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Manuscript:	Cod 650, parchment, ff. 192
Depository Library:	Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, Austria
MSS title:	Augustine, <i>De Civitate Dei</i> (text incomplete)
Year:	c. 1180
Created:	Cistercian Abbey, Stična, Slovenia
Size:	Cover boards 442x299mm, parchment 422x299mm

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650 [Rec. 3256]

Rezept für die Sterbestunde

Anf. 192<sup>v</sup> Dye recept ist gesant in dÿ land Wÿ man sich haben schol in dem steribn daz habnt gesant dÿ chrÿchischn master Aüz sâlign vön Auicenen vnd ypocras. Ob aîn pöstem auf für vnder dem herzen ...

Schl. 192<sup>v</sup> vnd gÿtn wein trinkchn vnd got vör awgn habm daz ist daz aller pöst.

14. Jh. (192<sup>r-v</sup>) und 12. Jh., vermutlich 1180 von dem Schreiber Nikolaus in Sittich (Krain) ausgeführt, vgl. Beschreib. Verz. D. illum. Hss. In Öst. NF II, S. 287-292. Perg., 420 x 295, 2splätig, 49 Zeilen. Auf Bl. 192 ist jedoch über die ganze Breite fortgeschrieben. Vorn u. rückwärts je 1 Pap.-Deckbl., dann 192 Bll. Nach Zählung des 19. Jhs. Bl. 191 ist unten eingerissen, von Bl. 192 ist die untere Hälfte abgeschnitten; diese Bll. Gehören zur letzten Lage, dem Trinio Bl. 187-192.—Kam mit Cod. 649 [Rec. 3257] aus dem Zisterzienser-Stift Sittich (Krain)nach Wien. Auf Bl. 192r-v deutsche, das Stift Sittich betreffende Urkunden von 1305 bzw. 1277 in Abschrift des 14. Jhs., von anderer Hd. Als das Rezept. Cod. 649 u. 650 haben gleiche Halblederbde. Des 18. Jhs., vgl. Beschreib. Verz. a. a. O.—Mua. Bayr.- österr.

Zu den altd. Fischnamen vgl. Ahd. Gl. 4,635. Denis II, 1 (1799), Sp. 737, und E.G. Graff, Diutiska 3 (1829), 404, vgl. 186. Hoffmann Nr. CCCXCV. (Menhardt<sup>1</sup> 1960, p.44)

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October 10, 2005

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<sup>1</sup> Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek (ÖNB) together with number of German libraries formed united database *Manuscripta Mediaevalia*. <http://www.manuscripta-mediaevalia.de/> where one can search through their catalogs and obtain other information about their holdings. Knowledge of German desirable.

## **Introduction**

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The Cod. 650 is part of the Sitticum Collection of manuscripts created in the Cistercian abbey in Stična (Slovenia) during the 12<sup>th</sup> century by the group of scribes and illuminators working more or less in the same time.

The Stična Abbey was established in the year 1135 during the greatest expansion of Cistercian order. It existed continuously until the edict of Emperor Joseph II (1780-1785) which dissolved monasteries throughout the Habsburg Empire and ordered their libraries “handed over to the public, to either University or Lyceum libraries, while the Court Library in Vienna might freely choose which books and manuscripts to take.” (Golob 1996, p. 26) Therefore, the library of the Stična Abbey become divided between regional capital Ljubljana and Vienna. In year 1898, the Cistercian monks repossessed their abbey, which is still active, making Stična the oldest active monastery in Republic of Slovenia.

There is very limited interest in these manuscripts beyond German and Slovene speaking scholars. The Abbey in Stična is important for the cultural history of Slovenes and its architecture, art and history are extensively researched by Slovene historians. However, except for writings by Nataša Golob, none of these studies is available outside the Slovenia or on-line. In 1994, the National gallery in Ljubljana together with the Archive of the Republic of Slovenia, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (ÖNB) in Vienna, and Herzog-August-Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel organized the exhibition that presented to the public all the manuscripts from this collection. On that occasion the Gallery published bilingual (Slovene/German) guide to the exhibition with catalog and description of the manuscripts. In addition, Nataša Golob (1996) republished in Slovene and later in

English, a detailed monograph on the collection with numerous color photographs. This text was previously published in *Monumenta Slovenica* vol. IV, 1992, but the 1996 book is the main source of information about the Cod 650 presented in this paper. The ÖNB catalog of secondary literature on manuscripts in their holding does not list any other English language book that would deal with Cod 650.

