Passions for Learning: the Codex Sangallensis 548


by

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**Abstract**

This thesis is a narratological study of the eighth-century Codex Sangallensis 548, a collection of saints' lives preserved in the Abbey Library of St. Gall. Through an analysis of the narrative structures of these stories, their relationships with each other and with the culture in which it was produced, the author seeks to understand why this manuscript was produced and what it reveals about the minds behind its creation. As a product of student hands, it was a tool for developing writing skills, but it also functioned as a vehicle for educating its readers about both religious and political matters. In the religious sphere, the saints presented in the Codex are role models for living a correct Christian life. In the political sphere, it reflects the Carolingian reforms of this period as well as efforts to manufacture and maintain support for the dynasty through the use of literary productions. A melding of both these spheres is observed in the presentation of St. Leudegarius as a role model for the appropriate behavior of a Christian and of his story as a symbol of Merovingian disgrace. Thus, this Codex was produced for both religious and political reasons, and reflects the religious and political preoccupations and circumstances of the time in which it was produced.

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I would like to express gratitude to my supervisors, Dr. Andrew C. Gow and Dr. Felice Lifshitz, for their expertise and guidance. I must also thank the Government of Alberta for granting me the Queen Elizabeth II Master's Scholarship to complete this program. And, of course, a huge thank you goes out to my partner, my parents, family, and friends for helping me to survive this process in each of your own, special ways.

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**Introduction**

The monastery of St. Gall in what is now Switzerland stands on the site of a hermitage once inhabited by the monastery's namesake, the Irish hermit St. Gallus.[1] In 719, the site was chosen to be "re-established" as a monastery during the Mayoralship of the Palace of Charles Martel.[2] Two generations later, under Charlemagne, St. Gall was part of a widespread educational reform. This reform resulted in the equipping of St. Gall with a large monastic school, which included a *scriptorium*, or book-producing workshop. In this school, and *scriptorium,* the monks copied and produced thousands of texts, which helped St. Gall to build up what is one of today's biggest surviving libraries of medieval texts.[3] Among these texts is the Codex Sangallensis 548 (Cod. Sang. 548), a collection of stories of saints' lives. The Abbey Library has dated this Codex to the "last quarter of the eighth century" through its physical features, but its contents, which clearly reflect the

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[1] Gallus, born to noble parents in Ireland in the mid-sixth century, is known as a disciple of Columbanus, having been given to the Church for education at a young age.  He accompanied Columbanus to England, and then to the Frankish territories, where they were caught up in the dynastic struggles of the Merovingian rulers and persecuted by angry pagans whom they attempted to convert. As a result of these dangerous situations, they were unable to settle in their first few chosen locations. Being unable to accompany Columbanus south to Italy due to an illness, Gallus instead settled at the site of St. Gall. Rev. Alban Butler, *The Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs, and Other Principal Saints.* (Dublin: James Duffy, 1866). Vol. X, October 16: St. Gall, Abbot.

[2] Paul Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel*. (Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd, 2000), 105.

[3] Due to its long history and prominence, as well as to the extensive library, the Abbey and Library of St. Gall was added to the list of UNESCO World Heritage sites in 1983. A full description of the site and its continuing significance, as assessed by the World Heritage Convention, is available at http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/268.

preoccupations of the early Carolingian era, also confirm that it must have been produced during this period.

The stories of saints' lives that appear in the Codex are, in general, accounts of the passions of martyred saints, including both female and male martyrs.[4] The longest is about St. Leudegarius, who died only about one hundred and twenty years before the Codex itself was produced. Each of these stories was chosen to be included for a purpose, and understanding the message and purpose of the contents of the Codex provides insight into the thinking of the people who produced it, particularly with regard to how they interpreted the world around them and what ideas dominated their views. Stories about saints' lives had been passed on for generations. In a society where the people who were most likely to be literate were men, and where those with access to such a text were members of an all-male religious community, this Codex had a limited potential contemporary audience. The Codex Sangallensis 548 was intended to serve two purposes for this audience: to be inspirational and to be instructional.

As inspiration, the Codex offered the monastic reader a series of worthy saints whose lives and deeds should be remembered, revered, and, to an extent, imitated. The reader was not expected himself to become a martyr like many of the saints described in the Codex, but he was encouraged to uphold the same principles of chastity and steadfast faith in God in a corrupt world. In this way it was also religiously instructive. However, it was politically instructive as well, subtly reinforcing the programs of reform introduced by Charlemagne around the time of

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[4] A passion, from the Latin *patior*, "to suffer", is a narrative that tells the events surrounding a saint's suffering and death.

the Codex's production. When the Codex's stories underscored the correct ways of living, they also underscored Charlemagne's ideal of *correctio* and reinforcement of the Rule of St. Benedict in religious houses. In addition, in demonizing the political intrigues of the Merovingian court, the predecessors of the Carolingians, the Codex serves to legitimize the Carolingians as kings of the Frankish kingdom.

A look at the Codex as a material object, including the physical appearance of the pages, such as the handwriting and decoration, and the quality of its raw materials, as well as at its literary contents, creates a more complete picture of this manuscript as an educational tool. While all of the stories included in it indicate that there are certain trends that should be followed in the pursuit of a religious education, a closer study of the *Vita Leudegarii* in particular is helpful in understanding the preoccupations of the time. This particular *Vita* is prominent, both because of the amount of space dedicated to passing it on and to its relative contemporaneousness with the Codex. It is representative of the larger trends among the stories that accompany it in the manuscript, but it also reveals much about the political and social spheres in which it was produced. Therefore, the *Vita Leudegarii* will be the main focus of this examination of the Codex.

The Codex Sangallensis 548 cannot be viewed as a Chronicle or source for accurate historical data about the protagonists of its stories. Instead, its historical worth is found in the nature of its contents: what it includes and excludes, in comparison with other versions of these saints' lives, and the way in which it presents the details of each story. Through a study of the context of the Codex, the intended message of the Codex's creators may be understood.  We can gain insight

into the preoccupations of its creators and into what they believed was information that should be shared, or that their intended audience ought to know. Ultimately, Codex Sangallensis 548 is a reflection of its time, its creators and the conditions in which it was produced, and is a useful source to help us better understand them.

**Codex Sangallensis 548**

The Codex Sangallensis 548, so-called because of its location in the Abbey Library of Saint Gall, dates back to the last quarter of the eighth century. The dating of the Codex is more specifically identified by the handwriting that appears in it; it is a Carolingian miniscule particular to St. Gall in the late 8th century and early 9th century, developed after the period of Waldo the Abbott (770-784).[5] Written at St. Gall in Latin, the Codex is comprised of 175 pages, although the pages between 139 and 149 remain blank. These pages may have awaited further content that was never added, or they may indicate a miscalculation of the space necessary to copy out the chosen material. Either scenario is possible, given that the script of the Codex seems to be in several different hands.[6] If a story were left out, it may have been missed in the process of collaboration between scribes; or, as the scripts make different use of space on each page, the ten blank pages may be the result of that difference. As Beat Matthias von Scarpatetti has pointed out, there are seven identifiable hands at work in this volume, including those in the actual script of the stories and those in the corrections and notations.[7] It is useful to note that the hands do change mid-story: we know therefore that there was some level of collaboration between scribes, and that they did not produce separate works that were later bound together. Although the Codex is divided by quaternions, the script changes do

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[5] Beat Matthias von Scarpatetti, *Die Handschriften der Stiftsbibliothek St. Gallen, Bd. 1: Abt. IV: Codices 547-669: Hagiographica, Historica, Geographica, 8-18. Jahrhundert.* (Wiesbaden 2003), 7-8.
[6] Observed in different formation of letters, such as 'd', or tendency to use one form of abbreviation over another.
[7] Scarpatetti, 7-10.

not correspond to individual quaternions.[8] Rather, the new hand often appears in the middle of the page, as on pages 75, 93, 127, etc. See, for example, the handwriting change toward the bottom of page 75 (7 lines from the bottom):
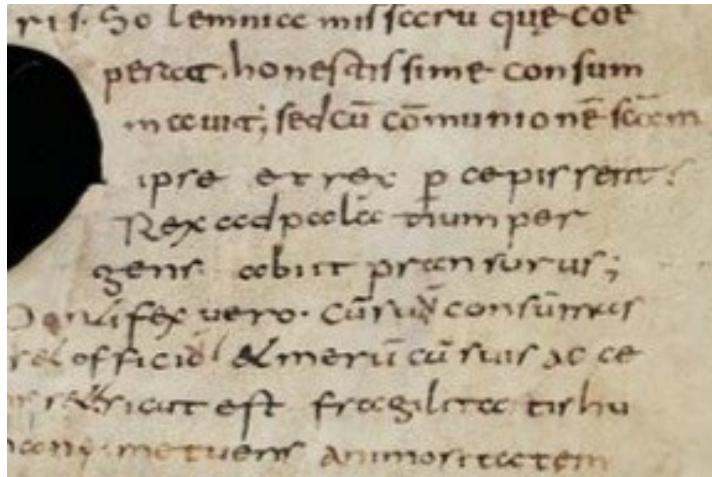


[9]

Another handwritten feature of this Codex is the late addition of corrections to the Latin throughout, and Scarpatetti identifies the manuscript as Schuelerarbeit.[10] For example, a kind of grammatical correction common in this manuscript can be found on page 12, where the an incorrect "que" has been changed to "qui" (7 lines from the top):
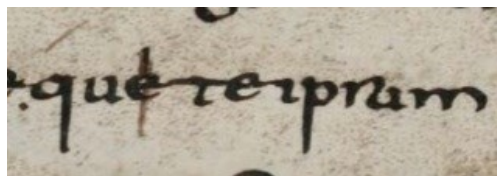


[11]

Not all corrections are as subtle as this. There are pages, such as page 73, that feature many very obvious corrections. The following images are just two of the

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[8] A quaternion is a set of four sheets folded to create eight leaves, or sixteen pages.
[9] St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 548: *Vitae sanctorum* (http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/list/one/csg/0548), 75.
[10] That is, the work of students, rather than schoolwork. Scarpatetti, 8.
[11] Cod. Sang. 548, 12.

more obvious corrections out of seven on that page alone (the first image is 1 line

from the bottom, the second is 3 lines above that):



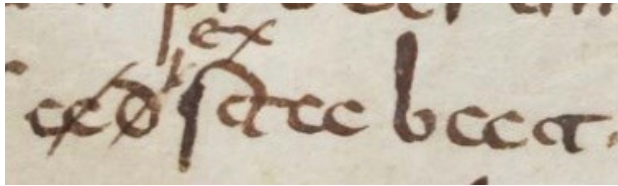Here, the word "ad" has simply been crossed out and replaced by "ex" between the

lines.



<sup>12</sup>
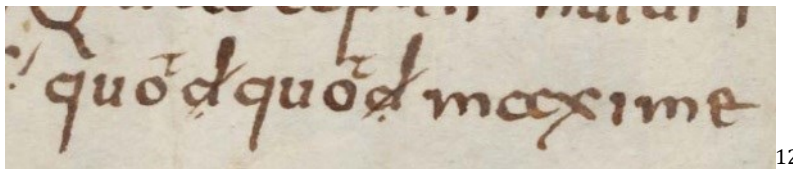
Similarly, "quodquod" has been replaced with "quotquot," again crossing out the

letters that create an incorrect word. Clearly, aesthetics were not an objective of the

creators of this manuscript.

The materials from which the Codex was created provide further evidence

that it served the utilitarian purpose of educating students and monks and was not

created as a decorative piece or a commodity to be sold. The parchment is not the

highest quality; it is made of goatskin and is full of holes.[13] In all, there are 36 major

holes affecting 18 pages, as well as numerous smaller holes throughout the

manuscript. These are not to be confused with other rips and tears that are probably

the result of aging and use; as the text in the manuscript is not interrupted by these

holes, they were obviously present in the raw materials chosen to be used.  Pages 51

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[12] Cod. Sang.  548, 73.
[13] Scarpatetti, 7.

and 52 are two sides of one leaf and are both disrupted by a substantial hole, as well as two minor holes, that demonstrate the typical quality of a page in Cod. Sang. 548:
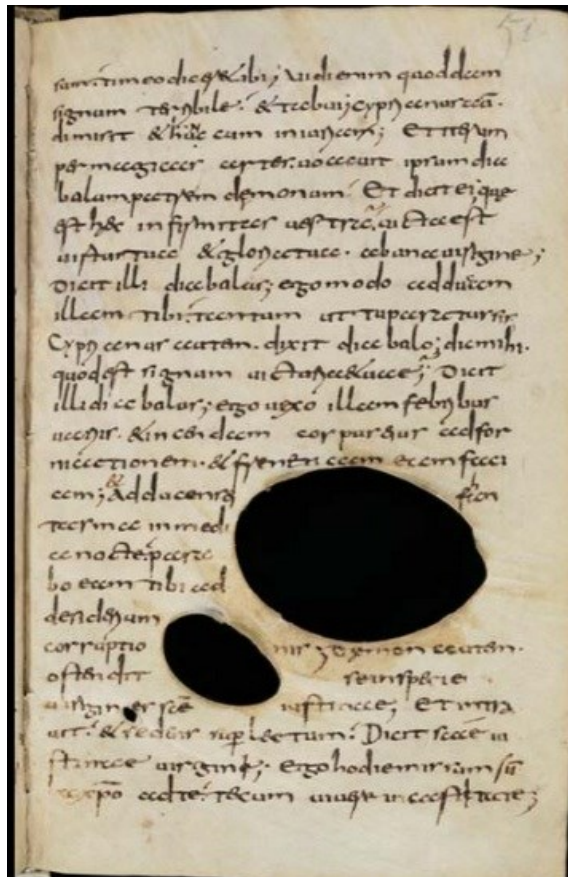
The Capitals of each chapter are also rather plain compared to other medieval manuscripts. Compare, for example, the capital D at the beginning of the *Vita Leudegarii* to a page from the famous Lindisfarne Gospels, which is about a century older than Cod. Sang 548:

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14 Cod. Sang. 548, 51.

