Abstract

Within European manuscript culture in the twelfth-century, a vast network of monastic and cathedral scholars circulated texts between their institutions, copying them, incorporating them into other manuscripts, and, in turn, preserving them. This study of the early circulation of two texts by Nicolaus Maniacutius († ca. 1145), a Cistercian scholar in Rome, reveals that they were incorporated into other codices in Rome, London, and northern England through different types of scholarly networks, and suggests some of the modes of transmission. How these texts were circulated clearly indicates how each text was valued, and demonstrates how “intellectual property” was valued in twelfth-century Europe.

In our time, the concept of property and ownership—personal, institutional, and national—pervades modern life, leading to conflicts ranging from minor disputes to lawsuits and international conflicts. Our increasing awareness of the value of what we call today “intellectual property” extends far beyond traditional copyright protection into international anti-piracy laws. The Chronicle Review recently published an article on Adrian Johns’s new book, Piracy: The Intellectual Property Wars from Gutenberg to Gates, a study of the concept of intellectual property and the history of copyright protection. Johns studied the impact of the printing press on the manuscript culture of the time, and how deeply that innovation in Western Europe, followed by the Industrial Revolution three centuries later, influenced the developing concept of intellectual property (Young 2010; Johns 2010). In the early eighteenth century, the first copyright laws emerged in Great Britain with the “Statute of Anne” in early 1710 (Eyre [1810–1828] 1955, 8; Statute 1710; Rose 1993, 36; Bently et al. 2010).
Six centuries earlier, the widespread practices of collecting, copying, and circulating texts, items that today would be called intellectual property, revealed a far different paradigm. Before the introduction of printing in Europe circa 1453, manuscripts certainly were perceived as property and often expressed property ownership. In addition, the use, re-use, and incorporation of older texts into new texts, with or without any sort of attribution, took place frequently and often without restriction or offense. Many writers in the ancient and medieval West did indeed copy, incorporate, or refer to earlier texts in their own works, thus preserving the authors and titles of works that would have been lost. For example, Pytheas of Massalia’s *On the Ocean*, which was first published in the late fourth century BC, is only known today because at least eighteen other ancient and early medieval authors included parts of it in their own texts (Cunliffe 2003, 3). Investigating that practice of incorporating earlier texts into a new work leads us to intriguing questions and insights into the fluid medieval world of scribes, copyists, and scholars, so very different from our own contemporary print culture (Mayer 2004, xi–xvi). It also invites us to investigate how the texts themselves were valued, both by writers and collectors, and how texts circulated between monastic libraries and cathedral chapters. The perceived value of a particular work in its own time depended upon both the actual text, including “borrowings” incorporated into it, and the subtext. Those currents of symbolism, polemic, or doctrine derived from multiple variables, including cultural biases and motivations supporting the composition or preservation of specific works. Despite enormous losses of material over time, these fragmentary remains of the rich textual culture of the medieval Church provide a window into a unique perception of intellectual property. This investigation of two mid-twelfth century manuscripts and their composition, dissemination, collection, and preservation investigates that intellectual world in which monastic and cathedral scholars avidly composed, collected, and copied the intellectual property of their time.

---

1. See Trehame and Walker 2010; Nichols and Wenzel 1996, 1–3. No doubt the circulation, copying, and incorporation of texts into new texts and manuscript collections existed within literate cultures outside of medieval Europe; however, this paper will focus on manuscript culture in Western Europe in the twelfth and early thirteenth century.
Nicolaus Maniacutius: Exegete, Scholar, and Scribe

In this study, the early history of two texts by the scholar, Cistercian monk, and canon of the Lateran Palace in Rome, Nicolaus Maniacutius († ca. 1145), will be examined to investigate Nicolaus’s authorial motivations and intentions, and to determine their value and significance in that era and the following century. The early life of the transmission of these two works, Historia Imaginis Salvatoris and Ad Incorrupta Pontificum Nomina Conservanda, reveals their significance as property in and of themselves, and also as expressions of ownership of sacred property by the Church. The Historia, composed ca. 1145 (see Figure 1), exalted the new pope Eugenius III (reigned 1145–1153) as the “new high priest” and the Church as the “new Temple”, and reiterated traditional doctrinal claims that the