On the other hand, there is the wealth of the sources about Cistercians and life in Cistercian monasteries. The Stična Abbey has its own web site<sup>2</sup> where they give a brief history of the Abbey and general information about Cistercians order and monks currently living in the monastery. On the grounds of the monastery, in one of the side buildings the Ministry for the Culture of Republic of Slovenia together with a group of enthusiasts organized the Slovene Museum of Religions (Slovenski verski muzej)<sup>3</sup> with exhibitions of monastic life, art, and architecture in Slovenia. The most informative is a multimedia project about the history of the Cistercian order in Yorkshire (Cistercians in the Yorkshire 2005). Beside the Internet, the Cistercian order is elaborated in almost every book of medieval history.

## Manuscript

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The Habsburg Court and Österreichische Nationalbibliothek by no means took away from the Slovenia all the most beautiful or the most important manuscripts. The National and University Library in Ljubljana have some exquisite MSS of the Sitticum Collection. However, the Codex 650 kept in Vienna, containing the text of St. Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, is a quite impressively decorated manuscript especially if we bear in the mind that this is the product of the Cistercian scriptorium.

The characteristic of the Cistercian art is austerity, utilitarianism and clean lines, not quite yet Gothic, not any more Romanesque. In book decoration as well as in the decoration of

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.rkc.si/sticna/sl/index.html> Slovene only.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www2.pms-lj.si/sticna/index.html> Slovene only.

churches, there should not be any pictures and a minimum of colors – “letters should be of one color and not painted” (Golob 1996, p.15) However, these strict rules were enforced rather halfheartedly, as we could see from Cod. 650. Not only that initials in Cod. 650, as well as other MSS in Sitticum Collection, are multicolored, big, and elaborate; initials in Cod. 650 also incorporate human images, delightfully cute dragons, fantastic birds, and animals so characteristic for the fully developed Gothic style.

However, the MSS produced in Stična, Cod. 650 included, never use gold leaf or any of the more opulent decorating techniques characteristic for Benedictine scriptoriums. Their color palette is limited to the lighter and more transparent hues of yellow, red, green, and blue. The handwriting of the Cod. 650 also contributes to the overall feeling of lightness and of simple elegance. The Early Gothic handwriting still bears the simplicity and readability of the Carolina. As with most of the medieval MSS, because of rebinding it is difficult to say how big were the original margins. The text is laid in two, 106 mm and 109 mm wide, columns with 20 mm space between. The MSS produced in Stična scriptorium were usually ruled with pencil, mostly soft crayons of light brown color, but sometimes light brown ink was used. However, there are few exceptions, like the first few folios of Cod 650, which are ruled with hard-point (Golob 1996, p. 50).

Like in Cistercian churches, where decorative effect is only exaggerated by the ribs of the vaults, or rhythmic exchange of the pillars and the arches in the cloister, the layout of the Cod. 650 uses a few simple elements and arranges them in a very pleasing book design. The main decorative elements are painted initials built from the coiling of vines, as was the very common decorative style at that time. The initials are symmetrical as much as the Latin alphabet permits, but the types of coiling and the rendering of leaves and occasional flowers depend on individual preferences of the illuminator. In some letters, vines come out of the mouth of the fantastic animals, usually a dog or dragon. Most of the beginning and closing of the chapters are in the arcaded frames with words. The most characteristic feature of the Cod 650 is painted initials that incorporate humans, mostly

images of church officials. What is especially interesting, if we bear in mind that statues (except for the Cross) and pictures are absolutely forbidden in the Cistercian churches.<sup>4</sup>

The Cistercian are also known as the “white monks” for the color of their tunics. That expression is also used to describe the bindings of their MSS—simple white leather or parchment over wooden boards. Most of the original binding of the MSS from the Sitticum Collection were collectively replaced sometimes just before the Edict of Dissolution (1782). So, Code. 650 is today bound in brown stippled paper over wooden base; the spine and the corners are covered with brown leather; double thongs divide the spine into six panels. The parchment of the volume is of very high quality as are almost all Stična MSS. There are some holes, incisions and dark spots, but all damaged parts were sown, some even with multicolored silk yarn (Golob 1996, p. 48)

