

*The holy Shroud and the dating of the codex Pray**

d'E. Poulle au Symposium de Paris 2002. A l'occasion de
ont fait part au symposium d'intéressantes hypothèses sur
Faute de place nous ne pouvons les reproduire ci-après.

The Pray Codex was discovered around 1770 by the Jesuit Georgius Pray in the library of the chapter of Pozsony (also known under the name of Pressburg). This manuscript is today kept in the National Library of Budapest, under the MNy.⁽¹⁾ collection (old collection: Hung. 4° 387). Well-known in Hungary, where it was the subject of a considerable bibliography due to its use as a documentary source on the ancient history of the kingdom of Hungary (it contains in particular some of the oldest historic testimonies on the beginnings of the Hungarian monarchy, as well as a text in prose language, a burial oration, which is the oldest witness of the Hungarian language), it is foremost of interest to our studies due to the presence, in a set of five drawings, of a scene depicting the empty tomb after the Resurrection, in which can be recognised with certainty what is undoubtedly the oldest picture of the Holy Shroud of Turin, because the artist has reproduced almost anecdotal details that allow this identification.⁽¹⁾

Hence the importance attached to finding the most precise date possible for this Pray Codex.

The manuscript found by G. Pray was in bad condition, and the order of the gatherings was already greatly disturbed; it was rebound in 1855, but in so doing the disorder of the gatherings was made worse, so that around 1870, it was unbound and has since remained in loose bifolia.⁽²⁾ In concrete terms, the 172 folios of the manuscript as it stands today have simultaneously several foliations, all from modern times, some in Roman numerals, others in Arab

numerals, consecutive to the disorder in which the manuscript remained during the century after its discovery⁽³⁾; that is how the two folios on which the five drawings figure, today fol. XXVII and XXVIII, also bear the old numbers V and VI and have also been referred to under numbers 40 and 41, these last numbers being unwritten and remaining in a way theoretical. Although the manuscript has been kept unbound, the regrouping of the bifolia by gathering was fortunately maintained, and the only hesitation in general concerns the order in which the gatherings or groups of gatherings should succeed each other as a whole.

The content of the manuscript is complex, as is often the case with manuscripts from the early and middle Middle Ages, and even more complex in that it is recognised that, such as it stands today, the Pray manuscript is the result of the regrouping of two manuscripts, which would have taken place shortly after the writing of one and the other; the unity of composition of each of the two manuscripts, established by Emma Bartoniek⁽⁴⁾, was confirmed by Ladislav Mezey in 1973⁽⁵⁾, using very reliable palaeographical criteria of the identification of the initial hands in both manuscripts, which was not contested; the numerous additions to the original text in both manuscripts (many more than appear in L. Mezey's inventory in his descriptive summary) obviously do not question the palaeographical unity of the two original texts. The two foliation systems, in Roman and Arab numerals, are used to individualise the two manuscripts joined today.

* This article does not question dates previously put forward for the components of the Pray Codex. On the contrary, it attempts to confirm and refine them with the help of arguments that could provide a demonstration.

