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Revisiting the Question of Walahfrid Strabo's Autograph: New Evidence and a New Conclusion*

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Since Bernhard Bischoff published his study of St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 878 (hereafter *Sangallensis* 878) in 1950,¹ this small, quite inconspicuous manuscript has become famous and is now part of the *Cimelia Sangallensis*.² The reason for this is that it contains the developmental stages of an unmistakable main hand, which was judiciously assigned the *siglum W* by Bischoff. At the same time, Bischoff gave numbers to the various stages of development of the hand (**W I** to **W IV**) which denote four stages in this scribe's life. From the content of the manuscript, Bischoff was able to deduce that the writer had contact with Fulda, and he was also sure that the hand had not been trained in the writing school at St. Gall. Bischoff proposed Reichenau as the scribe's training location, as he was unable to find any trace of the hand or its writing style among the Augienses. He therefore cautiously designated two of the three life stages of the writer as "wahrscheinlich Reichenau," and Fulda, "schließlich vielleicht auf die Reichenau zurück."³ As for the identity of the scribe, he concluded that the codex was the work of the Reichenau monk, Fulda student, and later abbot of Reichenau, Walahfrid Strabo (d. 849).

Bischoff proposed further observations supporting the Reichenau connection based on the contents of the codex. He recalled that illustrations from the "Chronograph of 354," present in *Sangallensis* 878, were used as a template for the Reichenau illumination of the late ninth century, as seen especially in the calendar illustrations of Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Reg. lat. 428.⁴ This and further

* All images used in this article are reproduced with the permission of their respective libraries, for which I would like to express my gratitude. Special thanks go to Professor Greti Dinkova-Bruun for all support, particularly for her help with language issues.

¹ Bernhard Bischoff, "Eine Sammelhandschrift Walahfrid Strabos (Cod. Sangall. 878)," in *Aus der Welt des Buches, Festgabe zum 70. Geburtstag von Georg Leyh*, Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen. Beiheft 75 (Leipzig, 1950), pp. 30–48.

² *Cimelia Sangallensis: Hundert Kostbarkeiten aus der Stiftsbibliothek St. Gallen*, ed. Karl Schmuki, Peter Ochsenbein, and Cornel Dora (St. Gall, 1989; 2nd rev. edition 2000), pp. 58–59.

³ Bischoff, "Eine Sammelhandschrift," p. 40.

⁴ Walter Berschin and Ulrich Kuder, *Reichenauer Buchmalerei 850–1070* (Wiesbaden, 2015), pp. 44–45.

connections, such as the description of a peach in Sangallensis 878, which Bischoff believed to be related to Walahfrid's *De cultura hortorum*, shall not be discussed here. The main point is that the manuscript shows an affinity with the Reichenau tradition, and it should not be ruled out that hand W was a Reichenau monk, even if there is nothing palaeographically to support this hypothesis.⁵ The questions to ask here are whether scribe W's Latin skills correspond to what we know about Walahfrid's command of the language and whether Sangallensis 878 could really be Walahfrid's autograph and, if not, where such an autograph can be found.⁶

Sangallensis 878 and Walahfrid's Life

According to Bischoff, the most important connection between the content of Sangallensis 878 and Walahfrid's life is the date of the following entry on p. 305 (Fig. 1): "Anno ab incarnatione Domini DCCCXLVIII. Terrae motus maximus factus est post primum gallorum cantum XII kalendas Martias die Saturni sed et fuit XI diebus et postea per interualla tamen sepe uenit. Kalendis Iuniis ipso anno primo mane die sabbato accidit" – "A.D. 849. A very great earthquake happened after first cock's crow, on February 18th, on Saturday, and it went on for eleven days, and even thereafter it often came at intervals. It happened on June 1st this very year, early on Saturday."

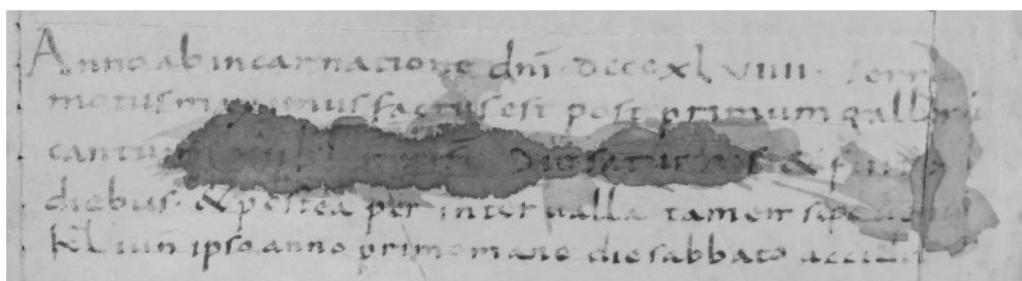


Fig. 1. St.Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 878, p. 305.

Bischoff connected the date of this entry to the untimely death of the abbot of Reichenau: on August 18, 849, Walahfrid died in the treacherous quicksand (*bibulae arenae*) of the

⁵ Hand W has still not been found in any manuscript from Reichenau.

⁶ Paul Gerhard Schmidt, "Karolingische Autographen," *Gli autografi medievali. Problemi paleografici e filologici*, ed. Paolo Chiesa and Lucia Pinelli (Spoleto, 1994), pp. 137–148, at 141, methodologically points out that Walahfrid has been associated with the manuscript because his life path is known, whereas other analogous biographies are not.



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Loire (*Liger*) while on a diplomatic mission (*missus*) to Charles the Bald.⁷ Given this tragic outcome, the most recent entry in Sangallensis 878 reads like a premonition of a fateful year. In two places, the reading is problematic; these passages have recently been extensively discussed by Michael Allen.⁸

As has been generally accepted, Walahfrid Strabo was one of the most talented Carolingian authors. Even his earliest poems demonstrate extraordinary quality. His prose is refined: in its *copia verborum* and demanding syntax – compare, for example, the liturgical history *De exordiis et incrementis* – it forces the reader to a slow, concentrated reading.⁹ Walahfrid had an exceptional knowledge of authors. For example, he had read Lucretius, which was rare at the time.¹⁰ We know from his own writings that this abundant talent could also be taxing and that his teachers on the Reichenau Island did not always appreciate it.¹¹ No doubt some of them were relieved when the *wunderkind* moved on to Fulda for further education “noch im Jahr 826 oder spätestens 827,”¹² and became a court poet in 829.