The Lindisfarne Gospels are older and the textual decoration follows a different

tradition, that is, the Celtic tradition.[17] However, the decorative writing used in the

Lindisfarne Gospels demonstrates what potential had already been reached in the

field of manuscript production by the time that Cod. Sang 548 was created. By

comparing the illustration in the two manuscripts, it is very clear that decoration

was not a priority in the creation of Cod. Sang 548. The attempts made to satisfy the

conventions of medieval manuscripts, in this case, elaborate capitals, are very

simple, drawn without any tools, not even a straightedge, and in one color. This

reflects the different priorities of the creators of Codex Sangallensis 548. Neither

creating beauty nor a valuable object is the goal of this manuscript. Instead, as a

physical object, it is a practice text, a tool for students to use in order to learn how to

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[15] Cod. Sang. 548, 67.
[16] Picture source,  Eadfrith of Lindisfarne (presumed),
"LindisfarneFol27rIncipitMatt"
http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMIN.ASP?Size=mid&IllI
D=2222&MSID=6469. Licensed under Public domain via Wikimedia Commons -
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:LindisfarneFol27rIncipitMatt.jpg#mediav
iewer/File:LindisfarneFol27rIncipitMatt.jpg
[17] The Lindisfarne Gospels were written around 698 by Eadfrith, bishop of
Lindisfarne, which is in the British Isles. Roger Collins, *Early Medieval Europe,* (New
York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 187.

create better manuscripts in the future. It is comprised of low-quality, expendable materials that can be marked up and reused or continued by future pupils.

This physical examination of Codex Sangallensis 548 demonstrates both its manner of production and its purpose. It is the product of collaboration – several scribes were involved in its production. It was used for instruction – students produced it, read it and corrected it.  After its completion, it may also have been read out and studied by monks at St. Gall, who were also intended to benefit from its edifying messages. These messages may be more clearly understood from an analysis of its contents.

**The Contents of Codex Sangallensis 548**

The Codex opens with a table of contents listing the nine saint stories that comprise it.
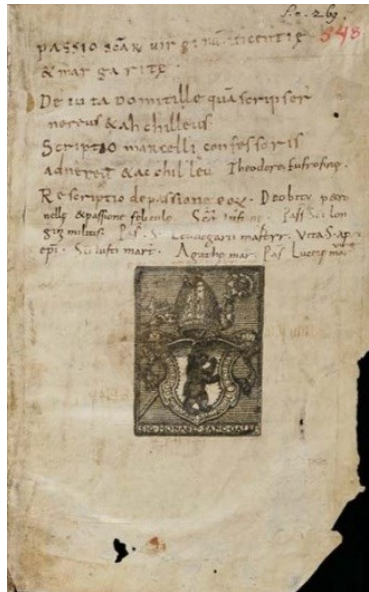
In order, those stories are: "Holy Virgins" Vincentia and Margarita; Saint Domitilla and her servants, Nereus and Achilleus, her foster sisters, Theodora and Eufrosina, and the retelling of the passion of Saints Petronilla and Felicula; Saint Justina; Saint Longinus Militus; Saint Leudegarius "the Martyr"; Saint Aprus Episcopus; Saint Justus "the Martyr"; Saint Agatha "the Martyr"; and Saint Lucia "the Virgin Martyr."[19]

It is interesting to note that the terms "virgin" and "martyr" have been used sparingly in the table of contents. While Vincentia and Margarita and Lucia are the only ones with the epithet "holy virgins," the saint stories themselves make it clear that Domitilla, Theodora, Eufrosina, Petronilla, Felicula, Justina, and Agatha were also virgins, as well as martyrs. Nereus and Achilleus and Longinus are martyrs as well, although the table of contents does not specify this. The Codex then presents the story of each of these saints, in the specified order. After the telling of all these

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[18] Cod. Sang 548, 3.
[19] The term "Saint" appears in this paper in recognition of the fact that this is how the Codex refers to these figures. It is not intended to imply judgment about or belief in their sainthood outside the context of this Codex.

stories, the Codex closes with a brief explanation of what to pray for and at what time to offer such prayers. This closing of the manuscript with explicit prayer instructions is another indication of the educational purpose of the Codex, offering advice on how to be a proper Christian.

**What is a Passion?[20]**

As stated above, the stories in Cod. Sang. 548 are all stories about saints who are persecuted for their faith, and, in most instances, are also martyred for it. All of the saints in the Codex, except St. Aprus, are martyr saints; however, the stories in the Codex do not equally emphasize their martyrdoms. For example, the story of Justina and Cyprianus in Cod. Sang. 548 focuses on the story of Justina's conversation with, and subsequent conversion of, the pagan magician Cyprianus. It does not, however, make anything of their martyrdom, although they are traditionally known to have died as martyrs in the early fourth century AD. The early sixth century St. Aprus is not a martyr, but the *Vita Apri Episcopi* included in Cod. Sang. 548 features many of the same narrative events as appear in the martyr stories. He is even imprisoned after a run-in with an official, but, unlike the other protagonists in the Codex who end up in the same situation, Aprus' miracle is not in the manner of his death but in a miraculous prison break. After this event, rather than his corpse performing miracles, Aprus himself performs miracles in the course

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[20] For the definition, please refer to footnote 4.

of his episcopacy. When he does die, more miracles are said to occur at his tomb,

just as is described in the Passions of the other saints that appear in the Codex.[21]

The prevalence of the Passion genre of saint story is an important aspect of

this Codex, particularly when we recognize that the Passions, as well as the Life of

Aprus, presented in this Codex all tend to follow similar narrative structures and

share similar narrative features.  Each story opens with a description of the Saint

about whom the story is written, often including when and where they lived. This

approach thus presents all these saints as real historical figures, although many of

them cannot be verified as having lived in the period ascribed to them, or having

lived at all. Vincentia and Margarita, aged ten and eight, lived during the

persecutions under Maximian, in the city of Iconium in the province of Isauria.[22]

Domitilla is identified as "neptem," niece or female descendant, of the Emperor

Domitian, during his tenure as Emperor.[23] Ss. Nereus and Achilleus are identified as

her eunuch chamberlains. Subsequent to Domitilla's conversion, Domitilla and her

entourage are exiled to Pontia.[24] In the middle of Domitilla's Passion is a digression

in the form of a letter from an acquaintance, which outlines first a miracle story

about St. Peter, and then the Passion of Sts. Petronilla and Felicula.[25] Even their

story-within-a-story opens with an introduction: Petronilla is the daughter of Peter.

The reader soon also discovers that Felicula is her foster-sister, and they are in

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[21] Cod. Sang. 548, 117-27.
[22] Ibid, 4.
[23] Ibid, 15.
[24] Cod. Sang. 548, 26.
[25] The acquaintance is Marcellus, "confessoribus Nereo et Achilleo," Ibid, 26.

Rome.[26] St. Justina is introduced as the daughter of Edesil and Dediona in the city of

Antioch.[27] The first sentence of St. Longinus' Passion announces that he is a soldier

and centurion, the next states that he was present at the crucifixion.[28] A description

of St. Leudegarius' noble background and childhood at the court of Clothar opens his

story.[29] St. Aprus' epithet is Bishop of Toul, and a description of his Christian

upbringing begins his story.[30] St Justus is nine years old, and his Passion takes place

on a trip to Amiens with his father.[31] St. Agatha is a girl from Catania in the Province

of Sicily, during the reign of Emperor Decius.[32] St Lucia is a virgin saint from

Syracuse who wants to go to venerate Agatha at her tomb.[33] Thus, we can see that

these saints are from all around the Roman Empire and most of them are presented

as having lived during antiquity. They represent several different kinds of people:

children, adults, those of pagan background and those of Christian parentage, men

and women, nobles and slaves. What unites them all in these brief introductions is

that they are all "*sancti/ae et beatissimi/ae.*"[34] Their various backgrounds

demonstrate that anyone, no matter their age, social status, or background, can

become a saint like these heroes and heroines.

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[26] Ibid, 31.
[27] Ibid 44.
[28] Ibid, 58.
[29] Ibid, 68.
[30] Ibid, 117.
[31] Ibid, 127.
[32] "IN PROVINTIA SICILIA IN URBE CATHENENSIUM SUB DECIO IMPERATORE"
Ibid, 149.
[33] Ibid, 160.
[34] "holy and blessed."

**The Heart of the Passion: Persecutions of the Saints**

After the protagonist's background is described in each story, an antagonist is soon introduced, and this character is often a government official of some kind. This government official decides that the saint has offended him in some way. In the case of the virgin martyrs, it is usually because the female saint has rejected an offer of marriage because she has dedicated herself to God. Vincentia and Margarita are called before the Palace Prior Eusebius on orders of the Emperor Maximian to bring him some Christian girls in order to make them sacrifice to the gods.[35] They are sought out for persecution specifically because they are Christian, and the aim of their persecution is simply to convert them, and failing that, to torture them. However, despite this persecution, which is apparently unrelated to their marital prospects, the saints make several references to the blessed maintenance of their virginity throughout their torture. Domitilla's persecution comes as a result of her marriage to Aurelianus, son of the consul – she refuses to give up her virginity in order to fulfill her wifely duties.[36] Saints Petronilla and Felicula face a similar situation. Petronilla is approached by the nobleman Flaccus, who wants to marry her. When she dies, he decides that Felicula must be his wife instead.[37] The antagonist in the story of St. Justina is also a spurned lover. When Justina rejects the marriage proposal of a man named Aglaidus, he hires the magician Cyprianus to use

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[35] "require mihi puellas quis dicunt christem confiteri ut eas cogas diis nostris sacrificare." Cod. Sang. 548, 4.
[36] Ibid, 25.
[37] Flaccus is described as a "*comes.*" Cod. Sang. 548, 32-3.

demons to attack Justina's steadfast virtue.[38] St. Agatha's persecutor is the consul

Quintianus, who is yet another rejected suitor.[39] St. Lucia, inspired by St. Agatha,

also consecrates herself to God and convinces her mother to distribute their wealth

to the poor. However, prior to this, Lucia's mother had arranged a marriage for

Lucia, and the fiance is angered by Lucia's conversion and her plan to distribute the

fortune to which he aspired. Therefore, he seeks the aid of the Governor Paschasius,

who becomes Lucia's chief persecutor.[40]

In the case of the male martyrs, each saint's honesty and reputation as a good

man and Christian threatens the antagonist's position of power in some way. Nereus

and Achilleus are faithful Christians who are very effective at converting other

people to Christianity. Their conversion of Domitilla, and active discouragement of

the institution of marriage, in part because of its potential for mistreatment of the

wife, led her to reject her own marriage. Thus, Nereus and Achilleus thwarted

Aurelianus' plan to marry Domitilla.[41] St. Longinus is also persecuted for his

effectiveness at conversion. Although he is a soldier, present at Christ's crucifixion,

he converts to Christianity and learns to live the Christian life from the Apostles.

After he spends a number of years proselytizing and converting many people, the

governor of Cappadocia, Octavius, becomes concerned about the influence of this

Christian Longinus. So, Octavius calls Longinus to answer for himself and sacrifice to

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[38] Ibid, 46-7.
[39] Ibid, 149.
[40] Ibid, 161-2.
[41] "Omnes sponsi antequam sponsas suas accipiant humil esse et mansuetissimos fingunt. postea vero quales se celaverint produnt."  Ibid, 16.

the gods, but Longinus refuses, insisting that "no one can serve two masters."[42]

Thus, Longinus defies Octavius' authority by exercising his faith. Leudegarius'

nemesis is the Mayor of the Palace Ebroinus, whose motive for persecuting

Leudegarius is primarily a political rivalry. According to the story in the Codex,

Leudegarius had not only held the same role at court, but was more popular in that

role. This made Ebroinus feel that Leudegarius was a threat to his power.[43] The

primary antagonist in the Life of St. Aprus is the judge Adrianus. Aprus attempts to

intercede on behalf of three criminals who have been incarcerated. Rather than

release the men, Adrianus has Aprus thrown in jail too.[44] The provocation of St.

