Chapter 2

THE EARLY LATIN *PHYSIOLOGUS*

FROM AT LEAST the early eighth century, the *Physiologus* was already well known in both Insular and continental Europe. This chapter discusses three important groups of sources: texts and images from before the eighth century that draw on the *Physiologus*; booklists from medieval libraries up to ca. 1000 that mention the *Physiologus*; and a manuscript that contains the earliest extant Latin copy of the text: Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 611 + Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 10756.

The Earliest Evidence

The extant manuscripts of the *Physiologus* are listed in Table 2.1 (a more detailed description of each is provided in Appendix I, the descriptive catalogue of manuscripts, in the corresponding numbered entry).[1] In addition, nine references to what may have been the *Physiologus* are made in early medieval booklists. These refer to the following entries, listed in order by booklist date and reproduced using the original spelling and capitalization:

- **a.** "Crisostomus de naturis animalium" in a ninth-century catalogue from a lost Murbach manuscript (discussed below).
- **b.** "liber phisiologi" in a ninth-century catalogue from the Salvatorstift in Würzburg (from an unknown manuscript).[2]
- **c.** "Liber I phisiologi" from the cathedral library catalogue Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, MS M.p.th.f.40, fol. 1r, compiled in Würzburg ca. 1000 with eleventh-century continuations on fols. 46r–v.[3] This may represent the same copy of the *Physiologus* as entry *b*.
- **d.** "Liber bestiarum" in a list from the 863 or 864 will of Eberhard and Gisela of Friuli, bequeathed to their eldest son Unruoch from their private chapel book collection. The will survives as a copy in a cartulary from Cysoing.[4]

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1 This book uses the standard Latin medieval manuscript catalogue dating system (abbreviations of "saeculo ineunte/medio/exeunte" and fractions). For example, in the first entry in Table 2.1, the beginning of the ninth century indicated as s. ix^{in}.

2 Becker, *Catalogi bibliothecarum antiqui*, no. 18, item 42 (hereafter Becker). This manuscript remains unidentified and may be lost. See O'Loughlin, *Adomnan and the Holy Places*, 185.

3 Becker no. 38, item 18; MBK IV.2, 987. Digitized at http://vb.uni-wuerzburg.de/ub/mpthf40/ueber.html.

4 Mons, Archives de l'État, Cartulaire 12 (made in 1517). The Latin text of the will can be found in Coussemaker, ed., *Cartulaire*, 1–5, no. 1; Becker no. 12, item 12; Schramm and Mütherich, *Denkmale der deutschen Könige und Kaiser*, 78–79. A partial French translation can be found in Riché and Tate, ed., *Textes et documents*, 414–15. See also La Rocca and Provero, "The Dead and Their Gifts," and Kershaw, "Eberhard of Friuli."

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Table 2.1. Extant *Physiologus* manuscripts

	Manuscript	Origin	Date
1.	Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 225 + Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 233 + Orléans, Médiathèque, MS 313	Saint-Mesmin, near Fleury	s. ix^{in}
2.	Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 318	Near Rheims	s. ix$^{2/3}$
3.	Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 611 + Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 10756	Bourges	ca. 727
4.	Brussels, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, MS lat. 10066–77	Rheims or Laon	s. x
5.	Chartres, Médiathèque L'Apostrophe, MS 63 (125)	France	s. x/xi
6.	Montecassino, Archivio dell'Abbazia, MS 316 + MS 323	Cassino	s. ix$^{2/4}$
7.	Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS Clm 14388	Northwest Germany	s. ix^{med}
8.	Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS Clm 19417	Southern Bavaria	s. ix$^{1/3}$
9.	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. T.2.23	Eastern France (Tours?)	s. ix$^{2/3}$
10.	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 129	Main river valley or its environs	s. ix
11.	Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Nouv. acq. lat. 1616 + Orléans, Médiathèque, MS 18 (*olim* 15) + Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Nouv. acq. lat. 455	Western France	s. x$^{3/3}$–x$^{4/4}$
12.	St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 230	St. Gallen	s. viii^{2}
13.	Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. lat. 1074	Catalonia	s. x^{ex}–xi^{in}
14.	Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, MS Gud. lat. 148	Eastern France	s. ix$^{4/4}$

e. "Liber Esopi de natura animalium" in a fragment of a Fulda library catalogue, now lost. It was partially transcribed in the eighteenth century by Johann Friedrich Schannat in his history of the monastery.[5] Though we do not know the precise date of this catalogue, it may have been created before 830 during the abbacy of Hrabanus Maurus, who had various lists made when he took up office in 822. Other extant booklist fragments are thought to have been part of the same long catalogue.[6]

f. "et libros bestiarum Ysiodori" in a Passau charter of property exchange dated 8 September 903, extant as a copy in Munich, Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Hochstift Passau, Inneres Archiv 5, fols. 124v–125v (the *Codex Lonsdorfianus* or *Lonsdorfer Codex*).[7]

5 Schannat, *Historia Fuldensis*, 63.

6 Raaijmakers, *The Making of the Monastic Community*, 194–95.

7 Digitized at https://bavarikon.de/object/bav:GDA-OBJ-00000BAV80016806. Transcribed at Becker no. 28, item 37; MBK IV.1:142–49.

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g. "liber bestiarum" recorded in a list of books donated to the Benedictine house at Peterborough in 970 by Æthelwold, bishop of Winchester, preserved in London, Society of Antiquaries, MS 60, fol. 39v (the Black Book of Peterborough).[8]

h. "liber bestiarum et uolucrum" in a list of books belonging to the St. Emmeram (Regensburg) monk Waltherius in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS Clm 14222, fol. 17r, copied in the tenth century (though the manuscript itself dates to the second quarter of the ninth century); and "de natura bestiarum et uolucrum" in the catalogue of 513 books belonging to St. Emmeram, compiled on the order of Abbot Ramuoldus or Ramwold (in office 975–1001) and completed by 993, though with subsequent additions. This catalogue is preserved in the tenth-century lectionary Pommersfelden, Gräflich Schönborn'sche Schlossbibliothek, MS 340 (2821), fols. 73v–75r.[9] The discussion below assumes that these two entries represented the same manuscript copy of a text on beasts and birds, in the personal possession of Waltherius in the tenth century and bequeathed by him to his community before 993.[10]

i. "Fisiologus" in a late tenth or early eleventh-century catalogue from eastern France or Belgium, preserved in Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 4, fol. 55v (line 10).[11]

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8 Digitized at https://collections.sal.org.uk/mss.0060.

9 Becker, 128, no. 42 (the Pommersfelden manuscript), item 453; and 130, no. 44, item 10 (the Munich manuscript); MBK IV.1:142–49. The Munich manuscript is digitized at www.digitale-sammlungen.de/view/bsb00036222?page=1. The most complete description of the Pommersfelden manuscript is in Swarzenski, *Die Regensburger Buchmalerei*, 41–45. The private comital library of Schloss Weißenstein, in which the manuscript is kept, is also known as Graf von Schönborn Schlossbibliothek.

10 This interpretation means that the date of Waltherius' booklist in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS Clm 14222 is pushed back from the early eleventh century, as estimated by Swarzenski, to before 993. See Swarzenski, *Die Regensburger Buchmalerei*, 25.

11 www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/list/one/bbb/0004. Becker no. 29, item 47; MBK Ergänzungsband I.2, 743; Genest, Chalandon, and Genevois, *Bibliothèques*, no. 1934. The manuscript itself is a pandect Bible from Tours. The booklist was thought to be from Fleury by Cuissard, *Inventaire des manuscrits*, 209–11, Manitius, *Handschriften antiker Autoren*, 258, and others following them, but this is incorrect according to Mostert, *The Library of Fleury*, 48. Florian Mittenhuber suggested on e-codices that the booklist is from Lotharingia, based on the saints' lives that it lists (from Soissons, Saint-Quentin, Liège, and Maastricht). A provenance in Eastern France or Belgium was suggested by Munk Olsen, *L'étude des auteurs classiques latins*, 3.1 (1982), 283. Provenance in Alsace or Strasbourg has been suggested but is unproven: Krämer, *Handschriftenerbe des deutschen Mittelalters* 1.2, 743. Bischoff, *Katalog der festländischen Handschriften*, 1:103, gave a western German provenance, perhaps from the diocese of Cologne, though he also indicated Strasbourg (its own diocese and part of the archdiocese of Mainz) as a probable location. A recent conference report posited, without presenting the full argument, that the list was copied in the region of the cult of St. Romaric (on the basis of the inventory in the related codex Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 3), between Épinal, Verdun, Metz, and Strasbourg, and suggested Bonmoutier (Saint-Sauveur-en-Vosges) or Saint-Sauveur d'Andlau as probable places of origin; see Turcan-Verkerk, "Langue et littérature," 149. As regards the date of the list, only Cuissard, *Catalogue général* 12, iii, and Pellegrin, "Membra disiecta Floriacensia," dated it to the ninth century; all others follow Homburger in dating it to the

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None of these booklists entries appears to refer to any of the still-extant *Physiologus* manuscripts. Early medieval books were frequently exchanged and given in gift, however, so we cannot discount the possibility that the above entries refer to codices originating at, or belonging to, other centres. Nevertheless, the high rate of loss of medieval manuscripts over time, and the wide geographical spread of the *Physiologus*, make it probable that most of the booklist entries denote unknown copies of the text that are now lost.

Of the nine entries, *b*, *c*, and *i* are not in doubt since they name the *Physiologus*. Entry *a* is almost certainly also a *Physiologus*, since John Chrysostom never wrote a text on the nature of animals and there appears to have been an early medieval tradition of crediting him with the authorship of the *Physiologus* (the *explicits* to the *Physiologus* in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 14388 and Clm 19417 attribute their copies of the text to Chrysostom; see descriptions in Appendix I). Entries *c*, *f*, *g*, and *h* are the least certain, since they ambiguously refer to books about beasts or the nature of beasts and birds. Among such works were Isidore's *Etymologiae*, books 11–14, and Pliny's *Historia naturalis*, both of which contain information on animals, birds, and stones, were widely used and were so long that they were often copied in part rather than in full. However, the works of both Pliny and Isidore were well known and usually attributed to them by copyists: both the Murbach (*a*) and Alsace or Strasbourg (*i*) inventories, for example, list works attributed to Isidore under the headings "Ysidori/ Ysodori libri" before the presumed *Physiologus*. Listing the name or subject matter of a text without its author usually meant either that it was so familiar that the author's name was redundant, or that its author was unknown. The former seems unlikely in the case of the *Physiologus*. We can see from a catalogue of thirty-four books, made at Würzburg ca. 800, that this kind of abbreviation was reserved for widely read authors such as Gregory the Great, Augustine, and Bede.[12] Their respective works are listed simply as "dialogi," "enciridion" and "Historia anglorum."[13] Other early medieval catalogues also abbreviate the titles of famous works in this way. It is more probable, therefore, that entries *c*, *f*, *g*, and *h* are references to the *Physiologus*.[14] No other prose text on animals circulated in the early Middle Ages without an attributed author. The sole exception is the *Liber monstrorum*, but its subject matter—monsters or marvellous creatures—means that it was unlikely to have been listed as a "liber bestiarum."