If one reads the note of 849 with a background knowledge of Walahfrid’s talent, there is no trace of this linguistic mastery. Beyond the fact that the logic of annual entries and the remark *ipso anno* speak for a record after 849, the text is characterized by merely basic vocabulary and a raw style, not the brilliant prose of a Carolingian model author. “Terrae motus maximus factus est” might still pass as a quote from Matt. 28.2, but are we really supposed to believe that Walahfrid would have used “per interualla tamen sepe uenit” – with missing *temporum* after *interualla* and redundant *sepe* – for the repeated occurrence

⁷ See “Epitaphium Walfredi” 7–8, in *Appendix ad Walahfridi carmina*, ed. Ernst Dümmler, MGH. Poetae 2 (Berlin, 1884), p. 423: “Dum Ligeris bibulas transcendis missus harenas, / Hic corpus linquens spiritu ad astra uolas.”

⁸ Michael Allen, “rec. ‘Eisenhut,’” Die Glossen Ekkeharts IV,” *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 23 (2013), 346–53, at pp. 351–53; most of the above translation adopts Allen’s wording.

⁹ For a critical edition, see *Walahfridi Strabonis libellus de exordiis et incrementis quarundam in observationibus ecclesiasticis rerum*, ed. Victor Krause, MGH. Capitularia regum Francorum 2 (Hannover, 1897), pp. 473–516. The edition, translation, and commentary of Alice L. Harting-Correa, *Walahfrid Strabo's Libellus de exordiis et incrementis quarundam in observationibus ecclesiasticis rerum. A Translation and Liturgical Commentary* (Leiden, 1996) does not reach the quality of Krause’s text; compare Matthias Lawo, “rec. ‘Harting-Correa,’” *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch* 34 (1999), 159–63.

¹⁰ Ludwig Traube, “Zu Walahfrid Strabo’s De imagine Tetrici,” *Neues Archiv* 18 (1893), 664–65, was the first to see that the poem contained elements modeled on Lucretius; compare *Walahfrid Strabo, De imagine Tetrici: Das Standbild des rußigen Dietrich*, ed. Tino Licht, Reichenauer Texte und Bilder 16 (Heidelberg, 2020), pp. 44–46.

¹¹ Walahfrid reflects on this in the prologue of his *Visio Wettini*; see *Heito und Walahfrid Strabo, Visio Wettini: Einführung, lateinisch-deutsche Ausgabe und Erläuterungen*, ed. Hermann Knittel, Reichenauer Texte und Bilder 12 (Heidelberg, 2009, 3rd ed.), p. 68.

¹² Walter Berschin, *Walahfrid Strabo und die Reichenau*, Spuren 49 (Marbach, 2000), p. 5.

of an earthquake, when he certainly could have expressed himself more eloquently? One should compare this sentence to Walahfrid's comment on the increasing use of the Credo in the Carolingian liturgy: "idem symbolum latius et crebrius in missarum coepit officiis iterari" – "that the Creed began to be repeated in the liturgy of the Mass more widely and frequently."¹³ Either Walahfrid had lowered his own aspirations and abilities in writing "per interualla saepe uenit,"¹⁴ or this entry is not written by him. What if the connection between the earthquake note and the year of his death does not permit any conclusions as to who scribe **W** was?

Scribe W and Walahfrid

In light of everything said above, the identification of **W** with Walahfrid in Sangallensis 878 needs to be re-examined. On pp. 174–175 of the manuscript, **W IV** copies some declension exercises which were traditionally used to practice grammar by changing a Latin phrase from one case to another and from singular to plural.¹⁵ Our first example is found on p. 174, in the grammatical metamorphosis of the phrase "Ipsa eadem supradicta coniunx et contumax et contumeliosa in manu arpagnem tenens." It is anyone's guess whether Walahfrid should really be assumed to have copied this declension exercise so long after his own years of apprenticeship, although he might have done so for teaching purposes. Nonetheless, it is unlikely that he would have failed the simple task of forming a correct dative plural, since the text gives *tenentis* rather than the correct *tenantibus*. Apparently, any Latin scholar versed in the forms of the language would be equally unable to suffer this Latin mistake, as another hand had corrected it (Fig. 2).

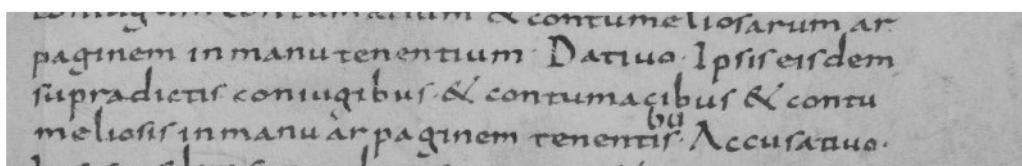


Fig. 2. St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 878, p. 174.

This is not the only peculiarity found in the declension exercises copied by **W IV**, which speaks against Walahfrid's authorship. The following "Aquila uetus uolans a terra egressa Olimpum penetrans per aerem cita adtingens" on p. 175 shows the form *uetere* in the

¹³ Walahfrid, *De exordiis et incrementis* 23, ed. Krause, p. 500; Harting-Correa, *Walahfrid Strabo's Libellus de exordiis et incrementis*, pp. 138–39.

¹⁴ Also, this would be the only instance of the word *interuallum* in Walahfrid's work.

¹⁵ Among ancient grammarians, there was a term for these exercises, namely, the Graecolatinum *chria* (see *TLL 3* [Leipzig, 1906–1912], col. 1027) which seems to have been unknown in Carolingian times.



