Image and Inscription in the Painterly Manuscripts from Ottonian Cologne

A dissertation presented

by

Joshua O'Driscoll

to

The Department of History of Art and Architecture

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the subject of

History of Art and Architecture

Harvard University

Cambridge, Massachusetts

April 2015
ABSTRACT

Focusing on a small number of richly illuminated manuscripts produced in Cologne around the year 1000—and known to scholars since the early twentieth century as the so-called "painterly" group of manuscripts—this dissertation takes the close study of a well-defined group of objects as the starting point for an examination of issues central to broader histories of medieval art. A diptych-like pairing of miniatures with inscriptions, each of which is given a full page, constitutes a characteristic feature of these manuscripts. Because these inscriptions were written specifically to accompany the facing images, the manuscripts from Cologne afford us a rare glimpse of a discourse on art and image making in the tenth and eleventh centuries, as well as providing insights into how such miniatures were meant to be viewed.

The first chapter establishes a theoretical framework for the project, which examines both the historical and the scholarly origins of the Cologne School. Moreover, the concept of a "painterly" style is scrutinized and its use is traced back to significant developments in German art-historical writing of the late nineteenth century. The second chapter—devoted to a remarkable, yet relatively unknown tenth-century gospel book in Milan—demonstrates how the manuscript's carefully-crafted pictorial program draws upon an impressive tradition of Carolingian poetry and epigraphy in order to instill a pointed moralizing lesson on its recipient. A closely related sister-manuscript, preserved today in Paris, forms the subject of the third chapter, which demonstrates
how the designer of its program employed philosophical and dialectical terms—taken from the school texts of the day—in order to devise an ambitiously complex set of miniatures and inscriptions, centered on a contemplative engagement with the paintings. The dissertation concludes with a chapter on the more famous Hitda Codex, illuminated at the behest of a powerful abbess in the early eleventh century. Through an analysis of the manuscript's narrative program, the chapter details how both image and inscription coordinate the active engagement of the viewer—prompting a consideration of the ways in which the pairings function as allegories of introspection.

Throughout the dissertation I aim to reconcile the innovative formal qualities of the miniatures with the unusual complexity of their accompanying inscriptions. As a consequence of this study, it can be demonstrated that in the painterly manuscripts from Cologne, the close intertwining of image and inscription results in sophisticated programs of illumination, which elucidate an unprecedented contemporary reflection on the nature of painting in age otherwise known for its scarcity of written sources on art.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ................................................................................................. iii

Acknowledgements ........................................................................... vii

List of Abbreviations .......................................................................... xi

List of Figures ...................................................................................... xiii

Preface ................................................................................................ 1

Chapter One: Beginnings ................................................................. 3

Cologne at the Millennium ............................................................... 7

Inventing the Painterly Group .......................................................... 22

The Insight of Inscriptions ............................................................... 39

Chapter Two: The Milan Gospels in the Ambrosiana ....................... 52

The Book of Life ................................................................................ 59

An Image of God .............................................................................. 72

A Demanding Image ........................................................................ 88

The Nurturing Father ......................................................................... 104

The Evangelists and their Tituli ...................................................... 114

Chapter Three: The Gereon Sacramentary in Paris ......................... 129

Overshadowing the Virgin .............................................................. 144

A Material Contemplation ............................................................... 160

*Hic erit contemplandum* ................................................................. 176

Looking into Heaven ........................................................................ 194
Chapter Four: The Hitda Codex in Darmstadt ........................................... 209

Virgo paritura ........................................................................................................ 221

The Signs of Christ .................................................................................................. 235

Perpetual Light ........................................................................................................ 252

Favored Above All .................................................................................................. 273

Conclusion ............................................................................................................... 289

Appendix ............................................................................................................... 294

Bibliography ........................................................................................................... 299

Figures .................................................................................................................. 333
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A project such as this could not have been accomplished without the generous and continued support of several individuals and organizations. It is a pleasure to be able to acknowledge here the extent of such support and to try, as best as I can, to express the true depth of my gratitude to all those who have helped me along the way.

To my advisor, Jeffrey Hamburger, I owe my first and foremost debt of gratitude. His unwavering encouragement at every stage in the process, along with his critical eye and open mind were absolutely crucial elements in seeing this dissertation through to its end. Whether as a student, a scholar, or a writer, I have learned immensely from him, and I know that in the years to come I will continue to draw on the memories of our many discussions and our shared encounters with works of art.

I am ever grateful to Herbert Kessler, in whose seminar on early medieval illumination I first encountered the Ottonian manuscripts from Cologne. Both teacher and mentor, Herb has been a steadfast source of support, advice, and feedback over the years, and I cannot adequately express how important that has been to me.

I thank my committee members, Ioli Kalavrezou and David Roxburgh, for their close and critical reading of my text, as well as for their perceptive comments and for sharing their expertise with
me. Their input has helped me consider my work from several different angles, and I know that their comments will be vital in helping me take the dissertation to its final stage as a book.

Of all the institutions and foundations that have supported my research I must first thank the unparalleled and generous support provided by the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts (CASVA), at the National Gallery of Art (Washington, D.C.). Because of a three-year Paul Mellon Predoctoral Fellowship, I was able to conduct the majority of my research in Germany, where I had sustained access to major collections of medieval manuscripts and works of art. Moreover, my time in residence at the Center was truly a writer's paradise and I benefited enormously from the lively exchange afforded by the community of scholars in place there. A year-long fellowship from the Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (DAAD) provided further support for my research abroad, and a Dissertation Completion Fellowship (DCF) provided me with a welcome opportunity to return to Harvard during the final stretch.

As anybody working on manuscripts knows, pursuing a topic such as this would have been impossible without the assistance of many colleagues in museums and libraries who are responsible for the safekeeping of these treasures. While I am grateful to all of the curators and librarians who granted me access to their manuscripts and fielded my research inquiries, I would like to mention in particular the help of Charlotte Denoël at the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris, Silvia Uhlemann at the Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek in Darmstadt, Trifone Cellamaro at the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan, and Harald Horst at the Erzbischöfliche Diözesan- und Dombibliothek in Cologne. Also, the tireless assistance of the wonderful research librarians at
the National Gallery in Washington and the Fine Arts Library at Harvard greatly enhanced my ability to conduct research.

Without question, my time in Germany was transformative and I remain deeply thankful to the many colleagues and friends who made my experience there particularly fruitful and enjoyable. Christoph Winterer became a trusted advisor, a critical reader, a superbly knowledgeable travel companion, and, along with his wife Gabi, a gracious and welcoming host. Susanne Wittekind welcomed me warmly at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Cologne, where I was able not only to conduct and discuss my own research, but also to engage with the lively scholarly community there. I am particularly grateful for the many discussions held with the members of the mediävistischer Gesprächskreis including Prof. Wittekend, Kristin Böse, Kirsten Lee Bierbaum, Vera Henkelmann, and Jitka Ehlers. Peter Orth kindly shared his knowledge of Carolingian poetry with me, and in several instances offered his opinion on the Cologne tituli and other such matters. Also at Cologne, a number of co-dissertators helped me look forward to the many days spent at the library: Christian, Lisa, Matthias, Stephanie.

So many scholars, colleagues, and friends have helped me think through both the form and the content of the dissertation. I can only offer a partial list here, in no particular order. I am truly privileged to have had Beatrice Kitzinger as a constant reader of my work. Also Cynthia Hahn, my very first professor of medieval art, consistently offered her support and guidance to me. While at CASVA, I was particularly grateful for the support of the deans, the camaraderie of my fellow pre-docs, the advice and wisdom of the senior fellows, including Holly Clayson, Andrés Zervigón, and Lorenzo Pericolo. At Harvard, Jan Ziolkowski offered his thoughts on matters of
Latin; William Stoneman was likewise a trusted source of advice. Nicole Pulichene graciously proofread my text. On several different occasions I was fortunate to be able to present my research at conferences, colloquia, and workshops throughout Europe and the United States: for these opportunities I would like to thank in particular Michele Ferrari at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg; Klaus Gereon Beuckers at the University of Kiel; Nicolas Bock at the University of Lausanne; Nino Zchomelidse at Johns Hopkins University; and Margaret Mullett at Dumbarton Oaks.

Also, a very deep and heart-felt thanks my beloved friends who helped keep me going through all of this, who cheered me up when I was down, who distracted me when I was too focused, and who helped me keep my head out of the clouds. Each of you, in your own way, has helped make this journey not just memorable, but also a true joy.

Above all, however, I would like to thank my family: my parents, Patrick and Carmen, and my brother Sean. They always supported me when I needed it most, and never stopped believing in me. I dedicate this dissertation to them.
**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

*Standard References*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCCM</td>
<td>Corpus christianorum: Continuatio mediaevalis. Turnhout: Brepols.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSEL</td>
<td>Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum. Vienna/Leipzig: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky [vols. 1–70], Academia Scientarum Austriaca [vols. 71–].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MGH Conc</td>
<td>Monumenta Germaniae historica, Concilia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MGH Scriptores</td>
<td>Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptores rerum Germanicarum.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Manuscript Repositories*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BAV</td>
<td>Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL</td>
<td>British Library, London.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BnF</td>
<td>Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRB</td>
<td>Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, Brussels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSB</td>
<td>Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dombibliothek</td>
<td>Erzbischöfliche Diözesan- und Dombibliothek, Cologne.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GM</td>
<td>Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAB</td>
<td>Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HLM</td>
<td>Hessisches Landesmuseum, Darmstadt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JRL</td>
<td>John Rylands Library, Manchester.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYPL</td>
<td>New York Public Library, New York.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ÖNB</td>
<td>Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PML</td>
<td>Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RB</td>
<td>Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo, El Escorial.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB</td>
<td>Staatsbibliothek.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>StB</td>
<td>Stadtbibliothek.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UB</td>
<td>Universitätsbibliothek.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ULB</td>
<td>Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek, Darmstadt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLB</td>
<td>Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note**

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Dedicatory Frontispiece. The Everger Lectionary. Cologne, c. 985–999. Cologne, Dombibliothek, Hs. 143, fols. 3v–4r.


Figure 5. The Pharaoh's Feast. The Vienna Genesis. Syria (?), early sixth century. Vienna, ÖNB, Cod. Theol. Gr. 31, fol. 17v.

Figure 6. Frontispiece to Deuteronomy. The Leo Bible. Constantinople, c. 900–950. Vatican, BAV, MS Reg. Gr. 1b.

Figure 7. Initial Page to John. The Manchester Gospels. Trier, c. 996–1002. Manchester, John Rylands Library, MS Lat. 98, fol. 154r.


Figure 9. Annunciation Miniature and Titulus. The Hitda Codex. Cologne, c. 1000-1020. Darmstadt, ULB, Hs. 1640, fols. 19v–20r.

Figure 10. Madonna della Clemenza, encaustic. Rome, 705–707 (?). Santa Maria in Trastevere.

Figure 11. Genesis Cycle, wall painting. Rome, c. 757–767. Nave of Santa Maria Antiqua.

Figure 12. Crucifixion. Sacramentary from Corvey, mid-tenth century. Leipzig, UB, Cod. Rep I 4° 57, fol. 1v.

Figure 13. The Hand of God. The Uta Codex. Regensburg, c. 1020. Munich, BSB, CLM 13601, fol. 1v.

Figure 14. Majestas Domini, titulus and miniature. Gospel Lectionary. Trier or Mainz, c. 1000-1030. Munich, BSB, CLM 11327, fols. 1v-2r.

Figure 16. Dedicatory Inscription. The Ada Gospels. Aachen, c. 800. Trier, StB, Cod. 22, fol. 172r.

Figure 17. *Liber-vitae* Inscription (added). The Gauzelin Gospels. Tours, c. 835 with late-ninth-century additions. Nancy, Cathedral Treasury, no signature, fol. 1r.

Figure 18. Majestas Domini (added). The Gauzelin Gospels. Tours, c. 835 with late-ninth-century additions. Nancy, Cathedral Treasury, no signature, fol. 2v.

Figure 19. Dedicatory Inscription. The Escorial Codex aureus. Echternach, c. 1045. El Escorial, RB, Cod. Vitr. 17, fol. 4r.

Figure 20. Majestas Domini Titulus. The Milan Gospels. Cologne, c. 1000. Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS C 53 Sup., fol. 2r.

Figure 21. Majestas Domini. The Gauzelin Gospels. Tours, c. 835 with late-ninth-century additions. Nancy, Cathedral Treasury, no signature, fol. 3v.

Figure 22. Majestas Domini. The Moutier-Grandval Bible. Tours, c. 835. London, BL, Additional MS 10546, fol. 352v.

Figure 23. Majestas Domini. The First Bible of Charles the Bald. Tours, c. 845. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 1, fol. 330v.

Figure 24. Majestas Domini. The *Codex aureus* from St. Emmeram. Court school of Charles the Bald, c. 870. Munich, BSB, CLM 14000, fol. 6v.

Figure 25. Drawing of the Lost Golden Altar from Xanten. Friedrich Jakob Pels, 1734. Xanten, Stiftsarchiv, H 19 Bll. 64, p. 395.

Figure 26. Majestas Domini. The Ste.-Chapelle Gospels. Trier, c. 984. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 8851, fol. 1v.

Figure 27. Dedicatory Miniature. The Milan Gospels. Cologne, c. 1000. Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS C 53 Sup., fol. 2v.

Figure 28. First Dedicatory Miniature. Hrabanus Maurus, *De laudibus sanctae crucis*. Fulda (Mainz?), c. 850. Vienna, ÖNB, Cod. Vind. 652, fol. 2v.

Figure 29. Second Dedicatory Miniature. Hrabanus Maurus, *De laudibus sanctae crucis*. Fulda (Mainz?), c. 850. Vienna, ÖNB, Cod. Vind. 652, fol. 3v.
Figure 30. Dedicatory Miniature. Hornbach Sacramentary. Reichenau, c. 983. Solothurn, Cathedral Treasury, Cod. U 1, fol. 7v.

Figure 31. Dedicatory Miniature. Ragnaldus Sacramentary. Tours (Marmoutier), c. 844. Autun, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 19 bis, fol. 173v.

Figure 32. Dedicatory Miniature. First Bible of Charles the Bald. Tours, c. 845. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 1, fol. 423r.

Figure 33. Dedicatory Miniature. Collectar. Stavelot, c. 1020–1040. Brussels, BRB, MS 1813, fol. 14r.

Figure 34. Dedicatory Titulus. The Milan Gospels. Cologne, c. 1000. Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS C 53 Sup., fol. 3r.

Figure 35. Dedicatory Miniature and Inscription. The Aachen Gospels of Otto III. Reichenau, c. 990. Aachen, Cathedral Treasury, no signature, fols. 15v–16r.

Figure 36. Jerome Portrait. The Milan Gospels. Cologne, c. 1000. Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS C 53 Sup., fol. 3v.

Figure 37. Novum opus Page. The Milan Gospels. Cologne, c. 1000. Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS C 53 Sup., fol. 4r.

Figure 38. Beato Damaso Page. The Manchester Gospels. Trier, c. 996–1002. Manchester, JRL, MS Lat. 98, fol. 1v.

Figure 39. Jerome Cycle. First Bible of Charles the Bald. Tours, c. 845. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 1, fol. 3v.

Figure 40. Jerome Cycle. The San Paolo Bible. Reims (?), c. 866–875. Abbey of San Paolo fuori le mura, no signature, fol. 3r.

Figure 41. Jerome Portrait. Psalter of Charles the Bald. Court school of Charles the Bald, before 869. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 1152, fol. 4r.

Figure 42. First Incipit Page to John. The Milan Gospels. Cologne, c. 1000. Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS C 53 Sup., fol. 185v.

Figure 43. Evangelist Portrait, John. The Milan Gospels. Cologne, c. 1000. Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS C 53 Sup., fol. 186r.

Figure 44. Titulus to John. The Milan Gospels. Cologne, c. 1000. Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS C 53 Sup., fol. 186v.
Figure 45. Titulus to John (continued). The Milan Gospels. Cologne, c. 1000. Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS C 53 Sup., fol. 187r.


Figure 47. Initial Page to John. The Milan Gospels. Cologne, c. 1000. Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS C 53 Sup., fol. 188r.

Figure 48. John Portrait and Titulus. The Noialles Gospels. Court school of Charles the Bald, c. 850–875. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 323, fols. 149v–150r.

Figure 49. Incipit and Initial Page to John. The Noialles Gospels. Court school of Charles the Bald, c. 850–875. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 323, fols. 150v–151r.

Figure 50. Evangelist Portrait, Matthew. The Milan Gospels. Cologne, c. 1000. Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS C 53 Sup., fol. 19r.

Figure 51. Binding. The Gereon Sacramentary. Cologne, before 1002. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 817.

Figure 52. Binding. Rhenish (Aachen?), c. 1000-1020. Aachen, Cathedral Treasury.

Figure 53. Exultet Prayer. The Gereon Sacramentary. Cologne, before 1002. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 817, fol. 56v.


Figure 55. Gregory Portrait Titulus. The Gereon Sacramentary. Cologne, before 1002. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 817, fol. 20v.

Figure 56. Gregory Portrait. The Gereon Sacramentary. Cologne, before 1002. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 817, fol. 21r.

Figure 57. Porphyrian Tree. Boethius, Second Commentary on the Isagoge of Porphyry. Cologne, late tenth century. Cologne, Dombibliothek, Hs. 189, fol. 1v.

Figure 58. Annunciation. The Gereon Sacramentary. Cologne, before 1002. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 817, fol. 12r.

Figure 59. Annunciation. The Egbert Codex. Trier/Reichenau, 977–993 (980–985?). Trier, StB, Cod. 24, fol. 9v.

Figure 60. Annunciation. Prüm Troper. Prüm, c. 995. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 9448, fol. 1v.
Figure 61. Annunciation, detail. The Gereon Sacramentary. Cologne, before 1002. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 817, fol. 12r.

Figure 62. Annunciation Titulus. The Gereon Sacramentary. Cologne, before 1002. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 817, fol. 11v.

Figure 63. Nativity. The Gereon Sacramentary. Cologne, before 1002. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 817, fol. 13r.

Figure 64. Nativity. The Prüm Troper. Prüm, c. 995. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 9448, fol. 4v.

Figure 65. Ivory Diptych. Constantinople (?), late tenth century. Milan, Museo del Duomo, inv. nr. 1388.

Figure 66. Reverse of Gereon Nativity Miniature. The Gereon Sacramentary. Cologne, before 1002. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 817, fol. 13v.

Figure 67. Nativity Titulus. The Gereon Sacramentary. Cologne, before 1002. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 817, fol. 12v.

Figure 68. Crucifixion. The Gereon Sacramentary. Cologne, before 1002. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 817, fol. 59r.


Figure 70. Crucifixion, wall painting. Rome, c. 741. Theodotus Chapel, Santa Maria Antiqua.

Figure 71. Crucifixion. Sacramentary from Lorsch. Trier, late tenth century. Chantilly, Musée Condé, MS 40, fol. 4v.

Figure 72. Crucifixion Titulus. The Gereon Sacramentary. Cologne, before 1002. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 817, fol. 58v.

Figure 73. Crucifixion, detail. The Gereon Sacramentary. Cologne, before 1002. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 817, fol. 59r.

Figure 74. Crucifixion Icon. Palestine (?), eighth century. Mount Sinai, The Monastery of Saint Catherine, Weitzmann cat. nr. B.36.

Figure 75. Pilate and the Guards. The Gereon Sacramentary. Cologne, before 1002. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 817, fol. 59v.

Figure 76. Women at the Tomb. The Gereon Sacramentary. Cologne, before 1002. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 817, fol. 60r.
Figure 77.  Gospels from the abbey of St. Peter, Salzburg. Salzburg, c. 1000–1050 (before 1030?). New York, PML, M. 781, fol. 85v.

Figure 78.  Gospels from the abbey of St. Peter, Salzburg. Salzburg, c. 1000–1050 (before 1030?). New York, PML, M. 781, fol. 86r.

Figure 79.  Ivory Plaque with the Crucifixion, Ascension, and Christ Enthroned. Cologne, c. 1050. Cologne, Diözesanmuseum (Kolumba), inv. nr. 1992/31.

Figure 80.  Reliquary Cover. Constantinople, twelfth century (?). Paris, Musée du Louvre, Objets d’Art, MR 346.

Figure 81.  Women at Tomb, detail. The Gereon Sacramentary. Cologne, before 1002. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 817, fol. 60r.

Figure 82.  Initial Page to Pentecost. The Gereon Sacramentary. Cologne, before 1002. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 817, fol. 77v.

Figure 83.  Ascension. The Gereon Sacramentary. Cologne, before 1002. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 817, fol. 72r.

Figure 84.  Ascension. The Egbert Codex. Trier/Reichenau, 977–993 (980–985?). Trier, StB, Cod. 24, fol. 101r.

Figure 85.  Ascension, ivory. Metz, late ninth century (860–870?). Coburg, Kunstsammlungen der Veste Coburg, inv. nr. Pl.001.

Figure 86.  Ascension, ivory. Carolingian, late ninth century. Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Skulpturensammlung, inv. nr. 2109 (irreparably damaged in WWII).

Figure 87.  Ascension Titulus. The Gereon Sacramentary. Cologne, before 1002. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 817, fol. 71v.

Figure 88.  Gathering of the Nations. The Gereon Sacramentary. Cologne, before 1002. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 817, fol. 76v.

Figure 89.  Pentecost. The Gereon Sacramentary. Cologne, before 1002. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 817, fol. 77r.


Figure 91.  Pentecost. San Paolo Bible. Reims (?), c. 866–875. Abbey of San Paolo fuori le mura, no signature, fol. 295v.
Figure 92. Majestas Domini. The Gereon Sacramentary. Cologne, before 1002. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 817, fol. 15v.

Figure 93. Annunciation. The Hitda Codex. Cologne, c. 1000–1020. Darmstadt, ULB, Hs. 1640, fol. 20r.

Figure 94. Annunciation. The Hitda Codex. Cologne, c. 1000–1020. Darmstadt, ULB, Hs. 1640, fol. 20r.

Figure 95. Annunciation. The Hitda Codex. Cologne, c. 1000–1020. Darmstadt, ULB, Hs. 1640, fol. 20r.

Figure 96. Annunciation. The Hitda Codex. Cologne, c. 1000–1020. Darmstadt, ULB, Hs. 1640, fol. 20r.

Figure 97. Annunciation. The Hitda Codex. Cologne, c. 1000–1020. Darmstadt, ULB, Hs. 1640, fol. 20r.

Figure 98. Annunciation. The Hitda Codex. Cologne, c. 1000–1020. Darmstadt, ULB, Hs. 1640, fol. 20r.

Figure 99. Nativity. The Hitda Codex. Cologne, c. 1000–1020. Darmstadt, ULB, Hs. 1640, fol. 21r.

Figure 100. Adoration of the Magi. The Hitda Codex. Cologne, c. 1000–1020. Darmstadt, ULB, Hs. 1640, fol. 22r.

Figure 101. Presentation in the Temple. The Hitda Codex. Cologne, c. 1000–1020. Darmstadt, ULB, Hs. 1640, fol. 23r.

Figure 102. Baptism. The Hitda Codex. Cologne, c. 1000–1020. Darmstadt, ULB, Hs. 1640, fol. 75r.

Figure 103. Baptism. Menologion of Basil II. Constantinople, c. 1000–1025. Vatican, BAV, MS Vat. gr. 1613, p. 299.

Figure 104. Baptism, ivory. Cover of the Drogo Sacramentary. Metz, c. 850. Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 9428.

Figure 105. Baptism, ivory. Trier (?), late tenth century (?). Munich, BSB, CLM 4451.

Figure 106. Healing of the Demoniac at Capernaum. The Hitda Codex. Cologne, c. 1000–1020. Darmstadt, ULB, Hs. 1640, fol. 76r.

Figure 107. Healing of the Demoniac. Echternach Lectionary. Echternach, c. 1030–1031. Brussels, BRB, MS 9428, fol. 42r.
Figure 108. Healing of Peter’s Mother-in-Law. The Hitda Codex. Cologne, c. 1000–1020. Darmstadt, ULB, Hs. 1640, fol. 77r.

Figure 109. Healing of the Withered Hand. The Hitda Codex. Cologne, c. 1000–1020. Darmstadt, ULB, Hs. 1640, fol. 114r.

Figure 110. Healing of the Withered Hand. The Egbert Codex. Trier/Reichenau, 977–993 (980–985?). Trier, StB, Cod. 24, fol. 23v.

Figure 111. Resurrection of the Widow’s Son. The Hitda Codex. Cologne, c. 1000–1020. Darmstadt, ULB, Hs. 1640, fol. 115r.

Figure 112. Resurrection of the Widow’s Son, wall painting. Reichenau, tenth century (?). Reichenau (Oberzell), Church of St. George.

Figure 113. Healing of the Blindman at Jericho. The Hitda Codex. Cologne, c. 1000–1020. Darmstadt, ULB, Hs. 1640, fol. 116r.

Figure 114. Storm at Sea. The Hitda Codex. Cologne, c. 1000–1020. Darmstadt, ULB, Hs. 1640, fol. 117r.

Figure 115. Storm at Sea. Aachen Gospels of Otto III. Reichenau, c. 990. Aachen, Cathedral Treasury, no signature, fol. 27r.

Figure 116. Wedding at Cana. The Hitda Codex. Cologne, c. 1000–1020. Darmstadt, ULB, Hs. 1640, fol. 169r.

Figure 117. Wedding at Cana. The Brussels Echternach Lectionary. Echternach, c. 1030–1031. Brussels, BRB, MS 9428, fol. 21r.

Figure 118. Healing of the Paralytic. The Hitda Codex. Cologne, c. 1000–1020. Darmstadt, ULB, Hs. 1640, fol. 170r.

Figure 119. Healing of the Paralytic. The Nuremberg Codex aureus. Echternach, c. 1035. Nuremberg, GM, Hs. 156142, fol. 53r.

Figure 120. Christ and the Adulteress. The Hitda Codex. Cologne, c. 1000–1020. Darmstadt, ULB, Hs. 1640, fol. 171r.

Figure 121. Christ and the Adulteress. Trier/Reichenau, 977–993 (980–985?). Trier, StB, Cod. 24, fol. 46v.
Before delving into the world of Cologne’s Ottonian manuscripts, it is worth devoting just a few words to the intentions of this project—not just in terms of what it hopes to accomplish, but also its limitations and its perceived boundaries. As the reference to “image” and “inscription” in the title suggests, this dissertation will take a two-pronged approach to the study of a particularly remarkable group of illuminated manuscripts: the so-called “painterly group” of the Cologne school of Ottonian illumination. Dating to the decades around the year 1000, the gospel books and the liturgical manuscripts making up this group from Cologne distinguish themselves through an unusually consistent juxtaposition of full-page miniatures with corresponding full-page inscriptions, also known as tituli. With this particular disposition of text and image, the two semantically-linked elements are arranged as pendants across the opening of the manuscript. Despite the rich potential for insight afforded by such a phenomenon, art historians—mainly those of earlier generations—have tended to focus their efforts on questions of style and iconography, often in an attempt to look beyond the miniatures in question to glimpse something of their lost models. In fact, along with the contentious and complex issue of the dating of the manuscripts, the thorny question of their models—that is, the stylistic sources of their painterliness—has dominated scholarly discussions of the manuscripts thus far.

In an attempt to chart a different course, this dissertation will often sidestep the still-controversial questions of dating or stylistic models in order to approach the manuscripts from a different perspective—one which attempts to understand the remarkable miniatures and tituli of the group against the context of their broader pictorial programs. However, this is by no means to suggest that the more traditional issues of dating or style are no longer vital avenues of research.
Rather, it is merely to stress the potential benefit of balancing overly analytical approaches with those which seek to understand how the manuscripts function as specific objects. In a similar manner, this dissertation will attempt to avoid any sort of terminological warfare in which historically established terms and categories are called into question or abolished. Although the first chapter will certainly scrutinize the problematic concept of “painterliness” as well as the old-fashioned notion of a “Cologne school,” it will not attempt to do away with the terms altogether. As inadequate as they may be, they remain far too useful as simple designations. Likewise, no distinction will be made between the terms “titulus” and “inscription,” nor will any attempt be made to offer a binding definition of this ubiquitous category of text. Instead, an emphasis will be placed on understanding the rich variety of potential pictorial interactions that such texts afford.

As a final proviso, it is important to note that this dissertation will not attempt to provide a systematic treatment of each individual manuscript from the painterly group—a task which has already been accomplished. Rather, the project focuses on the three manuscripts from the group with the most significant and elaborate pictorial programs: a gospel book in the Ambrosiana in Milan; the Sacramentary from St. Gereon in Paris; and the Hitda Codex in Darmstadt. While each of these manuscripts forms the subject of its own chapter, the remaining members of the group will be discussed intermittently and only as needed.
CHAPTER ONE
BEGINNINGS

For nearly a century scholars have referred to the objects at the core of this study as the “painterly group” of illuminated manuscripts from Ottonian Cologne. Fully living up to their alluring title, the manuscripts display a remarkable approach to handling pigment that derives in part from a fluid manipulation of the medium into expressive layers of paint. Most noticeable in the ground and background elements of the miniatures—as well as in the depiction of atmospheric effects such as clouds or light—the painterly technique sets the group of Cologne miniatures apart from contemporary examples of Ottonian illumination, which, in contrast, depend primarily on pronounced outlines for the delineation of forms. While not always appreciated, the peculiar style of Cologne’s painterly group has earned not just the sustained attention of specialists, but even the interest and admiration of a broader public. The most famous representative of the group, the Hitda Codex in Darmstadt, features regularly in introductory textbooks and surveys of medieval art history—at least as it is currently taught in the United States. In German art-historical writing, the group’s painterliness has provided the occasion for some memorable feats of description. Writing about the Gereon Sacramentary in Paris, for example, Carl Nordenfalk was particularly adept at capturing, almost in a visceral way, the exceptional handling of paint that characterizes the group:

Painting with an unusually full brush, the artists of Cologne were able to achieve their forms, as it were, directly from thick masses of color. One sees how, in the Pentecost miniature from the Paris sacramentary, the tongues of fire that descend upon the heads of the Apostles appear as rippling daubs of color. Likewise, both ground and background are transformed into soft waves of color, just on the verge of solidifying—in other
instances, they are enlivened by the free-form play of the golden silhouettes of feather-like plants.¹

Nordenfalk certainly had a gift for crafting near-lyrical descriptions of miniatures, but his enthusiasm for the visual qualities of the group was by no means unique.

Writing a few years earlier, Hans Jantzen, the author of the first monographic history of Ottonian art, canonized the painterliness of the Cologne school with his maxim on the essential characteristics of the leading exponents of Ottonian illumination: “In Cologne, color dominates; on the Reichenau, gesture; and in Regensburg, the conceptual.”² As catchy as it may be, Jantzen’s formulation of the Cologne school proves problematic on two counts. First, he conflates color and painterliness. While often related, the two concepts are not at all equivalent, and the resulting confusion becomes apparent in Jantzen’s description of the Hitda Codex—a manuscript that demonstrates an exceptionally creative treatment of what is, contrary to Jantzen’s assessment, a rather reduced palette. In a short passage, Jantzen describes the painter of the Hitda Codex in terms that read today more like a formalist’s fantasy of the process of painting:

Indeed, in the Hitda Codex we encounter an artist who expresses himself above all in the language of color. He is a master who understands all the mysteries of color, who


possesses a sensitivity to the most exquisite chromatic values, and who certainly counts as one of the most important painters in Ottonian art.³

The point here is not to dispute the innovative visual qualities of the Hitda Codex, which are plain to see, but rather to demonstrate how imprecise the discussions of its painterliness can be. The second, no less instructive problem with Jantzen’s maxim is his conflation of the painterly group with the entire Cologne school, which comprises about twenty manuscripts spanning almost one-hundred years.⁴ From the very beginnings of scholarship on the school to the modern-day status quo, established by the double-volume study of Peter Bloch and Hermann Schnitzler, scholars have recognized three distinct stylistic subgroups of Cologne’s Ottonian illumination. According to Bloch and Schnitzler, the earliest of the three main styles is the painterly group (malerische Gruppe) of about six or seven manuscripts, depending on how one counts, followed by a “rich” or opulent group (reiche Gruppe) of three manuscripts, and finally a “severe” group (strenge Gruppe) of six manuscripts.⁵ With a few notable exceptions, the

---


⁴ The clearest and most thorough overview of the school is still the catalog which constitutes the first volume of Bloch and Schnitzler’s double-volume reference work. See Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule I, p. 13-120.

overwhelming majority of scholarship on the Cologne school has focused its attention primarily on the painterly group. It ought to be stated at the outset that the present study will do little to redress this unfortunate imbalance, but a continued focus on the painterly group is nevertheless justified. It is in this first major group of the Cologne school that the manuscripts display both the greatest pictorial innovation as well as the most sophisticated and elaborate programs of tituli.

Although this dissertation focuses on the painterly group, it is not about their painterliness per se. Instead, the project examines the innovative visual qualities of the miniatures from the perspective of a second characteristic feature of the group: their full-page tituli—or inscriptions—that were written specifically to accompany the group’s miniatures. In stark contrast to the pictorial programs, the sets of tituli in Cologne’s painterly manuscripts have yet to

Lectionary in Cologne (Dombibliothek, Hs. 143), the Gereon Gospels in the Cologne (Historisches Archiv, Cod. W 312), the Milan Gospels in the Ambrosiana (MS C 53 Sup.), the Gereon Sacramentary in Paris (BnF, MS Lat. 817), the Hitda Codex in Darmstadt (ULB, Hs. 1640), and the Giessen Gospels (UB, Cod. 660). The “rich” or opulent group (reiche Gruppe) comprises: the Maria ad Gradus Gospels in Cologne (Dombibliothek, Hs. 1a), the gospel book in New York (PML, M. 651), and the Bamberg Gospels (SB, Msc. Bibl. 94). The “severe” group (strenge Gruppe) comprises: the Gereon Gospels in Stuttgart (WLB, MS Bibl. fol. 21), fragments of a gospel book in Nuremberg (GM, MM 394 and 395), the Tyniec Sacramentary in Warsaw (BOZ 8), a sacramentary in Freiburg i.B. (UB, Cod. 360a), the Harley Gospels in London (BL, Harley 2820), and the Abdinghof Gospels in the Kupferstichkabinett of Berlin (Cod. 78 A 3). A problematic group, known as the “special painterly group” (die malerische Sondergruppe), comprises three additional manuscripts that are to a certain extent related to the painterly group while nevertheless constituting outliers in either a chronological or stylistic sense. These are: the Namur Gospels (Grand séminaire, M 43); the Gundold Gospels in Stuttgart (WBL, MS Bibl. quart. 2); and the Gerresheim Gospels (Gerresheim, no signature).

receive systematic study. Far from commonplace, both the deliberate wording and conscious structure of the tituli provide an ideal point of departure from which to probe contemporary understandings of what these miniatures meant and how they were thought to function. At its core, the dissertation aims to reconcile the strong wording of the inscriptions with the equally striking nature of their facing miniatures—all within the larger context of what contemporary sources, visual as well as verbal, can say about Ottonian attitudes toward images. In laying the foundation for the chapters that follow—each of which focuses on one of the three most significant manuscripts of the painterly group—the present introductory chapter will progress along three different paths: first, a consideration of the historical beginnings of the Cologne school and the supposed location of its workshop; second, an assessment of the scholarly beginnings of the school, examining in particular the implications of the concept of painterliness; and finally, an introduction to the phenomenon of tituli in early-medieval illumination, with particular attention given to the implications of disposition—that is, the specific arrangement of text and image—in the tituli of the painterly group.

*Cologne at the Millennium*

Certain episodes in the history of art stand out all the more because they appear to have emerged from thin air. Such is the case with the first illuminated manuscripts from Ottonian Cologne, which date to the decades around the year 1000. As auspicious and memorable a date as it may be, the turn of the millennium marks in fact a rather late start for Cologne’s artistic efflorescence, particularly when judged against a broader history of the city’s political and cultural resurgence.
after the tumultuous dissolution of the Carolingian empire. The turning point in this sense undoubtedly came much earlier with the episcopacy of Archbishop Bruno (r. 953-965), brother of Emperor Otto the Great (d. 973) and the near embodiment of what German historians would come to call the Ottonian “imperial church system” (*Reichskirchensystem*), a particular approach to governing that fused imperial and ecclesiastical politics. With his dual role as both the archbishop of Cologne and the Duke of Lotharingia, Bruno was able to raise the profile of the city to new heights within the empire, primarily through his own active engagement as a political leader, a reformer, and a patron of religious institutions. As his contemporary biographer relates with a characteristic flair for hyperbole, Bruno was no less ambitious concerning the city’s intellectual standing: he is said to have personally rediscovered the seven liberal arts, which had long been forgotten in the city, and eagerly sought out learned discussions with the best scholars.

---


of the day—both from Western Europe and Byzantium. Yet for all his impressive accomplishments and his indisputable relevance for the development and prosperity of the city in the tenth and eleventh centuries, Bruno seems to have had little interest in cultivating the art of manuscript illumination. If he did, any trace of it has been lost. As a consequence one cannot claim that Cologne’s first cultural renewal in the tenth century coincides with any important developments in the history of its painting. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that Bruno laid the cultural if not artistic foundations that would enable the production of deluxe illuminated manuscripts well over a generation after his death.

Before turning to that inaugural moment, however, it would be worthwhile to consider the possibility of a preceding Carolingian tradition of illumination. Here, too, art historians have little to build on. Even with a generous estimate for the considerable losses endured with the passing of time, no evidence suggests that Cologne had previously possessed anything approaching the level of artistic production that began in the final decades of the tenth century and would persist, in various forms, for the better part of the following one-hundred years.

---


11 In this regard, however, Cologne is not so unusual. The beginnings of several other important centers of manuscript illumination are similarly characterized by a delay in the onset of artistic production (e.g. Tours, Reichenau, Echternach). For a thorough overview of the various schools of Carolingian and Ottonian painting, see Florentine Mütherich, “Die Buchmalerei in den Klosterschulen des frühen Mittelalters,” in Monastische Reformen im 9. und 10. Jahrhundert: Vorträge und Forschungen, eds. Raymund Kottje and Helmut Maurer (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke 1989), p. 15-28.

12 For differing approaches to the complicated question of Carolingian illumination at Cologne, see Ehl 1922, Die ottonische Kölner Buchmalerei, p. 9-42; Bloch and Schnitzler 1970, Die
be sure, occasional textual references give some sense of the artistic landscape of the Carolingian city. For example, the oldest known listing of books from the cathedral library, written in 833, mentions an illuminated manuscript of the Apocalypse that has since been lost; also, the work of Sedulius Scottus, a Carolingian poet, preserves sets of inscriptions that he wrote to accompany monumental wall paintings, presumably in Cologne. Yet not a single line of text refers explicitly to the production of illuminated manuscripts in the city itself, and—more significantly—art historians have determined that the notable examples of Carolingian illumination preserved today in Cologne were in fact produced at other, more established artistic centers. Thus the picture that emerges of the artistic situation in Cologne during the ninth and early-tenth centuries is one largely dependent on the importation of works of art. The provenance of several other important manuscripts strengthens this supposition. For example, Archbishop Hermann I (r. 890-924) donated a magnificent illuminated Bible to the cathedral some thirty years after it was written and painted in Tours; similarly, Archbishop Gero (r. 969-976)


presented to the cathedral his now famous and eponymously known gospel lectionary, the Gero Codex, which he commissioned from the workshop of the Reichenau, the island monastery in Lake Constance.\textsuperscript{15} Although this practice of importing luxury manuscripts would persist well into the eleventh century, a noticeable shift occurred with the episcopacy of Everger (r. 985-999), who, while following in the established tradition of donating luxury manuscripts to the cathedral, chose to commission his codex—known today as the Everger Lectionary or Epistolary—not from a foreign workshop, but rather from scribes and painters working within the city itself.

* * *

Comprising a liturgically ordered selection of readings from the Epistles, Everger’s manuscript boasts a handful of elegant full-page initials, all of which, however, pale in comparison to the ambitious double-page frontispiece depicting the archbishop prostrating himself in supplication before the enthroned figures of Peter and Paul on the opposite page

[FIGURE 1].\textsuperscript{16} Blocks of color coordinate the backgrounds of the paired compositions: a deep red for the golden text of the titulus above Everger as well as the thrones of the two saints; an unusually bright green for the middle zone with Everger’s head as well as the bodies of the two


saints; a deep blue for the area behind the nimbed heads of Peter and Paul; and finally, a lower register of dark-green earth, dotted with golden flowers and modeled such that the color gradually darkens toward the lower margin. The resulting effect articulates a meaningful juxtaposition between the archbishop—splayed out on the earth, with his head barely rising from it—and the dignified apostles who, in contrast, sit enthroned in the zone above with their heads reaching the heavens.

Whatever crudeness there may be in the execution of the figures, their arrangement demonstrates an underlying level of sophistication that reveals the frontispiece to be a calculated display of self-promoting humility. Everger presents himself not only to the authors of the Epistles contained in the codex, but also to the patron saint of Cologne’s cathedral, Peter, whose arm reaches down across the frame in acknowledgement of the archbishop’s plea. Moreover, the choice of an illuminated epistolary—rather rare at the time—bears with it a significant consequence: it was the subdeacon, not the archbishop, who held the duty of reading from the Epistles during mass. Therefore, by selecting a particular manuscript type for his portrait, Everger ensured that it would be viewed—ritually, at least—by his subordinates. Reading the verse inscription in light of this potential third participant—that is, apart from the archbishop and the pair of apostles—gives a powerful impression of the nature of his penitential display and, broadly speaking, of the importance of public acts of contrition in this period:

Nexus, alme pater, vitiorum solve potenter · Paule, deo lectus, pariter tu solve reatus · Consequar ut veniam Christo donante supernam. Evergerus Archiepiscopus. ¹⁸

Nurturing father [Peter], release me fully from this bond of sins, and you, Paul, chosen by God, release me equally from guilt so that I may obtain, through the gift of Christ, heavenly pardon. Archbishop Everger.


¹⁸ For the Latin text of the inscriptions, see MGH Poetae V, p. 449.
Explicitly identifying Everger through both name and title, the inscription makes a repeated reference to his sin and guilt (*nexus vitiorum...reatus*) while ending with a statement of hope for heavenly pardon (*veniam supernam*). Whereas this first inscription enacts Everger’s dual prayer to Peter and Paul—expressing thereby a primary goal in commissioning the manuscript—a second, less conspicuous inscription, which runs along the frame of the second miniature, gives voice to the book itself and provides a commentary to the viewer by emphasizing the supplicatory nature of the interaction:

> Presul Evergerus, cuius sum nomine scriptus, hos vocat esse suos devota mente patronos.

*The Bishop Everger, in whose name I have been written, calls upon these men, with a devout mind, to be his patrons.*

By casting the interaction as a petition—a direct request for the support of the cathedral’s patron saint—the second inscription implicitly draws the viewer’s attention to the response of the two Apostles in the miniature, both of whom show themselves to be quite amenable to the Bishop’s appeal. Herein lies the ambition of the frontispiece: it not only depicts publicly the dramatic penance and supplication of the archbishop, but also it offers the viewer assurance of its success.

However much Everger’s presence and personal concerns stand behind the creation of this first significant work of the Cologne school, it would be exceedingly difficult to argue that he himself was responsible for the manuscripts that were to follow. Later sources rarely mention his patronage—at times they even spurn him as an ignominious character, particularly infamous for his suspicious role in the death of the venerable Archbishop Gero.¹⁹ Moreover, scholars now believe that Everger’s manuscript belongs to a small group of closely related codices, the rest of

---

which are of only minor artistic importance. Carl Nordenfalk was the first to argue in favor of this convincing regrouping, suggesting that these manuscripts constitute the very earliest phase of Cologne’s illuminated manuscripts. In his review of Bloch and Schnitzler’s double-volume study of the Cologne school, Nordenfalk pointed to an important piece of evidence unmentioned by the two authors: namely, the contemporary owner inscriptions found in a related manuscript containing Jerome’s commentary on the prophets. The inscriptions explicitly state that the manuscript belonged to the cathedral library and was written, furthermore, under Everger’s episcopacy. More recently, scholars have elaborated upon Nordenfalk’s proposal by arguing that the manuscripts were written and produced in the scriptorium of the cathedral itself. While this may well be the case, the more important point to underscore is that these earliest manuscripts from Cologne differ fundamentally from the subsequent painterly manuscripts to such an extent that they can no longer be considered as belonging to the same workshop. What is more, the differences extend beyond the finer points of ornament and script to encompass the most basic circumstances of production. That is to say, not one of the subsequent illuminated manuscripts from Cologne bears such an explicit connection with the archbishop, or for that matter even with the cathedral library. Instead, the evidence points overwhelmingly to the involvement of

---

20 The manuscript remains today in the collection of the cathedral library (Cologne, Dombibliothek, Hs. 53). The inscriptions from fol. 1v and 195r read: “Liber sancti Petri scriptus sub tempore domni Evergeri archiepiscopi.” The second iteration of the inscription omits the word “domni.” For literature on the manuscript, see Günter Gattermann (ed.), Handschriftencensus Rheinland: Erfassung mittelalterlicher Handschriften im rheinischen Landesteil von Nordrhein-Westfalen I (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1993), p. 601-602. For Nordenfalk’s argument regarding a separate grouping of manuscripts associated with Everger, see Nordenfalk 1971, Review of Bloch and Schnitzler, p. 303. For critique of this interpretation, however, see Hoffmann 2012, Schreibschulen und Buchmalerei, p. 190.