---

2. Canons were clergymen assigned to the basilica or palace to assist in the liturgies or maintenance of the papal cathedra or palace.
3. While Nicolaus Maniacutius has been referred to over the centuries by different translations of his name (e.g., Magnacucius, Manjacoria, Mangiacoce), in this essay the Latin form, Nicolaus Maniacutius, will be consistently used.
4. See Falconieri 2002, 51–52, 184; de Blaauw 2004, 161–71; Peri 1977, 19–125; Light 1995, 75; Bell 1992, 105–6, 238–39; Bell 1996, 131–51; Signer 2004, 21–32; Goodwin 2006, 46–47, 143–45. Scholars have preserved and copied Nicolaus Maniacutius’s various texts since ca. 1159–1181, yet his life and works are still relatively obscure and have not merited an in-depth study as a complete body of work.
5. See Wolf 1990, 321–25; John the Deacon 1159–1181; Ralph of Diceto, c. 1200; Stubbs 1876, 1: 259–63; James 1932, 20–21. The earliest copy of the Historia Imaginis Salvatoris, ca. twelfth century, exists today in only one copy: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Fondo S. M. Maggiore 2, cc. 237–244. It is not clear whether this manuscript is an autograph or a copy. Wolf (1990) published a transcription of the text. Ad Incorrupta Pontificum Nomina Conservanda survives today appended to two different MSS by different authors: John the Deacon, who produced the second redaction of the Descriptio Lateranensis Ecclesiae circa 1159–1181 that had been kept in the Archivio Capitolare di S. Giovanni in Laterano as Codex Lateranense A. 70 (which contains the earliest text from the twelfth century and early redactions of it); and Ralph of Diceto, Lambeth 8, Lambeth Palace Library. Cyrille Vogel (1956) wrote an extensive manuscript history of the Descriptio Lateranensis Ecclesiae. Stubbs (1876) published the definitive transcription of Lambeth 8, including Nicolaus Maniacutius’s Ad Incorrupta. A full physical description of the manuscript may be found in James 1932. I would like to thank Dr. Susan L’Engle, Assistant Director of the Vatican Film Library at the Pious XII Library, St. Louis University, for her generous and timely assistance in locating manuscript sources.
spiritual wealth of the Judaic heritage had been subsumed by Christianity. Those polemical statements indeed had been made by Christian writers since at least the fourth century and were not new arguments. However, Nicolaus also identified the private papal chapel in the Lateran Palace as the Sancta Sanctorum”. Within the chapel, a cypress chest, which held a collection of sacred relics from the Holy Land, had been called “Sancta Sanctorum” for several centuries, but Nicolaus’s designation of the papal chapel by that name was new (Wolf 1998, 423). The Historia also borrowed heavily, without attribution, from a late eleventh-century Lateran work, the original and anonymous edition of the Descriptio Lateranensis Ecclesiae, ca. 1073 (Valentini and Zucchetti 1946, 3: 319–25). In his own work, Nicolaus repeated claims made in the Descriptio that

6. See Wolf 1998, 423; Thunø 2002, 160–66; Weber 2007. “Sancta Sanctorum” in the ancient Hebrew tradition referred to the “Holy of Holies”, the enclosure in which they had placed the Ark of the Covenant during their nomadic wanderings, and the most exclusive room in the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, in which the Ark remained. See Exodus 25–40 for descriptions of the first Holy of Holies constructed to house the Ark. The construction and movement of the ark into the Holy of Holies in the Temple of Solomon is also described in III Regum 6–8. These citations refer to the Latin Vulgate Bible, produced by St. Jerome between 382 and 405, which was the authoritative biblical text used by Christian clergy in the twelfth century. See Biblia sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem, Weber 2007. For a more in-depth discussion of the arca cipressina in the Roman “Sancta Sanctorum” and the medieval usage of the term, see again Thunø 2002.
the Roman Church possessed invaluable items from pre-Christian, Jewish antiquity, and preserved them in the Lateran Basilica, particularly within and beneath the high altar. These relics included the sacred vessels from the Temple of Herod (Ex. 25–30), which had been destroyed by Roman forces in 70 AD. Nicolaus’s composition of the Historia, with sections from an earlier text, is particularly ironic because he primarily labored at correcting the Vulgate Psalter and removing superfluous additions that it had acquired through centuries of scribal copying. In a local and institutional sense, however, Nicolaus’s claims triumphantly buttressed the power and authority of Pope Eugenius III (reigned 1145–1153); and yet, it was not to be his only laudatory composition for his pope and former abbot.

Ad Incorrupta Pontificum Nomina Conservanda, also composed circa 1145 by Nicolaus Maniacutius, chronicled the papal succession in the form of a poem, beginning with St. Peter and ending with Eugenius III (reigned 1145–1153). From 1140 Eugenius had served as Abbot (Bernardo) of the new Cistercian abbey of S. Anastasius at Tre Fontane in Rome when the abbey was re-inhabited by Cistercian monks. Nicolaus himself joined that same monastic community around 1140, apparently after serving as deacon at S. Lorenzo in Damaso in Rome. Following

7. Herod the Great (reigned 40–44 BC), King of Judaea, renovated the Second Temple in Jerusalem in 23–22 BC, thus, in a historical sense, the “Temple of Herod” and the “Second Temple” essentially denote the same structure. The sacred vessels, which Roman forces took from Herod’s Temple when they destroyed it in 70 AD, included the table of the showbread, the menorah, the altar of incense, and other ritual implements.

8. See Valentini and Zuccheti 1946, 3: 326–73; MacCarrone 1985, 349–447. Primarily composed to assert the primacy of the Lateran basilica in a polemical battle for parochial supremacy over the Vatican, the Descriptio contained an extensive listing of both pre-Christian (Jewish) and Christian relics in the basilica and palace. On that conflict of words between Roman canons, see MacCarrone 1985.