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ablative singular which, although not really an error, is an alternative form. However, we know that Walahfrid uses *ueteri* not only in his poetry because of its convenient prosody, but also in his prose works. That a third and last declination exercise on p. 175, i.e. “*Puer parvus natans limphis superpositus atque subiectus*,” was accompanied by a sign of uncertainty, with an R for the note *require* in the margin, also speaks against an author of Walahfrid’s caliber. There are other similar observations all over *Sangallensis* 878: propter instead of the correct *post*, *quod* and *qui* instead of the correct *quia*, an odd *uliquid* for *aliquid*, and many more.¹⁶

When Bernhard Bischoff republished his article on Walahfrid’s autograph in the second volume of his *Mittelalterliche Studien*, his material had expanded.¹⁷ The same hand, **W IV**, had emerged in the oldest surviving Horace manuscript written in Weißenburg/Wissembourg, now Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Reg. lat. 1703. This was a major discovery: one of the rare Horace connoisseurs who had spent years in exile in Speyer,¹⁸ about 40 miles from Weißenburg, participated in the copying of the oldest Horace codex! Bischoff writes: “I arrived at the identification of this beautiful individual hand, transformations of which capture the development of an unusual personality, step-by-step on the basis of palaeographic observations and contextual considerations. This identification was not undermined when the same hand came to light twice more after this study was written.”¹⁹ This is a strange tone for such an important discovery. Bischoff certainly did not need to indulge in paroxysms of joy, but why this defensive stance? When one examines the manuscript, the reason

¹⁶ Wesley M. Stevens, *Rhetoric and Reckoning in the Ninth Century: The ‘vademecum’ of Walahfrid Strabo*, *Studia Traditionis Theologiae* 24 (Turnhout, 2018), p. 75; further examples can be found in Walter Berschin and Tino Licht, “Geht die Überlieferung von *Anthologia Latina* 665 aus dem Chronogrammen von 354 auf Walahfrid Strabo (+849) zurück?”, *AL. Rivista di Studi di Anthologia Latina* 7 (2016), 133–44.

¹⁷ Bernhard Bischoff, *Mittelalterliche Studien: Ausgewählte Aufsätze zur Schriftkunde und Literaturgeschichte*, 3 vols. (Stuttgart, 1966–1981), 2:50–51.

¹⁸ An attestable Horace quote in Walahfrid is identified by Francesco Stella, “*Carolingi, Scrittori*,” in *Encyclopedie Oraziana III. La fortuna. L’esegesi. L’attualità* (Rome, 1998), p. 162; there is a parallel between Walahfrid, *De cultura hortorum* 58–59 and Horace, *Carmina* 2.7.20–23.

¹⁹ Bischoff, *Mittelalterliche Studien*, 2:50: “Die Schritt um Schritt aus paläographischen Beobachtungen und inhaltlichen Erwägungen erarbeitete Bestimmung der schönen, individuellen Handschrift, in deren Wandlungen etwas von der Entwicklung einer ungewöhnlichen Persönlichkeit zu fassen ist, ist auch nicht erschüttert worden, als dieselbe Hand nach der Abfassung dieser Studie noch zweimal zutage kam.” The second testimony is a fragment of the chronicle of Frechulf of Lisieux (d. 853) in Beuron, Bibliothek der Benediktiner-Erzabtei, Fragm. 17, which Bischoff thought was copied by Walahfrid himself during his journey as a legate of 849, because **W** appears there together with a hand from Orléans. Strangely enough, this rather improbable assumption convinced Hartmut Hoffmann of the validity of Bischoff’s autograph thesis; see Hartmut Hoffmann, “Autographa des frühen Mittelalters,” *Deutsches Archiv* 57 (2001), 1–62, at pp. 32–35.

becomes clear: hand **W IV** is again seen to be the same weak Latin scholar. Copying an author such as Horace from a direct or indirect model written in *scriptura continua* was certainly difficult and scribes were prone to making mistakes, but hand **W** fails at the lowest level of difficulty. In *Sermones* 2.7, Horace presents a slave speaking to himself. The slave says that his own vices are not worse than those of his master. He goes to the brothel, while his master sneaks into the bed of an adulteress, and when her husband comes home, he has to hide in a trunk, his head between his knees: “*turpi clausus in arca*” is the correct text (*Sermones* 2.7.59). Can we really assume that Walahfrid was incapable of copying this with the correct separation between the words, instead writing “*turpicla usus in arca*” (Fig. 3, line 3, with corrections by a later hand)?²⁰ In my view, the response to this question can only be “No.”

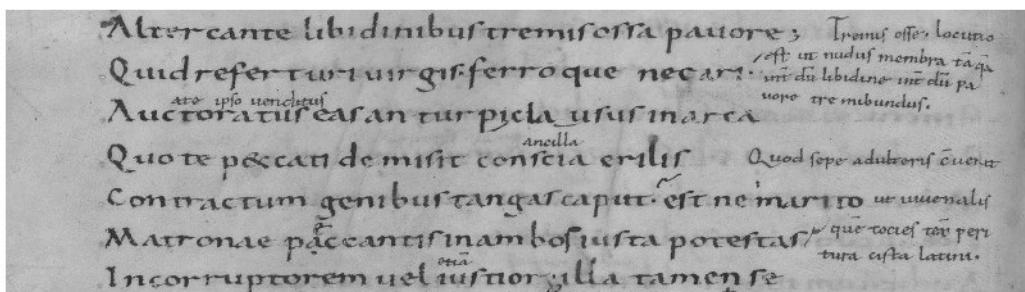


Fig. 3. Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Reg. lat. 1703
(Wissembourg, saec. IX¹), fol. 140v.

In the last extensive study on the codex by Wesley M. Stevens, a further division in the activity of hand **W** (IIIa, IIIb, etc.) was added to mark presumed “biographical breakpoints,”²¹ thereby inverting Bischoff’s approach of applying palaeography to life rather than imposing life on palaeography.²² The dangers of Stevens’s approach are seen in his discussion of the Horace manuscript, BAV, MS Reg. lat. 1703. According to

²⁰ Similar misunderstandings, which would have been easy to avoid with a certain comprehension of the text, are shown by **W** on fol. 110r: “inde fit ut raro quis euixisse beatum / dicat” instead of “inde fit ut raro qui se uixisse beatum / dicat” (*Sermones* 1.1.117); fol. 133v: “si quis lecticam nitidam gestaream et agnum” instead of “si quis lectica nitidam gestare amet agnam” (*Sermones* 2.3.214); fol. 137v: “sineque maiorem fecerat ione mala rem” instead of “si neque maiorem feci ratione mala rem” (*Sermones* 2.6.6).