Justus' nemesis is less obvious; Justus is a child, traveling with his father and uncle.

Justus is depicted as a very pious and generous child, performing miraculous feats

along the journey. When the anti-Christian judge Ritiovarus hears of the trio of

Christian travelers, he sends knights to kill them. When Justus refuses to disclose

the location of his father and uncle, who have hidden themselves in a cave, he is

decapitated.[45]

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[42] "Nemo potest duobus dominis servire."Cod. Sang. 548, 61.
[43] "Qui acceptis huius regni gubernaculis quotquot maxime adversus leges antiquorum regnum ac magnorum procerum quorum vita laudabilis ex stabat repperit ineptos ad pristinum reduxit statim... In tantum ut usque quaque omnia regnafrancorum restitueret." Ibid, 73.
[44] Ibid, 122.
[45] Ibid, 134-5.

**Saints and Persecutors: A Power Struggle with Life in the Balance**

For both the female and male martyrs, their relationship with their antagonist is due to some undermining of the antagonist's authority. The saint's Christian faith is both the reason for their rejection of the persecutor's demands and the persecutor's excuse for the saint's victimization. As a result, the antagonist proceeds to use his power and influence to try to break the saint's faith and to undermine his or her virtue. Vincentia and Margarita are threatened with punishments, like being thrown into the sea, if they do not agree to sacrifice to the gods.[46] Domitilla's husband, frustrated that exile has not changed her mind about maintaining her chastity, ultimately conspires to bring her home and consummate the marriage by force.[47] Earlier in the same story, Nereus and Achilleus refuse to help change Domitilla's mind about her conversion, as well as to sacrifice to the gods, and are simply beheaded for their obstinacy.[48] After three days for consideration, Petronilla also simply dies rather than marry Flaccus, so it is Felicula who suffers more persecution.[49] For refusing to marry Flaccus and give up her Christian faith, she is incarcerated in darkness and starved for a week.[50] Justina's persecutor, Aglaidus, first tries to have her kidnapped by a mob, and when that is unsuccessful, he hires a magician to use demons to lure her away from her faith, including by trying to induce a "fever" in her for "fornication" to undermine her vow

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[46] "Si eas non ad vocaveris diis sacrificare in mare demergeris." Cod. Sang. 548, 5.
[47] Ibid, 39.
[48] Ibid, 35.
[49] "Reclinans se inlectulo emisit spiritum." Ibid, 32.
[50] Ibid, 33.

of chastity.[51] When Longinus refuses to sacrifice to the gods, his tongue is cut out.[52] Leudegarius, on the wrong side of a political coup, ends up being kidnapped, having his own brother murdered in front of him, and suffering physical tortures such as having his tongue cut out.[53] As mentioned above, Aprus is incarcerated and Justus is beheaded. For her refusal to accept the advances of Quintianus, St. Agatha is kept hostage at a brothel for a month as he attempts to undermine her virtue. When this proves unsuccessful, she is tortured physically: she is kept in the dark, in seclusion, and her breast is cut off.[54] St. Lucia's punishment is also to be sold to a brothel, although this is prevented by a miracle.[55]

**Perseverance in the Face of Persecution**

Despite these tortures and tribulations devised by the antagonist, which are often unsuccessful due to miraculous holy intervention, the saint maintains his or her dedication to God. In some cases, like those of Domitilla, Longinus, Leudegarius, or Justina, spectators, persecutors and executioners alike are converted as, or after, they witness these miracles. The worse the antagonist's punishments become, the more steadfast the saint remains in his or her faith, and the angrier the persecutor

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[51] "ego vexo illam febribus variis et incendam corpus eius ad fornicationem et freneticam eum faciam. et adducens fantasma in media nocte parabo eam tibi ad desiderium corruptionis." Cod. Sang. 548, 51.
[52] Ibid, 65.
[53] Ibid, 84.
[54] Ibid, 149, 153-4.
[55] Ibid, 164.

becomes. Finally, the ultimate trial comes when the saint is threatened with death, which is gladly accepted.[56]

When Vincentia and Margarita are condemned to death by being rolled naked over fiery coals, they state that as Christians, "[they] are not afraid."[57] When the coals miraculously go cold, they are beheaded, saying simply, "thanks to the Lord."[58] After Aurelianus' wedding scheme to bed Domitilla ends in his own death, Aurelianus' brother Luxurius has Domitilla and her sisters burned to death in their room. The saints' bodies are found prostrated in prayer.[59] Petronilla, as mentioned above, chooses death to put herself beyond Flaccus' reach. Felicula suffers a week of starvation, then has a vision of Christ. When she is ordered to deny her Christianity, she refuses on the grounds of her love for Christ, and chooses to be crucified rather than recant.[60] Although Longinus had proven the power of his God over Octavius' idols, Octavius still condemns Longinus to death. So, Longinus stands praying for an hour, until he is ready to die: the text states that he simply "gave up his spirit to the Lord."[61] Leudegarius is so accepting of his own martyrdom that he even blesses his executioners to give them the strength to carry out their task.[62]

St. Justus, too, knows of his impending death. He senses the danger approaching for him and his father and uncle, and he tells them to go and hide.

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[56] This is not the case for the *Vitae* of *Ss. Apri Episcopi* or *Justinae*, as these saints survive the narrative in the Codex and go on to convert many people to Christianity.
[57] "christianae sumus: non timemus." Cod. Sang. 548, 11.
[58] "domino gratias." Ibid, 13.
[59] Ibid, 43.
[60] Ibid, 32-3.
[61] "Et statim octavius presides iussit eum capitalem subire sententiam. Et stans sanctis di Longinus oravit tam quam unius horae spatium et sic domino in pace sed dedit spiritum. " Ibid, 66.
[62] Ibid, 92.

When the assassins ask Justus where his parents are and whether they sacrifice to the gods, Justus refuses to reveal the location of his family members and tells the villains that he is a Christian.  Although he knows the danger he faces, Justus maintains his resolve and his faith, and is decapitated for it. Despite the decapitation, Justus holds his head in his hands and prays to God to accept his spirit.[63] Even in death, he is a faithful Christian; this miracle occurs because of it.

St. Agatha's pithy response to each torture meted out to her demonstrates how willing she is to suffer torment and persecution. For example, she tells her persecutor that, as wheat cannot be fit into the barn until it has been trampled down, she cannot enter paradise until she has been martyred by her executioners.[64] Despite, or perhaps because of her calm acceptance of martyrdom, she is not killed at this point in the story. Instead, after several more days of torture, Agatha finally decides it is time to die, and does so, alone in her jail cell.[65] Lucia's death comes after a series of attempts to kill her are unsuccessful.  Her would-be killers, unable to drag her off to a brothel using force, magic, or oxen, or to light her on fire, ultimately decapitate her. Lucia accepts her martyrdom as part of her duty as a servant of

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[63] "Interrogaverunt iusto ubi essent parentes eius. vel quorum diis sacrificarent. At ille christianum se esse; et cum parentes suos prodere noluit. Dicit alter ad alium educ gladium et amputa caput eius et feramus eum prefecto. Et cum caput eius fuisset abscisum corpus erigens stetit sicut immobilis. et accipiens caput in manibus suis posuit in sinum suum et oravit anima eius ad dominum; dominus caeli ex terre recipe spiritum meum quia innoxium et mundum corde." Cod. Sang. 548, 134-5.

[64] "Non enim pote est triticum in horreo reponi nisi haec eius fortem fuerit conculcatas arestas et redactus in palleis. Ita et anima mea non potest in paradisum domini cum palma intrare martyri nisi diligenter feceris corpus meum a carnificibus coaptari." Ibid, 154.

[65] Sancta vero domini ingressa in carcerem expandit manus suas ad dominum in caeli et dixit Domine ... Te deprecor ut accipias spiritum meum domine quia tempus est ut me iubeas istum sactum derelinquere et ad tuam misericordiam pervenire. Haec autem dixit coram multis cum infeti voce et emisit spiritum." Ibid, 157-8.

God.[66] All of these saints maintain their resolute faith and refuse to deny their

Christian beliefs under threat of death, demonstrating that they all accept their

deaths. As Agatha points out, they can regard their deaths as a step towards an

afterlife in heaven. Their persecution is thus really their salvation.


**Death as Victory**


Therefore, in death, the saint is not defeated. Proof of his or her holiness and

God's power lies in the posthumous miracles performed by their bodies, such as

their resistance to desecration, and the healing and conversion of visitors to the

saint's tomb. As Vincentia and Margarita are martyred, everyone watching goes

temporarily blind. Then, when their bodies are taken to a field to be eaten by wild

birds, angels protect them so that they cannot be defiled and they do not

decompose.[67] After Domitilla and her foster-sisters are burned to death, their bodies

are found unharmed and undisturbed, although deceased.[68] After Longinus' death,

his persecutor Octavius, who was previously struck blind, throws himself onto

Longinus' body and repents for having ordered Longinus' death. He then becomes a

Christian, and his sight is miraculously restored. [69]

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[66] Cod. Sang. 548, 171.
[67] "Omnes ceci effecti sunt; et dum capita sanatarum in earum corpore revocata sunt. Lumen eis ut ante a restitutum est; audiens haec iudex iussit corpora earum in campo per triduum custodire. ut ab est iis et avibus consum merentur. Protegente autem angelo di non sunt contaminatae nec mutatus est color corporis earum: duo columbe albe ibi eas consolabatur." Ibid, 13
[68] Ibid, 43.
[69] Cod. Sang. 548, 66.

The miracles performed by Leudegarius' corpse form an entire postscript to his *Vita*. His tomb appears to emit a bright light, and pilgrims visiting it find that their ailments have disappeared. A rash of thefts is resolved when a supplicant at Leudegarius' tomb returns to his cell to find the goods returned there. After a dispute among bishops over whose city should be the permanent site of Leudegarius' tomb, his body goes on a journey during which several more miracles occur.  Many more ailments and handicaps are cured, demons are exorcised, and a ship is saved from being wrecked in a storm.[70] As St. Aprus is buried, there is a wonderful smell, and when they put him in the tomb, two columns of cloud descend from the sky and a dove flies up to heaven. A shrine to Aprus is built on his tomb, and there lepers are cured, the blind see, the deaf hear, and the dumb speak. [71]

The miracle after St. Justus' death is that his decapitation does not take the life out of him.[72] Hs head continues to speak. When Justus' executioners flee, his father and uncle come out of hiding. Justus' decapitated head tells them to bury his body in a cave, and return his head to his mother.[73] Once his head is returned to his home, through the divine power of the boy saint, a light shines forth from the house

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[70] Stories of Leudegarius' posthumous miracles, Ibid, 97-115.
[71] Ibid, 125-6.
[72] The actual state of Justus' existence is unclear: his body can hold his head, and his head continues to speak, but he is not considered to remain alive. When asked what happened to their son, Justus' father tells his mother that Justus is dead: "Filius meus iustus defunctus est." Ibid, 138.
[73] "capu[t] genetrici meae de ferte ut in amore dilectionis osculet eum et si obtat me videre in paradiso me requirat" Ibid, 136.

through the entire city. [74]After a shrine for St. Justus is established, a blind girl's sight is miraculously restored.[75]

At the conclusion of Agatha's story, her persecutor Quintianus is killed and her fame and veneration grows. A year after her death, Mount Etna erupts, and Christians in her city venerating Agatha use her veil to protect themselves from harm by waving it at the volcano. Miraculously, Etna quiets and the fiery lava stops flowing, demonstrating the holy power of St. Agatha to believers.[76] Agatha also appears to St. Lucia in a vision, which spurs Lucia on to carry out her good works and steadfastly maintain her spirits until she too is martyred. Lucia's story simply ends with her martyrdom and not with a further section about posthumous miracles. However, her entire ordeal is a series of miracles involving the incorruptibility of her body.

Thus, it can be seen that all the martyr stories, as well as those two that are not told as Passions, contain many similar events. Their characters are motivated by the same steadfast faith and desire to serve their God. Many of the virgin saints threaten the status quo by declining marriage. Their would-be suitors all take these rejections as personal insults. The persecutors of all the saints, except for Leudegarius and Aprus, feel threatened by the saints' refusals to participate in pagan sacrificial rituals.  They see the refusals as threats both to the authority of the

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[74] "cum esset utique noctis tempore divina iuvente virtute non solum domus sed tota urbis resplenduit." The fact of the shining "over the whole city" is mentioned three times over two pages. Cod. Sang. 548, 137-8.
[75] Ibid, 139.
[76] Ibid, 159.

official trying to force the saints to honor the pagan gods, and to the entire social

order of the society.