9. As Smalley (1964, 78–81) explained, in his correction of the Vulgate Psalter, Nicolaus compared the Hebrew text of the Psalms to the Vulgate, and considered the Hebraica veritas to be closest to the original text.

10. See Mabillon 1896, 2: nos. 184, 343, 344, and 345. Bernardo of Pisa re-established a monastic community at S. Anastasius at Tre Fontane, outside of Rome, following the direction of his monastic superior, Bernard of Clairvaux, after the Benedictine abbey had stood vacant during the papal schism of the 1130s.

11. For details see Berger 1893, 12; Bell 1996, 134; Wolf 1998, 422; Brouette and Manning 1997, 16: tome 1, fasc. 1; Mercati 1937, 2: 48–49; Denifle 1888, 4: no. 3, 270–76; Wilmart 1921, 136–43; Stegmüller 1954, nos.
the election of his former abbot on 15 February 1145, Nicolaus evidently moved from S. Anastasius to the Lateran Palace in the service of the new pope.\textsuperscript{12} Only three days after his election, due to the volatile political climate in the City, Eugenius was forced out of Rome and into exile.\textsuperscript{13} As a cleric attached to the new administration and coming from the same monastic community as the new pope, Nicolaus probably left Rome with the papal entourage when the urban environment turned dangerous. During the months-long exile with the pope, from 18 February until Nicolaus’s death late in 1145, he apparently completed these two laudatory works, \textit{Historia Imaginis Salvatoris} and \textit{Ad Incorrupta Pontificum Nomina Conservanda}.\textsuperscript{14} His expertise as a biblical scholar had prepared him well for this

\textsuperscript{12} See \textit{Bonaventura} 1709, iii; \textit{Falconieri} 2002, 51–52, 184. In the earliest printed version of the \textit{Historia}, (1709), Bonaventura identified “Nicolao Maniacutio” as a canon regular of the Lateran. Yet based on current research and consideration of Nicolaus’s role as a Cistercian monk, at the time of Eugenius III’s election Nicolaus would not have joined the Augustinian canons regular of the Lateran Basilica, but most probably would have joined the canons of the Lateran Palace. I am most grateful to Professor Sible de Blaauw for pointing out this to me (see again \textit{Falconieri} 2002).

\textsuperscript{13} See \textit{Jaffé} 1888, 2: 21; \textit{McBrien} 1997, 200. McBrien (1997) explains that since as an abbot Bernardo had not yet been consecrated as Bishop when elected to the papacy on February 15, he did not become the Bishop of Rome officially until February 18 upon his consecration in Farfa. Following his consecration, the pope and his court moved to Viterbo and remained there for several months until it was safe to return to Rome.

\textsuperscript{14} See \textit{Wolf} 1998, 422; \textit{Bonaventura} 1709, iii; and \textit{Wolf} 1990, 67. In the introduction to the \textit{Historia} (1709), Bonaventura placed Nicolaus Maniacutiuss’s active period later in the twelfth century, in the era of Pope Alexander III (1159–1181). Recent scholarship by \textit{Wolf} 1997/1998, however, has proposed
task during his brief period of service to the pope. After ten months in exile, primarily in Viterbo, the papacy reached a compromise with the city of Rome, and returned to the city in a glorious adventus on 21 December, which Cardinal Boso (1955–1957, 2: 386) described in the Liber Pontificalis (see also Jaffé 1888, 2: 27). Whether Nicolaus witnessed that triumphant return or not, he left a legacy of works that expressed an undeniable allegiance to his pope, for in both Historia and Ad Incurrupta Nicolaus honored and exalted Eugenius III’s authority and legitimacy as St. Peter’s successor (Champagne 2007). What more logical impetus for offering verses of praise and support for a pope than during a difficult year in exile and perhaps upon his triumphal return to the holy city?

The historical record is silent on the actual use or mode of presentation of these two works, what has been called the “performative context” of medieval texts (Nichols and Wenzel 1996, 2). One possibility is that Ad Incurrupta was written to be read aloud in the pope’s honor, particularly in honor of a pope in exile. Undoubtedly the oral expression of these works would have concerned Nicolaus. Reading sacred works both orally and silently was an important element of daily monastic life. And, in an earlier work, Libellus de Corruptione et Correptione Psalmorum et Aliarum Quarundam Scripturam (ca. 1140), Nicolaus had expressed his concern for accurate pronunciation by urging that stress marks should be placed on particular syllables of written words (see Figure 2). In Vox Paginae, Leonard Boyle notes that Nicolaus’s Libellus offers a valuable demonstration of the use of “tonic accents” in the twelfth century. Apparently Nicolaus had

---


16. The only extant copy of the Libellus de corruptione et correptione psalmorum et aliarum quarundam scripturam may be found in Montpellier, Bibliothèque de l’École de Médecine MS H. 294, cc. 144r–159v.

had extensive experience working with texts and manuscripts before his emergence in the Roman record ca. 1140 (Peri 1977, 22–24).

