

PASCASIUS RADBERTUS, *De corpore et sanguine domini* (On the Body and Blood of the Lord)

In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment

Southern Europe (Southern Italy or France?), c. 1120-1140

148 folios on parchment, modern foliation in pencil, 1-146, omitting the first blank, a partially lifted pastedown, part of quire one, and the last blank, part of the last quire, complete (collation i^s (1, blank pastedown, unnumbered, 2, also blank) ii^s [beginning f. 8] iii-xvii^s xviii^o xix²), no catchwords, every quire signed at the end, lower margin (q, followed by a roman numeral), ruled in blind with double full-length vertical bounding lines and with the top two and bottom horizontal rules full across, prickings, top, bottom and outer margins, many of the leaves trimmed right along the prickings (justification 75 x 50-49 mm.), copied in a Carolingian minuscule on the top line in thirteen long lines, marginal apparatus copied by the scribe in red includes initials of authors and subjects, decoratively boxed in red with touches of yellow, nota marks and the chi-rho symbol, majuscules within the text outlined or partially filled in red or red and ochre, red rubrics (some touched with yellow or blue), one-line red initials with blue and ochre highlights, 1- to 4-line initials, red or black, filled in red and ochre, ochre and blue, or with touches of ochre or green, two 3- to 4-line white initials, f. 1v and 8v, with details in black, with white acanthus infill with red highlights and shading in black on ochre (on f. 8v, with blue dots), on blue notched grounds that follow the shape of the initial, in very good condition, a few very minor stains. Bound in modern half leather and wooden boards, spine with three raised bands, one clasp and catch fastening, traces of red and black visible on all three edges, in good condition apart from minor scuffing. Dimensions 112 x 77 mm.

The text in this manuscript by the ninth-century theologian, Pascasius Radbertus, abbot of Corbie, was the first comprehensive discussion of the Eucharist, or Holy Communion. It was his most important and widely disseminated work, and was destined to influence theological debate throughout the Middle Ages and Reformation. This is an astonishingly small format twelfth-century copy, equipped with a marginal apparatus that includes identification of authors cited, subject headings, and *nota* marks (including the chi-rho symbol). This text is very rare on the market.

PROVENANCE

1. Written in the early twelfth century, perhaps c. 1120-1140, as suggested on the evidence of the script and layout: ruled in blind, "ae" is almost always written cedilla-e, 'g' with open bottom, "Ns" ligature used at the end of a word. An origin in Southern Europe is supported by the type of parchment, and by the initials, especially the majuscules within the text filled with two colors, here often red and ochre. Exactly where this was copied is a puzzle, and further research is needed. The script is quite distinctive, with some features that call to mind Beneventan script (a script that developed in Southern Italy in the eighth century, and continued in use, although not exclusively, until c. 1300, and occasionally later), especially the prominent 'r' extending slightly below the line, the tall 'st' ligature, the use of round uncial 'd', and even the tear-drop 'a' that is related in shape to the distinctive 'a' used in Beneventan. However "qui" is abbreviated throughout in the northern fashion, which would certainly be unusual in Beneventan manuscripts, and indeed in manuscripts copied in most of Italy (see Newton, 1999, p. 172, who mentions the northern "qui" in manuscripts from Monte Cassino as an "interloper" and a sign that

the scribe had originally been trained elsewhere in Carolingian minuscule, or was copying an exemplar in that script). Perhaps this was copied by a scribe from Southern Italy, working in Southern France (where Carolingian minuscule was the standard script, and a "northern" abbreviation for "qui" is not uncommon), or alternatively, a scribe in Southern France, who learned to write in Southern Italy.

Elements of the decoration can be compared with manuscripts from both regions. Compare the initials filled in two colors on f. 40, for example, with the initials in British Library, MS Egerton 1945, from the diocese of Benevento, written in Beneventan, first half of the twelfth century, with small initials filled with two colors, red and pale yellow (Online Resources). The colors used in the minor decoration are also found in manuscripts from Southern France, as is the type of acanthus found in the painted initials (a rather broad leaf, with a combination of lines and dots for shading); cf. the earlier, eleventh-century, and otherwise quite different in its decoration, Paris, BnF, MS lat 52, f. 27, an Old Testament from Southwestern France, possible Moissac, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8427233v/f59.item>

This copy is of special interest because of its strikingly small size, which is very unusual, especially for a twelfth-century theological manuscript. Certainly, the very tiny size of this copy, suggests it was made for a special purpose. It probably was not made as a normal copy for study in a monastic library. Perhaps it was a copy commissioned for the personal use of an abbot or bishop?

2. Inside front cover, modern pencil note on the diagonal records author, below, "No. 2", and "90"; front flyleaf, f. 1, in pen, earlier (s. XVII_XVIII), "S. Pascasio"
3. Private European collection.