The codex consists of 24 quires. Except for the first and last, quires have 8 folios. The folio 1 and 2 as well as folios 191 and 192 are glued together and sown together with respective quires (1 and 24). There are traces and some indications of the quires signatures; however, some of the pages where quire begins or ends are cut off all the way to the margins. Golob (1996, p. 193) suggests that is done by collectors of marginal pictures and notes. There indications in codex itself, as well as in other MSS from this scriptorium that scribes and illuminators liked to make create small pictures around the Roman numeral denoting quire signature. Sometimes dragon holds the paper with the signature in its jaw, sometimes a bird in her beak or sometimes a young lad would point with his hand to the number.

The size of the MSS—442x299mm—suggests that that the Augustine text was held in high regard, as one of the important text of the patristic literature. The extensive decoration (21 painted initials, 28 arcades or double arcades, arcaded frontispiece) and

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<sup>4</sup> A selection of regulations concerning art and architecture mad by the Cistercians' General Chapter (1134 and after) Ch.20: We forbid there to be any statues of pictures in our churches or in any other rooms of a monastery of ours, because, when attention is paid to such things, the advantages of sound meditation and training in religious gravity are often neglected. But we have painted wooden crosses." (Braunfels 172, p. 243)

careful and uniform design as well as size of the MSS show that Augustine's text was considered a venerable reading.

However, one must add that in spite of the solemn simplicity that permeates the design of the MSS, the illuminator (presumably head of the scriptorium by the name Bernard) found the way to express his sense of humor and lighthearted esthetic exuberance by side drawings, and, especially in illuminating the initial S on the folio 179v which have a completely different visual structure than all other initials.

## **Text**

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In the year AD 410 the Visigothic army, led by Alaric, entered Rome and pillaged it freely for days. It was the first time in 800 years that "barbarian hordes" entered the imperial city. Although, the city and the Empire were in a miserable condition well before Alaric entered the scene, the sacking of Rome, the embodiment of "civilization," had an enormous demoralizing effect on the citizens of the Empire. How this could happen to us? What have we done wrong? Was the Christian God, the right god after all? Would the old gods do better in protecting us?

*De civitate Dei* by Augustine was an attempt to counteract these doubts. The treatise is divided into 22 books (chapters); the first 10 carefully repudiate the claims of old pagan communities toward divine power; while the last 12 retell the story of biblical creation introducing into it the idea of the City of God. The city of Rome does not matter—it is just the City of Man, fallible and ephemeral. The only city that matters and that people should strive to get to is the City of God. Because this is a spiritual place, a place not on this Earth, it could not be "build" from stones. It is spiritual place of perfection and true peace. Against the picture of misery and despair over life in decaying Roman Empire, Augustine offers "the vision of human life, one which accepts the place of disaster, death, and disappointment while holding out hope of a better life to come, a hope that in turn

eases and gives direction to life in this world” (Britannica 2000). Essentially, he gives philosophical and theological flesh to the concept of Christian heaven and afterlife.

The book had tremendous intellectual and theological influence throughout West European society, helping the people to bear the chaos of the early Middle Ages. It was also a very important document for the Cistercian order, often recalled in their writings. They formulated the order’s way of monastic life as “a City of God in the building, its members [...] living stones, built together by charity into and habitation of God in the Spirit” (Merton 1957, p. 96). The majestic size of the codex Cod 650 seems essential for the text of such theological importance.

However, it is interesting to note that the text of the treatise in Cod. 650 is incomplete, missing parts of the first 10 chapters (books). Would that imply that in the context of the Stična Abbey and the developments of 12<sup>th</sup> century, the issue of paganism (polytheism) was beyond question? Although Cistercians always looked to build their monasteries on the frontiers—natural as well as cultural—territory of today’s Slovenia was already Christian for whole three centuries. During the rule of Charlemagne, the territory or Carniola was also under his suzerainty and consequently, shared all the cultural benefits of the 12<sup>th</sup> century Renaissance. The last marauding tribes coming out of central Asia, Magyars were neighbors, but by the 12<sup>th</sup> century, even they were well-trusted members of the Christendom. In the year AD 1180, thirty years (1054) after the final schism and excommunications between the churches in Rome and Constantinople, the main issue was the spiritual purity of the Christendom not the threat of paganism.