²¹ Stevens, *Rhetoric and Reckoning*, pp. 61–68.

²² In a critical review of this study, John J. Contreni shared the observation that Sangallensis 878 is “intended for an audience larger than one” and recommended “it may be time to examine the entire question anew”; John J. Contreni, “rec. ‘W.M. Stevens,’ *The Medieval Review* (2018),

<https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/tmr/article/view/31090/35353>.



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Bischoff, hand **W** in this manuscript is in a state between **WIII** and **WIV**.²³ Stevens imagines that hand **WIVb** wrote in 833–838 in Prüm, St. Denis, or Aachen,²⁴ which means that the hand in BAV, MS Reg. lat. 1703 was working before that time. As a result, Stevens unceremoniously dates the collaboration on the Horace manuscript (his hands **WIIIB/WIVa**) to the year 829 and postulates that Walahfrid stayed in Weißenburg in the spring of 829.²⁵ However, it is firmly established that Walahfrid was in Aachen at that time, where his *De imagine Tetrici* – one of the few poems that can be precisely dated – was written.²⁶ Thus, in the speculative reading of Sangallensis 878 as a biography, the contradictions become insoluble (and an autograph much less likely).

Walahfrid and the “Zurich Adomnan”

Where should we then look for an autograph? The answer should be: in places where Walahfrid left behind traces that can be securely linked to him. For example, we know of a surviving codex that once belonged to him. Reginbert, the librarian of the Reichenau who died in 846, noted in the incremental catalogue of Reichenau:²⁷ “In XXX. libello habentur libri tres, quos Arculphus episcopus Adamnano excipiente de locis sanctis ultramarinis designauit conscribendos et quartus liber de eadem notatione est adjunctus, quis autem fecerit ignoramus, quem mihi Walafrid, frater noster, me supplicante donauit” – “The 30th volume contains three books on the Holy Places in the Near East which Bishop Arculf has had written with the help of Adomnan, attached is a fourth book on the same topic. Who wrote it, we do not know. The volume was bestowed on me by Walahfrid, our brother, at my request.” Today, this manuscript is preserved in Zurich, Zentralbibliothek, MS Rh. 73, fols. 2–29, the so called “Zurich Adomnan.” While the main scribe of the codex shows an insular ductus, there is a second scribe who enters the inscriptions of the ground plans of the buildings in Holy Land. His writing – as would befit someone educated at Reichenau – is Carolingian, and also shows the “rt” ligature which was often used at Reichenau (*reperta est*). It is worth keeping in mind the features of this hand with its delicate ductus (Fig. 4): it uses two forms of “a,” which are often drawn out at the end of the word, whereas the regular, uncial “a” is sometimes slightly open and starting from a fairly high point (*constantiniana basilica*); the “y” is dotted, remaining between median and baseline (*martyrium*); the “d” is club-shaped, the ascender starting with a shoulder and then

²³ Bischoff, *Mittelalterliche Studien*, 2:50.

²⁴ Stevens, *Rhetoric and Reckoning*, p. 67.

²⁵ Stevens, *Rhetoric and Reckoning*, pp. 101–2.

²⁶ *De imagine Tetrici*, ed. Licht, p. 98.

²⁷ *Mittelalterliche Bibliotheks-kataloge Deutschlands und der Schweiz. I. Die Bistümer Konstanz und Chur*, ed. Paul Lehmann (Munich, 1918), p. 261.

drawn towards the top, making the shaft appear entwined at times (*exedra*). I assign the siglum **S** to this hand.

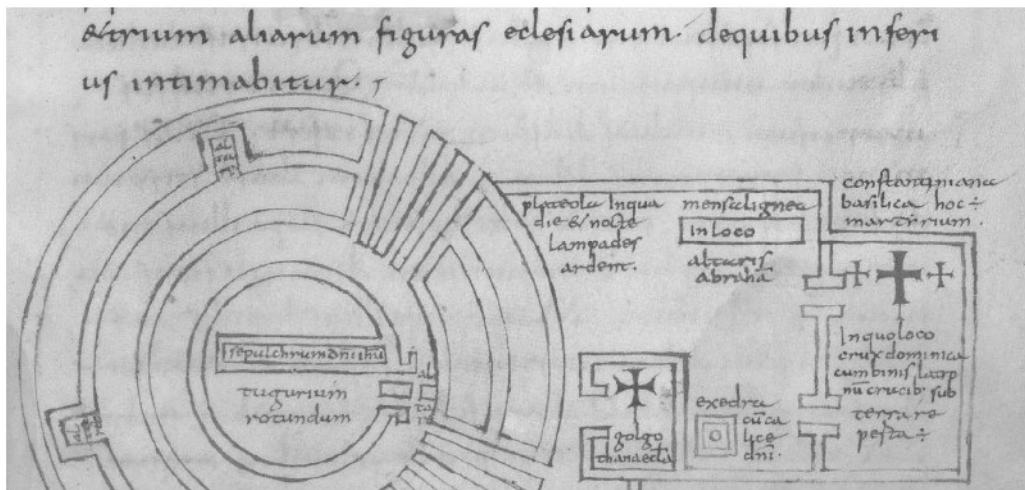


Fig. 4. Zurich, Zentralbibliothek, MS Rh. 73 (Fulda, a. 827–829, for fols. 2–29), “Zurich Adomnan,” fol. 5r. Captions in Caroline minuscule; top two lines in the main handwriting under insular influence.

The interest in architectural details can again be observed elsewhere because hand **S** which captioned the ground plans in the “Zurich Adomnan” is the same hand which participated in the writing of the “Plan of St. Gall” (St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 1092). This is not a new observation, as Johanne Autenrieth noted it in her description of the writing of the “Reichenau Confraternity Book.”²⁸ The term *exedra*, found both in the “Zurich Adomnan” and the “Plan of St. Gall” as an architectural description (Fig. 5),²⁹ was not a word used very frequently by Carolingian authors. Walahfrid explained it in *De exordiis et incrementis*: “Exedra est absida quaedam separata modicum quid a templo uel palatio et dicta inde, quod extra haereat” – “Exedra is a form of apsis which protrudes slightly from the church or the palace building, and it is called that because it is attached outside.”³⁰ The clear distinction to the more common *absida* fits perfectly with its understanding on the “Plan of St. Gall.”