TEXT

[f. 1, blank], ff. 1v- 146v, [verse preface with the first letters spelling out the name of the author, "Radbertus Levita"], f. 2, incipit, "Regis adire sacre qui uis sollempnia mense/ ... Accipies palmam regni uirtute beatus"; [prologue] f. 2v, incipit, "PASCHASIUS RADBERTVS PLACIDO SVO SALVTEM, Dilectissimo filio et uice christi presidenti magistro monastice ... Propter quod lege securus et perforce deuotus," *Explicit prologus*; [f. 8], *Incipit textus libri, Christi communionem uerum corpus eius et sanguinem esse non dubitandum*, incipit, "Quisque catholicorum dum recte deum ... [Chapter 22] ... Vnde uotorum fili transeamus hinc festinantes succinctis mentibus ... gaudia quantocius uenire ualeamus, Amen," *Explicit liber Paschasi*.

Pascasius Radbertus, *De corpore et sanguine domini*, edited, Bedae Paulus, 1969 (Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio mediaevalis 16). The text was widely disseminated and survives in at least 120 manuscripts, dating from the ninth through the seventeenth century, in institutional collections across Europe (Paulus, ed., pp. ix-xliv).

The text circulated in at least four versions, two of which date back to the author's lifetime. This manuscript includes the earliest version, which survives in the greatest number of manuscripts today. It includes the acrostic poem and Pascasius Radbertus's prologue addressed to Warin, abbot of Corvey (826-856). The text is divided into the original 22 chapters, and it

lacks the interpolations characteristic of the second version, presented to the emperor Charles the Bald on Christmas, 843 or Easter, 844 (the edition by Paulus prints passages from later versions in italics or in square brackets): lacks the long addition at the end of chapter 6, those in the middle and end of chapter 9, both additions at the end of chapter 14 (Chapter 14, line 120, ff. 97v-98, begins with a rubric, not found in edition, *Quid christus ostensus sit ad sacrificandum cuidam presbitero in specie pueri ab angelo*), and the interpolations in chapters 21 and 22.

This copy is of special interest because of its strikingly small size, which is very unusual, especially for a twelfth-century theological manuscript. All the manuscripts listed with their dimensions by Paulus in the edition are larger. The smallest in his list are: Engelberg, SB MS 147, twelfth century, 51 ff., 140 x 110 mm.; Leiden, BPL MS 1822, from Moissac, 116 ff., 150 x 85 mm.; Vienna, ONB, MS 863, early thirteenth century, 144 folios, 120 x 193 mm. (see Paulus, ed., p. xxviii, perhaps an error for 120 x 93 mm.?), Oxford Bodleian Library, MS 859, s. XV, 395 ff., 121 x 95 mm., and Subiaco, MS 299, s. XIV, 140 x 110 mm. Most copies are much larger. Certainly, the very tiny size of this copy, suggests it was made for a special purpose. It probably was not made as a normal copy for study in a monastic library. Perhaps it was a copy commissioned for the personal use of an abbot or bishop?

The careful organization of this copy is also worthy of special attention, and suggests that this manuscript reproduces an early exemplar. Radbertus explains in his prologue that authors cited in his text were identified by initials copied in the margins, and this is a careful copy that includes these initials (along with a few extra initials not included in the critical edition). The manuscript also includes marginal subject headings (for example, f. 21v, "de agno"; f. 23v, "Quid sacramentum uiris"; f. 24, "Misterium"; f. 24v, "Vim baptismi"), decoratively boxed in red and yellow, and two types of "nota" marks – the common one, a monogram based on the word "nota" and the other, the chi-rho or chresimon symbol (numerous examples, including ff. 17, 19v, 23, and so forth). This sophisticated apparatus to aid the reader was copied by the original scribe in a formal script, and we can be almost certain that he was meticulously copying them from his exemplar.

The presence of the chi-rho symbol used as a nota-mark is unusual in a twelfth-century manuscript, and is evidence that the exemplar of this manuscript was likely much earlier in date, perhaps even from the ninth century. The chi-rho was used as a symbol of Christ in medieval manuscripts and art (famous examples are the chi-rho pages in the Book of Kells and the Lindesfarne Gospels), but in pre- and non-Christian Greek manuscripts, it was used to mark important passages (from "χρηστός" meaning "useful"). In Carolingian manuscripts, the chi-rho was used in the margin as a nota mark (for example, Cologne, MS 94, a late ninth-century copy of Gregory's letters; Mayr-Harting, 1992, p. 51). This is much less common in later manuscripts, but can be found, usually when the scribe was copying his exemplar, as must be the case here. Another example is found in an eleventh-century manuscript from Metz, Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, MS Msc. Bibl. 127 (Online Resources; we thank Professor Mariken Teeuwen and Dr. Evina Steinova, who has just completed a dissertation on technical signs in early medieval manuscripts, for sharing their knowledge of this topic).