Besides the text of the *De Civitate Dei*, the last two folios of the codex are transcribed with three inscriptions in Latin:

f. 191r: right after decorative *explicit liber* of the main text, at the bottom of the right column are two invocations in Latin—one against lightening and storms, and one against spells.

- f. 191v: Latin quatrain (a poem in four lines) in hexameter talking about fish, with German glosses added to it sometimes around 1200.
- f. 191v: the Latin text of *Passio S. Floriani* (the Martyrdom of St. Florianus)

As well as three inscriptions in German:

- f. 192: document of Henry, Count of Gorizia, and a list of estates he took under his protection for three years (a copy of the 1305 original);
- f. 192v: A document of Maynard, Count of Gorizia, confirming some rights of the Monastery of Stična (a copy of the 1277 original);
- f. 192v: A prescription “after Avicenna and Hippocrates” against various diseases.

It would be interesting to speculate on the meaning of these inscriptions. It is significant that, relatively speaking, newer notes, and documents were written in German and not the Latin. This reflect the language of the nobility in the region (if not of the peasants) and presumably the language spoken in the Abbey by the monks themselves (most of them coming from the German speaking lands). The inscriptions are particularly interesting in the context of struggle of Habsburgs to diminish the influence of local feudal families, especially Counts of Gorizia-Tyrol to which Count Henry belong. According the History of the peoples of Yugoslavia (Grafenauer et al. 1953, p. 817) the Count Henry, heir of Maynard, was also the relative of the last Czech king. He tried to reclaim the right of his family on Czech crown and even managed to hold that title for the few years. However, in the year 1335 he dies on the battlefield without heirs (p. 817), opening the way for Habsburgs to dominate the Central Europe for centuries.

Are these documents therefore a testimony of (long-term?) involvement of the monastery in wider power games between local feudal families, in spite the Cistercian ideal of isolation from worldly affairs? However, it could be simply that because the area was away from bigger towns, and monks were probably the few people literate in the area, the Abbey served as local notary public and document archive.



The last entry in the codex Cod 650—an instruction “after Avicenna and Hippocrates”—is added to the codex sometime in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and give advice how to conduct oneself in the case of the “big dying” i.e. plague<sup>5</sup>. Besides solemn advice not to enter a plagued city, there is also very hearty advice not to forget to drink and to eat well in order to prevent becoming sick. Golob comments: “the advice was extremely relevant, for in the years 1348 and 1349 the plague was raging throughout Europe, and one is therefore advised to take reasonable action and not surrender to despair” (p. 37).

### **Script and scribes**

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The historical territory of the Carniola, today’s central and northern part of Slovenia, was always under predominant influence of the Germanic cultural flows. The motherhouse of the Stična Abbey is the Rein Abbey, near Graz in Austria, which in itself is ultimately daughter-house of the Ebrach Abbey in Bavarian, which is daughter-house of the Marimond Abbey in France. Because the Stična Abbey did not have its own scriptorium school, all its scribes, and illuminators come from one of this monasteries. Golob’s research of the MSS in the Sitticom Collection shows that the presence of the particular scribes or illuminators in the Stična scriptorium is quite short. There could be numerous reasons for that and she does not offer any explanations, however Braunfels (1972) in his book on monasteries and orders in Europe observes following about the Cistercians monastic life:

“The asceticism of the monks reduced their mean expectation of life to twenty-eight years. If one reflects that these youths never entered a monastery before their fifteenth year, and often like St Bernard only at twenty-one, this means that Cistercian asceticism was on average only supportable for about a dozen years.” (p.69)

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<sup>5</sup> “Rezept für Sterbestunde,” the title of the Cod 650 entry in Menhardt (1960) translate in “Recipe for the hour of death.”

The consequence of this “high turnover” is that the Stična scriptorium never really develops its own “national hand” and any variations in script from official Germanic hands depend on individuality of scribes.