Cologne’s powerful religious foundations: most notably the eminent collegiate church of St. Gereon and the well-endowed Benedictine abbey of St. Pantaleon. Deciding which one of these two important religious foundations laid claim to the city’s artistic workshop has proven to be one of the many contentious issues in scholarship on the Cologne school.

* * *

Despite its importance, the dilemma of locating Cologne’s artistic workshop cannot be fully resolved here. Apart from a lamentable history of destruction and dispersal that complicates any attempt to reconstruct the various medieval libraries of the city, the greatest obstacle to such a resolution remains the lack of any rigorous overview of the various scriptoria at Cologne during the tenth and eleventh centuries. Indeed, Hartmut Hoffmann’s decision to exclude Cologne manuscripts from his magisterial study of Ottonian paleography and book production constitutes a major loss in this regard. Given the absence of such a specialized treatment of the material, it will suffice to present only the most pertinent arguments regarding the plausibility of locating the workshop at either St. Gereon or St. Pantaleon, as well as a brief reflection on the implications of such a choice.


Based solely on the evidence provided by the manuscripts themselves, St. Gereon would at first appear to be the more logical candidate. The provenance of three deluxe manuscripts can be traced back to this important collegiate church, and a further three contain liturgical references to its patron saint. Moreover, a late-medieval inventory of the church offers an impressive—if much later—glimpse of its rich holdings in books and liturgical objects. Such observations have led some scholars—among them Walter Berschin, Jeremia Kraus, and Ulrich Kuder—to propose St. Gereon as the location of Cologne’s premier artistic workshop. Although ultimately siding with these scholars, Florentine Mütherich has nevertheless made an important observation that undercuts their argument: the indications provided by these manuscripts clearly pertain to their patrons or recipients, not their producers. In line with a broader pattern of production in which the Cologne manuscripts were created for export to various regional foundations, it may very well be the case that St. Gereon was merely the greatest patron of the workshop, not its residence. In fact, approaching the question from the perspective of manuscript production turns the odds decidedly against St. Gereon’s favor. Aside from the lengthy list of books found in the

24 The three manuscripts with a medieval provenance linking them to St. Gereon include: the Gereon Gospels in Cologne; the Gereon Sacramentary in Paris; and the Gereon Gospels in Stuttgart. Further references to Gereon in listings of saints can be found in the sacramentaries in Warsaw and Freiburg, as well as the gospel books in London and Berlin. See Kraus 2005, *Worauf gründet unser Glaube*, p. 82, fn. 130.

25 For the fourteenth-century inventory of St. Gereon, see Peter Joerres, *Das Urkundenbuch des Stiftes St. Gereon zu Köln* (Bonn: Hanstein, 1893), n. 450, p. 444-454.


aforementioned inventory, only an isolated textual reference to a scribe from St. Gereon suggests that there was any form of scribal activity there at the time, let alone an active scriptorium.\textsuperscript{28}

In contrast, the Benedictine abbey of St. Pantaleon offers more convincing evidence for possessing both an active scriptorium as well as its own collection of books. Despite several known acts of dispersal, a small number of manuscripts from the library can still be identified, and consequently some sense of the collection’s scope can be determined.\textsuperscript{29} Of the surviving manuscripts associated with the monastery, two stand out as particularly noteworthy: the oldest known copy of Vitruvius and, likewise, the oldest known copy of Theophilus’ \textit{On Diverse Arts}, which was itself bound with another copy of Vitruvius.\textsuperscript{30} Though not necessarily overlapping with the production of the extant illuminated manuscripts, the presence of these major technical treatises at St. Pantaleon can hardly be dismissed as mere coincidence. Indeed, that these texts reflect a real interest in the production of objects can be seen from archaeological excavations,

\textsuperscript{28} The reference derives from an important listing of books from Cologne (Erfurt, Wissenschaftliche Allgemeinbibliothek, Cod. CA 2\textsuperscript{o} 64, fol. 117v), which can be dated to the years 1010-1026. Comprising part of what may perhaps be a listing of borrowers from the Cathedral library, the pertinent text reads: “Adelboldus episcopus. Librum super psalterium optime scriptum ad manum Wanizonis de sancto Gereone scriptoris.” See Plotzek 1998, \textit{Geschichte der Kölner Dombibliothek}, p. 31; and Irmgard Jeffré, “Handschriftliche Zeugnisse zur Geschichte der Kölner Domschule im 10. und 11. Jahrhundert,” in \textit{Kaiserin Theophanu I} (1991), p. 165-172, esp. p. 168.


\textsuperscript{30} For the two manuscripts, the Vitruvius (London, BL, MS Harley 2767) and the Theophilus (Wolfenbüttel, HAB, Cod. Guelph. 69 Gud. lat.), see ibid., p. 93-96 and p. 103-104; Carol Herselle Krinsky, “Seventy-Eight Vitruvius Manuscripts,” \textit{Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes} 30 (1967), p. 36-70; and most recently Heidi Gearhart, \textit{Theophilus’ On Diverse Arts: The Persona of the Artist and the Production of Art in the Twelfth Century} (Ph.D. Dissertation: University of Michigan, 2010), p. 48-60. Mayr-Harting suggests that the Harley Vitruvius manuscript was actually at the Cologne Cathedral Library, and only on loan to St. Pantaleon. See Mayr-Harting 2007, \textit{Church and Cosmos}, p. 103.
which have unearthed traces of an active bronze foundry directly adjoined to the church.\textsuperscript{31}

Historical circumstances align in favor of St. Pantaleon as well. The abbey was revived and richly endowed in 955 by no less a figure than Bruno himself, and only a few decades later Empress Theophanu would begin to foster a deep personal connection with the institution. Both of these high-ranking figures chose St. Pantaleon as their final resting place, thus providing significant occasions for further donations. Bruno’s last testament lists an impressive number of luxury goods that were to be given to the institution in addition to large sums of money toward the completion of the cloister and the expansion of the church.\textsuperscript{32} Likewise, Thietmar’s chronicle relates how, at Theophanu’s interment at St. Pantaleon in 991, Otto III “gave generously to the brothers for his mother’s salvation.”\textsuperscript{33} Seen, then, from the dual perspective of manuscript production and historical circumstances, St. Pantaleon would appear to be the most likely place for the development an ambitious artistic workshop at Cologne.

Despite the tantalizing possibility of relating the Cologne school directly to Theophanu’s involvement with St. Pantaleon, one of the earliest illuminated manuscripts of the painterly


\textsuperscript{32} For Bruno’s testament, see \textit{Ruotgeri vita Brunonis} (MGH Scriptores rerum Germanicarum 10), p. 50-51. The relevant passage reads: “cuppan auream, sigillum et scutulam Grecam, que penes nos sunt, beato Pantaleoni, candelabra preterea, quae in ministerio nostro sunt, cotidiana, equitem argentem a Magonciaco archiepiscopo datum, pallia X optima, vasa X argentea ex melioribus, libras C ad claustrum perficiendum, CCC ad ecclesiam ampliandam…” (To the blessed Pantaleon a golden chalice, the seal and Greek dish which are in our possession, the lamps, which were part of my daily use, a silver horse given to me by the archbishop of Mainz, ten of the best cloaks, ten of the better silver chalices, 100 pounds for the completion of the cloister and 300 pounds for the expansion of the church...).

group typifies much of the frustration associated with any attempt to shed light on the beginnings of the school. Known today as the Gereon Gospels, the sizable codex takes its name from an unverifiable provenance linking it to the collegiate church of St. Gereon, reported by the collector Ferdinand Franz Wallraf from whose collection it entered the City Archives of Cologne at some point in the nineteenth century.\(^\text{34}\) Its moniker notwithstanding, the manuscript itself offers no evidence as to either its place of production or its medieval provenance. This uncertainty is particularly unfortunate not only because the manuscript represents an important early phase in the artistic development of the painterly group, evident, for example, in the manuscript’s impressive Majestas Domini miniature [FIGURE 2], but also because it counts as a rare instance of imperial patronage among the surviving manuscripts from Cologne. Nonetheless, certain art historians have been less than enthusiastic regarding the quality of its miniatures. Anton von Euw, a great scholar on the Cologne material, memorably referred to the manuscript as an “artistic chaos” and a catastrophe. For von Euw, both the uneven execution of the miniatures as well as the consistently botched tituli pages indicate that the workshop had not yet attained the level of experience necessary for carrying out large-scale luxury commissions.\(^\text{35}\) The treatment of the tituli pages does indeed lend credibility to von Euw’s low opinion of the illuminator. By the time one reaches the page prefacing the portrait of Luke, for example, the painter has seemingly given up on completing his task [FIGURE 3]. Moreover, the page prefacing John’s portrait lacks any illumination whatsoever. While somewhat overstating his

\(^{34}\) For basic literature and further references on the manuscript (Cologne, Historisches Archiv, Cod. W 312), see Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule I, p. 25-31; von Euw 1991, Vor dem Jahr 1000, p. 30-34; and most recently the catalog entry by Thomas Labusiak in Otto der Grosse und das Römische Reich: Kaisertum von der Antike zum Mittelalter, eds. Matthias Puhle and Gabriele Köster (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2012), p. 660-661.

\(^{35}\) See von Euw 1991, Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule, p. 264-266.
case, von Euw nevertheless rightly emphasizes the undeniable presence of mishaps and oddities in the production of the manuscript—oversights that are all the more puzzling given that the manuscript was commissioned by, or for, the most important members of the imperial family.

Following an established tradition of medallion portraiture in Ottonian illumination, the painter of the Gereon Gospels inserted bust-length likenesses of imperial figures around the frame of the initial page to the gospel of Matthew [FIGURE 4]. The particular constellation of a youth along with two women of disparate age leaves little doubt that the miniature falls within the regency period of the young Otto III—a precarious decade stretching from the death of his father in 983 to his assumption of full sovereignty in 994, during which time his mother, Theophanu, and grandmother, Adelheid, steadfastly defended his right to rule from potential usurpers.36 Because Matthew’s gospel opens with the “liber generationis” (the book of generation), the portraits effectively graft the imperial family onto Christ’s genealogy, resulting in a striking visual statement of familial authority and power. Moreover, the deliberate cross-like arrangement of the figures—with Otto III and Adelheid comprising the horizontal axis, and Theophanu and the agnus dei forming the more important vertical element—indicates that Theophanu occupies the privileged position in the miniature, even though she directs all of her attention toward her young son. Basing their arguments largely on this unusual portrayal of Theophanu, whose covered hands are raised emphatically toward Otto, certain scholars have argued that the medallion bust constitutes in fact a posthumous portrait of the empress and,

consequently, the gospel book was commissioned perhaps as part of her memória. However speculative that may be, the Gereon Gospels no doubt reflects a deep connection with either Theophanu herself or her immediate circle, and thus amounts to another strong piece of evidence in favor of the involvement of St. Pantaleon, her favorite institution in the city. Exactly how and when the book came to be counted among the many possessions of St. Gereon will likely never be known for sure. In any case, very little evidence can be found to suggest that it was in fact produced there.

*   *   *

At the heart of these debates about the location of the workshop lies a latent problem of historiography: that is, the uneasy and incongruous relationship between the modern, art-historical concept of an artistic school and the historical practices of book production in Cologne during the tenth and eleventh centuries. Because the precise interplay of patron, painter, and workshop remains irreparably obscure for the period, the concept of an artistic school can be little more than an ad hoc designation for an otherwise vague understanding of the particular context in which these books were created. As a result of this negligible state of knowledge, even the most basic historical assumptions must be called into question. For example, one ought to consider the possibility that Cologne’s illuminated manuscripts may in fact be better understood as the output of a concentrated network of production, rather than originating from a single, discrete location in the city. In other words, the manuscripts are likely to be the result of a more fluid set of interactions among members of the city’s various institutions. At the very minimum, such an approach would provide a useful corrective to the overly monolithic conception of an

---

37 The best evidence that the miniature relates more to Theophanu than the young Otto is not just her covered hands, but rather that she herself is occupying the privileged position and not her son, whose right to rule was constantly at risk in this period.
artistic school that was articulated by Bloch and Schnitzler in their pioneering study of the Cologne manuscripts, which at times reads as an effort to place each of the manuscripts along a predetermined trajectory of the school’s stylistic development. Building on such issues, the section that follows will examine more closely the underpinnings of Bloch and Schnitzler’s “painterly group” of Cologne manuscripts, assessing both the assumptions at work in the characterization of the group as well as the art-historical implications of the concept of painterliness for an understanding of the miniatures.

Inventing the Painterly Group

The scholarly origins of the Cologne school reach back to a formative period in modern studies on Ottonian illumination—that is, the decades around 1900. Despite a proliferation of studies on Ottonian art around 1880—initiated at the broadest level by the introduction of photographic plates into scholarly works, and at a more field-specific level by the momentous discovery of the cycle of frescoes at the Church of St. George on the Reichenau—a general awareness of Cologne’s illuminated manuscripts was still lacking. Not even the more rigorous histories of medieval painting by Anton Springer or Hubert Janitschek were able to shed any light on the

38 The broader history of Ottonian miniature painting, which trailed slightly behind that of Carolingian illumination, and developed in constant relation to it, received its first outlines in the handbooks and overviews of German art that were beginning to appear around the middle of the nineteenth century. While authors such as Johann Fiorillo, Franz Kugler, and Gustav Waagen generally acknowledged a “flowering” of the arts under the Ottonians, the Cologne manuscripts are noticeably absent from their histories. See Johann Fiorillo, Geschichte der zeichnenden Künste in Deutschland und den vereinigten Niederlanden I (Hanover: Brüder Hahn, 1815), p. 239; Franz Kugler, Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte I (Stuttgart: Ebner & Seubert, 1842), p. 504-505; Gustav Waagen, Handbuch der deutschen und niederländischen Malerschulen I (Stuttgart: Ebner & Seubert, 1862), p. 6-13. For a general overview of the historiography of Ottonian Art,
objects. The latter author, for example, discusses the Hitda Codex in rather derogatory terms without referring at any point to Cologne or related manuscripts. Indeed, the fundamental problem was still a matter of identifying the relevant objects and establishing the basic framework of relationships. Karl Lamprecht’s attempt to do precisely that in 1882 demonstrates how daunting a task this must have been: his chronological listing of 241 manuscripts illuminated in the Rhineland, which he himself describes as a first attempt at gathering the material, leaves out many of the most important Cologne manuscripts. It was only in 1891 with the publication of Wilhelm Vöge’s dissertation on an important group of Ottonian manuscripts—incidentally, one of the very first dissertations in the newly-established discipline of art history—that a real turning point was achieved.

see most importantly Susanne Wacker, Ottonik-Rezeption (Ph.D. Dissertation: Universität Hamburg, 2001).


40 Janitschek’s discussion of the Hitda Codex begins as follows: “Ein Evangeliar, das Hidda, die Äbtissin des westfälischen Frauenstiftes Meschede, schreiben und ausschmücken ließ, ist von verschwenderischer Pracht des Materials, aber die künstlerische und technische Durchführung der Gemälde steht auf keiner höheren Stufe als de süddeutschen Durchschnittsleistungen.” He goes on to describe the style of the miniatures in terms that would later qualify as painterly. See Janitschek 1890, Geschichte der deutschen Malerei, p. 91.

41 See Karl Lamprecht, “Kunstgeschichtlich wichtige Handschriften des Middel- und Niederrheins,” Jahrbücher des Vereins von Alterthumsfreunden im Rheinlande 74 (1882), p. 130-146. Here he vaguely mentions the Gereon Gospels (n. 25), the gospel book from Gerresheim (n. 33), the Everger Lectionary (n. 46), and the gospel book from St. Maria Lyskirchen (n. 55).

As a student of Springer, Lamprecht, and Janitschek, Vöge sought to build on their work by explicitly formulating his dissertation as an example of a new and ambitious approach to the study of manuscript illumination based on the concept of schools of painting (\textit{Malerschule}) as developed in contemporary histories of Renaissance art.\textsuperscript{43} To this end he employed a range of technical, stylistic, and iconographic analyses to bring a sense of order to a scattered body of manuscripts, which in his opinion constituted the remnants of a discrete artistic school.\textsuperscript{44} The manuscripts he assembled were nothing less than the most famous of all Ottonian codices: at the core of the group were the two gospel books associated with Otto III in Aachen and Munich, as well as the Pericopes of Henry II, also in Munich.\textsuperscript{45} Yet due to a bias against evidence provided by historical and social contexts as well as a reluctance to acknowledge the possibility of traveling artists or production for export, Vöge miscalculated the location of his artistic school. Instead of the Reichenau, the place with which this celebrated group of manuscripts is now inextricably linked, he opted at first for Cologne.\textsuperscript{46} It was clearly an uneasy fit, and Vöge himself


\textsuperscript{44} Vöge actually made a distinction between a main school (\textit{Hauptschule}) and several daughter-schools (\textit{Filialschule}), see Vöge 1891, \textit{Eine deutsche Malerschule}, p. 177.

\textsuperscript{45} For his discussion of these manuscripts, see Vöge 1891, \textit{Eine deutsche Malerschule}, p. 7-98.

\textsuperscript{46} For the localization of the school to the Cathedral Library of Cologne, see Vöge 1891, \textit{Eine deutsche Malerschule}, p. 177-179.
would retract his hypothesis only a few years later in favor of Trier.47 Because such a crucial aspect of his dissertation was so quickly outdated, it would be easy to misjudge the importance of his methodological achievement for the history of scholarship on early medieval illumination. However, there can be no question that the impact of his work was quick and consequential: it provided scholars with a much-needed impulse and a clear sense of direction that they could easily refine.48 Research efforts were now focused on mapping out the various schools of painting across the empire and as soon as Vöge’s manuscripts were successfully assigned to the Reichenau, the opportunity arose to consider anew Cologne’s artistic production.

As it turns out, one scholar was able to accomplish both of these feats with an impressive level of clarity—all the more so given the sheer uncertainty running through the foregoing preliminary history of the school. That man, Arthur Haseloff, approached first the Reichenau manuscripts in 1901, and then the Cologne manuscripts in 1904 and 1905.49 He examined the former group in his contribution to a landmark monograph on the Egbert Psalter in Cividale, in which he decisively put Vöge’s thesis to rest. After dismissing the localization of Vöge’s group to Cologne, Haseloff gave the first hint that he was ready to attribute an entirely different and


48 For Vöge’s reception in studies of Ottonian art, see Wacker 2001, Ottonik-Rezeption, p. 62-64. The studies of Arthur Haseloff on Reichenau manuscripts and Georg Swarzenski on Regensburg manuscripts—just to give only two of the most significant examples—were clearly written in the wake of Vöge’s dissertation. See Arthur Haseloff, Der Psalter Erzbischofs Egbert von Trier: Codex Gertrudianus, in Cividale (Trier: Gesellschaft für nützliche Forschungen, 1901); and Georg Swarzenski, Die Regensburger Buchmalerei des X. und XI. Jahrhunderts: Studien zur Geschichte der deutschen Malerei des frühen Mittelalters (Leipzig: Karl W. Hiersemann, 1901).

49 For a recent consideration of this important scholar of manuscript illumination, see Ulrich Kuder and Hans-Walter Stork (eds.), Arthur Haseloff als Erforscher mittelalterlicher Buchmalerei (Kiel: Ludwig, 2014).
very important group of manuscripts to the city.\textsuperscript{50} He would go on to publish a nascent conception of the Cologne school in the 1904 catalog of a major exhibition of Rhenish art in Düsseldorf, in which he declared the chief works of the group to be the gospel book in Milan and the Gereon Sacramentary in Paris.\textsuperscript{51} A more substantive account of the school would appear only one year later with the publication of his thorough overview of German miniature painting in André Michel’s multi-volume \textit{Histoire de l’Art}.\textsuperscript{52} In only a few pages, Haseloff’s brief history of the school established the essential visual characteristics of the Cologne manuscripts—which he divided for the first time into three distinct stylistic groups—as well as a number of the guiding principles that for better or worse inform scholarship on the manuscripts to this day. Yet it is important to note that however much Haseloff stressed the importance of this newly-formed school of Ottonian painting, he was consistently critical of its artistic merits. To his eyes, even the highest-quality Cologne manuscripts exhibit a pronounced spirit of archaism—that is to say, they demonstrate a retrospective turn back to Carolingian precedents from the palace school of

\textsuperscript{50} See Haseloff 1901, \textit{Psalter Erzbischofs Egbert von Trier}, p. 155: “Es sei vorausbemerkt, dass wir den Kölner Ursprung einer ganz anders gearteten, sehr bedeutenden Schule nachweisen werden.” (\textit{It should be provisionally noted that we will establish a Cologne origin for an entirely different, very important school of manuscripts}).


\textsuperscript{52} Haseloff’s survey of German miniature painting was part of a larger section he wrote on Romanesque painting in the northern countries (\textit{dans les pays du nord}). See André Michel, \textit{Histoire de l’Art} I.2 (Paris: A. Colin, 1905), p. 711-755. For the discussion of the Cologne school in particular, see p. 728-730. The original German version of this important survey of medieval painting is currently under preparation for publication. See Harald Wolter-von dem Knesebeck, “Arthur Haseloffs frühe Schriften zur Buchmalerei,” in Kuder and Stork 2014, \textit{Arthur Haseloff als Erforscher}, p. 207-211, esp. p. 209.
Charlemagne, Reims, or the school of Charles the Bald.\footnote{See Haseloff 1905, Histoire de l’Art, p. 728: “Malgré cette absence de tout caractère de luxe et de magnificence princière, l’école de Cologne nous donne une suite d’œuvres, qui sont d’une certaine importance pour l’histoire de l’art, bien que conçues dans un esprit marqué d’archaïsme.”} In his view they are “diametrically opposed” to the main lines of stylistic development represented by the schools of the Reichenau, Trier, and Echternach, which constitute for him the core of Ottonian art.

While such an explicit prejudice in favor of Carolingian precedents may well be regarded as a symptom of the times, it still mars an otherwise superb analysis of the characteristic formal qualities of Cologne’s main group of illuminated manuscripts—soon to be known as the painterly group. Haseloff was the first to draw attention to the facture of the miniatures as a distinguishing trait—that is, the manner in which the Cologne illuminators handled pigment. In his discussion of the Gereon Sacramentary, for example, he gives a particularly vivid account of the illuminator’s technique:

The colors are generally applied in thick, greatly textured layers, which differ entirely from the smooth and unified manner of the preceding schools [\textit{i.e.} Reichenau, Trier, and Echternach]. The strange way in which this artist understands and manipulates color manifests itself above all in the scenes where he attempts to render—in his manner—a given ensemble of space and landscape. The effect achieved is entirely baroque.\footnote{See Haseloff 1905, Histoire de l’Art, p. 729: “Les couleurs y sont généralement appliquées par couche épaisse et fortement triturée, qui contraste absolument avec la manière unie et lisse des écoles précédentes. L’étrange façon dont cet artiste entend et manie la couleur se manifeste surtout nettement dans la série des scènes où il s’efforce de rendre, à sa manière, un ensemble donné d’espace et de paysage. L’effet obtenu est tout à fait baroque.”} For Haseloff, the dramatic use of color in the Gereon Sacramentary was as incomprehensible as it was unexpected. Moreover, he attempted to attribute this incomprehension to the Cologne illuminators, whom he saw as distorting the techniques found in important Carolingian models.
such as the illuminated Bibles from Tours or the Coronation Gospels in Vienna. In contrast, he observed in the second subset of Cologne manuscripts—the prototype of Bloch and Schnitzler’s “rich” or opulent group (reiche Gruppe)—a reduced presence of this retrospective taste, and a turn instead toward the smooth style of the dominant schools of Ottonian art. To be clear, any analysis of the underlying preconceptions at work in this first study of the painterly group should not unduly detract from its achievement. Taken as a whole, Haseloff’s brief and lucid history of the school still stands as a remarkable account of a previously unknown group of manuscripts. Yet as the history of Cologne’s Ottonian illumination unfolded in the decades after his work, Haseloff’s characterization of the school as derivative or retrospective would become entrenched in the scholarly treatment of the manuscripts. As a consequence of this outlook, the most innovative and distinguishing feature of the miniatures—that is, the painterly facture so perceptively described by Haseloff—paradoxically came to be seen as the greatest indicator of their imitative status.

* * *

The foreword to Heinrich Ehl’s dissertation on Ottonian book painting in Cologne, published in 1922, is an unusually revealing text. The author of the first independent study of the Cologne school begins by expressing in no uncertain terms the scale of his debt to Arthur Haseloff: without the latter’s essay of 1905 or his personal collection of photographs, Ehl claims

55 Ibid., p. 729: “Il n’est pas douteux que l’imagination de l’artiste ne se soit emparée ici, sans trop les comprendre, de motifs antérieurs autrement conçus” (There is no doubt that, without fully understanding them, the imagination of the artist was seized here by earlier motifs that were conceived differently).

56 Ibid., p. 730: “de goût moins rétrospectif et se rapprochant davantage du style de Trèves.”
his dissertation would have been “utterly impossible” to finish.57 Indeed, to a large extent his monograph can be understood as an elaboration of Haseloff’s conception of the school—lacking, however, his predecessor’s keen eye for visual analysis or insight for historical connections.58 An important cause for this shortfall, which would be difficult to overstate, was Ehl’s inability to examine firsthand two of the most important manuscripts of the painterly group—the Gereon Sacramentary in Paris and the Milan Gospels in the Ambrosiana—owing, as he says, to the circumstances of war.59 Another telling aspect of the foreword can be found in its epigraph, which was taken from a passage in Franz Kugler’s Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte—a popular and exceptionally early example of a global art history survey, first published in 1842.60 The passage in question opens Kugler’s discussion of Romanesque art and argues that it is precisely in the tenth century that a German “Volksgeist” (national character) achieved the level of development necessary to express itself in works of art.61 While it might be tempting to digress


58 The main thesis of Ehl’s work is essentially the dependance of the painterly group on Carolingian models as well as on contemporary Ottonian painting from southwest Germany (i.e. Reichenau, Trier, and Echternach). However, see also the harsh, yet not unjustified review of Albert Boeckler in Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft (1924/1925), p. 242-244.

59 See Ehl 1922, Ottonische Kölner Buchmalerei, p. 8, 103. While Ehl does not mention the Gereon Sacramentary specifically, he repeatedly emphasizes his inability to work with the Parisian libraries. With the Milan Gospels, in contrast, he explicitly states that he was unable to see the manuscript and thus devotes a mere two-and-a-half pages to its illumination.

60 The epigraph reads: “Das 10. Jahrhundert ist, was die Geschichte der christlichen Völker des europäischen Okzidents anbetrifft, als diejenige Epoche zu betrachten, in welcher die alten und die neuen Kulturerhältnisse sich voneinander scheiden” (For the Christian people of Western Europe, the tenth century should be regarded as the period in which the old and new cultural dispositions begin to separate from each other). Kugler 1842, Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte, p. 415.

here into a discussion of nationalism in the art-historical writing of the period, the more relevant point to underscore is that Kugler frames his subsequent history of German miniature painting precisely in terms of a turn away from painterliness (eine malerische Behandlungsweise) toward a more ornamental or graphic treatment of form (ornamentistische...zeichnende Behandlungsweise). This is not to suggest that Kugler’s handbook was necessarily the direct source for Ehl’s inaugural use of the term “painterly” as a fixed name for the first of Haseloff’s three stylistic subgroups of Cologne illumination (der malerische Hauptstil), but rather that the naming of the group reflects a well established preconception of the place of painterliness in medieval illumination. That place was in fact at the margins of medieval art: both chronologically—referring to the art of Late Antiquity or the High Renaissance—and geographically—referring to the art of Byzantium. To label a group of medieval miniatures as painterly, therefore, was tantamount to imparting a peripheral status—one that pushed against the otherwise predominant currents of medieval art, which were broadly understood to constitute a gradual intensification of contours and planes at the expense of modeling forms in space. Yet how exactly did such a preconceived notion of the relationship between painterliness and medieval illumination come to be?

As much as the discourse on painterliness in German art history of the late nineteenth century aspired to the status of a universal principle of art, it nevertheless developed quite specifically as a consequence of attempts to rehabilitate Baroque and late-antique art from the rigid strictures of classicism. Heinrich Wölfflin, the scholar most closely associated with the

Formen, welche den Gedanken zur Erscheinung bringen, aussprechen, dass er namentlich auf die weitere Gestaltung der Kunst seinen Einfluss ausüben konnte.” (The German national character had achieved that stage of development in which it could articulate with self determination those forms that give an appearance to inner thoughts, and in particular that it could exert its
term, codified the link between Baroque art and painterliness as early as 1888, emphasizing thereby the most consistent and definable feature of the otherwise mercurial concept: that is, the devaluation of contour, or outline, as a signifier of form.\textsuperscript{62} This purely visual conception of painterliness soon took on a perceptual component as well, which described the corresponding effect that a painterly or linear technique has on a viewer. Expressed in terms of tactility and opticality, the effect on the viewer can be summarized as follows: because of the greater importance of outline, a linear technique results in an image that can almost be touched by the viewer (\textit{Tastbild}); in contrast, a painterly technique produces an optical image (\textit{Sehbild}) that requires an additional level of perception on the part of the viewer—an imaginative step.\textsuperscript{63} Most closely associated with the pioneering scholarship of Alois Riegl, this theoretical expansion of the concept allowed art historians to link the use of linear or painterly styles to broader cultural shifts. In this regard, a decisive moment that brought the discourse on painterliness into the realm of manuscript illumination can be found with the publication of Franz Wickhoff’s study of the

\textit{influence on the further formation of art}). The emergence of such a \textit{Volksgeist} was seen as the driving force behind the flowering of the arts in the High Middle Ages.


Vienna Genesis in 1895. Wickhoff, who preferred the term “illusionistic” to painterly, put forth various arguments in favor of the idea that both the format of the codex itself, as well as the Christian religion’s increased demands for clarity in pictorial narrative, led overwhelmingly to a turn toward a linear style and away from a more classical approach to painting that was still evident in certain miniatures from the Vienna Genesis, such as the astonishing depiction of the feast of Pharaoh [FIGURE 5]. 64 Episodes of painterliness in medieval illumination—excluding Byzantium—are thus highly unusual. It is important to note, however, that because of its close ties to the art of Late Antiquity, Carolingian illumination was generally regarded as a significant exception—a crucial, yet also preliminary stage in the stylistic development of medieval art. 65 In his monograph on the Egbert Psalter in Cividale, Arthur Haseloff formulated one of the most succinct statements on the painterliness of Carolingian art:

The majority of the Carolingian schools are painterly in their technique. It is precisely in this regard that the essential character of the “Renaissance” manifests itself—that there could emerge an approach to painting, which, through painterly means, placed high demands on the comprehension of the viewer. At its core, this approach to painting does not depend on contour lines, through which the hand of the viewer can “touch” the forms,

---

64 The relevant passage reads: “Dennoch bewirkte die Herstellung der miniirten [sic] Handschriften selbst und vor allem die beabsichtigte Deutlichkeit, dass die illusionistische Art zu malen, auch bei den farbigen Vollbildern, nach und nach von einer mehr zeichnerischen abgelöst wurde.” (Yet the very nature of illuminated manuscripts, and above all the clearness which was their aim, brought it about that the illusionist manner of painting was replaced little by little, even in full-page coloured illustrations, by a more lineal method). See Franz Wickhoff, Die Wiener Genesis (Vienna: Tempsky, 1895), p. 96. For the at times problematic English translation, see idem, Roman Art: Some of its Principles and their Application to Early Christian Painting, trans. Eugénie Strong (London: Heinemann, 1900), p. 189. See also a precursor to this idea in an important article on Early Christian manuscript illumination: idem, “Die Ornamente eines altchristlichen Codex der Hofbibliothek,” Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses 14 (1893), p. 196-213, esp. p. 213.

65 It appears that a concise overview of the historiography of Carolingian art in the second half of the nineteenth century has yet to be written.
but rather it depends on painterly images, by which the eye of the viewer—guided through color, light and shadow—must complete the form from memory.\textsuperscript{66}

Haseloff’s characterization of the painterliness of Carolingian illumination demonstrates a full awareness of the theoretical development of the concept, yet this is certainly not the manner in which the painterliness of Cologne’s Ottonian illumination would come to be understood.\textsuperscript{67} For Haseloff, and Ehl after him, the broader trajectory of medieval art’s stylistic development held too much sway and it became impossible to see Cologne’s moment of painterliness as an internal development. At best, the unusual style of its first group of illuminated manuscripts constituted an aberrant moment of archaism that would quickly be corrected by the increasingly ornamental and linear styles of the second and third groups.\textsuperscript{68} For both authors, the creative impulse behind

\textsuperscript{66} Haseloff, \textit{Psalter Erzbischofs Egbert von Trier}, p. 130-131: “Die Mehrzahl der karolingischen Schulen ist in ihrem Verfahren malerisch. Gerade darin offenbart sich das Wesen der “Renaissance”, dass eine Malerei aufkommen konnte, welche mit malerischen Mitteln arbeitend, an das Verständnis des beschauenden Auges hohe Anforderungen stellen durfte. Ihr liegen nicht Umrisszeichnungen zugrunde, an denen gewissermassen die Hand des Beschauers die Formen nachtasten kann, sondern malerische Bilder, bei denen das Auge, geleitet durch die Farben, durch Licht und Schatten die Form aus der Erinnerung ergänzen muss.”

\textsuperscript{67} Regarding such an awareness of the discourse on painterliness, Haseloff was certainly not alone among scholars working on medieval illumination. For an additional example of the reception of Wickhoff, see Swarzenski 1901, \textit{Die Regensburger Malerei}, p. 7-8.

\textsuperscript{68} Ehl clearly conceived of the three groups of the Cologne school as constituting a microcosm of medieval art’s broader stylistic trajectory. Speaking of the school, he writes: “Es konzentriert sich geradezu in ihrem engen Rahmen jene ganze Entwicklung vom malerischen zum linearzeichnerischen Stil, vom Illusionismus zur Flächengeltung, der in der heimischen Ornamentik der merowingisch-fränkischen Kunst vorbereitet, durch die königliche und höfische Akademie-kunst Karls des Großen unterbrochen, am Ende des 11. Jahrhunderts wieder in jene flächenhafte Kunst einmündet, die sich durch die fast 200 jährige Schulung nun auch das Gegenständliche der Figur und das rein Bildmäßige unterwirft…Diesen Weg vom Meister des Wiener Schatzkammerevangeliars zu Rogerus von Helmershausen an einer geschlossenen Schulgruppe entwicklungsgeschichtlich aufweisen zu können, erhebt die Kölner Malerei über ihren qualitativen künstlerischen Durchschnittswert hinaus zu erhöhter kunsthistorischer Bedeutung.” (\textit{Within the framework of the school, there can be found that entire development from the painterly to a linear-graphic style—from illusionism to the rise of a planar art, which was primed by the indigenous ornament of Merovingian-Frankish art, but interrupted by the royal and courtly academic art of Charlemaige, only to resume at the end of the eleventh...})
Cologne’s painterliness needed to be sought elsewhere—namely, with Carolingian illuminators. This act of displacement, or of attributing the formal innovation of the Cologne miniatures to another group of painters, constitutes a crucial presupposition in Bloch and Schnitzler’s treatment of the school.

* * *

As explained in the forward to the first volume of their study, Bloch and Schnitzler drew heavily on Haseloff’s conception of the painterly group as well as on the intervening research of Albert Boeckler. For this latter scholar, whose plans for a comprehensive monograph on the Cologne school were interrupted by his death in 1957, the pronounced painterliness of manuscripts like the Gereon Sacramentary or the Hitda Codex posed an immediate problem. Yet differing in approach from Haseloff, who sought an explanation for the peculiar style primarily in remnants of the Carolingian past, Boeckler argued strongly in favor of an additional, more immediate source. Boeckler argued for the presence in Cologne of a hypothetical Byzantine illuminated manuscript from the so-called Macedonian Renaissance. Perhaps similar in form to

---

century with a particularly planar art that, after almost 200 years of development, now also subsumes the figural and the purely pictorial...To be able to observe in one discrete school the entire development of this stylistic trajectory, from the master of the Vienna Coronation Gospels to Roger of Helmershausen, raises the art-historical significance of Cologne painting well beyond the qualitatively average artistic value of the miniatures). See Ehl 1922, Die ottonische Kölner Buchmalerei, p. 45.

---

69 See Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule I, p. 5-8.

one of the most famous—if perplexing—examples of Byzantine illumination from this period, the Leo Bible in the Vatican Library, Boeckler’s hypothetical manuscript would have provided Cologne illuminators with direct access to a painterly approach to manuscript illumination—a technique represented brilliantly, for example, in that Bible’s frontispiece to Deuteronomy, where the stark juxtaposition of white highlights and dark shadow-tones lends the mountainous background an impressive, nearly vibrant quality [FIGURE 6]. Of the several issues raised as a consequence of this hypothesis, Boeckler was well aware that his position led to the paradoxical conclusion that the two “diametrically opposed” schools of Ottonian illumination—that is, Cologne and Reichenau—would have been equally dependant on the same Byzantine sources for their radically different styles. Those who share Boeckler’s view of a direct Byzantine influence in Cologne have never quite resolved this dilemma, and the matter has become a perennial source of debate among scholars. In their study, Bloch and Schnitzler would

71 For the Leo Bible (Vatican, BAV, Cod. Reg. Gr. 1 and 1b), see Suzy Dufrenne and Paul Canart, Die Bibel des Patricius Leo: Codex reginensis graecus 1 B (Zurich: Belser, 1988); see also the subsequently published complementary volume Paul Canart (ed.), La Bible du Patrice Léon, Codex reginensis graecus 1: commentaire codicologique, paléographique, philologique et artistique (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2013). For the dating of the manuscript to the first half of the tenth century, see Dufrenne and Canart 1988, Die Bibel des Patricius Leo, p. 65-66. For a more recent proposal of a quite early date for the manuscript, around 910, see the contribution of Irmgard Hutter in Canart 2013, La Bible du patrice Léon, p. 195-272, esp. p. 271-272.

72 Boeckler ends his study with a statement of this apparent paradox: “Damit kommen wir zu dem fast paradoxen Ergebnis, daß byzantinische Vorlagen gleicher Art entscheidend beteiligt gewesen sind bei der Konstituierung jener beiden Stile, die sich innerhalb der ottonischen Malerei als stärkster Kontrast gegenübertreten. Es wird eine der interessantesten Aufgaben sein zu untersuchen, wie diese gleichartigen Vorlagen in Köln und wie sie in der Reichenau aufgefaßt und abgewandelt worden sind, so daß es zu so verschiedenen Ergebnissen kommen konnte.” See Boeckler 1950, Kölnner ottonische Buchmalerei, p. 149.

73 The debate is part of a larger discussion among scholars of Ottonian art that has come to be known simply as “the Byzantine question.” For the context in Cologne, see, in addition to Boeckler, von Euw 1991, Die ottonische Kölnische Malerschule, p. 251-280; idem, “Der Einfluß des Ostens auf die abendländische Buchkunst im 9., 10., und 11. Jahrhundert,” in Kunst im
continually strike a careful balance between the positions of Haseloff and Boeckler—that is, between Carolingian and Byzantine models—adding in the process their own third factor to the equation.\textsuperscript{74}

Building on the work of their predecessors, Bloch and Schnitzler formulated a conception and analysis of the painterly group that was driven by the assumption that the painters of Cologne depended almost entirely for the creation of their work on three distinct bodies of influence: a late-Carolingian model presumably from the school of Charles the Bald and resembling perhaps the Liuthard Gospels in Darmstadt;\textsuperscript{75} a Byzantine model that is much more difficult to characterize, but similar perhaps to the Paris Psalter or the Leo Bible;\textsuperscript{76} and finally, an illuminated manuscript from Ottonian Trier—more specifically, from the workshop of the so-called Gregory Master, widely regarded by scholars to be the preeminent book painter of late-tenth-century Germany.\textsuperscript{77} The immediate source of this final strand of influence survives in a


\textsuperscript{74} It should be noted here that Bloch and Schnitzler rejected Boeckler’s notion that a single manuscript provided the sole source of Byzantine influence in Cologne. See Bloch and Schnitzler 1970, \textit{Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule} II, p. 160; see also Bloch 1968, \textit{Der Darmstädtler Hitda-Codex}, p. 79.

\textsuperscript{75} For the gospel book in Darmstadt (ULB, Hs. 746), see Koehler (Mütherich), \textit{Die karolingischen Miniaturen} V, p. 88-99.

\textsuperscript{76} For the Paris Psalter (Paris, BnF, MS Gr. 139), see \textit{Byzance: L’art byzantin dans les collections publique françaises} (Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 1992), p. 350-351. For the Leo Bible, see the discussion above, p. 35.

\textsuperscript{77} This position is most concisely stated in Bloch and Schnitzler 1970, \textit{Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule} II, p. 10-11, 156, 159-160; see also Bloch 1968, \textit{Der Darmstädtler Hitda-Codex}, p. 78-79. In his commentary on the Hitda Codex, Bloch would go on to propose a simplified formulation of this parsing of the Cologne school’s distinguishing traits: “Würde man eine unzulässige Simplifizierung nicht scheuen, so ließe sich sagen, daß Trier das Gerüst der Evangelienbücher lieferte, Byzanz den Anstoß zum neutestamentlichen Zyklus und zu

36
gospel book in Manchester, which Bloch and Schnitzler would come to recognize as the foundational work (*Gründungswerk*) of the entire Cologne school. Though the medieval provenance of the Manchester Gospels remains all but unknown, there can be no doubt that its pictorial program was copied to an astonishing degree of fidelity by the painter of the Gereon Gospels in Stuttgart—as a comparison of the corresponding initial pages from the two manuscripts makes clear [FIGURES 7 and 8]. Moreover, its canon tables and decorative repertoire find strong points of resonance in several other manuscripts spanning the Cologne school—an observation which led Bloch and Schnitzler to assume quite problematically that the Manchester Gospels embodies the impetus as well as the *terminus post quem* for nearly the entire artistic production of the Cologne school. Simply put, however, the Manchester Gospels presents more problems than it does solutions. Not only does the absence of the manuscript’s evangelist portraits and tituli—excised at an unknown date—complicate any clear assessment of the extent of its supposed influence on the painterly group, but also the very date of the manuscript itself remains highly controversial and thus can in no way be used as an anchor for the chronology of the Cologne manuscripts. Even more problematic, the methodological principle underlying the


high estimation of the gospel book’s role in the Cologne school can be linked directly to the deeply embedded scholarly prejudices that emphasize the derivative or imitative qualities of the Cologne manuscripts in favor of the more dominant schools of painting. As a consequence of this approach, the thoroughly researched analyses of Bloch and Schnitzler—who, in the hunt for sources, scoured a vast expanse of early medieval, Byzantine, and even Coptic art—rarely give any consideration to the school’s own artistic merit. Indeed, reading through their double-volume standard work, one searches in vain for any discussion of the sophistication of the Cologne painters or the novelty of their miniatures. Resulting in more than just an unfortunate understatement of the painterly group’s artistic importance, this reflex to locate the creative aspects of the miniatures elsewhere risks leading scholars to invent Carolingian or Byzantine specters of the innovative works of art before them.

A guiding principle of this dissertation is the contention that the priorities of scholarship ought to be shifted away from a search for the ultimate Byzantine or Carolingian models of the

80 In a critique of Elisabeth Schipperges’ novel attempt at a formal examination of the Hitda Codex, Bloch makes the following, quite telling statement about the potential for innovation in this period: “Freilich würde der Anspruch eines mittelalterlichen Kunstwerks erneut verfehlt, wenn man darin die schöpferische Unverwechselbarkeit des modernen Künstlers suchte. Zumal die Buchmalerei karolingischer und ottonischer Zeit war eine reine Mönchkunst, die im dienenden Bewahren altherwürdiger Formen ihr höchstes Gut sah. Nicht auf eigene Schöpfungen zielte diese Kunst, sondern auf das Fortleben und Anverwandeln der geheiligte Tradition. So wird man das Eigenständige stets nur im Blick auf die Quellen erfassen können” (emphasis added). See Bloch 1968, Der Darmstädter Hitda-Codex, p. 77. Incidentally, he would go on to include a slight note of hesitation regarding this assumption in the conclusion to his commentary: “Vielleicht war allzuhäufig von Quellen und Vorbildern, von Einflüssen und Analogien die Rede. Das war methodisch notwendig, zumal bei der Begegnung mit einer Kunstgesinnung, die, wie kaum eine andere, die Überlieferung heiligte.” Ibid., p. 107.

