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The Politics of Booklists

Library Catalogues and Self-Representation in the High Middle Ages

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High medieval booklists are routinely interpreted as administrative sources that existed to inventory book collections, somewhat similar to present-day library catalogues. Historians, however, have found them curiously unreliable and impractical. A case study of the Benedictine monastery of St. Laurent in Liège suggests a different approach to booklists. The thirteenth-century St. Laurent booklist was used, I argue in this article, to position the library as a centre of trinitarian expertise, fundamentally orthodox, and highly respectable. In order to do so, the booklist had to strategically neglect several books that might detract from the image of a perfect library. Booklists such as those from St. Laurent were, therefore, complex mixtures of the administrative with the political, and should be studied as such.

Hoogmiddeleeuwse boekenlijsten worden gewoonlijk geïnterpreteerd als inventarissen van bibliotheken; administratieve bronnen die wel wat weg hebben van hedendaagse bibliotheekcatalogi. Historici hebben echter opgemerkt dat ze als catalogi opvallend onpraktisch en onbetrouwbaar waren. Een casestudy van lijsten uit St. Laurent, een benedictijner klooster in Luik, suggereert een andere interpretatie. St. Laurents dertiende-eeuwse boekenlijst deed de wereld kond van een bibliotheek met ongekende expertise over de Heilige Drievuldigheid binnen een fundamenteel orthodox en uitermate respectabel kader. Om dat te bereiken werden op de boekenlijst heel wat boeken weggelaten die afbreuk zouden kunnen doen aan het beeld van de perfecte bibliotheek. Boekenlijsten zoals deze waren derhalve complexe mengkroezen van het administratieve met het politieke, en zouden als zodanig moeten worden bestudeerd.

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Introduction

There is something strange about high medieval booklists. Booklists, as the name suggests, enumerate books in a particular library. Scholars have edited many of these lists because they can help to reconstruct and understand libraries, even though high medieval booklists were no catalogues in the modern sense of the word.[1] The *communis opinio* is that these booklists were 'inventories, the purpose of which was the preservation of the collection of books they describe. They were generally made by librarians or custodians for their own use or for the use of their successors.'[2] As inventories, however, these lists appear curiously untrustworthy – especially the ones that predate the 1300s. They were carefully crafted. These early booklists were usually created in a monastery by someone who knew the collection quite well – let's call them the librarian[3] – and who would insert a list of books into a good-quality volume in the monastic library.

While booklists look impressive, historians often find them chaotic or incomplete. First of all, librarians often limited themselves to describing a selection of their monastery's books, such as the schoolbooks, without stating clearly what they were doing and why.[4] They sometimes left out books of lesser value. Some entries in a list are all but incomprehensible because the librarian guessed at the name of a book's author or jotted down what they felt the title should have been. In an attempt to mirror the order of Creation in their booklists, many librarians strove to arrange the books hierarchically, starting with books from Scripture, continuing with the four Latin Doctors of the Church (Jerome, Augustine, Ambrose, and Gregory the Great); followed by other authors and works in order of decreasing importance. This made it all but impossible to properly include a composite manuscript that, for example, began with a work by Jerome and continued with Basil's Hexameron.

1 Notable editions are the *Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues*, the *Repertorio di Inventari e Cataloghi di Biblioteche Medievali dal secolo VI al 1520* (RICABIM), the *Corpus Catalogorum Belgiii*, and the somewhat older *Mittelalterliche Bibliothekskataloge Deutschlands und der Schweiz*.

2 Albert Derolez, 'Medieval Libraries in the Low Countries: Thoughts for an Integrated Approach', *Queeste* 20:2 (2013) 70; See also Richard H. Rouse, 'The Early Library of the Sorbonne I', *Scriptorium* 21:1 (1967) 58. DOI: https://doi.org/10.3406/scrip.1967.3284.

3 I use the word 'librarian' for 'the person responsible for the care and administration of a collection of books owned by a medieval institution' (often an armarius or cantor, and/or the abbot). Richard Sharpe, 'The Medieval Librarian', in: Elisabeth Leedham-Green and Teresa Webber (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland, vol. I: To 1640* (Cambridge: CUP 2008) 218. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521781947.011; Benjamin Pohl, *Abbatial Authority and the Writing of History in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford Academic, 2023) 233-249. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198795377.001.0001.

4 Albert Derolez, *Les catalogues de bibliothèques. Typologie des sources du Moyen Âge occidental* 31 (Turnhout: Brepols 1979) 59-60.

A librarian would usually list such a manuscript among the works of Jerome, occasionally – but certainly not always – followed by a note such as *in quo exameron basilii*.[5] This introduced a further element of chaos into the lists. Finally, many librarians would not leave open space for new additions. Without an aesthetic way to add new acquisitions to the existing list, new titles would have to be crammed in between the lines, or added to the margins, thus absolutely ruining the page's beautiful appearance, and most librarians did not bother to even try. As a result, their booklists offer a static snapshot of the library.[6]

Booklists are, therefore, impressive yet complex. As a result, they are edited and described more often than they are analysed. Albert Derolez, an expert on the subject, has even denounced the idea of using booklists for a general study of libraries as illusory. In his opinion, scholars should edit booklists, identify as many titles on these lists as possible, and leave it at that.[7] While scholars must respect the complexity of the booklists as highlighted by Derolez and others, his call for restraint comes with dangers of its own, namely 'a frustrating use of a good source', as Malcolm Walsby put it.[8]

Drawing on a recent shift in our engagement with archival records, I probe the possible uses of booklists to contemporaries that go beyond administrative tabulation. My argument is that the striking complexity of these texts is inextricably linked with the political priorities of the monasteries that produced them. My claim chimes closely with the rapidly growing attention of historians and literary scholars to the metahistory of textual records, up to the point that some scholars speak of an 'Archival Turn'. In their discussions of how contemporaries managed and navigated the increasingly large amount of texts in their daily lives, scholars often note that both the records themselves as well as the new types of text developed to manage them (inventories, catalogues, indexes and so on) not only fulfilled a practical purpose but also often doubled as a canvas to make statements about the social self of individuals, groups, or institutions and their place in society and its history.[9]

5 Albert Derolez, Benjamin Victor and Lucien Reynhout (eds.), *Corpus Catalogorum Belgii: The Medieval Booklists of the Southern Low Countries. 2: Provinces of Liège, Luxemburg and Namur* (Brussels 1994) 118-124, here 121 #9 (henceforth: CCB). Note that in CCB 2 113, this manuscript appears to be listed as 'Hieronimus de Hebraicis questionibus et nominibus' without mention of Basil.

6 Derolez, *Les catalogues*, 20-23.

7 Ibidem, 67.

8 Malcolm Walsby, 'Book Lists and Their Meaning', in: Malcolm Walsby and Natasha Constantinidou (eds.), *Documenting the Early Modern Book World: Inventories and Catalogues in Manuscript and Print*. Library of the Written Word 31 (Leiden: Brill 2013) 5. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004258907.

9 For two agenda-setting overviews, see Liesbeth Corens, Kate Peters and Alexandra Walsham (eds.), *Archives and Information in the Early Modern World*. Proceedings of the British Academy 212 (Oxford: OUP 2018); Alexandra Walsham, 'The Social History of the Archive: Record-Keeping in Early Modern Europe', *Past & Present* 230:Suppl. 11 (2016) 9-48. DOI: https://

I must stress from the outset that the evidence on the uses of booklists in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries is extremely sparse. To this day, the Archival Turn is mainly the work of early modernists, who often study how contemporaries grappled with a surfeit of records and the concomitant risk of 'information overload'.[10] While medievalists are forerunners in their attention to intertextuality as one of the underpinnings of this flowering metahistory of textual records, they have to contend with a lack of information on how exactly documents such as booklists were used by contemporaries.

Three booklists from the Benedictine monastery of St. Laurent in Liège provide a valuable case-study in this respect (Figure 1). These lists were not used, I argue, to inventory the collection, for the use of the librarian, as a finding aid or to help preserve the books against theft. Instead, the lists were meant to present the library in an almost narrative way for particular audiences. Their essential function, I demonstrate, was to communicate a specific representation of St. Laurent's library. These booklists were thus more political than administrative in nature, an observation that opens up the possibility that many high medieval booklists similarly intermingled the administrative with the political and should be studied as such.

