus acquired its enduring status in cultural memory as the "cradle of the Carolingians," and for many centuries the abbesses of Nivelles most likely remained the most powerful territorial rulers in the region. When in 1798, during the French Revolution the abbey was dissolved, the community of women could look back on a history of approximately 1150 years.

Gertrud and Itta had placed the pastoral care of the women in the hands of Irish monks for whom they founded the monastery of Fosses. With time a community of canons with the unusually high number of thirty members was established in Nivelles; its role was to support an aristocratic community of approximately forty canonesses. The *Liber ordinarius* of Nivelles, including the documents and records that it contains, reflects the formative beginnings of the monastery, its important traditions and rituals as well as its religious, political, and charitable functions into which both the female and male communities were integrated. Given its liturgical function, the manuscript necessarily documents

the performance of the liturgy in great detail. More than that, however, it permitted the community not simply to preserve but also to shape and structure its memory and understanding of itself in terms defined by liturgy. The manuscript permits us to see how the liturgy was put to use not only for religious but also for political and social reasons. Indicative of this context was the decision of the Chapter of Nivelles to add to the *Liber ordinarius* crucial documents regarding the interaction of the female and male communities that for the most part are not documented elsewhere.

The abbey's religious, political, and social importance alone would suffice to make its *Liber ordinarius* a document of commanding interest. It takes on added significance, however, in light of what is now over a generation of scholarship devoted to questions of gender as they relate to the history of medieval monasticism. One salient feature of the *Liber ordinarius* of Nivelles is that its contents are addressed primarily to the requirements of its primary community of canonnesses rather than those of its secondary community of canons. Rarely does a document provide such direct insight into the particularities that distinguished a female from a male community as well as the many ties that bound them together.

When it originally surfaced at an auction at Sotheby's, London, in 2008, the *Liber ordinarius*, which the catalogue described in misleading fashion as the "Hausbuch" of the Abbess Elizabeth de Bierbais, was dated to within her lifetime, ca. 1280, in large part on the basis of documents included among the liturgical texts proper. Such a date would link the *Liber* to period of tremendous turmoil in the abbey's history, years which witnessed quarreling not only between the abbey and citizens of the town over taxes (the proverbial town-gown struggle), but also among the abbess and the canonesses over jurisdiction and management of the abbey's considerable estates, the complicated relationship to the dukes of Brabant as well as other duties and obligations. These struggles culminated with the opening of the tomb of St Gertrude by Abbess Elizabeth de Bierbais on 8 July, 1292. To situate the *Liber* within, let alone characterize it as a witness to, these dramatic events certainly lends the book a certain melodramatic character. Its origins, however, prove to be much more complicated – and perhaps still more interesting – in ways which underscore that the liturgy, far from the timeless reflection or embodiment of eternal praise, which is how it is described in idealizing accounts, in fact represents a highly contested and ever-changing field of social as well as religious action.

Such changes are not simply reflected in but shaped by the material record in the form of manuscripts. The *Liber ordinarius* from Nivelles provides one very concrete and vivid example of this phenomenon. One striking feature of the manuscript is that all of the documents incorporated into its pages can be dated to the second half of the thirteenth century; the latest date that can be attached to any of them is the year 1300. The dating of this material to the latter half of the century contradicts the date assigned to the Lambert Table. If credence can be

lent to an inscription in the calendar as well as the accompanying Lambert Table for calculating the date of Easter, both of which provide the date 1346 (and both which are written in the same script, if not necessarily the same hand, as the rest of the manuscript), then the entire book dates not to the later thirteenth, but rather to the middle of the fourteenth century, a shift of at least half a century.

The history of the manuscript's creation and the transmission of the materials it contains can briefly (if somewhat summarily) be reconstructed as follows. As occurred quite frequently, the liturgical customs of the abbey of Nivelles owe their having been recorded to ongoing conflicts within the community. Very often, significant information is only set down and codified when it is, for whatever reason, perceived as being in peril. In the particular circumstances that gave rise to the manuscript, a struggle broke out between the abbess and the Chapter of the canonnesses and the canons of Nivelles, which at its heart revolved around the ancient status of the abbey as self-governing under the Empire. It appears that the compilation of the liturgical customs of the abbey, i. e., the original version of the *Liber ordinarius* that in turn most likely was based in part on still older models and that served in turn as the exemplar for the extant manuscript, was assembled and commissioned by the Chapter of women during the second half of the thirteenth century. Into this manuscript, which no longer survives, were entered the internal decisions of the Chapter in these years. The *Liber ordinarius* thus served to record the collective memory of the Chapter of Nivelles and of the decisions and debates that marked its conflict with the abbess. In a certain sense, then, the *Liber* represents the beginning of the Chapter's independent administration of its own affairs. By documenting its own self-governance, the Chapter took an important step in the direction of taking over responsibility for the complex fabric of Nivelles's ritual and, by extension, political life and, in so doing, challenging the abbess's sovereignty. With the exception of two documents and the record of the opening of Gertrude's grave in 1292, the added documents contained in the manuscript are otherwise unknown. Together with a critical apparatus and a translation, they receive their first edition as an appendix this volume of essays.

As the conflict between the Chapter and abbess regarding the abbey's position in the Empire once again came to the fore in the middle of the fourteenth century, it would appear that the Chapter commissioned a more or less exact copy of the *Liber ordinarius*, the manuscript that is now housed as MS Lat 422 at the Houghton Library of Harvard University. This manuscript contains extensive traces of use and in the fifteenth century received a new binding. As this binding demonstrates, no later than the fifteenth century and possibly earlier, the *Liber ordinarius* was secured to a lectern by a chain, i. e., in a place where it would have been accessible equally to the communities of canonnesses and canons, possibly within the church of St Gertrude. The editors know of no comparable example of a *Liber ordinarius* that was chained in comparable fashion; such books were nor-

mally housed in the sacristy. The manuscript's singularity in this respect underscores the extent to which the manuscript had come to serve a special, indeed, exceptional function. A remark made by Geldolphus van Ryckel, abbot of St Gertrude in Louvain and author of a life of the saint printed in 1637, indicates that the women's choir at Nivelles housed one or more lecterns with chained books of which one contained a record of the opening of Gertrude's tomb ("Haec ex libro qui catenatus extat ad stallum dominarum in choro").[1] From the seventeenth century there also survives a text, printed by Jules Fréson in 1890, which alludes to detailed instructions in "the ordinal of the Ladies" (*l'ordinaire des Damosselles*) regarding the abbess's obligation to provide the canonnesses with salmon cut according to precise specifications (no doubt the text in MS Lat 422, f. 95r).[2]

The manuscript's relatively modest decoration, in the form of flourished penwork initials, discussed briefly by Jeffrey F. Hamburger in his description of the manuscript, supports or at least in no way contradicts a dating of the manuscript to the middle of the fourteenth century. As detailed in the contributions to this volume by Albert Derolez and Rowan Dorin, the manuscript is almost certainly a copy; there is no other satisfactory way to explain the manuscript's particular combination of scribal and codicological irregularities. If accepted – and in this volume Walter Simons's essay represents a dissenting voice – the manuscript's dating not to the late thirteenth but rather to the middle of the fourteenth century has profound implications, not only for how it was made, but also for the historical circumstances of its making, which here are discussed in greatest depth in the essay by Eva Schlotheuber, together with the historical background and the development of the charitable institutions that also shaped the community‹s identity and therefore were also reflected and negotiated in its liturgy on an ongoing basis.

To unpack the ordinal's potential as an historical witness proves an exceptionally complicated task, one requiring collaboration among a large group of historians representing many different areas of specialization: hence the subtitle of this volume: "Liturgy as Interdisciplinary Intersection". The abbey's ordinal provides an unexpected opportunity to shed light on the social and political setting, the shaping and interaction of gender in space, architecture, furnishings, customs, music and, not least, the liturgy of one of the most important female monastic houses in all of medieval Europe. Whereas Andreas Odenthal's essay mines the ordinal for liturgical data that can be used to reconstruct the layout

[1] Van Rijkel, Historia (1634), 406.

[2] Fréson, Histoire (1890), 41: "Premes que la Dame sa vie durant paierat des ore en avant les herens crus; Item payerat le pièche de Saumon crue, de telle longheche, et largesche, entre le boudine et le teste, sans queue et sans teste, que contenu est en l'ordinaire des Damoss[s] sans point detrainer ne debestournerwetet, mais tout ouvert deseure et desoubs, si on ne trouve du contraire par bonnes gens qui a ce se cognoisteront." Our thanks to Walter Simons for bringing to our attention both this passage as well as that in van Ryckel, cited in the previous note.

and function of various spaces within and among the churches that constituted its immediate "family," Klaus-Gereon Beuckers explores the building against the broader historical foil represented by older and contemporary structures. By recounting the history of the relics of St Gertrude, Bonnie Effros traces her cult to its origins in the Merovingian period and through successive transformations, of which the events documented in the ordinal were among the most dramatic in its history. Alison Beach analyses the very interesting and detailed information given in the documents about the election and investiture of the abbess of Nivelles in late thirteenth century. Margot Fassler and Louis van Tongeren investigate different aspects of the community's traditions of ritual performance: Fassler, the cult of St Gertrude as expressed in a previously unexplored corpus of chant (both music and texts), van Tongeren with a focus on the celebration of Easter, an examination brought into sharp focus through systematic comparison with the Easter rites specified in other *ordinaria* from the region. Looking out from the abbey towards its urban and rural contexts, Charles Caspers inquires into the processions that radiated out from the abbey and which inscribed into local topography the networks within which it was embedded by ritual and legal obligations. Drawing in part on information provided by the *Liber ordinarius* of Nivelles, Walter Simons's detailed discussion of the region's beguinages, which represent a radically different tradition of female religious practice, as well as the interaction of these much more modern institutions with the great and venerable abbey, succeeds in shedding new light on accepted narratives regarding the very origins of the beguine movement.