Scholars, chroniclers, and historians since circa 1200 have copied and collected Nicolaus’s few manuscripts, and mentioned him sporadically in the historical record as an exegete, Hebraist, and corrector of the sacred texts; however, those earlier writers have not uniformly agreed on the specifics of Nicolaus’s clerical position(s) in Rome or the year of his death. And yet, Nicolaus’s texts hold clues to earlier associations and events. One such clue embedded in the Libellus refers to a certain Magister Hugo’s exegetical work on Lamentations (Peri 1977, 89, line 31). Vittorio Peri identified Magister Hugo as Hugh († ca. 1140–1142), abbot of the Augustinian abbey of St. Victor in Paris. Peri also noted that Hugh had been present in Rome, “near the Curia, between 1130 and 1140” (1977, 37). Therefore, Nicolaus’s reference to Hugh of St. Victor may have referred simply to his close familiarity with Hugh’s texts, or it could have signaled an actual acquaintance, entirely possible if both biblical scholars had been in Rome during the 1130s. Yet Nicolaus’s mention of Hugh also leads to other questions about each scholar’s methods and the striking similarities between their approaches. Hugh not only used the Hebrew Bible to determine the accuracy of the Vulgate Old Testament; he also conversed with scholarly Jews in their common vernacular to determine more fully
Hugh of St. Victor’s work reveals extensive contacts with Jewish scholars in northern Europe. The text of Hugh’s Didascalion reveals not only links between the exegetical programs of Jewish scholars in northern France and those of Hugh, but also demonstrates structural commonalities between the exegesis of Abraham ibn Ezra (†1167), who moved from Iberia to northern France in the 1140s, and that of Hugh. This evidence of communication, whether as direct citation or indirect influence exerted by Hugh of St. Victor and Abraham ibn Ezra upon each other, enlarges our understanding of the scholarly culture in which both lived. The similarities in their methodologies also lead to further questions about Nicolaus’s earlier, unknown life within that inter-confessional scholarly milieu, since Nicolaus followed some of the same practices as Hugh. Decades later in the late-twelfth and early-thirteenth century, more and more Christian scholars would undertake the study of Hebrew and translate Hebrew texts themselves. What is distinctive about Nicolaus is the precocity of his methodology, before the mid-twelfth century and in the same era as the highly influential Hugh. Two other twelfth-century exegetes and Hebraists, Andrew of St. Victor (died ca. 1175), and Herbert of Bosham (died ca. 1194) flourished in the second half of the twelfth century, decades after Nicolaus (Goodwin 2006, 73–74). Nicolaus, on the other hand, claimed before mid-century in the Libellus (ca. 1140) to have discussed the text of the Psalms with a “certain Hebrew” (Maniacutius in Peri 1977, 91, line 2).

The Libellus reveals Nicolaus’s avid interest in scriptural correction, exegesis, and consultations with Jewish scholars on the Hebrew text of the Psalms, what he called the Hebraica Veritas. Most significantly, Nico-

---

18. See Smalley 1964, 102–5, and, for a less positivistic view of Victorine Hebraism, Moore 1998, 135–38. Moore cautions that the “model of cooperation and toleration depicted by Beryl Smalley” may not have been entirely accurate. When discerning Hugh’s “doctrine of Judaism” in his several texts, Moore notes Hugh’s adherence to then commonly held beliefs of the Jewish crime of deicide and their punishment by their God for that crime. Her cautions can also be applied to studies of Nicolaus’s own Hebraism. Nevertheless, Nicolaus’s notable practices at the mid-twelfth-century mark are precociously distinctive.

19. See Signer 2008; Taylor 1961; Buttimer 1939. Signer (2008) notes especially close parallels between Hugh’s “emphasis on the Literal or historical sense of Scripture as the solid basis for the development of theological study” and the biblical commentaries of Abraham ibn Ezra.
laus expressed, according to Michael Signer, “his desire to learn Hebrew” (Signer 2004, 24):

Nam et ego illud forsitan non haberem, nisi quidam Hebraeus, mecum disputans et paene singula quae ei opponebam de psalmis aliter habere se asserens, hoc de Monte Cassino allatum esse penes quendam praebbyterum indicasset. Tunc primum ad Hebraeae linguae scientiam aspiravi. Et cum postmodum Bibliothecam studiose conscriberem multisque superfluitatibus expiarem, huic editioni diligentem discussae locum psalterii deputavi. Cui et praefatiunculam addidi de diversis translationibus dissersentem, numerum psalmorum iuxta Hebraicum sed et versuum indicantem, quot psalmi titulis careant, quot alphabeto texantur, quotiens repetatur in psalterio diapsalma, quotiens alleluia et quid utrumque significet.

(Maniacutius [Peri 1977, 91, lines 2–11])

This practice that both Nicolaus and Hugh pursued was, according to Beryl Smalley, “only following the example of St. Stephen Harding”, the third abbot of Cîteaux, who had himself worked with Jewish scholars decades earlier to correct the Vulgate (ca. 1111), using the Hebrew text of the Psalms.