Before engaging with the St. Laurent booklists, I must discuss the terminology of library historiography, as well as the definition of politics. First the terminological issues. Scholars sometimes distinguish between 'booklists' that 'reflect a single element in the growth or use of the library' (such as schoolbooks or books that were used in a liturgical context), and the much more exhaustive 'catalogues' that present an image of an entire library and its organisation.[11] It is common to present booklists as forerunners of the true catalogues that came into being around the thirteenth century.[12]

I would, however, caution against the reification of this contrast between booklists and catalogues. First, because high medieval librarians did

doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtw033. The latter issue of *Past & Present* includes a contribution by Jason Scott-Warren on life-writing and bookkeeping that rhymes with my own approach, see 'Early Modern Bookkeeping and Life-Writing Revisited: Accounting for Richard Stonley', *Past & Present* 230:Suppl. 11 (2016) 151-170. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtw031.

10 See the seminal Ann M. Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press 2010).

11 Richard Sharpe, 'Reconstructing Medieval Libraries', in: Jacqueline Hamesse (ed.), *Bilan et perspectives des études médiévales en Europe* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Brepols 1995) 407. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1484/M.TEMA-EB.4.00490; Donatella Nebbiai-Dalla Guarda, 'Les listes médiévales de lectures monastiques: Contributions à la connaissance des anciennes bibliothèques Bénédictines', *Revue Bénédictine* 96:3-4 (1986) 271-272. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1484/J.RB.4.01156.

12 Richard Sharpe, 'Library Catalogues and Indexes', in: Rodney Thomson and Nigel J. Morgan (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Vol. II: 1100-1400* (Cambridge: CUP 2008) 197, 203; Richard H. Rouse, 'La diffusion en occident au XIIIe siècle des outils de travail facilitant l'accès aux textes autoritatifs', *Revue des études islamiques* XLIV (1976) 130.

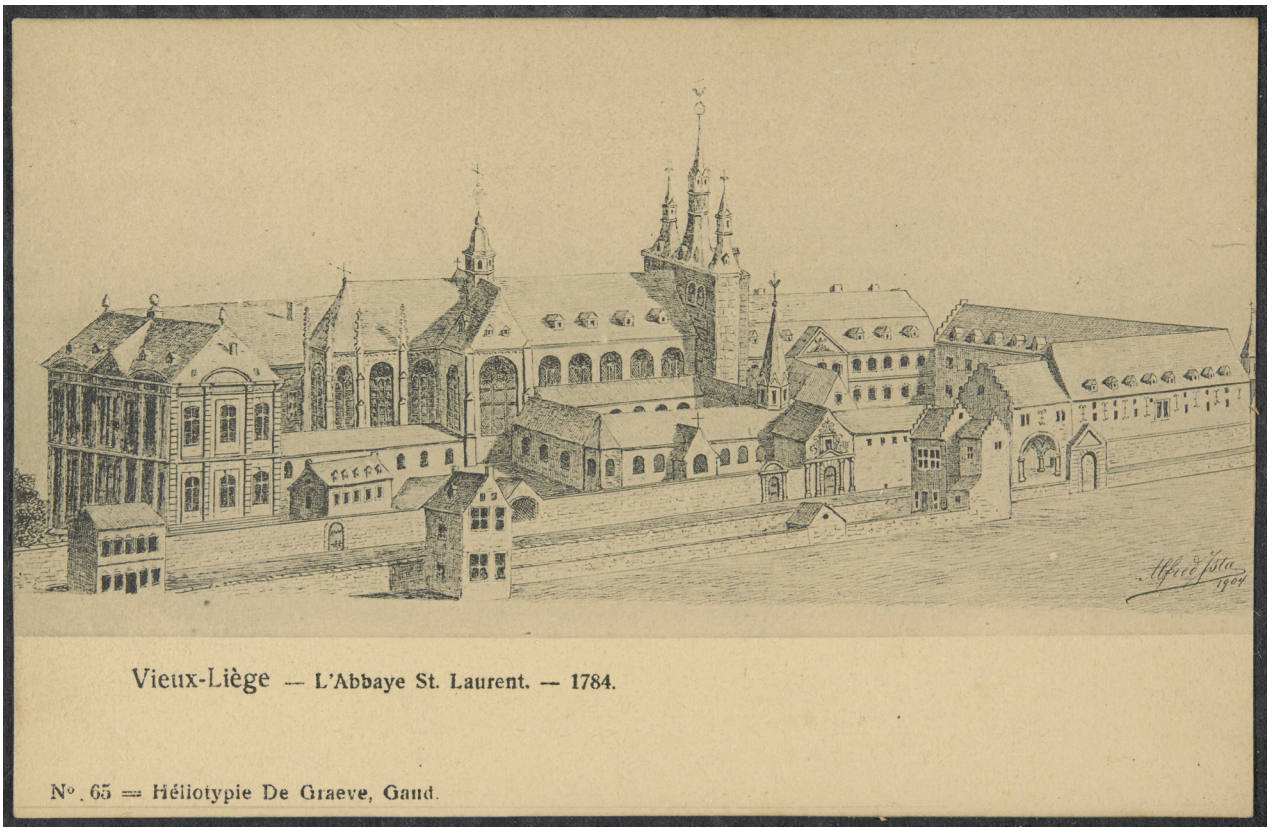

Figure 1. The abbey of St. Laurent in the 18th century. KU Leuven Libraries Special Collections, GP087372.

not make such a distinction – they would describe their list along the lines of *brevis librorum*, *notitia librorum, nomina librorum*, or *numerus librorum*, no matter how selective or exhaustive their selection of books was.[13] Second, because the idea that booklists were succeeded by catalogues suggests that the creation of booklists fizzled out after the thirteenth century, which is not the case. In fact, they remained popular until long after the invention of print.[14] Finally, we will see that St. Laurent's thirteenth-century 'catalogue' was hardly less selective than its twelfth-century 'booklists'. In this article, I will therefore use 'booklists' as an umbrella term that covers everything from highly selective lists to catalogue-like phenomena, without imagining them as a distinct phase of a teleological evolutionary narrative.

As to my argument that these booklists were political in nature, 'politics' can of course signify many things.[15] In a narrow sense, politics is concerned with the competition for control over state resources; in a broader sense it is more akin to Weber's notion of 'any independent *leadership* activity'. While the word 'political' was not used in any of these meanings during the high Middle Ages, Chris Fletcher points out that it is not necessarily anachronistic to use it to describe medieval practices. In this article, I proceed from an expansive definition of politics in the sense that booklists were political when they functioned as tools to secure power in a human grouping, with an emphasis on the aspects of communication and securing assent within that group.[16] In other words, booklists were political when they were created by an actor to articulate identities that clearly positioned that actor vis-à-vis other actors, thus eliciting a specific reaction from an audience, ideally one that was commensurate with the interests, perceived or otherwise, of that actor. Then and now, politics is about projecting a culturally constructed notion of order on complex and dynamic social realities in ways that shape and reshape the power relations between the stakeholders involved.

I first discuss the capacity of monastics to develop exhaustive overviews of their library collections and earlier attempts to interpret booklists as heuristic and administrative tools. Next, I develop a comparative

13 Derolez, *Les catalogues*, 24-26. Note that in this article I will also use the terms 'book' and 'manuscript' as functionally equivalent.

14 Walsby, 'Book Lists', passim; Marc D. Lauxtermann, '"And Many, Many More": A Sixteenth-Century Description of Private Libraries in Constantinople, and the Authority of Books', in: Pamela Armstrong (ed.), *Authority in Byzantium* (Farnham: Ashgate 2013) passim.

15 As Adrian Leftwich noted, 'because it is such a highly contested subject, debates about the proper definition and the scope of [politics] are themselves political, and that it is not likely that there will ever be universal agreement either on what politics, as an activity, is or what the appropriate composition of the discipline of Politics should be.' Leftwich, *What is Politics: The Activity and its Study* (Cambridge: CUP 2004) 2.

16 Christopher Fletcher, 'Politics', in: Jackson W. Armstrong, Peter Crooks and Andrea Ruddick (eds.), *Using Concepts in Medieval History: Perspectives on Britain and Ireland, 1100-1500* (Cham: Springer Nature 2022) 163-186. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-77280-2_9.

analysis of three twelfth- and thirteenth-century booklists from the monastery of St. Laurent to point out that these lists were idiosyncratic rather than exhaustive, thus hinting at a specific communicative purpose rather than at the open-ended use of these lists as inventories. In the two sections that follow, I develop the case-study of the St. Laurent collections further to probe how these booklists and their uses were tied to ongoing political debates. A contextualised discussion suggests that booklists were carefully designed instruments to articulate and to propagate specific and sensitive statements that were highly germane to the self-definition of the monastery as a spiritual and political community.