The reason for persecuting Christians for failing to sacrifice to the gods was

theologically based. Polytheists saw Christians as having abandoned both tradition

and their duty to worship the gods. Conversion to Christianity was seen as

disrespecting the gods, and thereby endangering the whole community, meriting

first punishment and then death if they refused to acquiesce. This could, to some

extent, explain the anger of Ritiovarus towards Justus and his family for being

Christians and in Ritiovarus' city. This is another reason that successful

proselytizing by these Christian saints would have been of particular concern to

pagan officials.[77]

The persecutors of Leudegarius and Aprus both feel personally affronted by

these two saints because of the saints' involvement in their respective officials'

domain: Leudegarius has outshone Ebroinus in the role of mayor of the palace, and

Aprus has offended a judge by questioning his decision to incarcerate the men Aprus

defends. The motives of the antagonists arise from damage to their egos or

perceived threats to their authority or religion, while the saints are not motivated by

any such insecurities. Instead, they are faithful, even selfless Christians, kind and

willing to sacrifice for others. Justus and Lucia demonstrate this when they give

their possessions to the poor. These saints are attacked and persecuted through no

real fault of their own, by others who feel threatened by the way that they practice

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[77] On the Roman worldview, Peter Brown, *Authority and the Sacred: aspects of the Christianisation of the Roman World* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 35-6.

their faith. They maintain their dedication to the Christian faith despite persecution.

The miracles that occur during their tribulations as well as posthumously function

to validate their professions of faith and prove that they are indeed holy people.


**What makes a saint?**


In addition to the narrative points common to each of these stories, their

protagonists, the saints, share common characteristics. Each one is virtuous, and

certain key words and expressions indicating this this reappear again and again: St.

Justus is "innocentu[s] et pur[us]," while St. Aprus demonstrates the merits of

"simplicitatis et innocentie." [78] Female saints are similarly recognized for their

innocence, and more specifically, for their sexual innocence. St. Lucia is applauded

for her chastity, St. Justina prays for the protection of her chastity, and Sts. Vincentia

and Margarita have God's protection over their chastity as well.[79] The significance of

this virtue is stated explicitly in the first Passion: "virginity exceeds all virtues in

worth."[80] In addition to innocence and chastity, the virtue of fidelity, in particular

fidelity to Christ and to God, regularly appears in descriptions of the saints in this

Codex. For example, Nereus and Achilleus are said to be constant and faithful in the

letter from Marcellus.[81] In the same story, Domitilla's "great faith" is also

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[78] Cod. Sang. 548, 137, 125.
[79] Lucia, ""per annos xx venerando in castitate;" Justina, "custodi me in castitate;" Vincentia and Margarita ""Dominus noster qui nos in virginitatem dignatus est custodire." Ibid, 171, 50, 9.
[80] "Ita virginitas omnium virtutum dignitates excedit" Ibid, 19.
[81] "constanter esse et fide" Ibid, 28.

mentioned.[82] In St. Lucia's dream, Agatha recognizes this virtue in her, too, when she

tells Lucia to "lean on your faith."[83]

Due to their great virtues, each saint also becomes famous: in the case of

Longinus, "more and more the reputation of the holy Saint Longinus rushed forth."[84]

The virtues of St. Aprus also "increased far and wide."[85] Similar terms are used to

describe Agatha's rising fame: "the fame of the blessed virgin Agatha grew through

all the provinces."[86] In the case of St. Agatha, her story inspires St. Lucia to become

such a good Christian that Lucia becomes a saint too. Thus, the saint's fame is not

about their personal glory, but is due to works carried out for the glory of God and

to demonstrate for others how to live properly. In fact, that is exactly the purpose of

this volume of stories about saints: to teach their readers how to live lives dedicated

to God and marked by virtue, service and inspiration of others by the example they

set.

The use of a familiar narrative structure in each story facilitates the telling of

the story, emphasizes the similarity of that story to the others, and helps the reader

easily to identify the moral of the story. Each martyr suffers horrific torments, but

nothing breaks his or her faith, and in death the martyr is triumphant over his or her

foe. Clearly, steadfast faith in God is the key to victory over adversity. Furthermore,

this faith brings great rewards in the afterlife, in particular, going to paradise as a

martyred saint. Thus, the copying and preservation of the legends in this Codex is

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[82] Cod. Sang. 548, 35.
[83] "macri tue fides." Ibid, 161.
[84] "magis magisque fama beati martyris Longe lateque prorupit." Ibid, 96.
[85] "longe lateque crebresceret." Ibid, 119-20.
[86] "per universam provintiam beatissimae virginis agathe fama crebesceret." Ibid, 160.

far more than the simple passing on of these stories for posterity. It reminds the reader, or the reader's audience, and the scribe as well, about the importance of a strong faith in God and that the way in which he lives his life should be principally informed by that faith.

**Perkins' Theory of Martyrdom**

Other theories about the origin and function of martyr stories have also been proposed. In *The Suffering Self,* Judith Perkins suggests that to be a Christian, in antiquity, was to be a martyr; thus, such Passions were used to imbue the Christian community with an identity and a "self-definition that enabled the growth of Christianity as an institution."[87] Perkins posits that early martyr stories were a new twist on familiar Greco-Roman storylines, tracing the transformation of social paradigms of a "happy ending" from the Greco-Roman "marriage as a happy ending" into the early Christian "death as a happy ending."[88] In a Christian Passion, the death of the martyr is not to be viewed as a defeat at the hands of persecutors, but as a triumph. The Christian protagonist has managed to escape the control of the persecutor and by extension of the devil.

By comparing this genre to Greco-Roman love stories, Perkins attempts to show how the Passion arose as a genre out of a pre-existing literary form, and helped to create an identity for a developing community. However, as Perkins is

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[87] Judith Perkins, *The Suffering Self: Pain and narrative representation in early Christian era.* (London, New York: Routledge, 1995), 12.
[88] Ibid, the quoted phrases are chapter titles.

writing in reference to late antique Passions, the community about which she writes is not the same community that produced and read the Codices at St. Gall. The identity of the community at St. Gall was, by the end of the eighth century, undoubtedly Christian, and therefore not in need of influences to form or reinforce their identity as Christians in response to pagan threats. Therefore, Perkins' theory about Passions as an identity-forming genre does not apply in this case. Why Perkins' theory is useful here, however, is that it helps to explain where the Passion genre originated and how, as an aspect of early Christian identity, martyr imagery and narrative style became a key part of Christian literature. An eighth-century Passion was not produced for the same reasons as a fourth-century Passion, but the proliferation of the genre is perhaps due in part to the history of Christian identity.

Many of the Saints in Cod. Sang. 548 are "ancient" saints, whose stories take place in the time described by Perkins. However, two saints in the Codex are not: Aprus Episcopus, a sixth century bishop saint, and Leudegarius, a seventh century saint. Their placement among these saints with older, more established cults is also a way of using a pre-existing narrative form to facilitate the development of a particular identity. In this case, that is creating an identity for newer saints that lends them an air of legitimacy similar to that of the established saints. Leudegarius' and Aprus' stories are placed exactly in the middle of the Codex. The "younger" saints share traits with the older saints. The newer stories share narrative structures with the older ones. By being placed in the midst of the established narratives, an attempt to legitimize these new additions to the canon of saints can be seen in Cod. Sang. 548.

**Saint Stories as Contemporary Theology**

Another use for such saint stories may have been as contributions to or
reinforcement of contemporary theology. Several historians have, in recent decades,
used this theory to understand the function of saint narratives.[89] Of course, Cod.
Sang. 548 was not an original work, but a selection of saint stories copied from other
sources. Therefore, the stories found in this Codex cannot be seen as theological
contributions coming directly from St. Gall. They may, however, indicate how St. Gall
was situated within the context of contemporary theological development. That all
the martyr stories in the Codex share the message of the importance of steadfast
faith can be viewed as a reflection of contemporary theological thought. That the
monks at St. Gall were picking up this theme and passing it on shows that they were
engaged in this stage of the development of Christianity. As Joseph-Claude Poulin
points out in regards to the *Vita Leudegarii*, the protagonist of this Passion is not the
"stereotyped character" of a perfect saint with a "predestined perfect life."[90] Instead,
he is an imperfect man whose ultimate virtue is his "perfect constancy [of faith] in
the midst of trials."[91] In this way, the choice to include, or availability of, Passions
that present a "Christian acceptance of terrestrial misfortune" and a saint whose
choices could be emulated as a personal decision rather than a result of one's birth,

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[89] For an overview of theology in saint narratives, see Felice Lifshitz, *Religious
Women in Early Carolingian Francia.* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014),
113.
[90] <<Leger n'est pas un personnage stereotype, ineleuctablement predestine a la vie
parfaite.>> Joseph-Claude Poulin, "Saint Leger d'Autun et ses premiers biographes
(Fin VIIe-Milieu IXe Siecle)" in *Bulletin de la Societe des antiquaires de l'ouest et des
musees de Poitiers.* vol 14 no. 3 (1977), 189.
[91] <<une parfaite constance au milieu des epreuves.>> Ibid, 189.

gives a window into the sort of Christianity being advanced at the time.[92] The

theology in this case is that one is a saint because of the choices one makes. The

text's real purpose in this Codex, though, is not to create, develop, or even prove that

message, but simply to pass it on.


**The Monastic School at St. Gall: Education in the time of Charlemagne**


One of the best pieces of evidence that this Codex and its contents served

educational purposes is that St. Gall, the monastery where it was produced, was one

of the Frankish kingdom's "major educational centers."[93] It was famous both for its

*scriptorium*, or writing workshop, which produced many of the manuscripts that

contributed to St. Gall's famous library, and for its school. The period when this

Codex was produced there is notable for an increased production of texts in general

in the Frankish kingdom, thanks in large part to the enactment of Charlemagne's

program of educational reform at this time.

That Cod. Sang. 548 is a student text can be determined from several pieces

of evidence. Physically, it is of low quality materials that, while still relatively

valuable, demonstrate that this was a text intended for regular use rather than

admiration. The quality of its craftsmanship is also low in regards to both the

decoration and the oft-corrected Latin in which the stories are written. Its lack of

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[92] <<acceptation chretienne des infortunes terrestres>> Ibid, 189.
[93] John Contreni, "Education and Learning in the Early Middle Ages: New
Perspectives and Old Problems" in *The International Journal of Social Education 4.*
(Indiana, 1989), 15.

costly decoration also points to its use as an instructive, rather than liturgical text.[94]

That St. Gall was an educational centre further supports that this Codex is a student

production, rather than a low-quality monastic text. It can be understood as a book

for students insofar as there are seven discernable hands at work in it; at least seven

students were trained in manuscript-production through the creation of this

particular Codex. In a more general sense, it is further an educational text because

its contents are intended to be instructional to its audience, be it a student scribe, a

pupil studying it, a brother reading it aloud, or monks listening to it in the refectory.

The period directly after Charlemagne's reign also coincides with St. Gall's

own sharp rise in renown and influence as the place to educate one's sons and

future clerics. As J.M. Clark points out, by 850, St. Gall was "so famous that it

attracted pupils from outside."[95] That is, the elite, who could send their sons to

study anywhere in the realm, chose to send them to St. Gall. By the end of the ninth

century, St. Gall was even exporting its curriculum, via St.Gall-trained scholars, to

other schools, and continued to do so for centuries.[96] The period in which Codex

Sangallensis 548 was created was also the period during which the school and

abbey's reputation was being formed and built up. The concurrence of St. Gall's

expanding educational programs and resulting prominence and Charlemagne's

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[94] Adam S. Cohen explains that important liturgical texts, like the Gospels, were often richly decorated in precious metals to reflect their important, holy roles and contents. Adam S. Cohen, "Book Production and Illuminations from Reichenau and St. Gall," Carolingian Culture at Reichenau & St. Gall: Manuscripts and Architecture from the Early Middle Ages, http://www.stgallplan.org/en/tours_book.html, (Sept. 17, 2014)

[95] J.M. Clark, *The Abbey of St. Gall.* (Cambridge University Press: New York, 1926), 91.

[96] Ibid, 92.

educational reforms is no coincidence; Charlemagne's reforms emphasizing the importance of education must surely have helped to shape the curriculum at St. Gall.