Over and above the rich vein of liturgical information it supplies, which fills a notable gap in our knowledge of Nivelles, the documents in both French and Latin that the ordinal includes along with its more conventional liturgical texts undoubtedly represent its most unusual feature. It was, of course, hardly uncommon for documents of all kinds to be inscribed in blank spaces within manuscripts, whether inside the binding, on fly leaves or on blank folios. Parchment was precious, and occasionally the documents thus included were actually pertinent to and augmented a book's contents. The documents incorporated into the *Liber ordinarius* of Nivelles, however, of which this volume includes both an edition and a translation, are anything but casual additions. Codicological and paleographical evidence indicates that they are of a piece with the rest of the manuscript. They therefore represent a carefully considered supplement whose content can only be explained by the particular political circumstances of the manuscript's making. These circumstances are explored here in the essays by Eva Schlotheuber and Rowan Dorin. To their analysis, which situates the manuscript amidst the crisis of governance faced by the abbey in the mid-fourteenth century, Thomas F. Kelly supplies an analysis of the abbey's personnel as referenced in the *Liber ordinarius* and the terminology used to do so, to which Virginie Greene adds a consideration of the legal language deployed in the documents written in

the manuscript's particular version of the French vernacular, detecting in it literary as well as purely linguistic and legalistic elements. In turn, Hannah Weaver provides the necessary linguistic analysis of the French, disentangling the various strands that lend it its local accent.

The contributors, all of whom attended a workshop originally convened in the Spring of 2015 by Jeffrey F. Hamburger and generously made possibly by Harvard's Radcliffe Institute, have taken the brief represented by the book's subtitle as seriously as it was intended. To the extent that there is overlap among the essays, it is in ways that are mutually reinforcing. As the contributions make clear, the history of the liturgy, far from being an obscure adjunct to other areas of historical inquiry, is central to an understanding of medieval history in many of its facets. In the case of the *Liber ordinarius* of Nivelles, those facets include topics as varied as the ordering of the liturgy in all its layers, the processions that extended beyond the family of churches that connected the abbey to the surrounding urban landscape, and relations between the laity and the abbey in the High Middle Ages as well as between the canonesses, an ancient form of female community, with the more modern form represented by the beguines. Ecclesiastical and liturgical history are closely intertwined. To these topics are added other areas of focus, all interrelated: the architecture of the church, which was frequently rebuilt and remodeled throughout its history and which was so grievously damaged during World War II; the layout and function of liturgical furnishings, not to mention the terminology employed to describe them; the complex spatial ordering of a church shared by female and male communities as well as, on occasion, the laity; the music that would have resounded in these spaces, articulating and lending resonance to the community's devotions; and the community's cult of the saints, which in turn was rooted in its ancient history and political affiliations.

And then there is the physical fact of the manuscript itself: in its original binding, but somewhat battered and unassuming in appearance, certainly not a lavish liturgical manuscript of the kind that undoubtedly adorned the abbey's altars. These books – the abbey's graduals and antiphonaries, missals and breviaries, not to mention a host of other service books – have largely been lost over the course of the centuries. Their disappearance and destruction, however, lends the surviving of the *Liber ordinarius* that much more significance. Its content permits, if not a complete, then at least an extensive reconstruction of portions of the abbey's ritual, ceremonial and musical life. Written in an idiosyncratic script, the manuscript offers little for the eye beyond the regular alternation of simple red and blue lombard initials of a kind commonly found in Gothic manuscripts, of which a few are enlivened by elaborate fleuronnée decoration, to which must be added among the manuscript's most endearing features, its inclusion (in two versions) of a measure, painted prominently in red, for the salmon that the abbess is to distribute to the canonesses during Lent [Pl. 12,

p. 496, f. 95r]. Moreover, the manuscript's structure, a sequence of utterly regular gatherings, combined with the irregular organization of its contents, provides a genuine historical conundrum. Why, must one ask, is the content of a liturgical book clearly dated 1346 interrupted by not one but two sets of documents placed between the Temporale and the Sanctorale and, again, at the end of the Sanctorale. And why are these documents, which deal largely with the obligations of the both the abbess and the *custos*, as well as the conflict between Abbess Elizabeth de Bierbais (r. 1272–1293) and the chapter of Nivelles, which by the time the manuscript was made, lay quite far in the past, recorded in Old French? Why this particular selection of documents, too scanty to have formed part of a customary? Why the strange character of the script, for which no precise parallels are forthcoming, either in other surviving documents from Nivelles or in other manuscripts of the period? Why are certain ceremonies included and others not? Each of these questions generates still more. These are just some of the puzzles for which the following pages propose possible answers.

The Manuscript

Codicological Description of the *Liber ordinarius* of Nivelles (Houghton Library, MS Lat 422) and the Date of its Decoration

Jeffrey F. Hamburger

ff. 1v–8r: Calendar and Lambert Table; f. 8v blank.
ff. 9r–56v: Temporale, followed (f. 54v) by documents.
ff. 57r–103v: Sanctorale and Common of Saints, followed (f. 93v) by documents.

Parchment (heavily rubbed and stained, showing signs of extensive use, small tears repaired by sewing), ff. 103, 305 × 225 (230 × 165–170) mm, calendar ca. 260 x 195 mm, trimmed, in 11 regular, undisturbed gatherings of 8 leaves each (I–XII^{8}; XIII$^{8-1}$ [viii, stub between f. 103 and the rear pastedown, to which a separate piece of parchment also trimmed, has been attached in the lower part of the gutter]) catchwords or quire mark (IV, indicated as III^{9}, as the calendar is not included in the numeration) in all but gatherings I and VI; modern pencil notation (f. 54v) noting that the text between ff. 55v and 56r is not continuous]. Written below top line by a single scribe in both Latin and Middle French and in different shades of brown ink ranging from near black to light brown in variations in a single, schooled, yet idiosyncratic book hand.[1] Single vertical and double horizontal bounding lines (often no longer visible), ruled in brown ink (first gathering, long lines) or hard point (remaining gatherings, double columns), pricked for 36 lines, but in some cases ruled and written with as many as 39 or as few as 30 lines, varying even within gatherings and sometimes from recto to verso; pricking in inner margins and occasionally (ff. 58–59, 65–72, and 101) in the outer and lower margins.[2]

12- to 10-line *I* initials (ff. 9r, 54r, 90v) with red and brown fleuronnée decoration, sometimes (ff. 54r and 90v) adjoining display script in alternating red and blue majuscules with brown or red fleuronnée; and 6- to 5-line initials (ff. 8r, 57r) with puzzle patterns in red and blue. 2- and 1-line initials (occasionally, as on f. 46va, with guide letters) in red or blue with alternating brown or red fleuronnée, which is consistent throughout the manuscript. Rubrics in majuscules stroked in red; all liturgical instructions crossed in red; helical line fillers in red or blue. Titles of documents sometimes boxed in double or single red lines. No

[1] For analysis of the script, see the contributions by Albert Derolez and Margot Fassler in this volume.

[2] For discussion of this "extraordinary" feature, see the discussion by Albert Derolez in this volume.

illustration besides the measures for salmon, drawn in red in the first column and outer margin of f. 95r (and erased on f. 94r).

Corrections from the later fourteenth or fifteenth century on ff. 34va, 36ra, 44vb, 47va, 47vb, 71rb, 71va, 73rb, 74rb; early modern annotation on f. 55v indicating that the text continues on f. 93r (in fact, f. 94r).

Binding, fifteenth century, tanned leather, brown, rubbed and with portions missing, especially on spine, and with simple blind tooling in the form of double and triple fillets framing a rectangular title window; turned in with tongues over boards, squared, with some wormholes; 6 raised bands over leather sewing supports (spine with traces of 10 raised bands, not including trimmed head band, from previous binding), with single straight sewing over a slit band; head- and tail bands missing; attached to boards with tawed thongs in channels; pegs not visible beneath parchment pastedowns; two straps, anchored on back cover by brass plates, the fastenings in lighter (alum-tawed?) skin, each originally with two brass clasps with simple tooling attached to pins on front cover, some claps and pins missing; lower strap with an additional hole for another pin, also missing; five brass bosses on front and back cover, extensively rubbed, indicating that the book was kept open on a pulpit or reading desk for extensive periods of time; two holes for an additional brass fitting, most likely a chain attachment, at the center of the tail edge of the back board.

Fleuronée decoration: The manuscript's fleuronnée decoration performs two primary functions: making the otherwise uniform succession of liturgical information more legible by breaking it up into sections and adding hierarchy by highlighting at least some of the most important moments in the calendar. These include the opening of the Temporale [Pl. 5, p. 489, f. 9r], the feast of Corpus Christi [Pl. 6, p. 490, f. 54r], the opening of the Sanctorale [Pl. 8, p. 492, f. 57r], and the Translation of St Gertrude. [Pl. 9, p. 493, f. 63v] The uniformity of the fleuronnée as well as other elements of the decoration throughout the volume, in both the Latin and the French sections as well as the calendar, indicates the entire book must have been carried out in a single campaign during or just prior to 1346, the date indicated by the inscription above the Lambert Table (f. 7v), written by the same scribe responsible for the rest of the manuscript.[3] [Pl. 4, p. 488] In one instance (f. 52r), even a marginal correction receives a comparable fleuronnée initial. [Derolez, Fig. 4, p. 25] To the extent that dated comparanda can be identified, nothing about the fleuronnée decoration precludes such a date. In fact, to some extent the evidence reinforces it. If one turns to the relevant volume of the *Manuscrits datés* for Belgium in search of the fleuronnée's most distinctive feature, namely, the broad oak leaves, occasionally inhabited by birds or rabbits, alongside or within the finer filigree (ff. 9r, 10v, 17v, 57r, 58r, 63v, 73v, 81v) [Pls. 5, p. 489, 8, p. 492, and 9, p. 493], the following examples can

[3] For a dissenting view regarding the date, see the essay by Walter Simons in this volume.

be found: n°. 43 (Brussels, BR, ms. 270, dated 1340); n°. 63 (Ghent, UB, ms. 942, dated 1367); and n°. 78 (Liège, BU, ms. 348C, dated 1381).[4] Another tell-tale feature, the small, stylized blossoms within the filigree extensions in the form of a circles surrounded by dots, also occurs in mid fourteenth-century manuscripts (e. g., *Manuscrits datés*, n°. 43, as above).

[4] Masai / Wittek, Manuscrits (1968–1991), vol. 1.