The politics of high medieval booklists

Members of medieval religious communities have always been perfectly able to create exhaustive inventories of all the books in their collections. In ninth-century Lorsch, for example, four distinct booklists were drawn up. The first was an administrative list that left open spaces to add new acquisitions. The second was a fair copy of that list, with 70 added titles. According to Bernhard Bishoff, this list was probably intended to be taken outside of the monastery, as a portable representation of the library.[17] The third booklist was even more complete, and was set out in a strict hierarchy of authors and themes: first the Bible books, then the Church Fathers, other authors on Christian doctrine and history, followed by subjects such as law, hagiography, and history. This created an almost narrative representation of the library that not only showed the sheer number of books available to the community of Lorsch, but also laid out how the library mirrored the divine order of the world. Finally, a 'short title' copy of the third list was made for administrative purposes.[18]

The four booklists from Lorsch show a distinction between 'administrative' and 'public' booklists. By good fortune, the Lorsch lists were all bound into one manuscript and have therefore been preserved. Most of the preserved booklists from other communities resemble the public booklist from Lorsch. Either the administrative booklists quickly went out of fashion, or (and to my mind, more likely) many booklists with a primarily administrative function were written down on loose leaves or quires of parchment, and destroyed as soon as the list had become obsolete, leaving us with the public lists for analysis.

The argument has been made that many booklists that appear incomplete were, in fact, administrative inventories of the books in one

17 Bernhard Bischoff, *Lorsch im Spiegel seiner Handschriften* (Munich: Arbeo-Gesellschaft 1974) 12.

18 Rosamond McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1989) 185-189. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511583599.

specific location in a monastery: the school, or the church, or the treasury, or the main library (Figure 2). If a booklist only inventorised one physical location in the monastery, books that were not physically stored in that location would by definition be missing from the booklist.[19] A librarian who possessed a booklist for each room in the monastery where books were stored, would thus be able to use them as administrative tools.

This argument is not without its problems. In cases where we possess multiple booklists from one community, it is not uncommon to find one title on more than one booklist. Those overlaps can sometimes be explained away – perhaps the community possessed two copies of the same text, or perhaps the books were moved from one location to the other – but not, I deem, when they occur too often. St. Laurent, for example, has fourteen overlaps between its booklists, or roughly 10 percent of its probable collection.

In fact, we know too little of how books were physically stored in high medieval monasteries: for 'the state of research on the history of libraries as spaces can only be called miserable'.[20] Archeological evidence shows that a monastery's library was not usually stored in a dedicated library room, but scattered all over the monastery in recesses, on shelves, and in caskets.[21] That would either oblige a librarian to have had a separate booklist for each room in which books were stored, or – more practically – to make a master list that subdivided the books according to the recesses, caskets or shelfs on which they were stored. High medieval booklists tend not to do this: they were supremely unconcerned with the space of a physical library. Booklists do not usually link books to specific rooms, shelves, chests, or signatures and only rarely gave a description of the physical format of the manuscript that could help one to identify it on a shelf (at most they would say something like 'in an old volume', or 'in two volumes').[22] As a result, they must have been distinctly impractical inventories.

Another reason why the booklists would have been impractical finding aids was that booklists did not usually list all the works in one volume. The thirteenth-century St. Laurent booklist, for example, mentions 'Jerome's *Book of Hebrew Questions*, with Basil's *Hexameron*' in a section that was dedicated to the works of Jerome.[23] This entry would not be of much help to someone

19 For example Fritz Milkau and Georg Leyh, *Handbuch der Bibliothekwissenschaft* (Wiesbaden: Milkau Verlag 1950) 273; Richard H. Rouse, Mary A. Rouse, and Roger A.B. Mynors (eds.), *Registrum Anglie de libris doctorum et auctorum ueterum* (London: British Library 1991) xv; Derolez, 'Medieval Libraries', 71.

20 Richard Gameson, 'The Medieval Library (to c. 1450)', in: Leedham-Green and Webber, *The Cambridge History*, 13-14; Heinfried Wischermann, '"Claustrum sine armario"' (2011) 93, cited from Nuria de Castilla, François Déroche and Michael Friedrich, 'Towards a Comparative Study of Libraries in the Manuscript Age', in: *Libraries in the Manuscript Age*. Studies in Manuscript Cultures 29 (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter 2023) 5.

21 Leedham-Green and Webber, 'Introduction', in: Idem, *The Cambridge History*, 1-5.

22 Sharpe, 'Library Catalogues', 199-201.

23 *CCB* 2 121.

Figure 2. Depiction of a library around 700 AD. Firenze, Bibliotheca Medicea Laurenziana, Ms Amiatinus 1, f. 5r. Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=332293.

who was interested in Basil the Great but did not know that they should be searching amongst the works of Jerome to find it.[24]

Even more impractical are phrases like 'et alii' in booklists. A 1100-1117 booklist from Abdington Abbey, for example, states that the community possesses Augustine's *De civitate Dei*, his homilies on John's gospel, 'and many other volumes of the same teacher'. Further on, the list states that the library contains 'many books on physics'.[25] Such remarks are understandable as a boast about the riches of Abdington Abbey's library, but they would have been distinctly unhelpful for someone who wanted to know whether they could get their hands on Augustine's *Confessions* or a specific work on physics.

Furthermore, the booklists' material presentation does not testify to an administrative nature, for booklists were often added to valuable manuscripts such as Bibles or theological treatises.[26] The St. Laurent booklists, for example, were part of Ambrosius Autpertus' *In Apocalypsim*, Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*, and a Passional while the 1105 Stavelot booklist was part of the famous Stavelot Bible.[27] This is exactly why these booklists have been preserved. It also imbued the booklist with the status of the manuscript it was included in. Complete Bibles, for instance, had very high status in high medieval monasteries, and to include a booklist in such a manuscript meant that it shared in the reverence and respect that was accorded to the codex as a whole. On the other hand, it detracted from their usefulness as administrative tools, for it is hard to imagine a librarian running around with the community's most valuable Bible to inventory the library. It also required scribes to present the booklist in an aesthetically pleasing manner that would not detract from the codex' value. As a result, booklists were often laid out as running text, without space for emendations or later additions (Figure 3).[28] While this beautified the booklists and made them look like an integral part of the manuscript, it also made them quite impractical as inventories – communities that wrote or acquired a significant number of manuscripts would outpace their booklists within few years.

These booklists not only looked like narrative texts on the page, I already mentioned that they also listed book titles in such a manner that the list formed a coherent narrative in and of itself. Titles were often placed in a fairly rigorous hierarchy. In the thirteenth-century booklist from St. Laurent, the Bible was followed by the Church Fathers, followed by theologians in order of importance: Florus, Bede, Hilarius, Alcuin, Pascasius, Origen, Cassiodorus. They were followed by a section on history, which was again

24 See Derolez, 'Medieval Libraries', 72.

25 Sharpe, 'Library Catalogues', 200.

26 Milkau and Leyh, *Handbuch der Bibliothekwissenschaft*, 273.

27 Koninklijke Bibliotheek van België, Brussel (Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels. Henceforth Brussels KBR) 9668, 9384-89, 9810-14; British Library Add. MS 28106-7.