Most of the scribes did not sign their work, but could be identified based on their ductus and particular rubrication style and Golob (1996) conducted detailed research of writings and illuminations, noting individual hands and rubrication characteristic. Beside Bernard who identifies himself<sup>6</sup> by the name in the MS 8/II f2r (deposited in National and University Library in Ljubljana), Golob denote scribe only by the letters (Scribe F) and illuminators by their particular style (The Master of the Long Palmated Leaves) or by the MSS they illuminated (The Gospel Master).

However, Golob identifies scribe Engilbert by the name based on the drawing of young man on the margin f95v with part of his name cut off by the binder’s knife and with his hand pointing to “a finished work.” *[Eng]ilbertus* written over his head (p. 155). Based on the type of the robe and long hair stile, Golob is certain that drawing presents a monk. However, in the catalog entry Menhardt (1960, p. 44) name scribe of Cod 650 as *Nikolaus* for whom Golob thinks that it is just Engilbert’s “colleague.” The portrait of Nicolaus is on the bottom of the folio 62v and he is holding an open book with inscription “I beseech you, remember me, remember me ...” (bottom line of the inscription is cut off, again) (p. 155). This is drawing of much younger man, almost a boy with short hair. Type of clothes could not be identified because drawing is cut off in the middle of the chest. It is unclear what exactly his function in manuscript production was, but his portrait could be probably put better in the context with a number of similar quire signature portraits appearing in Cod 685 of the collection. There could be of lay brothers or craftsmen involved in MSS production. Golob suggests that they are the most probably the parchment makers because some of them hold in their hands a pumice stone. One of the figures holds a volume with ruled lines and that could infer that, at least for the some

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<sup>6</sup> *Lecturi. Bernhardus monachorum Christi minimvs. Quociens hoc commentum a me exaratum ad legendum sumes queso ut memineris laboris meque iuuare sudeas tuae bono orationis.* (To reader: Bernard, smallest among Christian monks. Every time you take to read this treatise, which I made, please remember of my labor and try your best to support me with the goodness of your prayers.) (Golob 1994, p. 30).

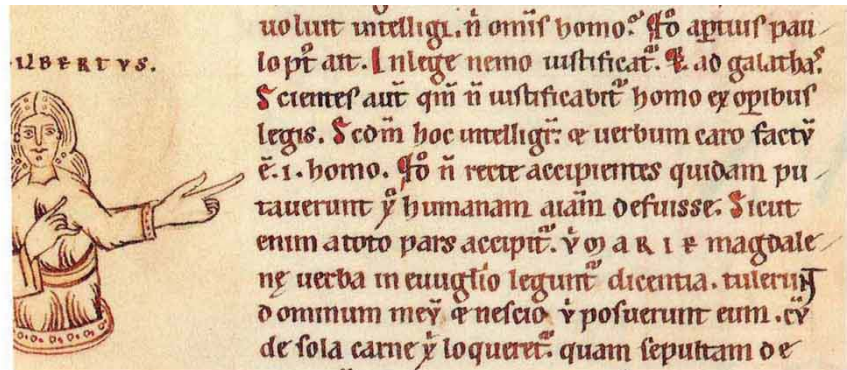
of the volumes, ruling was done by parchmenters. Few figures hold bound volumes in their hands, and suggestion is that they show bookbinders (p. 157-163).

The script that all Sitticum Collection manuscripts are written is a form of early gothic miniscule, defined by Brown MP (Ductus) as “minuscule protogothica textualis libraria media/formata” (Tillotson 2005). Brown TJ (Ductus) define it as “protogothic miniscule” (no. 11), although all forms of letters in her example do not reflect perfectly the script used in Cod. 50.

The main characteristic of the protogothic script is that it is the transition from the carolina towards the gothic script, but it is still quite spacious and easy to read. The ductus of scribe Engilbert, who wrote entire text for Cod. 650, already shows strong verticals and lateral compression so characteristic of the gothic script. His writing is even and rhythmic, letters leaning to the left and uniformly following the baseline. The forming of ovals is narrow and the top of the letters are split. His finishing and linking strokes are long and reaching high up the form of the letter in distinctly gothic thin and oblique strokes. However, there is still a presence of the roundness of the caroline script in the ovals of letters like **o**, **b** and **g**. It is interesting that Engilbert varies his tail of the letter **g**—once it is left open as in Brown TJ example, other time it is closed in gothic textura style. He also uses both, the miniscule as well as uncial, form of letter **d**.