81 Nordenfalk touched upon this point in his review of Bloch and Schnitzler’s study. Criticizing their tendency to trace every significant detail back to Carolingian or other models, he writes “Etwas können doch die Maler aus eigener Kraft erfunden haben…Das Rebellische, das Non-Konformistische in der ottonischen Kunst würde einmal eine besondere Untersuchung verdienen.” See Nordenfalk 1971, Review of Boch and Schnitzler, p. 309.
Cologne miniatures and toward a hitherto neglected consideration of the painter’s share in creating the miniatures. Taking it as axiomatic that the skilled illuminators of Cologne had a thorough knowledge of a variety of potential models—whether Carolingian, Ottonian, or Byzantine—one ought to ask, then, to what extent and to what purpose did a painter manipulate the various elements of such models to suit either his own needs or those of the manuscript’s broader pictorial program. Such an approach does not dismiss the importance of iconographic or stylistic analyses for an understanding of the manuscripts. Rather, it considers the question from a different angle: one of intention and innovation rather than dependence and imitation. A key factor in this conceptual reframing of the artistic merit of the painterly group will be a thorough analysis of the programs of tituli that were written specifically to accompany the miniatures.

The Insight of Inscriptions

While it would be no exaggeration to say that medieval art abounds in examples of inscribed images, the presence of original tituli in the manuscripts of Cologne nevertheless qualifies as a distinguishing feature that sets the group apart from the majority of Ottonian illuminated manuscripts. With a few exceptions the illuminated manuscripts from the Reichenau, for

---

example, lack complex programs of inscriptions, as do the manuscripts from Corvey, Fulda, Mainz, and Liège. In contrast, the painters and designers of manuscripts from Trier, Regensburg, and Echternach employed inscriptions to varying degrees—from isolated donor and evangelist tituli to full-fledged, elaborate textual programs. Yet the Cologne manuscripts distinguish themselves even in comparison with these three prominent schools of painting, largely through their remarkably consistent approach to the disposition of titulus and miniature. That is to say, the Cologne manuscripts tend to pair each of their full-page miniatures with a corresponding full-page inscription—as can be seen, simply by way of example, in the opening of the Annunciation miniature from the Hitda Codex [FIGURE 9]. As a result of this particular disposition, text and image remain discrete entities while nevertheless being given equal weight and prominence as part of a double-page spread. This diptych-like arrangement of text and image is exceedingly rare in the context of narrative cycles of miniatures, which tend to exhibit a more traditional approach to text placement directly alongside the miniatures—an approach based ultimately on the practice of monumental wall painting. Despite this strikingly innovative feature of the Cologne school’s miniature cycles, art historians have been remiss in giving the tituli their due consideration.

(2004), p. 78-92. It is important to note that by the ninth century the practice of composing tituli flourished as a literary genre in its own right and extensive cycles of inscriptions were commissioned from several major poets of the period. Their verses adorned not just wall paintings and altars, but also the entire gamut of material culture from textiles and caskets to windows and doorways. In this regard, see Calvin Kendall, *The Allegory of the Church: Romanesque Portals and their Verse Inscriptions* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), p. 21-50.

For their part, Bloch and Schnitzler were curiously reluctant to engage with the tituli during the course of their examination of the Cologne manuscripts. When they do address the inscriptions, the focus of their attention lies predominantly in establishing various recensions for the texts accompanying the evangelist portraits and the Majestas Domini miniatures. Regarding the unusual and distinctive tituli for the narrative miniatures of the Hitda Codex and the Gereon Sacramentary, the pair of scholars deem the texts to be little more than mere descriptions of subject matter, thus disqualifying them from serious literary consideration. A similar prejudice against the literary merits of the Cologne tituli—particularly those of the Hitda Codex and the Gereon Sacramentary, which were not composed in verse—can be found in the work of scholars who might otherwise have made significant contributions to their study. Arwed Arnulf, the author of the only monographic overview examining the use of such texts in ancient and medieval art, dismisses the tituli of the Cologne manuscripts entirely, giving merely one example of an inscription from the Gereon Sacramentary—in a faulty transcription, no less. Moreover, in his study of Ottonian tituli, Benedikt Vollmann provides another assessment of the inscriptions from the Gereon Sacramentary—this time one which is outright uncharitable and

84 See Bloch and Schnitzler 1970, Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule II, p. 61-64. There, they conclude their discussion with the telling remark that “über die literarischen Quellen der Tituli war nichts in Erfahrung zu bringen.”


which fails to convey any sense of the full range of the inscriptions found in the manuscript.  

One important exception to this history of oversight can be found in a short passage from Walter Berschin’s important book on the study of Greek in the Latin West. There, the eminent philologist ascribes for the first time both an intellectual and a literary value to the Cologne inscriptions—and to the Gereon Sacramentary in particular—arguing that the Cologne manuscripts developed the genre of the titulus to such an extent that it had reached the level of “Bildtheologie” (image theology). Without fully developing his argument about the ways in which the tituli engage with, and refer to, their corresponding miniatures, Berschin nevertheless was able to change the estimation of subsequent art historians. By way of introduction to the examination of image and inscription that will be presented in the following chapters, it will be helpful to consider briefly the nature of tituli in Carolingian and Ottonian illumination—in other words, their perceived function as well as the varied ways in which they were employed.

* * *

Theodulf of Orléans, a leading intellectual at the court of Charlemagne, touched upon this very subject in the fourth book of his treatise on images—the Opus Caroli regis contra synodum, commonly known as the Libri Carolini, a sprawling five-hundred page polemic on the nature of images and their proper role in the church, which he wrote in the year 793 as a response to contemporary iconoclastic controversies in Byzantium. Because the work survives in only two


89 For the Libri Carolini, the introduction provided in the critical edition of the text is indispensable. See Opus caroli regis contra synodum (Libri Carolini), ed. Ann Freeman, MGH Conc II sup. I (Hannover: Hahn, 1998).
copies—a manuscript in the Vatican Library, likely belonging to Theodulf himself, and a second manuscript in Paris, which is a later copy made for Bishop Hincmar of Reims—scholars have questioned its impact and relevance for the production of art in the early Middle Ages. At the very least, however, the treatise provides an invaluable source for understanding the potential for a conceptualization of painting and image-making in this period. In an attempt to demonstrate the problematic ambiguity inherent in any image, Theodulf crafted a thought experiment involving a missing inscription. With this story, Theodulf asks his reader to imagine that a lover of images is presented with two paintings of a beautiful woman. The pictures are exactly alike in every respect and yet the viewer is told that one depicts the Virgin Mary and should be honored accordingly, whereas the other represents the pagan goddess Venus and ought to be immediately cast aside. Perplexed, the viewer turns to the painter of the images and asks for help identifying the figures. In response, the artist simply inscribes one painting with the label “Mary, mother of God” (Mariae, Dei genetricis), and the other with the label “Venus, mother of that fugitive Aeneas” (Veneris, Aeneae cuiusdam profugi genetricis). The viewer then dutifully takes up the painting inscribed Mary, honors it and kisses it, and then takes the painting of Venus—now deemed an idol—casts it aside, denounces it, and curses it. With a slight hint of gloating,

---

90 Today the manuscripts are in the Vatican (Lat. 7207) and the BnF (Arsenal MS 663). See Laffitte and Denoël 2007, *Trésors carolingiens*, p. 186.


92 Theodulf’s story, which will be paraphrased in what follows, can be found in section IV.16 of his text. See *Libri Carolini* (MGH Conc II.1), p. 528-529.
Theodulf reminds his reader that the two were exactly alike in form, color, and material.\textsuperscript{93} The story of the missing inscription is of course a parody of idolatry and ought to be understood as serving the broader aims of a polemical treatise, but the underlying point is clear: for Theodulf, inscriptions constitute a vital, even superior component of pictures since they possess the ability to articulate the meaning of otherwise vague images. To paraphrase his words, inscriptions have the power to “speak silently and give voice to those who are absent.”\textsuperscript{94}

For the modern-day art historian with an actual medieval image of the Virgin Mary in mind—for example, the early eighth-century \textit{Madonna della Clemenza}, one of the five great Marian icons of Rome—it would be all too easy to dismiss Theodulf’s claim as simply preposterous [\textbf{FIGURE 10}].\textsuperscript{95} One could argue that painters had an entire array of visual conventions at their disposal to ensure the proper identification of their intended subject matter—conventions which today would be brought together under the rubric of iconography—and yet, if one tones down the exaggeration of his story and replaces the painting of the Virgin with contemporary images of saints, then Theodulf’s argument suddenly becomes much more relevant. Faced, for instance, with a depiction of twenty-two saints flanking an enthroned Christ from the mid-eighth-century Genesis cycle in the nave of Santa Maria Antiqua [\textbf{FIGURE 11}], even the most experienced scholar will be relieved by the presence of inscriptions accompanying

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{93} It is particularly remarkable to see how Theodulf parses the essential components of a painting into these three visual categories of form, color, and material (\textit{Pari utraeque sunt figura, paribus coloribus, paribusque facte materiis, superscriptione tantum distant.}). See ibid., p. 529.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{94} Or, as Theodulf puts it: “tacite loquantur et nonnumquam dicta absentium, nonnumquam vero praesentium sine voce edisserant.” See ibid., p. 529.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\end{flushright}
each figure.\textsuperscript{96} Had they been missing their labels, the majority of these saints would be unidentifiable and the conceptual viability of the program would be jeopardized. Therefore, a very practical need to name and identify images underlies the use of the titulus in medieval art.

* * *

However much this foundational use of the titulus is rooted in traditions that reach back to Greco-Roman Antiquity, if not earlier, it is worth mentioning that for the Middle Ages, at least, there could not have been a more exalted precedent: Christ himself bore on his cross a tri-lingual titulus—the exact wording of which was a point of dispute between Pontius Pilate and the chief priests of the Jews.\textsuperscript{97} As John notes in his Gospel (19:19-22), the priests pleaded in vain with Pilate to modify Christ’s titulus so that it no longer stated “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews” (\textit{Iesus Nazarenus rex Iudaorum}), but rather “he said: I am King of the Jews” (\textit{ipse dixit rex sum Iudaorum}). Slight as it is, this change in wording shifts the function of the titulus from that of identifying a person to identifying a deed—in this case, a crime—and thus the request would have left Christ without a proper title or identity. Pilate abruptly ended the dispute with his emphatic statement reaffirming the authority of the written word: “What I have written, I have written” (\textit{Quod scripsi, scripsi}). Apart from this important conceptual precedent, the equation of image and inscription with identity led to a natural association with portraiture and iconic modes

\textsuperscript{96} For the Genesis Cycle at Santa Maria Antiqua (c. 757-767), see Joseph Wilpert, \textit{Die römischen Mosaiken und Malereien der kirchlichen Bauten vom IV. bis XIII. Jahrhundert} II (Freiburg i.B.: Herder, 1917), p. 703-710. See also, Birute Anne Vileisis, \textit{The Genesis Cycle of Santa Maria Antiqua} (Ph.D. Dissertation: Princeton University, 1979).

\textsuperscript{97} For more on the relevance and implications of Christ’s titulus, see Cynthia Hahn, “Inscriptions and Interactions: Text and Image on the Cloisters Cross and other IVories,” \textit{Acta ad archaeologium et artium historiam} 24 (2011), p. 185-204. For the Antique tradition of tituli, see Arnulf 1997, \textit{Versus ad picturas}, p. 23-46.
of representation.\textsuperscript{98} In such cases, tituli could serve to identify not just the specific individual represented, but also his or her merits or significance. It is largely in this sense that the tituli for evangelist portraits and Majestas Domini miniatures would develop.

From quite early on, the tituli for depictions of the evangelists would attempt to express as concisely as possible the essential characteristics of each of the four authors of the Gospels—with no poet surpassing the popularity of Sedulius in this regard. Indeed, a short passage from the conclusion of the first book of his \textit{Carmen paschale}, which was written in the second quarter of the fifth century, stands as the immediate textual source for an astonishing number of tituli from illuminated gospel books in the ninth and tenth centuries:

\begin{quote}
Hoc Matthaeus agens hominem generaliter implet,
Marcus ut alta fremit vox per deserta leonis,
Iura sacerdoti Lucas tenet ore iuveni,
More volans aquilae verbo petit astra Johannes.
Quatuor hi proceres una te voce canentes
Tempora ceu totidem latentum sparguntur in orbem.\textsuperscript{99}
\end{quote}

Guiding man, Matthew covers all of this broadly,
Mark, the lion’s lofty voice, roars out in the wilderness,
Luke holds the laws of priesthood in the mouth of the bull,
John, soaring like an eagle, flies to the stars with his words.
These four noble men sing your praises with a single voice,
Spreading like the seasons over all the earth.\textsuperscript{100}


\textsuperscript{100} Translation adapted from that of Patrick McBrine, \textit{The English Inheritance of Biblical Verse} (Ph.D. Dissertation: University of Toronto, 2008), p. 217.
The exemplary status of this passage derives in large part from its ability both to identify the figures and to explain their significance in a manner that possesses a distinct literary merit in its own right. The designers of Carolingian gospel books, particularly those from Tours, were quite fond of incorporating these ornaments of verse into their pictorial programs. For example, the miniatures from the Lothar Gospels include these same lines from Sedulius as the basis for a larger program of tituli that includes an additional set of near-contemporary verses attributable perhaps to Alcuin.\footnote{For the Lothar Gospels (Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 266), see Koehler 1930, \textit{Die karolingischen Miniaturen} I.1, p. 403-405; Laffitte and Denoël 2007, \textit{Trésors carolingiens}, p. 102-103.}

\* \* \*

Implied in Theodulf’s story is a second, no-less fundamental aspect of the titulus: namely, its ability to go beyond the mere act of labeling and to engage the viewer directly, eliciting his or her response. Designers and painters of books in the early Middle Ages were particularly well attuned to the possibilities of this constellation of image, text, and viewer. For example, in a mid-tenth-century miniature of the Crucifixion from Corvey a series of inscriptions fills both frame and ground [\textbf{FIGURE 12}]. Addressing first the viewer—relating the significance of Christ’s sacrifice—the inscriptions then switch voice in order to address the figures of Mary and John in the form of a prayer:

\begin{verbatim}
Annuat hoc agnus mundi pro peste peremptus.
Fulgida stella maris, pro cunctis posce misellis,
Et tu iunge preces cum virgine, virgo Iohannes.
\end{verbatim}
Let this indicate how the lamb was killed for the pestilence of the world.
Shining star of the sea, intercede for all the wretched,
And you, Virgin John, join in prayer with the Virgin.
On your cross, Christ, affix all evils.

By reading these tituli, the viewer himself speaks directly to the figures and is thus incorporated into the image. This close integration finds visual expression in the nuanced arrangement of the figures—particularly Christ on the cross, who seems to float above the frame, occupying an ambiguous space between the viewer and the page.

In its most extreme form, image and inscription could fuse together to such an extent that the act of reading and the act of viewing become nearly simultaneous: to remove one component would render the other a fragment. For instance, in the early-eleventh-century Uta Codex from Regensburg—by far the most elaborately conceived expression of this tendency from the early Middle Ages—a seemingly endless number of epithets, biblical citations, and personifications populate a series of miniatures, each of which is governed by a strict sense of symmetry. With the manuscript’s opening miniature depicting the hand of God [FIGURE 13], these nominally secondary elements are so closely integrated that they form what one scholar has described as an interlocking system of word and image.103 One could quibble over the ideal point of entry into such a composition, but, in practice, each individual component relays the viewer to any one of several corresponding elements spread throughout the page. The resulting miniature is not so much a puzzle to be deciphered, as it is a rigorous and guided meditation on a given theme—in this case, the eternal nature of divinity.

From an art historical perspective, however, one of the more remarkable aspects of early medieval tituli stems from their ability to take on a theoretical component. In a common expression of this tendency, such tituli draw the viewer’s attention to the aesthetic qualities of the object or miniature in question, often justifying or juxtaposing the high value of the physical materials with an even greater spiritual worth. Examples of this motif can be found spanning the entire range of Carolingian and Ottonian manuscripts—from the Godescalc Lectionary to the *Codex aureus* in the Escorial. A verse from the dedicatory poem in the latter manuscript, for example, explains why the book was written in gold:

Regi cunctorum fert hoc diadema librorum,  
Auro quod scripsit, quoniam sapientia dixit:  
Omnia transibunt numquam mea verba peribunt.  

[The Emperor Henry] offers this crown of books to the King of Kings,  
Which he wrote in gold because Wisdom says:  
Everything shall pass away, but my words shall never perish.

---


106 For the dedicatory poem from the Escorial *Codex aureus* (El Escorial, BR, Cod. Vitrinas 17), see Boeckler 1933, *Das goldene Evangelienbuch*, p. 17. See also Hoffmann 1986, *Buchkunst und Königsgen* I, p. 43. The final line of the poem paraphrases a line common to the synoptic Gospels, see Matt. 24:35; Mark 13:31; and Luke 21:33.
The text effectively glosses a fundamental aspect of the manuscript’s illumination and lends it a distinct spiritual meaning by linking a known physical quality of the material—its inability to tarnish—to a higher truth.

Along with the material aspects of the codex, tituli could also refer to more subtle concepts such as artistic merit, or even the limitations of pictorial representation. Popular strategies for approaching these issues include the motif of the painter’s “learned hand” (*docta manus*) or the use of paradox to cue the viewer to the fundamental inadequacy of representation. For example, the opening lines of a particularly ambitious titulus to an early-eleventh-century Majestas Domini miniature combine both of these aspects to create a concise, yet powerful formulation of the artist’s task [*FIGURE 14*]:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Cernis, ut artificis dominum sollertia pinxit,} \\
\text{Membratim fingens, quem caelum non capit ingens.}^{107}
\end{align*}
\]

\*You see how the skill of the artist painted the lord,\*
\*forging limb by limb, he whom the vast heavens cannot contain.\*

The author of the titulus paradoxically heightens his praise of the artist’s skill (*sollertia artificis*) by stressing the impossibility of painting Christ.\(^{108}\) Reading the titulus, the viewer is compelled to contemplate not just the subject matter of the facing miniature, but also the very means by which it is conveyed.

* * *

---

\(^{107}\) The titulus can be found on fol. 1v of a lectionary that stems from either Trier or Mainz (now Munich, BSB, CLM 11327). For the text, see MGH Poetae V.3, p. 673. For a description of the manuscript, see Elisabeth Klemm, *Die ottonischen und frühromanischen Handschriften der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek* (Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert, 2004), p. 235-237.

\(^{108}\) The author’s high praise of the artist would appear to be misplaced. This remarkable titulus has been paired with one of the most conventional and unremarkable Majestas Domini miniatures of the entire eleventh century.
Of course, not all tituli are as explicitly theoretical as the Majestas titulus from Trier. Sometimes they are, in fact, just labels for figures, or just descriptions of subject matter. Yet even then they merit careful scrutiny, for there are many ways to describe a scene and, as both Theodulf’s story and Christ’s own titulus make clear, the simple act of naming a figure can bear with it profound consequences. If, for art historians, there can be no doubt about the importance of these often-overlooked texts as a potential source for insight into contemporary attitudes toward images in the Early Middle Ages, then the more pressing question is one of method or approach—in other words, how best to mine this source. In this regard, the painterly manuscripts from Cologne are particularly well-suited to serve an exemplary role. For the makers of these manuscripts, the inscriptions clearly held special significance, a point which is evident in the very placement of the texts as pendants to the facing miniatures. As such, the arrangement of elements across the opening of the codex enables a particularly effective triangulation of text, image, and viewer. Despite such formal consistency in terms of the disposition, however, the manuscripts under consideration in the following chapters display remarkably varied approaches to the interaction of image and inscription. Whether it is the ambitiously poetic formulations of the Milan Gospels, the elaborately philosophical statements of the Gereon Sacramentary, or the concise yet pointed commentaries of the Hitda Codex, the Cologne tituli offer vivid testimonies both to the sophistication of their makers and viewers as well as to the potential for artistic innovation and reflection in an age otherwise known for its scarcity of written sources on art.
CHAPTER TWO
THE MILAN GOSPELS IN THE AMBROSIANA

The gospel book from Cologne preserved today at the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan boasts an extensive program of full-page tituli and miniatures, the latter of which have been seen by scholars as representing the stylistic high point of Cologne’s painterly group of Ottonian manuscripts.\(^{109}\) The decorative program of this rather diminutive codex, which measures only 23.1 x 16.8 cm, may be considered in two parts. First, the manuscript opens with a sequence of several miniatures and tituli, which includes: (1) an introductory poem, (2) a titulus for a lost Majestas Domini miniature, (3) a dedication miniature with a facing titulus, (4) a miniature of Jerome which has lost its facing titulus, (5) and an initial page to the Novum opus, one of Jerome’s gospel prologues. The second portion of the decorative program comprises four sequences of illuminated pages—one for each of the four Gospels. These gospel sequences contain the evangelist portraits, tituli, and decorative initial pages. A set of canon tables rounds

---

out the manuscript’s decoration and provides a transition between the opening sequence of miniatures and the beginning of the gospel text itself. The lavish visual repertoire of solid purple backgrounds, golden frames and ornate vegetal motifs distinguishes the manuscript as a luxury version of the gospels—a type of object which had become a particular specialty of the scriptoria and workshops of Cologne in the late-tenth and eleventh centuries.110

Although scholars have never doubted its Cologne provenance, the manuscript lacks any specific indications that would enable a more precise localization of either its place of production or its intended recipient. One can only surmise that the manuscript remained in Cologne through the Late Middle Ages, at which point a scribe modified several aspects of the manuscript to bring it line with more contemporary liturgical usage.111 For example, the late-medieval scribe emended the capitula evangeliorum to include a reading from the Gospel of Matthew in honor of the 11,000 Virgins—a feast which held particular relevance for Cologne.112 At some point in the fifteenth century the manuscript underwent another significant change in the form of a new binding. The decoration of the stamped brown-leather binding features central panels—on both the front and back covers—which consist of alternating depictions of the apocalyptic lamb

110 Bloch and Schnitzler recognized sixteen illuminated gospel books from Ottonian Cologne. One of these, MS C II 22 from the Bibliothèque de Strasbourg, perished in a fire in 1870, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1970, Die ottonische Kölner Buchmalerei II, p. 25; a second manuscript survives only as two fragments from the opening to the Gospel of John (Nuremberg, GN, MM 394, 395), see idem. 1967, Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule I, p. 99-100. Two further gospel books were acknowledged by Bloch and Schnitzler as being stylistically related to works from Cologne, but in the final analysis left out of the group: Darmstadt, HLM, AE 679 (olim Kg 54:213); Berlin, SB, MS Theol. Lat. Fol. 25; see idem. 1967, Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule I, p. 26.

111 These modifications were applied not only to perceived errors in the gospel text, but also to the capitula evangeliorum (fol. 229r-237r), which has been substantially emended.

112 The emendation occurs on fol. 234r. See Wilhelm Zilliken, Der Kölner Festkalender: seine Entwicklung und seine Verwendung zu Urkündedatierungen (Bonn: C. Georgi, 1910), p. 127-132.
holding a flag and the figure of a griffin.\textsuperscript{113} A vegetal border surrounds these central panels and a series of ten large rosettes forms the outermost border. Further study of the style and decoration of the binding may perhaps point to the particular region or workshop responsible for its creation—information which has thus far remained elusive.\textsuperscript{114} Recently, Marco Petoletti was able to provide an additional link in the provenance of the manuscript by deciphering an erased owner inscription from the manuscript’s first folio. The inscription places the manuscript in the hands of the canons of the Nieuwe Kerk in Delft anywhere from the late-fifteenth to early-sixteenth centuries, and reads: “Liber iste quatuor evangelistarum est magistri Arnoldi Lydrek /// pro s// magistro Gerardo Liagen de Delft canonico Nove Ecclesie de Delft sibi in Christo carissimo.”\textsuperscript{115} Perhaps directly from Delft, the gospel book entered the newly formed library of Cardinal Federico Borromeo, who received the codex as a gift from Antonio Olgiati, the library’s first prefect.\textsuperscript{116} Olgiati was an avid collector of manuscripts and was often in the habit of noting

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{113} The binding of the Milan Gospels remains unpublished. The stamped lamb and griffin motifs are approximately 1.5 x 1.1 cm in size. The central panel of the front cover comprises seven rows of three squares, whereas the back cover comprises eight rows of four.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{115} In Petoletti’s transcription illegible passages have been marked with a slash (/). Even with the aid of a UV light, the inscription proved difficult to make out—so much so that Petoletti’s reading could not be confirmed in its entirety and the dating of the inscription ought to be considered open to debate. See Marco Petoletti, “‘Littera de penna, littera de pennello’ Storie di manoscritti ambrosiani miniati,” in \textit{Come nasce un manoscritto miniato: Scriptoria, tecniche, modelli, e materiali}, eds. Francesca Flores d’Arcais and Fabrizio Crivello (Modena: Franco Cosimo Panini Editore, 2010), p. 139-150, esp. p. 139.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{116} Olgiati’s inscription occurs on fol. 1r. He is also mostly likely responsible for the erasure of other owner inscriptions on fol. 1r and 237r.
\end{flushright}
where, when, and from whom he acquired his books. Alas, the ambiguously worded inscription from the first folio of the Milan Gospels provides only the date of its acquisition:

> Quatuor sacrosancta Dei evangelia, variis iconibus, characteribus, et parergis auro, et minio elaboratis insignita, quae ad illustrissimum Cardinalem Federicum Borromaeum, Bibliothecae Ambrosianae fundatorem...dono transmisit anno 1606...Antonio Olgiato eiusdem bibliothecae, quam primus omnium tractavit, praefecto.118

The four sacred gospels of God, distinguished with various pictures, characters, golden frames and elaborated in minium, which to the illustrious Cardinal Federico Borromeo, founder of the Ambrosian Library...sent as a gift in the year 1606...from the Prefect Antonio Olgiati, of the same library, which he first led.

Remaining in the Ambrosiana since its donation there in 1606, the Milan Gospels constitutes not only the collection’s finest example of Ottonian manuscript illumination, but also, on a broader level, it represents one of the most significant and original examples of an illuminated gospel book from the end of the tenth century.

Despite the quality and scope of its illuminated program, the gospel book has received relatively little focused attention from scholars. Effectively introducing the codex to modern scholarship in 1904, Arthur Haseloff included the Milan Gospels in the catalogue of a major art exhibition in Düsseldorf, for which he prepared an overview of Rhenish manuscript illumination


118 According to Bloch and Schnitzler’s reading of the inscription, Borromeo provided the manuscript as a gift to the Ambrosiana, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule I, p. 37. The grammar is unclear: Borromeo’s name certainly appears in the accusative case, whereas Olgiati’s is in the dative or ablative case. The subject of the verb *transmisit* is thus ambiguous. However, the formulation “dono transmisit ad Borrhomaeum” would seem best translated as: “sent as a gift to Borromeo.”
from the ninth to the fourteenth centuries. The gospel book begins Haseloff’s list of twelve Cologne manuscripts, and thus represents what he considered to be a major work of the school along with the Gereon Sacramentary in Paris. Following upon Haseloff’s publication, Antonio Muñoz devoted an article to the relationship between these two manuscripts, concluding that the Milan Gospels represents a stylistically superior work from the same artistic group as the Gereon Sacramentary. In their standard work on the illuminated Ottonian manuscripts from Cologne, Bloch and Schnitzler modified this appraisal and suggested instead that the two manuscripts are in fact so closely related that they may be considered the work of the same two illuminators.

Furthermore, they dated both the gospel book and the sacramentary to the period between the imperial coronation of Otto III in 996 and his death in 1002—a dating based in large part on the highly problematic stylistic relationships between the Cologne manuscripts and the Manchester Gospels. The thorough description and analysis provided by Bloch and Schnitzler established

---


122 Bloch and Schnitzler saw the same two hands at work in the miniatures of both the Milan Gospels and the Gereon Sacramentary, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, *Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule* I, p. 31, 37. Following their estimation, the better of the two hands, Hand 1, was responsible the majority of the miniatures, while Hand 2 executed the Jerome miniature as well as the portraits of Luke and John. Regarding the Gereon Sacramentary, Hand 1 produced the following miniatures: the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Majestas Domini, the Crucifixion, and the Gathering of the Nations. Hand 2 was responsible for the remaining five miniatures. While the miniatures of both manuscripts do indeed exhibit a surprising range of quality and technique, it is nevertheless difficult to accept such a clear distinction into two groups. One could also imagine a scenario in which a single master worked with the aid of an assistant.

123 Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, *Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule* I, p. 31, 37. See also the discussion above, p. 36-38.
a status quo regarding the Milan Gospels, which has essentially prevailed up to the present day with only one major exception.\textsuperscript{124}

In 1991 Peter Christian Jacobsen published an important study of Latin poetry in Ottonian Cologne, in which he discussed the tituli of the Milan Gospels from the perspective of a philologist.\textsuperscript{125} In addition to providing some general information on the sources of the tituli, Jacobsen recognized for the first time the manuscript’s fragmentary state. On the basis of codicological evidence, Jacobsen argued that a single bifolio can be assumed missing from the manuscript’s opening sequence.\textsuperscript{126} According to Jacobsen’s reconstruction, this lost bifolio would have formed the second in a gathering of three such bifolia (that is, a ternio) and it would have contained on its first recto side a blank decorative page (fol. *2r), with the missing Majestas Domini miniature depicted on the verso (fol. *2v). The second recto of this missing leaf would have displayed the titulus to the Jerome miniature (fol. *5r), and its verso would have displayed the Beato Damaso (fol. *5v)—that is, the opening address to the Novum opus. Because several of the tituli from the Milan Gospels reappear in later Cologne gospel books, Jacobsen was reluctant to acknowledge any trace of originality in the codex. In his estimation, the “redactor” of the Milan Gospels merely compiled the manuscript’s tituli from various sources.\textsuperscript{127} Therefore,


\textsuperscript{127} “Der Redaktor hat demnach den vollen Zyklus der Versinschriften übernommen, den die gemeinsame Textvorlage der Codices III [\textit{the Milan Gospels}], X [\textit{the Maria ad Gradus Gospels}], und XVIII/XIX [\textit{the Harley and Abdinghof Gospels}] bot, hat ihn aber am Anfang noch durch die
Jacobsen neglected to consider how the tituli and miniatures of the manuscript could together constitute a sophisticated and original program for an illuminated gospel book. In fact, there exists to date no comprehensive study of the Milan manuscript’s miniatures and tituli as a coherent program. As art historians, Bloch and Schnitzler had relatively little to say about the tituli; whereas Jacobsen’s philologically based observations failed to take into account any possible relationships between the tituli and their corresponding miniatures.\(^\text{128}\)

The following chapter will attempt to redress these oversights by providing the first in-depth consideration of both the miniatures and the tituli of the Milan Gospels seen as a whole. Modifying Jacobsen’s initial hypothesis, the chapter will demonstrate that the tituli were not only written specifically for this codex, but also that they were intended to work together with the miniatures to create an overarching program of illumination that was conceived with the manuscript’s recipient in mind. By drawing on a rich and venerable tradition of Carolingian poetry and epigraphy, the designers of the program endeavored to instill upon its recipient—who is featured prominently in the manuscript’s dedicatory miniature—a pointed moralizing message, which characterized their gift first and foremost as the Book of Life, but which also emphasized the attendant demands for virtue and devotion that were incumbent on one receiving such a gift.

\(^{128}\) Regarding an analysis of the tituli, Bloch and Schnitzler were at a loss: “Über die literarischen Quellen der Tituli war nichts in Erfahrung zu bringen.” See Bloch and Schnitzler 1970, *Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule II*, p. 64.
The Book of Life: The Opening Verses of the Milan Gospels

The manuscript opens with what may best be described as an introductory poem. Given the spacing and arrangement of the text, the original length of the poem can be estimated to have been approximately eight verses long, which suggests that as many as three-and-a-half verses of text have been lost from the missing leaf. The extant four-and-a-half verses serve to characterize the manuscript as both the Book of Life and the Fountain of Life—two biblical motifs with a long exegetical tradition reaching back to Late Antiquity.

Hic liber est vitae toto diffusus in orbe,
Quatuor ut lato sparguntur flumina mundo,
Quae fons iriguus paradisi dirivat unus,
Sic et aquae semper sunt hic sacra flumina vivae,

Jacobsen was the first to suggest that the Milan Gospels suffered the loss of a single bifolio in the first gathering. Jacobsen, however, does not suggest that the dedicatory poem continued on the now-missing leaf (fol. 2r*). Instead, for reasons unstated, he insists that the poem was intentionally left fragmentary and thus serves as an indication that the verses derive from a larger poem. Therefore, in his view, the poem ought not to be considered a work created specifically for the Milan Gospels: “Da der letzte Vers absichtlich unvollständig blieb, entsteht der Eindruck, der Text dieser Zierseite sei einem vollständigeren Gedicht entnommen, sei also keine Neuschöpfung für den Mailänder Codex.” See Jacobsen 1991, Lateinische Dichtungen, p. 179. Rather than a continuation of the opening verses, Jacobsen argued that there was a blank decorative page similar to that found on the first folio of the Maria ad Gradus Gospels (fol. 1r). Given its fragmentary state, there is no reason to suppose that the dedicatory poem would not have been continued on the now lost folio. Jacobsen’s argument that a blank decorative page faced the fragmentary opening poem cannot be upheld.

Quae vitae fons XPC...\textsuperscript{131}

This is the book of life covering the entire globe;  
Just as the four rivers spread through the wide earth,  
whose source is the one well-watered fountain of paradise,  
So too are these sacred rivers here ever the water of life,  
for Christ the fountain of life...

With this opening poem the four Gospels—as the Book of Life—are said to encompass the entire world just as the four rivers of paradise irrigate the terrestrial globe. The third and fourth verses of the poem carry the analogy further and equate the singular source of the four rivers in paradise (the Fountain of Life) to the one source of the four Gospels (Christ). The major themes are quite clearly the unity and the universality of the Gospels—two motifs that, in various ways, underlie numerous examples of surviving frontispieces from early-medieval gospel books.\textsuperscript{132} Although the subject matter itself is entirely fitting for the opening verses of a gospel book, both the language in which the verses are presented and the context upon which they draw are quite remarkable. Indeed, prior to the Milan Gospels only two gospel books survive that exhibit this particular form of introductory text where the motifs of the Book of Life and Fountain of Life have been merged: the Ada Gospels in Trier and the Gauzelin Gospels in Nancy—two manuscripts which number among the most significant examples of luxury gospel books from the ninth century.

\textsuperscript{131} The tituli of the Milan Gospels have been published twice: MGH Poetae V, p. 449-451 (published in part from the tituli which reappear with slight modifications in the Maria ad Gradus Gospels); and also Jacobsen 1991, Lateinische Dichtungen, p. 179, 187.

The first of these close parallels can be found in the opening lines of the well-known dedicatory inscription from the Ada Gospels, an illuminated codex aureus created at the so-called court school of Charlemagne in Aachen. The first secure piece of evidence placing the manuscript in Trier dates only to the twelfth century, leaving its earlier provenance open to speculation. Whether or not the manuscript served as a direct source for the Milan Gospels, the first two lines of its dedicatory inscription characterize the gospel book through a similar conflation of two distinct motifs—the Book of Life and the Fountain of Life—which again serves to emphasize both the unity and universality of Christ’s teachings [FIGURE 16].

Hic liber est vitae paradisi quattuor amnes
Clara salu[t]i]feri pandens miracula Christi,
Que prius ob nostram voluit fecisse salutem
Quem devota deo iussit perscribere mater
Ada ancilla dei, pu[l]c[h]risque ornare metallis:
Pro qua, [quis]que legas versus, orare memento.  

This is the book of life, the four rivers of paradise
Spreading the illustrious miracles of salvific Christ,
Which he once performed for our salvation.
Devoted to God, Mother Ada, servant of God, ordered this [book]
To be written out and decorated with precious metals:
Whoever reads these verses, remember to pray for her.

The inscription can be found on fol. 172v. For the Ada Gospels (Trier, StB, Cod. 22), see Die Trierer Ada-Handschrift, eds. K. Menzel et al. (Leipzig: Verlag von Alphons Dürr, 1889). For a more recent overview with further references, see Michael Embach, Das Ada-Evangeliar (StB Trier, Hs 22): Die karolingische Bilderhandschrift (Trier: Paulinus Verlag, 2010).

See Embach 2010, Das Ada-Evangeliar, p. 28.

An emended version of the poem was printed by Dümmler as a footnote to Carmen 67 (“Hunc ancilla dei iam iusserat Ava libellum”), see MGH Poetæ I, p. 286-287. The text of the poem is cited here as it appears in the manuscript with brackets indicating corrections made in the manuscript itself. For the translation of the third verse, however, Dümmler’s correction of the adjective “pius” to the adverb “prius” has been retained. For a reproduction of the inscription, see Embach 2010, Das Ada-Evangeliar, p. 17.
Essentially ending with the second verse, the metaphor stops short of the Milan poem and lacks any comparable thematic development of the motif. Christ receives no mention as the Fountain of Life and the participle *pandens* provides merely an implied reference to the global reach of the Gospels. The emphasis lies instead on the miracles of Christ, which are tied to the memorial function of the book commissioned by Ada.\(^\text{136}\)

In his fundamental study of the codicology of the Ada manuscript, Karl Menzel convincingly demonstrated that the gospel book was written by two scribes at two distinct points in time: the first scribe being active in the last decade of the eighth century and the second scribe beginning perhaps as many as two decades later, in the first quarter of the ninth century.\(^\text{137}\) Because the second scribe is responsible for the first gathering as well as gatherings six through twenty-two, it seems plausible to suggest that he had taken up a commission abandoned or set aside by the earlier scribe. According to Menzel, the dedicatory inscription—located on the verso of the last folio of the manuscript—displays similarities to the second hand, his “Schreiber B,” but he also observed somewhat skeptically that the script is noticeably weaker and that the scribe had to correct himself four times in only six lines of text—and even then there are two additional mistakes which went unnoticed.\(^\text{138}\) Wilhelm Koehler expressed similar concerns about the authenticity of the inscription, and suggested that the verses represent a mid-ninth-century copy of a lost inscription that would have been placed elsewhere in the manuscript, though he could

\(^{136}\) For the difficulties associated with identifying Ada as an historical figure, see Embach 2010, *Das Ada-Evangeliar*, p. 16-27.


not say where. Given both the complicated codicological history of the manuscript and the fact that its first folio has been lost, one could speculate that the verses were intended at some point to serve as a frontispiece for the deluxe gospel book—a feature of the manuscript that was either lost early on or never completed.

* * *

Just such a frontispiece can be found in the Carolingian gospel book from the cathedral treasury at Nancy, known today as the Gauzelin Gospels after the tenth-century bishop of Toul with whom the manuscript is often associated. The luxury binding—comprising gold, silver, precious gems and engraved portraits of the evangelists—probably dates to the time of Gauzelin himself (r. 922–962); the codex, however, has long been recognized as an important early work from the scriptorium of Tours, and may be dated paleographically to the period of Abbot Adalhard (c. 835). Inserted at the beginning of the manuscript at some point in the later ninth century, an illuminated bifolio opens the book with a dedicatory poem that characterizes the

139 Koehler, Die karolingischen Miniaturen II, p. 34: “Vielleicht ist die Vermutung gestattet, daß es sich um die Kopie einer verlorenen Eintragung handelt, obwohl es schwer auszudenken ist, wo in der Handschrift diese Verse ursprünglich gestanden haben könnten.”

140 Such frontispieces are rare in manuscripts from the court school of Charlemagne, the closest example being the dedicatory poem of the Dagulf Psalter, which is on the verso of the manuscript’s first original leaf (Vienna, ÖNB, Cod. 1861, fol. 4v); see Koehler, Die karolingischen Miniaturen II, p. 42-46. As an example of the opposite strategy, the dedicatory poem for the Godescalc Evangelistary occupies the very last opening of the manuscript (Paris, BnF, MS Nouv. acq. lat. 1203, fol. 126v-127r); see Ibid., p. 22-28.

Gospels once more through a conflation of the Book-of-Life and Fountain-of-Life motifs, this time in a highly reduced manner [FIGURE 17]:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Hic liber est vitae} \\
\text{Hic et fons et origo librorum} \\
\text{Unde fluit quicquid quisquis in orbe sapit}
\end{align*}
\]

This is the book of life,  
The source and origin of books,  
Whence flows everything which anyone in the world can know.\textsuperscript{142}

Although clearly drawing upon the same sources as the Ada and Milan Gospels, the Gauzelin dedicatory poem omits any specific reference to the four rivers of paradise. Their presence is nevertheless implied through the verb *fluit* in the final verse. The author of the Gauzelin titulus has employed the Fountain-of-Life metaphor in such a way that the Gospels are represented as the ultimate source of all other books, and, for that matter, all possible knowledge. Set against a dark-blue background bordered by an elaborate frame, the text of the poem has been separated into two groups of three lines surrounding what appears to be the depiction of either a book or a book case.\textsuperscript{143} A comparison with the unusual and highly diagrammatic representation of the Majestas Domini [FIGURE 18], which follows on fol. 2v, confirms this identification. There, in a layout mirroring that of the frontispiece, four books—or book cases—surround a schematic representation of the *Chi Rho*, the first two letters of Christ’s name in Greek. The substitution of four books for the four evangelist symbols and the *nomen sacrum* for the body of Christ


\textsuperscript{143} Various identifications have been put forth by scholars: Auguin (p. 290) argues that the figure is a merovinian tomb; Berger (p. 247) suggests either a chest or the case of a book; Beissel (p. 190) repeats this latter suggestion, and Underwood (p. 128) suggests either a book or a case for a book.
transforms the iconography of the Majestas Domini into a powerful expression of the central role of the gospel book as the source for the Word of God. The strong visual associations linking the opening Book-of-Life poem and the subsequent Majestas Domini miniature provide an important parallel for the Milan Gospels, despite the vastly different visual strategies.

When considering the Gauzelin Gospels, it is also important to note the codicological observations first indicated by Wilhelm Koehler. As is so often the case with early medieval manuscripts, the book cannot be considered to be a codicological unity. The core of the manuscript was indeed written at Tours under the abbacy of Adalhard, but at a certain point in the second half of the ninth century, the manuscript was subjected to a significant intervention. A series of bifolia were added at various points in the manuscript, including the opening bifolio containing the Book-of-Life poem and the Majestas Domini diagram. These inserted leaves are remarkably unified not only in script and decoration, but also in purpose: they introduce an additional series of poems that seem to have been designed expressly for the manuscript. The dating of these additional poems—the majority of which are unpublished—remains uncertain, although one piece of evidence can be found on fol. 71v, where the name Arnaldus appears in hellenized Latin below the conclusion of the poem on Mark: ΑΡΝΑΛΔΩ ΙΟΒΗΝΘΗ (arnaldo iubente / on the command of Arnaldus).\footnote{In his description of the manuscript, Koehler mentions that the poems had not yet been published. Bonifatius Fischer, writing fifty years later, indicates once again their unpublished status. See Bonifatius Fischer, \textit{Lateinische Bibelhandschriften im frühen Mittelalter} (Freiburg i.B.: Herder, 1985), p. 223, n. 54: “Die Gedichte in dem Evangeliar von Nancy scheinen noch gar nicht alle gedruckt zu sein.” The verses are currently being prepared for publication in the continuation of the MGH Poetae series, edited by Peter Orth.}

The inscription most likely refers to the patron or instigator of the manuscript’s refashioning. It is tempting to identify the Arnaldus of the Gauzelin Gospels with a certain Arnaldus, Bishop of Toul (r. 872-894), but Koehler argued that
the decoration of the additional pages betrays a Touronian origin and noted as well that the name Arnaldus was quite common in the ninth century.

*   *   *

Despite the codicological problems posed by both the Ada and the Gauzelin dedicatory inscriptions, they nevertheless provide an important link between the Milan Gospels and a thoroughly developed corpus of Fountain-of-Life imagery in Carolingian art and literature. The most well-known examples of this subject matter are the two full-page miniatures of the Fountain of Life found in the Godescalc Evangelistary and the Soissons Gospels, which have been studied in detail by Paul Underwood. These particular miniatures represent exceptional cases among Carolingian and Ottonian illuminations, but they too can be understood in part as visual manifestations of a motif much more commonly expressed in Carolingian literature, particularly in the sub-genre which Francesco Stella considers to be an innovation of the early Middle Ages: the book epigram.

