

AN EARLY MEDIEVAL EPISTOLARY *LIBELLUS* AND THE QUESTION OF ORIGINALITY: PARIS, BIBLIOTHÈQUE DE L'ARSENAL, MS. 717

Shane BOBRYCKI*

This article examines an unusual early medieval manuscript, Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 717, the sole witness to a ninth-century letter written by the archbishop of Lyon about religious crowds in Dijon. The manuscript's codicology, palaeography, and orthography are examined with respect to the contents. Although this small manuscript is not (as has been suggested) an «original» document, it is a rare medieval example of an under-theorized codicological form of letter: the thematic booklet. This article explores the limits of the concept of «originality» in describing the propagation of such epistolary *libelli*. It argues that epistolary *libelli* were useful for disseminating doctrinal claims like those defended by the archbishop.

1. Introduction: Codex ipse Autographus ?

An anonymous seventeenth-century commentator wrote the following description on the verso of the front flyleaf of Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS. 717:

Codex iste Autographus continet Epistolam Amolonis Episcopi Lugdunensis ad Theobaldum Episcopum Lingonensem (de Langres dans la Champagne) in qua hunc hortatur ad expellendos e sua Diœcesi monachos quosdam, qui fœminis Reliquias sanctorum quas dicebant e Roma, et Palœstina allatas publice vendebant, ideoque monachorum illius temporis depravatos mores describit ac nullam fidem sanctorum Reliquiis præstandam esse concludit. conscripta videtur hæc Epistola circa annum 1280⁽¹⁾.

This autograph manuscript contains a letter of Bishop Amolo of Lyon to Bishop Theobald of Langres ([Fr.] of Langres in Champagne) in which he exhorts him to expel from his diocese certain monks who were publicly selling to women relics of saints which they claimed had been brought from Rome and Palestine, and so he recounts the depraved habits of the monks of that time and concludes that no trust should be proffered to the relics of saints. This letter seems to have been written around the year 1280.

«La note cy dessus», reads an eighteenth- or nineteenth-century note on the same folio, «est fausse». Amolo lived in the ninth century and the handwriting of

* The author would like to thank Michael McCormick, Charles West, and Warren Pezé for their advice, corrections, and suggestions. Thanks also to the staff at the Bibliothèque nationale de France and the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal in Paris, and especially to Amandine Postec and to Nathalie Coilly.

(1) Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS. 717 [hereafter «Arsenal 717»], f. Av. A digitization of this manuscript can be consulted on Gallica: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84900721>.

the manuscript (Caroline minuscule) has nothing to do with the year 1280⁽²⁾. The date is not all this Latin description gets wrong, either. The letter which appears on folios 1r-5r in Arsenal 717 is indeed from Amolo of Lyon to his suffragan Bishop Theobald of Langres, and it does discuss monks, relics, and women⁽³⁾. But Amolo does not instruct Theobald to «expel» two self-proclaimed monks who had carried unproven relics to the city of Dijon. Those relics are said to be from «Rome or I know not where in Italy», not Palestine⁽⁴⁾. Amolo does not claim that the monks were selling the relics to women, but rather that the relics had been deposited at Saint-Bénigne in Dijon, where large crowds of people, «and especially women», were now venerating them⁽⁵⁾. Amolo does not linger on the «depraved habits» of the monks of his times, even if he does wonder whether local religious authorities were stirring up popular enthusiasm «for the sake of filthy lucre»⁽⁶⁾. While he is skeptical about these particular relics, Amolo does not conclude that they are necessarily false, and he certainly does not condemn the cult of relics in general⁽⁷⁾. Finally, this early modern Latin description omits half of the manuscript's contents. Arsenal 717 also contains a second letter (f. 5r-8r) from Agobard of Lyon to Bartholomew of Narbonne, as another note in the upper left margin of the same folio clarifies, providing the relevant page numbers to both letters in Baluze's seventeenth-century edition⁽⁸⁾.

Despite the inaccuracy of the Latin note on the flyleaf of Arsenal 717, one of its claims has resonated with modern scholarship on this manuscript. Might this

(2) Arsenal 717, f. Av: «Amolon archeveque de Lyon Vivoit au IX^e Siecle ainsi la note cy dessus qui dit que ce Mss. est autographe, et que cette lettre a été ecrite vers l'an 1280 est fausse, d'ailleurs ce Mss. est plus ancien que le 13^e Siecle, on peut meme le juger de la fin du 9^e siècle, ou du commencement du 10^e». For the dates of Amolo's episcopacy, see Louis DUCHESNE, *Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule*, 3 vols, Paris, 1899, vol. 2, p. 172-173 (Amolo), and p. 189 (Theobald). Amolo is best known for his anti-Semitic treatise, the *Liber de perfidia Iudaeorum*, ed. Cornelia HERBERS-RAUHUT, Wiesbaden, 2017 (Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Quellen zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 29).

(3) Amolo of Lyon, *Epistolae* [hereafter «ep.»,], no. 1, ed. Ernst DÜMMLER, Berlin, 1899 (Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Epistolae, 5), p. 363-68. Amolo's letter was previously printed by Étienne BALUZE, ed., *Sancti Agobardi archiepiscopi Lugdunensis Opera*, 2 vols, Paris, 1666, vol. 2, p. 135-147. A new edition (based on DÜMMLER's text with one correction) and French translation is included as an appendix to Michel RUBELLIN, ed., *Agobard de Lyon, Œuvres*, 3 vols, Paris, 2016 (*Sources Chrétiennes*, 583), vol. 1, p. 428-457, with an introduction to the text by Jean-Paul BOUHOT at p. 417-426.

(4) Amolo, ep. 1, c. 1, ed. DÜMMLER, p. 363: «quaedam velut cuiusdam sancti ossa, quae se vel ex urbe Roma vel ex nescio quibus Italiae partibus sustulisse affirmabant».

(5) *Ibid.*, c. 7, p. 366.

(6) *Ibid.*, c. 5, p. 366: «turpis lucri gratia». For the expression in the Bible (originally «ἀισχροῦ κέρδους χάριν») see Tit 1.11 and 2 Ptr 5.2 (cf. 1 Tim 3.8 and Tit 1.7).

(7) *Ibid.*, c. 3, p. 364-365.

(8) Arsenal 717, f. Av: «(et Epistolam Agobardi Lugdunensis Episcopi ad Bartholomeum Episcopum Narbonensem) V. Baluze 1665 Tome II p. 135 et Tome I p. 197». The early catalogues also failed to mention Agobard's letter: BNF, N.A.F. 5402, p. 275 (no. 4067); Bernard DE MONTFAUCON, *Bibliotheca bibliothecarum manuscriptorum nova*, Paris, 1739, vol. 2, p. 747 (no. 4067).

single-gathering manuscript represent some form of «original» Carolingian letter? No modern scholar has agreed with our anonymous annotator that this manuscript is the «codex ipse autographus», «the autograph manuscript itself» of Amolo's letter. After all, medieval letter-writers usually dictated their letters⁽⁹⁾. Nevertheless, scholars have argued that the codicology of Arsenal 717 may be especially revealing. Egon Boshof in his 1969 book on Agobard of Lyon noted that the juxtaposition of the two letters in Arsenal 717 reflects Amolo's promise in the text of his letter to send along a copy of his predecessor's letter⁽¹⁰⁾. Lieven van Acker, who edited Agobard's works for the *Corpus Christianorum*, wrote in 1981 that Arsenal 717 appeared to be a close copy of Amolo's letter as he sent it⁽¹¹⁾. In 2010, Charles West went even further, arguing that Arsenal 717 should be understood as «an important example of an “original” early medieval letter», a position mirrored in 2016 by Jean-Paul Bouhot⁽¹²⁾.

The present article has two aims. First, it assesses the case for Arsenal 717's «originality»⁽¹³⁾. «Original» is a polysemic and problematic term for a medieval letter⁽¹⁴⁾. There is no suggestion that this text was a product of Amolo of Lyon's own

(9) For the dictation of letters, see Giles CONSTABLE, *Letters and Letter-Collections*, Turnhout, 1976 (Typologie des Sources du Moyen Âge Occidental, 17), p. 42-44. For the autography of medieval letters, see Hartmut HOFFMANN, «Autographa des früheren Mittelalters», *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, 57, 2001, p. 1-62, at p. 5-6.

(10) Amolo, ep. 1, c. 9, ed. DÜMMLER, p. 368; Egon BOSHOFF, *Erzbischof Agobard von Lyon: Leben und Werk*, Cologne, 1969, p. 313-314. See also further discussion below.

(11) Lieven VAN ACKER, ed., *Agobardi Lugdunensis opera omnia*, Turnhout, 1981 (*Corpus Christianorum*, continuatio mediaevalis, 52), p. lv.

(12) Charles WEST, «Unauthorised Miracles in Mid-Ninth-Century Dijon and the Carolingian Church Reforms», *Journal of Medieval History*, 36, 2010, p. 295-311, at p. 304; Jean-Paul BOUHOT, «Lettre d'Amolon, archevêque de Lyon à Thibaud, évêque de Langres», in M. RUBEL-LIN, ed., *Agobard de Lyon (supra n. 3)*, vol. 1, p. 424: «il me paraît l'original envoyé à Thibaut de Langres par Amolon».

