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CH 108  
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Ms. 006

This codex was most likely produced in Germany in the 11th-12th century, but contains copies of texts from as early as the 6th century (Digital scriptorium). The following texts are included: *De varietate liborum* by Haymo of Halberstadt, *Doctrina* by Severinus, *Historia ecclesiastica* by Bede, *Vita S. Fursei*, *Epistola XX* by Boniface of Mainz, *Expositio veteris ac novi testamenti* by Paterius notaries Gregorii I, and *Vita S. Bonifatii Moguntini* by Willibaldus.<sup>1</sup> Among these texts are various theological and exegetical pieces, as well as letters and hagiographies of British and Irish Saints. The presence of the latter suggests that while this codex was likely produced in Germany, it may have been used in a monastery in the region that would become England and/or reflects changing political allegiances in the region. The diversity of texts included in this codex may reflect diverse, everyday-needs expressed in a monastic community. This supposition is supported by the physical properties of the book, most notably the leather straps running from the back cover to the front cover as well as vastly different sized vellum pages and text size and font, among other properties.

The inclusion of the *Diadema Monachorum* points to a communal, monastic use of this codex. Smaragdus penned the *Diadmema Monachorum* at the Monastery of St. Mihiel in the early 9th century and was a popular monastic reformer in the Carolingian period. One of the hallmarks of educational reform in the Carolingian period was Latin literacy, which marked a distinction between sacred and everyday language.<sup>2</sup> Thus the *Diadema*, written entirely in Latin, is a testament to the monastic reform of the Carolingian period indicative of Charlemagne's push

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<sup>1</sup> "New York, Columbia University, Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, UTS MS 006," accessed March 12th, 2015, [http://ds.lib.berkeley.edu/UTSMS006\\_22](http://ds.lib.berkeley.edu/UTSMS006_22)

<sup>2</sup> Matthew D. Ponesse, "Editorial practice in Smaragdus of St Mihiel's commentary on the Rule of St Benedict," *Early Medieval Europe* (18) 2010: 62-63.

to bring the land/people under his control into an “Ideal Christian Society.”<sup>3</sup> Used as a community text within the monastery at St. Mihiel, the *diadema* was a compendium of “patristic spirituality and biblical exegesis intended to be read as a companion text to Rule of St. Benedict.”<sup>4</sup> The inclusion of the *Diadema* in this codex suggests that this book was also used in a monastery concerned with the rules that governed monastic life.

This suggestion is affirmed by the inclusion of *De varietate librorum* by Haymo of Halberstadt. Haymo was a monk who wrote popular exegetical commentaries and treatises. *De varietate librorum* was a treatise on “detachment from the world and the desire of heaven” and was valuable at the time because it was a “testimony to the piety of the 9th century.” The presence of *Doctrina* by Severini, a philosopher, statesman and Christian martyr who frequently translated Greek philosophy into Latin, re-affirms the monastery in the 11th and 12th centuries as a place of education and learning.<sup>5</sup>

The codex also contains a piece from Bede, *visio cuiusdam religioi*, a portion of Gregory the Great's *Moralia*. Bede was one of the most learned and influential Latin writers of Anglo-Saxon England.<sup>6</sup> His work was exegetical and reflected “unremitting papal and patristic devotion, for the major goal of Bede’s career was to cause his insular compatriots to see themselves in the international world of Roman tradition.”<sup>7</sup> Thus the fact that Bede’s work was included potentially points to the book’s use in a changing political environment and/or regional boundary negotiation.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 64.

<sup>4</sup> Another book written by Smaragdus. The *Rule of St. Benedict* was prioritized as the primary book of principals governing Frankish monasteries of the day. Smaragdus would later write a commentary on the *Rule of St. Benedict* shortly before his death. Ibid. 73.

<sup>5</sup> Blair, John, Simon Keynes, Michael Lapidge, and Donald Scragg. *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England*. Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2013. 60-62. Accessed March 13, 2015.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Schaefer, V.A. *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. 2nd ed. Vol. 6. Detroit: Thomson/Gale, 2003. 677-78.

A Hagiography of St. Fursey and St. Boniface is also included, the latter of whom was particularly noteworthy for his efforts to improve female literacy.<sup>8</sup> A former monastic turned missionary and loyal Roman ambassador commissioned by Pope Gregory II, Boniface played an important role in Germany's Christian memory.<sup>9</sup> A manuscript of his letter to Eadburg, the German abbess at Thanet is also present. This may indicate that the codex was used either in an abbey or monastery that housed both men and women, or in an abbey or monastery that had, or was building a relationship with, a female abbey or monastery.