Codicology and Palaeography of the *Liber Ordinarius of Nivelles*

Albert Derolez

I. Codicology

The following observations necessarily have a somewhat provisional character, as they are based on the descriptions of the codex provided by two successive auction houses and on the digitized reproduction of the manuscript. Whatever the qualities of the latter, only a thorough study of the original would allow to make an entirely reliable codicological description of the structure and the page layout (the two points that interest us here).

I.1 Structure

The LON is a parchment codex measuring 305 × 225 mm and containing 103 leaves, bound in a fifteenth-century blind-tooled brown leather binding over wooden boards. As will appear from the Table at the end of this article, its construction is absolutely straightforward: it consists of 13 quires, all quaternions; the last blank leaf of quire XIII was used as a pastedown. Apart from the first quire, which contains mainly the Calendar, and the last one, all quires are marked by horizontal catchwords at right on their last pages; quire IV (ff. 25–32) has no catchword, but instead the quire mark 'III^{9}' (the opening quire containing the Calendar is normally not included in the numbering of the quires, so our quire IV rightly received the quire mark III); quire VI too has no catchword; on quire VII no catchword was necessary.

The quires are grouped in three codicological units with basically the same features:

(1) Quire I (ff. 1–8), containing the Calendar and the Lambert Table and ending on a blank page.
(2) Quires II–VII (ff. 9–56), containing the Temporale followed by a series of documents.
(3) Quires VIII–XIII (ff. 57–103), containing the Sanctorale and the Common of the Saints, followed by a second series of documents.

I.2 Layout

All quires present a vertical row of prickings in the inner margin; the corresponding row of prickings in the outer margin has mostly been lost at the cropping of the codex; it is still visible on ff. 58–59, 65–72, and 101. Without having access to the actual codex, it is an endless task to count the number of prickings on all leaves, especially as in the digitized reproduction quite a number of leaves show no prickings. In most quires, however, it seems that their number is 37, the last but one being a double pricking (for the tracing of double horizontal through lines at the bottom of the text area). If this is right, then in principle the major part of the manuscript would have been ruled for two columns of 36 written lines below top line.

Quire I has ruling in light brown ink for long lines; the grid of the Lambert Table on f. 7v is traced in red ink. [Pl. 4] All the remaining quires appear to have lead-point ruling for two columns, which on most pages is now almost invisible. For one or other reason the ruling pattern is only visible on the first text page, f. 9r, which has ink ruling.[1] [Pl. 5] It is amazing to see in how many cases the ruling appears to deviate from the 36-line scheme supposed by the pricking pattern visible in most quires. The number of lines on each page varies from 30 to 39, and is quite often even different on recto and verso of the same folio. The only quire presenting a uniform ruling of 36 lines on all pages is quire IV. This extraordinary feature: quires pricked in view of the ruling, but the latter deviating from the pricking pattern, needs an explanation: it cannot be due to slovenliness or inattention, as on all pages both columns have the same number of lines and the variation in line numbers is unobtrusive. I will return to this in the conclusion.

I.3 Decoration

The Houghton *Liber ordinarius* presents a very homogeneous and in its liturgical parts quite extensive decoration.[2] It consists of red headings, red stroking of majuscules, red crossing of all liturgical and other instructions, a few red or blue paragraph-marks, and various types of initials: (1) bold black 1-line versals are used for the Sunday-letters in the Calendar and in the Lambert Table and its key [Pls. 3–4]; (2) red and blue 1-line versals (plain initials) occur in the text, mostly alternating, on some pages only; (3) the normal initial type is the 2-line flourished initial alternately red and blue, with delicate penwork in the contrasting colour; these initials are half-inserted, so that letters with ascenders (like *H*) or

[1] It is possible that the scribe or his or her assistant already on this first page became aware of the difficulties which ink ruling would cause if its application was continued in a manuscript with such a peculiar page layout as LON.

[2] For further discussion of the decoration, especially as it bears on the date of the manuscript, see the discussion by Jeffrey F. Hamburger in this volume.

descenders (like *P*) can be given their normal form; they have long penwork extensions in the left margin or in the intercolumnar space.

II. Palaeography

II.1 General features

The entire manuscript appears to be written in one and the same handwriting, which has most peculiar features. It is a documentary form of northern *gothica textualis libraria*.[3] The individual minuscule letter forms present almost no angularity, the compression in the horizontal sense is moderate, and fusions, as far as these are recognizable as being intentional, are relatively rare: *de*, *do*, *pe*, *po*. The ascenders vary in length between 2.5 and 1.5 minims. The script is upright or slightly sloping to the left. The forking at the top of the ascenders, triangular if the execution is careful, can be exaggerated and develop into strokes from the left. I will discuss this feature at a later moment. Descenders, on the other hand, end straight without such forking. As to the individual letter forms, the following may be said:

- *a* has an almost vertical shaft and the top of the latter generally turns very little over to the left; there is no upper bow; in many cases the shaft is so short that the letter may be called a single-compartment *a*.
- *c* is interesting insofar as its upper stroke tends to be straight and horizontal, thus approaching *c* to *t*; this is especially so when its first stroke crosses the upper stroke.
- *d* has always the uncial form, with a relatively long sloping ascender.
- *g* has a closed lower bow, which has approximately the same size or is slightly larger than the upper bow.
- the limb of *h* goes well under the line and turns to the left.
- *i* is short or long (*j*). The short *i*'s are often topped by conspicuously long strokes, not only when they occur next to letters like *u*, *m*, *n*. *J* can be found at the beginning of words, and in that case often extends above the headline as well as below the baseline; *j* (not extending above the headline) is also used as the second letter of double *i* (*ij*, both letters always stroked).
- the treatment of the feet of *m* and *n* is either indifferent, or brings these letters close to what has been called *textus rotundus*: in that case the feet turn upwards and touch the subsequent minim. I will have to return to this distinction. Normal *m* is often replaced by the uncial form, a feature typical of documentary script. It occurs very often at the opening of words, especially of

[3] The palaeographical terminology adopted in the present essay is found in Derolez, Palaeography (2003).

significant ones – so it may be considered a more solemn form of *m*, or a semi-majuscule.
- *r* is used in the normal double form: round *r* (*2*) after *b*, *d*, *h*, *o*, *p*, and straight *r* in all other positions. As in other manuscripts of the Gothic age, there is sometimes a tendency to adopt a semi-majuscule form of *r* in initial position.
- as is normal for manuscripts of this age, *s* equally adopts either the straight form (standing on the line), or the round form. Round *s* is very round and closed and is in shape not far away from cursive *s*. Due to its complicated form, it is generally made higher than the other minuscules and rises above the headline. Straight *s* may be used in all positions, at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of words; in the latter position its use is, however, very limited. Round *s* is normally found at the end of words, but in the present manuscript it is also often used in initial or in medial position (*supra*, *suffragia, psalmus*, etc.); as with uncial *m*, the question rises whether in initial position this form of the letter has not to be considered a semi-majuscule.
- the same duality exists for the letter *u* / *v*: the normal minuscule form *u* may be used in all positions, while the high and sharp *v*, which is of cursive origin, has its normal place at the beginning of words. Its first stroke slopes to the left and turns over in the same direction. In our manuscript, however, it is not rare to see it in medial position: so the word for "gospel" may be written *evangelium* or *euangelium*. The form *ewangelium* is also found, one of the rare instances of the appearance of the letter *w*.
- *w* may be used for "vu", for example in *wlt*.
- the first stroke of *x* is short; the other one, traced on the diagonal, is long and often broken into two strokes.
- *y* is always undotted.
- *z* has the shape of figure 3.

Ligatures are rare, but it is striking that the *et*-ligature or ampersand (&) plays such a prominent role in our manuscript and that it is used infinitely more frequently than tironian *et*. The latter sign is always crossed. See below more about the use of the two forms of the *et*-conjunction.
- the *ct*-ligature has the atrophied form, in which the top of the *t* is lengthened and curved to the left without touching the *c*.
- like in most other manuscripts of the Late Middle Ages, the *st*-ligature is constantly in use.

Abbreviations are frequent, at least in the Latin texts. A distinction needs to be made between general abbreviations and specifically liturgical ones. A few examples among the first:

do^{9}	*dominus*
ēcca or *ēccla*	*ecclesia*
3	*est*

Īhc	*Ihesus*
no^{a}ndum	*notandum*
ōmpc or *ōmps*	*omnipotens*
s̄pc	*spiritus*
x̄pc	*Christus*

The majuscules in the Houghton manuscript, extremely frequent in a text containing such a multitude of short quotations, deserve special attention. Much more than the minuscules, they adopt specific forms which, unlike majuscules in many other late medieval manuscripts, are almost always standardized, without allowing alternative forms. As we shall see, only for *N* and *S* the scribe(s) could choose between two forms.

The two techniques available for giving Gothic majuscules more "body" seem to have been used in our manuscript: duplicating or multiplying strokes on the one hand, and applying boldness to certain parts of the letter on the other.[4] It is to be noted that these bold parts or thickenings, which have approximately the shape of a crescent, are not obtained by exerting pressure on the pen, but artificially by drawing with the pen the outline and filling the interior with ink. This is obvious when the letter is rapidly executed and the filling has been omitted. The letters featuring these bold parts are *B*, *D*, *F*, *H*, *K*, *L*, *M*, *P*, *R*. Letters having only an additional vertical stroke within their eye are the "round" letters *C*, *E*, *G*, one form of *N* (see below), *O*, *Q*, *T*. These belong to types rather normal for their period. *V* has a peculiar duplication in the form of a loop (the duplication in *P* is made in the same way). *I*/*J* is undecorated, *X* is crossed. *N* has either a traditional straight form, consisting of two vertical strokes connected by a bar made of one or two sloping strokes, or a round form with an additional vertical stroke within the letter. *S*, on the other hand, has an easily recognizable upright form and a more horizontal form consisting of two or three superposed flattened letters *S*. *A*, finally, has a sharp triangular shape with sloping base-line and an additional wavy horizontal line from left at the top. It is to be noted that the decorative strokes in all these majuscules can be simple, double or triple.