The educational reforms accomplished under Charlemagne have led some scholars to consider his age as a kind of "Renaissance," due to the emphasis that it appears was placed on learning and the passing on of knowledge, as well as the wider cultural impacts of increased scholastic output.[97] Charlemagne's biographer Einhard supports the understanding of his reign as a Renaissance in his description of the way Charlemagne's capital, Aachen, became a hub for academics that attracted scholars from across Europe, most famously including the Northumbrian Alcuin.[98]

As such a hub, Aachen has been seen as a leader in the production of scholastic texts in this period. However, Rosamund McKitterick disputes Aachen's actual role in the production of texts under Charlemagne. She suggests instead that "groups of scribes and artists" across the kingdom produced works that have been connected with Charlemagne's reign, but may not have been physically located at his court. [99]Aachen seems instead to have been a symbol of Charlemagne's educational reforms, which were being implemented across his kingdom. With its renowned scriptorium, St. Gall could have easily been a key contributor to this output normally ascribed to Aachen. Monastic schools, like that at St. Gall, were expanded and supported by the royal government. *Scriptoria* were enriched through

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[97] Collins, 307.
[98] On the famous scholars at Charlemagne's court, Ibid, 307-9.
[99] Rosamund McKitterick, *Charlemagne: The Formation of a European Identity.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 350.

the spread of such monastic education, and as a result, there was also a significant

increase in the number of texts copied and passed on during this period.[100]

Chris Wickham suggests that the Carolingian push for widespread literacy, in

particular among Charlemagne's reforms, was rooted in a concept called *correctio*,

which was the view that in order to behave properly, one must first think properly.

In order to think properly, one must be able to read and understand key theological

texts.[101] Thus, the focus on copying religious texts, such as the contents of the Codex

Sangallensis 548, was as much about promoting literacy as about promoting proper

Christian thinking and behavior.

In Carolingian scholarship, the production of new books accompanied the

copying of older texts. These new works, which included Biblical commentary and

theology, as well as grammar, spelling, and philosophy, indicate that there was a

great deal of reflection on the past works that were being copied and passed on.[102]

People were not just reading religious texts; they were taking what they had learned

and building on older ideas to further their own understanding of these topics.

Therefore, the texts copied into a Codex, like Cod. Sang. 548, were not simply being

copied for posterity or for practicing handwriting. The writers, and the readers,

were expected to reflect on the stories, their messages, and what wisdom could be

applied to their own lives.

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[100] The authors note that the Merovingian period to 800CE produced 1800 books or book fragments that have survived to the present, which is a very small number compared with the 9000 surviving texts that date to the ninth century. Marios Costambeys et al, *The Carolingian World.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 145.
[101] This was of particular importance to the ecclesiastical and political elite. Chris Wickham, *Inheritance of Rome.* (London: Penguin Books, 2009), 383.
[102] Costambeys et al, 145.

The creation and study of religious texts was not only a part of a student's education, but was also part of monastic life and culture. The copying of books as a monastic pastime served three purposes. If a new copy of a text was required, copying texts as part of monastic routine helped to fill this need. It also helped to fill a monk's day with godly activity. Finally, it fit into the Carolingian ideal of *correctio* by striving to create more "correct" versions of texts, as a result of which readers or listeners would think and act more "correctly" as well.[103] The use of manuscripts in monastic life did not end with their production. Chapter meetings might include the reading of texts and an explanation of their meaning, and mealtimes were accompanied by the reading out loud of religious texts as well. Thus, the monks at St. Gall were as engaged in studying and learning from religious texts like the Cod. Sang. 548 as the student scribes there to learn their craft.

John Contreni has further delved into the actual programs of study at monastic schools like St. Gall undertaken during the Carolingian period. His work includes an examination of the sort of texts used and in what ways they seem to have been integrated into the education of pupils. For example, the large volume of texts using a "dialogue format" where content is presented in the form of a conversation, often between master and student, indicates that the *quaestio* method was in use at this time.[104] Furthermore, a "heightened atmosphere of questioning" can be seen to characterize the way in which texts in general were studied at these

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[103] This also applies to perfecting one's Latin, in order to perform the liturgy more correctly. Richard Matthew Pollard, "Carolingian Literature at Reichenau and St. Gall" Carolingian Culture at Reichenau & St. Gall: Manuscripts and Architecture from the Early Middle Ages, http://www.stgallplan.org/en/tours_book.html, (Sept. 17, 2014).

[104] That is, an inquiry-style method of instruction.

schools.[105] Not only reading and memorizing, but asking questions about instructional texts was a strategy for reaching a deeper understanding of their contents. This observation supports the idea that texts studied in monastic schools were a valuable educational resource for more than their potential in helping to develop simple literacy skills, and, having been created there, they were intended to be studied this way too.

Cod. Sang 548 is itself a great example of the dialogue format in use: many of the Passions involve detailed conversations between the saint and his or her persecutor, in which the saint explains various aspects of his or her faith and justifies his or her own martyrdom. Domitilla, for example, engages in a dialogue with her persecutor in which she highlights and explains one aspect of a "correct" Christian life. She says that among virtues, virginity holds the second place after martyrdom, and that virginity, rather than chastity, is singled out because it cannot be revoked. [106] Justina also has a long conversation with the magician Cyprianus, who is attempting to break her Christian fidelity and vow of chastity using demons, over the course of which she ends up actually converting Cyprianus.[107] Thus, it can be seen that Cod. Sang 548 employs the educational strategy of using dialogues and questioning as an opportunity to encourage contemplation and provide more thoughtful instruction to students about the messages behind each story.

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[105] Contreni, "Education and Learning in the Early Middle Ages," 17.
[106] "Ita ut secundum locum post martyres" ..."Sola virginitas ad statum suum penitus revocari non potest."  Cod. Sang. 548, 19
[107] Ibid,  43-58. Felice Lifshitz identifies this story in this particular Codex as the "oldest known copy of the *conversatio sanctae Justinae.*" Lifshitz, 196.

Carolingian educational programs included more than just saint stories and dialogues. Contreni identifies the documents the *Admonitio Generalis* and the *Epistola de litteris colendis* as making up the "manifesto of the educational reform" and finds in them directives to teach literacy, knowledge of "the Psalms, the nota, chant, computus, and grammar, as well as corrected versions of the 'Catholic' books."[108] For Contreni, such educational content is "utilitarian" and aimed at one ultimate goal: turning the students into clerics who could use these skills to "draw many to the service of God."[109] In this way, the students would receive functional tools for understanding and spreading God's word, which also helped them to lead godly lives. However, Contreni points out elsewhere that the success of schools and programs like this required more than simply being "commission[ed]."[110] To effectively pass on the intended values and lifestyle, "consistent example and exhortation would be necessary."[111] Part of this approach included an emphasis on "copying and study[ing]" the relevant texts.[112] A volume like Cod. Sang. 548 fits into this educational strategy as well. In the first place, students copying selected religious texts produced this volume. In the second, it presents the lives of saints who lived godly lives despite the most extreme adversity. What better example

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[108] John Contreni, "Inharmonious Harmony: Education in the Carolingian World." *The Annals of Scholarship: Metastudies of the Humanities and Social Sciences 1.* (New York, 1980), 84.

[109] Ibid, 84.

[110] Contreni, "The Carolingian Renaissance" in *Renaissances before the Renaissance: Cultural Revivals of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages.* ed. Warren Treadgold. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984), 64

[111] Ibid, 64-5.

[112] Contreni, "Carolingian Biblical Studies" in *Carolingian Essays: Andrew W. Mellon Lectures in Early Christian Studies.* ed. Uta-Renate Blumenthal. (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1983), 75.

could there be for a student in a Carolingian monastic school, or for a monk at a monastery like St Gall? If a saint could remain steadfast and holy in such awful conditions, then of course the reader could do so too, especially in a Christian kingdom like their own. Reproducing several stories about such exemplary Christians reinforced this ideal for the copyists, too.

Thus, the Cod. Sang. 548 is representative of the time and place in which it was produced. It reflects the educational reforms enacted by Charlemagne and his government. It provides examples of the "ideal" Christian as understood at that time. It uses educational techniques favored by monastic schools. All of these ways in which it reflects the state of education at St. Gall in the late eighth century also help to elucidate the main purpose of the Codex as an educational text for both the student scribes who produced it and the monastic audience who would have read, or listened, to it.

**The Admonitio Generalis**

A consideration of the ecclesiastic reforms implemented under Charlemagne is also important for understanding the context of this Codex, as the monastery in which it was produced was affected in more ways by the reforms than just by their educational aspects. Chief among the church reforms enacted under Charlemagne was the capitulary *Admonitio Generalis* of 789, which aimed to standardize many aspects of Christian observance within the church. It regulated the conduct of churchmen, designating the proper behavior and duties of the clergy, reaffirming

the necessity for monks to adhere to the Rule of St. Benedict and governing the proper manner of instruction about theology.[113] It also addressed details like sermon content, the use of Roman chants, the church calendar, and even standardized measurements.[114]

Like his educational reforms, Charlemagne's ecclesiastic reforms were based on his ideal of a Christian society. On acceding to power, he had found that many members of the clergy had become corrupt and were not adhering to the standards of behavior that he considered to be appropriate for Christians.[115] As a result, he undertook to reform ecclesiastic standards. According to Rosamund McKitterick, the *Admonitio Generalis* was really just one document "in the context of the succession of increasingly elaborate statements about the integration of the Christian faith within the institutional and political framework of the Frankish realm."[116] It was followed by many other "adjustments" and more regionally specific capitularies that further laid out what reforms were to be made. McKitterick asserts that these reforms were not only a result of Charlemagne's Christianizing ideology, but also functioned to introduce and demonstrate Frankish rule to newly conquered areas, especially through the regional capitularies.[117] After all, McKitterick points out, once Charlemagne became Emperor, he issued a capitulary that required the clergy in his newer territories to swear an oath of loyalty to him.[118] Thus, Charlemagne was

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[113] Lister M. Matheson, *Icons of the Middle Ages: rulers, writers, rebels, and saints.* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 2012), 169. McKitterick, *Charlemagne*, 239-40.
[114] Matheson, 169. McKitterick, *Charlemagne,* 239-40.
[115] Matheson, 169.
[116] McKitterick, *Charlemagne*, 240.
[117] Ibid, 244.
[118] Ibid, 245.

making formal efforts to integrate the Church into his State. In the context of

Charlemagne's expansionism, McKitterick's claims that his motives for ecclesiastic

reform were mainly political make sense. However, considering how specific the

content of some of these reforms was, as outlined above, how wide-ranging the

reforms were, and how they all relate back to the creation of a more perfect

Christian society, Charlemagne's Christianizing ideology cannot be discounted or

forgotten when considering his reforms. Even if he used the process of ecclesiastic

reform to solidify his control over newly conquered subjects, the clergy and monks

were affected by the reforms.

The monks at St. Gall would have not been exempt from the standards of

behavior required of clergy and monks, and the contents of the Codex Sangallensis

548 make it very clear that they were participating in Charlemagne's mission. This

Codex was probably produced about the same time as the *Admonitio Generalis,* and

it promotes exactly the ideals mandated in the *Admonitio Generalis.*[119] The stories of

the martyrs lay out proper behavior for a religious person. The reader is not, of

course, being asked to become a martyr, but the values of chastity and steadfast

faith are highlighted in the ways described above. In the life of Leudegarius, Joseph-

Claude Poulin has even read the version by Ursinus that appears in Cod. Sang 548 as

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[119] As noted above, handwriting analysis shows that the Codex was produced sometime after 784. This leaves a potential window of five years in which it could have been created before the *Admonitio Generalis*, but it is equally possible that it was produced after this document. Even if it does date to within those five years before the *Admonitio Generalis,* this document was the product of a series of educational and ecclesiastic reforms known to have begun at least five years earlier. The aforementioned *Epistola de litteris colendis*, for example, may itself be dated to 784/5. McKitterick, *Charlemagne,* 240.

a reflection of the rising concern over observance of canonical rules.[120] It seems that

this Codex is both a reflection of the reforms enacted during the period it was

produced and an example of the way such reforms were actually being implemented

and their values being passed on to students and monks at St. Gall. As the *Admonitio*

*Generalis* and other similar legislation attempted to return ideals of proper living

and obeisance to God to monastic life, the Passions in Cod. Sang 548 provided

inspiration in the form of examples of other great Christians living just that sort of

life.

**Why the *Vita Leudegarii*?**

   The Life of Saint Leudegarius, at 49 pages, is the longest of the saint stories in

Codex Sangallensis 548.[121] In fact, it is 35 pages longer than the average length of

the other saint stories, 14 pages.[122] The length of the story of Saint Leudegarius

suggests that his story carries a particular significance. There are three major

reasons that this Passion is a focal point in the Codex. Firstly, it fits the mould of a

stereotypical martyr story of this period, so it is an appropriate text to include.

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[120] <<Ursin manifesta un souci tout personnel du respect des regles canoniques>>
Poulin, 182.

[121] Alternately known as Leodegar, Léger, or various spellings of these. However, as
with the other figures in the Codex, the term "saint" is used here to acknowledge
that this is how the text always refers to Leudegarius; however, I do not intend to
imply that Leudegarius is anything more than a political figure or character in this
narrative.

