Memorable crises: Carolingian historiography and the making of Pippin’s reign, 750-900

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The Annals of Massay: date of composition

The Annales Petaviani (AP) are extant in three manuscripts, each with its own unique features. Neither of these manuscripts contains the original text or archetype. Pertz, who attempted to reconstruct the AP archetype on the basis of these three extant textual witnesses, discerned two sections in the text: the first section runs from 697/708-771, for which the author relied on the accounts of two other sets of minor annals, known as the Annales Sancti Amandi and the Annales Laureshamenses. The second section, from 771-799, appears to be an original account that may have been written on a year-by-year basis. The authorship and place of composition of the ‘original’ AP are unknown.

Of the three extant witnesses of AP, codex Rome, BAV Reg. lat. 520 (or Codex Petavianus) and codex Paris, BnF lat. 4995 (or Codex Tilianus) are closely related in terms of content. The former codex is dated to the mid-ninth century and the latter to the tenth century. What sets the Codex Tilianus apart are five interpolations that contain trivia concerning the leading members of the

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1 Manuscripts: (1) Paris, MS BNP, lat. 4995; (2) Rome, MS BAV, Reg. lat. 520; (3) MS Genève, BPU lat. 50. Editions: (a) DuChesne (ed.), HFS, 2, pp. 6-10, which is based on MS 1 and 2, to which DuChesne referred as Codex Tilianus and Codex Petavianus resp., named after the two famous sixteenth-century manuscript collectors. These MSS were later identified by Georg Waitz; (b) Labbe (ed.), Novæ bibliothecæ, 2, pp. 733-736, based on MS 3; (c) Bouquet (ed.), Recueil des historiens, 2, pp. 641-2. (>751; the rest in 5, based on editions by Labbe and DuChesne; (d) Pertz (ed.), MGH SS, 1, pp. 9-18, based originally on editions by DuChesne and Labbe; Pertz later also saw MS 3, leading him to make several corrections to his edition, which he published in MGH SS 3, p.170; (e) Mai (ed.), Spicilegium Romanum, 6, pp. 180-190, based on MS 2, which had at that point not yet been recognized as the Codex Petavianus used by DuChesne. For a detailed study and critique of the edition by Pertz, see: Werner, ‘Geburtsdatum’, 136-50, esp. 141-2.

2 Section 697-708 only consists of the entry for 697. This is only the case in MS BAV, Reg. lat. 520. Paris, MS BNP, lat. 4995 begins s.a. 708 and MS Genève, BPU lat. 50 begins s.a. 726. Pithou, Annalium et Historiae Francorum, 12, opens his work with a set of annals spanning the years 697,707,709-713 and that is largely identical with the recension of AP as encountered in Rome, MS BAV Reg. lat. 520. Pithou found this set of annals ‘ex antiquissimo codice legis Salica cui subiunctum fuit chronicon ad annum DCCXVIII.

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Carolingian family. Apart from these, both texts are very similar in content and revolve exclusively around the actions of the leading members of the dynasty. References to regional events are absent, which has led Wilhelm Levison to argue that these annals must be closely associated with the royal court. To this, Karl-Ferdinand Werner later added that both annals are found in manuscripts of a legislative character, which strengthened their 'reichsgeschichtlicher Charakter.' It is likely that the AP were meant as a historical framework for the legal texts collected in these manuscripts.

The third manuscript, Geneva, MS BPU lat. 50, dates to the second quarter of the ninth century and formerly belonged to the collection of St Martin of Massay. Because of this, Philippe Labbe, the first editor of this text, referred to the manuscript as the Codex Masciacensis. Its codicological context is very different from the other two manuscripts: the Codex Masciacensis is not concerned with law, but primarily with time and chronology. The annals also cover a shorter period, with annals spanning the years 726 to 796. They furthermore have, in Levison’s words, a more 'örtliche Färbung.' In terms of its relation to the other two manuscripts of the AP, the Codex Masciacensis appears to have slightly more in common with the Codex Tiliianus than with the Codex Petavianus, yet lacks the characteristic trivia on the members of the Carolingian family.