28 CCB 2 71.

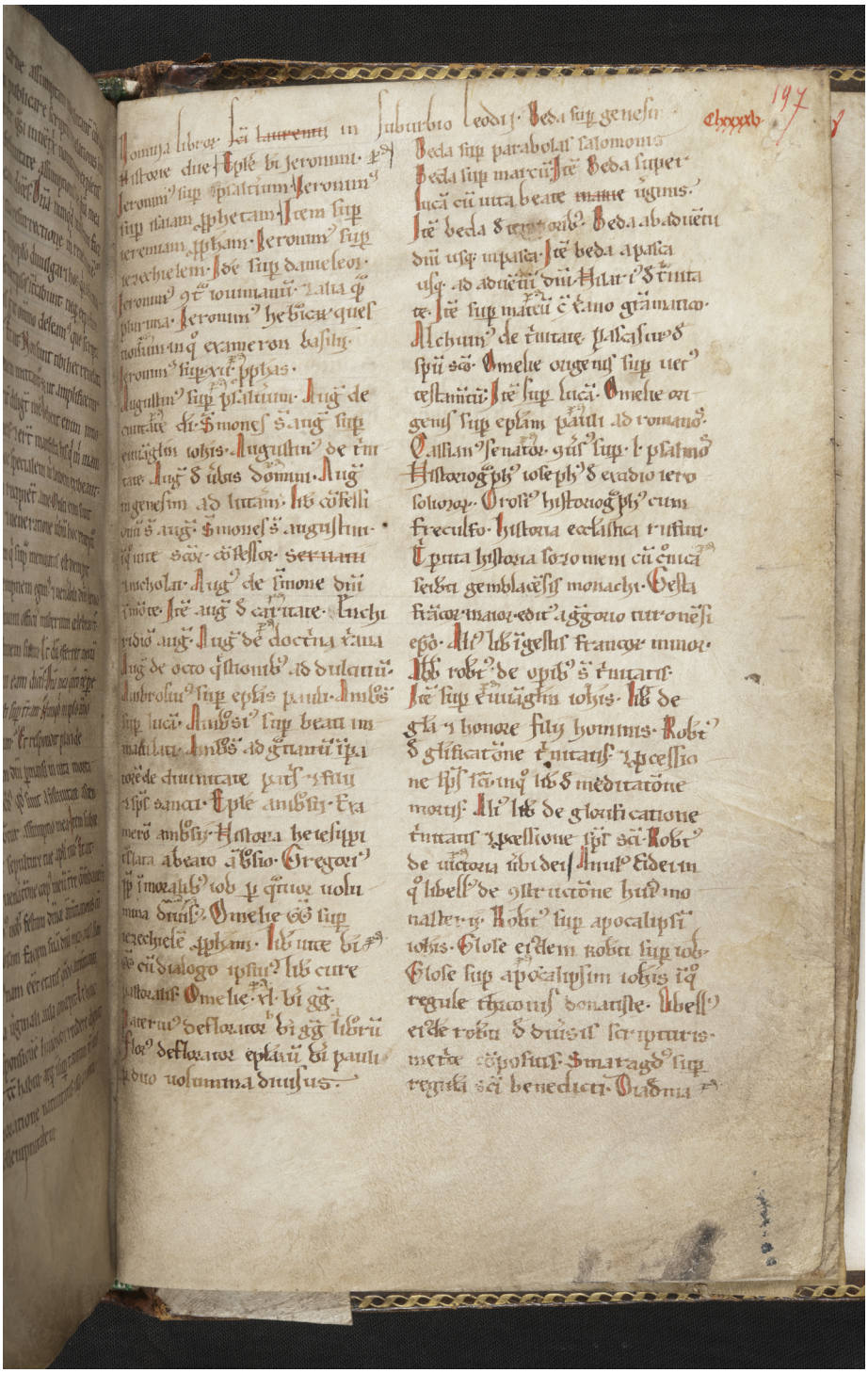

Figure 3. The thirteenth-century booklist from St. Laurent (Brussels KBR 9810-14, fol. 197r). Note that the booklist looks like a narrative text and leaves no space for emendations or additions.

followed by three famous authors (Rupert of Deutz, Smaragdus, and Haimo), and the booklist ended with miscellanea.[29]

This hierarchical structure had been in place for many centuries and was based on a selection of normative treatises on good and bad books, such as Jerome's *De viris illustribus* with Gennadius' annotations, Galasius' *De libris recipiendis et non recipiendis*, and Cassiodorus' *Institutiones divinarum et saecularium litterarum*.[30] By making the contents of a library's general booklist conform to writings such as these, the librarian was making a political statement about the orthodoxy of their library by pointing out that their institution's library functioned within the normative framework of a much broader literary and spiritual community.

Many preserved booklists follow this hierarchical structure. Some scribes may have adhered to the hierarchy out of habit, thoughtlessly conforming to the norm of what a booklist should look like. Yet there is more to it. Shorter booklists, with just school books or books about other specific topics or contexts, do not usually adhere to the hierarchical structure. It is, on the whole, only the booklists that describe the more general books in a community that adhere to the hierarchy.[31]

That makes sense if we consider the different audiences for these booklists. The audience for school books probably did not need to be convinced about the community's fundamental orthodoxy. This audience consisted of members from the monastic community as well as outsiders who were instructed within it, living and breathing its spirituality on a daily basis. These people did not need a booklist to tell them whether their community was orthodox or not. The audience for the more general booklists, on the other hand, was very different: some part of it may well have consisted of outside visitors.

The idea that libraries should be open to visitors is already observed in ancient Mesopotamia, though not any visitor was made welcome. Only competent or knowledgeable men were allowed to read the cuneiform tablets. Centuries later, Roman nobles famously opened their collections of scrolls to their peers, but not to the *plebs*.[32] Medieval monasteries also allowed visitors into their libraries, but the principle that people should only be given access to the level of information that they were intellectually and spiritually capable of handling held strong.[33] It is safe to assume that visitors were not entitled

29 *CCB* 2 120.

30 McKitterick, *The Carolingians*, 172-181, 200-205; Wolfgang Milde, *Der Bibliothekskatalog des Klosters Murbach aus dem 9. Jahrhundert: Ausgabe und Untersuchung von Beziehungen zu Cassiodors 'Institutiones'* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter 1968).

31 Many examples can be found in *CCB 1-6*.

32 Andrew Pettegree and Arthur der Weduwen, *The Library: A Fragile History* (London: Profile Books 2022) 19-24.

33 A good illustration of this principle can be found in William of St. Thierry, *Un traité de la vie solitaire: Epistola ad fratres de Monte-Dei de Guillaume de Saint-Thierry. Édition critique du texte latin*, ed. M.-M. Davy (Paris: J. Vrin 1940) 81, 120-121; see also Heinrich

to read whatever work in the library struck their fancy. Instead, it fell to the abbot or the librarian to decide who would be allowed to read what book.

If the librarian had to make sure that people did not get their hands on unsuitable books, it would be unproductive to present visitors with an inventory of all the books in the monastery, because that would only direct outsiders towards a number of works that might be categorically unsuitable for them. Instead, they could either talk visitors through the contents of the library themselves, or they might use a list that was specifically meant to be shown to outsiders. Such a list should contain only books that could profitably be consulted by a relatively broad audience and that would impress them favourably. Such a list should underexpose or completely exclude books that were too ugly, that were not likely to be spiritually profitable, that could easily lead to misconceptions, that could cast a bad light on the library and the community, or that were generally unsuitable to be brought to the attention of outsiders. As we will see, the thirteenth-century booklist from St. Laurent served precisely that purpose.

The politics of the St. Laurent booklists

The monastery of St. Laurent possessed three booklists: two short ones from the twelfth century, and a longer one with 129 titles 'of the conventual library'[34] from the first half of the thirteenth century.[35] The latter booklist was titled 'Names of the books of St. Laurent near Liège' (*Nomina librorum sancti Laurentii in suburbio Leodii*). This title suggests an exhaustive enumeration of books. Whether it was in fact exhaustive cannot be ascertained, because we cannot know which books were present in St. Laurent at the precise moment the booklist was drawn up. What we can do, however, is list the books that appear to have been produced in St. Laurent before the thirteenth century and that we know were still in possession of the St. Laurent community after the thirteenth century, as well as the books that we know were present in St. Laurent around the thirteenth century. These were the books that were probably located in the monastery St. Laurent at the time the 129-title booklist was drawn up.

There are at least eight such books: liturgical texts, saint's lives, and technical works.[36] While the absence of each individual book on the 129-title

Fichtenau, 'Monastisches und scholastisches Lesen', in: Georg Jenal and Stephanie Haarländer (eds.), *Herrschaft, Kirche, Kultur: Beiträge zur Geschichte des Mittelalters. Festschrift für Friedrich Prinz zu seinem 65. Geburtstag* (Stuttgart: Hirsemann 1993) 329.

34 In his edition, Derolez gave this booklist the title 'Catalogue of the conventual library, first half of the XIIIth Century', CCB 2 118.

35 Brussels KBR 9384-89, 9668, and 9810-14, edited in CCB 2 111-124. Note that it cannot be proven with total certainty that all three booklists concern the monastery of St. Laurent.