Dossier

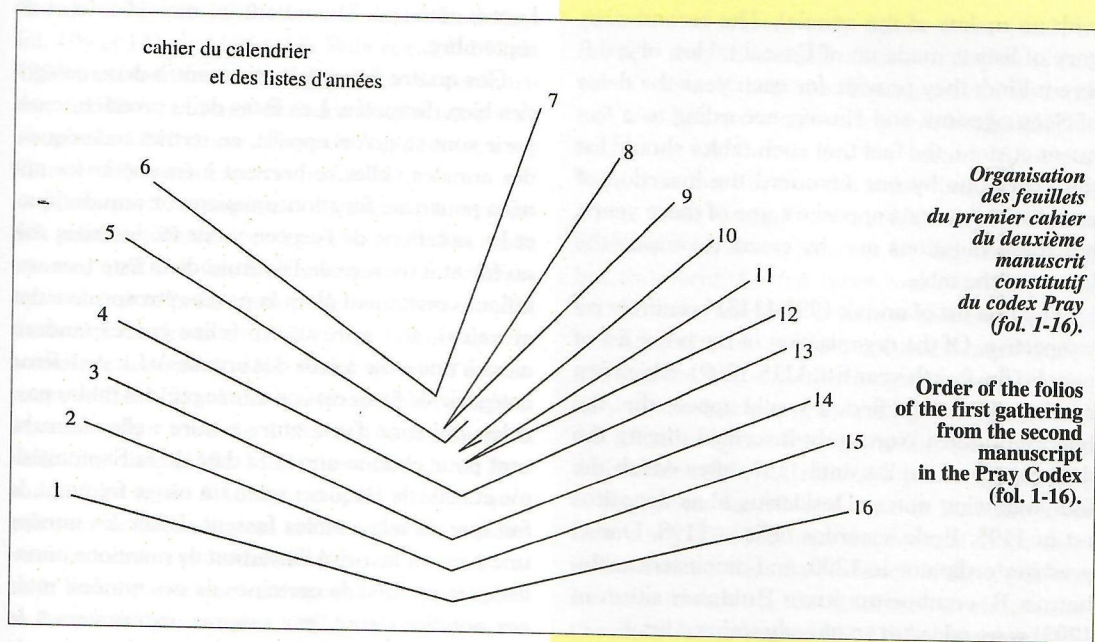
The manuscript as a whole can be referred to as a sacramentary, and the parts that strictly speaking are not so could be held as supplementary information attached to the sacramentary; these supplementary parts are: synodal statutes from the reign of Coloman, the *Micrologus* (a liturgical treatise) by Bernold de Constance and the drawings, in the first manuscript; and, in the second manuscript, computistical and annalistic information preceding the sacramentary strictly speaking, then, following, a *rituale* and a brief second sacramentary.

Concerning the second manuscript, that is the one containing the 144 folios with Arab numerals, from certain allusions one can deduce that it came from a Benedictine monastery (fol. 108v, there is an invocation to Saint Benedict for the "Benedictine family") and that, as this monastery was placed under the name of Saint John the Baptist, it must be Jánosi, according to L. Mezey's suggestion in 1973. Its first gathering was entirely devoted to the computistical and annalistic part, that is: a calendar, extracts from the *Massa compoti* by Alexandre de Villedieu, and several year lists for the periods 997-1115 (fol. 9-v), 1151-1300 (fol. 10-12), 1171-1271 (fol. 14-15) and 1115-1209 (fol. 16-v, a continuation of the first list).

The calendar (fol. 1v-7, at the rate of one month per page), which opens this second manuscript, only starts on the verso of the first folio, as was often the case so that the recto of the first folio would undergo any wear and tear while waiting for the protection of the binding. The calendar has been enriched with a few additional notes of saints' feast days or historical events, but for which the year is never indicated; amongst the notes by the initial hand, let us pick out the mention of the *elevatio* of Saint Ladislav on 27th June, which echoes annotations made in the second and third tables.

The year lists are in the second half of the gathering containing the calendar, gathering that

Le codex Pray



tions complémentaires de fêtes de saints ou d'événements historiques, mais dont l'année n'est jamais indiquée ; parmi les notations de première main, relevons la mention de l'elevatio de saint Ladislav au 27 juin, qui fait écho à des annotations portées sur les deuxième et troisième tables.

Les listes d'années sont dans la deuxième moitié du cahier contenant le calendrier, cahier qui a été fortement modifié par la suppression d'un feuillet et par son remplacement par d'autres feuillets (cf. la fig.), opérations manifestement contemporaines de la confection du manuscrit puisque l'écriture est restée homogène ; seules les troisième et quatrième listes se trouvaient primitivement dans le cahier puisqu'elles sont sur des bifeuillets dont l'autre côté, contenant les mois de janvier à mars du calendrier, fait partie de la première moitié du cahier ; la première liste figure sur un bifeuillet (fol. 8-9) et la deuxième liste sur un feuillet et un bifeuillet (fol. 10-12) qui ont remplacé un feuillet supprimé, lequel faisait partie d'un bifeuillet dont

has been substantially modified by the removal of a folio and its replacement with other folios (see the fig.), changes obviously made at the same time as the assembling of the manuscript because the writing remains the same; only the third and fourth lists were originally in the gathering as they are bifolia, of which the other sides, containing the months of January to March of the calendar, are part of the first half of the gathering; the first list figures on a bifolium (fol. 8-9) and the second list on a folio and a bifolium (fol. 10-12) that replaced the removed folio, which was part of a bifolium of which the other side (fol. 5) contained the months of August and September.