A key figure in the development of this specialized poetic form was undoubtedly Alcuin, a leading scholar at the court of Charlemagne and subsequently abbot of Tours from 796 until his

---


146 For the Godescalc Evangelistary, see most recently *Das Godescalc-Evangelistar: Eine Prachthandschrift für Karl den Grossen*, ed. Fabrizio Crivello (Darmstadt: Primus, 2009). For the Soissons Gospels (Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 8850), see Laffitte and Denoël 2009, *Trésors carolingiens*, p. 97-100; see also Underwood 1950, *The Fountain of Life*, p. 61-74. It should be noted that in the Godescalc Evangelistary the miniatures of the Christ enthroned and the Fountain of Life constitute the recto and verso of the same folio (föl. 3r/3v, respectively).

death in 804. Alcuin penned several sets of poems for luxury Bibles that were destined as gifts either for the Emperor himself or for dignitaries throughout the empire. Charlemagne, for example, received two such pandects from Alcuin in 800 and 801—the latter Bible included a dedicatory poem of 200 verses, composed perhaps to mark the Christmas-day consecration of the church dedicated to the Virgin Mary at Aachen. This largest and arguably most significant of Alcuin’s book poems begins with introductory material describing the Fall of Mankind and the need for redemption, as well as a brief explanation of the number of biblical books (v. 1-24). The next five distichs consider the Bible as a single codex, or “one body,” and serve furthermore as a transition to the core of the poem (v. 35-172), which summarily treats the individual books of the Bible. These five distichs offer an excellent example of what Francesco Stella has

---

148 For one of the more thorough introductions to this leading figure of Carolingian culture, see Donald Bullough, *Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation* (Leiden: Brill, 2004). See also the important guide to Alcuin’s writings provided by the second volume of the *Clavis auctores galliae* series: Marie-Hélène Jullien and Françoise Perelman (eds.), *Clavis scriptorum latinorum medii aevi: Auctores galliae 735-987, Tomus II: Alcuinus* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999).


demonstrated to be one of the major characteristics of Carolingian book epigrams: an emphasis on the book as a codex—that is, as a physical object. The relevant passage reads as follows:

His etiam libris inest caelestis origo,
Hos quia dictavit spiritus ipse deus.
Continet iste uno sancto sub corpore codex
Hic simul hos totos, munera magna dei.
Omnia namque novae ac veteris pia famina legis
Hic te non dubites, lector, habere, pius.
Hic vitae fons est, haec est sapientia vera,
Hae sunt perpetuae namque salutis opes.
Qui cupit inveniet scripturas discere sacras,
Sanctorum dicta hic veneranda patrum.

A heavenly origin lay in these books as well, 
Since they were dictated by God himself. 
This codex contains in one holy body 
All these books at once, the great gifts of God. 
Do not doubt, O pious reader, that you have here 
All the holy words of the old and new law. 
This is the fountain of life, this is true wisdom, 
For these are perpetual powers of salvation. 
He who wishes to learn will find here the sacred scriptures, 
The venerable sayings of the holy fathers.

The verses are quite emphatic in stressing the all-encompassing nature of the pandect and its status as both source and origin. Indeed the three main characterizations of the codex offered here—the book as *origo*, *corpus*, and *fons*—enjoyed a wide-ranging popularity throughout the ninth century. Although the Aachen Bible has been lost, the influence of its dedicatory poem—and, in particular, its characterization of the biblical codex as a physical object—can still be judged in the numerous contemporary variations and reformulations of its major themes.

---

154 Alcuin himself seems to have been particularly pleased with these five distichs since he essentially reused them, in a reduced form, as the opening lines of a dedicatory poem for a pandect ordered by Bishop Gerfrid of Laon (r. 774–800), see MGH Poetae I, p. 285, v. 1-5. Theodulf of Orléans, whom some scholars consider to have been a rival of Alcuin at court and
Sedulius Scottus—one of the leading poets of the second half of the ninth century—took up the Fountain-of-Life motif when composing his own dedicatory poem for a pandect commissioned by Gunthar, Archbishop of Cologne (r. 850-63), which was perhaps sent as a gift to St. Peter’s in Rome.\(^{155}\) Here the Fountain-of-Life theme occurs specifically within a paradisical context, which alludes both to the two-fold nature of the Old and New Testaments, as well as to the four-fold nature of the Gospels:

\[
\text{Aspice pandecten vitae de fonte scantentem} \\
\text{Ubere quae gemino clara fluenta serit.} \\
\text{Hic Geon, Fison, Eufrates, Tigris et amnis} \\
\text{Potant Christicolas nectare quoque pios.}\(^{156}\)
\[

\textit{Behold this pandect flowing from the fountain of life,}
\textit{whose two breasts issue gleaming waters.}
\]

perhaps even the initiator of the genre of the book epigram, took up these same themes when composing his own dedicatory poem, see Elisabeth Dahlhaus-Berg, \textit{Nova antiquitas et antiquita novitas} (1975), p. 60, 76-91; and Stella 1993, \textit{Poesia carolingia latina}, p. 54-68. Furthermore, the author of the dedicatory poem from the First Bible of Charles the Bald (Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 1) draws upon the same alcuinian themes to conclude a section explaining the salutory effects of the Bible, see MGH Poetae III, p. 243-248, v. 61; For the text of the poem and questions of its authorship see Dutton and Kessler 1997, \textit{Poetry and Paintings}, p. 7-19; see also Francesco Stella, “Lo spazio della soggettività nella letteratura carolingia,” in \textit{L’autobiografia nel Medioevo} (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull’alto Medioevo, 1998), p. 49-80, esp. p. 75-77.

\(^{155}\) For literature on this poem, see Ludwig Traube, \textit{O Roma nobilis: Philologische Untersuchungen aus dem Mittelalter} (Munich: Verlag der k. Akademie, 1891), p. 48; Max Manitius, \textit{Geschichte der lateinische Literatur des Mittelalters} I (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1911), p. 673; and especially Reinhard Düchting, \textit{Sedulius Scottus: Seine Dichtungen} (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1968), p. 184-189 and p. 208-209. For an English translation of the poetry of Sedulius, see Edward Doyle, \textit{Sedulius Scottus: On Christian Rulers and The Poems} (Binghamton, N.Y.: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1983). The poems of Sedulius survive in one twelfth-century codex from St. Matthias in Trier (now Brussels, BRB, MS 10615-729, fol. 214r-223v). As such, any evidence for the fate of this lost Bible of Gunthar must come from the poem itself. Ludwig Traube considered the poem to be the dedication for a Bible that Gunthar presented to the Pope in Rome; Manitius on the other hand suggested that the work was merely intended for a church dedicated to St. Peter; Düchting argues that the formulation, “clavigero…petro” (v.11), ought to be understood as referring to the Pope rather than the Saint. For Gunthar, see Oedinger 1901, \textit{Regesten der Erzbischöfen von Köln} I, p. 53-77.

Here are the Gihon, Pishon, Euphrates and Tigris rivers, refreshing pious Christians with sweetest nectar.\footnote{157}

Regardless of how long this lost Bible actually remained in Cologne, one can assume with reasonable certainty that its dedicatory poem was at least known there. In any case, the same archbishop commissioned yet another set of verses from Sedulius, this time for what appears to have been a monumental depiction of the Majestas Domini in a paradisical setting with a depiction of the twelve apostles.\footnote{158} The confusing arrangement of the tituli, which survive in a single manuscript copy, makes it difficult to imagine the appearance of the original visual program.\footnote{159} Nevertheless, it is clear that the monumental representation made an explicit connection between the four rivers of paradise and the four evangelists:

\begin{verbatim}
Cingitis altithronum leo, bos, homo rexque volucrum,
Geon tuque Fison Eufrates Tigris et amnis.

Hic sex discipulos trames describit honoros,
Dulcis odor Christi per quos respirat in orbe.
Campus hic aureolas argenti qui vomit undas
Sex alios domini fidos designat amicos.
Guntharius praesul christi venerandus amore
Has fiere species speculandaque scemata iussit.
\end{verbatim}

\footnote{157}{This translation modifies that of Doyle 1983, \textit{The Poems}, p. 163.}

\footnote{158}{It can not be determined whether the titulus refers to a painting or mosaic. See Weyres 1965, \textit{Der karolingische Dom zu Köln}, p. 385.}

\footnote{159}{The confusion concerns not only the appropriate order of the verses—which is most likely not the order preserved in the Brussels manuscript—but also the interpretation of the verses which describe the depiction of the Apostles, and, in particular, what is meant by \textit{hic trames} and \textit{hic campus argenti} (v. 9-11). See Arnulf 1997, \textit{Versus ad picturas}, p. 156-157: “Man kann sich danach wohl am besten eine Maiestas vorstellen…Was mit dem “Weg, der die ehrenvollen Schüler beschreibt” und dem “Feld von Silver, das die goldenen Wellen hervorbringt” gemeint sein sollte, bleibt mir allerdings verschlossen.” It is perhaps the case that \textit{trames} and \textit{campus} refer here to the compositional arrangement of the work into registers, and thus the \textit{campus argenti} would refer to a silver background against which the apostles would have been depicted.}

\footnote{160}{MGH Poetae III.1 p. 231, v. 4-5 and v. 9-14.}
*O lion, ox, man, and king of birds, attend heaven’s throne,*
*With the Gihon, Pishon, Euphrates, and Tigris rivers.*

...  
*This register presents the six glorious disciples,*
*Through whom Christ’s sweet perfume refreshes the earth.*
*Here a silver field, issuing golden streams,*
*Designates the other six faithful companions of the Lord.*
*The Bishop Gunthar, venerable in love of Christ,*
*Ordered the creation of these figures and sightworthy designs.*

These two examples stemming from the patronage of Archbishop Gunthar demonstrate that the Carolingian background of the Fountain-of-Life imagery was present and available in Cologne: whether through the influence of Carolingian biblical epigrams or through monumental depictions.

* * *

Seen against the broader context of this popular motif in Carolingian art and literature, the opening poem of the Milan Gospels distinguishes itself through a specific conflation of the Book-of-Life with the Fountain-of-Life motifs. This particular variation occurs specifically in the context of luxury gospel books—books which were furthermore associated with specific individuals who served either as patrons or recipients of the manuscripts. One final example of a Liber-vitae dedicatory poem helps explain why this may have been the case. The Escorial Codex aureus, a magnificent gospel book donated by Emperor Henry III to the Cathedral of Speyer around 1045, contains a double-page dedicatory poem [FIGURE 19], which follows an opening of the Majestas Domini and a miniature of the Virgin enthroned. The first half of the poem

---

161 This translation is modified from Doyle’s based on an examination of the manuscript in Brussels and the newly-proposed reading of the words *trames* and *campus*. See Doyle 1983, *The Poems*, p. 172; and see above, p. 70, fn. 159.

expands upon the meaning behind the Book-of-Life motif, amounting to what one scholar has referred to as a “hymn on the meaning of the Gospels.”

Hic liber est vitae, quia vitam continet in se  
Caelesti rore Christi diffusus ab ore  
Omnes ad gentes, ad nos nostrosque parentes,  
Ut mala vitemus, bona condita mentis amemus.  
Qui facit haec verba, capiet caelestia regna.163

This is the book of life, because it contains, in itself, life.
Like heavenly dew, it spreads from the mouth of Christ
To all people, to us and our relatives,
So that we may avoid evil and love the hidden good of the mind.
He who follows these words will reach the kingdom of heaven.

The Liber-vitae motif is not just a poetic metaphor. The gift of the Gospels offered its recipient very real access both to Christ and to eternal life achieved through him. This access was nevertheless predicated on the recipient’s ability to heed its teachings. The opening poem of the Milan Gospels—though fragmentary—makes a similar claim for the life-giving quality of Scripture and furthermore reminds its reader that the ultimate source of the text is Christ himself.

An Image of God in Heaven: The Majestas Titulus

The titulus on fol. 2r of the Milan Gospels refers explicitly to a representation of Christ surrounded by prophets and the four symbols of the evangelists—a Majestas Domini—which can

___________________________

163 For the dedicatory poem, see Boeckler 1933, Das goldene Evangelienbuch, p. 17.
be assumed lost on the basis of codicological evidence [FIGURE 20].\textsuperscript{164} The most plausible reconstruction suggests that this miniature formed the first verso of the lost bifolio. Thus, following directly upon the double-page \textit{Liber vitae} poem that opens the manuscript, the Majestas Domini would have begun a sequence of three full-page miniatures, each of which featured a corresponding titulus page. Although today lost to the modern reader, the iconography of the painting can be reconstructed on the basis of two miniatures from closely related gospel books, the most important being the slightly earlier Gereon Gospels, which depicts Christ enthroned and surrounded by the four evangelists, four prophets and two cherubim.\textsuperscript{165}

The titulus for the lost Majestas miniature consists of seven verses of hexameter which, though barely contained within the decorative frame, compares well with the length of other


Ottonian Majestas tituli, such as those found in the Gero Codex or the Bamberg Gospels. The text can be divided into three sections: the opening two verses, which introduce the image of God and the salutary nature of Christ; the second pair of verses which mention the figures of the prophets, who foretell the incarnation of Christ; and finally an explanation of the four evangelist symbols as they relate specifically to aspects of Christ’s life:

Est deus in caelo cuius hic habetur imago
Nostra salus christus spes atque redemptio iesus
De quo dogma prophetarum canit omne priorum
Hunc monstrando deum voluit qui visere mundum
Quemque suis signant animalia sancta figuris
Nascendo quia factus homo vitulus moriendo
Et leo surgendo siuitque aquila astra petendo.\(^{167}\)

*It is god in heaven whose image is here
Our salvation, our hope, and our redemption, Jesus Christ
Of whom all the teaching of the earlier prophets sings
thereby revealing this God who was willing to visit the world
and whom the sacred animals, through their figures, designate:
in being born, a man; in dying, an ox; and in rising, a lion;
and in seeking the stars, an eagle*

An analysis of parallel constructions, textual sources and in some cases direct borrowings, will demonstrate that the text itself can be understood as a carefully constructed christological reading of the Majestas iconography.

* * *

The tripartite structure of the Milan Majestas titulus—referring first to Christ, then to the prophets, and finally to the evangelist symbols—finds its ultimate source in the Majestas tituli

---

166 For the Majestas titulus of the Gero Codex (Darmstadt, ULB, Hs. 1948), see MGH Poetae V, p. 426; Schmidt 1924, *Gero Codex*, p. 14. For the Bamberg Gospels (Munich, BSB, CLM 4454), see MGH Poetae V, p. 435.

devised for the great Touronian Bibles of the ninth century.\textsuperscript{168} It is important to note here that it is specifically the biblical tituli that are relevant, and not the Majestas tituli of the Touronian gospel books. The most significant example of this latter group can be found in the Gauzelin Gospels, which represents the first known instance of one of the more popular forms of Majestas tituli in gospel books from the ninth century [FIGURE 21]:

\begin{quote}
Quattuor hic rutilant uno de fonte fluentes
Matthei marci lucae libri atque johannis.\textsuperscript{169}
\end{quote}

\textit{Here shine, flowing from one source,}
\textit{The books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John}

The titulus refers once again to the familiar Carolingian Fountain-of-Life topos, yet the emphasis here rests solely on the books of the evangelists, whereas Christ receives merely an implicit reference through the fountain metaphor. Also notably absent from the titulus is any mention of the four prophets who are prominently featured in the miniature itself, surrounding the evangelists and the \textit{Agnus Dei}. This disjunction between miniature and titulus in the Gauzelin Gospels reflects the chronological distance between the composition of the verses—attributable most likely to Alcuin or one of his students—and the painting of the miniatures some thirty years after his death.\textsuperscript{170}

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{168} For an overview of the tituli, see Herbert Kessler, \textit{The Illustrated Bibles from Tours} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 53-58.

\textsuperscript{169} For the Majestas titulus, see MGH Poetae II, p. 671 (cited from the Lothar Gospels, Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 266); and Beissel 1906, \textit{Geschichte der Evangelienbücher}, p. 191.

\textsuperscript{170} The attribution of the tituli to the circle of Alcuin is based primarily on the second verse, which is taken directly from verse 11 of \textit{Carmen 68}, one of Alcuin’s book poems which was copied in the Touronian Bible in Bamberg (SB, Msc. Bibl. 1, fol. 5v). There, the text of the poem is accompanied by a portrait bust of Alcuin himself. See Gude Suckale-Redlefsen, \textit{Die Handschriften des 8. bis 11. Jahrhunderts der Staatsbibliothek Bamberg} I (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2004), p. 28. The first verse has so far resisted identification, but it is most likely a reworking of an existing passage from Alcuin. For a close parallel, see Alcuin, \textit{Epistle 81}, v. 10-11: \textit{Quatuor evangelia de uno fonte, qui est christus, procedunt ad inriganda corda arida, ut}
\end{footnotesize}
Although no doubt dependent on the iconography of the Gauzelin Majestas miniature or its model, both the First Bible of Charles the Bald and the Moutier-Grandval Bible present an entirely new titulus, one in which Christ—depicted this time in human form instead of the Agnus Dei—receives pride of place as the king who shines [FIGURES 22 and 23]:

Rex micat aethereus condigne sive prophetae
Hic, evangelicae quattuor atque tubae.\textsuperscript{171}

The heavenly king gleams worthily, and the prophets [also shine] here, and the four evangelical heralds.\textsuperscript{172}

The prophets and evangelists follow, receiving only scant attention. The presence of the prophets is nevertheless significant in the context of a pandect because it is precisely in such codices that the Old and New Testaments are physically joined together, thus underscoring the important function of the Majestas miniature as a coordinating element between the two scriptures.

Despite its modest simplicity, the Majestas titulus in these two Bibles nevertheless presents the basic tripartite structure that would be elaborated further in two important manuscripts from the second half of the ninth century: the Bible of San Paolo fuori le mura and the Codex Aureus from St. Emmeram. The former, after a description of Christ as creator of the world, lists each of the four prophets by name and devotes a further two verses to the evangelists as a group:

\begin{quote}
Sede throni residens, mundum qui ponderat omnem,
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{172} This translation modifies slightly that of Dutton and Kessler 1997, \textit{Poetry and Paintings}, p. 117.
Corda replet vatum, ut nobis archana revelent.
Altius Esaia, Hieremias Hiezechielque
Afflati Danihelque videns misteria tecta
Quattuor assignant nobis animalibus almis
Almigraphos XPI virtutum quattuor aeque.\textsuperscript{173}

\textit{Seated on his throne he who weighs all of the world fills
the hearts of the prophets so that they may reveal the arcana to us.
Deeply inspired and seeing the hidden mysteries
Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel
with the four beings and the four nourishing scribes
equally instruct us of the virtues of Christ.}\textsuperscript{174}

The Codex Aureus from St. Emmeram—a luxury gospel book stemming from the court school
of Charles the Bald, which represents one of the most complex and ambitious combinations of
miniatures and tituli from the entire ninth century—presents a particularly elaborate variant of
this form of the Majestas titulus by devoting an entire verse for each of the four prophets and
each of the four evangelists [FIGURE 24].\textsuperscript{175} The attention lavished on the prophets in this
titulus is all the more astonishing when one considers that the manuscript—as a gospel book—
entirely lacks the books of the Old Testament. Rather than serving a coordinating function
between the two scriptures, the Majestas titulus and miniature form part of a larger prefatory

\textsuperscript{173} For the titulus on fol. 259r, see MGH Poetae III, p. 263; for a variant reading of the titulus,
see Joachim Gaehde, \textit{The Painters of the Carolingian Bible Manuscript of San Paolo Fuori le
Mura in Rome} II (Ph.D. Dissertation: New York University, 1963), p. 143. The commentary
volume to the facsimile edition of the manuscript follows the MGH reading, see Bernhard
Bischoff, “I Tituli delle miniature,” in \textit{Commentario storico, paleografico, artistico critico della
Bibbia di San Paolo fuori le mura}, ed. Alessandro Pratesi (Rome: Istituto poligrafico e zecca

\textsuperscript{174} This translation modifies that of Gaehde 1963, \textit{Painters of the Carolingian Bible} I, p. 374.

\textsuperscript{175} For the text of the titulus, see MGH Poetae III, p. 253; Koehler (Mütherich), \textit{Die
karolingischen Miniaturen} V, p. 175-198; Paul Dutton and Édouard Jeuneau, “The Verses of
93-94.
program that includes a full-page portrait of Charles the Bald as well as a depiction of the Majestas Agni, each with accompanying tituli.

In a similar manner, the author of the Milan titulus adopted the tripartite structure of Carolingian Majestas tituli from pandects for his own composition, which in turn forms part of a prefatory program for the manuscript. The result may not be as elaborate as the tituli of the San Paolo Bible or the Munich Codex Aureus, but it nevertheless reflects the ambition inherent in claiming such a prestigious tradition. The explicit reference to the prophets is particularly unusual in the context of Majestas tituli from Ottonian gospel books—in fact the Milan titulus is seemingly unique in this regard—and thus its presence provides the surest indicator of the ultimate source for the compositional structure of the verses.

*   *   *

With its underlying structure in mind, one can approach the Milan titulus with the expectation that it begin with a description of Christ, referring either to his kingship or to his role as creator. Instead the titulus opens with the emphatic and startling claim that it is God in heaven whose image is here (Est Deus in caelo cuius hic habetur imago). An initial reading of the line might suggest that it constitutes a rather straightforward description of a painted figure from the now-lost miniature: here is an image of God in heaven. Yet such a reading would overlook the sophistication implied by the direct form of expression—particularly the initial juxtaposition of est and deus, “it is God”—and it would also disregard the nuanced constellation of Deus-Imago-Christus presented to the reader. Indeed, in a manner quite fitting for a titulus, the meaning of the opening line hinges on a proper understanding of the word imago. Seen in the context of the two verses together (Est Deus in caelo cuius hic habetur imago: nostra salus Christus spes atque
redemptio Jesus), imago refers at once to the figure depicted in the miniature as well as to Christ as the image of God in heaven.

That a miniature of the Majestas Domini could present—through Christ—an image of God in heaven finds textual support in the late-antique and early-medieval commentary tradition on the book of Ezekiel, whose prophetic vision offered the standard textual source for the iconography of Christ enthroned.\(^\text{176}\) The precise moment of the description comes toward the end of chapter one, where Ezekiel describes his vision of a man seated above the firmament on a sapphire throne:

\[
\text{Et super firmamentum quod erat inminens capiti eorum quasi aspectus lapidis sapphyri similitudo throni et super similitudinem throni similitudo quasi aspectus hominis desuper.}^{177}
\]

\[And \text{ above the firmament that was over their [sc. the evangelic beasts] heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of the sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was a likeness as of the appearance of a man above upon it.}\]

A key point not lost on the late-antique and early-medieval commentators on Ezekiel—namely Jerome, Gregory the Great, and Hrabanus Maurus—was that the vision of Ezekiel is itself presented in terms of likenesses and appearances.\(^\text{178}\) Thus it is not a throne that the prophet sees, but rather the likeness of the throne; it is not a man, but rather the likeness of an appearance of a

---

\(^{176}\) The major late-antique and early-medieval commentaries on Ezekiel were: Jerome, \textit{Commentariorum in Hiezechielem Libri XIV}, ed. Franciscus Glorie, CCSL 75 (1964); Gregory the Great, \textit{Homiliae in Hiezechihelem Prophetam}, ed. Marcus Adriaen, CCSL 142 (1971); For an English translation, see Theodosia Gray, \textit{The Homilies of Saint Gregory the Great on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel} (Etna: 1990); For Hrabanus Maurus, see \textit{Commentaria in Ezechielem}, PL 110: 497d-1084c.

\(^{177}\) The passage derives from Ez. 1:26.

\(^{178}\) A prime example of this interest in the mediated quality of Ezekiel’s vision can be found in the commentaries of Jerome and Gregory on Ezekiel (1:28-2:1). For the former, see Jerome, \textit{Commentariorum in Hiezechielem} (CCSL 75), p. 25-26; for the latter, see Gregory the Great, \textit{Homiliae in Hiezechihelem} (CCSL 142), p. 118-120.
man. As Jerome notes: the firmament, the sapphire and the man are shown not in truth, but in likeness (similitudo). Ezekiel’s vision is thus a vision of images. Two important implications can be drawn from this observation: first, the vision recorded by Ezekiel must, by necessity, be subject to interpretation; and second, the mediated status of his vision provides a solid conceptual underpinning for its subsequent depiction in art. In this sense, looking at a miniature of the Majestas Domini offers an opportunity for the viewer to have his or her own visionary experience. In considering the likeness of the appearance of a man, Jerome argues that this image ought to be understood as representing God the Father, an interpretation which he then supports with numerous biblical citations, which serve to link God the Father with Christ the Son:

Hominem autem Deum Patrem debere intelligi; multa docent testimonia…omnia enim Filii Patris sunt, qui est imago Dei Patris invisibilis (Col. 1:15).

The man [on the throne] ought to be understood as God the Father, which several witnesses teach...for all things of the Father are also of the Son, who is the image of the invisible God the Father.

---

179 Jerome, Commentariorum in Hiezechielem (CCSL 75), p. 23: “Ex quo intellegimus et firmamentum et crystallum et sapphirum et hominem in similitudine non in veritate monstrari.”

180 For Gregory, the only option available for those wishing to approach the visionary experience of Ezekiel would be the constant contemplation of Scripture and religious teaching: “Since we cannot see this likeness through the spirit of prophecy we must continually acknowledge it and punctiliously contemplate it in Holy Writ, in divine counsels, and in spiritual precepts” (Cuius similitudinem gloriae quia nos per spiritum prophetiae videre non possimus, hanc assidue cognoscere et sollice contemplari in sacro eloquio, in caelestibus monitis, in praeceptis spiritualibus debemus). See Gregory the Great, Homiliae in Hiezechihelem (CCSL 142), p. 121; for the translation, see Gray 1990, Homilies of Gregory the Great, p. 93. Yet for an interesting Carolingian example of a visionary response to an image of the Majestas Domini, see Thomas F.X. Noble, “Images, A Daydream, and Heavenly Sounds in the Carolingian Era,” in Envisioning Experience in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Dynamic Patterns in Texts and Images, eds. Giselle de Nie and Thomas F.X. Noble (Ashgate 2012), p. 24-45.

181 Jerome, Commentariorum in Hiezechielem (CCSL 75), p. 23. This passage was taken up verbatim by Hrabanus Maurus in his commentary on Ezekiel. See Hrabanus Maurus, Commentaria in Ezechiel (PL 110), 542b-c.
Ezekiel’s vision of the “likeness as of the appearance of a man” is therefore to be understood as a vision of Christ as the only perceivable manifestation of the invisible God—or as Gregory the Great explains, a vision of the “mediator of God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.”\textsuperscript{182} The opening line of the Milan titulus not only emphasizes the fundamental importance of Christ’s dual nature as both God and man, but it does so precisely in the context of an actual image of Christ, thus justifying the validity of its own claim that “it is God in heaven whose image is here.”

As remarkable as it is, the Majestas titulus nevertheless stands in line with an important predecessor from Ottonian Cologne, an object in which expressing the dual nature of Christ also emerges as a major theme. Known today as the lost Golden Altar from the church of St. Victor in Xanten, it remains one of the few works of art that can be securely associated with the figure of Bruno, archbishop of Cologne and brother of Otto the Great, who likely commissioned the work as part of a memorial endowment.\textsuperscript{183} After his death in 965, Bruno’s chaplain and successor Folcmar took over the commission and saw it through to completion. The golden altar, which measured approximately 184 x 180 cm and consisted most likely of repoussé gold reliefs affixed to a wooden support, functioned as an antependium for the high altar of the church before being reconfigured in 1128 to form part of an elaborate retable, which was itself modified several times in subsequent centuries, ending ultimately with its disassembly and destruction in 1795. Some sixty years prior, in 1734, the antiquarian Friedrich Jakob Pels included a line drawing and a detailed description of the object as part of his manuscript \textit{Descriptio ecclesiae Xantensis}, which

\textsuperscript{182} Rather than citing the passage from Colossians (1:15) as does Jerome, Gregory cites instead 1 Timothy 2:5. For the translation, see Gray 1990, \textit{Homilies of Gregory the Great}, p. 87.

remains today the primary source for any knowledge of the altar’s appearance [FIGURE 25].

Unfortunately Pels’s drawing—essentially a transcription of the tituli in schematic form—conveys no information about the style or iconography of the figures apart from their basic compositional arrangement, which comprised a depiction of Christ in the center of the panel surrounded by the four evangelists and flanked by twelve figures from the Old Testament arranged in two registers. In other words, the altar presented a visual program in which the figures of the evangelists and the prophets were juxtaposed in the context of a Majestas Domini.

Most striking about the golden altar from Xanten is its unusual Majestas titulus, which Pels depicted as an inscription around the edge of Christ’s mandorla—a placement found in the Majestas miniature from the Ste. Chapelle Gospels as well. The two verses of leonine hexameter read as follows:

Res et imago duas fert ista notatque figuras


185 The arrangement of the Xanten Majestas with the evangelists accompanied by twelve figures—if not its exact iconography—recalls the monumental depiction of the Majestas commissioned by Bishop Gunthar of Cologne in the late ninth century, perhaps for the Cathedral; the program also recalls the central panel of the Milan Paliotto—a magnificent Carolingian golden altar preserved in that city’s Cathedral. See Victor Elbern, Der karolingische Goldaltar von Mailand (Ph.D. Dissertation: Kunsthistorisches Institut Bonn, 1952); and Cynthia Hahn, “Narrative on the Golden Altar of Sant’Ambrogio in Milan: Presentation and Reception,” Dumbarton Oaks Papers 53 (1999), p. 167-187.

Effigatus homo Deus est signatus in auro.¹⁸⁷

This object and image bears and notes two figures:
Man is depicted; God is signified in gold.¹⁸⁸

In only two lines, the majestas titulus of the Xanten Golden Altar manages to distill the essential
tenets of early medieval image theory.¹⁸⁹ It accomplishes this feat through the creative use of a
doubling effect both in the structure of the couplet, as well as in its description of both Christ and
the object itself. The relief—the physical image of Christ—is mentioned only indirectly through
the combination of both res and imago: the thing and the image.¹⁹⁰ The author of the distich then
doubles the verb—fert and notat—thus establishing a parallel structure with the dual aspect of
the relief. It is difficult to say to what extent the two verbs correspond to the two aspects of the
relief—in other words, is it the object that bears and the image that notes, or vice versa? The
syntax would suggest the former. In any case the parallel structure extends further to the dual
nature of Christ as both Man and God. These two aspects are modified with the participles
effigiatus and signatus, respectively, thus linking the dual nature of Christ to the two components
of the relief: the material object and its form. The level of identification here between Christ and
a physical image is astonishing and ought to be understood as both a considered reflection on the

¹⁸⁷ The tituli preserved in Pels’s drawing have been published in Franz Xavier Kraus, Die
christlichen Inschriften der Rheinlande II (Freiburg i.B.: 1894), p. 297; see also MGH Poetae V,
p. 357.

¹⁸⁸ For other translations of this titulus, see Herbert Kessler, “Image and Object: Christ’s Dual
Nature and the Crisis of Early Medieval Art,” in The Long Morning of Medieval Europe, eds.
Michael McCormick and J. Davies (London: Ashgate, 2008), p. 289-321, esp. p. 289. See also,
Pawlik 2012, Die Goldene Tafel, p. 63, fn. 16.


¹⁹⁰ Taken strictly, the word res does not permit a rendering as “material,” despite an implied
meaning as such through the mention of gold in the second verse. Although in the following
discussion the word will be translated as “object” or “thing,” one could argue that the use of the
word res was metrically determined and thus a looser reading of the word may be plausible.
nature of images as well as a justification of the appropriateness of their use in depicting Christ: just as Christ combined the visible and the invisible through his incarnation, so too does the material image combine the effigatus and signatus through its dual nature as both object and form. The titulus from the lost Golden Altar thus represents an important source for the Deus-Imago-Christus constellation in the Milan Majestas titulus.

* * *

The powerful opening line of the titulus establishes a thematic focus on the nature of Christ that, without exception, persists throughout the remaining verses. The second verse introduces Christ as a figure of salvation, hope and redemption (nourra salus christus spes atque redemptio iesus). Such a listing of epithets recalls the formulations of liturgical recitations in which an entire range of attributes are employed in prayer. In fact a similar combination of attributes occurs in the preface for the Sunday Mass in the second week of Advent:

Per Christum Dominum nostrum, cuius incarnatione salus facta est mundi, et passione redemptio procurata est hominis procreati. 191

By Christ our Lord, through whose incarnation the salvation of the world is accomplished and through whose passion redemption is procured for the descendants of man.

Here, the birth and death of Christ mark both the salvation and redemption of humanity, thus linking the rather general terms of salvation and redemption to specific moments in Christ’s life. Another variation on this theme occurs in a prayer preserved both in the ninth-century Anglo-Saxon Book of Cerne as well as in copies of Alcuin’s widely circulated handbook De psalmorum usu liber. The prayer, addressed to the Holy Trinity, runs through no less than twenty-eight epithets of Christ, including the three terms found in the Milan titulus:
Tu salus mea sempiterna…tu es redemptio mea facta, tu spes mea futura…

You my eternal salvation...you are my completed redemption, you my future hope...

Of course the presence of these same three terms in such a prolific inventory of epithets does not constitute a textual source per se. Yet the manner of their inclusion does provide an opportunity to consider why these three terms may have been selected for the Milan titulus. Taken together, the three terms establish a chronological level of interpretation which spans the eternal (salus), the past (redemptio) and the future (spes), each of which refers to specific aspects of Christ: the eternal aspect of Christ as God; the past aspect of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross; and the future aspect of Christ’s second coming. This chronological level extends even deeper into the past through the inclusion of the prophets in verses three and four, all of whom “sing” of Christ’s incarnation. Thus the first two sections of the titulus present Christ as God through a chronological framework which encompasses the past, the future and the eternal.

*   *   *

The titulus ends with an explanation of the “holy animals” of the evangelists, cast once more in a christological light. The animal symbols, which form part of Ezekiel’s vision of Christ

---


enthroned (Ez. 1:10), enjoyed a long tradition of association with the four evangelists, and their particular associations were codified by Jerome in his gospel prologue, the *Plures fuisse*. The most prevalent explanation for the assignment of the particular evangelist symbols links the qualities of the animals with what was understood to be the specific focus of each Gospel text: Matthew, for example, emphasizes the genealogy of Christ, therefore he is depicted as a man; Luke emphasizes priestly matters, therefore he is represented as a calf. However, an additional level of exegesis—one initiated by Gregory in his collection of homilies on the prophet—considers the ways in which the evangelist symbols relate specifically to aspects of Christ’s life, from his incarnation to resurrection. The corresponding passage from Gregory’s fourth homily mirrors the Milan titulus almost verbatim and ought to be understood as its textual source:

 Qui et nascendo homo, et moriendo vitulus, et resurgendo leo, et ad coelos ascendendo aquila factus est.  

*He who became a Man by being born, an ox in dying, a lion in rising again, and an eagle in ascending to the heavens.*

This same passage occurs in the Majestas titulus from the Ste. Chapelle Gospels, albeit in a modified form in which the last verse serves to coordinate between the two possible interpretations of the symbols, thus linking the symbols both to Christ as well as to the four evangelists [FIGURE 26]:

 Quatuor haec dominum signant animalia Christum:  
Est homo nascendo vitulusque sacer moriendo  
Et leo surgendo caelos aquilaque petendo;  
Nec minus hos scribas animalia et ipsa figurant.

*These four animals designate Christ the Lord:*

---


196 For the titulus from the Ste. Chapelle Gospels (fol. 1v), see MGH Poetae V, p. 430.
In being born, the man; in dying, the sacred calf;  
In rising up, the lion; and in seeking the heavens, the eagle;  
No less do the same animals refer to these scribes.

Despite the near one-to-one correspondence here between the Milan and Ste. Chapelle tituli, it is not entirely necessary that one be dependent on the other. Gregory’s homilies on Ezekiel, which served as the textual source for both, were well known, and this strand of exegesis appears independently in the illumination of at least two other Ottonian gospel books. Furthermore, an important difference between the two tituli lies in the treatment of the evangelists. In the Milan titulus the evangelists are completely neglected—the verses mention neither the names of the scribes nor even their respective gospels. The emphasis rests squarely on Christ, thus continuing the strong christological inflection which runs throughout the entire titulus.

This focused attention on the nature of Christ—excluding any mention of the evangelists or the harmony of their individual books—suggests that the Majestas titulus in the Milan Gospels was carefully composed with the manuscript’s opening Liber-vitae poem in mind. It is, after all, the introductory poem which explicitly emphasizes the unity and universality of the four Gospels, whose one source is Christ. Turning from the opening poem to the Majestas page, the reader transitions from a poetic characterization of the gospel book as the paradisiacal Book of Life, to a densely theological meditation on the nature of Christ as both the image of God in heaven as well as the source of redemption, accomplished through his birth, death and resurrection. Furthermore, by referring to Christ as an image of God in heaven, the titulus subtly justifies the validity of its own representation and its ability to present the reader—who himself is depicted in the following miniature—with his own vision of God in heaven.

197 For this passage from Gregory, see also Favreau 1993, Épigraphie et miniatures, p. 74. The verses appear in a tenth-century gospel book from either Bremen or Paderborn (Manchester,
A Demanding Image: The Presentation of the Book

Following directly upon the Majestas opening, the dedication scene and its corresponding titulus mark the culmination of the Milan Gospel’s prefatory program and the only instance in which both the miniature and its titulus have been preserved together. After the sweeping claims of the dedicatory poem and the deeply christological Majestas opening, the sequence turns abruptly to the depiction of a single moment involving what one may assume to be a representation of those involved in the creation and reception of the book. As such, the miniature represents an interface between the Gospels as universal and eternal on the one hand, and the codex as a physical object intended for a specific recipient on the other. For art historians, moreover, the opening represents the first and most important source for any understanding of the intentions lying behind the book’s creation. This is by no means to suggest that the image and its text are straightforward. Created in anticipation, viewed in retrospect, a presentation scene such as this can never be considered as simply relaying an actual historical moment. Both image and text ought to be understood instead as highly mediated representations of a desired event or outcome. To this end, attention will first be given to the visual strategies at work in the miniature before turning to the corresponding titulus.

Dominating the scene and occupying the entire right half of the composition, the towering figure of a young cleric extends his hand to accept the gift of a book from a comparatively

JRL, MS Lat. 87); moreover, the verses inform the decoration of the canon tables in the Bamberg Gospels (Munich, BSB, CLM 4454), even if they are not explicitly cited.
minuscule group of six monks or canons [FIGURE 27]. The opulence of his attire—
exquisitely painted in white, purple and gold—matches his impressive stature and contrasts
starkly with the plain garb of the supplicants. That these visual oppositions in scale and luxury
refer not only to the magnificence of the recipient, but also to the humility of the donors, can be
seen in the figure handing over the book, who exemplifies the latter quality to the extreme. He
represents both the smallest figure in the group and also the darkest in terms of how his garment
and facial features are painted. He stands out, furthermore, as the only figure whose clothing
lacks any trace of gold ornament. His posture and positioning—with both arms outstretched,

198 The miniature itself unfortunately lacks any inscriptions that identify the figures. The
clothing, furthermore, does not permit a more precise identification apart from the observation
that the figures do not appear to be wearing a hooded cowl, which features prominently, for
example, in a comparable dedication miniature from an early-eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon
Psalter depicting a group of monks receiving the rule from St. Benedict (London, BL, Arundel
155, fol. 133r), see Elzbieta Temple, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts 900-1066*, A Survey of
Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles, 2 (London: Harvey Miller, 1976), p. 84-85; Robert
Deshman, “Benedictus Monarcha et Monachus: Early Medieval Ruler Theology and the Anglo-
Saxon Reform,” in *Eye and Mind: Collected Essays in Anglo-Saxon and Early Medieval Art*, ed.
dedication miniature from the Hornbach Sacramentary (fol. 7v), for example, the monk Eburnant
is depicted similarly without a hooded cowl. It remains unclear the extent to which these
depictions of clothing accurately reflect particular garments. Equally unclear is an historical
understanding of specific regional practices regarding religious clothing. In her study of early-
medieval clothing, for example, Mechthild Müller has noted the variety of monastic cowls which
emerged around the turn of the millenium: “Es zeigt sich, daß um die Jahrtausendwende eine
Reihe von Klöstern damit begannen, das Aussehen der Kukullen zu verändern.” See Mechthild
Müller, *Die Kleidung nach Quellen des frühen Mittelalters* (Berlin, New York: Walter de
Gruyter, 2003), p. 121. Kassius Hallinger points to two types of cowls in particular, the latter of
which (the *Talarkukulle*) resonates particularly well with the garments worn by the figures in the
Milan miniature (that is, apart from the absence of a hood), see Kassius Hallinger, *Gorze-Kluny:
Studien zu den monastischen Lebensformen und Gegensätzen im Hochmittelalter* II (Rome:
Herder, 1951), p. 683-696. Bloch and Schnitzler assume that the group of six men refers to a
monastic context, but the question must remain open. See Bloch and Schnitzler 1970, *Die
ottonische Kölner Malerschule* II, p. 152. For the significance of monastic habit, see Giles
Constable, “The Ceremonies and Symbolism of Entering Religious Life and Taking the
Monastic Habit, from the Fourth to the Twelfth Century,” in *Segni e riti nella chiesa
altomedievale occidentale* II (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull’alto Medioevo, 1987), p. 771-
834, esp. p. 808-818.
head craned and sight set on the face of the imposing cleric—establish a diagonal axis from donor to recipient which visually manifests the underlying social hierarchy. The distance between the two is palpable and bridged only by the handing over of the book. In this sense the miniature can be understood in the context of what Ulrich Kuder has referred to as “displays of humility” in Ottonian manuscript illumination (Selbstminderungsriten). Such displays formed a vital part of early medieval ritual and have been the subject of much recent scholarship on the part of historians, particularly those concerned with the non-verbal aspects of Ottonian rulership. The humility topos at work here, however, extends beyond the figural qualities of scale and posture to include the very construction of pictorial space itself.

In this regard, the artist has made clever use of a double frame to create both a liminal space from which the supplicants emerge and an elevated space wherein the cleric stands. This structure—unique to the miniature—consists of both exterior and interior elements. Taken alone, the former—a purple and white border with a thin gold double-band winding down the left and right sides—occurs as a common framing device in other miniatures from the painterly group. The interior element, however, is quite unusual. It emerges behind the strip of earth at the bottom of the miniature and forms an inner frame which fades in color from dark purple to white,


201 The use of a single, solid frame that is modeled with a stark color gradient and often ornamented with gold, occurs with particular frequency in the miniatures from the Milan Gospels, the Gereon Sacramentary, the Giessen Gospels, and the Hitda Codex. Interestingly, the type is rarely used in the initial pages or decorative pages of these same manuscripts.
ultimately giving way to a solid golden background. The figures to the left emerge only partially from the liminal space between the two frames, almost as if they are approaching—or encroaching upon—an entirely different realm. The figure of the cleric, in contrast, stands apart from this interior frame and represents the only figure to exist entirely within the golden space of the background—a space that surrounds him and sets him apart. In accordance with his magnified scale, the cleric stands not just taller than the group of men but also lower on the ground, with his left foot even touching the border of the lower frame—yet another effect which situates the cleric, spatially and conceptually, apart from the other monks. It is worth noting that the strip of earth (humus) at the bottom of the miniature—the only hint of the event’s setting—may itself be understood as part of the visualization of a humility motif. Given the artist’s demonstrated ability in constructing meaningful visual oppositions, the pairing of a solid golden background with a bare strip of earth—rather than the more common choice of a throne or an architectural setting—ought to be understood as an intentional feature of the image’s visual rhetoric.

* * *

The innovative strategies at work in the image call for a revision of the standard assessment regarding both the miniature’s iconography and its position within the corpus of related dedication scenes. The source of this assessment can be found in what remains the fundamental—if outdated—reference work on the development and iconography of dedication

---

202 An interesting point of comparison can be found in the series of dedication miniatures from the Hornbach Sacramentary, where the pictorial setting comprises a strip of earth set against a striated background. Rather than deriving these features from the highly influential dedication miniatures from Carolingian manuscripts of Hrabanus Maurus’ De laudibus sanctae crucis, Peter Bloch has argued instead for a Touronian influence. See Peter Bloch, Das Hornbacher Sakramentar und seine Stellung innerhalb der frühen Reichenauer Buchmalerei (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1956), p. 90-91.
scenes in early medieval manuscript illumination, Joachim Prochno’s compendium from 1929, where the Milan Gospels receives only scant mention. Prochno considers the miniature to belong to the “simple and normal type, which is common in the Ottonian period,” and mentions as noteworthy only the “standing position of the recipient, the numerous onlookers behind the donor and the recipient’s lack of halo.” Yet it is precisely these features listed by Prochno that make the Milan presentation miniature so unusual in the context of other Ottonian dedication scenes.

Building on Prochno’s work, subsequent scholars—above all, Peter Bloch—have been able to pinpoint a key moment in the development of early medieval dedication scenes: the Carolingian manuscripts of Hrabanus Maurus’ *De laubibus sanctae crucis* (c. 810 and c. 840), where a two-part dedicatory program depicts first the presentation of the book by Hrabanus Maurus (accompanied by Alcuin) to St. Martin [FIGURE 28]; and second, the actual handing-over of the book from Hrabanus Maurus to Pope Gregory IV (r. 827–844) [FIGURE 29].