²⁸ *Das Verbrüderungsbuch der Abtei Reichenau*, ed. Johanne Autenrieth, Dieter Geuenich, and Karl Schmid, MGH Libri memoriales et necrologia N.S. 1 (Hannover, 1979), p. XXXVI, n. 43.

²⁹ “Plan of St. Gall” 17.55; see Walter Berschin, “Der St. Galler Klosterplan als Literaturdenkmal,” in *Mittellateinische Studien*, ed. Walter Berschin, 3 vols. (Heidelberg, 2005–2017), 1:125–56.

³⁰ Walahfrid, *De exordiis et incrementis* 6, ed. Krause, p. 480.



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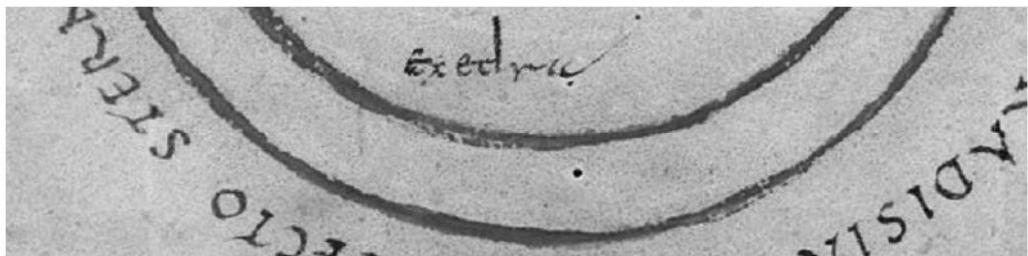


Fig. 5. St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 1092 (Reichenau, ca. a. 825), “Plan of St. Gall” 17.55; in the westwork of the church, the Carolingian scribe of the “Plan” enters the exterior apsis as *exedra*.

The fact that the “Zurich Adomnan” was in Walahfrid’s possession coupled with the definition of *exedra* in his *De exordiis et incrementis* and the identification of the same hand in both the “Zurich Adomnan” and the “Plan of St. Gall” strongly suggest that S is Walahfrid’s own hand. The “Plan of St. Gall” was made at Reichenau by two scribes. The Alemannic scribe is the planning mastermind, the Carolingian one the talented poet. A joined verse titulus can be found on the northwestern portal of the main church at “Plan of St. Gall” 16 (Fig. 6): “Exiet hic hospes uel templi tecta subibit / discentis scolae pulchra iuuenta simul” – “Here the guest will go out or enter under the roof of the church / the bright youth of the academic school as well.” The Alemannic scribe writes first. The long-held assumption that he was Reginbert, librarian and director of the Scriptorium at Reichenau, has recently been confirmed.³¹ As for the titulus, the Carolingian scribe carries out an unrewarding task because he adds only one piece of information, namely, that the students are also supposed to go through this entrance, and by using abstracta and inherent attributes, he succeeds in constructing a poetic pentameter: “discentis scolae pulchra iuuenta simul.”

³¹ Natalie Maag, *Alemannische Minuskel (744–846 n. Chr.): Frühe Schriftkultur im Bodenseeraum und Voralpenland, Quellen und Untersuchungen zur Lateinischen Philologie des Mittelalters* 18 (Stuttgart 2014), p. 80: “Die alemannische Hand erweist sich bei genauer Betrachtung eindeutig als die Reginberts.”

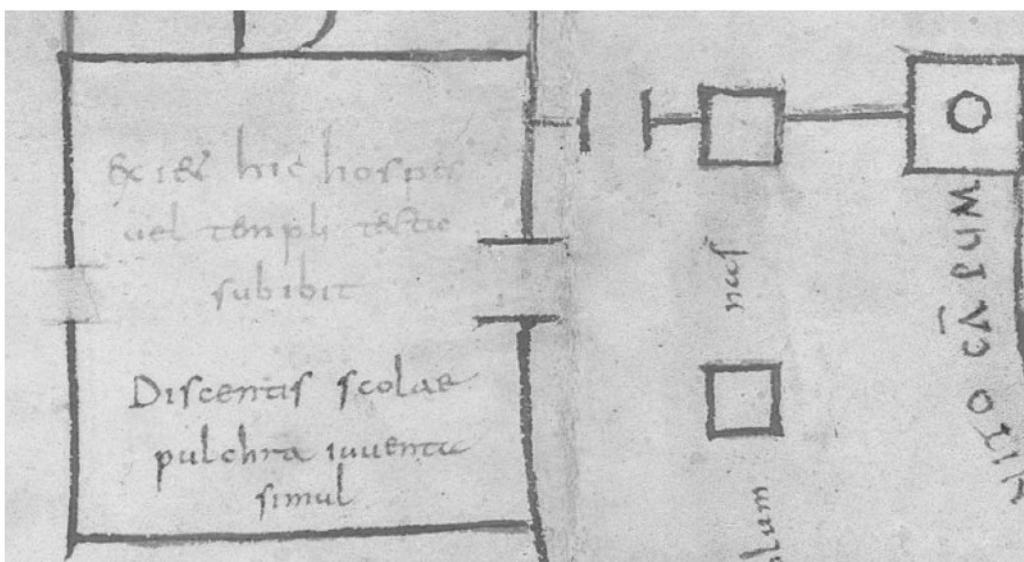


Fig. 6. St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 1092 (Reichenau, ca. a. 825), "Plan of St. Gall" 16.