(13) Cf. Vivien LAW, «Originality in the Medieval Normative Tradition», in *Studies in the History of Western Linguistics in Honour of R. H. Robins*, ed. Theodora BYNON and F. R. PALMER, Cambridge, 1986, p. 43-55, in search of what Law calls an «“alternative” originality in the Middle Ages» (p. 44) given the disconnection between modern ideals of originality and medieval ways of designating and assessing texts.

(14) C. WEST, «Unauthorised Miracles» (*supra* n. 12), p. 304, does not define what he means by «original». West thoughtfully highlights the particular interest of this text within its manuscript context, but he is careful not to overstate his case. In general, historians of early medieval letters use the term «original» to describe the rare surviving single-sheet letters. See Pierre CHAPLAIS, «The Letter from Bishop Wealdhere of London to Archbishop Brihtwold of Canterbury: the earliest original “letter close” extant in the West», reprinted in Pierre CHAPLAIS, *Essays in Medieval Diplomacy and Administration*, London, 1981, Essay XIV, p. 3-23, esp. p. 5-6, for a basic (diplomatic) distinction between originals, copies, and forgeries. Two overviews of surviving «original» Carolingian letters can be found in Mark MERSIOWSKY, «Regierungspraxis und Schriftlichkeit im Karolingerreich: Das Fallbeispiel der Mandate und Briefe», in *Schriftkultur und Reichsverwaltung unter den Karolingern*, ed. Rudolf SCHIEFFER, Opladen, 1996, p. 109-166, at p. 118-124; and Mark MERSIOWSKY, «Preserved by Destruction. Carolingian Original Letters and Clm 6333», in *Early Medieval Palimpsests*, ed. Georges DECLERCQ, Turnhout, 2007, p. 73-98,

handwriting, of course⁽¹⁵⁾. This is not how medieval letters were composed⁽¹⁶⁾. An archbishop like Amolo would have dictated his letter to scribes, who may have taken his words down in shorthand (for instance, on wax tablets) and subsequently made a fair-copy⁽¹⁷⁾. In fact, composition itself was complicated, fractured, and multiple. An author of archiepiscopal status may only have given basic directions or put final touches on a letter. His coterie would have done the bulk of the dictation and composition. We can name some of Agobard's ghostwriters in mid ninth-century Lyon, like Florus of Lyon and Hildigisus, who may have helped write Amolo's letters as well⁽¹⁸⁾. So to ask whether a letter like Arsenal 717 is «original»

at p. 77-94. For why such «original» letters are so rare, see Mary GARRISON, «“Send More Socks”: On Mentality and the Preservation Context of Medieval Letters», in *New Approaches to Medieval Communication*, ed. Marco MOSTERT, Turnhout, 1999, p. 69-99, at p. 74. The same is true of many «originals» from this period. Cf. Mark MERSIOWSKY, *Die Urkunde in der Karolingerzeit: Originale, Urkundenpraxis und politische Kommunikation*, 2 vols., Wiesbaden, 2015, vol. 1, p. 55-56: «Bei den Kapitularien, den karolingischen Herrscherverträgen, Synodalschriften oder Briefen dominieren hingegen völlig oft erheblich spätere Abschriften, die Originalüberlieferung bleibt die absolute Ausnahme». Letters which could not serve as literary models were deemed «useless» and generally did not survive in monastic or ecclesiastical archives. The original letter from Wealdhere to Brihtwold discussed by Chaplais is an example, in that the words «useless letter» («Ep[isto]la inutil[is]») were added to the document in the twelfth century: P. CHAPLAIS, «The Letters» (*supra* n. 14) p. 5-6, with further examples of the endorsement *inutile* and *utile* at p. 5, n. 11.

(15) For our knowledge of Lyon script in the ninth century, see Sigmund TAFEL, «The Lyons Scriptorium», *Palaeographia Latina*, 2, 1923, p. 66-73; 4, 1925, p. 40-70. For manuscripts associated personally with the influential Lyon intellectual, Florus the Deacon, see Célestin CHARLIER, «Les manuscrits personnels de Florus de Lyon et son activité littéraire», in *Mélanges E. Pothier: études de sciences religieuses offertes pour son éméritat au Doyen Honoraire de la Faculté de théologie de Lyon*, Lyon, 1945, p. 71-84 (reprinted in *Revue bénédictine*, 119, 2009, p. 252-269).

(16) Cf. Noël VALOIS, *De arte scribendi epistolas apud Gallicos medii ævi scriptores rhelesves*, Paris, 1880, p. 8. See also G. CONSTABLE, *Letters and Letter-Collections* (*supra* n. 9), p. 42-48 (production), p. 49-52 (composition). Dietrich LOHRMANN, *Das Register Papst Johannes' VIII. (872-882): Neue Studien zur Abschrift Reg. Val. I, zum verlorenen Originalregister und zum Diktat der Briefe*, Tübingen, 1968, p. 225-233, offers an instructive description of how papal letters were composed by *dictatores*, which is broadly applicable to the writing offices of bishops of lesser status.

(17) On the use of wax tablets from Antiquity through the Middle Ages, see Wilhelm WATTENBACH, *Das Schriftwesen im Mittelalter*, 3rd edn., Leipzig, 1896, p. 51-89.

(18) Arsenal 717, f. 5r, itself provides evidence for how authorial assistants could be erased from the record. The other manuscript containing Agobard's letter to Bartholomew, Paris, BNF, lat. 2853, indicates that Florus the Deacon and another author named Hildigisus assisted Agobard in the composition of this letter (Agobard of Lyon, *De quorundam inlusione signorum*, c. 1, ed. L. VAN ACKER (*supra* n. 11), p. 237). Paris, BNF, lat. 2853, f. 124v, reads (beneath a title in rustic capitals: «AD BARTHOLOMEU(M) EP(ISCOPU)M DE QUORUNDAM INLUSIONE SIGNORUM»): «Reuerentissimo ac dilectissimo domno et fr(atr)i bartholomeo ep(iscop). Agobardus. hildigisus. et florus in d(omi)no ih(es)u xp(ist)o se(m)piternam salutem». Arsenal 717 has removed Hildigisus and Florus. There (Arsenal 717, f. 5r, lines 19-20) the salutation of Agobard's letter to Bartholomew reads, «Reuerentissimo ac dilectissimo domno et fr(atr)i bartholomeo ep(iscop) o. Agobardus in d(omi)no ih(es)u xp(ist)o sempiternam salutem». For Florus and Hildigisus, see

is really to ask whether this manuscript is a fair copy, written by Lyon scribes or by scribes working for Lyon, of a text composed, presumably in a mixture of oral and written media, by Amolo and his assistants. To anticipate my conclusion, I will argue that there is little textual, palaeographical, or codicological evidence to suggest that Arsenal 717 was an «original» of this sort.

On the other hand, if Arsenal 717 was not «original» in that sense, the codicology of this manuscript is still unusual for letter collections in the early Middle Ages. Most early medieval letters survive in larger collections or formularies intended to provide prose models for students⁽¹⁹⁾. Arsenal 717, by contrast, consists of a single quire with extremely coherent contents: two related letters, one of which mentions the other⁽²⁰⁾. While I will argue that Arsenal 717 is not an «original» letter, I will make a second argument about what it might represent. Arsenal 717 probably reflects the «original» codicological context of Amolo's letter, even if the manuscript as we have is a copy, or a copy of a copy. Arsenal 717 is, in other words, an example of a well-known codicological genre: the single-themed booklet or *libellus*⁽²¹⁾. Such *libelli* were a popular vehicle for transmitting thematic collections in the early Middle Ages, and scholars have studied examples which preserve hagiographical and liturgical texts⁽²²⁾. The role of epistolary *libelli*, that

E. BOSHOFF, *Agobard* (*supra* n. 10), p. 157-158, 161-166. For a rich assessment of Florus's career, see Klaus ZECHIEL-ECKES, *Florus von Lyon als Kirchenpolitiker und Publizist: Studien zur Persönlichkeit eines karolingischen "Intellektuellen" am Beispiel der Auseinandersetzung mit Amalarius (835-838) und des Prädestinationssreits (851-855)*, Stuttgart, 1999.

(19) Carol LANHAM, «Freshman Composition in the Early Middle Ages: Epistolography and Rhetoric Before the "Ars Dictaminis"», *Viator*, 23, 1992, p. 115-134, at p. 117-118. Other letters might survive in thematic collections, such as the letter of Helisachar to Nidibrius of Narbonne preserved in London, B.L. Harley, MS. 2637. See Rosamond MCKITTERICK, *The Carolingians and the Written Word*, Cambridge, 1989, p. 208. For more detail on medieval letters and their preservation, see G. CONSTABLE, *Letters and Letter-Collections* (*supra* n. 9), p. 55-62; Hartmut HOFFMANN, «Zur mittelalterlichen Brieftechnik», in *Spiegel der Geschichte: Festgabe für Max Braubach zum 10. April 1964*, ed. Konrad REPGEN and Stephan SKALWEIT, Münster, 1964, p. 141-170; and Bernhard SCHMEIDLER, «Ueber Briefsammlungen des früheren Mittelalters in Deutschland und ihre kritische Verwertung», in *Årsbok 1926: Yearbook of the New Society of Letters at Lund*, Lund, 1926, p. 5-27.

(20) Arsenal 717, f. 5r; Amolo, ep. 1, c. 9, ed. DÜMLER, p. 368. See below for discussion.