[122] This average is also skewed higher by the second longest story, that of Saint
Domitilla et al, which is 28 pages. Removing Saint Domitilla's story from the average
brings the page count down to 11.8, as 7 of the 9 stories in the Codex are 15 pages or
under.

Secondly, as the subject of a saint cult on the rise, Leudegarius' story was an especially useful educational tool to pass on the intended religious messages, through the familiarity both student scribes and monastic readers, or listeners, may have already had with his legend. Finally, it carries a political agenda due to its relatively contemporary setting, and could therefore subtly reinforce Carolingian political messages.

**The Origins of the Story**

The life of Leudegarius, as related in this Codex, unfolds as follows:

Leudegarius is born into a noble family and studies in the Church under his uncle Dido, the Bishop of Poitiers. Leudegarius follows in his uncle's footsteps and becomes a cleric, only to be called to court as an advisor to Clothar the Younger, who ruled with his mother Queen Bathilde. When Clothar dies, his Mayor of the Palace Ebroinus is dismissed and Leudegarius is appointed to replace him under the new king Childeric. Leudegarius does a much better job of looking after the kingdom than Ebroinus has.[123] As a result, Ebroinus, who has been exiled to a monastery, and others, become jealous of Leudegarius' successes. They set out to turn the king against him, and he is also banished to a monastery. However, Childeric eventually dies and is succeeded by his brother Theuderic, whom Ebroinus has supported all along. Both Ebroinus and Leudegarius return to court at this time, but as a long-time

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[123] "Qui acceptis huius regni gubernaculis quotquot maxime adversus leges antiquorum regnum ac magnorum procerum quorum vita laudabilis ex stabat repperit ineptos ad pristinum reduxit statim. . In tantum ut usque quaque omnia regna francorum restitueret." Cod. Sang 548, 73.

supporter of the new king, Ebroinus is rewarded with the Mayorship of the Palace.

He then uses his new influence to exact revenge on Leudegarius. Ebroinus conspires

with fellow royal advisors who agree to draw Leudegarius out of Autun, where he is

bishop. This feat is accomplished by using an army to attack the city, then capturing

Leudegarius. Having captured Leudegarius, Ebroinus has his captive's eyes plucked

out. Leudegarius withstands this torture, becoming ever more steadfast in his

faith.[124] Still, his ordeal is far from over: Ebroinus and his co-conspirators keep

Leudegarius captive for "around two years" in a monastery.[125] Eventually, the king

summons Leudegarius, and at their meeting Leudegarius tries to answer a slander

against him put out by Ebroinus, who is also present. In doing so, Leudegarius

demonstrates his piety again by warning Ebroinus that temporal glory is soon lost,

but that he should focus on what has been given by the Holy Father alone. Of course,

Ebroinus is infuriated by Leudegarius' advice, and has Leudegarius' brother Garinus

brought out, threatening Leudegarius that he will take Garinus' life. Tying him to a

stake, they stone Garinus, and, as he prays for mercy and accepts his martyrdom,

Garinus dies.[126] Witnessing this, Leudegarius encourages his brother's martyrdom

and yearns for his own. However, Ebroinus is determined to prolong Leudegarius'

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[124] "Sed cum lumen sustulissent forinsecus humanum. interinsecus incluserunt divinium." Ibid, 81.

[125] "et tradenter eum custodibus inquoddam illum destinarunt coenobium. in quo latuit per annorum circulum duorum" Cod. Sang 548, 81.

[126] "Ille vero deprecatus est dominum dicens. Domine iesu bone qui ne venisti vocare iustos sed pecatores suscipe spiritum servitui. Ut qui dignatuses ad similitudinem martyrum mihi lapidibus istam vitam mortalem auferri iubeus clementissime veniam scelerum meorum tribui. hec dicens orando ultimum emisit spiritum." Ibid, p.84.

life so that he can be tortured before accepting his "eternal crown."[127] This torture includes leading Leudegarius through a pool filled with sharp stones, cutting off his lips and slicing out his tongue. After all this torture, Leudegarius is given into the custody of a man named Vuaningus, who takes him to a place at which many other holy people are staying as well.[128] He is protected there for many days with these people. Everyone who hears about God's mercy to him repents of their sins, and for many days and nights he keeps vigil in his new community, hardly needing to leave the church at all. Meanwhile, Ebroinus is again jealous of Leudegarius' influence and conspires to have him removed from his congregation.[129] He is summoned to the synod, where Ebroinus denounces him as a traitor to the king, and gives him into the custody of a man named Chrodebert, who is instructed to kill Leudegarius. As Chrodebert brings Leudegarius home, a halo appears over Leudegarius' head and those around him recognize that he is truly a man of God. Chrodebert is not sure what to do, and keeps Leudegarius at his home. However, Ebronius grows impatient and sends knights to kill Leudegarius.[130] The knights take Leudegarius away from Chrodebert so that he does not need to be involved with the death of an apparent holy man. Once they have taken him to a secret location, the knights do not want to kill him either and ask for Leudegarius' blessing. He blesses them, and one of the knights agrees to be the executioner. After Leudegarius prays one last time, they cut

[127] "eternam coronam." Ibid, p.84.
[128] Perhaps misspelled "Varinguius"?
[129] Cod. Sang 548, p.87
[130] "ebroinus iam obstinatur crudelitatem suam volens in eum perficere velocissime mox post eum emisit equites nimium pernicissimos qui eum morte perimerent." Ibid, 91.

off his head.[131] Nevertheless, he remains standing for about an hour. When the

gladiator who had killed him tries to cut Leudegarius' feet, they will not come off.

Seeing this, the gladiator's mind is attacked by demons and he throws himself into a

fire to end his own life. Chrodebert's wife takes possession of Leudegarius' body and

sees to it that it is interred properly.

Leudegarius is buried in a tomb for two years, until one night a great light is

seen emanating from it. Many people come from afar to visit. The blinding light frees

the afflicted from demons and heals the sick. When Ebroinus hears of these miracles

he is outraged and wants to stop them. Thus, he seeks to kill anyone who visits the

tomb for holy aid. Finally, after he commands that anyone seeking to revere

Leudegarius be persecuted, Ebroinus dies, and Leudegarius' body can be moved to a

more appropriate location, given his status as a saint and his reputation. In the

meantime, there are huge crowds that want to venerate him, but his body remains

safely hidden in the palace for some time until a final decision can be made about its

final resting place.[132] Ansoaldus, the bishop of Poitiers, Hermanacharius, bishop of

Autun, and Vincianus, bishop of Arles, all claim the body. Ultimately, Ansoaldus' bid

for Leudegarius' body is successful. As Leudegarius' body is transported to Poitiers,

many miracles occur. The sick are cured, demons are exorcised, and a ship is

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[131] "Cum hec diceret percussos extendens gladium amputavit caput eius et erectum corpus eius." "stetisse quasi unius hores spatium dicitur. Quod videns gladiator qui eum peremit pede percussit ut vel no cresus interam decideret." "Sed non multum post idem percussor eius correptus a demonibus et mente captus dei ultione percussus. in ignem se proiecit ibique vitam finivit.." Ibid, 93.
[132] Cod. Sang 548, 98-9.

rescued from a storm. Finally, a basilica is built where Leudegarius' body can remain forever.[133]

There are three major versions of the Leudegarius legend. The first two were reconstructed in the early twentieth century by the German historian Bruno Krusch for the Monumenta Germaniae Historica from three manuscripts dated to the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries.[134] The first of these was written shortly after the events of the Passion of Leudegarius, apparently commissioned by the bishop Herminarius, one of his contemporaries, and the man mentioned as Hermanacharius in the Codex Sangallensis 548's version. As Leudegarius' martyrdom has been dated to 679, and Herminarius was bishop between 683 and 692, this is probably the first incarnation of the Passion, appearing between 4 and 13 years after the event.[135] The events not described in this version, but that appear in later versions, suggest that it was written as early as 683, before Leudegarius' body was moved to Poitiers.[136]

Ian Wood points out that Herminarius had a number of political reasons for having a *Vita* produced that frames the legend to his advantage. For example, Herminarius' ecclesiastical career intersected with that of Leudegarius in such a

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[133] Ibid, 116.
[134] Paul Fouracre and Richard A. Geberding, *Late Merovingian France: History and hagiography, 640-720.* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1996), 194-5. The authors explain that Krusch determined the 10th century manuscript contained "fragments" of the earliest version of the Passion. He found that the 9th century manuscript was an amalgamation of the other two, and subtracting the 8th century details from the 9th century manuscript, discovered the earliest version matched the 10th century fragments. Thus, the third manuscript is not considered an original version, but the two versions that were amalgamated into it are identified as separate accounts of the Passion of Leudegarius.
[135] Ian Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms, 450-751.* (London and New York: Longman, 1994), 226.
[136] Fouracre and Geberding, 201.

way as to suggest that he "was among Leodegar's opponents, despite the author's claim that he interceded on the saint's behalf."[137] However, a popular cult following Leudegarius was developing in the years after his death, as is described in the Codex Sangallensis, and Herminarius would not have profited from being seen as a persecutor of a beloved local martyr. Instead, Wood asserts that Herminarius wanted the narrative to function as part of his case for bringing Leudegarius' body to Autun.[138] This scenario is also described at the end of the Life of Leudegarius in the Codex Sangallensis. Further, Fouracre and Geberding identify a "controversial element" in this version of the Passion of Leudegarius that suggests more dynamism in the characters than in later versions.[139] In the Passion written for Herminarius, Leudegarius is forced to become embroiled in political scandals in order to combat evil. In the same version of the story, Leudegarius' political enemy, Ebroinus, is said to also be motivated by political needs. In other words, Leudegarius can do some wrong, and Ebroinus is not evil for evil's sake.[140]

This is not, however, the version of the story that the Codex includes. Major differences include the fact that Herminarius himself is a figure in the story in the Codex, and it also contains additional stories about the miracles occurring after Leudegarius' death. The version from St. Gall also makes Leudegarius appear fully in the right and holy, in juxtaposition with a downright evil Ebroinus, which is another departure from Herminarius' version. While the earliest version may have been a

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[137] Wood, 226.
[138] Ibid, 226.
[139] Fouracre and Geberding, 196.
[140] Ibid, 201-2.

significant element in the development of the legend of Leudegarius, it is not the ultimate source for the version from St. Gall.

Instead, the source of the version from St. Gall is Krusch's second *Vita Leudegarii,* produced in Poitiers. As far as extant versions of this text, the version from St. Gall is the earliest known copy of this *Vita*, and is known as B1 (belonging to a "family" of versions of this *Vita* named "B" by Krusch).[141] Poitiers was the final resting place for the body of Leudegarius, and this version makes sure to include the details missing in the earlier version about the result of the dispute over the body. The monk Ursinus is credited as the author of this version. It purports to have been written at the end of the seventh century, and is dedicated to Ansoaldus, the bishop who succeeded in securing the body of Leudegarius to bring to Poitiers. However, Fouracre and Geberding point out that it contains historical mistakes that someone contemporary with Ansoaldus would not have made. These mistakes include the oft-cited identification of Leudegarius as a mayor of the palace (majordomo). Fouracre and Geberding trace the interpretation of a seventh century Poitevin monk named Ursinus as the author of the text to a misread funerary inscription by M. Rochais in 1948 that was perpetuated by later scholars reading his work. Fouracre and Geberding assert that the "real" Ursinus wrote in the eighth century.[142] As Charles Meriaux points out, the Cod. Sang 548 version was copied at the end of the eighth century, so we do know that, at the latest, the original from Poitiers was written

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[141] Poulin, 170-1. The version in Cod. Sang. 548 has been the main source for studying "Ursinus'" *Vita Leudegarii,* but it must be acknowledged that this Saint Gall version is just a copy of an older text from Poitiers.

[142] Fouracre and Geberding, 207. As Charles Meriaux points out, the Cod. Sang 548 version was copied at the end of the eighth century, so we do know that, at the latest, the original from Poitiers was written sometime before that.

sometime before that.[143] This version further differs from the earlier one, on which

Krusch believed it was based, by embellishing many scenes, adding new dialogue,

and removing those political details that made the characters dynamic and

explained the political complications of its time, as well as adding the epilogue

describing the transportation of Leudegarius' body.[144] This, therefore, is the version

that turned it into a martyr story for the ages, highlighting the battle between good

and evil and making Leudegarius the legendary holy saint.