36 Brussels KBR, 10274-10280 (s. X-XII), 10849-10854 (s. XI), 9361-9367 (s. XI), 10264-10273 (s. XI-XII), 18653-18657 (s. XI-XV), 18383 (s. XII[1]), 9642-9644 (s. XII[2]), New Haven, Yale Law School, JC275 no. 1 (s.

booklist might be explainable, together the absences start to indicate a pattern: they all appear to have been meant for daily use by the monks. First of all, while the St. Laurent librarian included several liturgical texts of high status, such as glossed psalters, scholarly translations of the Hebrew psalter, and complete Bibles, they did not include any liturgical texts that were meant for daily use, such as educational psalters, fragmented Bible texts, or Chapter Books.[37] Equally absent are some plain eleventh-century texts on the subject of Saint Lawrence, the monastery's patron saint; Saint Maurus, and Saint Foillianus.[38] These volumes may have been used for preaching, but would probably not have been shown to outsiders.[39]

The thirteenth-century list also does not mention many technical books that required specialised knowledge. These technical books mostly figure on the two twelfth-century booklists, here described as Booklist A and Booklist B. In what follows, we compare the three booklists to tease out the overlaps or the lack thereof (see Table 1). Booklist A represents an attempt around the year 1100 by Rupert of Deutz to establish a school in St. Laurent that combined an introduction to classical rhetoric with a thorough

XI[ex]). Two further manuscripts (mss) were made in St. Laurent but had already left the monastery well before the booklists were made (Brussels KBR 2031-32 and Munich BSB Clm. 23261). Paris BnF Lat. 10400 is often quoted as a manuscript from St. Laurent, but is really a collection of miscellanea that include a handful of flyleaves from St. Laurent mss. Note that there is no proof that the community already possessed KBR 9565-66 (probably created in St. Gall and in St. Laurent by the eighteenth century) by the time the booklists were created.

37 The Psalters (CCB 2 124 #126-128) on the booklist were scholarly translations or glossed, and would almost certainly not be used in the liturgy (Maurice Coens, 'Le psautier de saint Wolbodon, ecolatre d'Utrecht, évêque de Liége', *Analecta Bollandiana* 53 (1936) 137-142; C.M. Cooper, 'Jerome's "Hebrew Psalter" and the New Latin Version', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 69:3 (1950) 233; Paul Saenger, *Space Between Words: The Origins of Silent Reading* (Stanford: Stanford University Press 1997) 193; Frans van Liere, *An Introduction to the Medieval Bible* (New York: Cambridge University Press 2014) 211. Fragmented works of Scripture (KBR 9642-9644, 1838) were not included, though the prestigious complete bibles were (Marie-Rose Lapière, *La lettre ornée dans les manuscrits mosans d'origine bénédictine (XIe-XIIe siècles)* (Paris: Belles Lettres 1981) 382 #67, 103-115). Chapterbooks KBR 10274-10280 and 10849-10854 were used for readings during meetings in chapter that were not open to outsiders, and these were not included on the booklist either.

38 Brussels KBR 18653-18657 I: ff. 2r-13v; II: ff. 14r-19v; III: ff. 28-38. See also Tjamke Snijders, *Manuscript Communication. Visual and Textual Mechanics of Communication in Hagiographical Texts from the Southern Low Countries, 900-1200*. Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy 32 (Turnhout: Brepols 2014) 106-115, 430.

39 Compare Snijders, 'Manuscript Layout and Réécriture. A Reconstruction of the Manuscript Tradition of the *Vita Secunda Gisleni*', *Revue belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 87:2 (2009) 215-237. DOI: https://doi.org/10.3406/rbph.2009.7672. There are two further manuscripts that are not on the thirteenth-century booklist without an obvious reason. First, Brussels KBR 9668 (with Ambrosius Autpertus' *In Apocalypsim* and Rupert of Deutz's booklist). Second, Brussels KBR 9358 (a mishmash of citations from Augustine).

Booklist A (ca. 1100, 41 entries, Brussels KBR 9668)	Booklist B (ca. 1100-1150, 65 entries, Brussels KBR 9384-89)	The 13th-century booklist (ca. 1200-1250, 129 entries, Brussels KBR 9810-14)
I. Epistolę Pauli.		[81] Epistole sancti Pauli.
IIII. Beda in parabolis Salomonis, in quo etiam Hieronimus in epistola ad Galathas.		[39] Beda super parabolas Salomonis.
V. Heimo in apocalypsi		[76?] Alius super apocalipsim
VIII et VIIII. Cassiodorus super psalmos.		[52] Cassianus senator conversus super L psalmos.
	[18] Hic presens Isidorus ethimologiarum.	[88] Isidorus etimologiarum.
	[43] Prosper.	[95] Prosper de contemplativa et activa vita.
XVII. Rethorica ad Erennium.	[27?] Rethorica Tullii. [2?] Rethorica de inventione et ad Herennium in uno volumine. [58?] Rethoricae Tullii.	
XVIII. Item rethorica ad Erennium.	[27?] [2?] [58?]	
XX. Hieronimus de Hebraicis questionibus et nominibus.		[9] Ieronimus Hebraicarum questionum, in quo exameron Basilii.
XXV. Machrobius.	[11] Macrobius in somnio Scipionis.	
XXVII. Topicę differentię, in quo et alia opuscula Boetii.	[35?] Commentum Boetii in topica Tullii.	
XXVIII. Virgilius.	[15] Virgilius maior cum Servio.	
XXX. Expositio in lamentatione Hieremię		[5?] Item super Ieremiam prophetam.
XXXI. Glosę in ępistolis Pauli	[20?] Glosarius super epistolas Pauli.	[74?] Haimo super epistolas Pauli.
XXXII. Libellus matutinalis.		[129] Libri matutinales quinque.

Table 1. (continued)

Booklist A (ca. 1100, 41 entries, Brussels KBR 9668)	Booklist B (ca. 1100-1150, 65 entries, Brussels KBR 9384-89)	The 13th-century booklist (ca. 1200-1250, 129 entries, Brussels KBR 9810-14)
XXXVII. Retorica de inventione.	[2?] Rethorica de inventione et ad Herennium in uno volumine.	
XXXVIII. Item topicę differentię.	[34?] Topica Tullii	
XXXVIIII. Corpus dialecticę.	[3] Quattuor textus dialecticę. [4] Liber in quo item quattuor textus dialecticę et antepredicamenta, cathegorici et ypothetici sylogismi, topicę diferentię et liber divisionis et diffinitionis in uno volumine. [23] Libelli duo de questionibus dialecticę et de compositis argumentis.	

Table 1. Possible correspondences between three booklists from St. Laurent.[1]

[1]Rob Drückers, '"Claustrum sine armario sicut castrum sine armamentario": De bibliotheek van de St. Laurentabdij te Luik in de twaalfde eeuw', *Millennium: Tijdschrift voor middeleeuwse studies* 13:2 (1999) 121; Idem, 'St. Laurent Revisited', *Millennium: Tijdschrift voor middeleeuwse studies* 15:2 (2001) 172-74; Diehl, 'Masters and Schools', 151-182; CCB 2 111-114.

knowledge of the liturgy, which he considered the basis for an understanding of theology and the Bible.[40] His list contained more than 26 works of liturgy and patrology, and eleven works by classical authors and on subjects such as agriculture and geometry. The thirteenth-century 129-title booklist mentions five of them: the letters from Paul, Bede's Commentary on Proverbs, Cassiodorus' Commentary on the Psalms, Jerome's Hebrew Questions, and a book with lectures for Matins. None of the other books on Booklist A are named on the thirteenth-century list: the Psalter, the Augustines, the Bedes, the four or five works on the apocalypse,[41] nor the manuscripts by classical authors and on technical subjects.

Booklist B includes nine of these more 'technical' works. Booklist B was the list of a second school library in St. Laurent that was drawn up in the first half of the twelfth century. This list presents a large collection of mostly non-Christian authors and technical subjects that were perused in St. Laurent. The St. Laurent monks studied logic and math with the help of Aristotle, Boethius and Euclid, worked on medicine and music, loved their Cicero, and possessed a good selection of grammatical texts.[42]

Of the 65 titles on Booklist B, only three were included on the thirteenth-century list. These works were written by Christian authors for a generalist audience: Julianus Pomerius (Pseudo-Prosper of Aquitaine) advised people on the best way to be active in the world yet avoid vice in his *On the active and contemplative life*; Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies* was one of the most widely used encyclopaedic texts of the Middle Ages; and Haimo of Auxerre's commentary on the letters of Paul enjoyed a widespread popularity. The thirteenth-century booklist readily incorporated these books. The author of that booklist did not, however, choose to incorporate the books by Aesop, Avianus, Cato, Claudian, Homer, Juvenal, Lucan, Macrobius, Ovid, Persius, Porphyry of Tyre, Priscian, Prudentius, Sallust, Servius, Solinus, Statius, Virgil, and others – mostly literary works by non-Christian authors.