These four lists belong to two distinctive categories. The lists from the first category are what are known, in technical terms, as annals: they are limited to enumerating the years for a purely annalistic purpose and the connected notations were written either at the same time as the drawing up of the lists (these notations therefore constitute the retrospective part of the annals), or afterwards (they would therefore correspond

Dossier

with an update of the annals). The second category of lists is made up of Pascal tables, of a different kind: they provide for each year the dates of Septuagesima and Easter; according to a frequent custom, the fact that such tables should list the years one by one favoured the insertion of annalistic notations opposite some of these years, but these notations are, by essence, outside the layout of the table.

The first list of annals (997-1115) is entirely retrospective. Of the organisation of the other list of annals (the fourth year list, 1115-1209), which is a continuation of the first, it would appear that the historical notes were only inscribed during the drawing up of the list until 1187, after which the four following notes (*Desiderius abas depositus est in 1195*, *Buda sacerdos obiit in 1198*, *Daniel presbiter ordinatur in 1200*, and *monasterium Johannis B. comburitur juxta Bulduam situm in 1203*) were added to an already scripted list.

The second and third lists (1151-1300 and 1171-1271) are Pascal tables⁽⁶⁾, but the second list was only filled in from 1183 on; for the years 1151-1182, the scribe was content with filling in, opposite the years, the dominical letters of Septuagesima and Easter, but not their dates; these two tables have very few annalistic annotations added to their margins: opposite 1171 (*adventus Bele regis*, fol. 14, marked by mistake opposite 1171 instead of 1172), 1192 (*elevatio sancti Ladizlay*, fol. 10v and 14), 1196 (*obiit Bela rex*, fol. 14), 1203 (*monasterium sancti Johannis B. comburitur*, fol. 10v), and, in much later writing, 1241 (*uxor Johannis occiditur et uxor Chucar Cumanis captivatur*, fol. 15).

This computistical part of the second manuscript can be dated fairly precisely, subject to making a choice between the various options presented: it can indeed be dated at around 1170, if one accepts that the third list was already written when the accession of Bela III was inscribed; or at the latest it could be from 1183 as, in the second list (1151-1300), the dates of Septua-

Le codex Pray

gesima and Easter only figure from 1183, as though the information concerning previous years was only of limited retrospective interest; it can also be attributed to the years 1187-1195, because, on the fourth list, the historical note of 1187 was inscribed at the same time as the list, which is no longer the case with the 1195 note. Certainly, all these lists are by the same hand, but this writing must have been spread over a certain time, however brief; the fact that the first and second lists were part of the reorganisation of the gathering, with the insertion of supplementary folios, leads to their being separated from the initial project of the gathering, meaning that their evidence is not retained to date the writing of the gathering. So I propose to date the latter from the 1187-1195 bracket provided in the fourth list, bracket that the presence of the elevatio of Ladislas (that is his recognition as a saint) incites to reduce to the years 1192-1195; which confirms the nature of notes connected to the accession of Bela III and the elevatio of Saint Ladislas that figure in both the Pascal tables: they respond to the appropriation made a little later to an annalistic usage that was not their first vocation.

If I have insisted on the date of the computistical part of the manuscript, it is because it is the one that lends itself to the most precise dating; the rest of the manuscript does not benefit from such precision. Indeed the two sacramentaries and the rituale do not contain, with regards to the text, anything susceptible to attribute them with a date. They can only be dated through the examination of the writing and numerous neumatic notations. Dating through writing is an uncertain art: one can only express an opinion and compare it to those of authorised experts. For my part, I concluded on the end of the 12th century, then consulted my colleague and friend Jean Vezin, director of studies (for Latin palaeography) at the Ecole pratique des hautes études, without of course sharing my thoughts with him; he came to the same conclusion.