The fact that Nicolaus consulted Jewish scholars in Italy supports a broader scope of communications between Christian and Jewish scholars in mid-twelfth century Europe. In fact, Michael Signer found that Nicolaus also had claimed in the Libellus to have encountered a Spanish Jew “learned (eruditus) in many languages” (Signer 2004, 24). In spite of these intriguing details Nicolaus supplied, his interest in Hebraism cannot

20. Perhaps I might not have had that copy of the psalms, unless a certain Hebrew, discussing with me and defending nearly each one of the psalms, which he himself otherwise claimed to have, had declared that this copy had been brought from Monte Cassino in the possession of a certain priest. Then for the first time I beheld the knowledge of the Hebrew tongue. And while I would eagerly write down and shortly purify Scripture from the many, superfluous texts, for this edition I conscientiously considered the passage of the examined psalter [. . .].
21. See Smalley 1964, 103; Matarasso 1993, 11–12; Migne 1844–1864, col. 1375A. Harding’s completed bible exists today in Dijon, Bibliothèque municipale, MSS 12–15. He also wrote of his work with Jewish scholars in the Monitum (ca. 1109), which may be found in Matarasso 1993 and in Migne 1844–1864. For a discussion of Harding’s editorial technique among the pages of Textual Cultures, see Storey 2009.
be extrapolated into a general focus of the early Cistercians. As David Bell has pointed out, the Hebraism that both Steven Harding and Nicolaus Maniacutius demonstrated did not reoccur among Cistercians until the seventeenth-century work of Giulio Bartolocci. Bell suggests that Nicolaus acquired his interest in “biblical and hebraic studies” apart from the Cistercians and before he joined that order circa 1140. Perhaps, for the deacon, scholar, and Hebraist Nicolaus, the example of Stephen Harding, who had communicated with Jewish scholars earlier in the century, attracted him to the Roman Cistercians in 1140 (Smalley 1964, 103). Certainly San Anastasius at Tre Fontane also promised a tranquil environment well-suited to scholarly labors.

The continuing prominence of Hugh of St. Victor and his students Andrew and Richard, along with Nicolaus Maniacutius, in current studies of Christian Hebraists and exegetes in the twelfth century demonstrates their importance in that methodological movement (Signer 2004, 22–26; Goodwin 2006, 55, 115–30). Is it mere coincidence that Nicolaus labored so closely in the footsteps of his contemporary, Hugh of St. Victor? Did Nicolaus’s desire to learn Hebrew indicate an earlier association between Nicolaus and Hugh, even perhaps a course of study with Hugh (in Paris or in Rome) before serving as a deacon at S. Lorenzo in Damaso shortly before 1140? Or, as suggested earlier, did Nicolaus and Hugh make contact in Rome during the 1130s (Peri 1977, 37)? Evidence to support these theories remains elusive; however, more clues may lie buried within Nicolaus’s several works. Nevertheless, the fact that Nicolaus’s *Ad Incorrupta* appeared circa 1200 in a chronicle by a prominent Anglo-Norman churchman in London indicates further circulation of the work beyond Rome and/or Paris.

**Ralph of Diceto, Nicolaus Maniacutius, and *Ad Incorrupta Pontificum Nomina Conservanda***

Over a half-century after Nicolaus’s composition of *Ad Incorrupta*, Ralph of Diceto (Diss), Dean of St. Paul’s Cathedral in London, incorporated

---

22. See Goodwin 2006, 47nn157–59; Bell 1996, 135. Goodwin (2006), however, argued that an interest in “advanced textual studies” was evident at the Cistercian monastery of Ourscamp, where the Hebraist Herbert of Bosham studied and worked for a period of time in the later twelfth century. In addition, Pontigny, another Cistercian house, held a “remarkably well-equipped library” at that time for Hebraic study.
the work into his historical narrative, the * Abbreviationes Chronicorum* (ca. 1200 [see Figure 3]). It is noteworthy that Ralph prominently attributes the work to “Nicolaus Maniacutii”.24

Incipiunt versus Nicholai Maniacutii ad incorrupta pontificum nomina conservanda, ne videlicet dicamus Eleutherius pro Eleuther, et Hylarius pro Ilarus; et ad sciendum qui sint antiquiores.