The only truly doubtful booklist entries, then, are *e*, the "Liber Esopi de natura animalium," and *f*, the "libros bestiarum Ysiodori." Aesop's fables, or a version of these fables by Aelian, Babrius, or Phaedrus, were known in early medieval monastic libraries (the tenth-century library catalogue of St. Emmeram described in entry *h*, for

late tenth or early eleventh century; see Homburger, *Die illustrierten Handschriften*, 72–79. I have chosen to follow Mittenhuber and Munk Olsen as regards provenance and dating on the evidence of the saints' lives and the script, which I believe to be early eleventh century.

12 Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud misc. 126, fol. 236r. This is a different booklist to the one in *a*.

13 McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word*, 171.

14 Entry *g* was also identified as a *Physiologus* in Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library*, 136.

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example, lists an "Aesopus") and may have existed in a Fulda copy attested by entry *e*.[15] Book 12 of the *Etymologiae*, on beasts and birds, could have been behind entry *f*. Both entries could also, however, refer to the *Physiologus*, which was similar enough to both Aesop and Isidore's texts to be ascribed to these authors.

Even if we discount *e* and *f*, the remaining entries add to the picture of the circulation of the *Physiologus* in the early Middle Ages already provided by the extant manuscripts. By the mid-eighth century, the *Physiologus* was present in central France. By the ninth century it was being copied in the principal Frankish territories in France and Germany. But the history of the *Physiologus* in Europe is not well represented by the geographical spread of the manuscripts. The ninth-century witness from Catalonia, for example (see Chapter 5), cannot be said with certainty to have been made there, and it is the only known Latin *Physiologus* from the region. The Spanish bestiary tradition generally remained relatively weak throughout the Middle Ages. The earliest known version was translated into Aragonese, Castilian, and Catalan from the French-language *Livre dou Tresor* by Brunetto Latini (d. 1294).[16] A second translation, based on fourteenth-century Tuscan bestiaries, did not appear until the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[17] The *Physiologus* itself reappeared in Spain during the Renaissance. Gonzalo Ponce de León's translation of the Greek *Physiologus* into Latin was published in Rome in 1587 and subsequently translated into Castilian by Francisco Tejada Vizuete.[18]

Conversely, though the ninth-century manuscript from Cassino seems to suggest that it was an outlier, it is probable that the Latin *Physiologus* was disseminated from Italy. The earliest evidence for the text in the Latin West is from the Apennine Peninsula. Ambrose had access to either a Greek or a Latin version in the fourth century, while the Latin *Decretum Gelasianum*, a sixth-century Italian forgery also found in the *Physiologus* manuscript St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 230, explicitly prohibited the *Physiologus*. Later Italian copies of the *Physiologus* or a related version such as the *Physiologus Theobaldi* attest to a strong and continuous manuscript tradition, in both Latin and Greek.[19]

The history of the *Physiologus* in its Insular context is also more complex than the number of surviving copies or booklist mentions suggests. The text first appears to have been used by Aldhelm ca. 695 to compose riddles.[20] Aldhelm's use of the *Physio-*

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15 Becker no. 42, item 474.

16 Baldwin, *The Medieval Castilian Bestiary*.

17 Pascual, "La tradición animalística"; Salvat, "Notes sur les bestiaires catalans."

18 Edited in Sebastián, *El Fisiólogo*. The Y recension of the *Physiologus* was most recently translated into Spanish by Guglielmi, ed., *El Fisiólogo*.

19 For example, the Latin *Physiologus* in Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS San Marco 650 (s. xi), the Greek *Physiologus* in Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS E 16 sup. (s. xi, https://ambrosiana.comperio.it/opac/detail/view/ambro:catalog:70286), and the Latin *Physiologus Theobaldi* in Fano, Archivio del Capitolo della Cattedrale, MS 5 (s. xiii).

20 Manitius, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur*, 1:137n5; Milovanović-Barham, "Aldhelm's Enigmata," 51; Lendinara, *Anglo-Saxon Glosses*; Salvador-Bello, "Evidence of the Use of the *Physiologus*."

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logus for riddles, and his proven use of the *Aenigmata Bernensia* in the Bern/Paris collection (parts 3 and 5, discussed below), indicate that he had read this manuscript or a related, now lost, copy. Aldhelm made several trips to the continent, including a pilgrimage to Rome with Cædwalla of Wessex ca. 688–89.[21] They travelled to Rome via France, and this was also the way taken by Aldhelm on his return journey. Joanna Story has shown that two ninth-century Rheims manuscripts preserve the unique text of the original Roman *tituli* or verse epigrams that served as a source for Aldhelm's verse compositions.[22] One of these manuscripts also contains a copy of Aldhelm's riddles.[23] This evidence seems to suggest that the *tituli* were copied by Aldhelm in Rome, that they were then transmitted by him to a centre in or near Rheims, and that this then enabled a manuscript anthology of Roman *tituli* to be compiled in the ninth century. It is not inconceivable, therefore, that Aldhelm spent enough time in France in the late seventh century to consult the exemplar for the Bern/Paris collection, or perhaps the relevant parts of the collection itself, which was created ca. 727 (see more detailed discussion of this manuscript in the second half of this chapter).

After Aldhelm, the evidence for the *Physiologus* in early medieval England remains sparse but clear. Hwaetberht (writing as Eusebius), abbot of Monkwearmouth-Jarrow in the first half of the eighth century, used either Aldhelm's compositions or the *Physiologus* itself for his own riddles.[24] The *Liber monstrorum*, an anonymous eighth-century text probably composed in England, also used the *Physiologus*.[25] However, the *Physiologus* material used by these texts may derive from the *Etymologiae*, which was a major source of the *Liber monstrorum*.[26] More text historical work is needed to establish their relationship.[27]

The fragmentary Old English metrical *Physiologus* in the Exeter Book (Exeter, Cathedral Library, MS 3501, fols. 95v–98r) also indicates that the *Physiologus* was known to Insular writers by the tenth century and was read with sufficient interest to be at least partially translated and re-worked in verse form. The Exeter Book was given to Exeter Cathedral by Leofric, its first bishop (d. 1072) and was produced in the seventy or eighty years before Leofric's elevation to his office, possibly ca. 970–90.[28]

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21 Lapidge, "The Career of Aldhelm," 52–64.

22 Story, "Aldhelm and Old St Peter's."

23 Milovanović-Barham, "Aldhelm's Enigmata," 51.

24 Greenfield, Calder, and Lapidge, *A New Critical History*, 12. The identification of Eusebius with Hwaetberht has not been proven, but is probable; O'Brien, "Hwaetberht," 315.

25 Lapidge, "Surviving Booklists," 55.

26 Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies,* 86–115; see also Orchard, *A Critical Companion to Beowulf*, 134–35.

27 On the Insular *Physiologus* tradition, see Orlandi, "La tradizione del *Physiologus*" and Frank, "Die Physiologus-Literatur." On the *Liber monstrorum* manuscripts, see Bologna, "La tradizione manoscritta."

28 Krapp, ed., *The Exeter Book*, 10; Schubel, *Englische Literaturgeschichte*, 13. See also Conner, "On Dating Cynewulf." Leofric's donation is recorded in Exeter, Cathedral Library, MS 3501, fols. 1r–2v.

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Its place of origin is uncertain.[29] The text consists of only three chapters (the whale, the panther, and the partridge) and a number of folios are missing.[30] This makes the source recension of the text difficult to determine. Various scholars have argued that it is related to the B version,[31] or the *Physiologus Theobaldi* (in fact a later work composed between 1022 and 1035),[32] and even that it has no connection to the main recensions (B, C, or Y).[33] Contamination across recensions may have ultimately influenced the Exeter Book text.[34]

The Exeter Book *Physiologus* is omitted from this book except as proof of the knowledge of the *Physiologus* in tenth-century England. As an original work of Old English poetry that focuses on the descriptive and aesthetic side of the tales rather than their moral lessons, the Exeter Book text is sufficiently different in form, function, and content from the Latin *Physiologus* in the early Middle Ages that it is clearly not part of the same context.[35] It is also a vernacular version, and as such deserves consideration on its own terms independently from the Latin recensions, and with reference to the Insular poetic and riddling traditions that informed it.

There is little to no evidence that the *Physiologus* was ever read in early medieval Wales or Scotland, though it may have made its way to Ireland. The eighth-century Irish Derrynaflan paten (a dish used to hold the Eucharist during Mass), found as part of a small hoard of liturgical vessels within the monastic enclosure in Derrynaflan, Co. Tipperary, depicts a stag and snake on one of the panels along its rim. It has been suggested that this imagery derived from the *Physiologus*, in which the stag spits water through cracks in the earth to drive out the snake before crushing it.[36] However, similar baptismal allegories involving these animals also appear in Cassiodorus' commentary on the Psalms (in relation to Psalm 42) and in Isidore's *Etymologiae*, among other texts borrowing from these.[37] The tangled-up nature of these sources means that

29 The Exeter Book's origin was thought by Patrick Conner to be Exeter: Conner, "On Dating Cynewulf," 23–55, and *Anglo-Saxon Exeter*, 85–86. However, the consensus now is that the Exeter Book was not made there; see Scragg, "Exeter Book," and Gameson, "The Origin of the Exeter Book." The origin of the Exeter Book is also briefly discussed in Biggs, "The Eschatological Conclusion," and Drout, "'The Partridge' is a Phoenix."

30 Drout suggested that the partridge was in fact the phoenix, but Pakis argued persuasively against this; Drout, "'The Partridge' is a Phoenix"; Pakis, "A Note in Defense."