The comparison between these three lists suggests at the very least that none of them were intended as exhaustive, catalogue-like tools. Instead, they were gateways to specific themes in the monastic library – an educational

40 Jay Diehl, 'Masters and Schools at St. Laurent: Rupert of Deutz and the Scholastic Culture of a Liègeois Monastery,' in: Steven Vanderputten, Tjamke Snijders and Jay Diehl (eds.), *Medieval Liège at the Crossroads of Europe: Monastic Society and Culture, 1000-1300* (Turnhout: Brepols 2017) 151-182; John van Engen, *Rupert of Deutz* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press 1983).

41 *CCB* 2 112-114 #XXVIIII, V, VI and VII, X. Note that Derolez speculates that entry V on Booklist A, 'Heimo in apocalypsi', might correspond to entry 76 on the thirteenth-century booklist: 'Alius super apocalipsim', 'if we interpret 'alius' not as 'another author' but as 'another book' (by the same author).'

42 Anne-Catherine Fraeys de Veurbeke, 'Un catalogue de bibliothèque scolaire inédit du XIIe siècle dans le ms. Bruxelles, B.R. 9384-89', *Scriptorium* 35:1 (1981) 25.

gateway (booklist A), a pagan science-gateway (booklist B), and a more general gateway (the 13th-century booklist).

The principle of using a list of titles to facilitate a specific kind of reading had been widely practiced for centuries. Monastics were used to 'reading lists' that grouped and regrouped books from the monastic library for various purposes: mass, the liturgical hours, or the refectory.[43] Typical reading lists would detail in what order works from Scripture were to be read during the liturgical year, which saint's lives should be read fully during matins, and which books were suitable to be read during mealtimes in the refectory.[44] The functionality of these reading lists greatly resembles the functionality of the St. Laurent booklists.

It is important to stress that the thirteenth-century booklist may have been intended to function as a more general gateway into the library for a much broader audience, but that there is no indication that it was functionally different from the twelfth-century booklists. This booklist clearly did not list most of the books from the twelfth-century booklists. Not because they were all lost by the thirteenth century, as they were not.[45] Not because they were stored in a different location in the monastery, for while they may very well have been stored elsewhere, some of them were included in the thirteenth-century booklist, so that location in and of itself is not the whole story. The books simply went unlisted, I argue, because they did not suit the purpose of the thirteenth-century booklist.

Using the booklists

Why would the community need such a calculated booklist? The answer goes back to the question of how these booklists were used. On the one hand, the lists may have served the religious communities' own members who were, of course, obliged to read at least one book a year from the monastery's collection, though some of them probably read much more than that.[46] On the other hand, it must also have been common for libraries to play host to scribes from other institutions because a monastery's most reliable way to enlarge its library was for members of monastic orders to travel to some other institution and ask for permission to either borrow a manuscript or to copy it on the spot (Figure 4).

Communities also routinely lent books to outsiders. Tenth-century bishops would borrow scores of liturgical books and the occasional

43 Nebbiai-Dalla Guarda, 'Les listes médiévales', 317-318.

44 Ibidem, 271-326.

45 Drückers, '"Claustrum sine armario"', 118-121; Idem, 'St. Laurent Revisited', 172-174 identifies several books from one of the twelfth-century booklists that were still in St. Laurent in the early modern period.

46 Fichtenau, 'Monastisches und scholastisches Lesen', 323-324.

▲

Figure 4. Fourteenth-century depiction of a (fictional) library. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, Français 782 f.2v. Produced by Biblissima (https://biblissima.fr).

chronicle.[47] Eleventh-century Cluny lent books in exchange for a pledge.[48] Twelfth-century St. Victor in Paris decreed that the librarian was allowed to lend books to outsiders in exchange for a pledge of equivalent worth. The librarian also had to scrupulously note the name of the borrower, and ask for the abbot's permission if someone requested to borrow an extremely valuable work.[49] In 1212, one of the councils that prepared Lateran IV forbade 'those who belong to a religious Order to formulate any vow against lending their books to those who are in need of them (…) after careful consideration, let some books be kept in the House for the use of the brethren; others, according to the decision of the abbot, be lent to those who are in need of them'.[50] Byzantine libraries were open to both monastics and educated laypersons, and thereby 'functioned as a centre for diffusing Greek culture'.[51] At around the same moment, the customaries from houses such as Abdingdon, Eynsham, and St. Jacques in Liège began to specify the administrative requirements one had to fulfill before borrowing a book from their collections.[52] Stephen Langton, the archbishop of Canterbury, declared that not lending books was a type of homicide and therefore a transgression of the sixth commandment.[53] The frequent grumbling over how reticent monastic communities were to lend their books shows that the idea of borrowing books from a monastery was a matter of course, but that monasteries were not always eager to hand out their books. Booklists could have mediated between would-be borrowers and reluctant lenders.

Some communities even circulated their booklists outside of their monastic walls to valorise their collection. There are several early medieval examples: a copy of a Reichenau booklist was made for Murbach, the second catalogue from Lorsch may have been made for St. Vaast, the Vatican Library contains booklists of both Lorsch and Fulda, and Lupus requested a list of the books in St. Germain-des-Prés.[54] The early Sorbonne boasted a wall-catalogue with the booklists from various Parisian convents; and a now-lost thirteenth-century manuscript bound booklists from various Norman

47 Laura Pani, 'The Bishops' Libraries in Western Europe (9th-12th centuries)', in: Andreas Bihrer and Hedwig Röckelein (eds.), *Die 'Episkopalisierung der Kirche' im europäischen Vergleich*. Studien zur Germania Sacra. Neue Folge 13 (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter 2022) 354.

48 François Dolbeau, 'Quelques aspects des relations entre bibliothèques d'établissements religieux (XIIe-XVe siècles)', in: Nicole Bouter (ed.), *Naissance et fonctionnement des réseaux monastiques et canoniaux* (Saint-Etienne: Centre européen de recherches sur les congrégations et ordres religieux 1991) 497-498.

49 Dolbeau, 'Quelques aspects', 497.

50 Clarke, *The Care of Books*, 74; Pohl, *Abbatial Authority*, 233-249; Peter J. Lucas, 'Borrowing and Reference: Access to Libraries in the Late Middle Ages', in: Leedham-Green and Webber, *The Cambridge History*, 242-264.

51 Immaculada Pérez Martín, 'Byzantine Libraries: The Public and the Private', in: De Castilla, Déroche and Friedrich, *Libraries in the Manuscript Age*, 185 ff.

52 Dolbeau, 'Quelques aspects', 497.

53 Lucas, 'Borrowing and Reference', 246.

54 McKitterick, *The Carolingians*, 209.

abbeys together.[55] 'I do not know', Léopold Délisle says of this Norman manuscript, 'of another document that shows with equal clarity how, in the Middle Ages, abbeys gave true publicity to their booklists'. He thinks that the manuscript was constructed 'so that studious monks would know where to find the book that could not be found in the library of their own houses', but this was only one aspect of the booklists' true purpose.[56] Each booklist served to give other communities an idea of the reach of the institutional library as well as its position within an overarching literary network.

Knowing that monastic libraries received visitors, and that some communities actively publicised the contents of their libraries, the enticing hypothesis arises that St. Laurent's thirteenth-century booklist served to position the abbey as fundamentally orthodox. The booklist may have directed a non-specialist audience – younger monastics, visiting scribes and scholars, and the increasing number of laypeople who hoped to borrow from the library – to an irreproachable selection of Bibles, liturgical works, patrological and theological treatises, and canon law; while keeping them away from a selection of books that were more difficult and less orthodox.

We know that St. Laurent was keen to present itself as orthodox, because the community had the liability of being known as a centre of expertise on the Trinity and the nature of the Eucharist. St. Laurent had harboured an expert on these subjects in the person of Rupert of Deutz, and prided itself on its trinitarian works long after Rupert had left the community: more than 10 percent of its thirteenth-century booklist was still dedicated to trinitarian theology.[57] It listed commentaries on the Trinity by Augustine, Hilary, and Alcuin, treatises by Paschasius Radbertus, and many works by Rupert himself – including two copies of his *De glorificatione Trinitatis et processione Spiritus Sancti*, and two copies of his *De divinis officiis*. The fact that the librarian listed the doubles of these works underlines their continued importance for the community, for the only other work that was mentioned twice on the booklist was the Bible. They also gave special prominence to Saint Basil the Great, who had been the first to clearly define the Trinity back in the fourth century and had battled the Arians over that definition: It was twice remarked that a volume about a very different subject also contained a text by or about Basil.