(21) Joseph-Claude POULIN, «Les "libelli" dans l'édition hagiographique avant le XII^e siècle», in *Livrets, collections et textes: Études sur la tradition hagiographique latine*, ed. Martin HEINZELMANN, Ostfildern, 2006, p. 15-193; Claire PILSWORTH, «Vile Scraps: "Booklet" Style Manuscripts and the Transmission and Use of the Italian Martyr Narratives in Early Medieval Europe», in *Zwischen Niederschrift und Wiederschrift: Hagiographie und Historiographie im Spannungsfeld von Kopienüberlieferung und Editionschnik*, ed. Richard CORRADINI et al., Vienna, 2010, p. 175-196.

(22) Hagiographical: J.-C. POULIN, «Les "libelli"» (*supra* n. 21), esp. p. 15-18; C. PILSWORTH, «Vile Scraps» (*supra* n. 21), esp. p. 178-180; Liturgical: Cyrille VOGEL, *Medieval Liturgy: An Introduction to the Sources*, rev. and trans. William G. STOREY and Niels Krogh RASMUSSEN, Washington, D.C., 1986, p. 37-38. For the possibility of the eighth- and ninth-century circulation of annalistic historiography in *libellus* form, see Rosamond MCKITTERICK, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World*, Cambridge, 2004, p. 107-108.

is, *libelli* designed to transmit letters, is less familiar⁽²³⁾. I will contend that *libelli* like Arsenal 717 may have played a larger role than scholars suspect in disseminating letters, and not just the saints' lives and liturgical acts familiar to scholars. Specifically, I will argue that the *libellus* may have been a natural codicological vessel for letters on a single theme.

A focus on «originality» distracts us from this line of inquiry. Scholars interested in «original» early medieval letters have tended to focus on another codicological form altogether: surviving single-sheet letters, which tend to be businesslike in content and diplomatic in appearance⁽²⁴⁾. Indeed, the distinction between «original» and «copy» in this case derives from the technical vocabulary of diplomatic, a vocabulary not well suited to the kind of letter preserved in Arsenal 717⁽²⁵⁾. I will argue that early medieval letters possessed more than one codicological genre. A dossier of single-themed letters called for a different physical matrix than an administrative letter⁽²⁶⁾. *Libelli*, I will argue, may have been a normal form of transmission for such letters in the early Middle Ages. There are admittedly few analogues outside of hagiography and liturgy. Surviving examples are rare, it is true, but, as Mary Garrison warned in 1999, this may be the result of patterns of survival⁽²⁷⁾. Arsenal 717 may not be the copy which Amolo's scribes sent out in the 840s, but West is still right to point to the codicology of Arsenal 717 as a «neglected» source for the transmission of the word in the early Middle Ages⁽²⁸⁾.

2. Arsenal 717: Overview and Provenance

Arsenal 717 consists of a single gathering of eight folios (f. 1-8), measuring 270 × 240 mm. This gathering is protected by a bifolium jacket made of two sheets of reused medieval parchment pasted together writing-side inward, one on top of the other to form a thick protective covering (marked as folios A and 9) – all within a workaday modern binding⁽²⁹⁾. The manuscript's sole original contents

(23) One major example, discussed further below, is Cologne, Erzbischöfliche Diözesan- und Dombibliothek, Cod. 117 (f. 93-97). See Ernst PERELS, «Propagandatechnik im IX. Jahrhundert: ein Original-Aktenstück für Erzbischof Gunthar von Köln», *Archiv für Urkundenforschung*, 15, 1938, p. 423-425; Horst FUHRMANN, «Eine im Original erhaltene Propagandaschrift des Erzbischofs Gunthar von Köln (865)», *Archiv für Diplomatik*, 4, 1958, p. 1-51; H. HOFFMANN, «Zur mittelalterlichen Brieftechnik» (*supra* n. 19), p. 150.

(24) M. MERSIOWSKY, «Preserved by Destruction» (*supra* n. 14), p. 82-94, for a thorough examination of palaeographical and codicological features of surviving «original» letters.

(25) P. CHAPLAIS, «The Letter» (*supra* n. 14), p. 5-6.

(26) In using the term «matrix», I draw on the language of M. MERSIOWSKY, *Die Urkunde in der Karolingerzeit* (*supra* n. 14), vol. 1, p. 236-241.

(27) M. GARRISON, «“Send More Socks”» (*supra* n. 14), p. 99: «students of medieval literacy and communication should avoid explanatory models that would be undermined» by new discoveries.

(28) C. WEST, «Unauthorised Miracles» (*supra* n. 12), p. 304.

(29) Henry MARTIN, *Catalogue des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal*, Paris, 1886, vol. 2, p. 55-56. For other descriptions, see Adrien BRESSOLLES, *Doctrine et action politique d'Agobard*, Paris, 1949, p. 34; L. VAN ACKER (ed.), *Agobardi opera* (*supra* n. 11), p. liv-lv; Bernhard

are the two letters mentioned above. Both are from ninth-century archbishops of Lyon; both deal with the problem of superstitious or fraudulent crowds attracted to relics. The first letter (f. 1r-5r) contains Amolo's advice to his suffragan Theobald of Langres when crowds especially composed of women were wildly venerating untested relics at Dijon⁽³⁰⁾. It survives only in this manuscript. The second letter (f. 5r-8r), from Amolo's predecessor Agobard of Lyon to Bartholomew of Narbonne, treats a similar case of crowds and relics some twenty years earlier at the shrine of Saint Firmin in Uzès⁽³¹⁾. That second letter also appears in a slightly different form, under the heading *De quorundam inlusione signorum*, in the famous manuscript of Agobard's collected works rescued (and published in 1605) by Papire Masson, now Paris, BNF, lat. 2853⁽³²⁾. Aside from these two letters, Arsenal 717 contains one later medieval addition. An extract from the Council of Troyes (23 May, 1107) was added to the empty final verso (f. 8v) sometime in the twelfth century, judging by the handwriting⁽³³⁾. We cannot know exactly when the bifolium jacket (f. A and 9) was added to the manuscript, but it is possible to make out some of the script inside the two pasted-together parchment sheets; an invocation («in nomine domini») and a notary's mark (a diamond interwoven with a four-pronged star surmounted by a cross) suggest that this is a fragment of a fifteenth-century French notarial register⁽³⁴⁾.

The manuscript's early modern history has been described by Martin, Blumenthal, and Nebbiai⁽³⁵⁾. Sometime in the first half of the seventeenth century, Arsenal 717 came into the hands of Nicolas Camusat (1575-1655), a canon of Troyes who donated several manuscripts to Saint-Germain-des-Prés⁽³⁶⁾. It is tempting to suppose that this manuscript long abided in Troyes, since the twelfth-century

BISCHOFF, *Katalog der festländischen Handschriften des neunten Jahrhunderts (mit Ausnahme der wisigotischen)*, ed. B. EBERSPERGER, 3 vols, Wiesbaden, 1998-2014, vol. 3, p. 10 (no. 3923); Uta-Renate BLUMENTHAL, *The Early Councils of Pope Paschal II, 1100-1110*, Toronto, 1978, p. 88-89.

(30) Amolo of Lyon, ep. 1, ed. DÜMLER, p. 363-368.

(31) Agobard of Lyon, *De quorundam inlusione signorum*, ed. L. VAN ACKER (*supra* n. 11), p. 237-243.

(32) Papire MASSON (ed.), *Sancti Agobardi Episcopi Ecclesiae Lugdunensis Opera*, Paris, 1605. For description of Paris, BNF, lat. 2853 (probably tenth-century), see L. VAN ACKER (ed.), *Agobardi opera* (*supra* n. 11), p. li-lij; A. BRESSOLLES, *Doctrine et action politique d'Agobard* (*supra* n. 29), p. 32-33.

(33) Published in U.-R. BLUMENTHAL, *The Early Councils of Pope Paschal II* (*supra* n. 29), p. 90-97.

(34) On notaries' signs, see Arthur GIRY, *Manuel de diplomatique*, Paris, 1984, p. 603-614.

(35) Henry MARTIN, *Histoire de la Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal*, Paris, 1990, p. 291; U.-R. BLUMENTHAL, *The Early Councils of Pope Paschal II* (*supra* n. 29), p. 88-89; Donatella NEBBIAI, «Pour la Bibliothèque de Saint-Germain-des-Prés au XVII^e siècle: Nicolas Camusat (1575-1655), ses livres, ses recherches», in *Actes des deux colloques du tricentenaire de la mort de dom Mabilon*, ed. Jean LECLANT, André VAUCHEZ, and Daniel-Odon HUREL, Paris, 2010, p. 517-548, at p. 539-540.

(36) For Camusat's career, see D. NEBBIAI, «Pour la Bibliothèque de Saint-Germain-des-Prés» (*supra* n. 35), with discussion of his donation of this manuscript at p. 532-533.

extract added to f. 8v contains text from Pope Paschal II's 1107 council there – but there is no clear evidence. Camusat donated the manuscript to Saint-Germain-des-Prés in 1640, as Luc d'Achery noted at the bottom of folio 1r⁽³⁷⁾. The manuscript then came into the library of the brothers Pierre and Jacques Dupuy, who assigned it the number 183 in their collection. From there it came into the Royal Library, where it was given the number 4067 in the manuscript catalogue of the king's books drawn up by Nicolas Clément in 1682 (now BNF, N.A.F. 5402, at p. 275), later published by de Montfaucon in 1739⁽³⁸⁾. At some point in the eighteenth century the manuscript came into the possession of the celebrated bibliophile Antoine-René d'Argenson, marquis de Paulmy (1722-1789)⁽³⁹⁾. It was de Paulmy, the master of artillery, who established what became the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal at his home and workplace, and that is how this document ended up with its current shelf-mark in the fourth arrondissement of Paris, nestled between the Île Saint-Louis and the Bastille.