31 Lapidge, "Surviving Booklists," 55.

32 Gastle, "The Beast Fable," 71. The *Physiologus Theobaldi* has been critically edited by Eden, *Theobaldi "Physiologus."*

33 Frank, "Die Physiologus-Literatur," 36.

34 Orlandi, "La tradizione del *Physiologus*," 1093.

35 Letson, "The Old English *Physiologus*," 20.

36 Ryan, "Some Aspects of Sequence and Style," 72, and *Early Irish Communion Vessels*, p. 39, fig. 14 and photo 16. See also Ryan, "The Menagerie." On evidence for *Physiologus* influence on Pictish symbolism, see Henderson, *Pictish Monsters*.

37 As Psalm 41, in accordance with Cassiodorus' use of the Vulgate psalm numbering. CCSL 97; Cassiodorus, *Explanation of the Psalms* 1; *Etymologiae* 12.1.18–19. The story and its origins are described in Clark, *A Medieval Book of Beasts*, 134.

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Figure 2.1. Viking-age sceatta (reverse) depicting a stag apparently kissing a snake. Ribe, Sydvestjyske Museer Denmark, catalogue no. NM FP 14603.1. Available under CC-BY-SA licence.

the ultimate origin of the imagery on the Derrynaflan paten cannot be ascribed with certainty to the *Physiologus*. Scandinavian influence is also possible: some Viking-age coins depict a stag and snake on their reverse (Figure 2.1).

Aldhelm and Hwaetberht's riddles, the Exeter Book and the Peterborough booklist demonstrate that the *Physiologus* was known to Insular writers from at least the second half of the seventh century. Some early medieval English coins may also have been influenced by the *Physiologus* in their animal depictions.[38] We can only speculate, given the lack of sources, about the spread of the text in the seventh century. It is unlikely that the *Physiologus* was transmitted to the continent from England, since the continental manuscript evidence is much stronger than the Insular, and since the text was used in Italy as early as the fourth and sixth centuries. The Latin *Physiologus* may have instead arrived in England from Rome with Theodore of Tarsus and Hadrian of Canterbury in the 660s or 670s, or with Aldhelm in the 690s.[39] Aldhelm was one of the pupils at the famous school founded by Theodore and Hadrian in Canterbury, which provides another conceivable locus for Aldhelm's introduction to the *Physiologus*.[40] While it is impossible to be certain during which of these moments of international exchange the *Physiologus* was transmitted to England, they are emblematic of decades of travel and pilgrimage from Insular settlements to Rome, other parts of continental Europe, and beyond, in the seventh century. This lively movement of people was ultimately responsible for the wide circulation of texts such as the *Physiologus*.

Regardless of the precise routes it took, the *Physiologus* clearly enjoyed reasonably widespread circulation in the Latin West, relatively soon after its translation into Latin in the fourth century. It made its way across the Channel before or during the

38 Gannon, "Coins, Images and Tales." See also Gannon, *The Iconography of Early Anglo-Saxon Coinage*.

39 On the context of the books of Augustine, Hadrian, and Theodore, see Gameson, "The Earliest Books of Christian Kent." Much less likely, though still possible, is the introduction of the *Physiologus* to England with Augustine in 597 or with another set of books sent to Augustine from Rome four years later.

40 If Aldhelm used Byzantine riddles as one of his models, it is also possible that he accessed them through his teacher Theodore, either as part of oral tradition or as part of the book collection brought by Theodore to England. See Milovanović-Barham, "Aldhelm's Enigmata."

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second half of the seventh century. Its textual tradition was well-established in Europe by the time the earliest extant copy of the Latin *Physiologus* came to be made. The early medieval Latin West therefore inherited a work that had at least one century of active monastic transmission behind it, and that would have been known to those copying and composing texts.

The *Physiologus* in Early Medieval Libraries

Although all the *Physiologus* manuscripts mentioned by the extant booklists are now lost, the catalogues themselves tell us that the *Physiologus* was read in monastic and cathedral contexts in the early Middle Ages, both by clergy and by laypeople. Many more copies must have existed. In his 1961 lecture notes, Bernhard Bischoff estimated 500 ninth-century Carolingian libraries containing 200 to 300 volumes, which equals to at least 100,000 Carolingian manuscripts. Of these, only some 6 percent have survived. Various attempts have been made at using this and other figures to make more precise numerical estimates of manuscript survival.[41] They all indicate that the rate of loss was very high, and that we only have as many Carolingian sources as we do because of an explosion in text production. Merovingian sources are correspondingly much fewer in number. Charters from before 800 have a survival rate as low as 0.001 percent, by one estimate, due to the use of (easily degradable) papyrus in Merovingian chanceries.[42]

But even educated guesses at survival rates remain somewhat arbitrary. Too many factors remain unknown. Even if the estimates we have are correct, numbers say nothing about the distribution of books or about the cultural and intellectual importance of certain texts. By comparing book catalogues, we can conclude that the *Physiologus* was read as much as texts by Horace, Juvenal, Terence, and even Martianus Capella, who is mentioned only thirteen times in catalogues from the ninth and tenth centuries. Capella's *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* survives in much greater numbers in extant manuscripts; but more importantly, glossing evidence shows that it was read both widely and actively, especially in schools.[43] Contextual evidence is therefore much more valuable than numerical comparison for measuring the cultural significance of a text such as the *Physiologus*. The booklists are still valuable evidence in this respect, and are worth examining more closely (with the exception of lists *b* and *e*, of which we do not know enough to draw any real conclusions).

41 Buringh, *Medieval Manuscript Production*, 237; Wood, "The Problem of Late Merovingian Culture," 202; McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word*, 167.

42 Ganz and Goffart, "Charters Earlier than 800."

43 Tahkokallio, "Manuscripts as Evidence," 39; Teeuwen, "Glossing in Close Co-Operation"; Teeuwen and O'Sullivan, *Carolingian Scholarship*.

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Iskar's List

Perhaps the longest library catalogue that mentions the *Physiologus* is the list made at the Abbey of Murbach (*b*). The manuscript in which it appeared is now lost and the catalogue exists only in a transcription made on paper by the Benedictine monk Sigismund Meisterlin in 1464.[44] The list was copied as a separate and subsequent addition to the main Abbey *registrum* of some 400 books, dated to ca. 840–42, edited by Wolfgang Milde.[45] According to Meisterlin's title, "Breuiarium librorum Isghteri Abbatis obmissis his qui in registro continentur pro parte," it was the catalogue of books belonging to Iskar, Abbot of Murbach around the middle of the ninth century.[46] The list was first edited by Hermann Bloch, and again more recently by Karl-Ernst Geith and Walter Berschin.[47]

Geith and Berschin believed that the words "obmissis…parte" meant that Meisterlin purposely omitted those titles which also appeared in the main catalogue (although some duplicates remain). He may also have omitted some titles not in the main catalogue. In addition, Meisterlin almost certainly transcribed in long lines what was originally a two-column list, which means that the books are not presented in their original order—as evident from the mixing of theological works with those pertaining to history and works related to the natural world, as discussed below.[48]

Like many other Carolingian abbots, Iskar donated his collection to the monastery on his death.[49] The contents of this collection are both interesting and unusual. Since they provide a potentially valuable context for a lost *Physiologus* copy owned by a named Carolingian abbot, they are reproduced in full here. Meisterlin's capitalization, abbreviations, and irregular treatment of *v* and *u* have been retained. Geith and Berschin identified the texts and associated some of the entries with extant manuscripts from Murbach. This information is provided beneath each entry:[50]

1. Epistole et canones diuersi volumen I
   Letters and lists from ecclesiastical councils. Gotha, Forschungsbibliothek, memb. I.85 or I.75.[51]

44 This transcription is in the manuscript Colmar, Archives Départementales du Haut-Rhin, Cartulaire Abbaye Murbach 1.

45 Milde did not edit the Iskar catalogue, although he reproduced it as an image alongside images of the main catalogue: Milde, *Der Bibliothekskatalog*.

46 "An abridged list of the books of Iskar the abbot, omitting those which are listed in the register in part."

47 Bloch, "Ein karolingischer Bibliotheks-Katalog"; Geith and Berschin, "Die Bibliothekskataloge."

48 Geith and Berschin, "Die Bibliothekskataloge," 86–87.

49 McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word*, 156.

50 Geith and Berschin, "Die Bibliothekskataloge," 68–84. With reference to Bloch's edition, 272–73, and to plate 12 in Milde, *Der Bibliothekskatalog*. I have followed Bloch's numbering of the entries.

51 https://dhb.thulb.uni-jena.de/rsc/viewer/ufb_derivate_00015136/Memb-I-00085_00001.tif.

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2. Hebraicarum questionum et de XL mansionibus volumen I
   Jerome, *Liber Hebraicarum questionum in Genesim* and *De XLII mansionibus filiorum Israel in deserto (ep. 78)*. Colmar, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 33 (*olim* 41).[52]
3. Excerpta Iheronimi de Ethico philosopho
   Aethicus Ister, *Cosmographia*. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 25.
4. Gesta pontificum et epistola Iehronimi [*sic*] de gradibus sacerdotum volumen I
   Liber pontificalis and St. Jerome, *ep*. 46 on the clerical grades.
5. Allexandri epistola ad Aristotilem et olimpiadem matrem suam
   Pseudo-Alexander the Great, probably the *Letter to Aristotle* and the *Letter to Olympia* about miracles in India, derived from Pseudo-Callisthenes.[53]
6. Orosius prouinciarum descripcio
   Orosius, *Historiae adversus paganos* bk. 1, chap. 2.
7. De eadem re Iheronimus
   The anonymous *Dimensuratio provinciarum*, falsely ascribed to Jerome.
8. Ysidorus de terra
   Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* bk. 14.[54]
9. Cosmographia Iulii cesaris
   Julius Honorius or Pseudo-Aethicus, *Cosmographia*, B recension.
10. Solinus de situ orbis volumen I
    Solinus, *Collectanea rerum memorabilium.*
11. Questiones albini in genesim
    Alcuin, *Interrogationes et responsiones in Genesin.*
12. Questiones Augustini et orosii in genesim
    Pseudo-Augustine and Pseudo-Orosius, *Dialogus quaestionum.*
13. Glose super regum
    Glosses or a commentary on the Book of Kings.
14. Bachiarius de reparacione lapsus
    Bachiarius, *Epistula ad Januariam seu De lapso.*
15. Exitium troianorum
    Dares Phrygius, *De excidio Troiae historia.*

52 https://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/sommaire/sommaire.php?reproductionId=1946.