This talent is of course also attestable in other places as, for example, the titulus for the cow shed in "Plan of St. Gall" 32.1 (Fig. 7). The wiped-out passage must be read as *armenta*, which is unproblematic; more important is the correction entered by the Carolingian hand: "Hic armenta tibi faetus lac atque ministrant" – "Here, the cattle give you calves and milk." The versification is perfect, and the verse even conforms to Marx's Rule according to which there should not, if possible, be any monosyllabic word after the caesura of the fifth semi-foot (*penthemimeres*).³² For that reason, the first verse of the *Aeneid* reads "Troiae qui primus ab oris," not "qui Troiae primus ab oris." But even so, the same scribe has rearranged the verse to read: "Hic armenta tibi lac faetus atque ministrant." Why has he done this? This question is not difficult to answer – because of prosodic concerns. The length of the "a" in *lac* is hard to determine; Servius confirms it, Martianus Capella is unsure, and Priscian seems to have regarded the syllable as a short one.³³ For this reason, the poet of the "Plan" has transposed the word and

³² This law named after the Bonn philologist Friedrich Marx (1859–1941) has been much discussed; see Friedrich Crusius, *Römische Metrik. Eine Einführung*, revised by Hans Rubenbauer (Munich, 1961, 6th ed.), p. 52, presents the issue as "Stellungsregel von Marx"; a more recent study, Antonella Arena, "Lo spondeo quarto nell'esametro latino e le deroghe alla norma di Marx," *Latomus* 56 (1997), 784–89, expresses serious doubts about the rule; Hans Drexler, "Caesur und Diaerese," *Aevum* 24 (1950), 332–66, also does not want to talk about a "law," but rather (pp. 355–56, n. 1) tries, based on the syntax and the corresponding *caesurae*, to describe the complex structure of the hexameter while including Marx's Rule in his description: "die Beobachtung ist gut."

³³ *TLL* VII.2.2 (Leipzig, 1956–1979), col. 815, 5–10.



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generated a length by positioning *lac* before *faetus*, which is not as elegant but is metrically infallible. These are abilities more befitting Walahfrid than the linguistic deficiencies observed in Sangallensis 878 as discussed above.

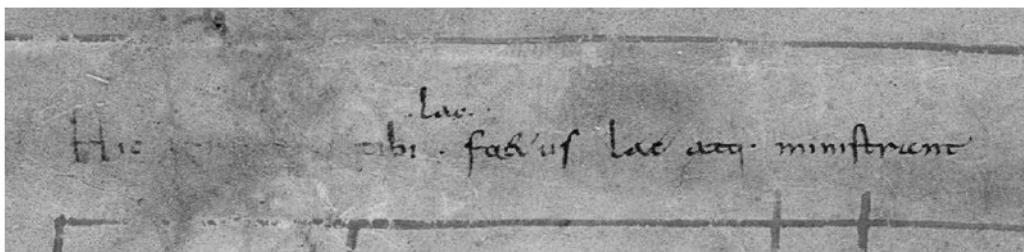


Fig. 7. St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 1092 (Reichenau, ca. a. 825), "Plan of St. Gall" 32.1.

The final remaining point is that the script in the "Plan of St. Gall" shows the same palaeographical features as the "Zurich Adomnan": we find a dotted "y" between median and baseline (*gyrum*) (Fig. 8), two forms of "a" (*atque ministrant*) which are in part drawn out at the end of a line (*aesca*) (Fig. 9), and a "d" with the entwined shaft (*domui*) (Fig. 9):

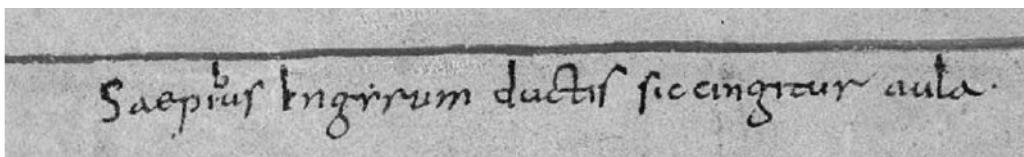


Fig. 8. St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 1092 (Reichenau, ca. a. 825), "Plan of St. Gall" 10.1.

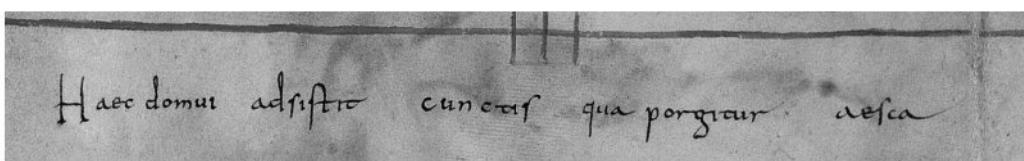


Fig. 9. St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 1092 (Reichenau, ca. a. 825), "Plan of St. Gall" 24.1.

*Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, MS Aug. CXXXVI and the
"Reichenau Confraternity Book"*

Another former Reichenau manuscript further expands the picture of hand S. Bischoff had pointed out early on that the Carolingian hand of the "Plan of St. Gall" is also found in a booklet copied in Fulda by a scribe from Reichenau which contains the *Life of St. Boniface*

by Willibald of Mainz.³⁴ The booklet has become part of Reginbert's manuscript Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, MS Aug. CXXXVI, fols. 1–20. Here hand S “borrows from the Fulda model,”³⁵ which it, however, distorts every now and then, primarily in marked lines. Because all other testimonies are not very extensive, these twenty folia in Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, MS Aug. CXXXVI, are our most important source for the revised autograph hand of Walahfrid Strabo. The characteristic features of the writing of the image captions of the “Zurich Adomnan” and the Carolingian scribe of the “Plan of St. Gall” can once again be easily observed in the Karlsruhe manuscript (Fig. 10): dotted “y” between median and baseline (*bynnān*, last line), entwined “d” (*adhuc*, line 5), and two forms of “a” drawn out widely at the end of words (“a daemoniorum euangelica praedicando mandata”, line 6). One particular upper-case letter is the Rustic capital “A” lightly crossed at the top (*Ac*, line 1), whereas insular “Fulda” influence manifests itself, for example, in the letter “r” of *hessorum* on line 5.