3. The Argument for Arsenal 717's «Originality»: Textual, Palaeographical, and Codicological Grounds

The case for Arsenal 717's «originality» as a Carolingian letter rests on three grounds: textual, palaeographical, and codicological. The textual evidence comes from Amolo's letter itself, which mentions Agobard's Uzès case as a parallel to Dijon⁽⁴⁰⁾. At the end of his letter, Amolo tells his correspondent Theobald of Langres that he has sent his suffragan a copy (*exemplar*) of his predecessor's letter along with his own:

Misimus vobis etiam exemplar epistolae praefati pii patris et nutritoris nostri ad iam dictum Narbonensem episcopum, ut si quis de huiusmodi causis subtilius et plenius nosse voluerit, illius lectione uberius ac profundius instruat⁽⁴¹⁾.

(37) On d'Achery, see Benjamin HEURTEBIZE, «Luc d'Achery», *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, ed. Marcel VILLER, Paris, 1937, col. 175-177. D'Achery also added the note «Ep(istol)a Amolonis Lugdunensis Ep(iscop)i ad Theobaldu(m) Lingonensem Epi(scopu)m» to the same folio (1r).

(38) B. DE MONTFAUCON, *Bibliotheca* (*supra* n. 8), vol. 2, p. 747, no. 4067: «Amolonis Episc. Lugdunensis Epistola ad Theobaldum Lingonensem Episcopum».

(39) See H. MARTIN, *Histoire de la Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal* (*supra* n. 35), p. 14-47, for de Paulmy's career, and p. 48-94, for the early development of the Arsenal collection.

(40) Amolo, ep. 1, c. 6, ed. DÜMLER, p. 366: «Scimus etiam civitatem quandam haut longe a nostris finibus, quae Ucaetia nuncupatur, sita in provincia Narbonensi, ubi cum eiusdem piaie memoriae praecessoris nostri tempore ad sepulchrum sancti Fermini episcopi istiusmodi percussiones et elisiones fieri coepissent...accepto ab eodem patre nostro consilio praedicavit eis atque praecepit Narbonensis qui nunc superest Bartholomeus episcopus, ut omnino locum illum, quem superstitiose frequentare coeperant, nequaquam amplius ita frequentarent...». This passage informs us that these events were occurring at Uzès. Although Agobard's letter refers to Saint Firmin, it does not specify Uzès explicitly: Agobard, *De quorundam intrusione signorum*, c. 1, ed. L. VAN ACKER (*supra* n. 11), p. 237: «in quadam ecclesia, ubi cuiusdam sancti corpus ueneratur nomine Firmini».

(41) Amolo, ep. 1, c. 9, ed. DÜMLER, p. 368.

We have also sent to you a copy of the letter of our aforementioned pious father and patron to the recently mentioned bishop of Narbonne, so that if anyone should wish to know about cases of this nature in greater detail and depth, he might be informed more fully and profoundly by reading it.

This led Boshof to connect the text with Arsenal 717⁽⁴²⁾, but it was Lieven van Acker who drew the conclusion explicitly: «Le fait que les deux écrits se trouvent ensemble dans ce manuscrit n'est pas un simple fait du hasard: la lettre d'Amolon à Thibault était originairement, à titre consultatif, accompagnée d'un exemplaire de celle d'Agobard à Barthélemi. Je crois qu'il s'agit ici d'une copie de cette missive d'Amolon»⁽⁴³⁾. Like Henry Martin before him, van Acker dated the caroline minuscule of Arsenal 717 to the tenth century⁽⁴⁴⁾. In van Acker's view, therefore, the manuscript must have been a later «copy», albeit one which strikingly suggested a closeness to the original as sent. West and Bouhot, however, have recently dated the script to the ninth century⁽⁴⁵⁾. If the manuscript is really ninth-century rather than tenth-, the consilience between text and content is all the more striking. We will examine the palaeography in greater detail below. For now, it suffices to say that West's ninth-century dating is possible, and matches that of Bernhard Bischoff, whose posthumous *Katalog*, recently published by Birgit Ebersperger, assigns the script to France, *circa* mid ninth century⁽⁴⁶⁾.

West argues that the «format, size...and *mise-en-page*» of Arsenal 717 closely resemble those of a celebrated *libellus* sewn into Cologne, Erzbischöfliche Diözesan- und Dombibliothek, Cod. 117 (f. 93-97)⁽⁴⁷⁾. This 205 × 160 mm booklet, appended to the end of a *Dionysio-Hadriana* canon law collection, is thought to be the «Versandexemplar im Original» of a dossier sent by Gunthar of Cologne to Hincmar of Reims in 865, sent with the intention of being further copied⁽⁴⁸⁾. Arsenal 717, to

(42) E. BOSHOFF, *Agobard* (*supra* n. 10), p. 314: «Tatsächlich überliefert uns eine Handschrift der Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal Agobards Schreiben an Bartholomaeus zusammen mit dem Amolos an Theutbald...».

(43) L. VAN ACKER (ed.), *Agobardi opera* (*supra* n. 11), p. lv.

(44) H. MARTIN, *Catalogue* (*supra* n. 29), vol. 2, p. 56; H. MARTIN, *Histoire de la Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal* (*supra* n. 35), p. 291; L. VAN ACKER (ed.), *Agobardi opera* (*supra* n. 11), p. liv.

(45) C. WEST, «Unauthorised Miracles» (*supra* n. 12), p. 303, n. 46; J.-P. BOUHOT, «Lettre d'Amolon» (*supra* n. 12), p. 424.

(46) B. BISCHOFF, *Katalog* (*supra* n. 29), vol. 3, p. 10 (no. 3923): «Frankreich, IX. Jh., ca. Mitte».

(47) C. WEST, «Unauthorised Miracles» (*supra* n. 12), p. 304.

(48) E. PERELS, «Propagandatechnik im IX. Jahrhundert» (*supra* n. 23), p. 425: «Man kann von einem Originalheft sprechen, das nach Absicht seines Verfassers wie eine Art "Kettenheft" in möglichst zahlreichen Exemplaren vervielfältigt werden sollte, um das gewünschte Ziel zu erreichen»; H. FUHRMANN, «Eine im Original erhaltene Propagandaschrift» (*supra* n. 23), p. 12: «Versandexemplar im Original»; Martina STRATMANN, «Briefe an Hinkmar von Reims», *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, 48, 1992, p. 37-81, at p. 49-50. See also the entry in B. BISCHOFF, *Katalog* (*supra* n. 29), vol. 1, p. 400 (no. 1928). H. HOFFMANN, «Zur mittelalterlichen Brieftechnik» (*supra* n. 19), p. 150, mentions this as one of the few «private letters» to survive from this period, also mentioning a letter from Bishop Hildegim of Halberstadt to the *prepositus* Reginbert of Werden, preserved in Münster, Staatsarchiv, Urkunde no. 2.

West's eye, has much in common with the Cologne 117 *libellus*, including what he identifies as a possible folding mark⁽⁴⁹⁾. The fact that Arsenal 717 survives as a single, coherent gathering, with text running from the top of f. 1r to the end of f. 8r (leaving f. 8v blank), suggests that it was always a standalone «booklet»⁽⁵⁰⁾. On the basis of this textual, palaeographical, and codicological evidence, West concludes, «In their fascination with the phantom relics described by Amolo, historians have unduly neglected what could be in a way the only real relic»⁽⁵¹⁾. West puts his case cautiously. He uses quotes around the word «original», and writes that Arsenal 717 may «preserve» Amolo's letter «as it was actually sent», but never claims that this *is* the letter that Amolo actually sent⁽⁵²⁾. For West, Arsenal 717 is simply a closer copy to Amolo's original missive than scholars have realized: close enough to reveal some of Amolo's intentions in penning this missive, and close enough to show how information circulated in the Carolingian period.

4. Assessment of the Evidence for «Originality» I: Palaeography

Have scholars neglected a rare «original» letter? The textual evidence is certainly suggestive given the order in which Amolo's and Agobard's letters appear in Arsenal 717: «We have also sent to you a copy (*exemplar*) of the letter of our aforementioned pious father and patron to the recently mentioned bishop of Narbonne»⁽⁵³⁾. Amolo's letter ends on folio 5r, line 18, with the next sentence after that one: «May omnipotent God see fit always to defend and safeguard your rever-

(49) C. WEST, «Unauthorised Miracles» (*supra* n. 12), p. 304; on the folds in the Cologne *libellus* (three horizontal, one vertical), see H. FUHRMANN, «Eine im Original erhaltene Propagandaschrift» (*supra* n. 23), p. 12-13, 34. The presence of folds has been one identifying characteristic of original early medieval letters as well as *libelli*: H. HOFFMANN, «Zur mittelalterlichen Brieftechnik» (*supra* n. 19), p. 149-150; M. MERSIOWSKY, «Preserved by Destruction» (*supra* n. 14), p. 87-90; W. WATTENBACH, *Das Schriftwesen im Mittelalter* (*supra* n. 17), p. 201. For folding patterns in other medieval *libelli* see Bernhard BISCHOFF, «Über gefaltete Handschriften, vornehmlich hagiographischen Inhalts», in Bernhard BISCHOFF, *Mittelalterliche Studien: Ausgewählte Aufsätze zur Schriftkunde und Literaturgeschichte*, Stuttgart, 1966, vol. 1, p. 93-100.