The neumatic notations are very numerous from fol. 39 on. In fact, there is a first stratum of notations, those which are part of the original manuscript text; and a second stratum, made up of interlinear or marginal additions. Dating neumatic notations is also an uncertain art; as it is totally outside my field, I consulted Marie-Nöel Colette also director of studies (for musical palaeography) at the Ecole pratique des hautes études; she defined the first stratum as subject to Germanic influence and dated it as 12th century, whereas the second stratum belongs to the domaine of messine notation and could date back to the very beginning of the 13th century. These conclusions meet those developed by Janka Szendrei in an article in 1985⁽⁷⁾.

In the first part of the Pray Codex, of which the folios are numbered in Roman numerals, none of its components can be dated, even approximately, by their contents. There remains only palaeographical expertise, which cannot even benefit from the support of musical palaeography because, in this first part, there is no neumatic notation. There again, J. Vezin and I agreed on suggesting the end of the 12th century for this first part; L. Mezey thought that this first part came after the second and was written in order to be joined to it, pointing out that, as chapter XXIII of the *Micrologus* was incomplete, this gap could have been deliberate, bearing in mind that this chapter XXIII contradicts the instructions connected to the ordinary of the Mass which figure in the sacramentary of the second part. But this demonstration is not entirely convincing as the omission of chapter XXIII can be found in several witnesses to the hand-written tradition of the *Micrologus*, and particularly in the older ones. So the dating of the two parts of the Pray Codex remains undetermined.

As for the five drawings, these are unaccompanied by any text that could have helped attribute them with a date through palaeographical expertise (the three texts that figure next to the



Vezin et moi-même, pour proposer pour cette première partie la fin du XII^e siècle, sans qu'il soit possible de juger si elle est un peu avant ou un peu après la seconde partie ; L. Mezey pensait que cette première partie était postérieure à la deuxième et avait été écrite pour lui être réunie, faisant remarquer que, le Micrologus étant incomplet du chapitre XXIII, cette lacune pouvait être volontaire, compte tenu de ce que ce chapitre XXIII est en contradiction avec les instructions relatives à l'ordinaire de la messe qui figurent dans le sacramentaire de la deuxième partie. Mais la démonstration n'est pas entièrement convaincante car l'omission du chapitre XXIII se retrouve dans plusieurs témoins de la

drawings on the front and back of fol. XXVIII are later additions and have no connection to them: one is a note on the responses to the Nocturne lessons, the second is a benedictio in periculo partus, the third the Exultet discussed below).

If these two manuscripts are both from the very end of the 12th century, the question now is the date of their joining into one manuscript. This question is even more important for our concerns, in that the five drawings are to be found just at the joining of the two initial manuscripts, where their bifolium forms a gathering separate from the other gatherings. In the 19th century when the disorder of the Pray Codex

Dossier

was at its peak, this bifolium travelled a lot around the manuscript, because it was found in the middle of the sacramentary, after the sacramentary, at the beginning of the whole manuscript, or even just after the synodal statutes. All the same, two things are certain regarding the bifolium of drawings: it was not part of the second manuscript, and its place is just before the calendar gathering. This place is justified by the fact that the lower half of the last page of the bifolium (fol. XXVIIIv), which was free of any drawings (the majestic Christ is only on the top half of the page), was used for the inscription of the text of the Exultet, which is sung on Holy Saturday for the blessing of the Pascal candle, and that this text continues on fol. 1 of the second manuscript left free by the script of the calendar, as seen above; the last words of the text of the Exultet are missing due to lack of space. And, despite the link of the Exultet between fol. XXVIII and 1, the bifolium cannot belong to the second manuscript because the state of the front of the fol. 1 shows that, for a time, it was used as a cover. So it is certain that the text of the Exultet was copied in after the joining of the two manuscripts; which is coherent with the neumatic notation of the Exultet, as it belongs to the second stratum, that of the messine notation, which as we have seen intervened in this manuscript in the early years of the 13th century.