(Lambeth 8, c. 58r)25

Apparently Ralph deemed Nicolaus’s papal list a more accurate and genuine version, worthy of inclusion and preservation in the * Abbreviationes*. *Ad Incorrupta* also fit into the overall scheme of the * Abbreviationes* along with numerous other ancient and medieval chronologies and histories. In

24. In Lambeth MS 8, * Abbreviationes Chronicorum* is inscribed in two columns of text per charta, 44 lines of text per column. * Ad Incorrupta* begins on c. 58r, column 1, line 43, and ends on c. 58v, column 2, line 38.
25. [Here] begin the verses of Nicolaus Maniacutius, to clearly preserve the genuine papal names, so that we may say Eleutherius instead of Eleuther, and Hylarius instead of Ilarus; and for knowing what may be more ancient.
William Stubbs’s critical study of the *Abbreviationes*, he determined that “Ralph was a laborious and experienced compiler” (Stubbs 1876, 2: xvi–xx). In the century after Ralph’s incorporation of *Ad Incorrupta* into his own chronicle, several other English monastic libraries also acquired copies of the text.26

Ralph of Diceto’s source for Nicolaus’s work is not known, but the events of his life suggest a connection to the abbey of St. Victor in Paris and, perhaps through that connection, ultimately to Nicolaus Maniacutius’s *Ad Incorrupta*. Born in Norfolk at Diss, Ralph probably studied in Paris in the 1140s and again following the coronation of Henry II in 1154.27 From 1164, Ralph served the English church as messenger to Archbishop Thomas Becket in exile in France and to Pope Alexander III. The interrelationships between the pope, the Archbishop, the Cistercians, and the Victorines during the years of turmoil between Becket and King Henry II of England (1163–1170) reveal closely associated and supportive communities.28 During his years in exile on the continent, Becket first resided with the Victorines in Paris, then with the Cistercians at Pontigny, before returning to England in 1170 (Goodwin 2006, 25–26). By the time of Ralph’s election as Dean of St. Paul’s in London (ca. 1180), the links between the Cistercians at Pontigny, the Victorines in Paris, and the

26. See Valentini and Zucchetti 1946, 3: 323; Bell 1992, 105–6, 239. According to Valentini and Zucchetti, *Ad Incorrupta* was also appended in the thirteenth century to the second edition of a Lateran manuscript, *Descriptio Lateranensis Ecclesiae* (ca. 1159–1181). This addition to the *Descriptio* seems to suggest that there was a Lateran (Roman) perservation of *Ad Incorrupta*. Bell (1992) notes that late in the thirteenth century, Nicolaus’s *Ad Incorrupta* was also copied into two MSS originally in the libraries of the English Cistercian monasteries of Dore (British Library, Egerton 3088 §13 c. 117) and Waverly (British Library, Cotton Vespasian A. xvi §5 c. 15). The British Library catalog entry of MS Egerton 3088 indicates that *Ad Incorrupta* was also copied into Cotton MS Domitian A. ii, cc. 96r–97, cc. 117r–117v. Though still somewhat unclear, the route of transmission of *Ad Incorrupta* among those libraries suggests a Cistercian scholarly network. Thus Nicolaus’s *Ad Incorrupta* might well have circulated through both local Lateran (Roman) and broader Cistercian and Victorine (European) networks.

27. See Smalley 1974, 114; Stubbs 1876, 1: xxxi; and Du Boulay [1665] 1966, 2: 769. Stubbs claimed that Ralph “may have been at Paris as early as the year 1140”, which indicates the possibility of direct contact with Hugh of St. Victor.

28. See Goodwin 2006, 18–43. Ralph of Diss had also contact with Thomas Becket thanks to their work within the group of young English scholars gathered by Archbishop Theboald of Canterbury (†1161).
Both Victorine influences have been identified in Ralph's *Abbreviatio-
nes Chronicorum* as well as his *Ymagines Historiarum*, suggesting a vibrant
connection between the dean and the Victorine community. Grover Zinn
(1977, 39) has shown a clear influence of the “form and substance” of the
first section of Hugh's *Chronicon* (from the creation to the Incarnation) on
the corresponding chronology in Ralph’s *Abbreviationes*. Clear evidence of
Victorine influence in the *Ymagines* include Ralph’s citation of “Magister
Hugo de Sancto Victore”, and his incorporation of a section of a text by
Richard of St. Victor, one of Hugh’s protégés (Zinn 1977, 40–41). Beryl
Smalley has noted that Ralph of Diceto had composed the *Ymagines Histori-
arum* from “a large dossier [collected] over many years”; Ralph’s erudition
and passion for collecting and compiling numerous works has been well
established (Smalley 1974, 115). Thus we see, in Ralph’s two chronicles,
his clear interest in the works of Hugh of St. Victor and of other Victor-
rines. Nevertheless, the question remains: how did Ralph of Diceto know
Nicolaus’s *Ad incorrupta* to the extent that he obtained an exemplar and
copied it into his great chronicle *Abbreviationes*?

In addition to a directly established relationship between Ralph of
Diceto and the Victorines, other theories have been posited to explain
how Ralph obtained Victorine texts. Zinn suggested a connection through
Arnulf of Lisieux, who retired to the Abbey of St. Victor in 1182 while also
maintaining a lifelong correspondence with Ralph of Diceto.29 Another
conduit for the texts might well have been the abbey of St. Albans, where
the monks actively collected Hugh’s manuscripts and those of other Victo-
rines. Simon, Abbot of St. Albans (1167–1183), wrote to Abbot Richard
of St. Victor and asked if he (Simon) could send a monk from St. Albans
to Paris to copy certain works by Hugh (Zinn 1977, 60; Migne 1844–
1891, 196:1228C–1229A). When Thomas Becket returned from exile in
France to England in November 1170, he stopped to visit “an old friend
and ally, Abbot Simon” before proceeding to Canterbury.30 The monastic
library at St. Albans contained copies of Victorine works, and decades

---

29. See Zinn 1977, 59; Schriber 1997; Stubbs 1876, 1: xxxi. Stubbs cites
especially Arnulf of Lisieux’s Epistle 16 to demonstrate the friendly exchange
between Arnulf and Ralph.