53 Figueira, *The Hermeneutics of Suspicion*, 36.

54 Thought by Bloch, "Ein karolingischer Bibliotheks-Katalog," 277, to refer to Isidore of Seville's *De natura rerum*, chap. 45–48. It is more likely, however, to refer to the *Etymologiae*, which was much more frequently copied.

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16. Titus lucrecius de rerum natura volumen unum
    Lucretius, *De rerum natura.*
17. Explanatio Augustini in apostolum volumen I
    Augustine, *Expositio quarumdam propositionum ex epistola ad Romanos*, *Epistulae ad Romanos inchoata expositio*, *Epistula ad Galatas expositio.*
18. Rabanus in librum regum volumen unum
    Hrabanus Maurus, *Commentaria in libros IV Regum.*
19. De compoto Astrolabio de gramatica foci et arati et versus theodolfi volumen I
    Works on computus and the astrolabe, grammar of Phocas, *Phaenomena* of Aratus or a commentary on his work, poems of Theodulf of Orléans.
20. Rabanus in Iheremiam volumen I
    Hrabanus Maurus, *Commentaria in Ieremiam.*[55]
21. Geometrica et Iginius volumen I
    A work on geometry and Hyginus, *Astronomica.*
22. Partes donati maioris et minoris, declinacionis nominis et verbi volumen I
    Donatus, selections from the *Ars grammatica (Ars maior)* and *De partibus orationis ars minor* on nouns and verbs; or the works of Donatus and an anonymous work on nouns and verbs.
23. Rabanus de compoto
    Hrabanus Maurus, *Liber de computo.*
24. Beda de arte metrica
    Bede, *De arte metrica.*
25. Priscianus minor de scriptoribus diuinorum librorum[56]
    Isidore of Seville, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* bk. 1, chap. 12: *De scriptoribus sacrorum librorum.*
26. Beda de naturis rerum
    Bede, *De natura rerum.*

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55 This text is known to have been written ca. 840–42 and was therefore used by Bloch to date the catalogue. None of the other works written by Hrabanus after 840 are attested in this or the main Murbach catalogues.

56 Bloch noted that this ought to read "Priscianus minor descriptio diversorum locorum," presumably because one of Priscian's works is a translation of the geographical poem *Periegenis* by Dionysius Periegetes. Geith and Berschin believed the phrase "Priscianus minor" refers to Priscian's *Institutionum grammaticarum* books 17–18 (on syntax), in addition to the *Periegenis* denoted by "de scriptoribus diuinorum librorum." It's more probable that the entry refers to the text by Isidore as listed here, since it (the full Isidore text) is also found under the rubric "scriptoribus divinorum librorum" in the ninth-century manuscript St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 878, p. 171 (www.e-codices.unifr.ch/de/csg/0878). Bloch, "Ein karolingischer Bibliotheks-Katalog," no. 25; Geith and Berschin, "Die Bibliothekskataloge," 77.

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27. Ysidorus de accentibus et martirologium

    Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* bk. 1, chap. 18. "Martirologium" could refer to Isidore of Seville, *De ortu et obitu partum* (also mentioned in the main catalogue and extant in the Murbach manuscript Colmar, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 43 (*olim* 39), https://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/sommaire/sommaire.php?reproductionId=1935); or to a martyrology by Jerome, Bede, Florus of Lyons, or an anonymous author.

28. Epistola Ypocratis ad antiochum

    A letter of Pseudo-Hippocrates to Antioch on illnesses associated with the four seasons.

29. Epistola antimii medici ad titum imperatorem[57]

    Anthimus, *Epistula de observatione ciborum.*

30. Crisostomus de naturis animalium

    Physiologus.

31. Fabula auiani et esopi et phedri et allexandri et didimi

    Fables attributed to Avianus, Aesop and Phaedrus, and fictional letters of Alexander the Great to Dindimus, King of the Brahmans (*Epistulae* or *Collatio Alexandri et Dindimi*).

32. Ferrandus diaconus de formula vite

    Ferrandus of Carthage, *Ad Reginum comitem ep. VII.*

33. Gesta allexandri magni volumen vnum

    Julius Valerius Polemius, *Res gestae Alexandri Macedonis*?

34. Plinii Secundi volumina tria

    Pliny the Elder, *Historia naturalis.*

35. Lex ribuariorum et alamannorum

    Ripuarian and Alemannic law codes.

36. Cronica Severi libri ii

    Sulpicius Severus, *Chronica.*

57 Bloch noted that this ought to read "Epistula Anthimi ad Theudericum regem Francorum." Both Titus and Theoderic are mentioned in the ninth-century Reichenau manuscript copy of this text: St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 878 (vademecum of Walahfrid Strabo (d. 849)), 352–65. The apparently unique reference to Titus (a confusion with the letter of Paul to Titus?) raises the possibility that this part of Cod. Sang. 878—codicological unit 5—is related to the copy mentioned in the Murbach catalogue, perhaps through a shared exemplar, or as antigraph and apograph. Since links between Reichenau and Murbach, both of which were founded by Pirmin, are well established, it may even represent the same copy. Two other manuscripts also mention Titus, but they are thirteenth and fourteenth century respectively: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 14935, and Prague, Knihovna Národního muzea, MS XIV.A.12. In addition, several other texts in the catalogue correspond to texts in codicological units 1, 2 and 3 of MS 878: no. 23 on p. 178, no. 24 on p. 91, no. 25 on p. 171, no. 26 on p. 242, no. 28 on p. 327. These facts, together with the unique title of no. 25, strongly suggest a connection. On St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 878, see Bischoff, "Eine Sammelhandschrift."

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37. Omelie origenis in leuiticum xvi
    Origen, *In Leviticum homiliae 1–16*.

38. Historie Iordanis libri ii
    Jordanes, *Getica* and *Romana*?

39. De instrumentis bellicis vegecii renati li [*sic*] iiii
    Vegetius, *Epitoma rei militaris*.

40. Liber achulfi de situ sanctorum locorum
    Adomnan, *De locis sanctis.*

41. De fide catholica Iustiniani imperatoris
    Justinian, *Edictum rectae fidei.*

42. Fulgencius Mirthologiarum
    Fulgentius, *Mythologiarum libri tres.*

43. Marcianus Felicis capelle
    Martianus Capella, *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*?

44. Claudius in Matheum
    Claudius of Turin, *Super Matthaeum*.

An important feature of this list is the kind of physical manuscript that each entry represents. Geith and Berschin believed that a number of these entries could be grouped together to form individual codices. They thought that texts 5–10, for example, were part of the same geographically focused manuscript, comparing it to volumes such as the tenth-century Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, MS Voss. lat. Q.29 and the thirteenth-century Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. lat 1357, which contain combinations of these and other texts.[58] This would mean, however, that the Murbach cataloguer listed individual texts without regard for their physical supports, which is not the case. Some entries mention one or more *volumen*, referring to the number of bound volumes filled by the text in question. This is the case with Solinus' *Collectanea* (10). Those texts too short to fill an entire bound volume were listed as part of a miscellaneous bound volume (e.g. 19); or kept as loose or tacketed quires or booklets, a regular practice in early medieval manuscript culture.[59] The glosses on Kings (13), the letters of Pseudo-Hippocrates and Anthimus (28 and 29), and the *Physiologus* (30) may all have been stored in this way.

Early medieval library catalogues did regularly list texts, or simply their authors, without mentioning their physical format (thorough inventories such as Notker the Stammerer's famous catalogue in St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 728 are

58 Geith and Berschin, "Die Bibliothekskataloge," 70.

59 Gumbert, "Skins, Sheets and Quires." It should be noted that a miscellany, such as the one described in entry 19, could conceivably also have been a lightly bound or unbound set of quires or booklet rather than a hard-bound codex. On booklets, see Robinson, "The 'Booklet'"; Da Rold, "Making the Book"; and Gillespie, "Medieval Books."

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exceptions).[60] But this does not preclude that they were kept as loose quires. Neither thematically similar content, nor the existence of thematic manuscript compilations, particularly those from a later period, can serve as proof that any set of texts in Iskar's list was bound together. This was certainly possible, and some of these quires or booklets do now survive in bound manuscript volumes—as Iskar's copy of the *Cosmographia* of Aethicus Ister (3) survives in the composite manuscript Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Junius 25. But at the time Iskar's list was made, the majority of its entries probably represented unbound or tacketed quires, or booklets, unless otherwise indicated.

Meisterlin's omission of those texts on this list that also appear in the main catalogue, as well as the other difficulties described above, mean that it is impossible to evaluate the true extent and implications of Iskar's private library. But several things are clear. The catalogue contains no significant patristic works, and few liturgical or theological texts, except a number of biblical commentaries (2, 11, 13, 17, 18, 20, 44). Computus, grammar, law and matters of Church structure—subjects of general interest in the early Middle Ages—are represented by a few works. The catalogue's major focus, however, is geography and (to a lesser extent) history, subjects represented by an impressively comprehensive set of those pagan and Christian authors whose works were widely read in the early Middle Ages, among them Adomnan, Aethicus Ister, Dares Phrygius, Jordanes, Lucretius, Martianus Capella, Orosius, Pliny, Solinus, and Sulpicius Severus, as well as fictional or pseudepigraphic authors such as Alexander the Great.

The scholarly work that has been done on history and geography in the early Middle Ages shows that they were tools used for particular purposes: history for defining and forging identity, for achieving the objectives of political power and rulership, and for articulating shared memory; geography for understanding the world, not as a physical reality in the modern sense but primarily as a means of approaching the mysteries of the Creator and human salvation.[61] Consequently, since history and geography had no claim to objectivity, but were tools to an end, they resist definition. The very variety of uses to which historical and geographical material was put indicates, however, how interesting it was to Christian thinkers—perhaps because it was "human" science, which told the grand story of the human race. Ultimately, secular history and geography offered a way towards a better understanding of the histories and geographies of the Bible, and its eschatological, typological, and allegorical interpretation. Influenced by Augustine and Neoplatonism, the reading of scriptural truth in the visible world was a long-standing epistemological approach in Christian thought.[62] Iskar's interest in histories and topographies therefore fits within a long tradition; but the impressive range of the catalogue suggests that in the early Middle Ages, this interest reached new heights among some members of the intellectual elite. It indicates a possible context for the *Physiologus* as one of a range of texts sought out specifically for their commentary on Creation and the human place within it.

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60 Stansbury, "*Sammelhandschriften*."