II.2 Two "Hands"

It is majuscule letter *A* that offers the most striking criterion for making the distinction between two variants of the handwriting described hitherto and occurring in the Houghton manuscript. For practical reasons I will call these variants Hand 1 and Hand 2, although for the time being it is impossible to decide whether they are distinctive of two scribes or two forms adopted by the same scribe. In Hand 1, the more calligraphic variant, the line at the top of majuscule

[4] See a note on gothic majuscules in Derolez, Palaeography (2003), 183–84; the *S* in fig. 5 is similar to one of the two forms of that majuscule in LON.

A has the wavy form described above. In Hand 2, which gives the impression of being a more rapid script, the line tends to become straight and is sloping or even vertical.

The parts written in Hand 2 are indeed often very cursive in appearance; in other cases they are less so, or even quite calligraphic. Similarly, the texts by Hand 1 sometimes (if rarely) show signs of a less careful execution. In spite of the divergent aspects offered by the pages (especially so for those written in Hand 2), it is possible to mention other distinguishing features of both scripts:

- the letters of Hand 1 present a degree of Gothic boldness and shading, which those in Hand 2 often lack; their tracing is indeed often linear.
- whereas the ascenders are almost vertical in Hand 1, they tend to slope to the left in Hand 2.
- the forking at the top of the ascenders, although not always carefully executed in Hand 1, is generally replaced in Hand 2 by sloping or horizontal strokes from the left, touching the ascender at some distance from the top.
- in Hand 2 there is a tendency towards adopting *textus rotundus* forms, especially in *m* and *n*, which is almost absent in Hand 1.
- the script of Hand 2 is generally wider and shows less compression in the horizontal sense than the script of Hand 1 (where this characteristic is anyhow not really prominent).
- in the majuscules featuring bold parts the latter are generally only in outline in Hand 2.

On the other hand, we should not forget that both hands use the same letter forms and abbreviations. A common feature of both hands is their distinctive use of the *et*-abbreviations: Hand 1 and Hand 2 both use the ampersand as well as the tironian *et*, but the ampersand is on all pages in the immense majority, tironian *et* often not being used at all. Examples of pages without tironian *et* are ff. 17r–19r, 25v–27v, 28v–29v, 31r–38v, 39v–41r, 42r–44v, 57r–59r in Hand 1, 47v–48v, 49v–54r, etc., in Hand 2. Noteworthy exceptions, where tironian *et* is relatively well represented, are ff. 10r, 11v, and especially the pages at the end of the volume containing documents, ff. 93v–103v.

Hand 2 could be explained as a more or less rapid, more or less cursive form of Hand 1.[5] Indeed, all its features: broadness, roundness, lightness, sloping ascenders, longer ascenders, rapid execution of majuscules, while maintaining basically the same letter forms and abbreviations, may be seen as a consequence of the rapid execution of a script like Hand 1. Whether 1 and 2 are distinct hands, or only two styles written by the same hand, we need to consider the pages where each of them is best recognizable and especially the places where one of them seems to take over from the other. In other words, we have to study the transitions visible within the codex and try to see what they possibly reveal.

[5] For the general features of cursive script, see Derolez, Palaeography (2003), 125–128.

According to the palaeographical criteria sketched above, the Calendar, the Lambert Table and its key (ff. 1r–8r) are copied in Hand 2. Together with the blank page f. 8v they form codicological unit 1 (quire I).

The second unit, containing the Temporale (and a few documents at the end) occupying quires II–VII (ff. 9–56), appears to be written in Hand 1 up to f. 46v; from f. 47r onwards in Hand 2. [Figs. 1–2] We have no idea of the cause of this change (which by the way does not happen at the transition of one quire to another), but there can be no doubt as to the exactitude of this statement. The transition is marked by some anomalies: on the bottom line of f. 46vb, the last words in Hand 1 are *Et notandum quod*; after this a series of words seem to have been erased, and above the erasure has been written *si feria II*^{a} *vel quocumque*, which is continued at the top of the following page (f. 47ra) in the same large script, possibly still over erasure, *alio die istius septimane contingat horas fieri de tempore*, after which Hand 2 continues in markedly smaller script *dicuntur ad matutinas* […]. From here onwards the Temporale is written in Hand 2 up to the end on f. 54rb. The lower part of this column is blank, and on the following pages, ff. 54v–56v, i. e., up to the end of quire VII, several documents in French and Latin have been inserted. [Pl. 7] In our opinion these are written in the same Hand 2. The somewhat divergent aspect of these pages, especially those containing French text, is easily understandable, given the specific appearance of the preceding text of the *Liber ordinarius*, with its heavy decoration, and the rarity of abbreviations used in French.

The third codicological unit starts on f. 57r with quire VIII and, as has been said, contains the Sanctorale (ff. 57ra–90vb) and the Common of the Saints (ff. 90vb–93rb), followed by the continuation of the documents mentioned above and more documents in Latin and in French (ff. 93va–103va). [Pls. 8–12] The Sanctorale certainly begins in Hand 1, but appears to give way to Hand 2, especially from f. 76v onwards, although there had been some examples of the typical rapid *A* majuscule before that page. [Cf. Fassler, Figs. 5–6] It is no doubt significant that in almost all the following pages of the Sanctorale and the Common of the Saints the more careful form of majuscule *A* typical of Hand 1 appears now and then. In this section there are some irregularities in the script, such as on f. 78ra (top lines) and 80va (line 6 and following), and differences in the general aspect of the pages. The numerous documents entered at the end of this unit (for the copying of which quire XIII had to be added) are equally in a handwriting that may be qualified as Hand 2; here too some more calligraphic forms may appear that remind us of Hand 1. Regarding the script of the documents in this final part of the manuscript, the same observations need to be made as regarding the documents added in the second codicological unit.

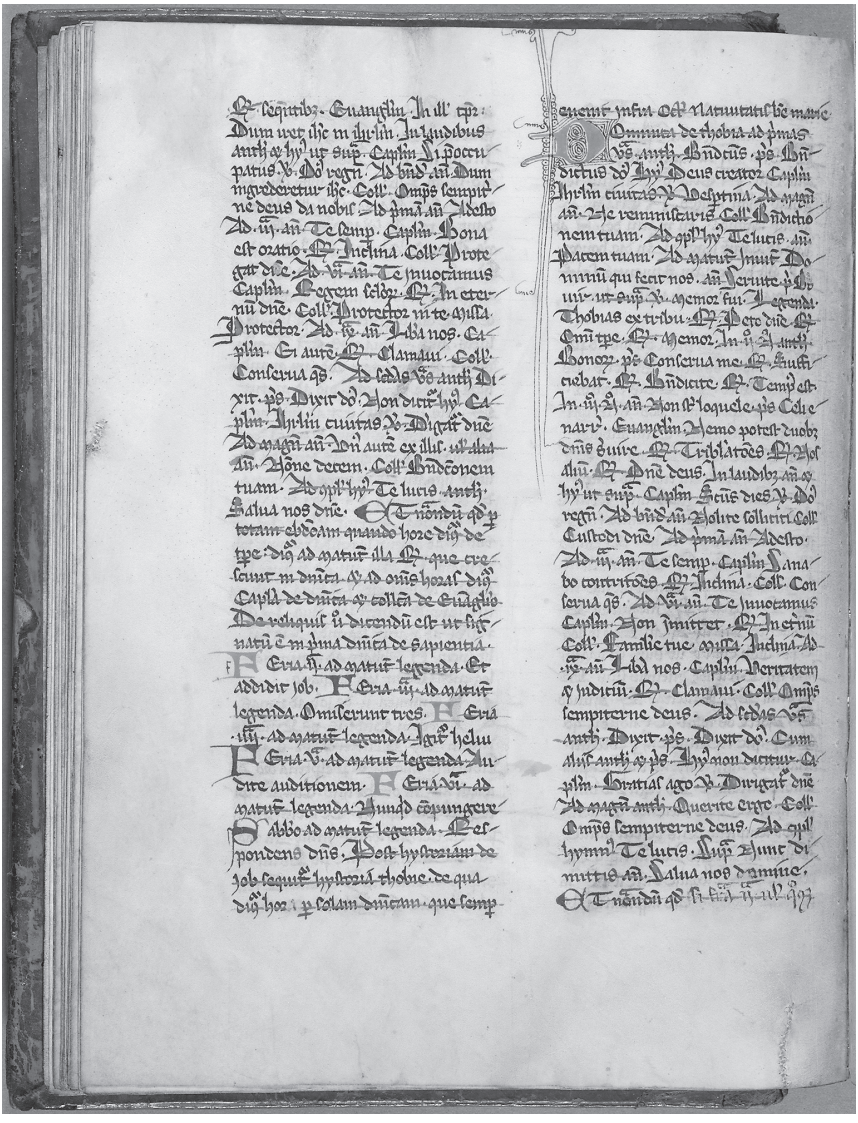

Fig. 1: Liber ordinarius of Nivelles. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University, Houghton Library, MS Lat 422, f. 46v. (Photo: Houghton Library)