205 For the complex issue of dating both the text and its miniatures, see Bloch 1962, *Zum Dedi kationsbild*, p. 472-473.
breakdown of the dedicatory event into two separate miniatures—corresponding to two different acts—exerted a strong influence on later Ottonian dedication scenes, particularly in manuscripts from the Reichenau such as the Gero Codex or the Hornbach Sacramentary in Solothurn. The latter manuscript, with its series of four dedicatory miniatures, is of particular relevance as a comparison for the Milan Gospels due to its depiction of the recipients as standing [FIGURE 30].

The corpus of comparative material can be expanded to include other Ottonian manuscripts such as the Egbert Psalter or the Egbert Codex, in which the recipient—as in the Milan Gospels—is neither Christ nor a saint, but rather a historical person: Bishop Egbert himself (r. 977–993).

In isolated respects this group of four earlier Ottonian manuscripts provides solid points of comparison for the Milan Gospels, but none of these manuscripts accounts for the presence of the group of monks or canons acting together as the donors of the book. That the men in the Milan Gospels are indeed—as a group—the donors, can be discerned through the depiction of the only two figures depicted in full length. Here the artist has quite cleverly mirrored the positioning of the arms in both figures, thus indicating that the handing-over of the book is a group act. Though rather uncommon, important examples of such group dedication scenes can be found in Carolingian miniatures and to a lesser extent Ottonian works of art as well. For example, a miniature from the Touronian Ragnaldus Sacramentary depicts a group of monks and laymen who approach the abbot in a supplicating manner in order to present him with an open book.

---

206 In his dissertation on the Hornbach Sacramentary, Bloch traces the development of presentation-scene iconography, beginning in the sixth century. Unfortunately, he does not discuss the Milan Gospels. See Bloch 1956, Hornbacher Sakramentar, p. 52–72.

207 The dedication miniature of the Hitda Codex, which postdates that of the Milan Gospels, will be discussed in chapter four. See below, p. 213-214.
book. In return, the supplicants receive a blessing from their superior [FIGURE 31].

Also from Tours, the final miniature from the First Bible of Charles the Bald represents arguably the most famous dedication scene in Carolingian art—here, too, conceived as a group dedication “on behalf of St. Martin and the brothers” [FIGURE 32].

For Ottonian examples, a mid-eleventh-century Collectar from Stavelot contains a dedication scene that has been divided into two registers [FIGURE 33].

The lower register depicts a group of five monks, one of whom hands over the book to an abbot, identified by scholars as either Poppo (d. 1048) or Thierry (d. 1080), who in turn presents the book to Mary, with a request for intercession voiced through Saints Peter and Paul. The two registers are accompanied by short tituli, which ought to be read from bottom to top:

_Sume pater librum multo sudore paratum._

_O Father, accept this book which was prepared with much sweat_

---


Virgo faveto nobis haec dona ferenTibus.\(^{211}\)

*O Virgin, favor those who brought these gifts to us.*\(^{212}\)

Thus the miniature combines two dedicatory acts into one scene: the handing-over of the book to the abbot, and its presentation to the Virgin. Both the tituli and the composition of the miniature help coordinate this double procedure. Compared with the Brussels Collectar, the Milan Gospels lacks any aspect which would correspond to this second aspect—that is, the presentation scene to a holy figure. Indeed, quite unique among the examples of group dedication scenes, the Milan miniature depicts the process in isolation, with no mention whatsoever of saints, the Virgin, or any other any other venerable figure to whom the book could be dedicated: the focus is clearly on the youthful cleric alone.

Struck particularly by this last observation, Prochno doubted whether the actual subject matter of the image could be understood with certainty: is it perhaps a scribe handing over the book to his patron, or is it rather the presentation of the book to a saint who merely lacks a halo or any other saintly attribute?\(^{213}\) Neither of these propositions bears scrutiny when confronted with the titulus on the facing page [FIGURE 34]. There, two verses of leonine hexameter appear in six lines of spacious majuscule script, with punctuation marking both the caesurae and the ends of the verses. The titulus refers directly to the figure of the cleric in an unequivocally hortatory tone:

\(^{211}\) The last word of the inscription is abbreviated “ferenT”. The reading of *ferentibus* seems more likely than the singular form *ferenti*.

\(^{212}\) Ottesen’s translation renders “ferentibus” in the singular, thus suggesting that the focus of the Virgin’s favor was meant to be the abbot alone. Ottesen 1987, *Development of Dedication Images*, p. 48.

\(^{213}\) See Prochno 1929, *Schreiber- und Dedikationsbild*, p. 59: “Es ist überhaupt nicht einmal sicher, ob die Dedikation, die Übergabe der Handschrift, vom Schreiber an den Besteller oder vom Stifter an einen Heiligen erfolgt.”
See what the habit of the work, brought here to you, demands:
In this, celibate, may you obtain life with Christ.

Quite remarkable for a dedicatory inscription, the titulus makes no mention of the book as a gift commissioned by or for a specific patron, or as a votive offering for a particular saint or religious figure—thus discounting Prochno’s preliminary suggestions. Bloch and Schnitzler were the first to propose a plausible scenario that incorporates a reading of both the image and its accompanying inscription. For these authors the miniature represents a young but important man, receiving a book of the Gospels to mark an important stage in his monastic life—perhaps the attainment of a high-ranking position, perhaps even his election as abbot. Although based on a problematic reading of the titulus, their explanation nevertheless acknowledges the essential features of the dedicatory scene and situates it firmly within the context of a monastic community. A further analysis of two key terms in the titulus can, however, reveal more of the nuances at work, which in turn suggest a possible motive for the creation of the book itself.

---


215 The translation of merceris vivere is difficult to render in English. The first verb is deponent, second-person singular subjunctive, and carries the sense of ‘to trade,’ ‘to buy,’ or ‘to acquire.’


Of the two terms in question—habitus and caelebs—the former is by far the most puzzling. The word forms the subject of the first verse (see what the habit of the work demands...) and refers to a quality or aspect of the gospel book, which is referred to in the titulus merely as “the work” (operis). Attempting to define exactly what the habitus of the work means proves difficult in large part because definitions of the term range broadly from mental or behavioral qualities, to physical appearance, or clothing and vestments. Already in the fourth century, Augustine commented upon the remarkable semantic flexibility of the word in a passage from his De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus (c. 388/396), where he interprets a line from Phillipians 2:7, which employs the term in reference to Christ’s incarnation: “taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man” (formam servi accipiens in similitudinem hominum factus et habitu inventus ut homo). In his explanation, Augustine provides three separate contexts in which the term is used—mental, corporal, and ornamental (primarily in the sense of clothing)—and he also provides an overarching definition of habitus as being that which is added to someone or something, but that is itself not necessary:

Multis modis habitum dicimus: uel habitum animi, sicuti est cuiuscumque disciplinae perceptio usu roborata atque firmata; uel habitum corporis…uel habitum eorum quae membris nostris accommodantur extrinsecus, secundum quem dicimus uestitum,


For a good sense of the range of meanings associated with the word, see the corresponding entry in Mittellateinisches Wörterbuch IV.6 (Munich: Beck, 2012), cols. 923-926.
calciatum, armatum et si quid eiusmodi est. in quibus omnibus generibus...manifestum est in ea re dici habitum, quae accidit alicui, ita ut eam possit etiam non habere.220

We use the word habit in many ways. We use it to refer to a habit [1] of the mind, e.g., the comprehension, strengthened and established by usage, of any body of knowledge, or to the habit [2] of the body...or to the habit [3] which is fitted onto us externally, in respect to which we say that one is clothed, shod, armored, and other such things. In all these cases...it is clear that habit refers to that thing which is added to someone [or something] in such a way that he [or it] could just as well not have it.221

He goes on to provide examples of each category and ends with a discussion of how Christ can be understood to have taken on the habit of man, as if it were clothing his divinity.222

Augustine’s definition of habitus would suggest that it is precisely the extra qualities of the gospel book that form the subject of the titulus. Given the near unprecedented use of this term in the context of Carolingian and Ottonian tituli, it would be prudent to consider the possibility that the word was chosen precisely for its range of possible meanings. Thus the habitus operis would refer simultaneously to the virtuous way of life propounded by the Gospels (in terms of its teaching), as well as to its physical appearance (in terms of its decoration), and perhaps even to the “clothing” of the book, if only as another symbolic reference to the manuscript’s rich illumination. Direct textual references linking the decoration of a gospel book to clothing or ornament are quite rare.223


222 According to Augustine, “the Word [Christ] was not changed by the assumption of humanity, just as the members clothed by a garment remain unchanged.” See ibid., p. 189.

223 One such example can nevertheless be found in an eleventh-century distich added by Bishop Berthold of Toul (d. 1019) to a Byzantine ivory relief in Berlin, which once adorned a manuscript of the Gospels. The titulus praises the ivory plaque as providing fitting honor for the gospel book. For the ivory plaque (Berlin, Museum für Spätantike und Byzantinische Kunst, inv.

The verb *induere* (to clothe or put on) refers here to the spiritual formation of the young ruler and recalls New-Testament passages which employ the same verb in a similar manner: in a verse from his Epistle to the Romans, for example, the Apostle Paul exhorts his readers to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ: and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences” (*induite Dominum Jesum Christum et carnis curam ne feceritis in desideriis*, Rom. 13:14). The language of the Aachen titulus is similarly metaphorical and cannot be said to refer specifically to the manuscript’s impressive program of miniatures. In comparison with the Milan Gospels, the request made upon Otto through the Aachen titulus appears remarkably passive: it is God, not Otto himself, who is asked to clothe his heart. In stark contrast, the titulus of the Milan Gospels specifically directs its recipient to look at the habit of the work and see what it demands.

The concept of a demanding *habitus*, particularly in conjunction with the explicit context of a religious community, immediately calls to mind the *habitus monachorum* and the *habitus*

---


227 Garrison argues that the motif of the parchment scroll held by both Otto and the Evangelists in their respective portraits takes up the theme of clothing through the Word. See Garrison 2012, *Ottonian Imperial Portraiture*, p. 52, 60.

228 The dedicatory inscription can be understood as elaborating upon the christomimetic topos of the facing portrait in that God is asked to clothe Otto’s heart just as Otto is asked to remember Liuthar—thus establishing a parallel structure between the two.
clericorum, or the monastic and clerical habit. As a common formulation from patristic sources through to the High Middle Ages, the habit refers here not only to monastic and liturgical clothing, but also symbolically to the religious vocation. Thus a recurring motif in Carolingian sources regarding the monastic habit, for example, highlights the potential for hypocrisy when the appearance of a monk in habit fails to match the reality of the prescribed way of life. Thus in his Commentary on the Rule of St. Benedict, Smaragdus of Saint-Mihiel warns against those who would appear to be as monks, but in reality have not left behind the ways of the world:

Ille enim fidem saeculo servat, qui ea quae saecularis egit in habitu monachi positus agere non cessat…In habitu enim et religione exterius a nescientibus videtur esse monachus, operibus tamen a scientibus Domino videtur esse mentitus.  

He still serves the world who though wearing the habit of a monk does not cease to do what he did while still a secular…By the habit he wears and the religious life he has professed he seems exteriorly, to those who do not know him, to be a monk; but to those who do know him his works prove that he has told a lie to the Lord.

Such preoccupations, the examples of which could be multiplied, demonstrate the deeply perceived semantic link between habitus as one’s exterior appearance and the corresponding inner reality of one’s way of life. Thus, to return to the context of the Milan Gospels, calling

---


231 For the translation, see *Smaragdus of Saint-Mihiel: Commentary on the Rule of Saint Benedict*, trans. David Barry (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 2007), p. 120.
upon the recipient to heed the *habitus operis* may be understood as an exhortation that he himself link the sumptuous decoration of the book with the virtuous way of life that the Gospels set forth.

* * *

The strong moralizing tone of the titulus is further indicated by the term *caelebs* in reference to the recipient. The word, meaning ‘celibate’ or ‘unwed’, refers not only to a marital state, but also marks the achievement of high moral rank. Rather of Verona (d. 974), a bishop and reformer, devoted a section to those who are *caelebs* in the second book of his *Praeloquia*, a treatise on the various orders of society. Here he addresses a celibate directly:

Caelebs es? Considera quam summum sanctitatis conscenderis culmen, et eo sollicitius praeipitem cave ruinam, quo altius stas. Animadverte itaque, quae causa de angelo fecit diabolum; et reminiscens Dominici illius: Quia sine me nihil potestis facere.  

*Are you celibate? Consider how you have climbed the highest peak of sanctity and the higher you stand the more carefully you should beware headlong fall. Pay attention to that cause that makes a devil of an angel. And remember the lord’s words “because you can do nothing without me.”*

Given that *caelebs* marks the “highest peak of sanctity,” it is not surprising to find the term used in Ottonian hagiography and funerary inscriptions as well. In the epitaph for Abbot Folcuin of Lobbes (d. 990), for example, *caelebs* begins a series of accolades and appears directly next to Folcuin’s name:

Caelebs Folquinus requiescit hic tumulatus,  
Nobilitate cluens, abbatis nomine gliscens,  
Divinis satagens, humana sophisma callens,

---


234 The term occurs in the *Vitae* of Saints Ursmar and Landelin, MGH Poetae V, p. 207 and 212, as well as the epitaph of Saint Wiborada, MGH Poetae V, p. 330.
Cuius peccatis veniam lector petat omnis.\textsuperscript{235}

The celibate Folcuin rests buried here,  
Renowned in nobility, increasing in title of abbot,  
Occupied with divine matters and skilled in human wisdom,  
May the reader beg for the pardon of all his sins

However, the most important indicator for the relevance of this word can be found in the Milan Gospels itself, where the term occurs in the titulus for the evangelist Luke, who, “teaching in Bithynia, ascended the heights as a celibate” (\textit{Bithiniaque docens migravit ad ardua celebs}).\textsuperscript{236}

The use of the term \textit{caelebs} in the dedicatory inscription points both to the “highest peak of sanctity” as well as to the model of virtuous behavior posed by those who have attained it.

By calling upon its recipient to follow a way of life befitting the title \textit{caelebs}, the gospel book offered by the group of men constitutes a demanding gift. The miniature reflects this exhortation by providing the cleric with an idealized image of himself—a spiritual portrait of sorts, which offers the youth a glimpse of the virtuous man he should strive to become. Looking at the miniature and reading its titulus, the cleric would have likely noticed his own habit, depicted here in exquisite detail: the amice around his neck, the white alb, the golden stole and maniple, and the magnificent scarlet chasuble with golden trim and ornament. Each of these liturgical vestments bore specific symbolic connotations relating to the duties and responsibilities of the clerical vocation—meanings which were elaborated upon not only in the standard liturgical commentaries of the period, but also in the various ordination rites themselves.\textsuperscript{237}

\textsuperscript{235} For the epitaph of Folcuin, see MGH Poetae V, p. 296.

\textsuperscript{236} The term \textit{caelebs} can also be found in reference to John the Evangelist in an inscription from a lost golden altar at St. Maximin in Trier, dating perhaps to the abbacy of Willihar (r. 945-957): \textit{Alme Dei celebs Christi dilecte Johannes / Istius fabricae complectere dona benigne}. See Rüdiger Fuchs, \textit{Die Inschriften der Stadt Trier I} (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2006), p. 87.

\textsuperscript{237} For the ordinations rites of priests, see Cyrille Vogel, \textit{Le Pontifical Romano-Germanique du dixième siècle} I (Vatican: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1963), p. 28-36, esp. 34; See also,
unusual presence of a second gospel book in his left hand ought to be understood as a part of this idealized portrait as well. In a manner reminiscent of continuous narrative, a process unfolds here in which the cleric, by taking up the Book of Life, attains the “highest peak of sanctity.”

The Nurturing Father: The Jerome Portrait

Of all the miniatures of the Milan Gospels, the portrait of Jerome is in several respects the most puzzling [FIGURE 36]. The very presence of Jerome in the visual program of an illuminated gospel book—as opposed to an illuminated psalter or Bible—is itself highly unusual and can be seen as one of the distinguishing features of gospel books from Cologne.238 Indeed in the broader context of early-medieval gospel books, miniatures of Jerome occur primarily, though not exclusively, in gospel books from Cologne beginning with the Milan Gospels and persisting through to later works of the eleventh century such as the Abdinghof Gospels in Berlin or the Harley Gospels in London.239 Yet even when compared with these later examples from Cologne,


238 Notable examples of depictions of Jerome from illuminated Psalters include the covers of the Dagulf Psalter (Paris, Musée du Louvre, MR 370-371), the Lothar Psalter (London, BL, MS Add. 37768, fol. 6r), the Psalter of Charles the Bald (Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 1152, fol. 4r), and the Golden Psalter from St. Gall (St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 22, p. 14).

239 The tradition of Jerome portraits in Cologne gospel books may be traced back further to the Franco-Saxon gospel book in the cathedral library (Dombibliothek, Hs. 14), which opens with a portrait of Jerome depicted as a scribe (fol. 1v). Although it remains unclear when exactly this manuscript entered the collection of the medieval library, it is plausible that the Carolingian gospel book stood as a conceptual model for what would become a regular feature of the subsequent Cologne gospel books. See Koehler (Mütherich), Die karolingischen Miniaturen VII,
the Milan miniature stands out both in composition and subject matter to such an extent that both Hermann Schnitzler and Peter Bloch examined the iconography of the miniature and its position within the Cologne school in two separate studies devoted to the subject. Before delving into the questions raised by these scholars, it will first be necessary to consider the miniature’s physical context within the manuscript itself, particularly in light of the presumed lost bifolio from the first gathering.

As previously discussed, the first gathering of the Milan Gospels is fragmentary in that it lacks not only the second half of the opening poem and the Majestas Domini miniature, but also the titulus to the Jerome miniature as well as an incipit, the so-called Beato Damaso—the opening address to Pope Damasus, which forms part of Jerome’s first Gospel prologue, the Novum opus. In their individual studies as well as in their co-authored standard work, Bloch and Schnitzler assumed that the portrait of Jerome transitioned seamlessly to the following page of text, and therefore they never recognized the lack of the opening address, despite the fact that such an absence is highly unusual among manuscripts from Cologne. Peter Christian Jacobsen

p. 207-214; and Anton von Euw, “Das Buch der vier Evangelien: Kölns karolingische Evangelienbücher,” Kölner Museums-Bulletin, Sonderheft (1989), n. 5, p. 47-49. Apart from the Milan Gospels, other portraits of Jerome from Cologne manuscripts can be found in: the Giessen Gospels (fol. 2v); the Hitda Codex (fol. 8r); the Bamberg Gospels (fol. 1v); the Maria ad Gradus Gospels (fol. 8r); the Abdinghof Gospels (fol. 14v) and the Harley Gospels (fol. 14v).


The only examples of the Novum opus that lack the opening address to Pope Damasus are the Namur Gospels (fol. 3r) and the Bamberg Gospels (fol 4r), both of which, however, show evidence that the address was originally intended to be included, but for whatever reason was never executed.
was the first to point out that each of the missing features from the first gathering would have been located on the same bifolio, which he suggests was removed when the manuscript was rebound at some point in the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries. Jacobsen’s hypothesis can be supported by two additional observations. First, the Novum opus prologue ends with the last two lines of Jerome’s text set apart in capitals written in ink, “OPTO UT IN CHRISTO VALEAS ET MEMINERIS MEI PAPA BEATISSIME” (fol. 6v), which is then followed by three lines of large golden capitals stating: “EXPLICIT ARGUMENTUM” and “incipit praefatio,” with the latter incipit referring to the text of the Plures fuisse—the third of the four standard Gospel prologues—which begins on the following page. Although by no means elaborate, the presence of a golden explicit and incipit nevertheless reflects a level of planning that incorporated the appropriate openings and closings of the manuscript’s constituent texts, thus making the absence of the Beato Damaso incipit highly suspect. A second observation in support of Jacobsen’s hypothesis can be found on the page of the Novum opus itself [FIGURE 37]. In the upper margin of the page, directly above the ornamental frame, a late-medieval hand has supplied the missing text in two lines: “incipit epistola beati iheronimi presbiteri ad damasum papam / in quatuor evangelistas beatissimo papae damaso iheronimus novum opus.” This later supplement to the text provides the strongest piece of evidence that the second bifolio of the first gathering was already missing by the late Middle Ages.

It is particularly unfortunate that it is no longer possible to compare the Milan Beato Damaso page with the sumptuous full-page version preserved in the Manchester Gospels [FIGURE 38]. This latter miniature seems to have provided the direct model for the same page in two Cologne gospel books: the Gundold Gospels (fol. 11r) and the Maria ad Gradus Gospels

---

(fol. 8v), both of which postdate the Milan Gospels. Other gospel books from the painterly group, such as the Gereon Gospels or the Hitda Codex, lack an elaborately decorated Beato Damaso page and include the text instead simply as an incipit before the Novum opus, thus preventing any clear assessment of when exactly the page from the Manchester Gospels began to serve as a model. One could speculate that the missing leaf may have been more modest in comparison with that of the Manchester Gospels, perhaps something more in line with the Milan Gospel’s other incipit pages which preface each of the four Gospels.

The recto of the missing leaf, which would have contained the titulus to the Jerome miniature, can be more securely reconstructed. As Jacobsen noted, the tituli for the Milan evangelist portraits recur in three later gospel books from Cologne—the Maria ad Gradus Gospels, the Abdinghof Gospels and the Harley Gospels—with the latter two manuscripts presenting versions of the tituli that have been truncated to include only the first two verses for each evangelist. In addition to the evangelist tituli, these three later manuscripts also contain a short Jerome titulus:

Hic pater insignis meritis Hieronimus almus
Scriptor et interpres divine legis habetur.

244 The text can be found in the Gereon Gospels (fol. 4r) and in the Hitda Codex (fol. 1r). The Giessen Gospels lacks the Gospel prologues in their entirety and has the Jerome miniature and titulus placed between the Majestas Domini and the canon tables. For this latter manuscript, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule I, p. 54-59.


246 This titulus occurs in the Maria ad Gradus Gospels (fol 8r); the Harley Gospels (fol. 13r); and the Abdinghof Gospels (fol. 15r). The reading of the titulus offered by each manuscript is essential the same, apart from a few minor scribal deviations. See MGH Poetae V, p. 449, corrected p. 685. Jacobsen 1991, Lateinische Dichtungen, p. 187.
Here is the nurturing father Jerome, notable in merits, 
writer and translator of sacred law.

Without making an explicit case for his position, Jacobsen suggested that these later Cologne gospel books preserve the lost Jerome titulus from the Milan Gospels. If Jacobsen is right, then the text is less complex than the manuscript’s other tituli. Nonetheless, the titulus does present characteristics that are in line with the surviving tituli of the Milan Gospels. A strong point of resonance can be found once again in the tradition of Carolingian illuminated Bibles. The distinction pater almus, for example, though quite common in Carolingian poetry, points to a particularly relevant variation of almus referring specifically to Jerome that can be found in the third distich of the Jerome titulus composed for the First Bible of Charles the Bald:

Hieronimus translata sui, quae transtulit, almus  
Ollis hic tribuit, quis ea composuit.

Here nurturing Jerome himself bestows on these men the words passed down,  
Which he translated, and with them those he composed.

The titulus from the this Bible emphasizes Jerome’s “nurturing” status not only as the translator of the Vulgate, but also as a writer in his own right—a reference, no doubt, to the set of biblical prefaces which he penned and that were included as introductory material in the Carolingian pandects. Other examples of Carolingian Jerome tituli—from the Lothar Psalter and the Psalter


248 For the Latin text of the titulus, see MGH Poetae III, p. 248.

249 The translation has been adapted from Dutton and Kessler 1997, Poetry and Painting, p. 113.
of Charles the Bald, for example—emphasize Jerome’s qualities as a translator or editor of texts, but make no mention of his status as an author.\textsuperscript{250} It is precisely this aspect of Jerome—as both \textit{scriptor} and \textit{interpres}—which the Milan titulus takes up, signaling his role not only as the translator of the Vulgate—or in this case, the Gospels—but also as the author of its prefaces.\textsuperscript{251} It is therefore highly significant that the Jerome miniature in the Milan Gospels directly precedes the text of the \textit{Novum opus} itself—a pairing which is surprisingly absent in the Giessen Gospels, the Hitda Codex, the Harley Gospels, and the Abdinghof Gospels.\textsuperscript{252} Indeed, taken together with the subject matter of the miniature, the supposed titulus of the Milan Gospels fits seamlessly into the manuscript’s prefatory program and ought to be considered an integral part of the manuscript’s original program.

*   *   *

As with the titulus, the portrait of Jerome depicts the saint as both scribe and translator [FIGURE 36]. Enthroned in the center of the image and set against a striated background, the aged Jerome turns his upper body slightly as he crosses his right arm over his left in order to

\textsuperscript{250} For the Lothar Psalter (London, BL, Additional MS 37768), see Koehler, \textit{Die karolingischen Miniaturen} III, p. 35-46. The titulus, which is ten verses long, has been published in MGH Poetae VI, p. 164. For the Psalter of Charles the Bald, see Koehler (Mütherich), \textit{Die karolingischen Miniaturen} V, p. 132-143. The titulus reads: “Nobilis interpres Hieronymus atque sacerdos / Nobiliter pollens transcripsit iura Davidis” (\textit{The noble interpreter and priest Jerome, exerting influence, nobly translated the law of David}). See MGH Poetae III, p. 243.


\textsuperscript{252} The Jerome miniature from the Giessen Gospels is placed directly between the Majestas Domini, which opens the book, and the series of canon tables. The Hitda Codex, on the other hand, opens with the \textit{Novum opus} and has the Jerome miniature placed seven folios later. Both the Harley Gospels and the Abdinghof Gospels have the Jerome miniature placed well after the prologues as well.
present an anonymous figure—perhaps his *notarius*—with a scroll. The writing stand to the left rounds out the composition and suggests that Jerome has just finished composing his work. Hermann Schnitzler, one of the first to examine the iconography of the Jerome portrait, considered the miniature to represent a creative reworking of the final scene in the Jerome cycle from illuminated Carolingian Bibles, such as the First Bible of Charles the Bald or the San Paolo Bible. For example, the third register of the Jerome page from the former codex appears to provide the best iconographic comparison. There, Jerome is depicted enthroned in the center of the composition distributing a multitude of books to a group of monks—the books occupy both of his hands, his lap, and two large crates on either side of his feet. The books seem to grow in size as the monks carry them back to their churches to stow them away, suggesting that it is indeed the pandect—the full text of the Vulgate—that is being distributed. The corresponding register in the San Paolo Bible (fol. 2v) has been divided into two scenes, the first of which depicts Jerome dictating the text of his prefaces, and the second depicts Jerome—this time standing—once again distributing his work to a group of monks, two of whom struggle to keep up with the profusion of books. The essence of these two miniatures from the First Bible of Charles the Bald and the San Paolo Bible is no doubt Jerome as the *almus pater*, the nurturing or bountiful father, who, as the San Paolo titulus states, provides Latium with “that which one must have” (*Latio transmittit habenda*). That the Milan miniature

---


254 Kessler sees the two buildings of the third register as representing a church and a library. See Kessler 1977, *Illustrated Bibles from Tours*, p. 86.

represents a creative reworking of this basic theme was clear to Schnitzler—even if he insisted on the role of an intermediary from the court school of Charles the Bald, something similar to the portrait of Jerome in the Psalter of Charles the Bald [FIGURE 41].

For Peter Bloch, however, the iconography presented several problems which led him to suggest a radically different interpretation of the miniature.

In contrast with Schnitzler, Bloch assumed that the iconography of the miniature was dependent not on the distribution scene of the Carolingian Jerome cycles, but rather on the iconography of dedication scenes, such as the influential examples found in copies of Hrabanus Maurus’ *De laudibus sanctae crucis*. He furthermore considered it unlikely that the scene represents the handing-over of an object from a person of higher authority (Jerome) to a person of lower rank (the notarius) since such a composition would be dependent on the iconography of the *Traditio legis*, which he saw as “running dry” in the West already in the late-antique period. Therefore, Bloch essentially flipped the directionality of the miniature and interpreted the scene as depicting a messenger of Pope Damasus presenting Jerome with the commission for a new Latin translation. This different point of departure drew Bloch’s attention to several aspects of the miniature which he considered problematic. He was puzzled most by the haloed messenger, the depiction of Jerome as a grey-haired older man, and the presence of a scroll instead of a book as the object of the dedication. In order to account for such oddities, Bloch proposed a rather labored argument in which he attempted to demonstrate how the artist of the Milan miniature drew upon pictorial sources that can be traced back ultimately to the dedication

---


scene in the original presentation copy of Jerome’s Gospel translation, which was offered to 
Pope Damasus shortly before his death in 384. This hypothetical manuscript would have 
contained a dedication miniature depicting Jerome himself handing over the finished translation 
to Pope Damasus. According to Bloch, the artist of the Milan miniature reworked a descendant 
of this iconographical archetype, removing the figure of Damasus, putting Jerome in his place, 
and turning the original figure of Jerome from the model into the papal messenger from the 
Milan miniature. In the process of this transformation, the artist neglected to remove the halo 
from the messenger—a remnant of his former status as Jerome—and furthermore he neglected to 
change the physiognomy of Pope Damasus to that of the more youthful Jerome. Also, if one 
accepts that the messenger presents Jerome with a letter from Pope Damasus, then the use of a 
scroll as opposed to a book would be accounted for as a fitting visual representation of a letter. 

These iconographic peculiarities, though unusual, are not so outrageous as to be considered 
mistakes on the part of the artist. Indeed, the iconography of Jerome in the Early Middle Ages 
was much too varied and flexible to necessitate a strict adherence to select models. In terms of 
representing Jerome as an aged and bearded man, several examples could be listed ranging 
chronologically from the ivory covers of the Dagulf Psalter, the Jerome miniature from the

translation, see Carl Nordenfalk, *Die spätantiken Kanontafeln* (Göteborg: 1938), p. 167, p. 206- 
207.

260 Bloch 1967, *Novum opus*, p. 126. See also a revised discussion which maintains Bloch’s 
earlier argument and supplements it with the introduction of a comparable iconography found in 
a tenth-century ivory diptych from Metz, destroyed in World War II. Bloch and Schnitzler 1970, 
*Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule* II, p. 149-50.

261 For an overview of the iconography of Jerome, see Renate Miehe’s contribution in *Lexikon 
der Christlichen Ikonographie* VI (Freiburg i.B.: Herder, 1974), col. 519-529. For the available 
textual sources concerning the life of Jerome, see Alberto Vaccari, “Le Vite Antiche di 
Girolamo,” in *Miscellanea Geronimiana: Scritti Varii Pubblicati nel XV Centenario dalla Morte 
Lothar Psalter, the Jerome miniature from the Franco-Saxon gospel book in the Cologne cathedral library, to the Jerome miniature from an eleventh-century gospel book from St. Vaast.\(^{262}\) The presence of a halo on the notarius finds an important, if singular, parallel in the portrait of Gregory the Great from the Sacramentary of Charles the Bald, where two nimbed scribes are depicted seated before a curtain, taking down Gregory’s dictation—thus indicating that a halo could in fact be given to anonymous figures, if only to elevate the importance of their work.\(^{263}\) In light of such variation, Bloch’s argument proves needlessly complex. A much more productive alternative would be to take up Schnitzler’s initial interpretation of the scene—as depicting Jerome, *scriptor et interpres*, passing on his prefaces and translations to a monk—and consider what purpose such a miniature could serve in the context of the prefatory program.

Recent scholarship on the role of Jerome in Carolingian art and culture has demonstrated both his relevance within a monastic context as well as the ability of artists to create *ad hoc* compositions involving the revered saint that were richly informed by contemporary concerns.\(^{264}\)

---


\(^{263}\) For the Gregory Miniature from the Sacramentary of Charles the Bald (Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 1141, fol. 3r), see Koehler (Mütherich), *Die karolingischen Miniaturen* V, p. 165-174.

The Jerome miniature from the Milan Gospels ought to be considered in a similar light—that is, as an *ad hoc* scene created specifically for the manuscript’s prefatory program. To this end, the placement of the Jerome portrait directly following the manuscript’s dedication scene proves highly significant in that it establishes a close visual relationship between the two miniatures—an observation supported by the strong similarities in both their subject matter and composition. In fact the two miniatures may be thought of as pendants which represent scenes of the presentation of the Gospels at vastly different points in time. The first miniature takes place in the contemporary present and involves the book itself as a physical object, the second occurs in the ancient past and represents the authoritative origin of the manuscript’s prefaces and translation. Pursuing the comparison further, one can see how the implicit hierarchies between the figures in the two miniatures have been reversed. In the first scene, it is the humble monks who present the gospel book to the imposing, yet youthful cleric; in the second, it is the *almus pater* who hands down the *lex divina* to the young monk, who in turn looks up with his eyes fixed on Jerome. When the two miniatures are seen in succession, the figure of Jerome stands behind the group of monks—conceptually, at least—not only as the provider of the sacred texts contained within their manuscript, but also as a figure of authority and a model for emulation.

*The Evangelists and their Tituli*

The prefatory sequences placed before each of the four Gospels in the Milan codex make up the majority of the manuscript’s illumination—an impressive array of twenty-four pages in total, with each book of the Gospels receiving six illuminated pages contained within a gathering that

Vergil in Carolingian Frontispieces and the Uses of Translation,” in *Les manuscrits carolingiens*,

114
is codicologically separate from the subsequent gospel text. The typical arrangement of the sequence, from Mark through John, opens quite unusually with an incipit page—not a titulus—facing the evangelist portrait [FIGURES 42 and 43]. This is then followed by a double-page titulus describing the evangelist [FIGURES 44 and 45], and finally an opening which includes a second incipit and the initial page [FIGURES 46 and 47]—that is, the decorative page which displays the opening words of the gospel text itself.\(^{265}\) Although somewhat overwhelming in terms of sheer number, the Milan sequences essentially constitute a remarkable amplification of the three basic elements of the standard prefatory sequence from early-medieval luxury gospel books: the titulus, the portrait, and the initial page.

Indeed, in terms of numbers alone, such a sequence of illuminated prefatory material far surpasses known examples from Carolingian and early Ottonian gospel books. For example, both the *Codex aureus* from St. Emmeram and the Noailles Gospels—two exceptionally lavish gospel books from the court school of Charles the Bald—display in a typical arrangement only four prefatory pages per Gospel: an evangelist portrait with a facing titulus [FIGURE 48], and an initial page with a facing incipit [FIGURE 49].\(^{266}\) The impetus behind the expanded sequence in the Milan Gospels was most likely the desire to include a double-page titulus as its own opening, independent of the evangelist portrait. Therefore, to maintain symmetry, the addition of an incipit page became necessary to fill the vacant position adjacent to the portrait. Whereas the prefatory

---

\(^{265}\) For practical reasons, only the pages from John will be illustrated here. For images of the remaining sequences, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, *Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule* I, figs. 56-73.

\(^{266}\) For the *Codex aureus* from St. Emmeram (Munich, BSB, CLM 14000), see Koehler (Mütherich), *Die karolingischen Miniaturen* V, p. 175-198. For the Noailles Gospels (Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 323), see ibid., p. 100-112. Apart from the initial page, the Matthew prefatory sequence from the Noailles Gospels has been lost.
sequences for the latter three books of the Gospels are remarkably uniform in conception; the Matthew sequence presents a noticeably different order, however, beginning instead with the double-page titulus describing the evangelist, which is then followed by Matthew’s portrait [FIGURE 50]. Moreover, Matthew is the only Gospel to have received one of the standard prologues for the evangelists—the so-called Monarchian prologues—as well as chapter listings.267 Taken together, these two modifications suggest that a change in plan occurred after the completion of the Matthew prefatory sequence. After Matthew, the standard evangelist prologues and chapter listings were no longer included, and the order of the illuminated prefatory sequence became fixed so that the evangelist portrait stands at the beginning of the quire and its titulus follows as the central opening. These codicological observations indicate that the evangelist tituli in the Milan Gospels received special consideration: not only have they been expanded to a double-page format, but also they have been accorded pride of place as the central opening of the quire, directly before the text of the Gospels.

Each of the evangelist tituli consists of six verses of leonine hexameter written in a predominately capital script mixed with isolated uncial forms.268 The verses are uniformly spaced—three per page—with a raised punctus clearly marking the end of each verse. The scribe corrected himself twice when writing out the Mark titulus, and a later hand has corrected damaged passages in the Matthew and John tituli. On the basis of several uncorrected scribal

267 The prologue and chapter listings occur on fol. 9v-10v. For the text of the Matthew Prologue, see Peter Corssen, Monarchianische Prologe zu den vier Evangelien: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Kanons (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1897), p. 5-6. The chapter listings follow De Bruyne’s C Group but terminate abruptly at chapter 13, see De Bruyne 1914, Sommaires, p. 270-280. Directly beneath the last line of fol. 10v a late medieval scribe has left a note remarking upon the missing chapters, which usually number twenty eight.

268 The internal rhyme is usually quite clear, but verse 6 of the Matthew titulus, verse 1 of the Luke titulus and verse 1 of the John titulus appear to be without rhyme. For examples of mixed forms of script, see quod in the second line of fol. 79r, and hic in the third line of fol. 186v.
errors, Peter Christian Jacobsen raised the complicated question of the text’s accuracy and concluded that the Milan text represents a considerably poorer version of the tituli than that found in the later Maria ad Gradus Gospels.\textsuperscript{269} While it is certainly the case that the Milan scribe encountered difficulty in completing his task, the nature of his errors suggests that the problem was due to a poorly written (or poorly spaced) model. In several instances the Milan scribe was compelled to determine the proper separation of words that were probably written without spacing in the model. Thus veredicus in the model became veri dignus in Milan, and cæli simnista became cælis hymnista. Finally, and most tellingly, the model’s monstrat venturae qualis from the John titulus, became monstra tuentur aequalis in Milan. With this last transformation, the Milan text is merely improperly and confusingly spaced: monstrat venturae qualis. A version and translation of the full set of tituli is offered here with the corrected readings marked by brackets:

Matthew (fols. 17v-18r):

\begin{quote}
Inter apostolicos domini numeratus amicos
Hic est, qui primus sanctoque carismate plenus,
Clara salutifer\[i\] scripsit miracula Christi.\textsuperscript{270}
Ipsius et sacris iunxit pia dogmata factis.
Dignus evangelista dei, cognomine levi,
Matheus ostendens verum hunc hominemque deumque.\textsuperscript{271}
\end{quote}

\textit{Here is he, counted among the apostolic friends of the Lord,}
\textit{Who, full of holy charisma, first described}
\textit{The brilliant miracles of salvific Christ.}

\textsuperscript{269} Jacobsen 1991, \textit{Lateinische Dichtungen}, p. 179. The much shorter version of the tituli presented in the Harley Gospels and the Abdinghof Gospels does not add to the discussion and will not be considered here. Entirely lacking the main verb, the Matthew titulus in these two gospel books does not even constitute a proper sentence.

\textsuperscript{270} Milan: salutifere.

\textsuperscript{271} Printed in MGH Poetae V, p. 449 (from the Maria ad Gradus Gospels); see also Jacobsen 1991, \textit{Lateinische Dichtungen}, p. 187
The worthy evangelist of God, Matthew, with the cognomen Levi,
He himself joined pious teachings to sacred deeds,
Revealing this truth: both God and Man.

Mark (fols. 78v-79r):

Doctor apostolicus hoc pingitur ordine marcus,
Qui Petri natus fuit in baptismate sanctus.
Atque evangelii, quod [di]dicit ore magistri,272
[Veridicus] scriptor, quod summus postea pastor.273
Predicat in magnis alexandri moenibus urbis,
In qua nunc meritis martyr veneratur opimis.274

In proper sequence, the apostolic teacher Mark is painted,
Who, through baptism, was made holy and a son of Peter.
And he is a truthful writer of the Gospel,
Which he learned from the mouth of the teacher,
Afterwards he therefore became the highest pastor.
He preached within the great walls of the city of Alexander,
Where he is now venerated as a martyr for his abundant merits.

Luke (fols. 118v-119r):

Ecclesiae lampas sacer hic est nomine Luca,
Qui vir apostolicus divino flamine plenus.
Hoc evangelium domino tribuente sacratum
Scripsit et in totum sparsit latissime mundum.
Ipse sequens sanctum per plurima vincula Paulum,
Bithiniae docens migravit ad ardua celebs.275

This holy man, Luke by name, lamp of the Church,
Is an apostolic man filled with divine inspiration.
He wrote this sacred Gospel, which was handed down from the Lord,
And spread it widely through the whole world.
He himself followed holy Paul through many challenges,
And teaching in Bithynia, ascended the heights as a celibate.

272 Milan: dicit.

273 Milan: veri dignus.

274 Printed in MGH Poetae V, p. 450 (from the Maria ad Gradus Gospels); see also Jacobsen 1991, Lateinische Dichtungen, p. 188.

275 Printed in MGH Poetae V, p. 450 (from the Maria ad Gradus Gospels); see also Jacobsen 1991, Lateinische Dichtungen, p. 188.
John (fol. 186v-187r):

Inter precipuos paradisi quatuor amnes,  
Hic est verbi potens, [caeli simnista] Johannes.²⁷⁶  
Qui sacra divini reserans mysteria verbi,  
Planius hec scripsit per mundi climata sparsit.  
Inter mirificos actus etiam ad celestia raptus  
Monstrat, venturae qualis sit gloria vitae.²⁷⁷

Among the four main rivers of paradise,  
Here is John, mighty in word and heavenly initiate,  
Who, revealing the sacred mysteries of the divine word,  
Wrote them clearly and spread them throughout the world.  
Among his wondrous deeds, he was also carried to heaven  
And shows how the glory of the coming life will be.

The errors of the Milan evangelist tituli count as little more than scribal mistakes based on the confused reading of a difficult model text. Jacobsen’s broad conclusion—based largely on these misreadings—that the entire textual program of the Milan Gospels must be seen as a compilation from various sources is, therefore, unfounded.²⁷⁸ On the contrary, a consideration of the idiosyncratic content of the tituli strongly suggests that they were indeed composed specifically for the Milan Gospels as part of a program of miniatures and tituli designed for the recipient represented in the manuscript’s dedicatory image.

*   *   *

²⁷⁶ Milan: caelis hymnista.

²⁷⁷ As mentioned above, this last verse of the John titulus in the Milan Gospels appears to read: monstra tuentur aequalis, which is technically the same as the version from the Maria ad Gradus Gospels (monstrat venturae qualis), just improperly spaced. Printed in MGH Poetae V, p. 450 (from the Maria ad Gradus Gospels); see also Jacobsen 1991, Lateinische Dichtungen, p. 188.

The characteristic feature of the Milan evangelist tituli is their overwhelmingly biographical nature. The focus of the verses rests entirely on the evangelists as either inspired men or authoritative scribes, who spread the Gospels throughout the world and continued to pursue a holy life up to the time of their death. Nearly all aspects pertaining to the content of their respective Gospels or to explanations of their corresponding evangelist symbols have been excluded.\textsuperscript{279} In this sense the Milan poems depart radically from the standard repertoire of evangelist tituli, which, despite ranging in length and complexity from the succinct and extremely popular verses of Sedulius’ \textit{Carmen paschale} to the obscure, theologically infused tituli of the \textit{Codex aureus} from St. Emmeram, nevertheless display a consistent, if sometimes formulaic effort to link the evangelist and the content of his Gospel to the meaning of his animal symbol.\textsuperscript{280} The Gero Codex, a gospel lectionary from the Reichenaue which formed part of the cathedral library at Cologne from its donation there around 969 up to the late eighteenth century, offers examples of exceptionally complex evangelist tituli which nevertheless conform in several

\textsuperscript{279} The references to gospel content in verse 3 and 6 of the Matthew titulus (\textit{clara salutiferi miracula christi} and \textit{hominemque deumque}) derive in the former case from a well known passage from the \textit{Carmen paschale} of Sedulius: \textit{clara salutiferi taceam miracula Christi} (CSEL 10, p. 17). For the latter case, which is a rather popular formulation in Carolingian poetry, a comparable example can be found in the Matthew titulus from the Liuthard Gospels (Darmstadt, ULB, Hs. 746, fol. 15r): “Hoc Matheus aiens hominemque deumque resignat.” See Koehler (Mütherich), \textit{Die karolingischen Miniaturen} V, p. 91.

respects to the conventional subject matter of early medieval evangelist tituli. The Matthew
titus, for example, reads:

Matheus ex patribus sumens exordia primus
Scripserat hebraico Christi miracula verbo:
Primo puerperium; tria mystica dona magorum;
Qualiter infantes occidere iussit herodes;
Ut Dominus humilis venit ad baptisma johannis.
Plurima virtutum memorat miranda suarum.
Post haec sponte sua passus ludibria multa,
Affixusque cru ci moriens subvenerat orbi.
Inter theologos genealogus iste quaternos.
In hominis facie signatur voce prophetae.

Matthew, first among the fathers, taking up the beginning,
wrote down the miracles of Christ in the Hebrew language:
First the birth; the three mystical gifts of the magi;
How Herod ordered the slaughter of the infants;
How the Lord comes to the baptism of humble John.
He [Matthew] recounts the many wonders of his [Christ’s] virtue,
And after these, he voluntarily suffered great mockery,
And then, affixed to the cross, rescued the world through dying.
Among the four theologians, this is the genealogist.
Through the voice of the prophet, he is designated by the face of man.