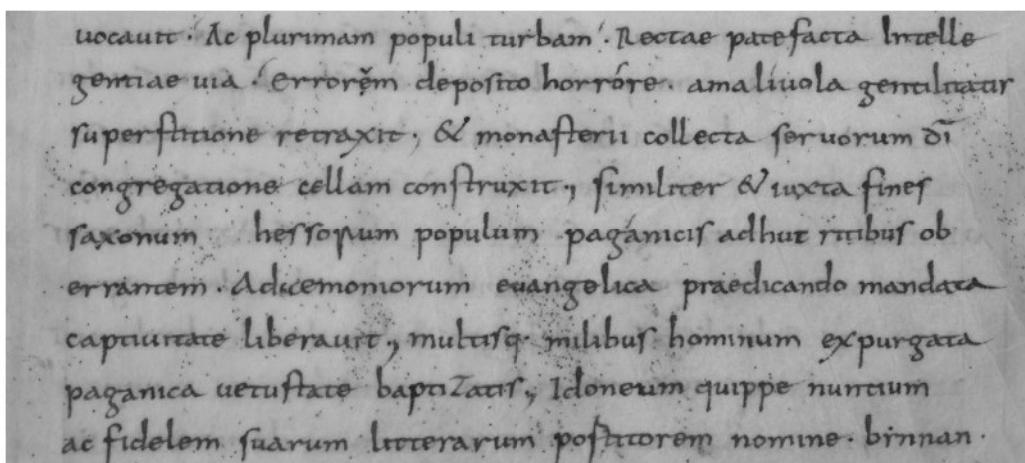


Fig. 10. Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, MS Aug. CXXXVI, fol. 10v.

Probably the earliest testimony of hand S is the “Reichenau Confraternity Book,” now Zurich, Zentralbibliothek, MS Rh. hist. 27 (a. 823/4). The fact that the hand of the “Plan of St. Gall” re-emerges here has already been noted, but a peculiarity of the page, in which the brethren of the Reichenau are listed, strengthens the autograph thesis: even though the revision of the confraternity book occurred in repeated stages, a secure

³⁴ Bernhard Bischoff, “Die Entstehung des Klosterplans aus paläographischer Sicht,” in *Studien zum St. Galler Klosterplan*, ed. Johannes Duft (St. Gall, 1962), pp. 67–78; revised in Bischoff, *Mittelalterliche Studien* 1:41–49.

³⁵ Bischoff, *Mittelalterliche Studien* 1:46.



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date of 823/4 can be established for when the work on the codex began.³⁶ A list of the monks at Reichenau is included in the manuscript on fol. 15v/p. 4; towards the end, second to last, the name *VVALAHFRID MONACHVS* is written in Rustic capitals (Fig. 11). Who would note in capitals this *paenultimus fratrum* who was 16 or 17 years old at the time and who did not belong to the highest nobility?³⁷ The answer is Walahfrid himself, who used this opportunity to enter, bordering on cheekiness, a kind of colophon about himself.³⁸ Beyerle discussed this peculiar situation in 1925,³⁹ but because Bischoff

| | | | | | | |
|-------------|------|---------|------------|------|------------------|------|
| E in muat | prtb | odulrīt | F gino | prtb | O tbeftus | diac |
| h ilarar | prtb | herouur | R atfrid | prtb | R uadberht | mon |
| R amfrid. | prtb | | h eriberht | diac | N othrum | mon |
| I erolf | prtb | Paldk | fanbold | mon | L antolt | mon |
| R aco | prtb | | u wolfman | prtb | A nna | mon |
| U willibold | prtb | | A ndreas | diac | u uALAHFRID MON | |
| R atpold | prtb | | u umidhers | prtb | T heot mufi | mon |
| I sanhaft | prtb | | C oldini | diac | Reginbapt Ingipr | |
| O rim | prtb | | h eilram | mon | crimolt Marchf | |

Fig. 11. Zurich, Zentralbibliothek, MS Rh. hist. 27 (Reichenau, a. 823/4), fol. 15v/p. 4.

had put an end to the research concerning Walahfrid's autograph by pointing to Sangallensis 878, the evidence of the line in display script remained either unconsidered or presented as an enigma,⁴⁰ but wrongly so: the line and the minuscule around it are written by the same scribe and in both cases the writing is that of hand S, with its Rustic capitals "A" crossed at the top, easily recognizable throughout (see Fig. 11, *Andreas, Anno, VVALAHFRID*).⁴¹

³⁶ This date is confirmed in *Heito und Walahfrid Strabo*, ed. Knittel, p. 153.

³⁷ On Walahfrid's year of birth of 807, compare Berschin, *Walahfrid Strabo und die Reichenau*, p. 14.

³⁸ I disagree with Autenrieth's separation of the hands in the "Reichenau Confraternity Book"; Walahfrid wrote the list of the brethren of Reichenau on p. 4 exactly as he did the St. Gall list on p. 10, but is nevertheless assigned different scribal abbreviations (HB1 and HB2) by her; compare the overview in *Verbrüderungsbuch*, ed. Autenrieth et al., pp. XL–XLI.

³⁹ Konrad Beyerle, *Die Kultur der Abtei Reichenau*, 2 vols. (Munich, 1925), 1:94: "Ja, er durfte selbst den eigenen Konvent in den *Liber Vitae* des Klosters eintragen."

⁴⁰ Berschin, *Walahfrid Strabo und die Reichenau*, p. 14; the discussion concerning the entry is reported in *Verbrüderungsbuch*, ed. Autenrieth et al., pp. XXXIV–XXXV.

⁴¹ Walahfrid's activity as a scribe also explains other notable features of the order and presentation of the names in the confraternity book. Thus, in the list of the St. Gall brethren the name Gozbert – not the

Conclusion

In light of everything discussed above, Sangallensis 878 should be excluded from the debate of the autograph of Walahfrid Strabo. Bischoff's hand **W** does not satisfy the demands we ought to make regarding Walahfrid's linguistic competence. Because the "Zurich Adomnan" is the only codex that was verifiably in Walahfrid's possession, this codex offers the possibility to trace an autograph. The inscriptions added to the architectural drawings document an interest which fits in well with Walahfrid's literary activity – *De exordiis et incrementis* – and his presumed assistance in the creation of the "Plan of St. Gall," which is confirmed palaeographically. A fascicle by the same hand (**S**), probably copied in Fulda, also fits into Walahfrid's biography, as does the entry in Rustic capitals in the "Reichenau Confraternity Book." If these observations are correct, we have Walahfrid's autograph from the early period of his activity until 829; later on, he would have had *amanuenses*. In addition, it is the quality of the verse inscriptions in the "Plan of St. Gall" which speaks for the young, talented Reichenau poet as the author. In the middle of the "Plan," a *porticus* connects church and cloister. The associated titulus at 22.1 is a versified snapshot of monastic life: the monks are to file out into the fresh air of the cloister and let the words of the mass reverberate in their thoughts. Walahfrid decides to capture the scene in a verse of highly intricate form. It is the only "golden line" on the "Plan of St. Gall":⁴² "Hinc pia consilium pertractet turba salubre" – "From here the pious convent deliberates the redeeming word."