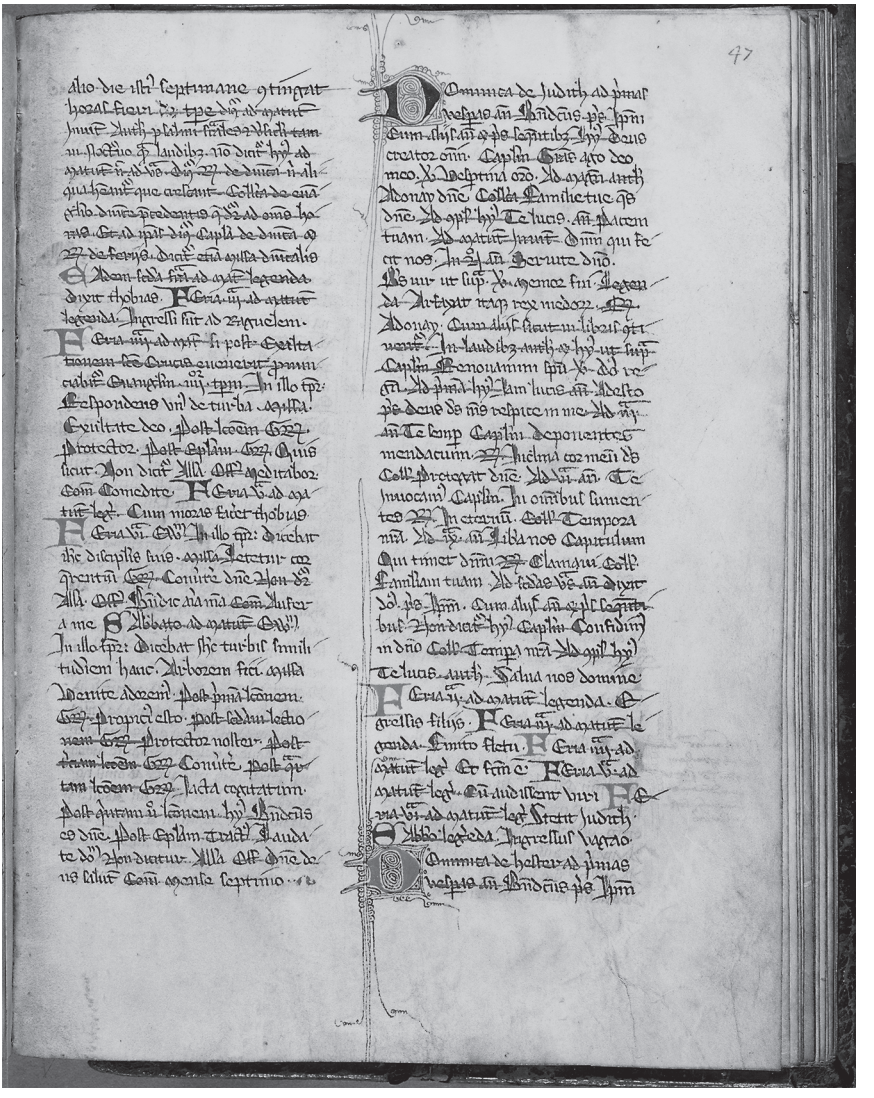

Fig. 2: Liber ordinarius of Nivelles. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University, Houghton Library, MS Lat 422, f. 47r. (Photo: Houghton Library)

II.3 The Making of the Liber ordinarius

We are now able to establish the relative chronology of the work of Hands 1 and 2: as in codicological unit 2 *and* in unit 3 Hand 2 continues the work of Hand 1, Hand 1 must be earlier than Hand 2. So, on a palaeographical basis the Calendar, the Lambert Table and its key, the continuation of the Temporale, the continuation of the Sanctorale, the Common of the Saints and the documents added at the end of these two sections are of a later date than the main part of the Temporale and the beginning of the Sanctorale. More precisely the order must have been the following: (1) Hand 1 starts copying the Temporale and, taking a new quire, the Sanctorale; (2) Hand 2 continues and finishes the Temporale as well as the Sanctorale, adding to the latter the Common of the Saints; (3) Hand 2 copies a series of documents on the blank pages at the end of the Temporale and continues them on the blank pages and a fresh quire after the Common of the Saints; (4) at an unknown date, before or after (3), Hand 2 copies the Calendar, the Lambert Table and its key; (5) the manuscript is decorated. As the entire manuscript, inclusive of the additions, presents the same decoration, which cannot have been applied a long time after the writing of the book, the activity of both hands must have taken place within a relatively short period of time. This is the more probable as, of the two original additions made by Hand 2 in the lower margins, the one on f. 52r is decorated like the text itself, but the one on f. 74r is undecorated: it was no doubt made after the manuscript had gone through the hands of the rubricator/illuminator. [Figs. 3–4]

II.4 The Dating of the Liber ordinarius of Nivelles

In the present case the study of the handwriting poses serious problems as far as its dating is concerned. The manuscript's general aspect and some of its features – in the first instance, the astonishingly prominent use of the ampersand instead of tironian *et*, which had been abandoned almost completely in the course of the thirteenth century – would point to an early date.[6]

It is particularly unfortunate that other manuscripts from the Nivelles Chapter are missing. The *Liber ordinarius* often refers to other books belonging to the institution (*sicut in libris continetur*, *sicut in missali continetur*, etc.), but as far as I know none of these has survived. So we are deprived of possible other examples of handwriting practiced in this institution. The charters of the Chapter (and of the city of Nivelles, with which the Chapter maintained intense relations), kept in the State Archives at Louvain-la-Neuve, are not helpful either: for the period 1250–1350 they are all written in gothic cursive script very different from the handwriting of the *Liber ordinarius*, with only one exception: a charter issued by the Chapter on 24 March 1257 (n. s.) written in a documentary form of *gothica*

[6] Derolez, Palaeography (2003), 95–96.

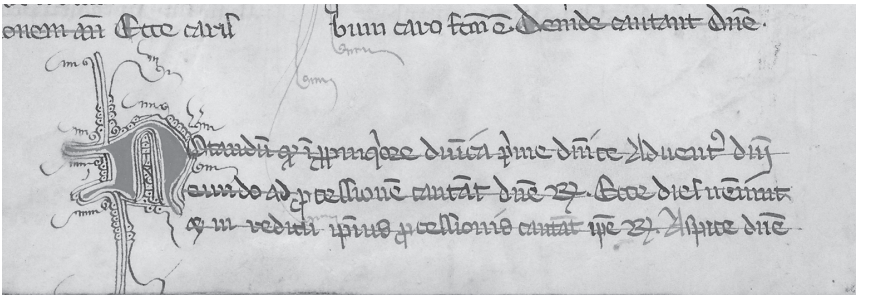

Fig. 3: Liber ordinarius of Nivelles. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University, Houghton Library, MS Lat 422, f. 52r. (detail) (Photo: Houghton Library)

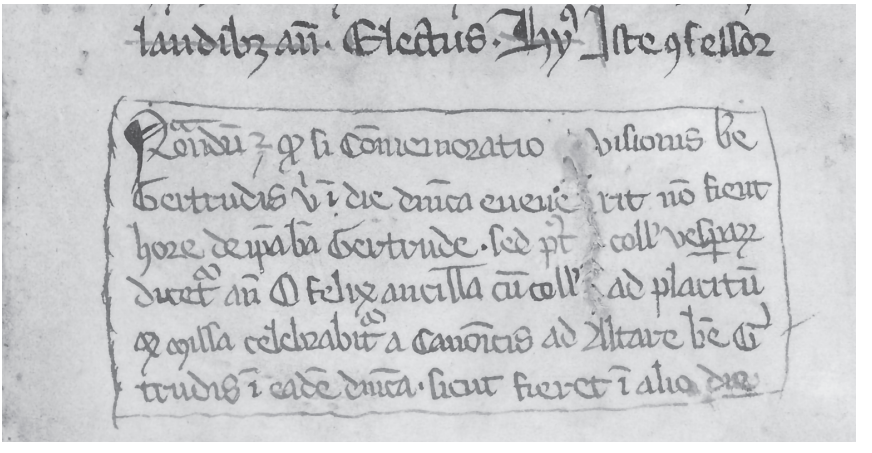

Fig. 4: Liber ordinarius of Nivelles. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University, Houghton Library, MS Lat 422, f. 74r. (detail) (Photo: Houghton Library)

textualis, which has a few majuscules reminding us of similar ones in our manuscript, but it does not use the ampersand at all, to mention only one of the numerous differences.[7]

We consequently are confronted with a unique handwriting for which no parallels exist. Apparently the Nivelles scribes – perhaps nuns – used a kind of archaic handwriting proper to that scriptorium. Perhaps the script can be explained as a tentative to combine features of documentary script (long ascenders,

[7] Louvain-la-Neuve, Archives ecclésiastiques du Brabant, nº. 1410 (10). I most sincerely thank Marie Van Eeckenrode, attaché at the State Archives, for her help during my visit to Louvain-la-Neuve.

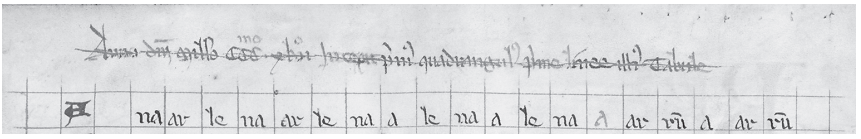

Fig. 5: Liber ordinarius of Nivelles. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University, Houghton Library, MS Lat 422, f. 7v. (detail) (Photo: Houghton Library)

single-compartment *a*, uncial *m*, majuscules in initial position, etc.) with features of book script such as calligraphic handwriting, absence of loops, general letter forms, to which also the overwhelming use of the ampersand may have been considered fashionable.

The 2008 Sotheby sale catalogue dated the codex to c. 1280, the Les Enluminures catalogue to c. 1293–1298. On the basis of what has been said in the preceding section, we are compelled to propose a date which is half a century later: indeed, at the top of the Lambert Table on f. 7v the following heading is written in Hand 2: *Anno Domini millesimo CCC^{mo} XLVI^{o} incipit primus quadrangulus prime linee illius tabule*. [Fig. 5] This heading is somewhat carelessly written and coarsely crossed by the usual red decorative line, and may have been added at a slightly later date, but the abbreviation for *millesimo* (*mill'o*) is consistent with what is seen elsewhere in the codex. There is no doubt – and it may easily be checked – that the Lambert Table in LON indeed corresponds to a Paschal cycle starting 1346. So, if all parts of the *Liber ordinarius* are written in virtually the same handwriting in a relatively short period of time, have a uniform decoration, and comprise a computistical table starting with the year 1346, a dating c. 1346 is inevitable.

Some features of the handwriting of the Houghton *Liber ordinarius* can undoubtedly be found in a few other manuscripts of a comparable late date:

- the peculiar forking of the ascenders occurs also in the Tournai *Roman de la Rose*, dated 1330.[8]
- single-compartment *a* is to be found in some, mostly lower-class, manuscripts.
- straight *s* in final position occurs in a minority of manuscripts, mostly in alternation with the more normal round *s*.
- the "horizontal" variant of majuscule *S* is seen in various manuscripts of both the thirteenth and fourteenth century.
- for the astonishing use of the ampersand in the fourteenth century, we can point to no more than two examples, one copied in England, and one perhaps in the Southern Low Countries. In the first, dated between 1305 and 1316,

[8] Masai / Wittek, Manuscrits (1968–1991), vol. 1, n°. 38, pls. 110–115 (110–111 especially.).

ampersand and tironian *et* appear side by side.[9] In the second, of which next to the date 1315 only the scribe is known: Iohannes de Rivo, the ampersand is almost exclusively used.[10]

III. Conclusions

Two fundamental conclusions may be drawn from the above.