Although the remarkable elaboration upon the content of Matthew’s Gospel constitutes a unique
feature of the Gero evangelist tituli, the first and last pair of verses reflect a more common
approach to describing the evangelists. The opening lines introduce Matthew as an author who
wrote in Hebrew, then, after the summary of the Gospel narrative, the titulus explains that he is
the “genealogist” among the evangelists, which is why his corresponding evangelist symbol is
that of a man. The titulus thus emphasizes the aspects of Matthew’s Gospel which set his text

281 For the history of the Gero Codex, see Schmidt 1924, Gero-Codex, p. 37-40; Leo Eizenhöfer
and Hermann Knaus, Die liturgischen Handschriften der Hessischen Landes- und
Hochschulbibliothek Darmstadt (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1968), p. 107-112; and Silvia
Uhlemann, “Der Gero-Codex in Darmstadt: Weg und Bewahrung eines Dokumentes der
Menschheitsgeschichte,” in Der Gero-Codex kehrt zurück: Das gemalte Buch von

282 For the tituli of the Gero Codex, see MGH Poetae V, p. 425.
apart from the writings of the other evangelists. In the same vein, the remaining three tituli of the Gero Codex follow this basic structure, and each ends by linking the respective evangelist to his corresponding symbol.

Several other examples of Carolingian and Ottonian evangelist tituli could be marshaled for comparison, yet none would match the exclusive focus on the biography of the evangelists found in the verses of the Milan Gospels. In light of this distinguishing feature, the Milan tituli ought to be recognized as new poetic creations. The author of the poems nevertheless drew heavily upon the biographical details provided by the standard Monarchian prologues to the Gospels, and he furthermore followed a general framework when transforming and condensing the lengthy and difficult text of the prologues into six verses of hexameter. First, the author provides a description of the evangelist taken from common poetic epithets: Matthew is one of the amicos Domini, Mark a doctor apostolicus, Luke the ecclesiae lampas, and John the

---

283 For an overview of early medieval evangelist tituli, see De Bruyne 1920, Prefaces, p. 192-195. The closest parallel to the Milan verses can be found in the tituli of the San Paolo Bible, which comprise both the verses of Sedulius referring to the evangelist symbols, as well as biographical verses on the evangelists which nevertheless focus more on the text of the Gospels, see MGH Poetae III, p. 263-264; Gaehde 1963, Painters of the Carolingian Bible II, p. 144; and Bischoff 1993, I Tituli, p. 145-173.


285 For the amicos domini formulation, see verse 12 of the titulus composed by Sedulius Scottus for a monumental Majestas Domini depiction commissioned by Archbishop Gunthar of Cologne, MGH Poetae III, p. 231.

286 The ecclesiae lampas formulation is quite common in both poetry and epigraphy. To name a few examples, see the first verse of the Epitaph for Archbishop Egbert of Trier, dating to 993: “Pontificum decus ecclesiae clarissima lampas,” published in Fuchs 2006, Trierer Inschriften, p. 115; see also Theodulf’s poem for Charlemagne “ecclesiae splendens lampas redimita sofia,” MGH Poetae I, p. 481, v. 20; or Sedulius’ poem for Hildwin of Cologne, MGH Poetae III, p. 227, v. 23.
caeli simnista.\textsuperscript{287} The author then emphasizes their authority or the source of their inspired status: both Matthew and Luke are filled with divine inspiration; Mark learned the true Gospel from the mouth of Peter, Luke was a follower of Paul, and John had privileged access to heaven itself.\textsuperscript{288} In the case of Mark, Luke, and John, the author gives special attention to their activities as preachers of the Gospels, as well as to other aspects of their later life: Mark is venerated as a martyr in Alexandria, while Luke was raised up to heaven as a celibate after teaching in Bithynia.\textsuperscript{289} Therefore, the evangelists are presented not just as inspired authors, but also as examples of holy men.

\* \* \*

With these distinguishing characteristics in mind, one may consider the extent to which the tituli correspond both to the evangelist portraits and to the visual program of the Milan Gospels as a whole. Regarding the relationship between the tituli and the portraits, it can be no coincidence that one of the most salient features of both is the complete absence of the evangelist symbols. Although not entirely without precedent, evangelist portraits lacking depictions of the respective symbols are exceedingly rare in Ottonian manuscript illumination, so much so that the

\textsuperscript{287} Several examples of \textit{caeli simnista} (alias \textit{simmista}) can be found, see however the first verse of the titulus for John in the Gero Codex: “caelitus incipiens seriem symmista Johannes,” MGH Poetae V, p. 426; or the John titulus from the Uta Codex, “fert aquilae facies domini simmista Johannes,” MGH Poetae V, p. 441.

\textsuperscript{288} The authority of the evangelists—or rather their status as either disciples or followers of disciples—can be found both in the Monarchian prologues and in Jerome’s Gospel prologue, the \textit{Plures fuisse}, see Jerome, \textit{Commentariorum in Matheum libri IV} (CCSL 77), p. 1-6.

\textsuperscript{289} The death of Luke as a celibate is mentioned in the Monarchian prologues, but the author appears to have drawn upon apocryphal material for information concerning Mark being venerated as a martyr in Alexandria. For the death of Luke, see De Bruyne 1920, \textit{Prefaces}, p. 172. For the apocryphal life of Mark, see Francesco Spadafora, “Marco, Evangelista,” in \textit{Bibliotheca sanctorum} VIII (Rome: Città Nuova Editrice, 1967), col. 711-718.
relevant examples may be briefly listed here.\textsuperscript{290} Prior to the Cologne School, examples of evangelist portraits without symbols can be found in isolated manuscripts from Corvey such as the Astor Lectionary in New York or a gospel book in Wolfenbüttel.\textsuperscript{291} Slightly later examples can be found in a disparate group of early-eleventh-century gospel books: a rhenish manuscript in Darmstadt with strong stylistic ties to both Mainz and Cologne, as well as two manuscripts from Liège, both now in Brussels.\textsuperscript{292} In contrast with the Cologne manuscripts, these examples do not constitute a strong iconographical tradition, nor do they offer any clear indication of a common source.\textsuperscript{293} To these six instances of Ottonian evangelist portraits without symbols, the Cologne School brings no less than eleven manuscripts—indeed, all of the gospel books from the School with the exception of the three manuscripts from the “rich” or opulent group (\textit{reiche}

\textsuperscript{290} The following list excludes examples which are clearly preparatory drawings or unfinished sketches. It also excludes examples where the evangelist symbols are represented on the facing page, as well as examples where the depiction of the symbols is inconsistent or confused (e.g. Munich, BSB, CLM 6204; Manchester, JRL, MS Lat. 87; Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 9391). For an overview of the iconography of early medieval evangelist portraits, see Ursula Nilgen, “Evangelisten,” in \textit{Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie} I (Rome: Herder, 1968), col. 696-713. See also the fundamental study of Albert Friend, “The Portraits of the Evangelists in Greek and Latin Manuscripts,” \textit{Art Studies} 5 (1927), p. 115-147 and 7 (1929), p. 3-29.

\textsuperscript{291} For the Astor Lectionary (New York, NYPL, MS Astor 1), see Bauer 1977, \textit{Corvey oder Hildesheim}, p. 101-107; for the gospel book in Wolfenbüttel (HAB, Cod. 16.1 Aug. 2\textdegree{}), see ibid., p. 114-123.

\textsuperscript{292} For the Darmstadt manuscript (HLM, AE 679), see Peter Märker, \textit{Gold und Purpur: der Bilderschmuck der früh- und hochmittelalterlichen Handschriften aus der Sammlung Hüpsch im Hessischen Landesmuseum Darmstadt} (Darmstadt: Hessisches Landesmuseum, 2001), p. 27. For the Brussels manuscripts (BRB, MS 18383 and MS II 175), see Gaspar and Lyna 1937, \textit{Les principaux manuscrits à peintures} I, p. 33-39 and p. 43-49.

\textsuperscript{293} To a certain extent, depictions of the evangelists without their symbols ultimately harken back to the classicizing miniatures of the Vienna Coronation Gospels. The majority of Carolingian examples of evangelist portraits without their symbols demonstrate clear links to this hugely influential manuscript. For an important recent study on the “Nachleben” of the Coronation Gospels, see Matthias Exner, “Typus, Kopie und Nachleben: Zur Wirkungsgeschichte des Krönungsevangeliars,” in \textit{Das Krönungsevangeliar des Heiligen Römischen Reiches}, ed. Franz Kirchweger (Gütersloh/Munich: Faksimile Verlag, 2013), p. 87-120.
Gruppe) as well as the much later Lyskirchen Gospels.\textsuperscript{294} It is clear, then, that the absence of evangelist symbols represents a trademark of Cologne gospel books, even if the ultimate impulse behind this tradition remains obscure.\textsuperscript{295} In terms of the Milan Gospels, however, the immediate source for the evangelist portraits was no doubt the closely related Gereon Gospels, dating most likely to the regency of Empress Theophanu or to the period shortly after her death in 991.\textsuperscript{296} Often considered the firstling of the painterly group, the Gereon Gospels not only represents the evangelists without their symbols, but also it provides three of the miniatures with facing tituli pages, which for unknown reasons were left unfinished.\textsuperscript{297} The presence of the blank tituli pages nevertheless attests to the early interest in providing miniatures of the evangelists with full-page tituli—an interest which first bore fruit with the Milan Gospels. That such a defining characteristic of the Cologne evangelist portraits is reflected in the Milan tituli leaves little doubt that the verses are of Cologne origin as well.

\textsuperscript{294} The manuscripts are: the Gereon Gospels, the Milan Gospels, the Giessen Gospels, the Hitda Codex, the Namur Gospels, the Gundold Gospels, the Gerresheim Gospels, the Stuttgart Gereon Gospels, the Nuremberg fragment, the Harley Gospels and the Abdinghof Gospels.

\textsuperscript{295} Bloch and Schnitzler maintain that the tradition began with the lost miniatures from the Manchester Gospels—considered to be the work of the Gregory Master—which are known today only through the copies found in the Stuttgart Gereon Gospels, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1970, \textit{Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule} II, p. 125-126. Their position is, however, doubly problematic. First, the Manchester gospel book dates most likely to the period of Otto III’s reign as emperor, which means that the manuscript postdates the Gereon Gospels. Second, no other examples are known from either the Gregory Master or from Trier where the evangelist portraits are depicted without their symbols. Two options appear more plausible: either the artist of the Stuttgart Gospels modified his portraits to conform with the prevalent tradition in Cologne, or the artist of the Manchester Gospels based his evangelist portraits in part on models from Cologne.

\textsuperscript{296} For the Gereon Gospels, see the discussion above, p. 18-21.

\textsuperscript{297} As discussed in chapter one, Anton von Euw has observed a gradual breakdown in the quality and execution of the manuscript from its opening miniatures to the sequence for John, which lacks a titulus page altogether. See von Euw 1991, \textit{Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule}, p. 264-266.
Finally, two observations suggest that the tituli were crafted not only in Cologne, but also specifically for the Milan Gospels itself. First, the prominence accorded the tituli both in their placement and execution reflects the level of attention one would expect from the presentation copy of a manuscript. The double-page layout endows the verses with a degree of independence from their related evangelist portraits, while the decision to place the tituli in the very center of the quire—after the evangelist portraits and directly before the beginning of the gospel text—underscores their importance. Second, and more importantly, the focus of the tituli on the life of the evangelists, as opposed to the content of the gospel text or an explanation of the evangelist symbols, relates directly to the general program of the Milan Gospels, which concerns itself with the moral formation of the recipient depicted in its dedication miniature. By concentrating the reader’s attention on the evangelists as exemplary figures of holy men, the tituli serve to align the miniatures with the manuscript’s broader aims of providing a Liber vitae for the young cleric. Specific links between the evangelist tituli and the tituli of the manuscript’s opening prefatory sequence are few, but nevertheless present. The Luke titulus, for example, refers to the evangelist in verse six as caelebs—the very same status which is promised to the young cleric should he choose to follow the habitus of the book. Moreover, echoes of the manuscript’s introductory poem can be found in the Luke and John tituli. In the latter titulus, the four rivers of paradise are explicitly mentioned in the opening verse, and in both tituli the

---

298 The fact that the Milan Gospels represents the presentation copy of the evangelist tituli does not preclude Peter Jacobsen’s observation that the tituli must have been copied from an independent source—a transcription or a clean copy, so to speak—from which the scribes of the Maria ad Gradus Gospels, the Harley Gospels and the Abdinghof Gospels also copied their texts. Sets of tituli were often transmitted through such transcriptions—an important example of this practice survives for the tituli of the DuFay Gospels (Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 9385), a Carolingian gospel book from Tours. All of the tituli for this manuscript can be found transcribed in a bifolio inserted into a Stavelot miscellany dating to the tenth and eleventh centuries (Bamberg, SB, MS Hist. 161, fol. 4v-5v).
evangelists are described as spreading the Gospels throughout the world in much the same language with which the introductory poem describes the rivers “spread through the wide earth”.\(^{299}\) Even the layout of the tituli—with their double-page format—recalls the double-page introductory poem of the manuscript, establishing a formal correspondence between the beginning of the manuscript and the beginning of each individual book of the Gospels. Therefore, through both their form and their content, the evangelist tituli of the Milan Gospels constitute an integral component of the manuscript’s broader program of miniatures and tituli.

Conclusion

The program of miniatures and tituli from the Milan Gospels offers art historians a rare opportunity to consider both the sophisticated intellectual background informing the production of a luxury gospel book in this period, as well as something of the intentions underlying its donation. What exactly did the group of men—depicted so humbly in the dedication miniature—hope to accomplish with their gift to the young cleric? Of course, one can never know for sure, but this chapter brings the answer into sharper focus. The designers of the program clearly drew on an esteemed Carolingian tradition—both pictorial and literary—in order to craft an ambitious and innovative program of illumination centered on the manuscript’s recipient. Moreover, the foregoing study of the nature of this program reveals a distinct moralizing tone evident in both the miniatures and the tituli. Expressed most strongly in the dedicatory titulus, which calls upon

\(^{299}\) The relevant line in the introductory poem reads: \textit{Quatuor ut lato sparguntur flumina mundo.} Both the Luke and John tituli take up the formulation \textit{spargere mundo.} Verse 4 of the Luke
the recipient to heed what the “habit of the work” demands, this defining aspect of the
manuscript’s program serves to emphasize that the gift of the Book of Life bears with it
considerable expectations for virtuous behavior. These expectations could hardly have been lost
on the young man. Having received this sumptuous gift, he would have seen a depiction of
himself directly following the Majestas Domini miniature—in other words, a depiction of the
one true source of eternal life, the image of God in heaven. Following his own representation, he
would have also encountered the portraits of Jerome and the four evangelists, each of which has
been formulated in such a way as to emphasize the authoritative and exemplary status of these
holy men. What is perhaps most remarkable about the Milan Gospels, however, is the
unparalleled way in which image and inscription combine to transform such well-established
motifs and traditions into something wholly new and utterly compelling.

——
titulus reads: in totum sparsit latissime mundum. Verse 4 of the John titulus reads: per mundi
climata sparsit.
In terms of both the complexity of its tituli and the innovative formal qualities of its miniatures, few manuscripts can rival the Sacramentary from St. Gereon, which is preserved today in Paris. With its extraordinary program of illumination spanning a total of thirty-four leaves, the sacramentary marks a high point in the painterly group of Cologne’s Ottonian manuscripts, second in number only to the later Hitda Codex in Darmstadt. It distinguishes itself furthermore as the only sacramentary from the Cologne school to feature such a well-developed cycle of miniatures and tituli. In fact, extensive miniature programs—aside from those found in the well-known corpus of Fulda manuscripts—are comparatively rarer in sacramentaries than in


301 The other two sacramentaries from Cologne—the Tyniec Sacramentary in Warsaw and the St. Vitus Sacramentary in Freiburg, both dating to the last decades of the eleventh century—possess greatly reduced miniature programs that feature in each case a Crucifixion miniature positioned at the opening of the Te igitur. For the Tyniec Sacramentary (Warsaw, Biblioteka Narodowa, BOZ 8), see Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule I, p. 100-103; For the St. Vitus Sacramentary (Freiburg, UB, Cod. 360a), see Ibid., p. 103-105. In addition to the Crucifixion, the Tyniec Sacramentary includes a miniature of the Majestas Domini (p. 32), the corresponding Majestas miniature from the St. Vitus Sacramentary is now lost and was likely excised between fol. 12v and 13r. The Freiburg manuscript contains an additional miniature of Gregory the Great (fol. 13v), a feature which does not appear to have been part of the Tyniec Sacramentary—this however remains uncertain as a codicological study of this manuscript has yet to be published.
other book types from the Early Middle Ages. Thus, at a basic level, the manuscript offers valuable insight into the illumination of a particularly significant category of liturgical book—the sacramentary—which contained all of the necessary texts for a celebrant to read during mass.

On another level, however, the sophisticated intertwining of text and image at work in the manuscript results in a rare opportunity to consider the perceived theoretical underpinnings of painting in this period. As such, the manuscript undoubtedly deserves a more prominent position in broader histories of medieval art. Although the Gereon Sacramentary almost certainly stems from the same workshop—if not the same painter or painters—as the Milan Gospels, this chapter

---


303 Another important manuscript in this regard is the Warmund Sacramentary in Ivrea (Biblioteca capitolare, LXXXVI). See Luigi Magnani, Le miniature del sacramentario d’Ivrea e di altri codici Warmondiani (Vatican: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1934). Regarding other examples of illuminated sacramentaries, there are important Carolingian exceptions that ought to be mentioned here: the Drogo Sacramentary (Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 9428); the fragmentary Sacramentary of Charles the Bald (Paris, BnF MS Lat. 1141); and the Touronian Ragnaldus Sacramentary (Autun, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 19 bis). For a discussion of sacramentaries with pictorial cycles, see Springer 1889, Bilderschmuck in Sacramentarien, p. 362-369. In addition to the Gereon Sacramentary he includes in this group: Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 18005; St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 339, 340, and 341; the sacramentary in the cathedral treasury at Mainz, MS Kautsch 4. To this list, two other Reichenau sacramentaries (Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, MS Rh. 71; and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Canon. liturg. 319) ought to be added: see Derek Turner, “The ‘Reichenau’ Sacramentaries at Zürich and Oxford,” Revue bénédictine 75 (1965), p. 240-276.
will demonstrate that the manuscript takes a remarkably different approach to the conception of its pictorial program.

Unlike the Milan Gospels or the Hitda Codex, the Gereon Sacramentary retains a trace of its original luxury binding in the form of an ivory plaque of the *Hodegetria*—a popular Byzantine type of the Virgin and Child—that remains embedded in the center of a seventeenth- or eighteenth-century cover fitted with red velvet [FIGURE 51].\(^{304}\) This lone remnant of a once sumptuous decorative ensemble marks the binding as an example of the contemporary Ottonian fashion for dismantling Byzantine ivory triptychs and reusing them as centerpieces for luxury bindings.\(^{305}\) At least ten ivory plaques of the half-length *Hodegetria* can be linked to Western

\(^{304}\) Due to its precarious state of preservation, the binding itself could not be examined extensively. Therefore, it remains unclear whether the wooden core of the binding ought to be considered original to the manuscript or dated instead to the application of the red velvet—Goldschmidt and Weitzmann (G-W II.125) describe the binding as “modern” as does Marie-Pierre Laffitte. See Marie-Pierre Laffitte and Valérie Goupil, *Reliures précieuses* (Paris: Herscher, 1991), p. 15. The binding is not listed in Frauke Steenbock, *Der kirchliche Prachteinband im frühen Mittelalter: von den Anfängen bis zum Beginn der Gotik* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1965). Goldschmidt and Weitzmann consider the Gereon ivory to be closely related to two other plaques, also from Western treasure bindings: their numbers G-W II.124 and G-W II.126. Moreover, they recognize in this group of three plaques certain characteristics from both the so-called “Nikephoros-Gruppe” and the “Triptychon-Gruppe.” However, iconographic eccentricities, such as the covering of Mary’s left hand or the absence of Christ’s feet, suggest that these ivories are somewhat removed from the higher quality pieces of the “Triptychon Gruppe.” In their catalog entry on the Gereon Sacramentary, Avril and Rabel follow Laffitte in suggesting that the ivory may in fact be a Rhenish work executed in a Byzantinizing style. See Avril and Rabel 1995, *Manuscrits enluminés d’origine germanique*, p. 71. Given, however, the range of styles, iconographies, and quality of execution within the group of Byzantine *Hodegetria* ivories, it would seem imprudent to assign the Gereon plaque to a Western workshop simply on the basis of the quality of its execution.

book covers from the period around the year 1000. After the Crucifixion, the iconography of the half-length *Hodegetria* ranks as one of the most popular subjects in Byzantine ivory carving, representing approximately ten percent of the entire corpus. Nevertheless, one ought to consider the possibility that the Gereon plaque stands for more than the mere spoliation of a popular contemporary image type, but rather that the subject matter of the ivory was instead purposefully selected to complement the broader themes of the manuscript’s christological program, which, as will be demonstrated, centers on the incarnation of Christ. Moreover, one could reasonably speculate that the ivory once formed the central element of its own pictorial program, as is the case with the closely related Byzantine ivories adorning the covers of three other Ottonian manuscripts: the Gospels of Otto III in Aachen, the Poussay Evangelistary in Paris and the Fulda Sacramentary in Bamberg [FIGURE 52].

---

306 The plaques are G-W II.80, 124, 126, 129, 133, 134, 139, 140, and 156. Several of the remaining *Hodegetria* plaques in Goldschmidt and Weitzmann’s corpus lack a clear provenance, though it is entirely possible that they too once adorned the covers of Ottonian manuscripts.


308 The Aachen, Paris, and Bamberg plaques are, respectively, G-W II.129, 134, and 139. See also Steenbock 1965, *Der kirchliche Prachteinband*, no. 51, 54 and 61. For a consideration of the “recontextualization” of a Byzantine ivory plaque in the context of a new Ottonian binding, see Zeitler 2003, *The Migrating Image*, p. 193.
differ in subject matter and composition to such an extent that no pattern can be gleaned regarding the possible appearance the Gereon binding’s original state.\(^{309}\)

The manuscript itself provides one important indicator that helps furnish an approximate date for its creation [FIGURE 53]. The evidence takes the form of a prayer from the Exultet, which mentions “our king Otto” (fol. 56v):

\[
\text{Precamur ergo te domine ut nos famulos tuos et omnem clerum et devotissimum populum una cum papa nostro ILLE et antistite nostro N atque rege nostro OTTONE quiete temporum concessa in his paschalibus sacramentis conservare digneris…}^{310}
\]

*We therefore beseech thee, O Lord, that you might grant us—your servants, all of the clergy, the most devoted people, with our one pope ILLE and our bishop N as well as our king OTTO—peace in the time given to these paschal sacraments.*\(^{311}\)

The “Otto” mentioned here can only be Otto III (d. 1002), who was crowned king at the age of three in 983 and emperor in 996.\(^{312}\) Directly preceding the mention of King Otto, the name of an archbishop has been erased and replaced with a golden letter N, which prevents any further


\(^{310}\) For the text of the *Benedictio cerei*, which forms part of the Holy Saturday liturgy, see Deshusses 1971, *Le sacramentaire grégorien* III, p. 362-363. Several scholars have referred to this passage from the much larger *Benedictio cerei* incorrectly as a prayer *pro rege nostro*, or even as a *missa pro rege*. Incidentally, the *missa pro rege* occurs later in the manuscript (fol. 174v) and does not mention Otto himself, but rather “servo tuo regi nostro N.” Curiously, Bloch and Schnitzler reproduced the *missa pro rege* (fol. 174v), but not the much more important prayer from the Exultet mentioning Otto (fol. 56v).


\(^{312}\) The most prevalent date put forth by scholars—between 996 and 1002—was first advanced by Bloch and Schnitzler, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, *Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule* I, p. 43. Ulrich Kuder, however, has proposed a significantly earlier date for the manuscript. In 1993 he suggested a date between 984 and 996, see Brandt 1993, *Bernward von Hildesheim*, n. IV-56. More recently, in 2013, Kuder suggested a much narrower range between 984-985, see Kuder 2013, *Der Hitda-Codex*, p. 111.
precision of the date to the episcopate of either Everger or Heribert (r. 999-1021).\textsuperscript{313} Scholarly debates concerning this prayer have hinged on the appropriate understanding of the word “rege” in reference to Otto. Several scholars, including Bloch and Schnitzler and Carl Nordenfalk, argue that the use of the word reflects the copying of an older model or that it is simply an arbitrary designation that could in fact have been written in a time when Otto III was officially emperor.\textsuperscript{314} Considering, however, that the prayer was without doubt carefully and deliberately written—with Otto’s name even being written in gold—it is difficult to imagine that the scribe would neglect to include his proper title.\textsuperscript{315} Despite major uncertainties regarding the interpretation of the prayer, it seems reasonable to place the creation of the Gereon Sacramentary in the last decade of the tenth century while still acknowledging that a more conservative dating would place the manuscript as late as 1002.

Several entries in the manuscript’s liturgical calendar reveal that the intended recipient of the book was almost certainly a member of the collegiate church of St. Gereon, a large religious foundation located just outside the old Roman walls of the city and, after the cathedral, the most


\textsuperscript{314} Although Bloch and Schnitzler admit that the prayer would seem to date the manuscript between 983 and 996, they nevertheless argue that: “doch ist die Übernahme dieser Formel aus einer älteren Vorlage zu vermuten, da die Hs. das nach 996 hergestellte Evangeliar Cod. 98 des Gregormeisters in Manchester voraussetzt.” See Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule I, p. 43. Carl Nordenfalk similarly dismisses the value of the reference to King Otto for dating the manuscript: “…da solche Texte aber öfters gedankenlos abgeschrieben wurden, läßt sich der Eintrag nicht für eine Datierung des Codex vor 996 auswerten.” See Nordenfalk 1971, Review of Bloch and Schnitzler, p. 305.

\textsuperscript{315} An interesting comparison in this regard can be found in the so-called Otto-Adelheid Gospels (Quedlinburg, cathedral treasury), which, quite unusually for a gospel book, possesses the entire text of the Exultet added as a gathering before the gospel text itself. At the end of this prayer, the name of Otto is explicitly given the title “imperatore.” See most recently the entry by Thomas Labusiak in Puhle 2012, Otto der Grosse, n. V.46, p. 640-642.
important religious foundation in Cologne. Both the dedication of the basilica and the feast of St. Gereon, with its octave, receive special mention in the calendar (fols. 7r, 8v). Most telling, however, is a prayer labeled “On entering the basilica” (in introitu basilicae, fol. 158v) that explicitly mentions St. Gereon by name. Apart from this first and unquestionable designation of St. Gereon, however, the subsequent medieval provenance of the manuscript remains largely unknown. Despite its impressive antiquity and unmistakable luxury, the codex found no mention in the thorough, late-medieval inventory of books and precious objects belonging to the foundation. Nevertheless, the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century additions to the manuscript, which consist of several prayers and New-Testament pericopes occupying what were originally


317 The entry for the dedication of the basilica on July 28th (fol. 7r), reads: “PANTALEONIS • Dedicatio GEREONIS aeclesiae.” For this and the entry regarding the feast of St. Gereon, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule I, p. 124, 126.

318 The prayer reads: “via sanctorum omnium Jesu Christe qui ad te venientibus claritatis gaudia contulisti introitum templi istius spiritus sancti luce perfunde, qui locum istum sanctorum martyrum tuorum Gereonis et sociorum eius sanguine consecrasti.”

319 For the fourteenth-century inventory of St. Gereon, see Joerres 1893, Das Urkundenbuch des Stiftes St. Gereon zu Köln, n. 450, p. 444-454. Joerres indicates that his edition of the inventory was taken from the so-called “red book” (liber rubeus) from the archive of St. Gereon, fols. 73r-77r. Meriting further study in its own right due to its detailed descriptions of works of art, the inventory lists several examples of manuscripts with luxury bindings, two of which offer close parallels to the Gereon Sacramentary without, however, constituting a match. The binding of one missal (n. 106), for example, is described as: “alium intitulatum librum missalem habentem in prima parte laminam deauratam cum 4 berillis magnis et in medio tabulam eburneam in que sedet Deus in majestate sua et in 4 angulis in tabulis eburneis 4 evangelistae.” Joerres unfortunately does not provide the incipit and explicit of this missal. The second close parallel is a lectionary, the central ivory of which matches in its description the ivory currently on the Gereon Sacramentary: “alium parvum librum dictum epistolarum et evangeliorum anni habentem in prima parte laminam argenteam vermiculatam in cuius medio sedet Virgo Maria habens filium in gremio et in 4 angulis 4 virtutes coronate et in altera parte laminam argenteam in qua stant 4 martires cum palmis.” See ibid., p. 453.
blank pages, attest to the manuscript’s continued liturgical use in the Late Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{320}

Notwithstanding this uncertainty, the manuscript in all likelihood remained in Cologne throughout the Middle Ages before reaching the hands of a Swedish Count, Gustav Adam Banér (d. 1681), in the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{321} In 1703, an acquaintance of his wife—Johan Gabriel Sparwenfeld, master of ceremonies at the Swedish court—bequeathed the manuscript to the royal library of France and it remains today one of the great examples of Ottonian manuscript illumination at the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris.\textsuperscript{322}

\textsuperscript{320} The additions are few enough to be numbered and listed here with their corresponding feasts when known: (1) fol. 2r, unidentified prayer; (2) fol. 10r, Luke 11:5-13, Major Litany, April 25th; (3) fol. 10v, John 16:23-30, fifth week after Easter; (4) fol. 10v-11r, John 17:1-11, Vigil for the Ascension; (5) fol. 11r, Luke 11:27-28, Dormition/Assumption, August 15th; (6) fol. 11r, different hand, John 19:25-27, Dormition; (7) fol. 187v, James 5:16-20, Major Litany; (8) fol. 187v, James 1:22-27, fifth week after Easter; (9) fol. 188r, Acts 4:32-35, Vigil for the Ascension; (10) fol. 188r, Eccles. 24:14-16, Dormition/Assumption; (11) fol. 188v, Phil. 2:8-11, unknown; (12) fol. 188v, prayers for the feasts of Mary Magdalene (two variations), Catherine, and Cecilia (13) fol 190v, unidentified prayer to “blessed Anna.” The addition of Gospel readings and lessons for the same four feasts suggest that the manuscript was modified for special use on these particular occasions.

\textsuperscript{321} Banér was the son of a famous Swedish field-marshall in Germany during the Thirty-Years War, Johan Banér (d. 1641), which may explain how he was able to acquire the manuscript. His activity as a collector remains unstudied, but he is nevertheless attested as an early owner of Pietro Bembo’s edition of Petrarch, see Cecil Clough, “Bembo’s Personal Copy of his Edition of Petrarch’s Le Cose Volgari,” Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester 55.2 (1973), p. 253-258. See also G. Wittrock’s entry in Svenskt biografiskt lexikon. One historian has referred to Banér as “a notorious intriguer and a litigant of unsavoury reputation.” See Göran Rystad, “Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie,” in Sweden’s Age of Greatness: 1632-1718, ed. Michael Roberts (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1973), p. 203-236, p.219.

\textsuperscript{322} A contemporary note from the inside front cover of the manuscript provides an account of the transfer: “Ex munificenta illustrissime et generosissime dominae Mariae Skÿtte benedicti filiae L:B:I:D:. comitis Gustavi Adami Banerii relictae viduæ hoc missale romanum uti singulare monumentu venerandae antiquitatis et datr…s […] illustrissime benivolentiae dignissimum pignus possidet Ioannes Gustav Sparwenfeld…” (the final line of the inscription is barely legible, but mentions the date). The estimation of the manuscript was not always positive. In his review of Peter Bloch’s 1963 work on the sacramentary, Jean Porcher refers to the note made by Jean Boivin—the early-eighteenth-century garde des manuscrits—upon the manuscript’s arrival in the library: “mais on ne peut dire qu’il y ait rien de bien exquis dans ces peintures. On peut seulement assurer qu’on ne peignait pas mieux que cela dans le temps où le livre a été
The sacramentary’s ten miniatures cluster into four groups spread throughout the first eighty pages of the book—leaving the last hundred folios entirely without illumination. After a calendar that lists the important feast days for each month of the year (fols. 4r-9v), two pairs of miniatures and tituli open the book, serving as a sort of visual preface to the text of the sacramentary. Depicting the Annunciation (fol. 12r) and the Nativity (fol. 13r)—the moments of Christ’s incarnation and birth—the miniatures establish a link between the structure of the book and the life of Christ. The unusual placement of the Annunciation and Nativity miniatures before the main text of the sacramentary underscores the significance of the birth of Christ as the point of origin not only for the book itself, but also for the entire liturgical year. A few folios later there follows a second group of miniatures depicting the Majestas Domini (fol. 15v) and a portrait of Gregory the Great (fol. 21r)—the sixth-century Pope who was believed to be the author of the sacramentary’s text. These two miniatures frame the canon of the mass—that fixed core of the text that includes the prayers necessary for the sacrament of the Eucharist. In this manuscript, the canon spreads across nine pages written entirely in gold, set against a purple ground. Several folios later, scenes from the passion of Christ preface the liturgy for Easter and


The program of illumination essentially ends with the last decorated text page of the Pentecost sequence (fol. 79r), the subsequent 111 folios bear only golden rubrics and simple initials that mark the beginning of masses and prayers.

For the text of the calendar, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, *Die ottonische Köln Malerschule I*, p. 121-127.

include the Crucifixion (fol. 59r), Pontius Pilate with the Guards (fol. 59v), and the Women at Christ’s Tomb (fol. 60r); the final set of miniatures occurs before the liturgy of Pentecost and includes the Ascension (fol. 72r), the Gathering of the Nations (fol. 76v) and a depiction of Pentecost itself (fol. 77r). Thus, apart from the miniatures of the Majestas Domini and Gregory the Great, the program consists primarily of scenes from the life of Christ, with the Pentecost miniatures serving as its conclusion. And yet, the previous efforts of scholars to interpret the nature of this pictorial cycle have hitherto met with great difficulty, due in large part to an insistence on seeing the miniatures as constituting either an historical cycle—that is, a cycle based on the narrative of the life of Christ—or a liturgical cycle, where the miniatures are arranged according to the major feasts of Church’s calendar.326

In fact, neither of these categories accounts for the unusual arrangement of miniatures in the manuscript. The historical interpretation proves unsatisfactory when one considers how the sequence of miniatures jumps from Christ’s birth directly to his death on the cross, with only the Majestas Domini and the Gregory portrait in between. Important events in the life of Christ—such as the Adoration of the Magi, the Presentation at the Temple, or any of his miracles—have been entirely excluded, and instead two exceedingly rare depictions—Pilate and the Guards and the Gathering of the Nations—are prominently featured. A purely liturgical interpretation proves similarly frustrating. There are of course no feasts associated with these two unusual miniatures, and the miniature of the Annunciation ought to be located much later in the manuscript since its liturgical feast takes place in March.327 Moreover, there are no depictions of saints or martyrs,


327 The feast for the *Annunciatio sanctae mariae* occurs on fol. 35v.
and no trace of what one could consider liturgical iconography: no altars, no celebrants of the mass, and no sign of the Eucharist.\textsuperscript{328} As will be demonstrated in this chapter, understanding the nature of this pictorial program requires a broader consideration not only of the structure of the manuscript and the peculiar grouping of its miniatures, but also of the exegetical background of both the miniatures and their tituli.

Despite featuring prominently in the manuscript itself, the tituli of the Gereon Sacramentary have been poorly served by art historians and philologists alike.\textsuperscript{329} Deeply entrenched photographic conventions that privilege the isolated miniature cropped out of its context are no doubt partially responsible for this oversight. In fact even today a microfilm scan produced for archival purposes remains the best way to experience the Gereon Sacramentary as a physical object.\textsuperscript{330} Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that the tituli were conceived as inseparable components of the miniatures themselves. In fact, only two of the miniatures lack inscriptions altogether: the Majestas Domini and Pentecost. Five of the remaining eight miniatures have been paired with full-page tituli written in gold and set within sumptuously decorated frames. These lengthy, at times complicated texts were written specifically with their


\textsuperscript{330} Fortunately the BnF has begun digitizing such archival microfilms making them accessible to the broader public. The URL for the Gereon Sacramentary (http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9066592s) was last accessed on February 15, 2015.
accompanying images in mind. As such, the inscriptions constitute an important source for scholars, offering a potential glimpse into how these images were understood—and in some cases, they even provide crucial insight into how these images were meant to be seen. Before probing these relationships further, however, it will be important to bear in mind two final observations regarding the tituli.

First, apart from the Gregory miniature, the pronounced juxtaposition of image and inscription occurs only in conjunction with the miniatures depicting key moments from the life of Christ—that is, the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Crucifixion, and the Ascension. Thus with the final Easter and Pentecost groupings of miniatures, which mirror each other in their arrangement, the placement of the titulus establishes a clear hierarchy between the first miniature—depicting Christ in an act of disappearance, either through his death on the cross or through his ascension—and the subsequent, subordinate pair of images, which in each case can be understood as a consequence of that event. This causal link between the first miniature of each group and the subsequent pair underscores their coherence as a group.

A second characteristic of the tituli constitutes arguably their most remarkable feature. In nearly each case, a consistent effort was made to rename the images using a highly unusual vocabulary characterized by words ending with the suffix "-iv-". With only one exception, these words are being used as nouns referring to the miniatures in the place of more common words such as *imago*, *figura* or *pictura*. Thus, according to the tituli, the Gregory miniature is a *signativo*, the Nativity is an *inspectivum* and the Ascension is an *operativum*. For two of the words—*imaginativo* and *signativo*—the Gereon Sacramentary offers in fact the first documented
case of their use in the Latin language. Walter Berschin was the first to draw attention to these unusual word forms, which he understood to be neologisms based on the writings of the ninth-century philosopher and theologian, John Scot Eriugena. Highly proficient in Greek, Eriugena himself introduced several new words into the Latin language while translating the works of the mystic writer known as the Pseudo-Dionysus. Berschin is certainly right to point to the ultimate Greek origin of these words, but the work of Eriugena cannot be claimed as a source. Instead, it will be demonstrated that these unusual words correspond to latinized forms of Greek technical terms found mainly in texts of a philosophical and dialectical nature—texts which were furthermore read and copied in Cologne. The word *operativum*, for example, appears as a gloss on the Greek term *ergastika*—meaning active or efficacious—which can be found in a contemporary Cologne manuscript of Martianus Capella’s popular guide to the liberal arts, the *The Marriage of Mercury and Philology* [FIGURE 54]. In fact, a Greek original can be identified or postulated for each of the terms in question—an observation which proves crucial

331 Personal communication from Adelheid Wellhausen from the *Mittellateinisches Wörterbuch* in Munich (March 2012).


334 The gloss can be found on fol. 145v. For the Cologne Martianus manuscript (Dombibliothek, Hs. 193), see Monika Isépy, *Die Glossen zu Martianus Capella im Codex 193 der Kölner Dombibliothek*, Libelli Rhenani 15 (Cologne: Erzbischöfliche Diözesan- und Dombibliothek, 2010).
for understanding their meaning. In the tenth and eleventh centuries, these words were confined mainly to the realm of the scholarly apparatus—that is, the gloss, the margin, and the diagram—by the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, however, philosophers such Albertus Magnus or William of Conches would employ these same terms in their own writing with much greater frequency.335

It is important to note that it is not just the peculiar word forms that establish a scholarly context for the tituli. The Gregory inscription, for example, refers to the image of the pope as “a statue composed of matter and form” (statua ex materia et forma composita) [FIGURE 55].336 And although, in comparison to his scribe, Gregory is certainly depicted in a monumental scale evocative of statuary, this reference to a statue ought not to be taken literally [FIGURE 56]. Indeed, the formulation “statua ex materia et forma” derives nearly verbatim from a passage in one of Boethius’s commentaries on Aristotle, where it is mentioned several times in reference to the ontological differences between a statue of Achilles, and Achilles himself—in each case, the form is the same, but the materia—the matter—is different.337 In a similar manner, the titulus to

335 The relevant entries in the various medieval latin dictionaries give a good sense of the later usage of the terms. For the word imaginativo, for example, see the corresponding entry in: Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources, ed. Ronald Latham (London: British Academy, 1975-2013), fasc. V, p. 1218. For the word operativum, see Novum glossarium mediae latinitatis ab ann DCCC usque ad annum MCC, ed. Franz Blatt (Copenhagen, 1979), p. 522-523.

336 The Gregory titulus (fol. 20v) reads: “Gregorius dei servus · cuius statua · ex materia et forma · fulget in hoc signativo composita · gratia sancti spiritus doctive illuminatus · confecit huius libelli corpus” (Gregory, servant of God, whose statue composed of matter and form shines in this meaningful object, wisely illuminated through the grace of the holy spirit, made the corpus of this little book). See Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule I, p. 38.

337 Only an excerpt of the relevant passage has been given here [emphasis added]: “Igitur supposita materia ac praeiacente cum in ipsam figura superuenerit, fit quaelibet illa res corporea ex materia formaque subsistens, ut Achillis statua ex aeris materia et ipsius Achillis figura perficitur. Atque ea quidem quae corporea sunt, manifestum est ex materia formaque subsistere, ea uero quae sunt incorporalia, ad similitudinem materiae atque formae habent suppositas priores antiquiores naturas, super quas differentiae uenientes efficiunt aliquid quod eodem modo sicut corpus tamquam ex materia ac figura consistere uideatur, ut in genere ac specie
the Crucifixion miniature refers to the sanctity of the cross as being in itself generalissima.\textsuperscript{338} The word \textit{generalissima} should not be translated as “most general,” as one might first assume. It is instead yet another logical term with a particular meaning: namely, the highest genus, meaning “that which cannot be predicated of anything”.\textsuperscript{339} In a diagram known as a Porphyrian Tree—taken from a second Cologne copy of the same Boethius commentary—the term \textit{generalissima} appears at the highest level of a chain-of-being which ranges from pure substance at the top to the individual humans listed below [FIGURE 57].\textsuperscript{340}

It is thus clear that the tituli establish a scholarly if not outright philosophical context for the miniatures. Faced with such an observation, one might rightly ask: if the tituli are making a claim for the complexity of the miniatures, through their act of re-naming and re-contextualizing, does this necessarily mean, then, that the images meet this expectation? A close look at some of the intricacies of the manuscript’s pictorial program will demonstrate that its miniatures are more than up to the task.

\textsuperscript{338} For the text of the titulus, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, \textit{Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule} I, p. 39, 98.

\textsuperscript{339} A succinct definition of \textit{generalissima} can be found in a gloss from an early-eleventh-century Boethius manuscript from Cologne (Cologne, Dombibliothek, Hs. 188, fol. 49r): “quia sicut generalissimum est cui non aliud genus superponitur.”