(50) C. WEST, «Unauthorised Miracles» (*supra* n. 12), p. 303. Contrast B. BISCHOFF, *Katalog* (*supra* n. 29), vol. 3, p. 10 (no. 3923): «letzter Quat. einer Hs.?».

(51) C. WEST, «Unauthorised Miracles» (*supra* n. 12), p. 304. For surveys of known early medieval original letters (not including this one), see M. MERSIOWSKY, «Preserved by Destruction» (*supra* n. 14), p. 77-82; M. MERSIOWSKY, «Regierungspraxis und Schriftlichkeit» (*supra* n. 14), p. 118-124; and the ongoing series, Armando PETRUCCI et al. (eds.), *Lettere originali del Medioevo latino (VII-XI sec.)*, 2 vols, Pisa, 2004-2012.

(52) C. WEST, «Unauthorised Miracles» (*supra* n. 12), p. 303-304. J.-P. BOUHOT, «Lettre d'Amolon» (*supra* n. 12), p. 424, by contrast, contends that the manuscript is the original letter, but in the context of a brief introduction to an appendix where he does not lay out his arguments for this position at length.

(53) Arsenal 717, f. 5r, lines 13-16; Amolo, ep. 1, c. 9, ed. DÜMLER, p. 368.

end belovedness for the establishment of his church»⁽⁵⁴⁾. One line later (f. 5r, line 19), Agobard's letter to Bartholomew begins with a large initial «R» and continues until the end of f. 8r. Originally f. 8v was left blank. The quire appears designed to fit both letters in the available space, with no sign of any interrupted text before or after. In addition, Agobard's letter at f. 5r-8r is the same one Amolo mentions in his text⁽⁵⁵⁾. The word *exemplar* which Amolo uses to promise a «copy» of his predecessor's letter is well attested as a term for physical copies of written texts in Carolingian Latin⁽⁵⁶⁾. The proximity of the two texts, the absence of blank spaces between them, and the originally blank verso folio at the end of the manuscript (now the twelfth-century canon from Troyes) all support the notion that the eighth folios of Arsenal 717 were never intended to contain any other texts. This manuscript could very plausibly be a close copy of Amolo's letter as he sent it.

But how close? The palaeographic evidence supports the notion that Arsenal 717 was composed in the ninth century rather than the tenth. Scholarly opinion seems to favor this dating. West cites personal correspondence from David Ganz and Rosamond McKitterick as well as the printed opinion of Ernst Dümmler to support his ninth-century dating, to which we can add the voices of Manitius and now Bischoff⁽⁵⁷⁾. The original text of Arsenal 717 (f. 1r-8r) is the work of a single scribe. The script is carried out in a somewhat uneven caroline minuscule. The ink is dark brown, almost reddish. Contemporary or near contemporary corrections (using a two-dot mark) have been added in a darker brown ink, some close to black. The corrector writes in a clear caroline minuscule with ninth-century touches such as the **eN** ligature (f. 1r., line 14). The letter forms for both the text and the corrections are typical of early medieval caroline minuscule. The scribe punctuates with an elevated dot, followed by a majuscule in rustic capitals; the question-mark is normal for the ninth century⁽⁵⁸⁾. The scribe always uses a half-uncial **a**, except in the ligature **ra**, where **a** takes on the **cc-form** (e.g. f. 1r, line 8: «**trans**acto»; line 18: «**trans**ferendum»; f. 3r, line 19: «**gr**atia»). In majuscules,

(54) Arsenal 717, f. 5r, lines 16-18; Amolo, ep. 1, c. 9, ed. DÜMMLER, p. 368: «Dominus omnipotens reverendam dilectionem vestram ad aedificationem ecclesiae suae iugiter protegere et custodire dignetur».

(55) Aside from the explicit appearance of Agobard and Bartholomew in both, see also the appearance of Saint Firmin in both texts: Amolo, ep. 1, c. 6, ed. DÜMMLER, p. 366; Agobard, *De quorundam inlusione signorum*, c. 1, ed. L. VAN ACKER (*supra* n. 11), p. 237.

(56) *Mittellateinisches Wörterbuch bis zum ausgehenden 13. Jahrhundert*, ed. Paul LEHMANN and Johannes STROUX et al., Munich, 2007, vol. 3, fasc. 10, col. 1553-1554, s.v. «exemplar».

(57) C. WEST, «Unauthorised Miracles» (*supra* n. 12), p. 303, n. 46: «R. McKitterick and D. Ganz have advised that a mid-ninth-century date is by no means out of the question (personal communication), and this seems confirmed by my preliminary comparisons with other Lyons manuscripts of this date».

(58) This mark consists of a single elevated dot and an S-like curve rather like the body of a modern «?» rotated counter-clockwise 160 degrees (see esp. f. 2v-3r). For an overview of early question-mark forms, see Bernhard BISCHOFF, *Latin Palaeography: Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, trans. Dáibhí Ó CRÓINÍN and David GANZ, Cambridge, 1990, p. 170.

the rustic capital **A** is lambda-like, with no horizontal bar. A minuscule **d** with a straight ascender is used throughout, while the majuscule **D** alternates between rustic capital and uncial forms (e.g. f. 34, lines 17 and 23). The scribe occasionally uses the **e-caudata**. The **f** extends generously both above and below the base line. The top compartment of the **g** is closed while the bottom is usually, but not invariably, open. Normally the text uses the minuscule **n**, but this sometimes alternates with a majuscule **N** form (e.g. f. 3v, line 22; f. 6r, line 3). The compartment of the rustic capital **P** is open and the horizontal base stroke is pronounced, as is that of the rustic capital **T**. The left stroke of the rustic capital **U** curves toward the left, but does not bulge out like the typical Lyonnais rustic capital **U**. The scribe uses the ligatures **et**, **ra** (in the form **rcc**), **st**, and a high **rt**. There are a fair number of abbreviations. Bischoff drew particular attention to the abbreviation *miscdam* for *misericordiam* (f. 8r, line 26), although elsewhere the word is spelled out in whole (f. 2v, lines 25-26: *misericor|diae*). The somewhat inconsistent size of the letters (see esp. f. 5v), a few drawn ligatures (e.g. *au|ctoritas*, f. 1, line 26), and the blotchy quality of the clubbed ascenders (e.g. f. 3v, line 24) probably led Bischoff to describe this minuscule as «unausgeglichen»⁽⁵⁹⁾.

Does the script hail from Lyon? The mid ninth-century Lyon scriptorium produced a consistent caroline minuscule with noteworthy traits⁽⁶⁰⁾. Lyon hands of this period are known for their small, sharp **cc**-form **a** (reminiscent of a modern typed **u** in italics), occasional Visigothic touches (especially in glosses), particular *signes de renvois* used by Lyon's learned scholars, such as the deacon Florus, as well as a distinctive *Nota* monogram, a rustic capital **N** with a nearly horizontal crossbar that sits on the baseline, and a peculiar «protruding» (*ausladend*) rustic capital **U** which appears consistently across mid ninth-century Lyon manuscripts⁽⁶¹⁾. None of these features is visible in the script of Arsenal 717⁽⁶²⁾. Bischoff has also noted that Lyonnais manuscripts sometimes carry out the large initials in a blue-

(59) B. BISCHOFF, *Katalog* (supra n. 29), vol. 3, p. 10 (no. 3923).

(60) S. TAFEL, «The Lyons Scriptorium» (supra n. 15); see also Elias Avery LOWE, *Codices Lugdunenses Antiquissimi: Le scriptorium de Lyon: la plus ancienne école calligraphique de France*, Lyon, 1924. B. BISCHOFF, *Latin Palaeography* (supra n. 58), p. 116, notes that the Lyon scriptorium altered its style in the second third of the ninth century. For further guidance, B. BISCHOFF, *Katalog* (supra n. 29), vol. 1, p. 484, vol. 2, p. 440, and vol. 3, p. 616, list manuscripts whose script Bischoff associated with Lyon or the «Umkreis von Lyon». The Lyon Bibliothèque Municipale has a large body of high-quality digitized ninth-century manuscripts, including several from Lyon itself: <http://florus.bm-lyon.fr/>.

(61) E.g. B. BISCHOFF, *Katalog* (supra n. 29), vol. 1, p. 24 (no. 77), p. 36 (no. 152), p. 415 (no. 2003); vol. 2, p. 24 (no. 2066), p. 137 (no. 2547), p. 138 (no. 2553), p. 139 (no. 2556), p. 140 (nos. 2559, 2560, 2561), p. 141-142 (no. 2565), p. 142 (no. 2569), p. 143 (nos. 2572, 2573, 2574), p. 144 (no. 2575), p. 145 (no. 2583), p. 147 (no. 2589), p. 203 (no. 2839), p. 344 (no. 3714); vol. 3, p. 84 (no. 4240), p. 225 (no. 5006), p. 238 (no. 5085).