This transformation is also the reason that Ursinus' *Vita Leudegarii* appears

in Cod. Sang 548: his presentation as a good man, although perhaps not a perfect

man, as Poulin argues, who makes the ultimate sacrifice that a Christian can, makes

Leudegarius the ultimate role model for a monk or cleric in training. All the

Passions, by definition, feature holy men and women making this sacrifice. Poulin

identifies in Ursinus' changes to the narrative several further elements that

underscore Leudegarius' legitimacy as a saint: the crown of light that shines around

him, attributing his enemies' actions to the work of the devil, and structuring the

Passion as an echo of Christ's martyrdom.[145] These comparisons and devices help

place Leudegarius in the company of other famous saints. However, he is also a

character who is familiar, whose origins are clear and who may be easy to relate to,

since Leudegarius became a saint not because he was born extraordinary, but

because of his unshakable faith. Therefore, as a popular figure and one known to

have lived just out of living memory, his life was a stellar demonstration that saintly

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[143] Charles Meriaux, "Le culte de saint Léger d'Autun, Saint-Vaast d'Arras et les Pippinides à la fin du VII<sup>e</sup> siècle" *Revue du Nord* 3-4 n° 391-392 (2011), 696.
[144] Fouracre and Geberding, 208.
[145] Poulin, 188, 197.

glory could still be achieved, and by any good Christian. Leudegarius' holy achievement was not that he died, but that he remained steadfast in his faith despite his persecution. A reader might not have to face a life or death situation like that, but he could learn from Leudegarius about the significance of constancy of faith. The key to Leudegarius', and the other martyred saints', salvation was not their martyrdom, or their "perfection" as Christians, but their absolute faith. By emulating such faith, the reader could also believe in his own salvation. With a carefully vetted role model like Leudegarius, this message could be most effectively passed on to the students and other members of the monastic audience at St. Gall.

**The Cult of St. Leudegarius**

That this *Vita* appears in the Codex Sangallensis 548 is highly informative in understanding the purpose of this particular Codex and the worldview of those people who produced it. That the original version from Poitiers may not have been so far removed in time from the version from St. Gall is also possibly indicative of a growing interest in the cult and figure of St. Leudegarius. That the Cod. Sang. 548 contains the earliest known, extant copy of the Poitiers *Vita Leudegarii* does not mean it was the only one around at that time.[146] If the original Poitiers version, which itself is now lost, was indeed written sometime in the mid-eighth century, and copies were being made in the decades following, then the saint may have been growing in popularity. The inclusion of this *Vita* in the Codex may indicate a

[146] This "B" version of the *Vita Leudegarii* appears in "almost" seventy known texts. Meriaux, 694.

connection to the wider community interested in saint cults and a desire to participate in the veneration of St. Leudegarius. This connection to the wider community is itself evident from this story's presence at St. Gall. A manuscript, being a precious possession of its home library, would not have been lent out lightly. An inscription from the Abbey of Reichenau states that a manuscript from its library should only be loaned "to someone who shall have there given faith and security until he should return it safe and sound to its place."[147] Thus, it can be seen that, in order to obtain texts from other religious houses for copying, St. Gall had to foster a network of trusted, friendly libraries from whom to borrow and share manuscripts. The willingness of the Abbey of St. Maxentius, near Poitiers, or another sympathetic abbey, to send a copy of this Leudegarius narrative to St. Gall is telling about St. Gall's involvement with factions looking to spread word about the saint. At the very least, the inclusion of this story in Cod. Sang. 548 indicates an awareness of the development of the cult of St. Leudegarius outside St. Gall, and an interest in raising familiarity with this saint's story at St. Gall. Most of all, it must be recognized that this story was not chosen randomly; that Leudegarius in particular was selected to be the story of focus in this Codex is therefore most probably due to the prevalence and popularity of his cult. If Leudegarius was already becoming popular, then promoting his cult was less the objective than promoting the lesson to be learned from his story and martyrdom. In an educational volume, a well-known and popular

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[147] David Ganz, "The Libraries, Librarians, and Library Catalogues of Reichenau and St. Gall," Carolingian Culture at Reichenau & St. Gall: Manuscripts and Architecture from the Early Middle Ages, http://www.stgallplan.org/en/tours_book.html, (accessed Sept. 17, 2014).

saint was a particularly useful vehicle for passing on the ultimate message of the

Codex.

A third version of the Passion of Leudegarius appeared in a similar time

frame to the production of the Poitiers version. This third version appears in the

continuations of the Chronicle of Fredegar, which describes events between 584 and

641 in Frankish Gaul.[148] Its authorship is hotly debated, although the origins of the

Continuations are more concretely known. Based on the *Liber Historia Francorum*,

the Continuations were commissioned by members of Charles Martel's family and

continue the description of events in the territory until 768.[149] This addition to

"Fredegar's" Chronicle was written within decades of the Codex from St. Gall, and

contains a life of Leudegarius as well.[150] The introduction to this work in the German

translation by Otto Abel acknowledges that this version is a direct descendent of the

one dedicated to Herminarius.[151] However, a comparison of the two texts shows

that while much of the content is the same, the version from the Continuation is

abridged. That is, Ursinus' version has far more embellished accounts of the same

events. Thus, it seems that these writers in the Frankish realm writing in a relatively

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[148] That is, the Chronicle of Fredegar, describes events between 584 and 641.
[149] Paul Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel* (Essex: Pearson Education Limited, 2000), 7.
[150] "Fredegar" is in quotation marks to acknowledge that the identity of this author is otherwise unknown, and that whether "Fredegar" and his "Continuator" are several authors or is just one remains a matter of debate between historians.
[151] To make the chronology of scholars more clear, Otto Abel wrote in the mid-nineteenth century, while Bruno Krusch wrote sixty years later. However, the manuscript "dedicated to Herminarius" identified by Abel must be the 9th century manuscript later determined by Krusch to be an amalgamation of two earlier versions. Thus, it is not the reconstructed earliest version that is being referenced. Otto Abel, *Die Chronik Fredegars und der Frankenkoenige,* (Leipzig: Verlag der Deutschen Buchhandlung,1888), 141.

similar time frame, the Continuator and Ursinus at Poitiers, who was subsequently copied at St. Gall, used two different sources for their work. It is difficult to be sure of what the original work contained, however, as what one must assume was "the original" version dedicated to Herminarius is a modern reconstruction. Nonetheless, that this version was also produced in the later eighth century and is the product of another author trying to pass on this story also supports that St. Leudegarius' popularity was growing. There are at least three extant Lives of St. Leudegarius produced in the mid to late eighth century; in a period when the industry of book production was growing, but had not yet hit its peak, this is a good indication of a cult on the rise.[152] While this "Fredegar" version was written shortly before the Poitiers version, it abridges the earliest *Vita* and therefore presents a different emphasis on aspects of the story.

The co-existence and production of the different versions within a similar time period also support the idea that some aspects of the Poitiers version were massaged to make particular political insinuations or emphasize a religious message. Fouracre and Geberding, following Krusch, suggest that Ursinus may "have drawn upon" the Continuations when creating his own version of the narrative, but it is very clear that Ursinus presents events in a different light.[153] Fouracre and Geberding further suggest that the Poitevin motivation behind Ursinus' new version of Leudegarius' Life was "to strengthen both Leudegarius' credentials as a saint and

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[152] "At least three" – another Life of Leudegarius was produced "in the eighth or ninth century" by "a monk of Morlach, in Austrasia," but due to the unclear dating, it is not counted in this total of known versions from the eighth century.  Rev. Alban Butler, *The Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs, and Other Principal Saints.* (Dublin: James Duffy, 1866). Vol. X, October 2: St. Leodegarius, or Leger, Bishop and Martyr.
[153] Fouracre and Geberding, 207.

Poitier's hold over his cult."[154]  Again, this indicates that there was a cult dedicated

to Leudegarius growing in popularity, or at least an active attempt to create one.

That Ursinus used local oral sources to create his story supports this as well.[155] The

connection to a particular city, in this case, Poitiers, would both increase the

reputation and profile of the city and fill its coffers with income from pilgrims

visiting Leudegarius' tomb and shrine. This motive behind modifying such a story

would not apply to the copyists at St. Gall, but it does indicate that the work to

spread interest in the cult had reached their monastery as well. Changing the details

of the story to create a more traditional saint story, thereby strengthening

Leudegarius' credentials as a saint, also speak to the efforts behind raising the

profile of his cult. Again, emphasizing his cult would probably not have been a

strong motive at St. Gall, but the fact that it is this manipulated narrative that is

present, rather than one presenting Leudegarius without the typical hallmarks of a

saint, may partly explain the reasoning behind including it in the Codex there. In this

version of the Life of St. Leudegarius, the saint is presented in a familiar saint-story

narrative, and demonstrates the stereotypical traits of a saint. These traits are the

key to this Codex: each saint story included in it features a saint who leads the

perfect Christian life, in the face of enormous adversity. With Ursinus' story,

Leudegarius now also appears in this way, and is the most effective of saintly role

models.  As Leudegarius became a well-known saint to the Carolingian reader, his

figure and story were therefore useful tools for instructing a monastic audience.

They already knew his story and could relate to him. Passing on both the desired

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[154] Ibid, 208.
[155] Poulin, 180.

political and religious messages simply required choosing the right narrative to show his example.

**A political life?**

The Life of Leudegarius in the Codex is included for political reasons as well as those religious reasons discussed above. In the Codex Sangallensis 548, the Merovingian setting is important, because it carefully portrays the instability of the Merovingian dynasty. There were instructional messages regarding both the political world outside St. Gall and the spiritual development of those living and studying at St. Gall. Leudegarius is like the other protagonists in this collection of saint's lives in that his antagonist is an angry government official who eventually succeeds in martyring him. He is also like the other martyrs in that, while he fought the system and lost his life, he is believed to continue to perform miracles after his death. What makes it noteworthy among these saint's lives is that Leudegarius' life, while not exactly contemporary, is supposed to have taken place only about a century earlier.[156] This may not have seemed recent to a true contemporary of the Codex, but it was just out of living memory and far more recent than the other stories in the Codex, all of which took place many centuries earlier. This may have made it easier for the eighth-century reader to relate to the tale and to see Leudegarius' experience as being the kind of thing that could happen in his lifetime; reminding him that sainthood and miracles were still possible in his time and

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[156] Leudegarius died between 677 and 679 AD; the Codex is estimated to have been produced in the last quarter of the 8th century. Fouracre and Geberding, 199.

society, not just a part of old tales carried on from another time and place.  It encouraged the reader to continue to strive to be like the saints described in the Codex, who, as the case of Leudegarius demonstrated, were not so far removed from the reader after all.

The other reason that Leudegarius' near-contemporary setting is significant is that while the Codex's other saint's lives are world-rejecting in a more general sense, the life of Leudegarius identifies specifically which world to reject: the world of Merovingian politics, represented by the antagonist Ebroinus, who seeks to undermine a holy man and his holy choices in his pursuit of selfish goals and personal gain. Ebroinus, as the Merovingians' Mayor of the Palace, is representative of that failing dynasty, the dynasty replaced only about twenty years before the Codex's production by Pepin III, who was succeeded by his son Charlemagne.[157] Thus, the production of this Codex during the reign of Charlemagne and its antagonism towards the Merovingians demonstrate the political mindset behind the Codex. In this tale, the creator of the Codex makes clear that the previous dynasty should be reviled on religious grounds, perhaps to underscore the greater legitimacy of the new dynasty.

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[157] The history of the Frankish kingdom before the Carolingians is often characterized by the in-fighting of the Merovingian dynasty. Its founder, Clovis I, ruled over a united kingdom, but it was divided between his sons into four separate territories that were inherited and conquered back and forth between various family members for generations. Due to the familial ties and varying military and political strengths of each, the kings of each territory had familial ties, and thus claims, to all of the three territories, and thus to the command of the entire Frankish Empire. The dynasty's reputation for instability and violence is a direct result of the way in which those with competing claims battled for dominance. The competing claims to the throne also form the background to the enmity between Ebroinus and Leudegarius in the *Vita Leudegarii.* Ian Wood outlines the history of violence and competition between Merovingian family members in Wood, 89-136.

The denigration of the Merovingian kings on a political level, too, is a clear theme in the life of Leudegarius. Leudegarius' allegiance to Merovingian Childeric II is repaid by exile, the royal family is beset by infighting, and ultimately cronies of another Merovingian, Theuderic III, attack and murder him. As the reader knows, Leudegarius is a good and holy man, so these betrayals make the Merovingian kings and their supporters tools of evil. In "Political Ideology in Carolingian Historiography," Rosamund McKitterick explains that this practice of blackening the reputation of the Merovingian elite was standard fare in Carolingian historical texts, and that a contemporary reader of such texts would have an "enhance[d]... understanding of the Carolingian family's power and prestige" as a result.[158] McKitterick uses Paul the Deacon's *Gesta Episcoporum Mettensium* as an example of this practice: Paul omits the Merovingians from his history, and places a seemingly exaggerated stress on the extent of Carolingian achievement, connecting that dynasty with that of the Trojans![159]  This strategy can be seen in Cod. Sang. 548 with the story of St. Petronilla. Although the Codex names her as the daughter of St. Peter, this relationship was based on a medieval misunderstanding. Nevertheless, the misunderstanding resulted in the development of a cult of St. Petronilla. Whatever her status as a historical figure, as a saint she was unmistakably connected to the

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[158] Rosamund McKitterick, "Political Ideology in Carolingian Historiogaphy," in *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages.* Yitzhak Hen and Matthew Innes, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 165-6.
[159] This particular connection harkens back to the legend of Aeneas' father Anchises' journey from Troy to Italy, and there establishing a people who later became the Franks. In the *Gesta Episcoporum Mettensium,* Paul traces Carolingian genealogy directly to an ancestor named Anchisus. McKitterick notes that this is a seriously "simplified genealogy", and many of the direct connections made by Paul would not have been direct at all. Ibid, 166.