First: the manuscript, hitherto dated from the end of the thirteenth century, must be dated to the middle of the fourteenth, more precisely around 1346.

Second: the ruling, which on many pages is traced without respecting the existing pricking, shows that, in contrast to the normal practice, the pages were prepared piece-meal. There must have been a strong reason for the scribe or his or her assistant to take the extraordinary pains to trace the ruling so carefully on so many pages independently from the pricking in keeping with the progress of the copying. The only explanation I see is in the brilliant theory advanced by Rowan Dorin, namely, that our manuscript is copied page-per-page from an earlier *exemplar*.[11] Even for a trained scribe, it was very difficult to make a page-per-page copy without having to adopt a narrower or wider handwriting at the bottom lines of the pages. The exceedingly well trained scribe(s) of the Houghton manuscript will have chosen to adopt another and more aesthetic solution for this problem: writing a different number of lines on each page in order to keep pace with the pages of the *exemplar*. As Dr. Dorin has suggested, the latter manuscript no doubt was disfigured by numerous corrections and additions changing the original amount of text on many pages and necessitating a variation in the number of lines when a formal copy was to be made that would reflect exactly the page division of the *exemplar*.

There is a supplementary argument in favor of believing that LON is a copy from an earlier original: the documents added to the *Liber ordinarius* itself are in the same handwriting and have the same decoration as the text of the Ordinal. One would on the contrary expect such documents, especially when they have different dates, to be written in one or more different hands, or at least to show different ink shades and to have either no decoration or decoration different from the decoration of the main text. That is what we see in numerous man-

[9] Watson, Catalogue (1984), pl. 148.

[10] Masai / Wittek, Manuscrits (1968–1991), vol. 1 (see n. 7), n°. 32, pls. 96–97; Van den Gheyn, Album (1908), pl. XVIII; Colophons (1967–1973), III, n°. 11218. The handwriting of this manuscript is *gothica cursiva/cursiva antiquior*. In the half page shown in Masai / Wittek, Manuscrits (1968–1991), vol. 1, pl. 97 one tironian *et* appears (col. a); in the page reproduced by Van den Gheyn we see tironian *etiam* (col. a, twice) and tironian *et* (col. b, five times), a small minority as compared to the multitude of ampersands on this page.

[11] See the contribution by Rowan Dorin in this volume.

uscripts in which blank leaves have been used for adding documents not being part of the main text. If the various documents in LON were in different hands, had no or different decoration, or showed otherwise that they were not added at the same time, the more or less exact date of the manuscript could of course be deduced from the dates of the documents. In the present case, it seems that the dates of the documents can only provide a terminus post quem.

According to this theory, the date that almost universally has been accepted for LON, the last decade of the thirteenth century, is not the date of the Houghton manuscript itself, but rather of its *exemplar*. This extraordinary conclusion is essentially based on palaeographical and codicological observations. I am fully aware that I have no explanation at all why this luxurious copy of the Nivelles *Liber ordinarius* was produced in such an extraordinary way, and almost half a century after its *exemplar* had been finished.[12]

Annex: Composition of the Nivelles *Liber Ordinarius*

From f. 9r onwards the number of lines is given where possible.

Quire I			Quire II			
1r	blank		9r	32	Temporale	Hand 1
1v	Calendar: January	Hand 2	9v	32		
2r	February		10r	35		
2v	March		10v	35		
3r	April		11r	34		
3v	May		11v	34		
4r	June		12r	35		
4v	July		12v	35		
5r	August		13r	35		
5v	September		13v	35		
6r	October		14r	35		
6v	November		14v	35		
7r	December		15r	36		
7v	Lambert Table		15v	37		
8r	Key to Lambert Table		16r	34		
8v	blank		16v	38		

[12] I thank Walter Simons for explaining to me the niceties of the Lambert Table, Rowan Dorin for the correspondence I enjoyed with him, and Jeffrey F. Hamburger for his contributions towards the improvement of the language of this article.

Quire III
17r 36
17v 36
18r 36
18v 36
19r 36
19v 36
20r 36
20v 36
21r 35
21v 36
22r 36
22v 36
23r 36
23v 36
24r 36
24v 36

Quire IV
25r 36
25v 36
26r 36
26v 36
27r 36
27v 36
28r 36
28v 36
29r 36
29v 36
30r 36
30v 36
31r 36
31v 36
32r 36
32v 36

Quire V
33r 36
33v 36
34r 36
34v 36
35r 36
35v 36
36r 37
36v 36
37r 36
37v 36
38r 36
38v 37
39r 36
39v 36
40r 36
40v 36

Quire VI
41r 36
41v 36
42r 36
42v 36
43r 36
43v 36
44r 36
44v 36
45r 36
45v 36
46r 36
46v 37
47r 37 Hand 2
47v 39
48r 34
48v 34

Quire VII
49r 37
49v 37
50r 36
50v 37
51r 33
51v 36
52r 35
52v 36
53r 38
53v 37
54r 37

54v	36	Documents	
55r	30		
55v			
56r	34		
56v	33		
Quire VIII			
57r	37	Sanctorale	Hand 1
57v	37		
58r	37		
58v	37		
59r	37		
59v	37		
60r	39		
60v	37		
61r	38		
61v	37		
62r	37		
62v	38		
63r	38		
63v	37		
64r	37		
64v	37		
Quire IX			
65r	36		
65v	36		
66r	36		
66v	36		
67r	36		
67v	36		
68r	36		
68v	37		
69r	36		
69v	36		
70r	36		
70v	36		
71r	37		
71v	37		
72r	36		
72v	36		
Quire X			
73r	36		
73v	36		
74r	36		
74v	36		
75r	36		
75v	36		
76r	36		
76v	36		Hand 2
77r	36		
77v	36		
78r	38		
78v	35		
79r	36		
79v	36		
80r	36		
80v	35		
Quire XI			
81r	36		
81v	38		
82r	36		
82v	36		
83r	36		
83v	36		
84r	36		
84v	38		
85r	38		
85v	38		
86r	37		
86v	38		
87r	36		
87v	39		
88r	38		
88v	35		
Quire XII			
89r	38		
89v	38		
90r	36		
90v	36		Common of the Saints
91r	36		

91v	37	
92r	36	
92v	36	
93r	36	
93v	36	Documents
94r		
94v		
95r		
95v		
96r	30	
96v	35	
Quire XIII		
97r	33	
97v	37	
98r	37	
98v	37	
99r	37	
99v	37	
100r		
100v		
101r		
101v		
102r		
102v		
103r	37	
103v		

The Context

Pilgrims, the Poor, and the Powerful

The Long History of the Women of Nivelles[1]

Eva Schlotheuber

Writing around 670, in the Prologue of the *Vita sanctae Geretrudis* the anonymous author appealed to the reader: "For what person, who lives in Europe, does not know the grandeur, name and place of this family?" Stressing that the origins of St Gertrude, the first abbess of Nivelles, were of critical importance, he makes clear his concern is not simply the saint but also the ascendance of an entire dynasty. The *Vita sanctae Geretrudis,* its later continuations and the *Additamentum Nivialense* preserve the *memoria* of her ancestors, and represent the origins of Carolingian panegyric.[2]

Together with the documents and notices appended to it, the *Liber Ordinarius* of Nivelles reflects and recounts the genesis of this exceptionally important monastery and the religious, political, and charitable activities that occupied its female and male communities. In order to understand the genesis of the *Liber Ordinarius* and, in particular, the additional documents within it, it is necessary to locate the manuscript within the history of Nivelles. To provide this context, this Chapter examines the manuscript's central themes: first, the circumstances of the foundations of Nivelles and Fosse; second, the care of the poor and infirm at Nivelles; and third, the legal status of the abbey within the Holy Roman Empire and the conflict between the abbess and Chapter of Nivelles, which escalated remarkably during the thirteenth century.

Over its long and impressive history, the powerful female community at Nivelles exhibits many characteristic, but also numerous distinctive features. In the context of seventh-century Gaul, among the former are its foundation as a convent of women by an aristocratic widow who, under the influence of an Irish monk and a missionary bishop from Aquitaine, St Amand (d. 676), used her own property for the purpose. Also typical were the monastery's adoption of a fixed rule and enclosure as well as its location some distance from a center of settle-

[1] I warmly thank Julie Hotchin (Canberra) for the translation of this essay.

[2] Vita sanctae Geretrudis A, ed. Krusch (1888), 454: *Quisnam in Euruppa habitans, huius progenie altitudinem, nomina ignorat et loca*? Column B of this edition also offers a parallel version that was probably reshaped in eleventh century, see below, 60, n. 142. For a literary appraisal of the *Vita sanctae Geretrudis,* see Berschin, Biographie 2 (1988), 19–20. I warmly thank Philipp Stenzig, Düsseldorf, for many helpful conversations and his advice in the preparation of this essay.

ment or episcopal seat. The high standard of education among the women was also not unusual.[3] Representative of communities of its kind was the importance of charitable activities, such as the care of pilgrims, the poor, widows and orphans, which profoundly shaped the history of Nivelles.

In contrast, among the distinctive aspects of Nivelles were its ability to assert its proximity to royal power, as well as its capacity to maintain an influential position between rival powers in France and, later, between the Holy Roman Empire, Lotharingia, and the Dukes of Brabant. When the women's community was dissolved in 1798 during the French Revolution, it looked back on a history of around 1150 years. No less unusual was the internal structure of the community. From the High Middle Ages, Nivelles included an uncommonly large number of thirty canons who assisted the community of aristocratic canonesses.[4] The community held extensive ecclesiastical rights of lordship, including rights as patron over eleven parish churches[5] and several hospitals. Moreover, the abbess of Nivelles was self-governing under the Empire, a position of considerable influence, which, for example, enabled her to assume a prominent role at the Synod of Liège, to which she was invited in 1288.