(62) On f. 6r, there is a protruding rustic capital **U** and a *Nota* monogram in the right margin which bears some resemblance to the μ -like Lyon rustic capital **N**, but neither appears to me definitive.

grey ink, but here there are only two large initials (f. 1r and f. 5r), for the first letter of each text, in the same ink as the main hand⁽⁶³⁾. The *rcc* ligature is common in Lyon hands (e.g. Lyon, BM, 324, f. 8v), but not exclusive to them. Bischoff in his posthumous note on this manuscript opined that there were «no signs of Lyon-nais script (e.g. the protruding *U*)»⁽⁶⁴⁾. Nor does the manuscript possess, to my eyes, traits particularly associated with other known scriptoria in mid ninth-century Francia (e.g. the supple aspect of Tours; the straight, unclubbed ascenders of Reims; the peculiar question-mark of Saint-Germain-des-Prés). Finally, the hand bears no particular resemblance to the little we know of Troyes scripts (a tempting possibility given the conciliar extract and the seventeenth-century provenance there)⁽⁶⁵⁾. The palaeographical evidence, therefore, is inconclusive. A ninth-century dating is likely, especially given the conservative ligatures, light punctuation, and rustic capital forms. A rough localization to what is today France satisfied Bischoff⁽⁶⁶⁾. Otherwise, however, the handwriting tells us little about when and where this manuscript was written.

5. Two errors: *ludumensis*, in *astro diuionensi*

An additional clue is provided by an orthographic error which was not signaled by Dümmler in his edition of this text. In the address, Amolo is styled (in Dümmler's printed edition), «Amolo humilis ecclesiae Lugdunensis episcopus»⁽⁶⁷⁾. As Dümmler notes in his *apparatus criticus*, however, the *g* of «Lugdunensis» has been added above the text by a corrector. Dümmler's note, which reads, «*g in Lugd. superscr.*», does not immediately make clear that the absence of the *g* is not the only orthographic error in the spelling of «Lyon» here in the manuscript. The text before the superscript correction (f. 1r, line 2) reads either *ludumensis* or *ludunien-sis* (depending on how one reads the minim). Neither of these two forms, nor the form *lugdumensis*, appear anywhere in a wildcard search (*ludumen**, *ludunien**) of the Patrologia Latina and CETEDOC digital databases, although of course these databases fail to capture variant manuscript readings⁽⁶⁸⁾. *Lugduniensis* appears

(63) B. BISCHOFF, *Latin Palaeography* (supra n. 58), p. 17.

(64) B. BISCHOFF, *Katalog* (supra n. 29), vol. 3, p. 10 (no. 3923).

(65) For an established ninth-century Troyes manuscript, Paris, BNF, lat. 2445, see B. BISCHOFF, *Katalog* (supra n. 29), vol. 3, p. 75 (no. 4195); Pierre PETITMENGIN, «D'Augustin à Prudence de Troyes, les citations augustiniennes dans un manuscrit d'auteur», in *De Tertulien aux mozarabes, II: Haut moyen-âge (VI^e-IX^e siècles). Mélanges offerts à Jacques Fontaine à l'occasion de son 70^e anniversaire*, ed. Louis HOLTZ and Jean-Claude FREDOUILLE, Paris, 1992, p. 229-251. See also Warren PEZÉ, «Deux manuscrits personnels de Prudence de Troyes», *Revue bénédictine*, 124, 2014, p. 114-150.

(66) B. BISCHOFF, *Katalog* (supra n. 29), vol. 3, p. 10 (no. 3923).

(67) Amolo, ep. 1, c. 1, ed. DÜMMLER, p. 363.

(68) «Lugdunen*» by contrast generates 1224 hits in CETEDOC and 4634 in the PLD. «Lugdumensis» does erroneously appear twice in the Chadwyck PL online database, for Ado of Vienne's *Chronicle*, PL 123, col 85A: «Tunc temporis et Irenaeus Lugdumensis cum maxima mul-

only once in these databases, in the fifteenth-century *Gnotosolilos Paruus* of Arnold Gheyloven, though in fact the manuscript reading there is *luduniensis* and it is the editor who has introduced the (partially) corrected form⁽⁶⁹⁾. These databases build on edited texts and do not preserve the *apparatus critici* of the editions, including variant readings, but they give a sense of the rarity of alternative spellings for Lyon. Furthermore, the dark-ink superscript **g** appears to be later than the regular corrector's hand – though it is impossible to say how much later. It is carried out in a darker ink than the early medieval corrections in the same manuscript, which tend to use a two-dot mark for corrections (one under the letter, one by the superscript correction). That two-dot mark is absent here, suggesting that the missing «g» was caught even after the first wave of corrections. A single orthographic error in the spelling of «Lyon» would be understandable given the freedom with which medieval scribes spelled proper nouns, but two errors begins to suggest a degree of distance⁽⁷⁰⁾. In addition, one of the corrections with the two-dot mark on the same folio is for the name of Dijon, printed by Dümmler as «in castro Divionensi», but written «in astro diuionensi» before the superscript **c** (f. 1r, line 3). This banal slip was corrected by the roughly contemporary corrector, but the fact that two of the relevant place names in this letter have been misspelled, when taken with the palaeographical evidence, is another possible indication that Arsenal 717 was not produced at Lyon.

6. Assessment of the Evidence for «Originality» II: Codicology

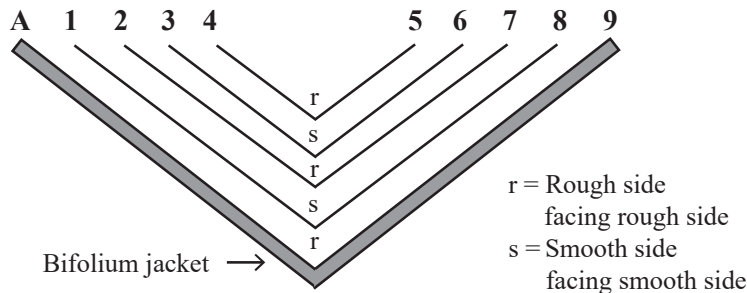
This brings us to the codicological evidence. The eight original folios are gathered like facing like, with the rough (hair) side on the outside of the gathering. The rough sides appear to have been smoothed with pumice. The pages are clean and not scuffed (in contrast to the Cologne *libellus*). The manuscript in its current state measures 270 × 240 mm. The writing is justified at 198 × 150 mm. The ruling is by dry point, at 29 horizontal lines per folio. No prickings are visible in the margins. The writing space is always 150 mm horizontally, while the vertical space between horizontal lines varies between 6 and 8 mm. The script is carried out in long lines; the writing begins above the line. Each page of text, including the final page of text (f. 8r), takes up all 29 lines, suggesting careful planning in the drafting of

titudine martyrium suum perfecit»; and for the historical note added to Halitgar's penitential handbook written by Leglay (PL 105, col. 650A), but when I checked both against the physical copies of the Patrologia Latina, I found that they were both digital transcription errors from the printed original. PL 123 (Paris, 1879), col. 85A and PL 105 (Paris, 1851), col. 650A both read «Lugdunensis».

(69) Arnold GHEYLOVEN, *Gnotosolilos Paruus*, Prima pars, Rubr. 6, c. 3.8, ed. A. G. WEILER, Turnhout, 2008 (Corpus Christianorum, continuatio mediaevalis, 212), p. 269. In fact, as Weiler notes in his apparatus, the manuscript reads «luduniensis».

(70) E. PERELS, «Propagandatechnik im IX. Jahrhundert» (*supra* n. 23), p. 424, notes that the Cologne *libellus* is not free from orthographical errors, even though it is an original.

both letters. The ruling continues on the originally blank verso of 8v, where it has been used to guide the writing of the twelfth-century addition (which only uses 24 lines). There are no visible quire marks either at the beginning or the end of the gathering. The structure of the quire is as follows:



How much do the «format, size...and *mise-en-page*» of Arsenal 717 resemble the physical appearance of other «original» Carolingian letters? West builds his case on the *libellus* of Cologne 117, the dossier of favorable conciliar material sent by Gunthar of Cologne to Hincmar of Reims in 865⁽⁷¹⁾. Gunthar's *libellus* may survive as it was sent, but, as mentioned above, it is not a typical «original» letter. The few original letters which survive from the ninth century tend to be single-sheet documents, more similar to charters than to the liturgical, hagiographical, and legal *libelli* which Arsenal 717 and Gunthar's booklet resemble⁽⁷²⁾. One of the early continental examples, the report of Maginarius to Charlemagne from Benevento in 788, survives on a papyrus roll consisting of six *plagulae*⁽⁷³⁾. By the ninth century, however, such letters were being written onto folded-up single sheets of parchment rather than on papyrus *rotuli*⁽⁷⁴⁾. Pierre Chaplais listed three Carolingian examples to support his analysis of the «earliest original letter close» (an early eighth-century Anglo-Saxon parchment rectangle sent by Wealdhere of London to Brihtwold of Canterbury): a letter from Louis the Pious to Baderad of Paderborn, one from Charles the Bald to the people of Barcelona, and one from Bishop Hildegrim of Halberstadt to the *prepositus* Reginbert of Werden in 876/877⁽⁷⁵⁾. All three documents consist of a single rectangular sheet of parchment, with long lines running

(71) C. WEST, «Unauthorised Miracles» (*supra* n. 12), p. 304.

(72) For overviews, see H. HOFFMANN, «Zur mittelalterlichen Brieftechnik» (*supra* n. 19), p. 147-154; M. MERSIOWSKY, «Regierungspraxis und Schriftlichkeit» (*supra* n. 14), p. 118-123.

(73) Paris, Archives Nationales, K 7, no. 91; *Chartae Latinae Antiquiores: Facsimile Edition of the Latin Charters*, vol. 16 (France 4), ed. Hartmut ATSMÄ and Jean VEZIN, Olten, 1986, p. 59-65 (no. 629). For a second, far more fragmentary, papyrus letter, see *Chartae Latinae Antiquiores: Facsimile Edition of the Latin Charters*, vol. 2 (Switzerland 2), ed. Albert BRUCKNER and Robert MARICHAL, Olten, 1956, p. 128-129 (no. 174).