Instead, the annals in the Codex Masciacensis, which I shall refer to as the Annals of Massay, contain six unique interpolations of their own. Two of these relate to the Carolingian family, placing them in a context of penance. In the entry for 726, which in all three recensions of the AP records the death of a certain Martinus, the Annals of Massay add that Martinus had been Charles Martel’s confessor. The other interpolation with regard to the Carolingian

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4 The following five entries are unique to MS Paris, BnF lat. 4995: 747: 'Et ipso anno natus Karolus rex'; 751: 'Et fuit natus Karolomannus rex'; 755: 'In hoc anno dominus Remedius adeptus est sedem ecclesiae Rotomagensis, et Pipinus superavit Langobardos, cum magnu munere reversus est in regnum'; 757: 'in eodem anno moritur Stephanus papa; et nativitas Gislanae'; and 770: 'nativitas Pipini filii Karlomanni'. Werner, 'Geburtsdatum', pp. 148-50, connects the composition of these annals to a supporter of Carloman (751-771), due to the reference to the birth of his son, Pippin, and because these annals stop in 771.

5 Wattenbach, Levison and Löwe, Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen, 2, pp. 186-7. In Wattenbach’s original publication the royal court is more clearly pronounced as the origin of these annals, using an argumentation similar to that Ranke, ‘Kritik’, had used to link the composition of the ARF to the royal court.

6 Werner, ‘Geburtsdatum’, 146.


9 N.B. the entry for 735 is missing.
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family concerns the events of 747 and has already been discussed in chapter four. It goes on at great length about the Carloman's penance at Monte Cassino.10

The four remaining interpolations refer to the deaths of the bishop-abbots of the monastery of St Martin of Tours. It is clear, therefore, that the composition of the *Annals of Massay* has to be looked for in the region of Tours, possibly at Tours itself, from where a copy later ended up at Massay. The only exception is the interpolation in the entry for 727, which identifies Bishop Adulfus, who died that year, as the bishop of Cambrai and abbot of St Vaast. To the entry for 790 was added that 'Audegarius, bishop of the monastery of St Martin, died on 18 January. He was of Anglo-Saxon origin, but his father, named Bottus, was a trader in the city of Marseille. Moreover, he was of great humility, whence he was beloved by all.'11 The remaining two interpolations were added at the end of the text, and might therefore be of a later date than the others.12 They relate to the deaths of Abbots Wicterb (756) and Alcuin (804). With regard to the former, these annals state that he 'was a Bavarian, descended from Heilolving (Agilolfing?), old and over eighty years, he was reading until this time, writing books with his own hand.'13 With regard to Alcuin's death, these annals give a remarkably detailed testimony, describing how

> on May nineteenth, on the first day of Pentecost, as dawn approached, in the sixth moon, 804 [years] after the Incarnation of the Lord, in the twelfth indiction, in the thirty-sixth year of the reign of lord Charles; after a paralyzing accident on May eighth, on the fifth day of the week at Vespers, after sunset, on the twenty-fifth moon.14

Since Alcuin was the last abbot whose death was recorded in these annals, and because his death is recorded in unique detail (the *Vita Alcuini*, composed c. 825, does not mention an *accidens paralysis*) the *Annals of Massay* were

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10 See chapter 4.1.2, p. 128.
12 According to Labbe, these entries were written *in manu perinde antiqua*. Further study of the MS Genève, BPU lat. 50 is necessary.
13 *AM*, addendum: 'anno DCCLVI, anno V regnante Pippino rege, obit Wicterbus episcopus et abba Sancti Martini. Fuit autem Baugoarius, genere Heilolvingus. Senex et plusquam octogenarius, usque ad id tempus sedebat, propria manu scribens libros.'
14 *AM*, addendum: Obiit Alchuinus XIV Kalendas Junii, feria I Pentecostes, inlucescente die, Luna VI anno Incarnationis Domini DCCCIV, Indict. XII anno XXXVI regnante domno Carolo; accidente paralysis VIII Idus Maii, feria V ad vesperum, post Solis occasum, Luna XXV.' N.B. following this, is a list of entries from 805-864, covering two folios, which remained empty.
probably composed during the abbacy of Alcuin’s pupil and successor at Tours, Fridugisus (d. 834).