Carolingian family; she was their patron saint.[160] Her inclusion demonstrates the political dimension of this Codex, which is also reflected in the story of Leudegarius. Neither story needs to take place in a Carolingian context for the Carolingian message to shine through. Rather, they hint at Carolingian greatness through more subtle strategies. Petronilla, as their patron saint, is symbolic of Carolingian piety, while the Merovingian context of Leudegarius' story demonstrates that dynasty to feature such terrible leaders that in contrast, the Carolingians of the reader's world are clearly a significant improvement.

Of course, effectively two generations into Carolingian rule, the family's legitimacy was less important than the legitimacy of their newly introduced policies. Poulin points out that much of the political intrigue found in Herminarius' *Vita Leudegarii* is omitted from Ursinus' version; Poulin's view is that this removed any danger of blackening Leudegarius' reputation by association with any political responsibility for his own persecution.[161] The problem with this position is that it presupposes that a religious decision cannot also be political. This glossing-over of the problematic political aspects of the *Vita* appears to be a political act. By removing any responsibility on Leudegarius' part for his feud with Ebroinus, it makes Ebroinus and his cronies, including the Merovingians, that much more responsible and makes them appear that much worse. That is to say, a religious reason for blackening a rival's reputation does not exclude a political motivation; by bringing the religious aspect into a political rivalry, especially in a religious society, emphasizing that one's rival has acted in un-Christian ways strengthens the case

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[160] McKitterick, "Illusion of Royal Power in the Carolingian Annals," 13-14.
[161] Poulin, 197.

that they are not fit to govern a Christian society. After all, as explained above, the Carolingians could claim that they were specifically chosen by God to replace the Merovingians as rulers of the Frankish kingdom. So, again, the contrast between Merovingian rule and Carolingian rule is included to support the contemporary religious policies of the Carolingians. As discussed above, the *Admonitio Generalis* and other religious directives were being created and enforced by Charlemagne around this time. While his hold on power may not have been in danger, it would have been important to quell unrest about his reforms. Thus, support for the Christian Carolingians was not simply a matter of proving their value over some other dynasty, but of facilitating the implementation of new Carolingian reforms. As Poulin admits, Ursinus' *Vita Leudegarii* makes a case for observance of canonical rule, which fits right into the context of Charlemagne's reforms.[162] The uses of a text like Cod. Sang. 548 in a monastic setting also suggest how support for reforms in these stories would be effective. Read aloud at mealtimes, this message of support for ecclesiastic reform would be spread among all the monks at St. Gall. This would thus ensure that not only scribes and individual readers, but all those listening to the story of Leudegarius, would receive the same message that their Abbey supported this king and his programs.

Charles Meriaux has read such political motives into the very creation of Leudegarius' cult. He posits that celebrating Leudegarius and destroying the memory of Ebroinus in the years following 687 through the creation of a *Vita*

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[162] Ibid, 182.

*Leudegarii* was a political decision.[163] Meriaux recognizes that the Pippinids, the

Carolingians' ancestors, as Mayors of the Palace would have been politically aligned

with Leudegarius' family, including his uncle Dido.[164] Thus, even the choice of

Leudegarius as a saint, in the first place, was a not-so-subtle political move in favour

of the Pippinid family! Furthermore, Meriaux identifies the agents of this political

move as monks – not religious men creating a hagiographical narrative for purely

religious purposes, but religious men in a political world using a religious text as

political tool.[165] Of course, the *Vita* in Meriaux's focus is not Ursinus' version, and the

period of time about which Meriaux writes is not the same time as the Codex.

Nevertheless, the origins of this cult, let alone this story, seem to be rooted in

Carolingian political leanings. This association would not have hindered the growth

in popularity of Leudegarius' cult. It would also have made the choice of a *Vita*

*Leudegarii* for compilation in the Cod. Sang. 548 a potentially political choice, but an

expedient one, upholding the by-then status quo of Carolingian rule.

     As Codex Sangallensis 548 directly follows Charlemagne's political and

religious agenda, the reasons for this clear loyalty to the Carolingian regime must be

addressed.  There are two main reasons for it, which come directly out of the

context in which the Codex was produced. First, at the time of its production,

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[163] Meriaux, section 26.
[164] Ibid, section 25.
[165] "[L]'entourage de l'évêque Vindicien de Cambrai et Arras, et peut-être plus précisément des moines de Saint-Vaast d'Arras, qui avaient tout intérêt à maintenir vivant le souvenir du saint martyr dans leur diocèse, là même où il avait été assassiné, en recueillant de manière exhaustive les éléments de sa biographie qui avaient aussi l'avantage de justifier, en quelque sorte, l'élimination d'une partie des élites neustriennes et la mainmise du maire du palais Pépin II sur l'ensemble du *Regnum Francorum*." Ibid, section 26.

Charlemagne was already very powerful. His reforms were being implemented, as discussed above. His influence in both the political and ecclesiastical spheres was clear, so maintaining his favor would have been beneficial to an abbot and an aristocrat alike. Militarily, Charlemagne was also hugely successful. During this period, he launched a campaign against the Lombards in Northern Italy in 773, eliminating the last holdout Lombard duchy of Benevento in 786. In 787, he invaded Bavaria. Between 774 and 796, he regularly fought the Avars and ultimately crushed their confederacy.[166] At court, conspirators against Charlemagne were executed, and eventually, oaths of loyalty became a requirement of both political and ecclesiastic elites.[167] In the late eighth century, Charlemagne had military, political, and even ecclesiastic power: if crossing him was deadly, then demonstrating loyalty to his regime and his vision could only be a smart political move. Producing works that denounced his family's old rivals, and implied both his legitimacy and good governance, was politically expedient.

In addition to having political reasons generally for the loyalty to Charlemagne demonstrated in Codex Sangallensis 548, the Abbey of St. Gall probably had specific reasons based on its history with the Carolingian line. St. Gall was refounded under the Alemanni abbot Otmar in 719. This was during the Mayorship of the Palace of Charles Martel, at the very end of the Merovingian period, when Charles Martel was fighting for control of the Frankish kingdom. Thus, when the monastery's "leading patron" Waltram went to the royal court to "seek protection" for St. Gall, it is unclear whether King Theuderic IV or Charles Martel

[166] On Charlemagne's military campaigns, Collins, 66-70.
[167] Costambeys, 78-9.

was to be the real source of protection.[168] As Paul Fouracre points out, in 719, St. Gall was in Alemannia, which was ruled by Duke Lantfrid, so the extent to which Charles Martel had influence is debatable, as he was certainly not in direct control of the area. In fact, shortly after this period, Martel actively campaigned against Lantfrid and his allies, who recognized the Merovingian king's authority rather than Martel's.[169] Religious houses like St. Gall were also involved in the struggle. The apparently friendly relationship between the Abbey of Reichenau, also in Alemannia, and Charles Martel led Lantfrid to expel the Abbey's founder, Pirmin, from the duchy.[170] St. Gall, viewed as an Abbey of Alemanni-origin, continued to enjoy Alemanni favour during the period. However, after two decades, Alemannia finally fell under Charles Martel's direct control, and St. Gall was thence part of the "Carolingian" Empire.[171] Forty years later, when the Carolingians were the clear victors in that dynastic struggle, it would have been in St. Gall's interests to maintain a clear alignment with that family. As had been demonstrated by the conflict around the time of St. Gall's founding, events in the political world could have a massive impact on a well-connected religious house.

The clear political agenda present in the *Vita Leudegarii* would have been obvious to a contemporary reader. The political message that aimed to legitimize the Carolingians and support their reform efforts indicates that Charlemagne's

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[168] A forged letter of protection from Charles Martel to St. Gall's brother-Abbey at Reichenau may actually contain traces of a "genuine" original letter of protection, so Martel may indeed have been the power behind such "royal" protection at St. Gall as well. Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel,* 105.
[169] Ibid, 106.
[170] Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel,* 106.
[171] Ibid, 106-7.

influence was strong over St. Gall. For a variety of reasons, the creator of Codex

Sangallensis 548 demonstrated a close loyalty to the new dynasty of Frankish kings.

Such loyalty was not unique among religious houses, as may be seen in the origins of

the cult of Leudegarius itself, which demonstrates how closely the religious and

political spheres were interwoven at this time.

The most important aspect of the life of Leudegarius is its comparative

contemporaneity to the Codex itself. For the eighth-century reader, this made the

religious message of the entire Codex more relevant and easier to relate to,

especially through the figure of Leudegarius. The cult of this seventh century saint

was on the rise, and his story and reputation would have been familiar to a

Carolingian reader. Thus, Leudegarius made a strong role model and his *Vita* was an

excellent vessel for instructing young minds about key religious and political

messages. In particular, the religious message reminded the reader about the

importance of faith, and especially of maintaining one's faith in God no matter what

adversity may lie ahead.

The story of Leudegarius is the longest story in the collected lives of the

saints presented in Codex Sangallensis 548. As it was three and a half times longer

than the average Life in the Codex, it required a correspondingly greater share of

resources than any other life did. The narrative's contents are related in far greater

detail than the other stories, which adds to its length and reinforces its message.

Therefore, compared to the other stories, this use of detail and material indicates

that it was, comparatively, of the greatest importance in the Codex.

Nevertheless, the Codex is made up of nine different saint stories, and Leudegarius' was not the only one chosen with a purpose. Considered altogether, the Lives and Passions in the Codex make up a collection of persecution narratives, in each of which a faultless Christian is victimized for openly practicing his or her faith, both through virtuous actions and simply admitting to being Christian. Rather than reject or deny that faith, the saint remains loyal to Christ and professes his or her faith until death, in many cases at the hands of a persecutor. Thus, Leudegarius is accompanied in his tribulations by the other holy protagonists of this Codex in demonstrating to the reader just how to lead a proper Christian life.

**Conclusion**

Codex Sangellensis 548, produced at St. Gall during the reign of Charlemagne, is an excellent source for better understanding the community and society that produced it. Through nine saints' lives, it sends a message in line with Charlemagne's political agenda, but also a message of religious inspiration. In doing so, it reflects the religious preoccupations of the creators and the political sphere in which they found themselves.

As an educational tool, this manuscript was used to train young men in the art of manuscript production, in leading an acceptable Christian life, and in understanding the heritage of their Christian religion. Through a study of the physical properties of the Codex, the manner of instruction and correction can be discerned.  As a text that could also be read in daily monastic life, this Codex was inspirational as support for monks striving to live better Christian lives. It was also instructional in demonstrating the Abbey's political perspective and ensuring that members of the community were apprised of it.  Through a comparison of the Lives and Passions chosen for inclusion in the Codex, the predominant themes and messages, and thereby concerns, of the minds behind the creation of the Codex can also be discerned.

The twin religious and political messages of the Codex are most completely embodied in its story of the life of St. Leudegarius. Examining this life in its contemporary context allows us to better understand the changes taking place in Frankish society when the Codex was written. This story underscores the legitimacy

of the godly Carolingian kings in contrast to their unstable Merovingian predecessors. Like the other saints' lives, it also demonstrates to the reader how a holy man should behave. In particular, it clarifies for the historian St. Gall's place in the Carolingian world: it was an active participant in Charlemagne's great reforms and an enthusiastic supporter of the Carolingian line.

In summary, the Codex reflects the preoccupations of the people who produced it. Beyond traditional dating methods, such as the dating of the physical material of the book, the contents date the Codex to the late eighth century. Its contents illustrate the social and political changes taking place during this period. It contains a clear message about the martyr's victory in death, and the importance of standing strong in one's belief, despite other social or political pressures. It also plays a political role in its contemporary world, by helping to legitimize the Carolingian dynasty in the face of any potential critics who would see them as usurpers, and clearly supports the reforms being enacted by the Carolingians. Despite the political function of this Codex, the religious messages in it have not been evacuated. It is a clear example of the melding of the political and the religious in this period, not uncharacteristic of the wider society that produced it.

In light of these conclusions, possible further research could be conducted into whether other saint stories produced during the same time period contain similar messages, and the extent to which the political situation may have influenced other such works. In particular, an examination of works produced by monasteries other than St. Gall could lead to a more general understanding of the monastic point of view during the early Carolingian era. A study of the further

development of these same saint stories in the later Carolingian period would also

help to build a more complete picture of how political and religious messages

evolved along with Carolingian society.

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