The script exhibits all other characteristic of protogothic French book hand: there are two forms of **r** and **s** which usage depends on their connection with other letters inside the word; and the letters **i** and **j**, as well as **u** and **v** are identical. Engilbert use all standard Latin abbreviations and signs that make text to look like modern Slavic Latin scripts. The *litterae notabiliares* (capitals on the beginning of the sentences) are accented with the color—usually simple red or yellow dot or line depending on the shape of the letter, and this is characteristic of all MSS produced in this scriptorium.

Portrait of Cod 650 scribe?  
He is pointing with his finger  
to a finished work and  
his name [En]gilbertvs  
is written above his head



Two forms of leter S

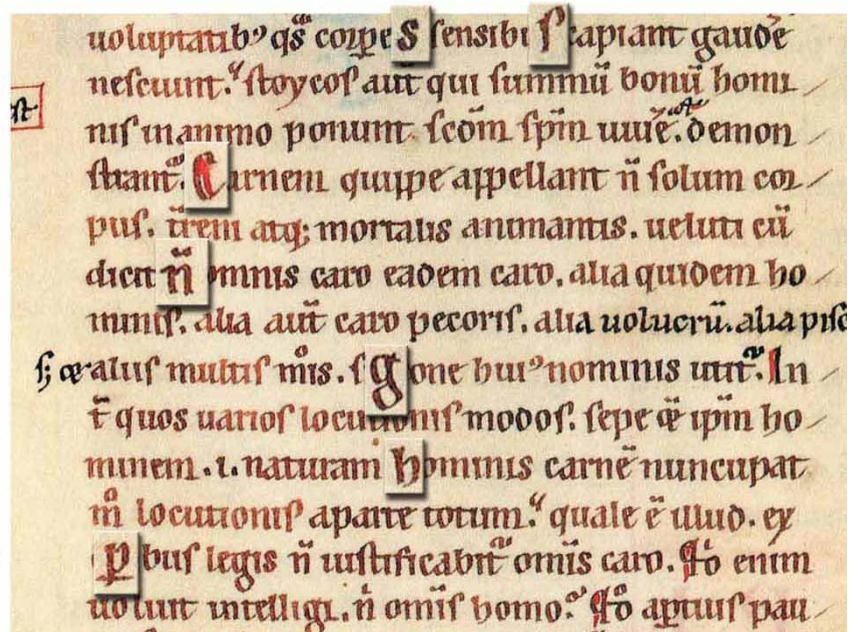
Literae notabiliones

Abriviation -est

Letter g with closed tail oval

Split top of a hast

Abiviation -per

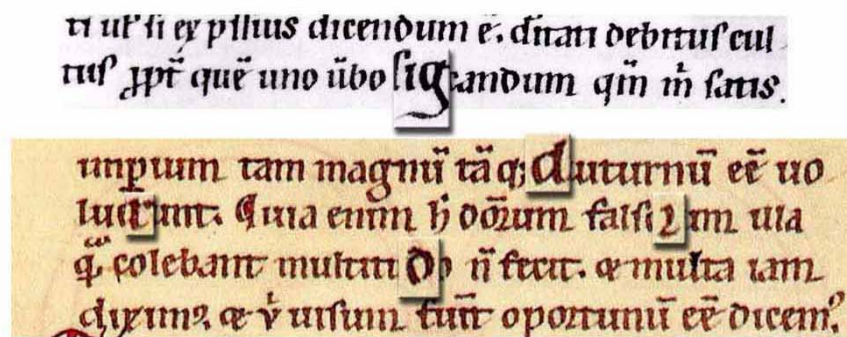


Letter g with open tail oval

Miniscule form of letter d

Two forms of letter r

Unicial form of letter d



## Cistercians and Monastic Reading

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Until the 6<sup>th</sup> century and the Rules written by St. Benedictine, there was no uniformity in organization and internal rules of individual monasteries. The observance of the proper liturgy or austerity of monastery life depended on the interpretation of the reigning abbot. The Benedictine Rule provided for uniform system of management, as well as spiritual and material organization of a monastery. The Rule integrated prayer, manual labor, and study into one balanced daily routine. In an attempt to curb the most extreme forms of hermitage, the Rule emphasized life in the community over solitude and insisted that monks be allowed clothes suited to the climate, sufficient food, and sufficient sleep (7 1/2-8 hours). The working day was divided into three roughly equal portions: five to six hours of liturgical and other prayer; five hours of manual work, whether domestic work, craft work, garden work, or field work; and four hours reading of the Scriptures and spiritual writings. One of important requirements was that monasteries should be self-sufficient and self-contained economic units.

Originally, the Rule did not provision for intellectual, literary, and artistic pursuits, however, the presence of novices that needed to be educated in liturgy as well as the needs of the monastery for service books, Bibles, and other patristic writings for spiritual development required that some time be spent on teaching and copying manuscripts.

Up to the 10<sup>th</sup> century, monasteries were established by local authorities, which often interfered into monastic affairs, investing abbots and extracting taxes. The Benedictine Abbey in Cluny reorganized the order, bringing it under the direct authority of the Pope, tightening the regime in monasteries, and organizing monasteries, dispersed throughout the Europe as one tight organized player in the medieval power struggle between the secular and religious authorities. During the next two centuries, the Benedictine monasteries played an active role in local politics, soliciting donations and endowments, making money off pilgrims. Benedictine churches were getting bigger and lavishly decorated; religious processions and liturgy become the central focus of monastery life.