One can go further. The entire manuscript, especially the second, as indicated above, was abundantly annotated, particularly in the calendar and annals gathering and in the last gathering of the second manuscript (from fol. 49 on). Most of the annotations of the calendar and the annals are datable, as seen, to around 1195-1203, others a little later; two of them, on fol. 10, are separate from the Pascal table which starts on the same page: one recalls the consecration, by the Bishop of Nyitra, of a church of Our Lady on 14th November 1228 and enumerates the relics kept there, the other gives a list of the

Le codex Pray



kings of Hungary with the length of their reigns, the last name being Andrew II, credited with six years; as this king's reign was much longer (thirty years), the length indicated could not have been that of the whole reign, and one can conclude that the list was compiled during the sixth year of his reign, so around 1210. The third note is that pointed out above for 1241, and was definitely written later than all the other notes. As for the notations at the end of the manuscript, these are essentially neumatic notations, either interlinear or in the top, bottom or side margins, and like those of the Exultet, they come from messine notation. Other additions figure at the end of the last gathering, either on the penultimate page of the supplementary sacramentary, which for this means was entirely scratched in

Dossier

(this particular addition was written well into the 13th century), or on the last two folios of the gathering (fol. 143 and 144) which the script of the supplementary sacramentary left blank; most of these additions are palaeographically datable to the beginning of the 13th century, particularly those on the top half of fol. 144v, in messine neumes. A final addition, on the bottom half of the same folio, can provide a more precise date: it is the text of a prayer known to have been written by Pope Innocent III, and thus announced: "Has orationes composuit apostolicus et dicit sepius", which refers to the pope as still living; so it was written before 1216. Now this note was written by the same hand as another note, "Ærgo qui solvendi jus ...", added, fol. XXVIv, after the end of Micrologus; this hand, which could only have operated after the joining of the two manuscripts, is therefore prior to 1216. No doubt it even predates 1210 as, between the end of Micrologus and the note Ærgo qui solvendi, another two-line note has been inserted after Ærgo qui solvendi as its layout respects the space occupied by the letter Æ; this note counts 1210 years between the Incarnation and an Antichrist presented as contemporary (tunc Antechristus), but otherwise unidentified: as no serious event that might have taken place that year is known, maybe for the annotator it was only a way, through the use of an extreme insult, of expressing irritation following some neighbouring conflict.

It would therefore appear that it was at the very latest in the first years of the 13th century, time of intensive use and updating of the sacramentary, that the manuscript of the Micrologus and that of the sacramentary were joined. However it is impossible to decide if the bifolium of the drawings was already part of the Micrologus manuscript and contained these drawings when the two manuscripts were joined, or if the bifolium was added at this time with the drawings freshly completed, but it is certain that it dates

Le codex Pray

back at the latest to the time of the joining of the two manuscripts.

Short of knowing if the drawings figured on the bifolium prior to its insertion between the two manuscripts, it is very difficult to suggest a terminus a quo for them, except by having recourse to stylistic analysis, which in art-historical matters is even more uncertain than the palaeographical analysis for the history of writing; they can at least be given a terminus ad quem: this is at the same time the date of the joining of the two manuscripts and that of the inscribing of the Exultet, which can only have been written after the completion of the drawings. The beginning of the 13th century is also the date suggested by an art historian in Hungary, Tünde Wehli, in an article that I have been unable to consult but of which, despite not following the argumentation, I at least know the conclusion⁽⁸⁾.

So I can therefore summarise what I think of the organisation of the Pray Codex and the dates that can be attributed to its components: this manuscript is the result of the joining, between 1195 and 1210, of two liturgical manuscripts originating from Hungary and both dating back to the very end of the 12th century, and, at the time of this joining, they were completed by the insertion of a bifolium containing the five drawings, except if this bifolium was already part of the first manuscript; as for the Exultet, it was written at the time of this insertion. And the five drawings, particularly the fourth which includes the representation of the Holy Shroud, can be dated back at the latest to the very first years of the 13th century.