I. The Foundation of Nivelles and Fosse

Nivelles formed part of the familial lands of the Pippinids, located in the so-called "Coal Forest" that stretched to the south and east of modern-day Brussels. Around 613 Pepin of Landen (c. 580–640) rose to prominence in Austrasia (the Frankish territory between the Vosges, Ardennes, and the region around Brussels and the Rhine) when he, together with Arnulf, later bishop of Metz († c. 640), backed king Clothar II against his rivals.[6] In 623 Clothar divided his kingdom and appointed his young son Dagobert I, who was then about 15 years old, king of Austrasia. Pepin became tutor and advisor to the young king. Pepin's growing influence extended when, in 624/625, Clothar II appointed him mayor of the palace (*maior domus*) of Austrasia, or manager of his royal household, an office with extensive political and administrative power.

Around this time, the *Vita Geretrudis* relates that Pepin invited the young King Dagobert to his house for a "lordly meal" (*nobilem prandium*). The *Vita*

[3] Vita sanctae Geretrudis A, ed. Krusch (1888), ch. 3, 457. According to Muschiol, Famula Dei (1994), 42–43, the foundation of Nivelles was part of the third phase of female religious life in Gaul, which "formed part of the implementation of the Hiberno-Frankish monastic rules and the enclosure that marginalized the women living as *Deo sacratae* in the world."

[4] The number of prebends for canons was usually between six and eight, eleven at most; see the essay in this volume by Klaus Gereon Beuckers, 287.

[5] For women's communities as patrons of parish churches, see Röckelein, Frauenstifte (2009).

[6] Schieffer, Karolinger (2006), 14.

records that an unnamed "son of a Duke of Austrasia," having the king's consent, sought the hand of Pepin's daughter Gertrude "according to the custom of the world for the sake of his lordly ambition and mutual friendship (*amicitia*)." The young Gertrude refused this offer from the duke's son, who we learn was richly "arrayed in gold and silver."[7] This anecdote illustrates how the court of Pepin of Landen functioned as a key site of political and social action within the realm. It also suggests that Pepin carefully maintained his independence in relation to the king, for, without the support of her parents, it was highly unlikely that Gertrude could have rejected this offer of marriage.[8]

This situation must have presented difficulties for the powerful mayor of the palace. The reasons for his decision must lie in the conflicts among the Austrasian nobility, although the details remain unknown. The circle around Pepin of Landen and the powerful Arnulf of Metz evidently favoured the ascetic, charitable mission characteristic of Irish monasticism, represented by the spiritual activities of the Irish monk Columban (d. 615).[9] In 629 Arnulf of Metz resigned as bishop and retired from politics to the Vosges, possibly against his will. Here his friend Romaric (d. 653) had founded a monastery inspired by Hiberno-Frankish monastic ideals, later named Remiremont (*Romarici Mons*) after him.[10] In the same year, 629, Pepin lost his position of influence alongside Dagobert I when the latter succeeded his father as king of the entire Frankish kingdom. After Dagobert I's death in 639, Pepin, through shrewd political manoeuvring, secured the independence and crown of Austrasia for his son, Sigibert III, who was still a minor. Pepin of Landen died the following year, in 640. Moreover, the marriage of Gertude's sister Begga to Arnulf's son Ansegisel united perhaps the two most powerful families of Austrasia, a union that would lead to the later Carolingian dynasty.

Pepin of Landen had held a prominent position within the unstable power structures of Austrasia, which contributed to the difficult circumstances his Aquitanian widow Iduberga (Itta) faced after his death. On the advice of the missionary bishop St Amand[11], also from Aquitaine and just as strongly influenced by Hiberno-Frankish monasticism, Iduberga and her daughter Gertrude founded a women's monastery on their familial estates (*Hausgut*). They may have been

---

[7] Vita sanctae Geretrudis A, ed. Krusch (1888), ch. 1, 454: *Dum Pippinus, genitor suus, regem Dagobertum domui sue ad nobilem prandium invitasset, adveniens ibidem unus pestifer homo, filius ducis Austrasiorum, qui a rege et a parentibus puellae postulasset, ut sibi ipsa puella in matrimonium fuisset promissa secundum morem saeculi propter terrenam ambitionem et mutuam amicitiam.* On these events see also Fox, Power (2014), 179–180.

[8] Fox, Power (2014), 179–180.

[9] Not without political ambition, four monasteries were founded by the Pippinids in these years: Cugnon (646/547), Stablo-Malmedy (647/648), Nivelles, and Fosse (651); Petraschka, Fränkischer Adel (1999), 40; Fox, Power (2014), 89–93.

[10] Schieffer, Karolinger (2006), 16.

[11] Dierkens, Saint Amand (1986), 225–234.

motivated primarily to secure their joint inheritance, as widows and unmarried daughters could both inherit and manage property after their "retirement from the world."[12] Iduberga appointed Gertrude as the first abbess of Nivelles, which, as a spiritual foundation, served as a secure centre for the family.[13]

Iduberga and Gertrude's religious and spiritual aspirations are evident in the dual influences of Irish and the Rome-affiliated Benedictine monasticism that shaped their foundation at Nivelles. These spiritual ideals were reinforced through the acquisition of the relics and "holy books" from Rome and the British Isles with which the new monastery was furnished: "With the greatest eagerness she exercised pastoral care towards the implements of ecclesiastical study, and through God's inspiration she deservedly obtained through her envoys, men of good reputation, relics of the saints and holy books from Rome, and from the regions across the sea [Britain or Ireland]."[14] The Irish influence was strengthened when Iduberga, Gertrude, and her brother Grimoald received abbot Foillan (d. 655/656) and his brother Ultan in Nivelles. Ultan had been banished from Neustria by Erchinoald, the powerful Frankish mayor of the palace in Neustria, for reasons unknown. These details are mentioned in the contemporary account in the *Additamentum Nivialense*.[15]

In 652 Iduberga, Gertrude and Grimoald founded the monastery of Fosse on the river Bebrona (Biesme) as a new home for these Irish missionaries. From its foundation Fosse offered refuge for *peregrini* in a *hospitium* for "pilgrims": "Not much later than this they [Foillan and Ultan] were expelled by the *patricius* [Erchinoald], who despised the pilgrims, but they were honourably received by the most religious handmaiden of God, Iduberga, also named Itta, and her daughter, the sacred virgin of Christ, Geretrud. With Grimoald himself pleased, protecting the same holy men, and making arrangements, he built a monastery of religious monks in a villa which is named Bebrona from the river flowing through it, with the above mentioned handmaiden of God providing all necessary things."[16] Close ties, therefore, bound Fosse and Nivelles together from the beginning.

---

[12] Muschiol, Famula Dei (1994), 36.

[13] The charter of King Otto I refers to the possessions of Nivelles as the "inheritance of Gertrude": DO I, nº. 318 (January 24, 966), 432–433, here 433 (*hereditas sancte Gertrudis sita in pago Tessandria* […]).

[14] Vita sanctae Geretrudis A, ed. Krusch, ch. 2, 457: *Erga ecclesiastica studia vasa summo studio pastoralem habet curam, et per suos nuntios, boni testimonii viros sanctorum patrocinia vel sancta volumina de urbe Roma et de transmarinis regionibus gignaros* [sic] *homines ad docendum divini legis carmina, sibi et suis meditandum, deo inspirante, meruisset habere*. Translation in Sainted Women, ed. MacNamara / Halborg et al. (1992), 231. See also Petraschka, Fränkischer Adel (1999).

[15] Additamentum Nivialense, ed. Krusch (1902), 449–451.

[16] Additamentum Nivialense, ed. Krusch (1902), 450: […] *despiciente expulsi sunt, sed a religiosissima dei famula Idobergane cognominae Itane eiusque filia sacra Christi virgine Geretrude honorifice suscepti sunt, ipso etiam Grimoaldo praeside eisdem sanctis congratulante viris, atque*

The foundation of Nivelles progressed in several identifiable stages. First, the initiative of the missionary bishop, Amandus of Aquitaine, around 646/647; then the foundation of a female religious community at Nivelles, with Iduberga's daughter Gertrude as its first abbess; and finally, after the arrival of abbot Foillan and the Irish monks, the women's community was affiliated with a male convent, thus constituting a double monastery under the direction of an abbess following the Irish model.[17] For this reason, the *Virtutes sanctae Geretrudis* depicts the first Abbess Gertrude as *gubernatrix famulorum famularumque Christi*.[18]

The *Vita sanctae Geretrudis*, composed around 670, and the accounts of the miracles that occurred after her death, written about thirty years later (*De virtutibus, quae facta sunt post discessum beatae Geretrudis abbatisse*, around 700) and their continuation (*Virtutum sanctae Geretrudis continuati*, after 783) are more or less contemporaneous.[19] These works are widely regarded by scholars as valuable and reliable accounts of the circumstances of the foundation of Nivelles.[20] The *Additamentum Nivialense de Fuilano,* copied in the seventh century, is an important addition to the events of the foundation period. It recounts the death of the Irish martyr Foillan and the foundation of the monastery at Fosse by Iduburga, Grimoald, and her daughter Gertrude.[21]

Over time the female monastery at Nivelles developed into an important political, economic and social centre for the Pippinids.[22] After a power struggle following his death, Gertrude's brother Grimoald eventually succeeded their father in 642/643 as mayor of the palace of Austrasia. Grimoald used his influential position to promote Hiberno-Frankish monastic ideals. He was instrumental in appointing Remaclus, a monk from the Columban foundation of Luxeuil, to lead the double abbey of Stablo-Malmedy.[23] Grimoald's position of power alongside King Sigibert III led to a crisis in the second half of the seventh century. Grimoald succeeded in persuading the king to adopt his son Childebert, although

---

in villa, quae ex nomine fluminis decurrentis nuncupatur Bebrona ordinate monasterium religiosorum construxit monachorum […]. Translation in Late Merovingian France, ed. Fouracre (1996), 322. This account highlights the political dimensions of the exile of the Irish missionary by Erchinoald, the Austrasian mayor of the palace, and Ultan's honourable reception by Gertrude and Iduberga. Sternberg, Orientalium more secutus (1991), 276.

[17] Dierkens, Saint Amand (1986), 331; Angenendt, Frühmittelalter (1995), 217–218; Angenendt, Heilige (2007), 205–208; Petraschka, Fränkischer Adel (1999), 44.