Benedictine monasteries, with Cluny Abbey on the top, became a powerful landowner and part of the feudal establishment in its own right.

In the 11<sup>th</sup> century these developments provoked the fundamentalist reaction, which demanded “return to the original ideas of St. Benedict.” The Cistercians started as a reformist movement inside the Benedictine order, but in the year 1098, they were established as an independent order. They use the same Benedictine Rule as Benedictines with all eight offices, requirements for work and reading. However, they insisted on austerity of life and monastic surroundings, simplicity of the rituals and on more contemplative approach to communal life. All Cistercian monasteries shared the basic architectural design, esthetic, and organization.

During 12<sup>th</sup> century, the order grew with fantastic speed and was renowned for hard work of its members, good organization and technological aptitude. Because they always build their monasteries on previously uncultivated or marginal land, they were more than welcomed by the local authorities. The spread of the order through Europe is also closely associated to the spread of the early Gothic style in architecture and handwriting. Although they are credited with strong influence on development in technology and agriculture through the 12<sup>th</sup> century, that was not their original intention—by the rule of the order, monks should not extend their practical technical knowledge or expertise to the laity.

Very early, the order realized that it would not be possible that monks alone do all the labor and at the same time satisfy all liturgical requirements. Therefore, the order introduced the institution of lay brothers that do all hard labor around the monastery and on the fields. Although the monastery hired outside workers for peak seasonal work, the monasteries did not use serf labor. However, lay brothers, although taking monastic vows and following the rules of the order, were not novices in training to become monks, their position was terminal. They were never expected to engage in any reading, even for the liturgical purpose. As Braunfels (1972) explains in his book on monasteries and orders in Europe: “[In Cistercian order] the lay brothers were to read no book, and to learn nothing

but the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Miserere and a few other prayers, which they were to sing by heart. They were never even to look at a text.” (p. 70)

The life of everybody in the Cistercian monastery varied between winter and summer schedule, guided mostly by daylight hours available. During summer, everybody would rise at 2am for Vigils, after which monks would read or contemplate for the short time before Lauds at daybreak (dawn), while lay brother would go to work. The Lauds were followed by Prime at sunrise. The monks would pray in the church while lay brothers would pray at their place of work. After the office of Prime, monks would congregate at the chapter house for daily meeting and reading from the Rule. After confessions, the Prior would allocate daily duties. During all this time, monks were expected to remain silent and do not converse among themselves. Until the office of Terce in the mid-morning, monks worked for about two hours on daily tasks around the monastery or in the garden. Between offices of Terce and Sext at noon, monks were to engage in reading and spiritual contemplation. At the beginning of the year, each monk was given a book that he should read during the following year.