To present the community of St. Laurent as a centre of trinitarian expertise carried some risk because trinitarian debates tended to get heated – Rupert himself had been under suspicion of heresy on the basis of his Eucharistic and trinitarian writings.[58] It was important for the thirteenth-century community to underline to visitors that the St. Laurent monks studied the Trinity from a position of fundamental orthodoxy. If this is indeed

55 Rouse, 'The Early Library', 71.

56 Léopold Délisle, *Le cabinet des manuscrits* I (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale 1868) 527-528.

57 CCB 2 121-124: #9, 14, 27, 45, 47, 48, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 72, 73, 102, 114 and 117.

58 Van Engen, *Rupert of Deutz*, 135-180, esp. 158-168.

what the community intended with their booklist, it would explain why so many pagan authors and works on non-Christian subjects were left off the general booklist: their absence was an attempt to safeguard the orthodox 'look and feel' of the library, and by extension the entire monastic community.

Positioning the library

Building on the idea that St. Laurent strove to appear orthodox, we should turn to a final category of books that appear to have been consciously hidden from the St. Laurent booklist: manuscripts that engage with the abbey's unfortunate involvement in the Investiture Controversy. At the end of the eleventh century, the monastery of St. Laurent in Liège was in turmoil. The Investiture Controversy, the conflict between pope and emperor over the right to name local church officials, was in full swing and the imperial Bishop of Liège had been steadily replacing Gregorian abbots under his authority with imperial sympathisers. In 1092, the bishop ordered Abbot Berenger of St. Laurent to step down. Berenger refused to comply and fled with most of his monks to the Gregorian archdiocese of Reims. Safely settled in a local priory, Berenger and his flock began to accuse their bishop of simony and heresy. They warned others that the sacraments he provided were invalid, and that contact with him must be avoided at all costs because his heresy was contagious.

Tired, perhaps, of their unrelenting campaign, the bishop eventually offered to reinstate Berenger as abbot of St. Laurent. This placed Berenger in a moral conundrum, because he very much wanted his abbacy back, yet had spent three years convincing everyone that even speaking to the bishop would turn one into a heretic. Eventually, though, Berenger caved, journeyed back to Liège, gave his bishop the kiss of peace, and resumed his position as abbot of St. Laurent.[59]

The St. Laurent monks did not all look upon their abbot's return with a friendly eye. A neighbouring chronicler characterised it as a *scandalum*, a deed that had put the spiritual welfare of both the abbot and his flock in danger and required some form of public repentance. A scandalum was a big deal – even the modern echoes of the Latin word suggests a public uproar. Around the year 1100, both Berenger and his monks would have known of cases in which accusations of scandalum had led monks to maim and depose their abbot.[60]

59 Tjamke Snijders and Steven Vanderputten, 'From Scandal to Monastic Penance: A Reconciliatory Manuscript from the Early Twelfth-Century Abbey of St. Laurent in Liège', *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture* 82:3 (2013) 535-543 with further references. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009640713000620.

60 Famous examples from the Liège region can be found in Folcuin's *Gesta* (*Monumenta Germaniae Historica* SS 4 (Hannover 1841) 68), and the *Life*

As far as we know, violence did not occur and the scandalum would in time fade from memory, not least because the community of St. Laurent worked hard to prevent the conflict between Berenger and his monks from attracting too much attention.[61] For example, an 1160 chronicle from St. Laurent that discusses the community's literary achievements chose not to mention the conflict between Berenger and the bishop, even though that conflict had in fact spawned a long poem by the famous Rupert of Deutz.[62] Other narrative texts from St. Laurent show a similar blind spot when it comes to Berenger's years as an abbot.[63] Clearly, the community saw no occasion to advertise these difficult years to the outside world.

The community's reticence to advertise the scandalum had its effect on the booklists as well. There are at least three contemporary manuscripts from St. Laurent that discuss Berenger's actions either directly or indirectly, yet none of them are included in the thirteenth-century booklist.[64] This was yet another way to keep a more general public from remembering the scandalum.

The first manuscript, ms. JC275 no. 1, sports an innocent title: 'The opinions of various Church Fathers concerning the primacy of the Roman Church' (*Sententiae diversorum patrum de primatu S. Romanae ecclesiae*).[65] Of course, these opinions from the Fathers were not assembled randomly. Read together, they constitute a reformist collection of canon law that defends monastic privileges against usurping bishops. This collection is commonly known as the 'Collection in seventy-four titles' (74T).[66] The 74T harshly objects to simoniacal candidates for clerical office and is lenient for clergymen who did

of Poppo of Stavelot (*Monumenta Germaniae Historica* SS 11 (Hannover 1854) 303).

61 Snijders and Vanderputten, 'From Scandal', 541-543.

62 The 1160 chronicle mentions vaguely that when Rupert was still young, he wrote 'Uno etiam libello statum nostrae prosecutus est ecclesiae, videlicet a quibus exstructa sit, quae bona vel quae mala de manu Domini ab Evraclo Leodiensium episcopo usque ad Obertus susceperit. De hac eadem quoque materia aliud opusculum Saphyco confecit metro.' Reiner of St. Laurent, *De ineptiis cuiusdam idiotae*, in: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* SS 20 (1868) 595; Van Engen, *Rupert of Deutz*, 18-19.

63 Snijders and Vanderputten, 'From Scandal', 541.

64 Note that the first part of Brussels KBR, 10595-10598 was created in the thirteenth century and does not appear on the community's last booklist. It contains, amongst others, an exemplum against symoniacs, and Bernardus' treatise *De consideratione* that deals with the Investiture Controversy. The manuscript might have been left off the booklist because of its contents, but it could also post-date the creation of the booklist.

65 New Haven, Yale University, Lillian Goldman Law Library, MSS J C275 no. 1.

66 Christof Rolker, 'The Collection in Seventy-Four Titles: A Monastic Canon Law Collection from Eleventh-Century France', in: Kathleen G. Cushing and Martin Brett (eds.), *Readers, Texts and Compilers in the Earlier Middle Ages: Studies in Medieval Canon Law in Honour of Linda Fowler-Magerl* (Aldershot: Routledge 2008) passim. Rolker argues that the 74T was a monastic text, created in the late eleventh century in Reims or its direct environment.

penance after a lapse into sin.[67] The community of St. Laurent created this manuscript between February 1093 and September 1100 – which is to say, during or shortly after Berenger's three-year exile.[68] The 74T manuscript is thus roughly contemporary to the scandalum in St. Laurent and takes a very outspoken stance against the Roman emperor and his designs on the Church.

In thirteenth-century St. Laurent, the latter manuscript would have been an awkward possession. First because it was a vivid reminder of the Berenger affair, second because Abbot Jean Maillart (ca. 1227-1239) was himself accused of simony, and third because the thirteenth-century abbots tended to be on very friendly terms with both their bishop and the emperor.[69] While the community of St. Laurent did not destroy the 74T manuscript, the monks cannot have been keen to see it in the hands of novices or external visitors to their library who might well misconstrue it as seditious or use it to rake up unfortunate memories. Indeed, the 74T was excluded from St. Laurent's thirteenth-century booklist. The booklist instead pointed visitors with an interest in canon law to the much safer copies of Gratian (based on the 74T, but less bellicose) and a copy of Burchard's *Decretum*.[70]

St. Laurent possessed yet another manuscript from around 1100 that dealt with the Berenger affair: the second codicological unit of Brussels KBR 9361-67 (ff. 89-110). KBR 9361-67 relates how vices and especially the sin of pride are intrinsic to high office and discusses how penance followed by a humble life can absolve such a sin. The manuscript framed Berenger's decision to return as abbot of St. Laurent in such a way that it presented a platform for the abbot to style himself as a penitent without losing too much face or abbatial authority while encouraging his monks to forgive the penitent sinner.[71] As such, the manuscript clearly engaged with the

67 John Gilchrist, *The Collection in Seventy-Four Titles: A Canon Law Manual of the Gregorian Reform*. Mediaeval Sources in Translation 22 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies 1980) 25-26.