(74) See M. MERSIOWSKY, «Preserved by Destruction» (*supra* n. 14), p. 82.

(75) P. CHAPLAIS, «The Letter» (*supra* n. 14), p. 10-15. See also the list of letters in M. MERSIOWSKY, «Preserved by Destruction» (*supra* n. 14), p. 77-82.

down the shorter side, folded three times vertically and three times horizontally, with a dorsal inscription identifying the addressee⁽⁷⁶⁾. The two royal letters were the work of royal writing offices. The dorsal inscription on the letter from Hildegrip to Reginbert, now Münster, Nordrhein-Westfälisches Staatsarchiv, Fürstentum Münster, Urkunde 2, reads «ragenberto preposito offeranda»⁽⁷⁷⁾. Nearly all the «original» single-sheet letters which survive are folded in this fashion⁽⁷⁸⁾. The script in the Münster letter is a somewhat modified caroline minuscule carried out with interlinear spaces. In other words, the visual idiom of these charter-like, single-sheet letters is entirely different from the Cologne *libellus* – and from Arsenal 717.

Therefore, we should not treat the Cologne *libellus* and the letter of Hildegrip as identical codicological forms, even if both could be characterized as «original Carolingian letters». These two documents have different functions and different forms. Hildegrip's letter has much more in common with charters and diplomas. Gunthar's «Propagandaschrift» is one of the many little booklets (*libelli*) which populated early medieval literary culture, particularly in hagiography⁽⁷⁹⁾. Some of these *libelli* survive today as parts (sometimes «self-contained units») of larger manuscripts⁽⁸⁰⁾. A ninth-century legal example is a *libellus* added to Sélestat, Bibliothèque Humaniste, 14 (now f. 94-98), consisting of five folios of about 165/176 × 120/125 mm (justified 125 × 95 mm), in twenty-one long lines, bound into a longer and larger legal collection⁽⁸¹⁾. Both individual saints' lives and liturgical *ordines* in *libellus*-format made their way into larger collections, where many survive today⁽⁸²⁾. The two lengthy letters in Arsenal 717 make more sense as a

(76) For folds and dorsal inscriptions, see H. HOFFMANN, «Zur mittelalterlichen Brieftechnik» (*supra* n. 19), p. 149; M. MERSIOWSKY, «Preserved by Destruction» (*supra* n. 14), p. 87-90.

(77) H. HOFFMANN, «Zur mittelalterlichen Brieftechnik» (*supra* n. 19), p. 150; Theodor SCHIEFFER, «Zu einem Briefe der späten Karolingerzeit», *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, 2, 1938, p. 193-204, at p. 195-196.

(78) M. MERSIOWSKY, «Preserved by Destruction» (*supra* n. 14), p. 87-90.

(79) C. PILSWORTH, «Vile Scraps» (*supra* n. 21), p. 178-181. See the survey of 314 hagiographical *libelli* in J.-C. POULIN, «Les “libelli”» (*supra* n. 21), p. 55-164.

(80) Pamela ROBINSON, «The “Booklet”: A Self-Contained Unit in Composite Manuscripts», in *The History of the Book in the West: A Library of Critical Essays*, ed. Jane ROBERTS et al., Farnham, 2010, vol. 1, p. 159-182, at p. 159, for much later examples.

(81) Sélestat, Bibliothèque Humaniste, 14 (104), f. 69-147. For discussion, Hubert MORDEK, *Bibliotheca capitularium regum Francorum manuscripta: Überlieferung und Traditionszusammenhang der fränkischen Herrschererlasse*, Munich, 1995 (Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Hilfsmittel, 15), p. 708-714; Hubert MORDEK, «Weltliches Recht im Kloster Weißenburg/Elsaß: Hinkmar von Reims und die Kapitulariensammlung des Cod. Sélestat, Bibliothèque Humaniste, 14 (104)», in Hubert MORDEK, *Studien zur fränkischen Herrschergesetzgebung: Aufsätze über Kapitularien und Kapitulariensammlungen ausgewählt zum 60. Geburtstag*, Frankfurt, 2000, p. 261-278; Thomas FAULKNER, *Law and Authority in the Early Middle Ages: The Frankish leges in the Carolingian Period*, Cambridge, 2016, p. 131-133.

(82) B. BISCHOFF, «Über gefaltete Handschriften» (*supra* n. 49), p. 94-97; C. VOGEL, *Medieval Liturgy* (*supra* n. 22), p. 37-38; see also J.-C. POULIN, «Les “libelli”» (*supra* n. 21), p. 17, for

libellus text than as the contents of a single-sheet letter. Both letters deal with the same subject, superstitious crowds venerating relics.

What about format? The Cologne *libellus* measures 205 × 160 mm, like the Sélestat *libellus* mentioned above, considerably smaller than Arsenal 717 (270 × 240 mm). The Cologne *libellus* is also more rectangular in format (with a 1.3 height-to-width ratio as opposed to Arsenal 717's 1.1 ratio). Of course, we cannot rule out the possibility that Arsenal 717 was cut down at some point, which makes such format comparisons risky. We are on surer ground comparing the *mise-en-page*. As we saw, Arsenal 717 was carried out in 29 long lines per page over a dry point ruling (single bounding lines, writing above line) at approximately 198 × 150 mm (1.3 ratio). We can compare that to the Cologne *libellus*, in 27 long lines, ruled at 175 × 128 mm. (1.4 ratio). The ratios here are closer, but this is not very meaningful given the difference in size and number of lines between the two manuscripts. In fact, Arsenal appears quite large not only for a *libellus* but for fuller codices containing letters. One ninth-century manuscript of Alcuin's letters with 98 folios now in Paris, BNF, N.A.L. 1096, measures 210 × 145 mm (1.4 ratio) and is justified (long lines) at 165 × 105 mm (1.6 ratio). London, BL, Harley 208, another ninth-century manuscript of 119 folios, with the letters of Alcuin and Dungal, measures 201 × 145 mm, justified at 154 × 110 mm. Paris, BNF, lat. 2853, Papire Masson's rescued tenth-century manuscript of Agobard's work, which also preserves Agobard's letter to Bartholomew of Narbonne, at 230 folios, measures 213 × 140 mm (note: it has been cut), and is justified to a narrow strip of 165 × 90 mm, presumably to leave space for commentary. Arsenal 717 is larger than these full codices by height and width, but in format and length it is most similar to the Cologne *libellus*.

Finally, there is the question of the fold or crease. Letters close (folded and usually sealed official correspondence) are not the only manuscripts which bear marks of folding. Bernhard Bischoff studied a group of manuscripts with creases and found they were commonest in manuscripts of smaller size and length, particularly *libelli* which at one time circulated on their own⁽⁸³⁾. The Cologne's *libellus* associated with Gunther of Cologne bears signs of folding (one vertical, three horizontal creases), although not in the regular horizontal and vertical patterns which appear in single-sheet letters⁽⁸⁴⁾. *Libelli* were transported in saddlebags or pouches of robes; they were small and liable to be folded up for ease of transport. Bischoff found creases in *libelli* of various genres: hagiographical, school, literary, disciplinary and ascetical, and medical texts. West points to a crease in Arsenal

«l'essor décisif et la multiplication des grands légendiers systématiques», a process which «a sans doute modifié – amoindri? – la place et l'importance des livrets dans l'économie générale de la circulation des œuvres hagiographiques après le XI^e siècle».

(83) B. BISCHOFF, «Über gefaltete Handschriften» (*supra* n. 49), p. 94.

(84) M. MERSIOWSKY, «Preserved by Destruction» (*supra* n. 14), p. 88-89. H. FUHRMANN, «Eine im Original erhaltene Propagandaschrift» (*supra* n. 23), p. 12-14, somewhat misleadingly likens the folds (one vertical, three horizontal) in the Cologne *libellus* to Charles the Bald's letter of 876.

717: «Admittedly, there is the possibility that this folding took place later, since the folds are very visible on the early modern parchment cover; but it is equally possible that the original little manuscript was folded before the cover was added, and refolded again afterwards»⁽⁸⁵⁾. I detect only one crease on Arsenal 717: a horizontal line roughly at the center of the manuscript which is more distinct on the bifolium jacket (f. A+9) than on the gathering within, particularly closer to the binding. In my view, this crease does not resemble the multiple folds in the Cologne *libellus*, but rather the lighter and more irregular folding patterns found among Bischoff's creased *libelli*⁽⁸⁶⁾. At the same time, a binding which is too tight can pinch folios inward, producing a central crease more visible near the binding and the outside folios of a manuscript⁽⁸⁷⁾. While West may be correct that the original gathering was refolded after being bound with the bifolium jacket, it seems more likely that the folding occurred after the jacket was added.