\textsuperscript{340} The Porphyrian Tree can be found on fol. 1r (Dombibliothek, Hs. 189).
Overshadowing the Virgin: The Annunciation Miniature

At first glance, the Annunciation miniature presents itself as a conventional depiction of the encounter between Mary and the archangel Gabriel [FIGURE 58]. Set outside the city of Nazareth, the future Mother of God, rising from her throne, stands to receive the angelic message, which marks the moment of Christ’s incarnation. The inclusion of Mary’s throne—depicted in profile in the lower right-hand corner, without a baldachin or any other indication of an interior setting—distinguishes the miniature, however, as a conflation of the two main variations on the iconography of the Annunciation current in the Early Middle Ages, which tended to represent Mary either enthroned in an architectural setting or standing outside the city walls.\(^{341}\) In general, Ottonian book painters favored the latter variant with Mary standing opposite Gabriel and often gesturing in acquiescence.\(^{342}\) For example, the miniature of the Annunciation in the Egbert Codex [FIGURE 59], which places the two protagonists in a nondescript landscape setting outside the walls of Nazareth, marks an important moment in this


\(^{342}\) For Ottonian depictions of the Annunciation see Plotzek 1970, *Das Perikopenbuch Heinrichs III.*, p. 110-116; Claudia Höhl, *Ottonische Buchmalerei in Prüm* (Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 1996), p. 132-138; and Winterer 2009, *Das Fuldaer Sakramentar*, p. 338-441. Winterer rightly stresses the variable nature of the iconography. Bloch and Schnitzler argue that the variation of Mary standing marks a Byzantine influence which they see as characteristic for the manuscript, Bloch and Schnitzler 1970, *Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule* II, p. 95. It should be noted that even the Annunciation miniature in the closely related Hitda Codex (fol. 20r) excludes the detail of the throne.
tradition and its design exerted a strong and persistent influence on subsequent depictions of the Annunciation, predominantly in manuscripts from Echternach and the Reichenau.\textsuperscript{343} The Gereon master, in contrast, seems to have taken as his point of departure examples of the Annunciation which depict Mary enthroned, set against an architectural background. In this vein, the Annunciation miniature found in the troper from Prüm provides a strong point of comparison with the Gereon sacramentary, particularly in the deployment of architecture [\textbf{FIGURE 60}].\textsuperscript{344}

In the Prüm Annunciation, the condensed cityscape frames the throne of the Virgin and establishes an identification of Mary with the Church—a reading reinforced through the detail of the cross placed at the very top of the pediment, surpassing the frame of the miniature while remaining on axis with the Virgin herself.\textsuperscript{345} The very same detail—marked this time in gold—occurs in the Gereon miniature in approximate, though not exact, alignment with the Virgin. Yet unlike the troper and several other related miniatures of the annunciate Virgin, the Gereon artist has depicted Mary standing in front of her throne.\textsuperscript{346}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{343}] For Reichenau manuscripts, see Mütherich 2001, \textit{Das Evangeliar Ottos III.}, p. 50; For Echternach, see Plotzek 1970, \textit{Das Perikopenbuch Heinrichs III.}, p. 111; Kahsnitz discusses the relationship between the Egbert Codex and the later Echternach manuscripts mostly in terms of the presumed late-antique model, see Kahsnitz 1982, \textit{Das goldene Evangelienbuch}, p. 88-91.
\item[\textsuperscript{344}] For the Prüm Troper (Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 9448), see Avril and Rabel 1995, \textit{Manuscrits enluminés d’origine germanique}, p. 61-64. See also, Janet Marquardt, \textit{Illustrations of Troper Texts: The Painted Miniatures in the Prüm Troper-Gradual} (Ph.D. Dissertation: University of California, Los Angeles, 1986); Höhl 1996, \textit{Ottonische Buchmalerei in Prüm}, p. 132-138, where she links the iconography of the miniature ultimately to Carolingian iconography represented particularly in ivory carvings from Metz.
\item[\textsuperscript{346}] The motif of the Virgin standing before her throne can be found in two luxury gospel books produced in Echternach in the mid-eleventh century: the Nuremberg \textit{Codex aureus} (fol. 18v) and the Escorial \textit{Codex aureus} (fol. 94r). For the former, see Kahsnitz 1982, \textit{Das goldene Evangelienbuch}, p. 88-92; for the latter, see Boeckler 1933, \textit{Das goldene Evangelienbuch Heinrichs III.}, p. 49-63.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
At a formal level, the detail of Mary standing before an empty throne adds to the sense of dynamism in the miniature by implying that the Virgin has just risen to greet the angel, who himself approaches from the left with his garment and wings slightly overlapping the frame. However, two additional levels of interpretation may be posited. First, the presence of the throne in conjunction with the golden cross atop the large central building in the backdrop—marking the highest point in the miniature—may be understood as an oblique topographical reference to the relic of Mary’s throne as well as to the actual Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth, both of which would have been known through the reports of pilgrims to the Holy Land. Although explicit references to particular locations occur in the manuscript only with the Easter sequence of miniatures, there is nevertheless a discernible and consistent interest on the part of the Gereon master in evoking the locus of his miniatures. A second and more widespread implication of the throne and the ecclesiastical architecture—already mentioned with respect to the Prüm miniature of the Annunciation—involves the close typological association of Mary with the Church itself, which constitutes one of the oldest and most persistent strands of exegesis.

---


348 The location of the Crucifixion has been inscribed near the base of the cross as “Golgotha locus” and, two folios later, the sepulcher of Christ bears the label “ecce locus ubi posuerunt eum.” This interest in the locus or setting of each scene will be indicated throughout the chapter.
involving the Virgin.\textsuperscript{349} Seen in this regard, the miniature serves to link the moment of Christ’s incarnation with the very establishment of the Church itself. Therefore, as the opening miniature of the sacramentary, the Annunciation serves a double function as representing both the beginning of the historical life of Christ, as well as the concomitant beginning of the Church as an institution. However, given both the ubiquity of this ecclesiastical inflection in representations of the Annunciation as well as the presence of a striking green wash of color enclosing Mary and Gabriel, it is clear that the emphasis of miniature has been placed squarely on the incarnation of Christ.

Almost escaping notice, the amorphous mass of green pigment occupies the very center of the image, surrounding the figures and rupturing our view of the cityscape in the background [FIGURE 61]. Boldly interjected by the painter, this intrusion into the pictorial space refrains from any precise delineation of form, relying instead on a fluid manipulation of pigment into layers of color that are seemingly suspended in motion. The apparent spontaneity of the motif belies an immense technical complexity, which is particularly noticeable at its fringe where bands of white, purple, and gold fluctuate across the picture plane, providing a visual antithesis to the linear geometry of the architectural backdrop. One can even detect what is perhaps a purposeful transition in the spectrum of green from the pale, near-white field by Gabriel to the

dark streaks of color enclosing the Virgin.\textsuperscript{350} This subtle variation in color lends the motif a sense of directionality as it frames the two figures, beginning in the left with Gabriel—where it occupies even the space between his feet—and extending beyond the Virgin, terminating at her throne. Examining the verso of the folio reveals the traces of a metalpoint preparatory drawing, which clearly indicates that this curious detail was considered an integral part of the composition from the earliest planning stages.\textsuperscript{351} Given, however, both the centrality of the motif and its vague formlessness, it is not surprising that the detail carries with it a history of misinterpretation. In their descriptions of the miniature, Bloch and Schnitzler referred to the detail variously as a hill or a mountain backdrop (\textit{Bergkulisse}). Moreover, they attempted to derive the motif from Eastern prototypes only to conclude that the painterly tendencies of the artist have distorted—nearly beyond recognition—any trace of the model.\textsuperscript{352} A contemporary scholar, Friedrich Ohly, took the opposite approach in a study dedicated to medieval signifiss. For Ohly, the central motif of the Annunciation miniature marks a moment where color has acquired a life of its own, free from representation. He goes on to argue that, as a pure color

\textsuperscript{350} Maria Gössmann has made a similar observation. See Gössmann 1957, \textit{Verkündigung an Maria}, p. 122.

\textsuperscript{351} See Avril and Rabel 1995, \textit{Manuscrits enluminés d’origine germanique}, p. 72.

formation (Farbgebilde), the de-objectified green “signals the acceptance of the annunciation in faith.” As recently as 2012, the miniature was featured in a special issue of the journal *Gesta*, dedicated to the work of Ohly, where a younger generation of scholars took up his claim suggesting in one essay that the green acts as “a pictorial device designed to block a beholder’s vision of the incarnation.” In a subsequent article, another scholar pointed out how the “greenness demands interpretation.” The motif certainly does demand interpretation, yet a key source for any such interpretation ought to be the full-page titulus, which, despite directly facing the miniature, seems to have escaped the notice of scholars thus far. The titulus not only mentions the motif explicitly by name—that is, the obumbratione, or the overshadowing of the

---


356 Even scholars who have correctly identified the color formation as an overshadowing have neglected to mention the titulus, see Gössmann 1957, *Verkündigung an Maria*, p. 122. Jeremia Kraus voiced concern over the need to search for sources for the green motif in the Annunciation miniature, and although she recognized the mention of the “Überschattung” in the titulus, she nevertheless follows in the vein of Ohly’s interpretation: “Die Farbe Grün bezeichnete im Mittelalter den Glauben, sodass sowohl die Sphäre der beiden Handlungsträger als auch ihr spezielles Verhältnis ausgezeichnet wird.” See Kraus 2005, *Worauf gründet unser Glaube*, p. 145.
Virgin—but also it does so in a manner that links the visual phenomenon implicitly to the very process of viewing the image.

* * *

The Annunciation titulus begins with a direct invocation of the miniature, which is then followed by a rather elaborate explanation of what the image can be seen to depict [FIGURE 62]. Referring first to the exceptional status of Mary, which was proclaimed on earth through the greeting of an angel of God, the titulus recounts in its final part how the Virgin was able to conceive through a spiritual overshadowing, through which she would give birth to the redeemer of the world:

Through the visualization of this picture it is shown how the special prerogative of the virginity of Mary was taught on earth through the salutational annunciation of an angel from the emperor of heaven. Through the overshadowing of a spiritual work, she became the mother of him, through whom the fallen world would be restored.

Despite possessing what some scholars might consider to be an unnecessarily complicated style, both the wording and structure of the Annunciation titulus merit careful consideration. Any philological analysis of the inscription encounters difficulties, however, already with its opening phrase: *huius picti imaginativo.* The term *imaginativus* proves particularly problematic as it

---

357 The Latin text of the titulus follows that of Bloch and Schnitzler with slight modifications—an attempt has been made to preserve the interpunction as indicated in the manuscript, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, *Kölner ottonische Malerschule I*, p. 38.

constitutes the first known use of the word in the Latin language—a word which is otherwise more commonly found beginning in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.\footnote{359 The word \textit{imaginativo} is being used here as the ablative form of a substantivized adjective, the nominative forms of which are \textit{imaginativus}, -\textit{a}, -\textit{um}. Adelheid Wellhausen, of the \textit{Mittellateinisches Wörterbuch} in Munich, kindly made available their records on this and other words from the Gereon tituli.} Many scholars have simply glossed over this unusual word form, and consequently no satisfactory explanation of its meaning in this context has yet been put forth.\footnote{360 See, for example, the translation of Jeremia Kraus, which renders the term incorrectly: “Durch dieses Gemälde wird eindringlich vorgestellt, auf welche Weise der besondere Vorzug der Jungfräulichkeit Marias durch die begrüßende Verkündigung von dem Boten des Herrschers über die Himmel auf Erden gelehrt wurde. Auf übertünchliche Weise überschattet, wurde sie die zukünftige Mutter dessen, durch den der Fall der Welt wieder aufgehoben werden sollte,” in Kraus 2005, \textit{Worauf gründet unser Glaube}, p. 145.} Because no other contemporary examples of the word are known, one is faced with an interpretive dilemma: either the use of \textit{imaginativus} in the Gereon Sacramentary represents a neologism coined by the author of its tituli, or it reflects the otherwise undocumented existence of an understood concept.

In arguing for the latter scenario, it will be important to bear in mind the term’s Greek analog, \textit{phantastikon (φανταστικόν)}.\footnote{361 The close etymological links between the stem forms of the Latin and Greek terms—that is, \textit{imago} and \textit{phantasia}, respectively—are attested already in the writings of Augustine. The literature here is vast. See Peter Dronke, \textit{Imagination in the Late Pagan and Early Christian World: The First Nine Centuries A.D.} (Florence: SISME, Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2003); Jean-Luc Solère, “Des images sans imagination (le lexique de l’image chez S. Augustin,” in \textit{Intellect et imagination dans la philosophie médiévale} II, ed. J. F. Meirinhos (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), p. 705-716; Maria Manuela Brito Martins, “A teoria da \textit{imaginatio} e da \textit{phantasia} augustiniana na tradição filosófica medieval,” in \textit{ibid.}, p. 759-774; see also the essays in \textit{Phantasia-Imaginatio: Colloquio internazionale del Lessico intellettuale europeo}, eds. M. Fattori and M. Bianchi (Rome: Edizioni dell’Ateneo, 1988).} Indeed, an equivalence between the two forms of the same term—Latin and Greek—proves crucial in bridging the chronological gap between the Latin word’s wider use in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and the underlying late-antique tradition, which employed the Greek variant. The clearest definition of the word \textit{imaginativus}
can be found in the fourth book of a philosophical treatise written by William of Conches, the *Philosophia mundi*, which dates to the second decade of the twelfth century. There, in chapter twenty-four, entitled *De cerebro* (On the brain), William discusses the tripartite structure of the human brain, assigning each cell, or ventricle, a cognitive function:

> Sed in capite sunt tres cellulae, in prora, in puppi, in posteriori parte. Prima vero cellula est calida et sicca et dicitur phantastica, id est visua lis vel imaginativa, quia in ea vis videndi est et intelligendi, sed ideo calida et sicca est, ut formas rerum et colores attrahat.  

> But in the brain there are three cells, in the brow, the stern and in the back. The first cell is warm and dry and is called phantastica, that is visual or imaginativa, because in it is the capability to see and to understand; it is warm and dry so that it attracts the forms and colors of things.

William’s treatise provides not only a definition of *imaginativus* as the capability of sight and perception (*vis videndi et intelligendi*), but also it offers a definitive etymological link between the Latin and Greek forms of the term. Tracing the use of the Greek variant, *phantastikon*, back through the Early Middle Ages to its late-antique origins is a difficult task, particularly given the inadequate state of scholarship on the tradition and transmission of medical texts in the period before the twelfth century. *Phantastikon* is, however, explicitly mentioned as the faculty of

---

362 The edition of the *Philosophia mundi* remains that of the *Patrologia latina*, where the treatise has been erroneously attributed to Honorius of Autun. See PL 172: 43-102.


364 See here two important works: Augusto Beccaria, *I codici di medicina del periodo presalernitano, secoli IX, X e XI* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1956); and Florence
imagination in the first book of Macrobius’s widely studied commentary on Cicero’s *Dream of Scipio*, where he describes how the soul descends from the heavens into the human body, acquiring along the way its various cognitive faculties:

In Saturni ratiocinatione et intellegentiam, quod *logistikòn* et *theoretikon* vocant: in Iovis vim agendi, quod *praktikon* dicitur: in Martis animositatis arderem, quod *thymikon* nuncupatur: in solis sentiendi opinandi que naturam, quod *aisthetikon* et *phantastikon* appellant...  

*In the sphere of Saturn it [sc. the soul] obtains reason and understanding, called logistikòn and theoretikon; in Jupiter’s sphere, the power to act, called praktikon, in Mars’ sphere, a bold spirit or thymikon; in the sun’s sphere, sense perception and imagination, aisthetikon and phantastikon...*  

Early-medieval commentators on Macrobius appear to have left behind no important glosses on this passage, nevertheless it remains entirely plausible that students of this difficult text either developed Latin equivalents for these Greek terms, or simply associated Latin variants with them.  

A further source for *phantastikon* can be found in the writings of no less a figure than Augustine himself. In his lengthy epistolary exchanges with his friend Nebridius, for example, 

---

the topic of imagination takes center stage. In the eighth of Augustine’s preserved letters, Nebridius asks the future bishop of Hippo why it is that he cannot compel Augustine’s imagination to reproduce those dreams, which he himself formed with his own imagination (“Cur, quaeso te, non ego phantastico meo tuum phantasticum ea somnia generare compello, quae mihi primo in eo ipse formavi?”).368 A few lines later, Nebridius goes on to explain how the imaginative faculty acts as a conduit, or transitive agent, shuttling images and experiences from the body to the soul: “there are many such things, which, as if through some mode of exchange, are transferred through the imagination from the body to the soul” (“multa talia, quae quasi commercio quodam a corpore in animam phantastice transferuntur”).369 These examples stress the instrumental function of phantastikon—used here either in the ablative case, phantastico, or adverbially, phantastice—and in this sense they offer a striking parallel to the use of imaginativo in the Gereon titulus, where the author similarly emphasizes the agency of the imaginative faculty. It is thus not through the image itself, but rather through its visualization and perception that the annunciation to the Virgin is figured for the viewer.

The curious formulation of the inscription’s opening words finds in fact echoes in two other instances of the instrumental ablative from the very same titulus: the angel’s greeting and the spiritual overshadowing (the annuntiatione salutativa and spiritualis operis obumbratione). The former case refers explicitly to Gabriel’s “salutatio,” or the well-known words with which the angel addressed the Virgin, as reported by the evangelist Luke (1:28): ave [sc. Maria] gratia


plena dominus tecum benedicta tu in mulieribus. This angelic salutation formed the cornerstone of late-antique and early medieval prayers, hymns and tituli concerning the Annunciation—due in large part to its perceived dual function as both praising the Virgin as well as justifying her role as intercessor. Without restating Gabriel’s message verbatim, the Gereon titulus—through its grammar—nevertheless focuses the reader’s attention on the angelic salutation as an effective agent, rendering patently clear that it was through his words that Mary’s special status was taught on earth. It is important to note that in referring to the act of speech the titulus stops short of ascribing it any agency regarding the incarnation itself. The angelic salutation functions instead primarily as a means of acclaiming the Virgin and universally acknowledging her special status.

The titulus ends with a consideration of the precise mechanism of Christ’s incarnation, placing a grammatical emphasis once again on the agency of the operation. As the inscription explains, the nebulous motif depicted in the center of the miniature is without doubt the obumbratio, the overshadowing of the Virgin mentioned in Luke’s Gospel (1:35), where the angel says to Mary: “the holy spirit shall come upon you and the power of the almighty will overshadow you” (spiritus sanctus superveniet in te et virtus altissimi obumbrabit tibi). Gabriel’s explanation occurs as a response to the Virgin’s preceding question, “how shall this be done, for I know not man?” (quomodo fiet istud, quoniam virum non cognosco?), indicating quite clearly that the overshadowing is indeed the exact means by which—and moment at which—Christ was conceived. Despite being a direct reference to the Gospel’s explanation of Christ’s incarnation, the inclusion of the obumbratio in the Gereon Annunciation text distinguishes the titulus as a rarity among other comparable examples. Generally speaking, such tituli tend either to

---


371 Despite several points of similarity the Annunciation titulus from the Hitda Codex (fol. 19v) makes no such mention of the overshadowing of the Virgin: regis caelestis hic angelus fatur · et
paraphrase Luke’s biblical narrative or to underscore the mystery of the divine incarnation.\textsuperscript{372}

Indeed, in order to find comparable examples of inscriptions which mention the \textit{obumbratio}, one must turn to the tituli preserved in literary sources such as the monumental programs of inscriptions composed by Ekkehard for the cathedral at Mainz in the early eleventh century—or, much earlier, the so-called \textit{Tituli historiarum} of Prudentius from the late fourth century.\textsuperscript{373} What is most provocative about the \textit{obumbratio} citation, however, is not its mere presence, but rather the way in which it forms one part of a titulus that exhibits a clear and persistent interest in agency—an interest which furthermore serves to characterize the Annunciation, the miniature and the event, as the impetus and driving factor of both the book itself as well as the liturgical year.

* * *

Returning to the miniature, one can now see how its painter focused his efforts on the moment of Christ’s incarnation with a startling degree of innovation [FIGURE 58]. This is not

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{372} An exhaustive list of tenth-century Annunciation tituli cannot be given here. Nevertheless, a good impression of the range of strategies regarding the employment of such tituli can be found in the illuminated manuscripts from Echternach. The lavish Escorial \textit{Codex aureus}, for example, contains an inscription which simply narrates the event (\textit{ait angelus ad mariam concipies et paries filium quem vocabis i s e u m}), see Boeckler 1933, \textit{Das goldene Evangelienbuch Heinrichs III.}, p. 24. In the Pericopes of Henry III in Bremen, the Annunciation miniature bears an inscription which addresses Gabriel directly (\textit{nuntia mariae fers, angele, mystica sanctae}), see Plotzek 1970, \textit{Das Perikopenbuch Heinrichs III.}, p. 311. And finally, the Nuremberg \textit{Codex aureus} emphasizes the mystery of the incarnation with its riddle-like hexameter inscription (\textit{plasmavit qui te, nascetur conditor ex te}), see Metz 1956, \textit{Codex aureus epternacensis}, p. 52.

\textsuperscript{373} The Annunciation titulus in Ekkehard’s extensive program of tituli comprises eight verses, with the relevant passage reading: “Pneumatis impregnant te virtus et intus obumbrat” (v. 599). See Arnulf 1999, \textit{Versus ad Picturas}, p. 211. Less evocative, the passage in Prudentius offers a précis of the gospel narrative in the form of a dialogue: “‘Sanctus te spiritus’ inquit ‘inplebit, Maria; Christum paries, sacra virgo.’” See \textit{Ibid.}, p. 211 (CCSL 126, p. 395).
to suggest that the Gereon painter was by any means the first to represent the overshadowing of the Virgin.\textsuperscript{374} The motif is, however, rare enough to suggest that the inspiration for depicting the precise mechanism of the incarnation was not a long-standing visual tradition, but rather an intimate acquaintance with both the liturgical and exegetical context of Luke’s narrative. For example, the corresponding liturgy for the fourth Sunday of Advent—that is, the service directly preceeding the Christmas vigil—begins with the popular introductory chant known as the \textit{Rorate caeli}\.\textsuperscript{375} Comprising verses from the book of Isaiah and the Psalms, the \textit{Rorate caeli} likens the coming of the messiah to a cloud of dew that rains down the just and brings forth the savior, and

\textsuperscript{374} Schiller argues erroneously, regarding the presence of the dove in the Annunciation scene from the triumphal arch of Santa Maria Maggiore, that “die Beschattung durch den Heiligen Geist, die durch die Einfügung der Taube verbildlicht ist, läßt sich in der frühen Kunst nicht feststellen.” See Schiller 1966, \textit{Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst} I, p. 45. There are in fact early-medieval examples of the overshadowing of the Virgin, which are few enough to be listed here. Apart from the two Annunciation miniatures from the Cologne school, there are miniatures from two nearly contemporary manuscripts: the Prüm Troper (Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 9448, fol. 1v) and the Benedictional of Aethelwold (London, BL, MS Add. 49598, fol. 5v). Furthermore, two closely related ivory carvings depict the theme as well (G II.62 and II.63). Goldschmidt considers the pieces to be “belgisch-kölnisch?” See also Paul Williamson, \textit{Medieval Ivory Carvings: Early Christian to Romanesque} (London: V&A Publishing, 2010), n. 55, p. 222-223. For the theme in general, see Ernst Kitzinger, “The Descent of the Dove: Observations on the Mosaic of the Annunciation in the Cappella Palatina in Palermo,” in \textit{Byzanz und der Westen}, ed. Irmgard Hutter (Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1984), p. 99-115; and more recently Barbara Baert, “Wind und Sublimierung in der christlichen Kunst des Mittelalters: die Verkündigung,” \textit{Das Münster} 66.2 (2013), p. 109-117.

\textsuperscript{375} The text of the introit reads: “Rorate caeli desuper, et nubes pluant justum: aperiatur terra, et germinet salvatorem. Caeli enarrant glorian dei et opera manuum eius annuntiat firmamentum” (\textit{Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just; let the earth be opened and bud forth a saviour. The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of his hands}), see Lasance 1945, \textit{The New Roman Missal}, p. 130. The \textit{Rorate caeli} is not in Gereon sacramentary itself, but almost certainly formed part of the contemporary liturgy. This assertion can be supported through recourse to a closely related, early tenth-century sacramentary, which has been supplemented in its margins with the texts of both a gradual and an antiphonal: Düsseldorf, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek, MS D 3, see esp. fol. 19r. See also, Edith Boewe-Koob, \textit{Das Antiphonar der Essener Handschrift D 3} (Münster: Aschendorff, 1997), p. 22-25.
was thus understood to be a prefiguration of the Annunciation and the incarnation of Christ. Furthermore, late-antique and early-medieval commentators on Luke’s Annunciation narrative, such as Gregory or Bede, consistently explained the overshadowing of the Virgin as occurring through a mixture of light and matter—the incorporeal and the corporeal. The overshadowing of Mary thus provided the Gereon master the perfect means of conveying the incarnation of Christ as the merging of the divine and the human—the incorporeal and the corporeal. Taking advantage of the possibilities of his medium, the painter offers the viewer his own merging of the incorporeal and the corporeal in the form of this daring motif. Even the very greenness of the overshadowing finds striking parallels in textual exegesis. In his commentary on Luke, for

376 In a similar manner, the prefiguration of Christ’s incarnation is taken up in the Carolingian Stuttgart Psalter (c. 820-830), where Psalm 71 is illustrated with a miniature of the Annunciation (Stuttgart, WLB, MS Bibl. Fol. 23, fol. 83v), which bears as a marginal gloss: “hic psalmus de nativitate Domini dicit: descendit sicut pluvia in vellus, hoc est Deus in utero sanctae Mariae” (this psalm on the nativity of the lord says: he descended like rain on a fleece, that is God in the womb of holy Mary). See Der Stuttgarter Bilderpsalter (Stuttgart: E. Schreiber, 1965), p. 107, 178.

377 As Gregory explains in his Moralia in Job: “Overshadowing is sometimes used in holy scripture for the incarnation of the Lord…for a shadow is caused in no other way than by a light and a body, the power of the highest overshadowed her because the incorporeal light assumed a body in her womb, by which overshadowing she received in herself every refreshment of mind” (obumbratio in sacro eloquio aliquando incarnatio Domini ponitur…quia enim umbra non aliter exprimitur, nisi per lumen et corpus, virtus ei altissimi obumbravit, qui in eius utero lux incorporea corpus sumpsit, ex qua videlicet obumbratione omne in se refrigerium mentis accepit). See Gregory, Moralia in Job (CCSL 143B), p. 1673; for the translation, see Morals on the Book of Job III.2 (Oxford: 1850), p. 557-558. Bede picks up on this line of thought in his commentary on Luke: “Of course a shadow is often formed from a light and a body…thus because the blessed virgin as a pure human being could not bodily take on full divinity, the power of the almighty overshadowed her, that is, the incorporeal light of divinity took up in her a human body” (Umbraque quippe a lumine solet et corpore formari…beata itaque virgo quia quasi purus homo omnem plenitudinem divinitatis corporali corpus nequibat virtus ei altissimi obumbravit, id est incorporea lux divinitatis corpus in ea suscepit humanitatis). See Bede, In Lucae evangelium expositio (CCSL 120), p. 33.

378 For the range of allegorical meanings associated with the color Green, see Christel Meier-Staubach and Rudolf Suntrup, Lexikon der Farbenbedeutungen im Mittelalter, CD-ROM (Cologne: Böhlau, 2011), p. 807-857.
example, Ambrose offers up the following prayer: “O Lord Jesus, would that my mind grow green with the moisture of your rain” (*Utinam, domine Iesu, mens mea pluviae tuae humore viridescat*).\(^{379}\) Gregory explains the effect of the Holy Spirit on the mind of the faithful with a similar analogy: “for the thinking faculty in man, which is dried up by the barrenness of its sin, through the power of the Holy Spirit grows green, like land when it is watered” (*humana namque cogitatio, quae peccati sui sterilitate aruit, per vim sancti spiritus, quasi irrigata terra viridescit*).\(^{380}\) These citations are not intended to suggest that the liturgical and exegetical background of the Annunciation rigidly determined the innovative qualities of the Gereon miniature, but rather that these texts provided a source of inspiration and a point of departure from which the painter could craft his work and through which the viewer could engage the image. Through its bold design and prominent placement within the miniature, the startling detail of the overshadowing of the Virgin compels the viewer to contemplate the process of Christ’s incarnation, which is shown to be the true subject of the painting. Far from representing an isolated occurrence within the manuscript, the artist’s painterly intervention marks the first of several instances where the manipulation of both iconographic details as well as the medium itself serves to construct a broader pictorial program predicated on a contemplative engagement with the life of Christ. The pronounced contemplative nature of this engagement receives its most explicit articulation in the subsequent Nativity miniature.


The scene emerges from a richly painted, dark-purple ground [FIGURE 63]. Having just given birth and cloaked in purple and gold, Mary reclines on an elaborately ornamented bed with her hands covered, legs crossed and her head turned toward her newborn child. The infant rests in a simplified, almost schematic crib, which is positioned slightly off axis at the base of an architectural setting, which prominently features a gable marked with a cross. The crib occupies an ambiguous space that extends beyond the buildings and conspicuously overlaps the edge of Mary’s bed. In an arcaded structure directly behind the crib, the ox and the ass stand over the child without, however, making direct eye contact with him. In the lower left-hand corner Joseph sits on a golden throne with both hands on his knees, gazing anxiously at nothing in particular. Like the viewer of the image, he serves as a witness to the event, not a participant. The position of his throne, transgressing even the outer edge of the frame, underscores his peripheral status. Joseph’s somewhat marginalized placement notwithstanding, the figures of the Gereon miniature form a closed circuit around the infant, which is furthermore anchored in place by the positioning of two compositional book-ends: the depiction of architecture in the upper left-hand corner and that of the rocky ground in the lower right. The result is a strong and

381 Both the ecclesiastical architecture as well as the rocky ground beneath the Virgin can be understood as having topological associations with the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem—the altar of which contained small windows that allowed pilgrims to glimpse down into the grotto of the Nativity below. See Schiller 1966, Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst I, p. 74.

382 For the standard iconography of Joseph and the potential typological significance of his gesture, see ibid., p. 63.
unified composition, the success of which can be judged against the closely related Nativity scene from the Hitda Codex [FIGURE 99].

Despite its striking composition, the constituent elements of the Gereon Nativity mentioned thus far comprise, to a large extent, the basic repertoire of the iconography as it was known in the Early Middle Ages. Because both the paucity and the variety of early comparative material complicate any clear understanding of a formative iconographic tradition, a core iconography can only tentatively be sketched, and will be based here largely on examples ranging from the sixth to eighth centuries. Apart from popular apocryphal elements such as the presence of the midwives or the washing of the Christ child, early Nativity scenes consisted primarily of the following elements: the Virgin, often at the right, reclining in her kline, or bed; Joseph seated in isolation, usually to the left, and depicted in a pensive gesture of grief with his head resting on the palm of his hand; finally, the swaddled infant in his crib, positioned between the two figures, and accompanied without fail by the ox and the ass. To this core imagery, Western artists in

383 Regarding this comparison between the Gereon and Hitda Nativity scenes, Bloch writes that “das Bild des Sakramentars in seinem inneren Zusammenhang durchaus überzeugender wirkt. Alles ist auf das Kind bezogen.” See Bloch 1968, Der Darmstädter Hitda-Codex, p. 96.


385 Of the earliest depictions of the Nativity, the most significant for present purposes are: (1) the scene from the lid of the sixth-century reliquary casket from the Sancta Sanctorum (Vatican,
the ninth and tenth centuries tended to add an architectural backdrop representing the city of Bethlehem. Furthermore, Western depictions of the crib often took on an architectural form which approximates that of an altar, thus lending the motif of the Christ child in the crib a starkly eucharistic connotation. The Nativity scene from the Prüm Troper (c. 995), while certainly exhibiting its own eccentricities, offers an effective point of comparison for the Gereon Nativity, particularly regarding these Western aspects of the iconography [FIGURE 64]. Occupying the middle register of the composition, the Nativity is set in the midst of a highly elaborate cityscape, including the city walls of Bethlehem, which fully enclose the figures in the foreground. The child rests on top of a prominent altar featuring an architectural base and even a marbled

---


386 This tendency can be found already in the ivories associated with the court school of Charlemagne, the so-called ‘Ada Group,’ such as the front cover of the Lorsch Gospels (London, Victoria and Albert Museum, Inv. Nr. 131:8), or a plaque with scenes from the life of Christ (London, British Museum, Inv. Nr. 1856,0623.17). For these ivories, see most recently Rainer Kahnsitz, “‘Die Elfenbeinskulpturen der Adagruppe’. Hundert Jahre nach Adolph Goldschmidt. Versuch einer Bilanz der Forschung zu den Elfenbeinskulpturen der Adagruppe’, Hundert Jahre nach Adolph Goldschmidt. Versuch einer Bilanz der Forschung zu den Elfenbeinskulpturen der Adagruppe’, Zeitschrift des deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft 64 (2010), 9-172, esp. p. 80-96.

387 See Schiller 1966, Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst I, p. 80-81. Schiller hesitates to ascribe across the board a sacramental connotation to depictions of the ‘architectural crib.’ Certain examples, however, such as the Nativity scene from the Fulda Sacramentary in Bamberg (SB, MS Lit. 1, fol. 25r) make the eucharistic connection explicit. See also the Nativity scene from the Galba Psalter (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Rawl. B 484, fol. 85r), where an architectural crib features prominently, Deshman 1995, Benedictional of Aethelwold, p. 19-24.

388 For the Nativity miniature from the Prüm Troper (Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 9448, fol. 4v), see Marquardt 1986, Illustrations of Troper Texts, p. 47-49; Höhl 1996, Ottonische Buchmalerei in Prüm, p. 139-152.
surface. What stands out in comparing the Prüm and Gereon scenes, however, is the extent to which the cityscape and the architectural quality of the crib have been diminished in the Gereon miniature, while at the same time several additional motifs have been introduced, which would appear to characterize the image as a hybrid.

Three details in particular might be understood as indicating a Byzantine pedigree for the Gereon Nativity scene: the presence of the angels adoring the Christ child, the rocky ground depicted beneath the Virgin, and the flash of light in the upper right-hand corner. These three elements number among the hallmarks of the Byzantine iconography of the subject, which almost exclusively placed the Nativity in a cave rather than in the city of Bethlehem, and which furthermore often included angels as part of the narrative of the Annunciation to the shepherds (Luke 2:8-13). A survey of surviving examples from the tenth and eleventh centuries indicates that the closest Byzantine parallels to the Gereon miniature occur not in book painting or mosaic, but rather in the more portable medium of ivory carving. A scene from a tenth-century ivory

---


390 Bloch and Schnitzler resigned themselves to leaving the question of the iconography of the Gereon Nativity open: “Schließlich muß auch hier wieder offenbleiben, ob die ikonographische Hauptvorlage bei der in stilistischer Hinsicht so stark byzantinisch anmutenden Miniatur ebenfalls byzantinisch war oder ob es sich bereits um eine karolingisch-ottonische Umbildung gehandelt hat.” See Bloch and Schnitzler 1970, Die ottonische Kölnische Malerschule II, p. 95. These same three byzantinizing elements in the Gereon Miniature—the angels, the cave and the flash of light—also have a textual basis in the apocryphal literature on the Nativity. See Frauenfelder 1939, Die Geburt des Herrn, p. 13-26.

391 For the Byzantine iconography of the Nativity, see Schiller 1966, Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst I, p. 76-77.

392 Surviving contemporary examples of Byzantine Nativity miniatures are too few in number to draw any firm conclusions. However, the Nativity scene from the Menologion of Basil II, c.
diptych in the treasury of Milan Cathedral, for example, includes all three of the aforementioned motifs in a composition that is strikingly close to that of the Gereon Nativity [FIGURE 65].

The presence of the angels removed from any narrative context, with one even placed directly behind Mary, as well as the depiction of the rocky substrate beneath her bed, constitute particularly remarkable similarities between the two. Yet as Bloch and Schnitzler rightly point out in their discussion of the Gereon miniature, many of the presumably Byzantine elements of Nativity iconography were known and to varying degrees incorporated into Western representations of the subject since at least the eighth century, thus complicating any clear assessment of the Gereon iconography. For example, one often finds depictions of angels in Nativity miniatures from Reichenau manuscripts; or, more unusually, one finds the depiction of a cave in the Nativity miniature from the Fulda Sacramentary in Bamberg, or a flash of light in the Nativity scenes from the Bernward Gospels in Hildesheim.

1000 (Vatican, BAV, MS Vat. Gr. 1613, p. 271) as well as the early-eleventh-century mosaic depiction from Hosios Loukas both exhibit a remarkably different relationship between Mary and the child, which sets them apart from the Gereon miniature.

393 For the Milan diptych (G-W II.42a and II.42b), see Frauke Steenbock, *Der kirchliche Prachteinband im frühen Mittelalter: von den Anfängen bis zum Beginn der Gotik* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1965), p. 112-113, n. 35. The Nativity scenes from the so-called painterly group of Byzantine Ivories, such as the triptych in the Louvre (OA 5004), also display compositional similarities with the Gereon miniature. See Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, *Ivoires médiévaux: Ve-XVe siècle* (Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 2003), p. 98-100, n. 19.

394 See Bloch and Schnitzler 1970, *Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule II*, p. 95, where the primary concern of the analysis was determining the nature of the Hauptvorlage. The fragmentary eighth-century mosaic from the oratory of John VII in Rome is a key monument in this regard.

395 For Reichenau Nativity scenes, see Mütherich 2001, *Das Evangelar Ottos III.*, p. 50-51; for the Fulda Sacramentary (Bamberg, SB, MS Lit. 1, fol. 25r), see Suckale-Redlefsen 2004, *Katalog der illuminierten Handschriften 1.1*, p. 120-127; for the Bernward Gospels (Hildesheim, Domschatz, MS 18, fol. 18r and 174r), see *Das kostbare Évangelier des heiligen Bernwards*, ed. Michael Brandt (1993), p. 30-32, 43-45; Jennifer Kingsley, *The Bernward Gospels: Structuring
Far more interesting than this Byzantine question, however, is a consideration of the extent to which the Gereon illuminator was able to go beyond his sources in order to develop an innovative pictorial composition that could be incorporated into the manuscript’s broader program of illumination. The Nativity miniature offers, in fact, a particularly suitable opportunity for such considerations given that the metal-point preparatory drawing remains clearly visible on the miniature’s verso (fol. 13v) [FIGURE 66]. Studying the verso of the miniature reveals how the preliminary design for the figure of Joseph incorporated the prevalent iconography of the time, which depicted his head resting on the palm of his left hand. For reasons that can only be speculated, the painter decided to adjust this posture so that both of Joseph’s hands rest on his knees in the final version. This rare glimpse at the process of painting ought to serve as a reminder of the deliberate and consciously constructed nature of the miniature. However, in order to understand the possible motives behind the artist’s unusual manipulation of certain key iconographic elements such as the flash of light, or the positioning of Christ’s crib, one must first consider the full-page titulus accompanying the miniature.

* * *

Written in golden letters against a purple ground, the Nativity titulus begins—just as the preceding Annunciation titulus—with a direct reference to the corresponding miniature [FIGURE 67]. Quite remarkably, however, the titulus then launches into an explicit statement

---


396 See Avril and Rabel 1995, Manuscrits enluminés d’origine germanique, p. 72: “dessin préparatoire à la pointe métallique, visible au verso des peintures des ff. 12, 15v et surtout 13 (dessin de Joseph appuyant la tête dans sa main gauche, non repris dans l’exécution peinte).” The folio with the preparatory metal-point drawing is not reproduced in Bloch and Schnitzler’s standard work, nor is the drawing itself mentioned.
on how the miniature ought to be viewed, ending with a rather convoluted formulation of the mystery of Christ’s birth:

Hoc materiale inspectivum · poscit humane mentis oculum diligenti attentione in se ipso exemplare · quam humili partu suae incarnationis · ille mundi mortalia petiit mortalis · in quantitate temporis · qui absque tempore in caelis · vivit immortalis.397

This material inspectivum demands diligent attention from the eye of the human mind, in itself an example of how, through the humble birth of his incarnation, he who lives timeless and immortal in heaven sought out the mortals of the world, as a mortal for a period of time.398

The titulus immediately raises two fundamental questions. First, what is a material *inspectivum* and why would one wish to refer to a miniature in such a complicated manner? And second, what is it precisely about a depiction of the Nativity that demands diligent attention from the mind’s eye?

Regarding the first question, the inclusion of the adjective *materiale* suggests that, unlike its use in the titulus, the word *inspectivum* normally refers to things of an immaterial or conceptual nature rather than a physical object such as a miniature painting. Indeed, the term appears in just such a context in several late-antique and early-medieval texts in reference to the proper division of philosophy. A point of origin, so to speak, can even be determined with


398 As is the case with the Annunciation titulus, scholars have either mistranslated or overlooked the most crucial aspect of the Nativity titulus: the word *inspectivum* (nom. neuter singular of *inspectivus*, -a, -um), which is here used as a substantivized adjective referring specifically to the miniature itself. Henry Mayr-Harting, for example, offers the following translation: “This material picture demands diligent scrutiny from the eye of the human mind, exemplifying in itself, through the humble birth of his incarnation, how he who lives immortal and timeless in heaven, sought out the mortals of the world as a mortal himself.” See Mayr-Harting 1991, *Ottonian Book Illumination II*, p. 117. Peter Bloch’s rendering of the titulus is not faithful to the Latin: “Diese materielle Anschauung fordert von der Einsicht menschlicher Vernunft mit höchster Aufmerksamkeit die eigene Beispielhaftigkeit. Wie wunderbar erlös doch in der niedrigen Geburt seiner Menschwerdung jener das Menschengeschick für alle Zeit von irdischer Vergänglichkeit, der zeitlos in den ewigen Himmeln thront.” See Bloch 1963, *Das Sakramentar von St. Gereon*, p. 40; see also Kraus 2005, *Worauf gründet unser Glaube*, p. 159, fn. 33.
relative certainty. In the year 410 the scholar Rufinus undertook the first Latin translation of a prodigious commentary on the Song of Songs written by Origen, an important third-century Alexandrian theologian. In the third part of the prologue to his commentary, Origen explains how the Greeks divided philosophy into three parts: ethicam, physicam and enopticus (theoricen), the Latin translation of which is given by Rufinus as moralem, naturalem and inspectivum.\textsuperscript{399} Thus, inspectivum enters the Latin language in no small way as a branch of philosophy—a mode of inquiry. Origen goes on to provide a precise definition for the term:

\begin{quote}
Inspectiva dicitur, qua supergressi visibilia de divinis aliquid et caelestibus contemplamur eaque mente sola intuemur, quoniam corporeum supergressi sunt a corporeum.
\end{quote}

Inspectiva is the means by which we surpass visible things to contemplate something of the divine and heavenly, which we see only with the eye of the mind, since these things exceed corporeal vision.\textsuperscript{401}

From the outset, then, this mode of inquiry is securely linked to visual processes, and stays true in both the Greek and Latin to its etymological sense of looking into or through something.

Origen found it necessary to include such an important philosophical taxonomy in a commentary on the Song of Songs—a sensual book staged as a “marriage song” (epithalamium) between a

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{399} “The branches of learning by means of which men generally attain to knowledge of things are the three which the Greeks called Ethics, Physics and Enoptics; these we may call respectively moral, natural and inspective” (Generales disciplinae, quibus ad rerum scientiam pervenitur; tres sunt, quas Graeci ethicam, physicam, enopticus appellant; has nos dicere possumus moralem, naturalem, inspectivam.). See Origen, Commentarium in Canticum Canticorum, ed. W. A. Baehrens, Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte 33 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung, 1925), p. 75. For the English translation, see Origen: the Song of Songs Commentary and Homilies, trans. R. P. Lawson, Ancient Christian Writers 26 (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1957), p. 40. Only fragments of Origen’s Greek text have survived, none of which, however, includes the passage presently under consideration. Regarding the fragments, see Baehrens’s introduction in Origen, Commentarium in Canticum Canticorum, p. xxvii; Lawson 1957, Song of Songs, p. 5-7.
\item \textsuperscript{400} Origen, Commentarium in Canticum Canticorum, p. 75.
\item \textsuperscript{401} The translation here has been adapted from Cassiodorus, Institutions of Divine and Secular Learning, trans. James Halporn (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2004), p. 189.
\end{itemize}
bride and her bridegroom—precisely due to its provocative, at times outright erotic content. By grafting this tripartite system of knowledge onto the three Salomonic books of the Old Testament (that is, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs), Origin effectively recasts these books as the site of a pedagogical progression—a divine philosophy. The reader ought to arrive at the third book only after having received training in the first two modes of thought and “has learned to know the difference between things corruptible and things incorruptible; so that nothing in the metaphors…may cause him to stumble” (*rerum corruptibilium atque incorruptibilium scientiam distinctionemque didicerit, quo in nullo possit ex his figuris...offendi*).⁴⁰² Therefore, understood in this context, *inspectivum* refers not only to a branch of philosophy, but also to its very culmination in that it provides ultimately the means by which one may contemplate God.

Despite a seemingly distant source, both the term and its definition were taken up by a number of late-antique and early-medieval authors ranging from Cassiodorus and Isidore to Alcuin.⁴⁰³ Cassiodorus in particular was fond of the word and included it no less than five times in his commentary on the Psalms as well as in his treatise on divine and secular learning, the *Institutions*.⁴⁰⁴ Manuscripts of this latter text provide a useful opportunity to examine the meaning of *inspectivum* through their diagrammatic representations of the various divisions of

---

⁴⁰² Origen, *Commentarium in Canticum Canticorum*, p. 78. For the English translation, see Lawson 1957, *Song of Songs*, p. 44.

⁴⁰³ The word will be included in the forthcoming fascicle of the *Mittellateinisches Wörterbuch*, fasc. 44 (Munich: Beck, forthcoming). In several instances the manuscripts offer an analagous Latin translation of the Greek *enoptiken/theoretiken* in the form of *contemplativus (-a, -um)*; the two Latin terms ought to be regarded as synonyms.

philosophy, which were included in nearly all of the extant copies of the work. In particular, the third recension of the manuscripts of the *Institutions*—Mynor’s so-called delta (Δ) group—contains diagrams that consistently juxtapose the Latin terms with their Greek antecedents. For example, in a diagram prefacing the section on dialectic from a late-ninth-century Cassiodorus manuscript from St. Gall, the term *inspectivam* (sic) stands as the translation for the Greek *θεορετικη* (*theoretike*). The text of the facing page explains the various divisions of philosophy and goes on to reproduce Origen’s definition of the term verbatim—without, however, mentioning its source. In a similar manner, a Carolingian treatise on dialectic, that of Alcuin, makes use of both the term and its definition in reference to theology itself: “What is Theology? Theology is what in Latin is called *inspectiva*, which is the means by which we surpass visible things and with the mind alone contemplate something of the divine and heavenly” (*Theologica quid est? Theologica est, quae Latine inspectiva dicitur, qua supergressi visibilia de divinis et coelestibus aliiquid mente solum contemplamur*). Therefore, by employing an explicitly philosophical term with a well documented definition, the Gereon Nativity titulus asserts—in no ambiguous terms—that the miniature ought to be understood as a theoretical object, a material contemplation.