61 Lozovsky, "Carolingian Geographical Tradition," and *The Earth is Our Book*.

62 Lozovsky, *The Earth is Our Book*, 142; Augustine, *De civitate Dei* XI.2.

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Waltherius' List

A text on beasts and birds, possibly a *Physiologus*, is also mentioned in one other personal booklist (*h*), belonging to the St. Emmeram monk Waltherius towards the end of the tenth century. It may have been written by Waltherius himself, since it not only lists his books but also an appended short list of liturgical vestments—alb, cincture, maniple, stole, and superhumerale (the chasuble isn't mentioned)—worn by priests to celebrate the Eucharist.[63] Nothing is known of Waltherius beyond this list. It is a reasonably standard catalogue of works useful for devotional study and worship, including grammatical, liturgical, and musical books, and saints' lives. A small range of poetic works, as well as a treatise on metrics, indicates that Waltherius had sophisticated Latin. The inclusion of the "libellus tagoberti" —possibly the *Gesta Dagoberti*, a life of the Merovingian king Dagobert I, which expounds on the duty and devotion of a lay ruler to the Church—may be a hint that Waltherius represented his monastery to powerful laypeople in some capacity, perhaps as an advisor, or even as a composer of sermons. Several other texts also suggest that Waltherius had a role in explaining the secular world from a Christian perspective. These texts include the *Physiologus*, a florilegium of the Psalms, and the *Commonitorium* or *Consultatio* against the Priscillianists and Origenists by Orosius.

If indeed the *Physiologus* is the text denoted by this catalogue entry, it is presented alongside a range of major works by widely read authors including Prudentius, Virgil, and Priscian. That the *Gesta Dagoberti* was composed in the mid-ninth century indicates that Waltherius had access to St. Emmeram's excellent library, and that he was attuned to recent moral political discourse. In this select group of texts, it is apparent that the *Physiologus* was part of the literary canon essential for a well-rounded education as a priest.

Monastic Lists

The remaining monastic catalogues (*c*, *f*, *g*, and *i*) all present wholly different contexts for the *Physiologus*. The "liber bestiarum" (*g*) donated to the Benedictine house at Peterborough in 970 shows that the *Physiologus* was considered by Æthelwold to be one of a number of books suitable for literary study. As with other tenth and eleventh-century continental copies of the *Physiologus*, this Insular copy demonstrates a clear move towards the study of the liberal arts, and away from allegorical interpretation of nature (see Chapter 5). It had been donated alongside a glossary of Greek words ("liber de litteris grecorum"), which would have been useful for literary learning. (Æthelwold's didactic poem *Altercatio magistri et discipuli* similarly contains material from the *Physiologus*).

63 It is difficult to determine from early medieval sources how the superhumerale relates to the rationale and the pallium, which are episcopal vestments, and whether their usage differed. The superhumerale mentioned here may refer to the simpler kind worn by priests, as opposed to the more elaborate version worn by bishops: see the early medieval commentary on the Pentateuch in Bischoff and Lapidge, *Biblical Commentaries*, 354.

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Unfortunately, nothing more can be said about the list of donated books as a framework for the *Physiologus*, since nothing more is known about the circumstances of their selection. Equally little can be said about the "Liber I phisiologi" from the Würzburg cathedral library catalogue (*c*), written ca. 1000: This is a very long list with eleventh-century additions, compiled in no apparent order, which testifies only to the rich and varied library collection of the cathedral at the turn of the millennium. A further early eleventh-century catalogue (*i*) from a monastic house in eastern France or Belgium, which mentions a "Fisiologus" among the "auctores huius monasterii," is also evidence only of the presence of the *Physiologus* in early medieval libraries.[64] However, this one was much more modest than the one belonging to the cathedral in Würzburg.

Madalwin's Donation

More interesting is a charter (*f*) from autumn 903 which records a transaction at a council convened by Burchard, the bishop of Passau, in which the *chorepiscopus* (missionary or suffragan bishop) Madalwin handed over his lands, vestments, and books in exchange for two life benefices. Madalwin perhaps sought to escape the Hungarian invasion of Bavaria, since he would have been in the region as part of his missionary activity among the Carinthian Slavs in lower Austria.[65] He may be the same Madalwin who appears as a notary in documents from the chancery of Carloman, King of Bavaria, between 876 and 879.[66] The charter lists fifty-six volumes, including a set of liturgical and theological books: a copy of the Gospels, commentaries, epistles, and saints' lives, a penitential, church council canons, a gradual, and a computus. This small collection is eminently suited for the needs of a missionary bishop. The bulk of the list, however, is headed "De arte grammatica," and these books are both more numerous and more diverse. They include standard authors read in the early Middle Ages as part of the liberal arts curriculum: Donatus, Bede, Sedulius Scottus, Boethius ("bene glosatum," "well-glossed"), Martianus Capella, and Prudentius. These texts represent *grammatica* broadly interpreted as an expression of early medieval literacy and literary culture. The strong emphasis on poetry, evident in Virgil's *Eclogues* and *Georgics* among other poetic works, shows that Madalwin, like Waltherius, had an interest in and high degree of skill in Latin. (While early medieval churchmen were generally expected to possess this skill, it was by no means universal.) The *Physiologus* was presented as part of this standard cultural reading-list. It appears in a set of texts brought together in a single volume: "Enigmata simphosii. et Althelmi et Ioseppi. et libros bestiarum ysiodori. in uno corpore."

64 "The authors of this monastery."

65 Hunyadi, "Signs of Conversion," 106.

66 Another Madalwin is named in a donation to the monastery at Prüm, giving fourteen manses and signing up as a monk in the 840s; chronologically this may be the same Madalwin. It is unclear how he may have come from Prüm to Austria or Pannonia, but that he did so is suggested by another text on the list, Wandalbert of Prüm's (now lost) work on the Mass. See MacLean, *History and Politics*, 37; and Manitius, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur*, 1:560.

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The work by "Ioseppus" is probably the late antique *Hypomnesticon* of Josephus Christianus, so called in the early Middle Ages to distinguish him from the historian Flavius Josephus. In fact the *Hypomnesticon* is a collection of extracts from Flavius Josephus' works. It takes the form of chapters posed as questions on subjects from the Bible—Adam's tomb and name, the trumpet of Jericho, Joshua's twelve memorial stones, and Moses as the inventor of Hebrew letters—with a series of answers given to each. It is interesting both that it is listed as "enigmata" or riddles, and that the *Physiologus* was copied in a volume with such riddles. Several of the extant *Physiologus* manuscripts also contain similar wisdom dialogues and riddles, which increases the probability that this entry did represent the *Physiologus* and not book 12 of the *Etymologiae*.

Riddles played an important role in transmitting knowledge and fixing it in the memory, as part of a ludic tradition that had the power to engage audiences from school pupils to non-Christian laypeople. By asking about Adam, or about the trumpet of Jericho, such literature both provided set points from which to develop knowledge of the Bible, and created a social culture (perhaps even a popular culture) around this knowledge. Evidently the *Physiologus* was used for this purpose as well. Madalwin's booklist contains other works of this kind, indicating their importance: a text titled *De ratione anime* and attributed to Origen is more probably the anonymous question-and-answer *Disputatio de origine animae* between Augustine and Jerome, compiled from fourteen of their own works.[67]

Eberhard and Gisela's Will

The final list, *d*, presents a special case of a *Physiologus* in the possession of a layperson. It appears in the will of Eberhard, Count of Friuli, and his wife Gisela, made in 863 or 864, which lists a *Liber bestiarum* among the books from their chapel that were bequeathed to their eldest son Unruoch.[68] Both the count and his wife belonged to the Carolingian higher aristocracy: Gisela was the daughter of Louis the Pious and sister of Charles the Bald, while Eberhard, like his father before him, was a high-ranking envoy (*missus*) of the king.[69] The will was a performative exercise of power, legally defining the couple's enormous estate and indicating its future.[70] Eberhard and Gisela's copy of the *Physiologus* was a chapel-book, since it was described as having been kept in the small book-collection of their personal chapel. It was therefore unlikely to represent their personal interests. Nonetheless, it was bequeathed to their heir and not to one of their eight other children, which included Adalard, Rudolph, and Gisela, all of whom entered the Church. Neither was it left to be donated in 865 with several other books

67 Hennings, "Disputatio," 264 and 267.

68 The will was edited by Schramm and Mütherich, *Denkmale der deutschen Könige und Kaiser*, from 93, and Becker, no. 12. See also La Rocca and Provero, "The Dead and Their Gifts," and Kershaw, "Eberhard of Friuli."

69 This is discussed in detail in La Rocca and Provero, "The Dead and Their Gifts," 234–45.

70 La Rocca and Provero, "The Dead and Their Gifts," 251.

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from their chapel to the monastery they founded at Cysoing (near Lille). Yet the *Physiologus* stands out among other works inherited by Unruoch which were more obviously useful for the legal and military exercise of power, and the Christian devotion which he was expected to perform: Vegetius' *De re militari*; Alemannic, Bavarian, Frankish, Lombard, and Ripuarian law codes; a Psalter; and a Gospel book.

The appearance of the *Physiologus* in the inheritance of a lay magnate indicates that it was not read exclusively within a monastic or ecclesiastical context. In fact, the Carolingian *Physiologus* may have found its place within a culture of aristocratic hunting and the elite masculinity that it defined, as suggested in the recent work of Eric Goldberg.[71] The opening *Physiologus* story tells of the lion, which scents the hunter on the air and erases its tracks with its tail to prevent the hunter tracking it to its lair. As a compendium of often fantastical animals and their no less fantastical natures, the *Physiologus* was amusing, not only by virtue of its marvellous tales, but perhaps also because it was so clearly divorced from the practical realities of the hunt and the familiar animals that were hunted. The unreal beasts of the *Physiologus* may have also contributed to its suitability as a book for elite men, who hunted a different class of animal from that hunted by commoners. Its stories brought an element of imagination to the familiar and aligned the privileged masculine activity of hunting with the Christian faith. This alone made the *Physiologus* an appropriate work for Unruoch to own and read. His new copy may also have been richly decorated: the early medieval *Physiologus* had a strong pictorial tradition.