30. See Goodwin 2006, 34–35. Becket could have been one means for the transfer
of works by Victorine canons to St. Albans in 1170, as he returned to his home-
land and to those who had faithfully continued to support him throughout the
conflict with King Henry II.
later also acquired a copy of Ralph’s *Abbreviationes* that included Nicolaus’s *Ad Incorrupta*, which had been copied from the manuscript produced at St. Paul’s in London (Zinn 1977, 59). Thus it indeed seems as though the St. Albans scriptorium and library served as a conduit for Victorine works to monastic and cathedral libraries in England in the latter half of the twelfth century. At the center of this activity was Ralph, who avidly collected manuscripts through his network of English and continental connections.

Evidently a number of connections existed between Ralph of Diceto, the Victorines, and other sources of Nicolaus’s *Ad Incorrupta*, and yet that mysterious scholarly network is only one of several aspects of this investigation that remain uncertain. The year of Nicolaus’s death is still disputed today; however, the Lambeth codex MS 8 contains clues that strongly suggest earlier scholars may have erred in their claim that Nicolaus lived until the end of the twelfth century. In his Latin transcription of *Ad Incorrupta*, Stubbs (1876, 1: 259n1) proposed that Nicolaus had lived in the reign of Pope Alexander III (1159–1181). In his introduction to the 1709 printing of the *Historia*, Alexander Bonaventura related the same claim, building on the work of earlier scholars (see Maniacutius 1709, iii). And yet examination of the actual manuscript, Lambeth 8 (from around 1200), reveals significant clues that suggest differently. The format of Nicolaus’s poem in honor of the popes begins with the first pope, Peter, and continues through Eugenius III, Nicolaus’s former abbot, who was elected in February 1145.

Tertius Eugenius qui nunc praelatus habetur
Donec vult vivat demum super astra levetur.31

The use of the present tense, indicative and subjective, in these verses seems to suggest that Nicolaus composed them while Eugenius was still alive, between 1145 and 1153. The list of popes that follows these verses is not in prose format, but in this instance takes the form of a column of names only, from Eugenius’s successor Anastasius IV (reigned 1153–1154) to Innocent III (reigned 1198–1216). Stubbs’s printed version (1876, 1: 262), however, sets the namelist within the typeset columns of text, as though in the original it had followed immediately after the prose lines dedicated to Eugenius III. The additional namelist appears in Lambeth 8, c. 58v, as an additional column in the far right margin of the charta.

31. “Eugenius III, the Bishop who is now known, / May he live as long as he wishes, / [And] at last may he rise above the heavens” (Stubbs 1876, 1: 262).
nearly hidden in the center fold of the codex. The names appear in a lighter, brown-colored ink, and not within the two columns of text on the charta. The brownish ink of the marginal column contrasts sharply with the “magnificent black hand large and bold” of the two columns of text on the charta (James 1932, 20), indicating that the list of popes from Anastasius IV to Innocent III was a later addition, at some point after Ad Incorrupta and the chartae of text following it had been written. Ralph or a later scribe or editor could have easily added that additional list to the right margin. The copying of one text, even with an attribution to its author, did not preclude an unidentified addendum, which inevitably led centuries later to implications in the the dating of Nicolaus’s work and biography. The extension of the papal list through Innocent III and Stubbs’s misleading transcription explains why he and other modern historians have repeatedly proposed that Nicolaus lived until much later in the twelfth century.32

Ralph’s many manuscripts, left to St. Paul’s Cathedral, were later transferred to Lambeth Palace in London during the English Reformation and are conserved today in the Lambeth Palace Library (Stubbs 1876, 1: lxxxix; James 1932, 20–21). The circulation and survival of Ad Incorrupta over a continent and across the English Channel, through many hands, depended on an appreciation of its value. If it had become known, valued, copied, and preserved by the Victorines in Paris, perhaps due to an earlier association between Nicolaus and Hugh, then the Victorines could have been the conduit for the text to pass to Ralph. Ralph’s apparent connection to the Victorines and his inclusion of Nicolaus’s work in his own chronicle, when Nicolaus followed many of the scholarly practices of Hugh of St. Victor, strengthens the potential connection of Nicolaus Maniacutius to the Abbey of St. Victor and its monastic scholars.