abbot, but the abbot's nephew – is emphasized by a "G" in display script. This Gozbert is in all likelihood the actual recipient of the "Plan of St. Gall" and also the one whose name is "mit allen größeren literarischen Unternehmungen für St. Gallen zwischen 833 und 850 verknüpft"; see Berschin, *Mittellateinische Studien*, 1:132. Reginbert also clearly has a special position as he is listed after twelve (!) *presbyteri* of the Reichenau as the first *monachus*, before the series of the *presbyteri* is resumed after the glass artist (?) *Mattheus diaconus*; see Berschin, *Mittellateinische Studien*, 3:99–100, n. 15.

⁴² The defining feature of the "golden line" is the "intertwined symmetry" of agreeing nouns around a verb in the middle of the verse (ABVAB) made possible by the free word-order in Latin; Walahfrid's ability to construct such verses is well attested in his *Hortulus*; see *Walahfrid Strabo: De cultura hortorum (Hortulus). Das Gedicht vom Gartenbau*, ed. Walter Berschin, Reichenauer Texte und Bilder 13 (Heidelberg, 2010, 2nd ed.), p. 12. In the ninth century, this verse structure was known from the rubric "Quae sit optima carminis forma" in Bede's *De arte metrica* 11: "Optima autem uersus dactylici ac pulcherrima positio est, cum primis penultima ac mediis respondent extrema, qua Sedulius frequenter uti consueuit, ut: Peruia diuisi patuerunt caerula ponti" – "The best and most beautiful word order in the dactylic verse, however, is when the first word corresponds to the penultimate and the middle word to the last. Sedulius shows such things quite often, as in: The blue waves of the divided sea before them opened." Bede also points out the danger of using this type of verse too frequently: "nec tamen hoc continuatim agendum"; see *Beda Venerabilis opera, pars I. Opera didascalica*, ed. Christopher W. Jones, CCSL 123A (Turnhout, 1975), pp. 113–14. There is also a brief history of the form of the "golden line" that traces the original restraint and its main use in pastoral poetry, as well as its increasing appreciation since Late Antiquity:



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If the identification of hand **S** with Walahfrid Strabo is correct, there is an indication of the date of his collaboration on the “Plan of St. Gall,” because he was at Reichenau for a sufficiently long period to have the necessary time to contribute to the project at most until 827 and then again as an abbot since 842. His years as abbot, however, must be excluded;⁴³ the *Visio Wettini* which was begun on Easter 825 is described by Walahfrid as his literary first fruit (*primitiae*); thus, the time span for the execution of the “Plan” must be narrowed down to the years 825/6 between the composition of the *Visio Wettini* and Walahfrid’s departure to Fulda. Dating the “Plan” by a verse in which the numerals stand for a date (chronogram) must once again be rejected, since, even though the graphic presentation of poetry as *carmina figurata* was popular at the time, there is not a single Carolingian manuscript transmitting a chronogram. Indeed, chronograms emerge only in the late Middle Ages and are characterized as such graphically.⁴⁴ Adding up the letters of a hexameter to reach a date has no more than a mathematical probability. For a chronogram, however, a clear intention and the visibility of the numerals are necessary. Given all this, it is already no more than a side note that the alleged chronogram of the goose garden, “Plan of St. Gall” 41.5, provides as the date of the creation of the “Plan of St. Gall” the year 1819 because of the M in *MANET*.

ABSTRACT

Since two publications by Bernhard Bischoff in 1950 and 1967, the hand **W** in Codex Sangallensis 878 and in two other manuscripts has been considered to be Walahfrid Strabo’s autograph. In this article, the question is asked as to whether the poor knowledge of Latin of scribe **W** really fits into the picture we have of Walahfrid’s language skills, and whether the traces of hand **S** in the “Plan of St. Gall,” the “Reichenau Confraternity Book,” the “Zurich Adomnan,” and Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, MS Aug. CXXXVI do not better suit his work, interests, transmission, and abilities.

see Seppo Heikkinen, “From Persius to Wilkinson. The Golden Line Revisited,” *Arctos* 49 (2015), 57–77.

⁴³ On a *terminus ante quem* “vor 833/838,” which can be concluded from Walahfrid’s work on the *Life of Otmar*, see Berschin, *Mittellateinische Studien*, 3:77.

⁴⁴ Berschin, *Mittellateinische Studien*, 1:153; Sebastian Scholz, “Ein Chronogramm im St. Galler Klosterplan? Anmerkungen zur Neudatierung des Klosterplans und zur Verwendung von Chronogrammen im frühen Mittelalter,” *Deutsches Archiv* 64 (2008), 109–18; the oldest safely verified chronograms are from the fourteenth century (p. 116).

RÉSUMÉ

Depuis les deux publications de Bernhard Bischoff en 1950 et en 1967, la main **W**, qu'on retrouve dans le Codex Sangallensis 878 et dans deux autres manuscrits, est considérée comme l'autographe de Walahfrid Strabon. Cet article remet en cause cette attribution, en soutenant que la mauvaise connaissance du latin du scribe **W** s'accorde difficilement à l'image que l'on se fait des capacités littéraires de Walahfrid et en avançant que les traces de la main **S**, identifiée dans le "Plan de Saint-Gall," le "Livre de confraternité de Reichenau," "l'Adomnan de Zurich," et le codex Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, MS Aug. CXXXVI, correspondent mieux au travail de Walahfrid ainsi qu'à ses intérêts, à la transmission de son œuvre et à ses compétences.

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