68 Roberts notes that 'The manuscript's inclusion of Urban's letter JL 5442 means that the manuscript could not have been copied before February 1093. Explicit polemical attacks on the antipope Wibert of Ravenna interpolated in the Cyprianic text make it unlikely that it was copied after Wibert's death in September 1100.' Gregory Roberts, *Description prepared for the 'Law in Medieval Europe' seminar taught by Anders Winroth* (Yale University, 10 December 2007). I would like to thank Michael Widener for giving me access to this document.

69 Ursmer Berlière, 'Abbaye de Saint-Laurent a Liège', in: Idem (ed.), *Monasticon Belge* (Liège: Abbaye de Maredsous 1928) 41-42.

70 CCB 2 123 #97 ('Gratianus'), #101 ('Concordia canonum', also known as the *Decretum Gratiani*), #100 ('Canones Burcardi'). For the relationship between 74T and Gratian see Christof Rolker, 'The Age of Reforms: Canon Law in the Century before Gratian', in: Anders Winroth and John C. Wei (eds.), *The History of Medieval Canon Law* 1 (Cambridge: CUP 2022) 62-78.

71 For the interpretation of this manuscript see Snijders and Vanderputten, 'From Scandal', 525-535 and 543-553.

scandalum and may have been instrumental in bringing about the spiritual healing that followed it.

KBR 9361-67 was of crucial importance to the community of St. Laurent at the end of the eleventh century. Nevertheless, the manuscript does not appear clearly on any of the community's booklists, even though it was definitely still in St. Laurent's possession by the eighteenth century.[72] Just like the 74T, this was a manuscript that the community simply did not want to advertise to outsiders.

KBR 10264-73 is a third and final manuscript about the scandalum that is absent from the booklists. This twelfth-century volume contained a selection of texts by Jerome and Rufinus. Jay Diehl has shown that the texts, read together, tell a story about 'the dangerous schisms that result from failing to live up to ascetic ideals, arguably the story that Saint-Laurent had lived through between 1092 and 1095'.[73] The second text in this codex can serve as a good illustration of this narrative. In the *Dispute Between a Luciferian and an Orthodox*, Jerome discusses whether heretical bishops who repented their sins could return to their office. The Luciferian tries to argue that a repentant bishop should be accepted back into the Church, but may never be allowed to return to his former office. The orthodox voice heartily disagrees, making lavish use of historical examples of heretics that were welcomed back into the Church. In this, it echoes the lenience of the 74T with respect to penitent clergymen.[74] In its insistence on the need for reconciliation to recover from such a schism, its story is remarkably similar to the narrative in KBR 9361-67 as well.

Why were these books not included on the thirteenth-century list of *Nomina librorum sancti Laurentii in suburbio Leodii?* They were not sold or given away, as we know that they were still in St. Laurent's possession by the eighteenth century. I find it disingenuous to argue that these manuscripts were accidentally overlooked by the thirteenth-century catalographer. Perhaps they were stored apart from the community's other books in order to keep the monks from dwelling on them. Yet I argue that the librarian would have been perfectly *capable* to include these books about the scandalum

72 Note that this codicological unit has, in later centuries, been bound together with Gregory of Tours' *Historia Francorum* (Brussels KBR 9361-9367 ff. 1-88). That codicological unit appears on the thirteenth-century booklist as nr. 60 ('Gesta Francorum maior, editus a Gregorio Turnonensi episcopo'). It is impossible to tell whether the two codicological units were already bound together by the time the booklist was drawn up, as the manuscript has been rebound in modern times. Brussels KBR 9361-9367 II has an eighteenth-century shelfmark from the library of St. Laurent (3LL2) on fol. 89r.

73 Jay Diehl, 'Origen's Story: Heresy, Book Production, and Monastic Reform at Saint-Laurent de Liège', *Speculum* 95:4 (2020) 1082. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1086/710557.

74 Brussels KBR 10264-10273 has an eighteenth-century library shelfmark from St. Laurent (MM 4-11). See Diehl, 'Origen's Story', 1051-1086.

on the thirteenth-century booklist, just like they could have included the books from the twelfth-century booklists, the Bible books, the plain manuscripts, the practical chapter books, and the liturgical books, but that they *decided* not to. We know from the silence about Berenger's abbacy in St. Laurent's narrative sources that the monks tried to be highly discreet about the scandalum. Most likely, this policy of discretion led to the exclusion of these three manuscripts from the thirteenth-century booklist. Similarly, the librarian decided to exclude the other books because they did not fit the purpose of the thirteenth-century list. In other words, the librarian's creation of the thirteenth-century booklist was conscious and calculated: it was, in essence, a political object, a tool to help secure power through a communicative strategy.

Conclusion

The dearth of analytical studies on the subject of high medieval booklists makes it difficult to ascertain whether St. Laurent's booklist policies were common, or unusual.[75] A few trends, however, are clear. Institutions produced booklists to help manage their books, but also to emphasise their particular strengths. By carefully arranging, excluding, and highlighting titles on a booklist, librarians could create a narrative that positioned an institution within a complex network of religious and political tensions.

Monasteries rarely included books that served practical or administrative purposes, such as customaries and cartularies, on their booklists.[76] The fourteenth-century regional booklist that is known as the *Registrum Anglie* listed no works on medicine, law, astronomy, science, grammar, logic, manual work, math, or classical literature except Seneca.[77] In the sixteenth century, booklists would not include ephemera (brochures, printed ordonnances, loose leaves), books that were forbidden because of their heretical or licentious nature, catechisms and works of doctrine, prayers that were used as amulets to repel diseases, pamphlets, composite volumes, and multi-site collections.[78] While each booklist's specific context determined which exact books were hidden from view, it appears that a number of booklists from the eleventh to the sixteenth century shared a

75 Walsby, 'Book Lists', 5.

76 Sharpe, 'Library Catalogues', 197. There are, of course, exceptions: the 1105 booklist from Stavelot, for example, needed to fill exactly one folio and the booklist's scribe included a broad selection of liturgical texts to make sure that the list did not end halfway through the folio.

77 Rouse, Rouse and Mynors, *Registrum Anglie* lxxiii-lxiv, lxxx.

78 Walsby, 'Book Lists', 11-18; Benito Rial, 'Sixteenth-Century Private Book Inventories and Some Problems Related to Their Analysis', *Library & Information History* 26:1 (2010) 75. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1179/175834909X12593373973336.

politics of hiding that corresponds very well with the findings from St. Laurent.

The incompleteness of these booklists made them feeble tools for a librarian who wanted to check whether all their books were present and accounted for. Though some communities made exhaustive listings of their possessions and used them for administrative as well as representative purposes, it is clear that many booklists habitually excluded books that contained sensitive information, were too commonplace, or were used in a highly practical or specialised context that was not suitable for visitors. When outsiders entered a monastic library, a general booklist could help to guide them towards books that they were intellectually and spiritually capable of handling, that they would not misconstrue, and that would not reflect badly on the monastic community.

In order to achieve this goal, the monastery of St. Laurent worked with multiple booklists. The small circle of highly-educated members of religious orders with an interest in pagan literature and scientific treatises could consult a special booklist that was made with their specific interests in mind. Simultaneously, a general booklist made the irreproachable parts of St. Laurent's collection accessible to a much broader public. This booklist did not try to reflect the spatial layout of a physical library or even the aggregate of book collections in various parts of the monastery buildings, but aimed to communicate the essence of that library – the books that were deemed suitable for outsiders and underlined the community's expertise and orthodoxy – to this relatively inexpert public.

In its deliberate selection, this booklist told a political story about the intellectual and spiritual self-representation of St. Laurent.[79] The works about the Trinity and by trinitarian thinkers reflected the community's main field of expertise. The sheer number of books on the list reflected the breadth of the library and its inherent respectability. Just as importantly, this booklist presented itself in the form of a literary text and followed a hierarchy of authors and subjects that was derived from a corpus of normative literature. This served to underline the community's knowledge of the established canon of 'good' Christian literature. Much more than primitive inventories, booklists such as these were among a community's most effective tools for intellectual and spiritual self-representation.

79 For the relation between the formation of a canon and the self-definition of a community see Luc Zaman, *Bible and Canon: A Modern Historical Inquiry*. Studia Semitica Neerlandica 50 (Leiden/Boston: Brill 2008) 37, 538-539.

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