The physical properties of this codex are striking. The book is bound between wooden boards that serve as the front and back covers. From as early as the 2nd century BCE, wooden book covers were a primary means of assuring the safety and longevity of a book's contents.<sup>10</sup> It is probably safe to assume then, that the wooden boards, sturdy and thick, enclosing this codex, probably provided protection for the contents of the book. The back book cover has a wormhole in the upper left corner, and the front cover appears to have been mildly damaged in the lower left corner as the wood has deep, "L" shaped groove. These boards are covered in yellowed leather that is strongly adhered to the covers. However, this leather was initially white, and has become yellowed and tanned over time by exposure to changes in temperature, humidity, etc.<sup>11</sup> The presence of white leather might suggest that the book was particularly valuable, or even "holy" given the theological implications of the color, white.

The leather on the front and back of the book also has some ornate details. The outline of 2-dimensional "X," roughly 1 inch thick, 10 inches tall by 8 inches wide, is bound within a large

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid. 539-555.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Howsam, Leslie. "Materials and Meanings." In *The Cambridge Companion to the History of the Book*, 73-89. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

<sup>11</sup> New York, Columbia University, Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, UTS MS 006," accessed March 12th, 2015, [http://ds.lib.berkeley.edu/UTSMS006\\_22](http://ds.lib.berkeley.edu/UTSMS006_22)

2-D rectangle that roughly borders the front cover, perhaps 1 inch thick, 11 inches tall and 9 inches wide. Two metal knobs are also present on the medial side of the front cover, and function to hold the straps (which have corresponding holes for the knobs to fit in) that are brought from the back cover to the book to the front cover, keeping the book from falling open. However, these straps are now not functional. The straps indicate that the book may have been transported between persons within a community (or potentially between different communities) to prevent the book from accidentally opening and damaging the contents, during transportation. It seems less likely that the book was used for very formal ceremonies, in part because the straps interrupt the aesthetic cohesion of the book.

The inside of the front cover reveals large print text that appears to be written on vellum which is more or less pasted onto the wood, on the medial side of the cover. This text, like all of the text in the codex, is in Latin. Given the theological nature of this codex, it is possible that this text expresses either gratitude to God or particular Saints (this latter option seems particularly plausible given the hagiographies included in the codex). It is also possible that this inscription on the inner cover offers some kind of guidance to the reader before he (or perhaps less likely, she) begins to read from the codex. The medial side of the back cover also contains text, however these inscriptions are written directly onto the wood. The purpose of these inscriptions is less clear, particularly because they appear to be more scattered, less linear and generally less cogent. I wonder whether readers placed a piece of vellum or other kind of page on which to write, on the back cover, perhaps to copy meaningful excerpts from the codex, and as they were writing the pressure from their writing instrument was permanently pressed into the wood. This might also suggest that the book was used in an intensely communal setting in which a person may not have constant access to the book.

The varying shape and sizes of the vellum pages also suggest that this book was used communally (most likely at a monastery). This codex includes sections from nine different sources, 2 of which vary greatly in size. Most of the pages are roughly the same size as the books covers, and some are marginally smaller. However a portion of these pages, perhaps twenty, are approximately 1/3- 1/2 of the size of the rest of the pages. The pages appear to be portions from a lectionary, which also suggest that this codex was used ritually, but less formally. The size of the lectionary pages may indicate that this portion of the codex was added after the rest of the books were complete.

The size of the text, the handwriting of the text and the color of the text also vary greatly but correspond roughly to each of the nine sections. This indicates that several different monks or scribes contributed to the creation of this codex. While most of the text is black, various paragraphs and sections begin with red ink and some sections contain only red ink. The text contains many emendations and writing in the margins may indicate that this codex was a constantly evolving, communal text emended for the specific needs of a particular community, rather than a finished product used in a strictly formal or ceremonial context. Many pages also include small holes running vertically at the lateral edge, which may suggest that the book was in a consistent state of revision.

In conclusion, the presence of not only numerous different texts, but different genres of texts indicates that this codex was produced to fulfill the everyday spiritual needs of a monastic community. However, the similarities among the texts- namely patristic devotion, monastic reform and loyalty to Rome contrasted with hagiographies of British and Irish saints point to the codex's use in a monastery that may have also been involved in educational reform and may have also experienced tensions between loyalty to Rome and other emerging religious and/or

political commitments. Great variations in text font and size also suggest that multiple scribes produced this content of this codex. Other physical properties such as the leather straps, significant differences in page size, the imprints on the back cover as well as frequent textual emendations also point to a highly communal, regular (if not everyday) use of by monastery.

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