Early medieval book catalogues are not the satisfyingly comprehensive pieces of evidence we might at times wish them to be, but as a group the handful of lists that mention the *Physiologus* do show that it was a versatile text, highly valued both by monasteries and by aristocrats. It is found in the context of missionary activity, private devotion, public worship, literary and linguistic study, imaginative story-telling, and performative masculinity. The presence of the *Physiologus* in the private libraries of Iskar, Waltherius, Madalwin, and Unruoch confirms that teaching schoolchildren was far from exclusively its purpose in this period. The *Physiologus* was not only read, but read by a broad cross-section of contemporary literate people.

The Earliest Extant Latin *Physiologus*

The earliest extant codex copy of the *Physiologus* in any language is Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 611 + Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 10756 (hereafter the Bern/Paris collection). Copied in the eighth century in France, this is a splendidly messy and complex set of booklets. Now split across two modern manuscripts, they were originally made in six different production stints, but are nevertheless very closely related. They contain a wealth of information about learning and administration in an ecclesiastical centre around the early eighth century and reveal a great deal about the collaboration of monastic scribes. This framework makes this

71 Goldberg, *In the Manner of the Franks*.

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collection an important witness to the early context and use of the Latin *Physiologus*. It is worth exploring in detail.

The Bern/Paris collection was probably made in or near Bourges, as indicated by the formula of a mandate to register a donation there on fol. 64r.[72] A large and flourishing Roman settlement, Bourges remained an important centre throughout the early Middle Ages. According to Gregory of Tours, its first bishop was the third or fourth-century missionary Ursinus.[73] He may also have been the first archbishop; in any case, Bourges had long been a metropolitan see by the time the Bern/Paris collection was copied in the early eighth century. Surviving documentation from Bourges at that time is scant. We know the names of its archbishops, but little else about them: between ca. 662 and the mid-eighth century, they were Ado, Agosenus, Rochus, and Siginus.[74] These men, like their predecessors, were almost certainly members of the regional aristocracy, both able and required to maintain diplomatic relations with the local count, the dukes of Aquitaine and, most importantly, with the Frankish court(s). Since Bourges was situated at the northern edge of Aquitaine, near Neustria, its suffragan bishops had their dioceses in territories belonging not only to the dukes of Aquitaine, but also to the rulers of Neustria and the rulers of Austrasia (who had land in Aquitaine).[75] This situation required delicate management.

The Bern/Paris collection has been dated to 727. It is unusual to be able to assign so precise a year to so early a manuscript, but in this case a computistical text in the Paris codex provides an exact calendar. Parts of the collection may have been made several decades earlier, however (see Appendix I). The year 727 falls at the end of a period of stability for the city, before a series of attacks on Aquitaine by Charles Martel and his brief capture of Bourges in 731. Umayyad raids into Aquitaine during the 720s had left Bourges relatively unaffected. As demonstrated by the Bern/Paris collection, Bourges at this time was a very busy episcopal centre, which required many texts for both administrative and ecclesiastical purposes, and which was able to produce them at a rapid rate but without much concern for uniformity of style. Nevertheless, the Bern/Paris collection was not simply a bundle of booklets bound together for convenience; rather, its script and material structure indicate a great deal of planning and collaboration among its creators, who evidently aimed to make a compendium bound in codex form. Their choice of texts, and the manner in which these texts were added to the collection, shed light on how the first known Latin *Physiologus* was read. As later chapters will demonstrate, the Bern/Paris collection offers a contrast to the compendia produced in the ninth and tenth centuries, and shows what they might have looked like without the emerging interest in nature and Creation, which is not yet evident here.

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72 MGH Form., 166.

73 Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* bk. 1, chap. 30–31 (MGH SRM I.1: 23–24), and *Liber in gloria confessorum*, chap. 79 (MGH SRM I.2: 91–92).

74 Péricard, *Ecclesia Bituricensis*.

75 See, for example, the case of Bishop Desiderius of Cahors ca. 650: Esders, "The Merovingians and Byzantium," 357.

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Physical Structure and Script

The collection's complex material structure can be summarized as six production units made in the same environment and bound together within a century or less.[76] It is written in a variety of hands using pre-Caroline and Merovingian minuscules, as well as uncial.[77]

Each individual production unit was copied by a small number of scribes using a uniform page layout, but many blank pages and spaces were left, particularly at the end of each unit, which were filled with various excerpts by roughly contemporary hands. These additions can be found on the following folios, divided by codicological part:

Parts I/II:	19v–20r
Parts II/III:	40v–42r
Part III:	82r, 86r–92r (Bern manuscript) and 64r, 67v–69v (Paris manuscript)
Part IV:	114r–115r

The summary of the six different parts below gives an indication of their physical structure and palaeography, which are much more complex in some parts than others.

1. Part I: Fols. 1–19 (quires 1–3)

The beginning of the first text is heavily damaged; a quire or more may therefore be lost. Ruled in twenty-six lines. Written in Merovingian minuscule by different hands.

2. Part II: Fols. 20–41 (quires 4–6)

Ruled in sixteen lines. Written in Merovingian minuscule by different hands, with the exception of three lines of uncial on fol. 41v.

3. Part III: Fols. 42–93 (quires 7–13; a single quire, originally found after fol. 72, is now bound in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 10756).

Copied in a single hand writing uncial and Merovingian minuscule, except for additions in different hands on fols. 86r–92r. Ruled, except for the final quire, in eighteen lines. The extant quires of unit III contain medieval quire signatures, labelling each quire I–VIIII.

76 For a detailed examination of the manuscript's structure, see Dorofeeva, "Visualizing Codicologically and Textually Complex Manuscripts."

77 Here and throughout, "pre-Caroline" refers to a range of transitional scripts which are still "Merovingian" but have acquired "Caroline" features. Depending on manuscript and hand, these may include, for example, reduced ligatures, fewer allographs, and new letter shapes more commonly associated with the Caroline minuscule alphabet.

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The order of these nine quires can be reconstructed as follows:

I (quire 7):	fols. 42–49
II (quire 8):	fols. 50–57
III (quire 9):	fols. 58–66 (66 is an added leaf attached to the final leaf of the previous quire; the signature for this quire is on fol. 65v, indicating that leaf 66 was probably a conjugate of a lost leaf after fol. 72 in the following quire)[78]
IV (quire 10):	fols. 67–72 (final leaf now missing)
V:	Missing
VI:	Paris quire
VII (quire 11):	fols. 73–78 (first and final leaves and their text now missing)
VIII (quire 12):	fols. 79–86
IX (quire 13):	fols. 87–93

David Ganz suggested that part III was limited to quires 7–12 (fols. 42–86), since these are the only quires to have signatures.[79] However, quire 13 does have a signature labelling it "VIIII" on the final page (93v), although it is very faded and, unlike the other signatures, placed on the left-hand side of the page rather than the right. A contemporary list of contents is also found in quire 13 (fols. 92v–93r). It only names texts in part III, which further suggests that this quire belonged to that part. Quire 13 was evidently an addition, however: its signature differs from the others, it was the only one not to be ruled, and only the list of contents at its end is written by the same scribe who copied the first twelve quires of part III.

Within this material context, the list of contents at the end of quire 13 is especially interesting. It is apparently complete, since the following page, 93v, is blank apart from a quire signature, some dry-point jottings that are probably not early medieval, and a wind diagram in its top half. It is possible to identify some of the texts in the list of contents with those extant in part III (see Table 2.2). An entire quire or more, which would have contained items III–X in the table of contents, has been lost after text ten, whose last page is also missing. The five formulae in the Paris quire—text eleven—then follow. The first of these formulae is numbered eleven, indicating that ten of them were lost, in addition to the lost texts III–X. Up until this point, the list of contents has matched the extant texts exactly, but they now diverge.

The scribe of the table of contents did not list the remainder of the texts in the Paris quire. They also left a gap after the formulae, which are followed by two items (XVI–XVII) that are not present in either the Bern manuscript or the Paris quire (Figure 2.2). No space was allowed for numbering these items, so that numbers eventually had to be inserted above the line or in the cramped space in the left margin.

78 My thanks to Peter Kidd for pointing this out.

79 Ganz, "In the Circle of the Bishop of Bourges," 269.

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Table 2.2. List of contents for Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 611.

Original Table of Contents	Text in Manuscript
I. Ars donati exposita ab aspero	9. Asper, *Ars Asporii*
II. De notis uulgaribus	10. Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* 1.22
III. Quid est antifrasin, enigma, parabula, paradigma, prosa, bucolicum, epitalamia, trenos, epitafium, fabulas, sillogismi IV. Confectio amforalis V. Sermo de tribus magis VI. De ponderibus et mensuris VII. De drumeta uel citeris quaendam omnibus clarentis VIII. Pauca nomina VIIII. De trebus principalibus linguis quibus spiritus sanctus appellatur X. Indicolos diuersos pauci	Missing quire/s
XI. Carta conmutationis XII. Praecaria XIII. Mandatum XIIII. Securitas XV. Ad archepresbyterum instituendum	11. *Formulae Bituricenses*
XVI. Quid sanctus hieronimy de antidotis dixit XVII. Differentias[80]	Missing texts
XVIII. De olla de lucerna de sale de mensa de calice de litteris	19. *Aenigmata*
XVIIII. De arca noe	21. List of measurements for Noah's Ark
XX. De stadiis	22. List of various measurements and how they fit into the *stade*
XXI. Epistula gallieni de febribus	24. Pseudo-Galen, *Epistula de febribus*

After these two items, the table of contents once more matches the extant texts in quires eleven and twelve.[81] It seems that the scribe of the contents table was not certain which text(s) would be included after the formulae in the Paris quire, therefore leaving a gap in the table, and initially omitting the numbers of items XVI and XVII. In the end, these items were never included.[82]

80 David Ganz has suggested this may be Isidore's *Differentiae*; Ganz, "In the Circle of the Bishop of Bourges," 273.

81 See Appendix I. Texts 20 and 23 are not listed but they are later additions, as perhaps are 24 and 25.

82 Fol. 89r, which contains this gap and the two missing items, appears to have an erasure in the lower third of the page, which was written over by the scribe of the list and is therefore eighth century or earlier. The upper third of the parchment is also scraped in places, suggesting that these are not corrections but the re-use of older sheets. Beneath the "m" of "mensa" in the third line from