There remains the question of the presence in Hungary, at the turn of the 12th and 13th centuries, of such a close representation of the Holy Shroud that goes as far as reproducing absolutely minor details that should have remained unnoticed. It is pertinent to remember here that the king of Hungary at the end of the 12th century was Bela III, who reigned from 1172 to 1196;

Dossier

before acceding to the Hungarian throne, this young man (born in 1148) had been sent to the court of the emperor of Byzantium, Manuel I, where he remained for nearly 10 years from 1163; the emperor had even planned for him to marry his daughter in order to make him his successor. It is certain that the young Bela did not go alone to Byzantium, he had a little court with him, who could have had access to the relics of the imperial chapel, amongst which was the Holy Shroud. So it is from this first-hand source that the artists who drew the five drawings could have collected his information; he noticed, for example, whilst depicting the taking down from the cross or the embalming of Christ, that the thumb of the Crucified was bent towards the inside of the palm, of which only the image on the Shroud could have instructed him. As for the image on the Shroud itself, if the imprint of Christ's body does not figure on it, this is obviously deliberate: as the scene illustrates the discovery of the Resurrection by the holy women, the absence of any reminder of Christ's stay in the tomb made the message clearer; on the other hand, the miniaturist was determined to show the texture of the material, by the representation, admittedly clumsy, of the herringbone weave, and even the reminder of the presence of the four holes in the shape of a L, forming a drawing that is a sort of signature of the Holy Shroud of Turin, and that was seen as such by the author of the copy of the Holy Shroud of Turin made at the beginning of the 16th century and kept at Lier⁽⁹⁾. ■

1. These drawings were reproduced (reduced) in the reports of the international Rome Symposium in 1993 (*L'identification scientifique de l'homme du linceul, Jésus de Nazareth*, Paris, 1995, pl. VI), to illustrate Professor Lejeune's talk "Etude topologique des suaires de Turin, de Lier et de Pray", p. 103-109. Beautiful reproductions in original dimensions have just appeared in an 8-page brochure published by the National Library of Hungary, accompanying the Hungarian text of the

Le codex Pray

same manuscript: Halotti Beszéd, die Grabrede (Budapest, 2002; Margaritae Bibliothecae nationalis Hungariae).

2. One must remember that it is customary when referring to medieval manuscripts to speak of folios and not pages: a folio is made up of two pages, one recto, the other verso, on a same support; a bifolium is made up of two folios (that is four pages) either side of the seam that binds the bifolium to a gathering.

3. The very complex history of the order, or rather disorder, of the gatherings of the Pray Codex has been presented in an article by E. Madas and E. Poulle, "L'organisation des cahiers du codex Pray", to appear in *Scriptorium*, t. 57, 2003.

4. E. Bartoniek, *Codices manus scripti latini*, vol. I, *Codices latini medii aevi* (Budapest, 1940), p. 1-5.

5. P. Radó and L. Mezey, *Libri liturgici manuscripti bibliothecarum Hungariae et limitropharum regionum*, new ed. (Budapest, 1973), p. 40-76.

6. These two tables, whose dates match for the most part, are not identical: one (the second list) gives the dominical letters and the dates of Septuagesima and Easter, the other adds to this information saints' days corresponding with these dates. There are a few errors in both tables, particularly in the second.

7. J. Szendrei, "Choralnotation als Identitätsausdruck im Mittelalter", in *Studia musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, t. 27, 1985, p. 139-170; the key to the illustration does not indicate the references of the folios: the illustration on p. 157 is the second page of the Exultet, those on p. 155 and 156 are fol.132v and 100.

8. T. Wehli, "Perugiai Bernát kódex és a Pray-kódex helye a középkori magyar könyvfestészetben" (The place of the codex of Bernát of Perugia and of the Pray codex in the painting of the book in the Middle Ages in Hungary), in *Ars Hungarica*, 1975, p. 197-210.

9. The demonstration of the identification with the Holy Shroud of Turin of its representation in the Pray Codex was carried out by Professor Lejeune, op. cit.