The Historia Imaginis Salvatoris

Nicolaus’s papal poem Ad Incorrupta also circulated among Roman clergy. In the thirteenth century, it was appended to the second edition (ca. 1159–1181) of an eleventh-century Lateran work, the Descriptio Lateranensis Ecclesiae (see Figure 4 and Valentini and Zucchetti 1946, 3: 323). Ironically, Nicolaus himself utilized elements of the original text of the Descriptio (ca. 1073) to compose another of his own works, the Historia

32. The basis of Bonaventura’s (1709) claim of Nicolaus’s period of active service in Rome must still be thoroughly investigated to settle this dispute.
Imaginis Salvatoris (from around 1145 [see Wolf 1998, 423–25). Today the Vatican Library owns the sole extant manuscript copy of the Historia, although it has been transcribed and published since 1709 (Maniacutius 1709; Wolf 1990, 321–25; Belting 1990, 500).

In addition to emphasizing supersessionist claims, Nicolaus focused in his Historia on the history and use of the Achieropita, that ancient image of Christ preserved in Rome that was believed to have been divinely made soon after Jesus’s death. The Achieropita resided in the “Sancta Sanctorum”, directly above a reliquary chest, also called Sancta Sanctorum, which contained particular relics from the Holy Land. The Achieropita’s placement effectively situated Christ’s feet on terra sancta, and recreated the Holy Land in the New Jerusalem of Rome and the new Christian Sancta Sanctorum (Wolf 1998, 422–25; Thunø 2002, 160–66). Nicolaus neatly explained in the Historia how the Achieropita had actually reached Rome—Titus, the Roman general directing the conquest of Jerusalem and destruction of the Temple, punished the Jews’ cruel treatment of Christ. He went further, though, to link Titus to Christianity by claiming that Titus had found the Achieropita in Jerusalem, revered the image, experienced a miraculous healing, and thus brought it to Rome to be carried in his triumph to celebrate the Roman defeat of Judaea in 70 (Wolf 1998, 422; Maniacutius 1709, 17). In that characterization of the Romans as God’s agents against the Jews, Nicolaus repeated a con-
cept articulated in the fourth century by Eusebius of Caesarea, and later in that century by Hegessipus, also known as Pseudo-Hegessipus. Hegessipus’s work, *De excidio urbis Hierosolymitanae*, was a Latin paraphrase of Josephus’s *Bellum Judaicum*, an eye-witness account of the destruction of Jerusalem in the Jewish War (*Eusebius* 3.7–8; *Pseudo-Hegessipus* 2.12.1; *Josephus* VI: IV). That belief, that the Romans had been “agents of God”, was repeated again centuries later as a potent polemical topos in the works of both Protestant and Catholic writers during the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, presumably an element of the era’s burgeoning antisemitism (*Kelly* 2003, 993–1010). Nicolaus’s *Historia* not only “borrowed” from existing texts, but also tapped a vast subtext of Christian supersessionism and ardent polemic.

Nicolaus’s use of the *Descriptio* in his *Historia* demonstrates his familiarity with the older text, perhaps acquired during his years in the Roman scholarly community. To buttress his assertions of the papacy’s unquestioned spiritual authority, Nicolaus listed the many extraordinary relics possessed by the church and housed in the Sancta Sanctorum and the Lateran basilica: relics from Christ’s life and Christian history in the Sancta Sanctorum, and relics from pre-Christian Judaism in the Lateran basilica. For the details, he turned to the relic list in the *Descriptio*. Nicolaus also repeated the *Descriptio*’s claim that the church possessed the sacred vessels from the Temple of Herod, physical property beyond earthly or heavenly value. He wrote that the Ark of the Covenant, menorah, and other sacred vessels and relics were contained in the high altar of the Lateran basilica (*Valentini and Zucchetti* 1946, 3: 326–73). That claim to papal ownership of supernatural authority, an allusion to authority beyond challenge, runs throughout the *Historia* as another subtext within the work. Nicolaus’s use of parts of an earlier Lateran manuscript, the *Descriptio*, in his own *Historia* demonstrates the web of connections within that Roman scholarly milieu of commonly read, borrowed, copied, and expanded texts. The composition and conservation of Nicolaus Maniacutius’s two works, *Ad Incorrupta* and *Historia*, indicates how they were valued in twelfth-century Europe, as well as the motivations that could have driven their production, acquisition, and early preservation. The substance of these works reveals powerful subtexts that Nicolaus engaged in order to assert papal authority and legitimacy in the turbulent twelfth century. At the same time, Nicolaus’s Hebraism and scholarly methods seem to underscore the complex scholarly world that he inhabited. Ralph of Diceto’s collection and preservation of Nicolaus’s *Ad Incorrupta* discloses the web of connections that must have provided texts to scholars separated by time and
distance. And now, across nearly nine centuries, their efforts are brought to light within our own scholarly world, opening a window for us into that long-silent world of monks and canons, working away in their libraries and scriptoria, abbeys and palaces, sharing, copying, and preserving texts.

University of West Florida, Pensacola

Works Cited


Harding, Stephen. 1844–1891. Censura de Aliquot Locis Bibliorum, in Migne 1844–1891, col. 1375A.


Ralph of Diceto. 1876. *Abbreivationes Chronicorum*, in Stubbs 1876, 3–263.