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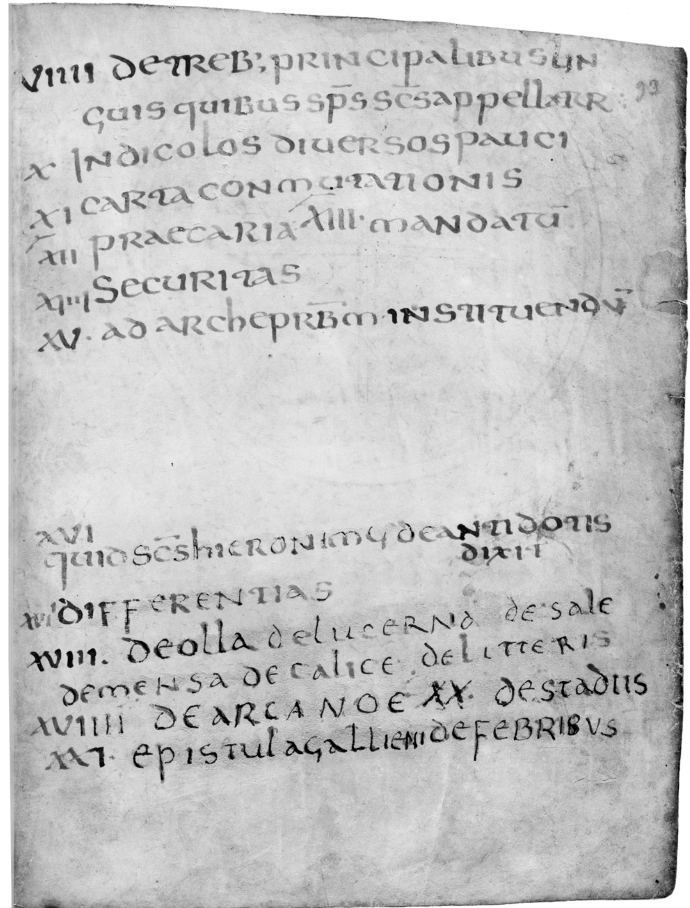

Figure 2.2. Planned programme of copying in Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 611, fol. 93r. Used with permission.

These complicated features indicate that the list of contents may not have been a list of contents at all, but rather a guide to the planned program of copying. This is supported by the fact that the list of contents itself is found at the end of the additional quire 13, and that it mentions none of the texts in that quire, which was evidently intended as spare space for the planned texts. But at some point the actual contents of the manuscript deviated from the planned program. The spare space in quire 13 was left blank, and eventually filled in with other texts by other hands.

This—like the many other textual and codicological additions to the Bern/Paris collection—is a symptom of a very busy and chaotic production environment. The collaboration of many scribes meant that they not only wrote different scripts, but also different versions of the same script. Tironian notes, uncial, half-uncial, minuscule,

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the bottom there appears to be a faded obelus, with perhaps another further down the line. Since obeli were used to indicate obsolete or incorrect text, their presence also supports the possibility that this was re-used parchment. The tracing over the letter-strokes in the bottom half of the folio was almost certainly done by a later fifteenth- or sixteenth-century hand.

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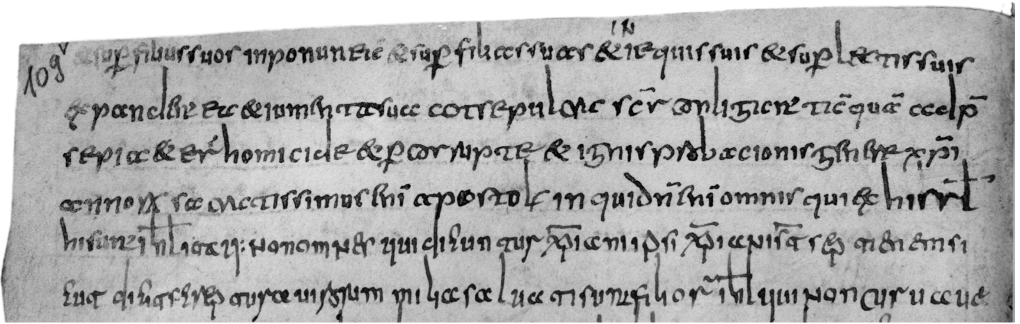

Figure 2.3. Change of hand in Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 611, 109v. Used with permission.

and cursive scripts are mixed without especial regard for where they are used and for what, and there is little attempt at consistency in the size and spacing of individual graphs across hands—no single "house style," though many of the hands are closely related. As a result, it would have been impossible to plan precisely how much text would fit into a single quire, a fact that may have contributed to the disparity between the plan and the contents. This may represent a distinctly Merovingian practice for community-produced books: Carolingian centres demonstrably planned each manuscript's contents to match the available space exactly.[83]

4. Part IV: Fols. 94–115 (quires 14–17)

Written in Merovingian minuscule and clearly ruled in twenty-three lines. The exception is the Pseudo-Methodius text, which alternates between pre-Caroline and Merovingian minuscules. This change is especially evident on fol. 109v (line five) and fol. 110v (line six); see Figure 2.3. It shows that two scribes trained in these scripts worked together on copying this text.

Quire 17 (fols. 114–15) may represent a new production unit, though this is debatable. It is written on a single bifolium, in a distinct right-leaning and well-spaced (both horizontally and vertically) Merovingian chancery minuscule not present elsewhere in the manuscript, with very long ascenders and descenders. Each page has 16 lines. Lowe noted that this bifolium "seems originally to have been ruled for a charter": that is, the wide-spaced ruling runs vertically down the pages, which were clearly intended to form a larger sheet before being cut up into the present (otherwise unruled) bifolium.[84]

However, the parchment for the Bern/Paris collection was gathered from a variety of sources, as indicated by the palimpsest folios, the irregular quire structures, the varied rulings, and the very scrappy quality of some of the leaves. Quire 17 fits very well within these parameters. Its unique hand is also not unusual, since other produc-

83 As demonstrated in many studies of manuscripts. Some of the Carolingian practices are outlined in Gumbert, "Skins, Sheets and Quires."

84 CLA VII.604c.

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tion units also show signs of an administrative context. It is therefore presented here as belonging to part IV.

5. Part V: Fols. 116–145 (quires 18–22)

Part V contains the *Physiologus* and is entirely palimpsest of Italian origin. It is written in Merovingian minuscule throughout, with the same uncial titles as the list of contents in unit III, and by a very similar hand. Lowe described the minuscule script as "barely distinguishable from charter-hand."[85] The pages are unruled, but the text is consistently presented in 18 lines.

6. Part VI: Fols. 146–153 (quire 23)

This last part consists of a single palaeographically distinct quire, ruled in 25 lines. Lowe described its script as "a crude pre-Caroline minuscule of French type, with some features recalling Luxeuil and some Corbie."[86] It is more precisely characterized as a hybrid minuscule with Merovingian and strong pre-Caroline features, being clearly punctuated, upright, rounded and lacking many of the ligatures found in Merovingian minuscule.

Summary

Despite the variety of hands and the complex codicological history of this collection, there is clear evidence that the different units were produced within the same context. Its original contents and hands are more or less contemporary, and connections exit between the different booklets. By the later eighth century, when the birth lunarium joining parts I and II (19v–20r) was copied, these parts must have been in their present order. Parts II, IV, and V are linked by the same hand, which copied sections on fols. 40v–41v, 98r–99r, and 138v–140v.[87]

As discussed above, part III is a special case. Its structure and length suggest that it may have been planned as an independent codex, or at least as the core of the collection. Its principal hand resembles others in the collection, however, particularly the hand, script hierarchy and ruling of part V. The additions to its final quire, like other additions to empty pages throughout the collection, were probably made once all the production parts had been brought together. Finally, a textual connection may also exist between parts III and V, as they contain works that eventually went into the Corbie recension of the *Collectio Vetus Gallica* (see below). For these reasons, all the parts that comprise the Bern/Paris collection are discussed in this book as the product of a single centre and period.

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85 CLA VII.604d.

86 CLA VII.604e.

87 Ganz, "In the Circle of the Bishop of Bourges," 269.

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Eighth-Century Knowledge Networks

It has been important to demonstrate that the Bern/Paris collection was executed in a series of related production stints, because this has implications for how the collection can be interpreted. A tendency towards compilation (that is, the copying of texts and excerpts from otherwise unrelated works together) began in late Antiquity and grew into the miscellany, one of the most—perhaps the most—common forms of codex in the early Middle Ages (see Chapter 3).[88] As I have argued elsewhere, such miscellanies were not slapdash gatherings of irrelevant texts, but useful and internally cohesive collections.[89] Their compilation also required a great deal of independent and creative thought: what we mean today when we speak of originality. This is the case even for books whose contents consist entirely of non-original (inherited antique) works. Early medieval compilers used a range of sophisticated authorial and editorial techniques, including but not limited to excerpting, alphabetization, abbreviation, commentary, and juxtaposition; and they applied them to the creation of manuals tailored to the specific requirements of an individual or community. Often, the form and combination of texts in early medieval miscellanies represented highly original solutions to the demand for certain kinds of content, within the (often quite narrow) constraints of available literature. As a result, the study of miscellanies as complete collections can shed light on a range of aspects related to early medieval intellectual life, including textual interpretation, links between ideas, new developments in politics or culture, and special local or regional concerns.

Until recently, however, miscellanies have been dismissed as basic or unimportant. In his influential 1970 study of medieval school curricula, Günter Glauche suggested that manuscripts containing works by respected writers (*Autoren-Sammelcodices*) and transmitting multiple schoolroom texts—including but not limited to commentaries, glosses, and grammatical works—should be understood as schoolbooks.[90] But this definition encompasses most early medieval miscellanies. While manuscripts containing such texts may have been used in schools, there is nothing to suggest that they were not also used elsewhere. As a class of book, miscellanies cannot have been confined only to a formal teaching environment. They were produced in far too significant numbers across early medieval Western Europe, and their contents were too heterogeneous. As discussed in Chapter 1, current research is changing our perception of these interesting books.[91]

It is difficult to judge to what extent the Bern/Paris collection represents early eighth-century compilation: whether it is a standard product of those monastic centres that made books prior to changes introduced by the Carolingians, or whether it

88 On the late Antique context of miscellanies, see Petrucci, "From Unitary Book to Miscellany."

89 Dorofeeva, "Reading Early Medieval Miscellanies," "Strategies of Knowledge Organisation," and "Miscellanies."

90 Glauche, *Schullektüre im Mittelalter*, 23–35.

91 van Rhijn, *Leading the Way to Heaven*; Patzold and van Rhijn, eds., *Men in the Middle*; Chazelle and Name Edwards, ed., *The Study of the Bible*.

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represented the flourishing of written culture in Bourges thanks to several centuries of prosperity and stability. Much of the context for this period is poorly documented or disputed. A number of the features of the Bern/Paris collection can, however, be teased out based on its contents and appearance.