The only daily meal in the winter and first of two in summer was around the noon. During the meal, one of the monks had a weekly duty to read appropriate passages from books—feeding the mind while feeding the bodies. The monks were required to maintain silence and keep eating noises to the minimum. After lunch, monks were allowed two hours for nap or reading, after which followed office of None. That was followed by two hours of work. That convened in late afternoon with light supper (in summer) and half hour of listening to the reading. After the Vespers, there was again short time for reading and contemplation, after which followed the Compline, the last office of the day. After that, monks retired to their cots in collective bedroom. Only the Abbot and guests slept in individual rooms. This routine was interrupted only Sundays and holidays when meeting at the chapter house were longer and accompanied by recitation from the books by reader of the week or abbot. The masses were longer and monks received the holy communion (the Eucharist).

It is difficult to say when would be an appropriate time to read text *De civitate Dei* like Cod 650. Considering the complexity of the text and size of the codex, it is doubtful that this would be a book lent to the individual monk for his yearly reading. It would be most probable that the book as an expression of commemorative devotion of the revered Abbot was read only on special occasions for the chapter house reading by the Abbot or some other senior monk.

## Provenance

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The monastery in Stična was established in the year 1135, and we presume that the Abbey library started forming as fast as the buildings were built. However, the real development of the scriptorium and library occurred under the service of Abbot Folknand (d. 1180). This is evident from sheer number of the MSS that share a common stylistic character and that are preserved from that period. “Apparently not a single MSS of any exceptional value was added to the library for a long time after his death—or at least none have survived from the following decades which could measure up to this group” (Golob 1996, p. 38)

The Abbot Folknand was also one who ordered copying of the Cod 650 shortly before his death. In the painted 11-line initial at the top of the verso of folio 62, Abbot Folknand sits with open book on his knees. On the pages of the book is inscription “Catholic Folknan, already dieing, ordered copying of this book for communal use”<sup>7</sup> (Golob 1994, p. 29) There would be nothing special that the Abbot would commissioned the book. In any monastic scriptorium, it was the Abbot’s prerogatory to decide which books were copied and that would be especially true in the tightly governed Cistercian monasteries. However, the commemorative inscription and the incorporation of the Abbot’s portrait into the initial, as well as the size and quality of the Cod 650 would indicate that the work on this particular codex was considered an expression of spiritual endowment by the

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<sup>7</sup> Civic catholicus Folknandus iam moriturus hunc scribi librum communem iussit in usum. (Golob 1996 p. 151)



Abbot. Looking in how good condition the codex is, we can assume that it was not handled much. Beside its size, it is very unlikely that the volume was ever used by anybody but the monks.

There is not that much drama in the provenance of the Cod 650. The codex was continuously part of the Stična Abbey library from the 12<sup>th</sup> century until the year 1784 i.e. until the edict of dissolution of monasteries by Habsburg Emperor Joseph II. The special commission cataloged the collection of the abbey upon takeover and two copies of that catalog were kept in Lyceum Library in Ljubljana. If nothing else, the Habsburg Empire was good at keeping their books straight. Some authors note that it was not necessary that all manuscripts present in the Abby library were registered, and that is quite possible that some volumes “sprang legs and walked away” as local euphemism for misappropriating in time of confusion goes.

Regardless of that, Cod 650 had quite a straightforward trip from Stična to Vienna. There, together with other MSS from the Stična Abbey, was given temporary pressmarks, numbers from 3256 to 3265 (Cod 650 was number Rec. 3256). Because they were included in the Court Library at that time, this MSS are now marked recentiores (‘recent’—as distinct from older pressmarks). MSS marked with the number preceding or following this, numbers come from other dissolution monasteries throughout the empire.

Cod 650 is exceptionally elegant codex where every artistic element has clear function and enough space on the page to come to full expression. Lightness of the colors does not overwhelm the yellowish whiteness of the parchment giving the full meaning to the expression of the “white monk.” However, today Cod 650 is probably important not because of the artistic excellence of four illuminators and scribe that collaborated in its creation, but for odd inscriptions added haphazardly at the end. The documents about coming and going of local lords, protection from thunder and death, and singlet about fish, beside its historical significance, show the reality of the life on the way to the City of God.

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