The first extensive treatment of Holy Communion or the Eucharisti, *De corpore et sanguine domini* (On the Body and Blood of the Lord) was written by Pascasius Radbertus (abbot of Corbie from 842-847) at the request of his former student, Warin, Abbot of Corvey, a daughter house of

Corbie in Saxony, in 831-833. When the treatise was first written Radbertus was the head of the monastic school, and he clearly intended his work to be a comprehensive treatment of the subject suitable for his students. In 843/844, Radbertus, who by this time was the abbot of Corbie, revised the treatise, expanding it by the addition of Eucharistic miracles found in the *Vitae patrum*, and composing a new prologue, and presented it to the Emperor Charles the Bald. A third version of the text circulated that combined elements of these two versions (as well as a fourth, later version by an unknown author). The text in this manuscript is the first and earliest (and most wide spread) version. The first letters of the verse preface of the first version, included here, spells out the author's name, "Radbertus levita" (Radbertus, a deacon). As was still common in monasteries in the ninth century, Radbertus appears to have remained a deacon, and was not ordained as a priest.

The first version is divided into twenty-two chapters, and presents a comprehensive discussion of the sacrament. The first chapters establish that the true body and blood of Christ are present in Communion (essentially the doctrine later defined as Transubstantiation), and later chapters discuss the definition of a sacrament, why Communion is celebrated with both wine and bread, and what words enact they mystery of the sacrament. In Radbertus's view, the host and wine at the moment of consecration became the historical body and blood of Christ; this theological view of the real presence was not the only interpretation current in the ninth century (Ratramnus, a contemporary of Radbertus's at Corbie, and later abbot, d. 868, argued for a more spiritual interpretation). The Mass, in Radbertus's interpretation, was therefore a daily repetition of Christ's sacrifice. Later medieval traditions tended to emphasize the Mass as a sacrifice and to embrace Radbertus's teachings, but the doctrine was periodically a subject of controversy, resurfacing in particular in the mid-eleventh century with Berengar of Tours and Lanfranc of Canterbury, and, even more famously, during the Reformation.

Little is known about Pascasius Radbertus's early life, although he was probably born near Soissons in northern France at the end of the eighth century. He entered the abbey of Corbie early in life, and died in 859. In addition to this treatise, he was the author of important biblical commentaries on Matthew, Lamentations, and Psalm 45, Lives of two abbots of Corbie, Adalhard and Wala, and a treatise on the Virgin Mary.

LITERATURE

Chazelle, Celia. "Figure, Character, and the Glorified Body in the Carolingian Eucharistic Controversy," *Traditio* 47 (1992), pp. 1-36.

Ganz, David. *Corbie in the Carolingian Renaissance*, Sigmaringen, 1990.

Mayr-Harting, Henry. "Ruotger, the life of Bruno and Cologne Cathedral Library," in *Intellectual life in the Middle Ages: essays presented to Margaret Gibson*, ed. Lesley Smith and Benedicta Ward, London and Rio Grande, Ohio, 1992, pp. 33-60.

Newton, Francis. *The Scriptorium and Library at Monte Cassino, 1058-1105*, Cambridge, and New York, 1999.

Paulus, Bedae, ed. Pascasius Radbertus. *De corpore et sanguine Domini : cum appendice Epistola ad Fredugardum*, Corpus christianorum, continuatio mediaevalis 16, Turnholt, 1969.

Peltier, Henri. *Pascale Radbert, abbé de Corbie: contribution à l'étude de la vie monastique et de la pensée chrétienne aux temps carolingiens*, Amiens, 1938.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Mariken Teeuwen. "Annotating Practices in Medieval Manuscripts"

<https://prezi.com/5mkn3-nzzbce/annotating-mss/>

Metz, Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, MS Msc. Bibl. 127 (Sedulius Scottus, *Collectanea*)
is completely digitized:

<http://bsbsbb.bsb.lrz->

[muenchen.de/~db/0000/sbb00000062/images/index.html?id=00000062&fip=87.212.206.68&no=12&seite=16&signatur=Msc.Bibl.127.](http://bsbsbb.bsb.lrz-muenchen.de/~db/0000/sbb00000062/images/index.html?id=00000062&fip=87.212.206.68&no=12&seite=16&signatur=Msc.Bibl.127)

Paris, BnF, MS Lat 52

<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8427233v>

British Library, MS Egerton 1945

<https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=2977&CollID=28&NStart=1945>

TM 822