The first and perhaps the most significant of these features is the extent to which the collection participated in contemporary intellectual culture. As David Ganz observed, some two-thirds of the texts in this manuscript were composed no more than a century before this collection was copied.[92] An example of this is the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius (101r–113r). It was written in reaction to the Islamic Caliphate's second fitna or civil war (680–692 CE), meaning that it was composed in northern Mesopotamia, translated from Syriac into Greek, the Greek translated into Latin (possibly at St. Catherine's Monastery in Sinai) and the Latin brought to Bourges (possibly via Marseilles, which might have had a direct link with Sinai), all in the short period between ca. 692 and ca. 727.[93] Three other eighth-century copies of the Apocalypse are known, all of them from Gaul.[94] This indicates a remarkable degree of connection both to contemporary intellectual networks, and to distant monastic centres.

A similar observation can be made about the *Collectio Bernensis*, a unique version of twenty-two Greek and African church canons (fols. 138v–140r). The compiler of the *Collectio Bernesis* used the *Collectio Vetus Galllica*—the earliest Merovingian canon law collection, which became widely influential in the Carolingian period—as a kind of mood-board for the themes and structure of his collection.[95] He used another manuscript containing church council canons as the actual source for the *Collectio Bernensis*. While the connection between the *Collectio Bernensis* and the *Vetus Gallica* is thus mainly one of form, the link between them is clear. In addition, the version of the *Vetus Gallica* consulted for this manuscript did not yet contain the letter by Gregory the Great to Queen Brunhilda of Austrasia, which was first abridged and inserted in the Corbie recension of the *Vetus Gallica*, made after about 721. But the letter is present,

92 Ganz, "In the Circle of the Bishop of Bourges," 273.

93 Internal textual evidence indicates that the Latin translation depended on the Greek. See Bonura, "A Forgotten Translation."

94 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 13348, fols. 93v–110v; Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Barb. lat. 671, fols. 171r–174v; and St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 225, pp. 384–439.

95 "…diente dem Verfasser der Collectio Bernensis jedoch nur als Vorlage für die Gestaltung der äußeren Form seines Werkes sowie als Anregung für seine Themen und ihre Quellen; direkt entnahm er ihr keine Kanones, bediente sich vielmehr zur Textherstellung eines zweiten Codex canonum zweifellos der historischen Ordnung, dessen Wortlaut er ganz offensichtlich mehr vertraute" ("it served the compiler of the *Collectio Bernensis* only as a model for the design of the outer form of his work, as well as a suggestion for his themes and their sources; he took no canons directly from it, relying much more on a second *codex canonum* for the production of the text, a codex doubtless following a chronological order, whose wording he quite obviously trusted more"); Mordek, *Kirchenrecht und Reform*, 108. The *Collectio Vetus Gallica* is also sometimes known as the *Collectio Andegavensis*, after one of its copies in an Angers manuscript (Mordek, *Kirchenrecht und Reform*, 19).

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in the same abridged form, in the Bern manuscript (fols. 98r–99r). It was, moreover, copied by the same scribe who copied the *Collectio Bernensis*, in a hand with Corbie or Luxeuil features. This suggests that Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 611 was one of the source manuscripts, and the source of Gregory's letter, of the Corbie recension of the *Vetus Gallica*.[96] There was therefore a close relationship between the centre that made the Bern/Paris collection, Corbie and possibly also Luxeuil.

We can guess at other connections as well. The *Ars Asporii* (42v–72v), a grammar composed in the sixth or seventh century, refers to Lyon and Autun, and its hand also recalls those of Luxeuil or Corbie.[97] A southern European connection is indicated by the Italian-origin palimpsest that is the support of part V, and by the *Carmen de ventis* (42r), composed in the early seventh century in Iberia or Italy and included in this collection only a few years later.[98] The *Sententiae* of Taio of Saragossa (d. 683) in this collection is the earliest evidence that Taio's work was read, which suggests a direct link with Spain, perhaps via refugees from the Arab conquest. It is also the probable source of the excerpts from Gregory the Great, which indicates that the compilers engaged closely with the texts and mined them for useful resources.[99] In doing so, the compilers were evidently restricted to the available free space in existing booklets (parts II, III, and IV): a full empty set of pages was not available.

These features offer a frustratingly brief glimpse into what must have been an incredibly active and far-flung network of knowledge exchange both within and beyond Gaul. This network cannot have been an invention of the early eighth century; instead, it must have existed for a long time by ca. 727, to enable the seventh-century texts in this collection to be disseminated. Such a network would have rivalled anything the Carolingians built up in the following two hundred years. Conceivably, the difference in the eighth century was only the lack of a centralized ideological program focused on textual culture. Bourges had the resources and people to create texts for education, liturgy, and administration, but this was not true for many monastic centres.

It is significant that the earliest known *Physiologus* in any language is included in such a collection. It represents an effort, in a major Merovingian ecclesiastical centre, to create a highly modern compilation of works that would not only meet various administrative, liturgical, and learning needs, but perhaps also keep Bourges up to date with what was being read and discussed within the wider Church to which it kept up connections. The *Physiologus* fits well within this context, since it was also an imported text, translated relatively recently into Latin, and only just starting to be widely read in Western Europe. The *Physiologus* must have seemed full of exciting potential, since it did something completely new: combine the natural world with Christian moral interpretations. In fact, there was never again anything quite like it,

96 As noted by Mordek, *Kirchenrecht und Reform*, 109.

97 Homburger, *Die illustrierten Handschriften*, 21–23.

98 Alberto, "The Textual Tradition," 363.

99 Ganz, "In the Circle of the Bishop of Bourges," 273.

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for every subsequent Latin text that did the same was ultimately based on the *Physiologus*.

A second overarching feature of the Bern/Paris collection is its focus on administration, especially evident in its formulae. There remain only five of the original fifteen formulae, with an additional, slightly later formula squeezed in at the end.[100] The addition shows that this was a working collection, which eventually, within a century of its creation, required supplementation. The formulae are a reminder that Merovingian monasteries inherited much of the civic administration that had been undertaken by the Roman state. The palaeography of the collection confirms this: "Both script and shorthand are remarkably close to the chancery, especially in the final section, ff. 116–45, where the *b* with a bow that turns back on itself and a *g* with a tail that seems to be "hinged" at the sharply angled base are used: These letters are both rare in book script."[101]

In the context of the other texts in the Bern/Paris collection, this administrative element indicates that writing, and the reading of that writing in the eighth century, were not necessarily restricted to particular spheres. An example of this can be found in the *In aurium apertione* text (Appendix I, no. 31), the third of seven scrutinies for the induction of catechumens.[102] Copied out in chancery shorthand, it was nevertheless a text used for an internal church ceremony that had no relationship to public worship or to public administration. Education was also one of the concerns in the collection, as suggested by the question-and-answer form of the computus in part IV. David Ganz has pointed out other administrative manuscripts whose "annotations show that they were studied, and that copy was collated with exemplar."[103]

This was truly a collection for an entire community, then, containing a range of works appropriate for the intellectual activity of the entourage of the bishop of Bourges, which included monks but also a range of other clerical and lay people. They were closely involved in the running of the diocese, civic administration, public worship, education (probably of both children and adults), and monastic life.[104] Text composition was also an important concern, not just for administrative purposes but also for sermons, for example. Both the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodius (101r–113r) and the following excerpt from Jerome's epistle 22 to Eustochium (114r–115r) use extravagant, violent language to describe the dangers posed by pagans—the Arabs in the first text, classical Greek and Latin writers in the second—and the triumph of Christianity. Used as inspiration, these texts would have made for effective sermons. Similarly, the collection of epitaphs on fol. 86v, perhaps copied from real examples, provided an excellent set of Latin models.

100 Brown, "The *gesta municipalia*," 108; Rio, *Legal Practice and the Written Word*.

101 Ganz, "Bureaucratic Shorthand," 69.

102 Brown, *The Book of Cerne*, 110.

103 Brown, *The Book of Cerne*, 70.

104 On the uses of epitaphs in manuscripts, see Handley, "Epitaphs, Models and Texts."

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The collection is strikingly practical, omitting theological, patristic, polemical, and philosophical works. Instead, the concerns of its compilers ranged from the dietary effect of certain foods to ordination. This may have been a direct inheritance of antiquity, which had long had set forms for compilations of important Christian texts—catenae, florilegia, collectanea, and so on. The kind of practical collection represented by the Bern/Paris manuscripts is therefore still unusual at this time, but it is testament to the resourcefulness and pragmatism of early eighth-century Christian communities in the Latin West.

Conclusion

The Bern/Paris collection is a glimpse into the realities of book production in the eighth century, before the multiple reforms and gradual systematization of monastic life introduced by the Carolingians. It is written on poor-quality, sometimes re-used parchment, by many people, without much care for uniformity in terms of the written space or in terms of script type, size or hierarchy. Its planning was somewhat haphazard: the quires contain both added and blank pages, some ruled and others not; the content design was not fulfilled; many texts were added in empty spaces rather than pre-planned; and the production units are semi-independent of each other. But it also shows evidence of the astonishing international interconnectedness of seventh- and eighth-century monastic knowledge networks, the speed at which they operated despite great distances and violent conflicts, and most of all the great interest of the Bern/Paris compilers in the world beyond their own circle. Perhaps the value of the *Physiologus* as an international work was not the least of the reasons for its inclusion in the earliest early medieval Latin manuscripts.

Codicologically uneven production largely disappeared from manuscript books in later centuries, as the Carolingian concern with the written word led to better funding for scriptoria and introduced more rigorous practices. But some elements remained the same throughout the early Middle Ages: miscellany manuscripts were made in great numbers, often collaboratively; the texts copied were diverse, and generally guided by practical concerns; and compilation remained a symptom of busy communal environments.

As the Bern/Paris collection demonstrates, the principal difference between Merovingian and Carolingian compilation lies in the intellectual practices that underpinned it. In the eighth century, miscellanies were purely practical books. With the advent of the Carolingian reforms, every element of book production became an ideological matter. This applied just as much to excerpting as it did to page layout, script, and decoration. Like all books, miscellany manuscripts acquired a significance that went beyond their contents. As a result, more thought was put into the presentation of the *Physiologus*, and its material on the natural world, within the framework of surrounding texts. The following chapters examine the ways in which this was done, and how it led to the evolution of early medieval ideas about the physical world.

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