7. Conclusion: An Original Epistolary *Libellus*

Arsenal 717 is probably not an «original» letter in most recognized senses of that term. It is certainly no «autograph» as the anonymous annotator of folio Av suggested⁽⁸⁸⁾. Nor is it the kind of «original» letter which Hildegard II sent to the *prepositus* of Werden, a businesslike single-sheet «letter close»⁽⁸⁹⁾. As West has pointed out, Arsenal 717 has much more in common with the Cologne *libellus* which Gunthar sent to Hincmar of Reims in 865. That Cologne manuscript, as Perels argued, was produced by Gunthar's writing office for the purpose of being copied further⁽⁹⁰⁾. The Cologne *libellus* was not of course written out by Gunthar himself, but it was a «Versandexemplar im Original», the only surviving example, but probably one of many⁽⁹¹⁾. Arsenal 717 was «original» in none of these senses. This *libellus* cannot have been the original *libellus* that Amolo sent to his suffragan Theobald in the 840s⁽⁹²⁾. Although the script is likely to be ninth-century, the hand does not resemble the distinctive style of the Lyon scriptorium, and the manuscript's misspellings of «Lyon» and «Dijon» reinforce this palaeographical impression. Arsenal 717 must be a second-order copy.

(85) C. WEST, «Unauthorised Miracles» (*supra* n. 12), p. 304.

(86) E.g. St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, MS. 567, pp. 135-153 (s. VIII-IX); B. BISCHOFF, «Über gefaltete Handschriften» (*supra* n. 49), p. 96.

(87) E.g. Paris, BNF, lat. 2400.

(88) Arsenal 717, f. Av: «Codex iste Autographus».

(89) Münster, Staatsarchiv, Urkunde no. 2.

(90) E. PERELS, «Propagandatechnik im IX. Jahrhundert» (*supra* n. 23), p. 425.

(91) H. FUHRMANN, «Eine im Original erhaltene Propagandaschrift» (*supra* n. 23), p. 12.

(92) For rich discussion of how information circulated in and out of writing in the Carolingian period, see Paul DUTTON, «Whispering Secrets to a Dark Age», in Paul DUTTON, *Charlemagne's Mustache and Other Cultural Clusters of a Dark Age*, New York, 2004, p. 129-150.

Yet this should not diminish Arsenal 717's codicological interest. In fact, it raises new questions about the dissemination of early medieval letters through epistolary *libelli*. Arsenal 717 sheds light on transmission sensibilities and methods of archiepiscopal self-promotion. If this *libellus* is not a Lyonnais version of the Cologne «Versandexemplar im Original», it may well have been designed, as van Acker thought, to preserve the basic appearance of the original *libellus* ⁽⁹³⁾. This manuscript may be a circulation copy made shortly after the original, sent out or copied beyond the archiepiscopal see of Lyon. In other words, it may be one or two codicological stages away from the (lost) original exemplar. This would make it just as rare a codicological artifact: not an «original» but a proximate copy in original format. Amolo, like Gunthar, wanted his little dossier to serve as a sign of his sagacity and authority. His predecessor Agobard's letter, whose *exemplar* Arsenal 717 preserves, had been directed to the archbishop of Narbonne, not a suffragan but a fellow metropolitan. Amolo may have intended to circulate this *libellus* widely in order to assert Lyonnais preeminence. Its rhetorical and literary qualities suggest that it was not merely intended to solve one exigent circumstance ⁽⁹⁴⁾. If this manuscript is evidence of the text's wider reception, it offers a rare glimpse into the written exercise of archiepiscopal authority.

Can we be sure that Arsenal 717 as it survives is not, as Bischoff ventured, the last gathering of a now-lost manuscript ⁽⁹⁵⁾? Arsenal 717 is admittedly larger than other Carolingian *libelli* – taller and wider than some contemporary epistolary codices – and in better shape than other surviving *libelli* (not scuffed, not crumpled) ⁽⁹⁶⁾. There are reasons mitigating against this possibility. First, there is a close connection between the text of Amolo's letter and the presentation of the two texts in the manuscript: «Misimus vobis etiam exemplar epistolae praefati pii patris et nutritoris nostri ad iam dictum Narbonensem episcopum» ⁽⁹⁷⁾. Second, the absence of other contemporary texts suggest that Arsenal 717 was always a stand-alone *libellus*. The pamphlet makes sense as a thematic unit. Amolo's letter begins at the top line of first recto folio and the last verso folio is left blank. Third, the absence of any signs of previous binding also suggest that Arsenal 717 represents

(93) L. VAN ACKER, ed., *Agobardi opera* (supra n. 11), p. lv.

(94) See esp. Amolo, *ep.* 1, c. 7, ed. DÜMLER, p. 366-367, for rhetorical fireworks: alliteration («studium et sacerdotalem sinceritatem ac severitatem», «maxime mulierum multitudo»); chiasm («istiusmodi commentum et figmentum diabolicum»); anaphora («nulla...nulla...nulla», «ubi...ubi...ubi, etc.», «ibi...ibi...ibi», «haec...haec»); isocola («novitatum vanitas amputatur...institutionis semita custoditur»); homophonic pairs («dolende ac pudenda, captiva et mente capta, annuntiando... atque optestando»).

(95) B. BISCHOFF, *Katalog* (supra n. 29), vol. 3, p. 10 (no. 3923).

(96) The horizontal crease in the manuscript is mainly visible on the bifolium jacket, not the early medieval gathering, so it cannot immediately be likened to the creases in other early medieval circulated booklets. That said, not all *libelli* bear creases or fold marks, for instance: Sélestat, Bibliothèque Humaniste, 14 (104), f. 69-147.

(97) Amolo, *ep.* 1, c. 9, ed. DÜMLER, p. 368.

an early step in the process of dissemination, and not a detached fragment of a once larger epistolary codex.

If Arsenal 717 is a ninth-century epistolary *libellus*, what could have inspired its production⁽⁹⁸⁾? Some notion may be gleaned by comparison with another rare example of what may be a booklet of the same kind. Paris, BNF, lat. 2443, contains letters of Hrabanus Maurus; it was probably written at Mainz, Hrabanus' see, during his reign as archbishop (847-856)⁽⁹⁹⁾. This small manuscript of only 29 folios measures 255 × 170 mm, justified at 192 × 120 mm, with 23 long lines per folio; its last verso folio (fol 29v) is blank⁽¹⁰⁰⁾. In this, it is closer than the Cologne *libellus* to the appearance, size, *mise-en-page*, and content of Arsenal 717⁽¹⁰¹⁾. The letters within pertain to questions of episcopal governance, particularly the role of the chorepiscopus⁽¹⁰²⁾. The function of this epistolary *libellus* seems roughly similar to that of Arsenal 717: a thematic circulation copy of a set of letters on related subjects, though this manuscript is one step closer to the sender. Such collections abide somewhere between the practical single-sheet letter and the longer literary collection⁽¹⁰³⁾. Arsenal 717 suggests that this literary genre had a codicological form, one which scholars should be aware of in subsequent studies of letters and their transmission. If this intriguing manuscript is not evidence for one rare form of letter, then, it affords another precious witness to the circulation of information and knowledge in the early Middle Ages.

Harvard University/Massachusetts Institute of Technology Shane BOBRYCKI

(98) Cf. M. GARRISON, «“Send More Socks”» (*supra* n. 14), p. 99, on peculiarities of preservation context.

(99) B. BISCHOFF, *Katalog* (*supra* n. 29), vol. 3, p. 75 (no. 4194). See also Charles SAMARAN and Robert MARICHAL, *Catalogue des manuscrits en écriture latine portant des indications de date, de lieu ou de copiste*, Paris, 1959-1984, vol. 2, p. 117. Digitization of the microfilm: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9078150z>.

(100) B. BISCHOFF, *Katalog* (*supra* n. 29), vol. 3, p. 75 (no. 4194).

(101) See also the statistical summary of dimensions and codicological traits among the hagiographical *libelli* in J.-C. POULIN, «Les “libelli”» (*supra* n. 21), p. 167-187.

(102) Hrabanus Maurus, *Epistolae*, no. 25, ed. Ernst DÜMLER, Berlin, 1899 (Monumenta Germaniae Historica, *Epistolae*, 5), p. 431-439. For the history of chorepiscopi in the West, see Jörg MÜLLER, «Gedanken zum Institut der Chorbischöfe», in *Medieval Church Law and the Origins of the Western Legal Tradition: A Tribute to Kenneth Pennington*, ed. W. MÜLLER and M. SOMMAR, Washington, DC, 2006, p. 77-94, esp. p. 78-80; A. SCHRÖDER, «Über die Chorbischöfe des 8. und 9. Jahrhunderts», *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie*, 15, 1891, p. 176-178; Raymund KOTTJE, «Chorbischof, 2. Westkirche», in *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, Munich, 1983, vol. 2, col. 1884-1886; H. LECLERCQ, «Chorévêques», in *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, ed. F. CABROL and H. LECLERCQ, Paris, 1913, vol. 3, part 1, p. 1423-1453.

(103) See also G. CONSTABLE, *Letters and Letter-Collections* (*supra* n. 9), p. 20-25.

RÉSUMÉ

L'article examine un manuscrit insolite du haut Moyen Âge, Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 717, qui est l'unique témoin d'une lettre du neuvième siècle écrite par l'archevêque de Lyon au sujet des foules religieuses à Dijon. La codicologie, la paléographie et l'orthographe du manuscrit sont examinées en relation avec son contenu. Bien que ce petit manuscrit ne soit pas (comme on l'a suggéré) un document «original», il s'agit d'un rare exemple médiéval d'une forme codicologique de lettre qui est sous-étudiée: le livret thématique. Cet article trace les limites du concept «d'originalité» en décrivant la diffusion de ce genre de *libelli* épistolaires. Il affirme que ceux-ci étaient utilisés pour propager des prétentions doctrinales, comme celles défendues par cet archevêque.