[18] Vita sanctae Geretrudis A, ed. Krusch (1888), De virtutibus, ch. 1, 465.

[19] Vita sanctae Geretrudis A, ed. Krusch (1888), 447–474. For the discussion of authorship, see Stocq, Vie critique (1931), 13; 28–31, and Late Merovingian France, ed. Fouracre (1996), 305–306. Petraschka, Fränkischer Adel (1999), 53, argues for different authors of the *Vita* and the *Virtutes*. McKitterick, Women and Literacy (1994), 26–27, discusses the possibility of a female author.

[20] Late Merovingian France, ed. Fouracre (1996), 309.

[21] Additamentum Nivialense, ed. Krusch (1902), 449–451.

[22] Prinz, Frühes Mönchtum (1988), 185–191. Schieffer, Karolinger (2006), 18.

[23] Schieffer, Karolinger (2006), 19.

he denied any claim to throne.[24] It was quite a surprise, then, when Sigibert III sired another son, Dagobert II, shortly before his death in 652.

A few years later, in 656, Grimoald devised a plan to depose the young king, which has become known as Grimoald's coup d'Etat. Grimoald met with bishop Dido (Desiderius) of Poitiers to progress the scheme at Nivelles in February 656, where a *placitum* or judicial court was being held.[25] Those present at the *placitum* agreed to tonsure the young Dagobert II and send him as a monk to Ireland, accompanied by bishop Dido.[26] The Irish monks apparently played a significant role in these events, as Foillan and his companions had taken part in this *placitum*. The extreme political sensitivity of these events manifested itself in their having been murdered and buried in a pigsty on their journey to Fosse, a deed that was, as much as possible, hushed up.[27] Through this scheme Grimoald hoped to see his own son Childebert (III) adopted by Sigibert III, assume the throne and, at the same time, protect the independence of Austrasia.

Grimoald's plan does not appear to have been a coup in the strict definition of the term, as the sources appear indifferent to Childebert's succession to the throne, and the Austrasian nobility very likely offered solid backing for Childebert too.[28] As Hamann has shown convincingly, Austrasian independence appears to have been threatened by Clovis II of Neustria, so the young Dagobert II was sent to Ireland probably to prevent him becoming Clovis's puppet.[29] Sigibert's brother, Clovis II of Neustria, however, was unwilling to watch Grimoald extend his power at the expense of his own kin, the Merovingian royal family, without acting. He took drastic steps; in 656 or 657 Grimoald was ambushed, taken prisoner and executed in Paris.

Grimoald's overthrow placed the women at Nivelles in a precarious position. He died without an heir and the family had to withstand the ensuing power struggle without a male representative.[30] Nivelles was now the most important safe haven for the family. In these dire circumstances, Gertrude designated her niece Wulfetrud, Grimoald's daughter, as her successor. Wulfetrud became the second abbess of Nivelles after Gertrude's death in 659. According to the *Vita Geretrudis*, the new abbess faced considerable opposition that threatened the abbey's existence: "Kings, queens and bishops wanted to remove her from office

[24] Hamann, Chronologie (2003), 54–58.

[25] Additamentum Nivialense, ed. Krusch (1902), 450–451; Ewig, Staatsstreich (1975), 576. Becher, Staatsstreich (1994), 119–147, and most recently Hamann, Chronologie (2003), 62–64.

[26] Hamann, Chronologie (2003), 62.

[27] Additamentum Nivialense, ed. Krusch (1902), 451: *Et res sic* [the murder of Foillan and his companions] *multis latuit diebus, quia eorum vestimenta et caballus et quicquid habebant foras transmittentes longe habitantibus vendiderunt. Sed cum ad dictum placitum minime pervenissent, commoti fratres caritatis sollicitudine, eumquque ubi et ubi denunciantes quaesierunt*.

[28] Becher, Staatsstreich (1994), 121–124.

[29] Hamann, Chronologie (2003), 83–84, 87–90.

[30] Schieffer, Karolinger (2006), 19–20.

out of hatred of her father, first by persuasion and then by force, so as to seize the possessions of God, over which the virgin presided, illegally for themselves."[31] Although this attempt failed, it clearly demonstrates the role of Nivelles as the dynastic centre of the family, a status that would prove crucial in later events.

The foundation of women's monasteries became a successful dynastic strategy for the Pippinids from the seventh century, when Gertrude's sister Begga also established a monastery towards the end of her life. The Pippinids owed their restoration to their former position of power to Begga.[32] Her marriage with Ansegisel produced Pepin of Herstal (Pepin II), whose son Charles Martel in turn acquired quasi-royal status in Austrasia. In 691/692 Begga turned to the women's community in Nivelles for support for her monastic foundation at Andenne. Agnes, who had succeeded Wulfetrud as third abbess of Nivelles, assisted Begga by providing liturgical books and relics, including a piece of St Gertrude's bed.[33] Nivelles and Andenne, together with Oeren near Trier, formed part of a wider family network of women's religious communities that accompanied and supported the rise of the Carolingians.[34] Nivelles stood out as an important retreat for female members of the Carolingian royal family, especially for the celebration of major liturgical feasts. For example, in 797 Alcuin reported to archbishop Anno of Salzburg that Queen Luitgard spent the feast of the Assumption with her children at Nivelles.[35]

II. Care for the Poor and Infirm at Nivelles: *Matriculum, xenodochium*, and Hospitals

Hospitals and other institutions providing poor relief are difficult to identify in the textual record. The actual functions of hospitals, *xenodochia* (a form of hospice or hospital usually for pilgrims) and guesthouses for pilgrims are impossible to distinguish solely by the terms used to refer to them.[36] Evidence for care

[31] Vita sanctae Geretrudis A, ed. Krusch (1888), ch. 6, 460: *Contigit autem ex odio paterno, ut reges, reginae etiam sacerdotes per invidiam diaboli illam de suo loco primum per suasionem, postmodum vellent per vim trahere, et res dei, quibus benedicta puella praeerat, iniquiter possiderent.*

[32] Prinz, Frühes Mönchtum (1988), 190. See also Hoebanx, L'Abbaye de Nivelles (1952).

[33] Vita sanctae Geretrudis A, ed. Krusch (1888), ch. 10, 499.

[34] Prinz, Frühes Mönchtum (1988), 186–194.

[35] Migne PL 100 (1863) cols. 235–236, here 235 (Letter of Alcuin to Archbishop Arno of Salzburg, August 797): *Liutgardis et infantes* […] *quia illae iturae sunt ad Nivella, ut ibi missam sanctae Mariae agant.*

[36] See Pauly, Hospitäler (2007), 13–18. Pauly argues that the decisive criterion is that the care of the poor and infirm is manifest in a dedicated architectural structure, indicating, therefore, that it has been institutionalised. See the recent work by Schneider, Armenfürsorge (2017), 81–105. The foundational studies remain Boshof, Armenfürsorge (1984); Mollat, Études (1974) and Rouche, La matricule (1974).

of the poor and infirm at Nivelles and Fosse is actually quite extensive, especially when compared with the survival of sources in general. The early traditions of hospital practice at Nivelles have attracted little scholarly attention, in contrast to more extensive research into the hospital at Fosse.[37] Charitable activities appear to have significantly influenced the foundation of both monasteries from the outset, likely prompted by the Benedictine ideal of *hospitalitas* and early Irish monasticism.

The *Additamentum Nivialense* draws a direct connection between institutional care of the poor, infirm, and pilgrims, manifested in the building of guesthouses (*tectum hospitibus praebens*) and the *famula dei* Iduberga and her community of women. The account of Foillan and his martyr's death makes this connection clear: "It happened here, that, after the above mentioned handmaiden of God [Iduberga/Itta)] departed for the realms above, having dispensed many fruits of alms throughout many places, having comforted many paupers, having received many pilgrims with every kindness, feeding the hungry, clothing the cold, offering a roof to guests, providing much money for the sacred altar vessels, and strengthening the army of holy virgins with the above-mentioned noble lady in the Lord, Foillan, the man of the Lord, concerning whom we have made mention above, undertook a journey for the benefit of the flock entrusted to him. He sang the solemnities of Mass on the day of the vigils of the most holy martyr Quintin in the church of Nivelles […]."[38] Foillan had been entrusted with the spiritual care of the nuns of Nivelles (*pro utilitate gregis sibi commissi*), as we learn from this account that he was murdered on his return from Nivelles after having fulfilled his religious obligations to the women.

The *Vita sanctae Geretrudis* emphasises the central theme of the "care for the poor and provision for pilgrims, the infirm, and the elderly" by its first abbess Gertrude. The *Vita* thereby affirms the account in the *Additamentum Nivialense*.[39] According to the *Vita*, Gertrude "constructed the churches of the saints and other buildings from their foundations and she provided orphans, widows, the imprisoned and pilgrims with their daily needs with all generosity."[40] Under

[37] Sternberg, Orientalium more secutus (1991), 275. The foremost study is Delattre, L'Hôpital (1963), 7–17.

[38] Additamentum Nivialense, ed. Krusch (1902), 450: *Contigit hic, postquam predicta dei famula, multis elemosinarum fructibus per diversa loqua dispensatis multisque pauperibus consolatis, multis etiam peregrinis cum omni humanitate susceptis, esurientes reficiens, algidos vestiens, tectum hospitibus praebens, immensa quoque munera divinis ministeriis exhibens sanctarum virginum agmen cum supradicta nobili in domino confirmans, ad superna commigravit regna, vir domini Foillanus, de quo supra memoravimus, pro utilitati grege sibi commissi iter aggrediens* […]. English translation from Late Merovingian France, ed. Fouracre (1996), 327–328.

[39] Vita sanctae Geretrudis A, ed. Krusch (1888) ch. 2, 456 (*curis pauperum et peregrinorum provida, infirmis et senibus pia*).

[40] Vita sanctae Geretrudis A, ed. Krusch (1888) ch. 3, 458: *Item sanctorum ecclesias et alia praecipua aedificia ex fundamentis construxit et orfanis, viduis, captivis, peregrinis alimonia cotidiana cum omni largitate ministravit*. For the close connection between charitable activities and Benedictine hospitality, see Schuler, Gastlichkeit (1983), 21–36.