In its final part the Gereon inscription expounds upon the birth of Christ in a manner that may at first seem unnecessarily complicated, but upon closer examination resonates in fact with

---


several examples of early-medieval Nativity tituli that use either complicated syntax or conspicuous pairings to underscore the fundamental mystery of the divine incarnation. In the Gereon titulus this strategy takes the shape of an opposition that pits the fleeting and mortal quality of Christ’s time on earth (mortalis in quantitate temporis) against the immortal and timeless nature of his divinity (qui absque tempore in caelis vivit immortalis). The result is not quite as pithy as the variations on the theme found in the slightly later Echternach manuscripts, which make use of clever, riddle-like word play to stress the miraculous nature of Christ’s birth:

Quem sine matre pater, genuit sine semine mater.\(^{408}\)
Whom the father without a mother brought forth, birthed the mother without seed.

Ingeniti genitus fit matris corpore natus.\(^{409}\)
Begotten of the unbegotten, born from the body of the mother.

These two verses of leonine hexameter juxtapose seemingly incongruous pairings in a manner that refers to Christ’s own paradoxical dual nature as both man and God. Several other inscriptions could be marshaled that hinge on a similar juxtaposition.\(^ {410}\) The opening lines of the near-contemporary Nativity titulus of Ekkehard for the Cathedral at Mainz, for example, stage a particularly effective pairing which characterizes Christ as both infant and king:

Nascitur ut cernis verbum sub pondere carnis.

\(^{408}\) This titulus accompanies the Nativity miniatures in the Nuremberg Codex aureus (fol. 18r) as well as the Brussels Lectionary (Brussels, BRB, MS 9428, fol. 7v). Printed in MGH Poetae V, p. 442, 448. See also, Schaller 1977, Initium carminum latinorum, n. 13169. This verse also appears as a trope.

\(^{409}\) This titulus accompanies the Nativity miniature in the Pericopes of Henry III (Bremen, UB, MS B 21, fol. 11r). Printed in MGH Poetae V, p. 445. The titulus itself is highly abraded, so much so that Plotzek demurred from providing a corrected reading. See Plotzek 1970, Das Perikopenbuch Heinrichs III., p. 311, fn. 135. See also, Schaller 1977, Initium carminum latinorum, n. 8088.

\(^{410}\) See, for example, the Nativity titulus from the Warmund Sacramentary in Ivrea (fol. 17v), printed in MGH Poetae V, p. 458.
Volvitur et pannis dominus infans rexque perennis.\textsuperscript{411}

You see how the Word is born under the weight of flesh. The lord is swaddled: infant and eternal king.

Hinted at in the first line of Ekkehard’s titulus is a crucial play that occurs between what the viewer reads in the text and then sees in the corresponding depiction. Indeed, the conscious complexity of these early-medieval Nativity tituli is predicated precisely on the discrepancy between the profound significance of Christ’s birth and his exceedingly humble manifestation in the form of a lowly infant. The Gereon titulus engages in a similar rhetoric, compelling the viewer—through the use of both its unusual terminology and complicated phrasing—to approach the miniature with “diligent attention” to its deeper meaning.

* * *

Returning once again to the Gereon Nativity, one could ask what exactly about the miniature demands such diligent attention from the eye of the viewer’s mind [FIGURE 63]. The image provides a startling answer in the flash of light descending from its upper right-hand corner. In formal terms, this passage of luminous white is striking in its complexity. Beginning with solid form and line, the pigment dissolves into a diaphanous wash as it falls toward the ground. Surrounding Mary’s bed, the light spills onto the earth below. More than a mere symbol, the depiction of light touches upon three separate Gospel passages while nevertheless maintaining its own semantic ambiguity: the star of Bethlehem (\textit{stella in oriente}, Matt. 2:9), the brightness of God surrounding the angel mentioned in Luke (\textit{claritas Dei}, Luke 2:9), and, most

importantly, the light in the darkness mentioned in the opening of John’s Gospel (lux in tenebris, John 1:5). By painting this motif against what is by far the darkest background of the manuscript’s entire pictorial cycle, the painter has successfully evoked a night scene, through which he was able to create his own visual gloss on the light in the darkness—that fundamental concept of the Nativity elaborated upon both in the early-medieval commentary tradition as well as in the liturgy of the mass.\(^{412}\)

Several late-antique and early-medieval commentators on the Nativity discuss the event—and the flash of light in particular—explicitly in terms of training one’s mental vision or the mind’s eye. Gregory the Great gives perhaps the most extended discussion of the topic not—as one might expect—in his Christmas homily, but rather in a passage from his *Moralia* where he considers a line from Job stating that “God speaks once and does not repeat the same thing twice” (*semel loquitur Deus et secundo id ipsum non repetit*, Job 33:14).\(^{413}\) For Gregory, this passage refers at its deepest level to Christ and to the profound implications of his birth as the incarnation of God’s Word. Such a line of thought leads Gregory to ponder the theme of the Nativity precisely through the analogy of a flash of light, in this case candlelight, which alerts the mind to the presence of that which it cannot see.

> Et quis digne fari queat illum ineffabilem nativitatem…Quae videlicet nos mirari possimus, sed intueri minime valemus, Illius autem nativitatis vim iam mirari posse, aliquantus videre est. Sed quomodo videmus quod nequaquam comprehendimus? Est autem quod de usu carnis trahere ad sensum spiritus debemus. Nam si quis in tenebris clausis oculis iaceat, atque ante eum subitum lucernae lumen erumpat, clausi eius oculi

\(^{412}\) With its dark and starry sky, the Nativity miniature from the Prüm Troper is similarly set at night. On depictions of night in medieval art, see Brigitte Borchhardt-Birbaumer, *Imago noctis: Die Nacht in der Kunst des Abendlandes* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2003), p. 171-220. However, Borchhardt-Birbaumer neglects to mention either of these two examples.

And who can worthily speak of that ineffable nativity... We can marvel at these things, but it is beyond our power to look into them. But to be able to wonder at that mighty nativity is in a certain degree to see it. But how do we see that which we do by no means comprehend? But we must borrow an instance from the habits of the body to illustrate the feelings of the mind. If any one is lying down in a dark place, with his eyes closed, and the light of a candle suddenly flashes before him, his eyes, though closed, are so struck by the very approach of the light that they open... And thus are we, when we endeavor to behold ought of the incomprehensible nativity. For even in this, that the mind is struck with surprise at the shining, and sees in a manner what it is not able really to see, it beholds as if in darkness the power of the light with closed eyes.

For Gregory the flash of light triggers a shift in vision from the corporeal to the spiritual—a shift that stands furthermore as a precondition for the proper contemplation of the Nativity. In his homily on the Nativity, Bede similarly describes the flash of light surrounding the angel in Luke’s narrative as the catalyst for a shift in vision: “it was unquestionably fitting that the herald of his Nativity should also bathe the bodily sight of human beings with the freshness of heavenly light” (*dignum profecto fuit ut praeco nativitatis illius etiam corporales hominum visus novitate caelestis perfunderet lucis*). Jerome, too, exclaims in his homily on the Nativity a strong desire to look upon the manger and to see the way in which the Word took on human form. He then goes on to explain the popular etiology for the date of the Nativity as the first day of the year in

---


417 Jerome, *Homilies II*, trans. Sister Marie Ewald (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), p. 222: “O, if only I were permitted to look upon that manger in which the Lord lay.” Several lines later, Jerome explains how his desire to see the Nativity touches upon the very core of Christ’s incarnation: “Because we could not see Him as long as He was the Word, let us see His flesh because it is flesh; let us see how the Word was made flesh.”
which the duration of light increases. These remarkable expositions are linked by a consideration of the Nativity as a site for mental vision and thus offer an important parallel to the Gereon miniature and its titulus. The process of contemplation with which Gregory and other theologians approached the Nativity is furthermore entirely in line with the definition of inspectivum referred to in the Gereon titulus.

The flash-of-light motif, however, finds its most extraordinary elaboration in the text of the sacramentary itself. The liturgy for the Nativity, which is marked in the manuscript by a large golden initial (fol. 22r), begins with an introductory prayer that refers specifically to the divine light illuminating the night of Christ’s birth: \(^{418}\)

Deus qui hanc sacratissimam noctem veri luminis fecisti inlustratione clarescere, da quaesumus ut cuius lucis mysteria in terra cognovimus eius quoque gaudiis in caelo perfruamur. \(^{419}\)

God, who has brightened this most holy night with the shining of the true light, grant, we beseech you, that we may enjoy in heaven the delights of him whose mystical light we have known on earth. \(^{420}\)

Implicit here is a distinction between corporeal light and the true, mystical light made possible through Christ’s incarnation. A few moments later in the liturgy, in the special preface to the canon of the mass (fol. 22v), the dual theme of light and mental vision reaches its culmination in a passage that resonates strongly with the theoretical mode of thought referred to in the Gereon titulus:

---

\(^{418}\) The initial is reproduced in Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, *Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule I*, p. 88. It should be reiterated here that the liturgy for the Nativity occurs some ten folios later than the miniature itself, which along with the Annunciation miniature is placed before the canon of the mass and thus serves as an opening to the book.


Quia per incarnati verbi mysterium nova mentis nostrae oculis, lux tuae claritatis influsit ut dum visibiliter deum cognoscimus, per hunc invisibilium amore rapiamur.\textsuperscript{421}

Through the mystery of the Word-Made-Flesh your splendor has shone forth before our mind’s eye with a new radiance, and through him, whom we recognize as God made visible, we are carried away in love of things invisible.\textsuperscript{422}

Therefore, both the miniature’s titulus and the corresponding passage in the liturgy call upon the viewer to go beyond a mere corporeal viewing of the scene and to see the miniature instead with the contemplative sight of the mind’s eye. This shift in vision constitutes, moreover, an essential component of the commentary tradition on the subject from Late Antiquity through to the Early Middle Ages.

*   *   *

The complexity of the flash of light that features so prominently in the Gereon Nativity thwarts any attempt to restrict its meaning to a single iconography. One ought to consider instead how the passage of paint triggers an engagement with the well-established discourse on the subject as it was developed in both the commentary tradition and the liturgy itself. As has been demonstrated, the various strands of this discourse converge on the importance of mental vision or the mind’s eye for understanding the profound significance of Christ’s birth. In the miniature, the theme of proper vision extends beyond the detail of the flash of light to play out in the figures themselves, where one notices a conspicuous disparity in their ability to see Christ. Both Joseph and the beasts stare aimlessly at nothing in particular, whereas Mary and the angels gaze in adoration at the swaddled infant. The artist constructs his argument about vision not just through the careful positioning of glances, but also through the unusual placement of Christ’s crib, which overlaps Mary’s bed and extends into her space. Just as with the overshadowing of the Virgin in

\textsuperscript{421} Deshusses 1992, \textit{Le sacramentaire grégorien} I, p. 100.

\textsuperscript{422} See Lasance 1945, \textit{The New Roman Missal}, p. 798.
the Annunciation miniature, the Gereon master has once again taken up fundamental concepts of his subject at hand and elaborated upon them in details which have hitherto been considered simply as the mark of a painterly tendency.

*Hic erit contemplandum: The Easter Sequence*

The theme of contemplative vision finds further development in the group of miniatures prefacing the liturgy for Easter, which opens with a powerful scene depicting the crucified Christ, mourned by the figures of Mary and John [FIGURE 68].

A thorned cross of solid gold rises from a highly striated ground—identified by an inscription as *golgotha locus*—and extends beyond the upper frame of the image into the space of the gable. With dramatically elongated arms and downward-pointing fingers, the dead body of Christ hangs from the cross with his eyes closed and his torso slumped to the right. Having fallen in the opposite direction, his head rests limp against his shoulder. The only hint of majesty remains the prominent cruciform halo, which nevertheless tilts off axis echoing the falling of his head. The protruding belly, which juts to the left, adds to the effect of pathos evoked by his lifeless body. Even the knot of his loincloth, often

423 The sequence of three miniatures can be found directly following the liturgy for the Easter Vigil and before the full-page initial marking the mass for Easter Sunday. In comparison with the Crucifixion miniatures found in the majority of sacramentaries—where they most often mark the beginning of the Canon, the *Te igitur*—the location of the Gereon miniature is rather unusual, but not unprecedented. See Springer 1889, *Bilderschmuck in den Sakramentarien*, p. 363-364; Rudolf Suntrup, “Te igitur-Initialen und Kanonbilder in mittelalterlichen Sakramentarhandschriften,” in *Text und Bild. Aspekte des Zusammenwirkens zweier Künste in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit*, eds. Christel Meier and Uwe Ruberg (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1980), p. 278-382.

424 On the appearance of this particular form of the cross in early-medieval manuscripts, see Beatrice Kitzinger, *Cross and Book: Late-Carolingian Breton Gospel Illumination and the Instrumental Cross* (Ph.D. Dissertation: Harvard University, 2012), p. 108-146.
positioned centrally, has been shifted sharply to the left, amplifying both the shape of the belly and the torsion of his chest. If his upper body appears drained of composure, lacking any sign of vim or vigor, then his legs, in contrast, still bear their weight, which is supported by the suppedaneum. The artist achieves this effect in part through a restrained contrapposto, whereby the left leg has received sharper modeling bringing it slightly to the fore and overlapping the right. That Christ’s upper-body forms the focal point of the painting can be seen in the pronounced visual contrast between the abundance of Christ’s flesh, splayed out in a thick application of white pigment, and the richly-cloaked bodies of Mary and John, replete with ornate detail. Apart from their faces, only the left hand of John is exposed as he holds a book against his chest. Unlike Mary, with her downcast eyes, John looks up at Christ. In fact he is the only one in an otherwise tightly bound composition to engage with the other figures. Both the relative isolation of the figures and the overall stillness of the composition underscore the fact that Christ has died—the action of the narrative has already passed and what remains is a scene of reverent contemplation.

* * *

Along with certain landscape elements, the figures of Mary and John—with their slender proportions, luxurious garments, and their gestures of grief—have been understood by scholars

---

425 For a discussion of the loincloth (perizonium) as well as the variety of Christ’s garments found in Crucifixion scenes, see Lawrence Nees, “On the Image of Christ Crucified in Early Medieval Art,” in Il Volto Santo in Europa: Culto e immagini del Crocifisso nel Medioevo, eds. Michele Camillo Ferrari and Andreas Meyer (Lucca: Istituto Storico Lucchese, 2005), p. 345-386.

426 Reiner Hauss herr places great weight on the difference in composure between Christ’s upper and lower body, assigning different models for each. See Reiner Hauss herr, Der tote Christus am Kreuz: Zur Ikonographie des Gerokreuzes (Bonn Diss. 1963), p. 50-51.
as the chief indicators of a strong dependence on Middle Byzantine models of the Crucifixion. As the first to propose a Byzantine model for the scene, Albert Boeckler pointed in particular to the figure of Mary with her covered hands, whom he saw as resonating with several representations of the same figure in Byzantine ivory carvings from the tenth century, such as a plaque from Dumbarton Oaks, which depicts the Descent from the Cross [FIGURE 69].

While the appearance of such foreign elements in the Cologne miniature is entirely plausible—the luxuriously ornamented garments are in this regard strongly suggestive—one ought to be cautious of decontextualizing Byzantine comparanda in the search for exact parallels. In the case of the Dumbarton Oaks plaque mentioned by Boeckler, the nearly identical positioning of Mary’s hand close to her face relates to the particular circumstances of a unique iconography, in which—as Kurt Weitzmann has argued—the Byzantine sculptor has attempted to combine into one scene two narrative moments of the Descent from the Cross. Given its own highly innovative and unusual position within the corpus of Byzantine Crucifixion ivories, it is highly unlikely that the Dumbarton Oaks plaque offers any indicator of a possible model for the Gereon

---


428 Formerly in the Chalenden collection (G-W II.71), the ivory is now in the collection of Dumbarton Oaks (n. 52.12). See *Dumbarton Oaks Catalogues* III, ed. Kurt Weitzmann (Washington, D.C.: J. J. Augustin, 1972), n. 27, p. 65. Along with the Dumbarton Oaks ivory, Boeckler points to two other plaques (G-W II.102 and II.103) as well as to the miniatures from the Leo Bible (Vatican, BAV, MS Reg. Gr 1b).

429 See Weitzmann 1972, *Dumbarton Oaks Catalogues* III, p. 66-67. A good comparison in terms of the narrative of the Descent from the Cross can be seen in the Quedlinburg ivory (G-W II.25).
miniature. Indeed, representations of Mary with covered hands at the Crucifixion can already be found in Western works from the eighth and ninth centuries, such as the fragmentary mosaic from the oratory of John VII in Rome, the Crucifixion scene from the Harrach diptych, and the Carolingian ivory plaque now adorning the Pericopes of Henry II—just to name a few examples. The general ambiguity of such distinctions between East and West, however, is embodied in what is arguably the closest overall parallel to the Gereon miniature, a work that is at once Byzantine and Western: the mid-eighth-century Crucifixion fresco in the Theodotus Chapel at Santa Maria Antiqua in Rome [FIGURE 70]. Apart from modifications to the setting and to the garments of the figures, as well as the removal of Longinus and Stephaton, the Gereon miniature appears to follow in a tradition represented by this important work of art. Evidence of its wider influence on Ottonian art can be seen in the Crucifixion miniature painted by the Gregory master in a Sacramentary at Chantilly [FIGURE 71]. Although nearly contemporary with the Gereon scene, the Chantilly Crucifixion has rarely been mentioned by scholars as a suitable comparison, perhaps due to the fact that Christ is depicted as living, as he is

430 For the fragment of the oratory mosaic, see Nordhagen 1990, Mosaics of John VII, p. 78-79; for the Harrach diptych, see most recently Rainer Kahnsitz 2010, Die Elfenbeinskulpturen der Adagruppe, p. 65-75; For the ivory on the cover of the Pericopes of Henry II, see Celia Chazelle, “Charles the Bald, Hincmar of Rheims and the Ivory of the Pericopes of Henry II,” in Lay Intellectuals in the Carolingian World, eds. Patrick Wormald and Janet Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 139-161.


in the Theodotus fresco. Although the distinction between a living and dead Christ bears with it important interpretive and theological implications, from a formal point of view the difference is negligible and easily modified. Furthermore, significant points of overlap between the two miniatures can be found in both the figures of Mary and John—in their proportion, drapery, and gesture—as well as in the treatment of the landscape—in the golden foliage at the base of the cross and the solid background topped by a lighter band of color. The Gereon scene’s chief deviation from these otherwise closely related depictions remains the importance given to representing Christ’s lifeless upper body, a feature of the miniature that has already been demonstrated as serving as its focal point. Signaled by Reiner Hausserr as an object of intense study by other artists in contemporary Cologne, typified above all by the innovative achievements of the Gero Cross and to a lesser extent the Lothar Cross, the dramatic emphasis on the dead Christ ought to be understood as a particularly contemporary feature of the Cologne miniature. Reflecting back on these iconographical considerations, one can conclude that parsing the Gereon miniature into its Greek and Latin components proves to be an inherently fraught exercise. One ought to consider instead the extent to which the painter has once again adapted his various sources to suit his own needs, or rather those of the manuscript’s broader pictorial program. In this regard, a consideration of the full-page titulus can help provide an interpretive context against which the artist’s formal innovations may be better understood.

*   *   *

Set within a sumptuous frame, the titulus to the Crucifixion appears in a golden script composed primarily of capital letters [FIGURE 72]. The scribe made full use of the space allotted him, even going so far as to fill the final line-and-a-half with non-linguistic characters—including an entire row of triple Xs—likely to prevent too large of a blank space at the end of the
titulus, thus maintaining the visual coherence of the page. The titulus distinguishes itself from the various other inscriptions of the Gereon Sacramentary at both a formal and textual level. Regarding its formal qualities, the Gereon text is the only such inscription to appear against a ground of unadorned, blank parchment. Peter Bloch argued that this modification represents an expression of grief, similar to how the Church itself sheds any sign of luxury or adornment during Good Friday.\(^4\)\(^{33}\) Although Bloch neglected to provide any evidence in support of his argument, one may consider it at least plausible on the basis of a recurrence of this very same feature in the Hitda Codex, where both the titulus and the Crucifixion miniature appear against a ground of blank parchment.\(^4\)\(^{34}\) Setting aside for a moment the interpretive implications of this unusual modification, one ought to consider the distinctive content of the titulus as well. While in its second part the titulus conforms broadly to the thematic tendencies of Carolingian and Ottonian Crucifixion tituli—emphasizing, in progression, the divinity of Christ, the magnitude of his death and, finally, the soteriological implications vis-à-vis the individual viewer—the opening of the titulus, in contrast, proves quite unusual even within the context of the Gereon

---

\(^{4}\)\(^{33}\) In his words: “Hier allein fehlt der Purpurgrund, — zum Zeichen der Trauer, wie auch die Kirche am Karfreitag ihre ganze Pracht verhüllt.” See Bloch 1963, Das Sakramentar von St. Gereon, p. 42.

\(^{4}\)\(^{34}\) Regarding this aspect of the Hitda Crucifixion, Christoph Winterer, unlike Bloch, argues that the blank parchment should be understood as white, thus standing in alignment with the manuscript’s broader metaphysical light topos. See Winterer 2010, Das Evangeliar der Äbtissin Hitda, p. 43. Jeremia Kraus attaches no significance to this feature, apart from marking a general process of reduction from the model (most closely represented by the Gereon Crucifixion) toward the most reduced form of the Crucifixion in the Giessen Gospels. See Kraus 2005, Worauf gründet unser Glaube, p. 363-364. For the stripping of the altar in Carolingian Good-Friday liturgies, see Les ordines romani du haut Moyen Age, ed. Michel Andrieu (Louvain, 1951), n. 24, 27, 28 and 29; also Römer 1955, Liturgie des Karfreitags, p. 62-63; Chazelle 2001, Crucified God, p. 36-37; and most recently Louis van Tongeren, “Imagining the cross on Good Friday: rubric, ritual and relic in early medieval Roman, Gallican and Hispanic liturgical traditions,” in Envisioning Christ on the Cross: Ireland and the Early Medieval West, eds. Juliet Mullins, Jenifer Ní Ghrádaigh and Richart Hawtree (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2013), p. 34-51.
Sacramentary itself. Unlike the tituli from the Gereon Sacramentary considered thus far, the Crucifixion titulus conspicuously refrains from any direct reference to the miniature as an image, opening instead with an emphasis on the holiness of “this cross:”

Huius crucis sanctitas per se generalissima · tui cordis imum o homo · compellat gratulative trahere gemitum ex se ipso · omnium inmutabilir tem · te in sceptrum sui regni reponendum · sustulisse amare mortis passivum.435

Let the holiness of this cross, which is itself the highest being, compel the depths of your heart, O man, to utter a groan of thanks that the one who has unchanging power over all things undertook the bitter suffering of death to return you to the scepter of his kingdom.436

The disavowal of any mediation through the image resonates with the highly empathic mode of viewing established in the titulus: the viewer is addressed directly—a unique moment in the manuscript—and compelled to issue a groan of thanks (gemitum gratulative) from the depths of his heart.437 This call for a groan or sigh from the viewer can be understood as more than just a corporeal response to Christ on the cross. Indeed, the model here is Christ’s own groan, described most prominently in the Gospel of Matthew (27:50): “and Jesus again crying with a loud voice yielded up the ghost” (Jesus autem iterum clamans voce magna emisit spiritum). The last cry of the crucified God thus marked the moment of his expiration.

435 For the text of the titulus, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule I, p. 39, 98.


437 For examples of the use of second-person verb forms in Crucifixion tituli, see Schlosser 1892, Schriftquellen zur Geschichte der karolingischen Kunst, p. 354-363.
The artist, in his own way, keys the viewer to that very moment of Christ’s death by depicting the sky darkening around the figures of Mary and John [FIGURE 73]. The nebulous formations surrounding these two figures have hitherto provoked a range of opinions regarding the ability of the painter to evoke what several scholars have assumed to be references—either through modification or through misunderstanding—to Agra and Gareb, the two hills surrounding Golgotha. This assumption is based on the prominent depiction of the two hills in several pre-iconoclastic depictions of the Crucifixion, including the aforementioned fresco in the Theodotus Chapel at Santa Maria Antiqua and two roughly contemporary icons preserved at Mount Sinai [FIGURE 74]. Yet as clear as the compositional analogy is between the Gereon Crucifixion and the landscape elements of these much earlier examples, it is equally clear that the Gereon artist had little, if any intention of depicting the two hills in his own miniature. To assume, as does Ulrich Kuder, that the painter either failed to understand his model or simply lacked the capacity to depict a basic landscape setting amounts to a serious misjudgment of both the artist’s demonstrated proclivities for depicting atmospheric phenomena as well as the


Indeed, a close examination of the miniature reveals that the painterly formations surrounding the figures of Mary and John are not passages of brighter pigment applied to the darker ground, as they are nearly always described in the scholarly literature. Quite the contrary, the lighter purple color constitutes in fact the base layer, which is also visible as a thin band in the uppermost portion of the miniature. To this ground of light purple, the artist added a wash of much darker pigment surrounding the majority of the cross while falling over and around the flanking figures. The artist’s decision not to encompass the figures with the darker pigment provides, on a formal level, the differentiation necessary to perceive the visual effect of the shift and also, on a broader level, distinguishes Mary and John in a manner that resonates with slightly later Crucifixion miniatures, such as those from two Echternach gospel books where the two figures are similarly set apart from the darkened background. The application of the paint itself thus enacts a darkening of the miniature, one which no doubt refers to the eclipse that occurs in the Passion narrative from the sixth to ninth hour—in other words, the moment of Christ’s death. Furthermore, the upper line of demarcation between the light and dark passages of the background directly bisects the symbols of the sun and the moon—two symbols that the Gereon painter has left undifferentiated in a further effort, perhaps, to emphasize the extinguishing of light. A similar emphasis can be

440 Kuder characterizes the nature of the Gereon artist’s reception as one of “mangelnde Konsequenz und formale, gedankenlose Übernahme.” See Kuder 2013, Der Hitda-Codex, p. 103.

441 For the later Echternach Crucifixion miniatures (Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 10438, fol. 95r; London, BL, MS Egerton 608, fol. 88r), see Plotzek 1970, Das Perikopenbuch Heinrichs III., p. 213.

442 The biblical description of the eclipse can be found in the synoptic accounts of the Passion: Matt. 27:45, Mark 15:33, and Luke 23:44.

443 For further literature on the depictions of the sun and moon in Crucifixion scenes, see Josef Engemann, “Zur Position von Sonne und Mond bei Darstellungen der Kreuzigung Christi,” in

184
found in the tituli surrounding the personifications of the sun and the moon in the Crucifixion miniature from the Uta Codex, which state that the two celestial bodies have been eclipsed due to Christ’s death. Therefore, both the miniature and the titulus from the Gereon Sacramentary exhibit innovative ways of signaling to the viewer the moment of Christ’s death.

Moreover, the emphasis on a direct, bodily engagement of the viewer with the moment of Christ’s death links both the miniature and its titulus to contemporary devotional practices that stress the involvement of the viewer with respect to images of the Crucifixion. The proceedings of the Synod of Arras in 1025, for example, contain a passage devoted specifically to the image of Christ on the Cross (Section XIV, *De imagine Salvatoris in cruce*)—one of the very few contemporary textual sources pertaining to the viewing of actual works of art. Here the author of the acts of the Synod, Bishop Gerard of Cambrai, discusses in detail the actual process of viewing an image of the Crucifixion, which he considers first in terms of narrative before focusing on Christ’s death and, in particular, the bodily response it ought to engender in the viewer:

*Dum hanc speciem venerantur, Christum in cruce ascendentem, Christum in cruce passum, in cruce morientem, Christum solum, non opus manuum hominum adorant. Non enim truncus ligneus adoratur, sed per illam visibilem imaginem mens interior hominis*

---


The sun and moon tituli from the Uta Codex (Munich, BSB, CLM 13601, fol. 3v) read: *Igneus sol obscuratur in aethere, quia sol justiciae patitur in cruce (The fiery sun is darkened in the sky because the Sun of Justice suffers on the cross); Eclypsin patitur et luna, quia de morte Christi dolet ecclesia (Even the moon suffers eclipse because the Church mourns over the death of Christ).* See Cohen 2000, *The Uta Codex*, p. 65.

When they venerate this image—Christ ascending the Cross, Christ suffering on the Cross, dying on the Cross—Christ alone, not the work of human hands, is adored. It is not the piece of wood that is adored, but rather by means of the visible image that the interior mind of man is stirred, and through this, the suffering of Christ and the death he undertook for us is inscribed in the flesh of the heart, so that each individual recognizes how much he owes his redeemer.

In this highly suggestive parallel to the process of viewing articulated by the Gereon Crucifixion and its inscription, the viewer is expected to focus his or her attention on Christ’s suffering and death. By engaging in such contemplation, the viewer ought to go so far as to register Christ’s death bodily in order to foster an awareness of his or her own individual stake in Christ’s sacrifice. In a similar manner, the direct appeal in the Gereon titulus to the viewer’s heart and to his recognition that Christ’s death pertains specifically to him (te in sceptrum sui regni reponendum), casts the miniature in a strong light of personal devotion.

Therefore, it is indeed indicative that the titulus, in emphasizing the sanctity of the cross and the solemnity of the event depicted, forgoes its purple background. If not in direct reference to contemporary practices of the Good-Friday liturgy, then certainly at a formal level, at least, the modification constitutes one of several strategies through which the visual qualities of the miniature and the titulus focus the viewer’s attention on the crucified Christ. For his part, the painter carefully depicted the cross in a manner that strongly emphasizes its physicality. First, a double-banded white highlight runs across both the left edge of the vertical shaft and the lower edge of the crossbeam. The white highlight finds its contrasting counterpart in the thick black outline that, along with a minium lowlight, traces the opposite edges of the cross. The artist

---

446 For the acts of the Synod of Arras, see PL 142: 1306a-1307b. See also the forthcoming edition of the acts of the Synod edited by Steven Vanderputten and Diane Reilly for the Corpus Christianorum series (2014).
furthermore made a particular effort to position perspectively both the suppedaneum and the
plaque for the cross’s inscription so that they are both seen from below. The combined effect of
these modifications endows the cross with a presence that nearly lifts off the page into a space
between the viewer and the picture plane. Furthermore, the artist’s decision to depict the cross as
thorned—that is, as a Steckkreuz—only heightens its dual role in the miniature: the cross
simultaneously forms part of a historical representation of the Crucifixion at Golgotha as well as
serving as an object of personal and liturgical devotion for the viewer. The heightened devotional
emphasis on the dead body of Christ speaks to another aspect of the Crucifixion miniature in
relation to the broader pictorial program of the manuscript. Quite unlike the strategies at work in
the miniatures of the Annunciation or the Nativity—where the incarnational theme of the Word-
made-flesh defies representation and the ultimate subject is therefore largely absent from the
miniatures—the artist’s approach in the Crucifixion is one of direct engagement. The subject of
the miniature—that Christ suffered death as a mortal—is laid bare before the viewer’s eyes with
an intensity unmatched in any other miniature from the manuscript. Turning the page, the
subject—the figure of Christ—disappears from sight and the viewer is once again called upon to
engage in a contemplative mode of vision.

*   *   *

Directly following the Crucifixion, a pair of miniatures depicts two events that deal
ultimately with Christ’s resurrection. On the left side of the opening, Pilate orders guards to
stand watch over Christ’s tomb; and on the right, the two Marys—Mary Magdalene and Mary,
mother of James—have come to anoint Christ’s body only to learn from an angel that he has
risen from the dead [FIGURES 75 and 76]. While the latter scene may be considered standard
fare in terms of contemporary Passion iconography, the miniature of Pilate and the guards, in
contrast, marks a seemingly unique occurrence in the history of early-medieval art up to this point.\footnote{\textsuperscript{447}} Set within a richly decorated architectural structure representing his tribunal, Pilate is seated to the right in a chair of state, dressed in an ornate costume marking him perhaps as a Jewish king. He gestures toward a group of three soldiers depicted to the left.\footnote{\textsuperscript{448}} Occupying the space of the dialogue between Pilate and the soldiers, a golden inscription begins with a precise explanation of the scene and ends by hinting at Christ’s resurrection:

\begin{quote}
\text{Pilatus qui hic selle curuli \textit{\cdot} in pictus precepit custodiam de Christo \textit{\cdot} nec moeret in Tartaro.}\footnote{\textsuperscript{449}}
\end{quote}

\textit{Pilate, depicted here on a chair of state, ordered guards for Christ, who nevertheless does not mourn in Tartarus.}

The inspiration for both the titulus as well as the artist’s representation of the scene derives from the end of Matthew’s Passion narrative (27:62-66), where the evangelist explains that the chief priests of the Jews—not the guards, as in the miniature—came to Pilate and requested a watch over Christ’s tomb, fearing that his followers might steal his body in the night and then falsely claim that Christ had risen from the dead.\footnote{\textsuperscript{450}} Pilate agreed to their demand and ordered a group of guards.

\footnote{\textsuperscript{447} For later representations of Pilate being asked to guard the tomb, see Colum Hourihane, \textit{Pontius Pilate, Anti-Semitism and the Passion in Medieval Art} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), p. 208-210.}

\footnote{\textsuperscript{448} On the representation of Pilate as a Jew, see \textit{Ibid.}, p. 146-148.}

\footnote{\textsuperscript{449} See Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, \textit{Die ottonische Köln Malerschule I}, p. 42; Kraus 2005, \textit{Worauf gründet unser Glaube}, p. 53. Vollmann offers a different reading, rendering the abbreviation “nc” as “nunc” and characterizing the titulus rather negatively as “schlampig-fehlerhaft.” See Vollmann 2004, \textit{Frühe ottonische Bildtitel-Dichtung}, p. 87-88. The second part of the inscription (\textit{nec moeret in Tartaro}) may be understood as a paraphrase of a New-Testament passage (Acts 2:31) describing the resurrection of Christ: “neque derelictus est in inferno” (neither was he left in hell).

\footnote{\textsuperscript{450} Bloch and Schnitzler refer to the apocryphal Gospel of Peter as a possible source for the miniature, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1970, \textit{Die ottonische Köln Malerschule II}, p. 96. However, this is an unnecessarily complicated assessment. The New-Testament narrative and its
guards to watch over the tomb, saying “You have a guard; go, guard it as you know” (habetis custodiam, ite custodite sicut scitis). In setting his scene, the artist most likely consulted a second Gospel account (John 19:13), which includes the name and a description of Pilate’s tribunal—called the lithostratos, the Greek word for mosaic or colored pavement—that must have served as the inspiration for the elaborate and fantastical depiction of the architecture crowning the miniature. This obscure Greek term from the gospel narrative seems to have caught the artist’s eye and provided the impetus for his fantastical interpretation of the pediment.

Although Bloch and Schnitzler were unable to find any visual parallels for the Pilate miniature—concluding somewhat reluctantly that the scene was an invention of the artist himself, based perhaps on depictions of Herod—there are in fact two instances of the commentary tradition certainly provide sufficient material for an independent development of the iconography.

451 The listing of pericopes from the Gereon Gospels in Cologne (fol. 203v) indicates that Matthew’s Passion narrative would have been read there on Palm Sunday.

452 The term lithostrotos received special mention in the two most widely circulated encyclopedias of the early Middle Ages: the Etymologies of Isidore of Seville, and the De rerum naturis of Hrabanus Maurus. The latter text explains that lithostrota are “skillfully worked pictures made from very small marble pieces and tiles dyed in various colors…The Gospel mentions the mosaics where, during the Passion of the Lord, Pilate sat before the tribunal in a place which is called the Lithostrotos…This makes clear that the varied fiction of false accusers could not conquer the simple assertion of truth.” (Lithostrota sunt elaborata arte picturae parvulis crustis ac tessellis tinctis in varios colores…De lithostroto autem in Evangelio fit mentio, ubi in passione Domini Pilatus sedisse pro tribunali scribitur in loco qui dicitur Lithostrotos…In quo manifestatur, quod falsorum accusatorum varia fictio non potuit vincere simplicem assertionem veritatis.). See Hrabanus Maurus, De rerum naturis, PL 111: 563b; see also the forthcoming edition of the text edited by William Schipper for the Corpus Christianorum series. For an English translation, see Priscilla Throop, De Universo: The Peculiar Properties of Words and their Mystical Significance II (Charlotte: MedievalMS, 2009), p. 282.
iconography in works of art dating from first half of the eleventh century.\footnote{Bloch and Schnitzler 1970, \textit{Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule} II, p. 96: “Bildliche Parallelen sind freilich nicht nachzuweisen.” This position, which must now be revised, has been taken up by Beuckers 2013, \textit{Der Hitda-Codex, zum Stand der Diskussion}, p. 21; and O’Driscoll 2013, \textit{Anmerkungen zum Verhältnis von Bild und Titulus}, p. 121.} A gospel book from St. Peter in Salzburg provides the closest parallel, even depicting a similar disposition of two scenes across an opening with the miniature of Pilate and the Guards to the left and that of the Women at the Tomb to the right [\textbf{FIGURES 77 and 78}].\footnote{For the Gospels from St Peter, (New York, PML, M. 781, fols. 85v and 86r) see Georg Swarzenski, \textit{Die Salzburger Malerei von den ersten Anfängen bis zur Blütezeit des romanischen Stils}, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Anton Hieremann, 1969), p. 33-34; see also Matthias Grünwald, “Das sog. ‘Evangeliar von St Peter in Salzburg’ (New York, The Pierpont Morgan Library, M. 781): Zur Verbindung von Ikonographie und Liturgie anhand der österlichen Miniaturen,” \textit{Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Benediktiner-Ordens und seiner Zweige} 111 (2000), p. 309-346, esp. p. 322-324. Grünwald, however, dismisses any connection between the Gereon and Salzburg miniatures and uncritically follows Bloch and Schnitzler’s assessment of the iconography.} The second instance of the iconography can be found in an ivory plaque from Cologne, c. 1050, which includes a highly abridged version of the scene in its lower register [\textbf{FIGURE 79}].\footnote{For literature on the Cologne ivory (G III.306, Cologne, Diözesanmuseum (Kolumba), inv. nr. 1992/31), see Manuela Beer, “Kölner Elfenbeinarbeiten des Mittelalters: von den Anfängen bis zum Ausklang der Romanik,” in \textit{Glanz und Größe des Mittelalters: Kölner Meisterwerke aus den großen Sammlungen der Welt}, ed. Dagmar Täube and Miriam Verena Fleck (Munich: Hirmer, 2011), p. 63-81, esp. 69-70; Klaus Gereon Beuckers, “Der König neben dem Kreuz. Überlegungen zum Programm der salischen Elfenbeintafel im Kölner Diözesan-Museum,” in \textit{Thesaurus Coloniensis. Beiträge zur mittelalterlichen Kunstgeschichte Kölns. Festschrift für Anton von Euw}, eds. Ulrich Krings, Wolfgang Schmit, and Hiltrud Westermann-Angerhausen (Cologne: Kölnischen Geschichtsvereins 1999), p. 57-70. Beuckers discusses the various identifications of the figure as either Herod or Pilate, and then offers his own interpretation of the figure as representing King David.} Depicted with a guard at his back, Pilate is seated on the left and gestures toward the crucified Christ in the middle of the scene, while an angel sits on the empty tomb to the right of Christ. Apart from the two Marys, who were perhaps excluded for compositional reasons, the ivory thus incorporates precisely the same constellation of scenes that can be found in the Easter sequence of the Gereon.
Sacramentary: the Crucifixion, Pilate and the guards and the Women at the tomb. Although these examples document the existence of the subject matter in Ottonian art of the early eleventh century, one can still recognize the innovative nature of the Gereon miniature and its role as an *ad hoc* creation designed specifically for the broader program of the manuscript.

Seen in this light, the artist’s modification of the Matthew narrative to depict the guards with Pilate, rather than the chief priests, can be understood as an attempt at creating a narrative link with the facing miniature. It is after all the very same group of guards depicted in the second miniature who have collapsed in disarray around Christ’s tomb. This visual correspondence between the two scenes finds further elaboration in the curious placement of Pilate on the right side of the miniature, which in effect parallels the composition of the facing scene, where the angel is seated to the right and addresses the two Marys approaching from the left. Additional parallels between the two miniatures include the gabled frame, which is significantly more elaborate in the Pilate miniature, as well as the placement of the golden inscription between the figures in the middle of an otherwise solid purple background. Despite these formal correspondences, it is nevertheless clear that the miniature of the Women at the Tomb marks the culmination of the Easter sequence—a status underscored by its placement directly preceding the opening prayer of the Easter liturgy, which itself begins with a direct reference to Christ’s resurrection and furthermore includes as its gospel pericope a passage that serves as one of the textual sources for the scene (Mark 16:1-7).\(^{456}\) Apart from the gospel narratives, the artist

\(^{456}\) The Easter liturgy begins: “Deus qui hodierne die per unigenitum tuum, aeternitatis nobis aditum devicat morte reserasti…” (*God who on this day through thy only begotten son hast vanquished death and unlocked for us the gate of everlasting life…*). See Deshusses 1971, *Le sacramentaire grégorien* I, p. 191; Translation p. 415. Each Gospel mentions the Women at the Tomb, however two are particularly significant in the context of the Gereon miniature: that of Mark (16:1-7), which constitutes the liturgical pericope for Easter Sunday, and that of Matthew (28:1-8), which marks the direct narrative continuation of the scene of Pilate and the Guards. As
appears to have drawn heavily on Middle-Byzantine models in crafting his miniature, such as the tenth- and eleventh-century examples from the Trebizond Lectionary in St. Petersburg and the Dionysiou Lectionary in Mount Athos, respectively, or the twelfth-century reliquary cover in the Louvre [FIGURE 80].\footnote{457} In this regard, the figure of the angel in the Gereon miniature, with his magnificent garb and emphatic gesture, is particularly indicative and could even be said to represent the painter’s most Byzantine moment. Nevertheless, as has been the case with the manuscript’s preceding miniatures, several details mark the image not only as a hybrid iconography, but also as the distinctive creation of the artist himself.\footnote{458} Chief among these are the unusually expressive figures of the two Marys, the bewildered guards who have fallen to the ground before the tomb, and, finally, the highly elaborate depiction of Christ’s burial shroud, which wraps sinuously around itself and extends the length of the empty sarcophagus.

Understanding the concept that lies behind this pairing of miniatures calls for a recourse to the commentary tradition on Matthew’s Passion narrative. Jerome provides the key point in his


\footnote{458} For discussions of the Eastern and Western characteristics of the miniature, see von Euw 1991, *Synthese der künstlerischen Strömungen*, p. 279; Idem 1993, *Einfluss des Ostens*, p. 188.
highly influential exegesis on the resurrection, which was taken up by several Carolingian
commentators on the passage:

Nec suffecerat princicipibus sacerdotum et scribis crucifixisse Dominum Salvatorem, nisi
sepulcrum eius custodirent, cohortem a Pilato acciperent, signarentque lapidem, quantum
in illis est, manum opponerent resurgenti, ut diligentia eorum nostrae fidei proficeret.
Quia quanto magis observatur, tanto amplius resurrectionis virtus ostenditur.\textsuperscript{459} 

*It was not enough for the chief priests and scribes to have crucified the Lord without also
guarding the tomb and resisting with all their might the one who was to rise again. Thus
did their diligence advance our faith. For the more the tomb is guarded, so much more is
the power of the resurrection shown.*\textsuperscript{460}

Therefore, through his pairing of the two miniatures, the painter has created an argument about
the death and resurrection of Christ. He casts his argument furthermore in terms of proper vision.
In this sense the guards are not depicted asleep—which is nearly always the case with this
iconography.\textsuperscript{461} Looking away from the tomb, they prove themselves to be simply oblivious to
the significance of the event at hand [\textbf{FIGURE 81}]. The women, in contrast, strain and bend
forward in an effort to see and therefore to understand the profound implications of what has
transpired. The miniature’s inscription once more implicates the viewer, stating:

Hic erit contemplandum · quomodo angelus celestis · testabatur christum resurexisse a
mortuis.

Ecce locus · ubi posuerunt eum.\textsuperscript{462}

\textsuperscript{459} Jerome, *Commentariorum in Matheum* (CCSL 77), p. 279.

\textsuperscript{460} The English translation has been modified from that of Schek. See *Commentary on Matthew*
(Fathers of the Church 117), p. 323-324.

\textsuperscript{461} Another unusual exception to the tendency of depicting the guards asleep can be seen in the
Women at the Tomb miniature from the Sacramentary of Henry II (Munich, BSB, CLM 4456,
fol. 15v).

\textsuperscript{462} For the text of the inscriptions, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, *Die ottonische Kölner
unser Glaube*, p. 53. The second part of the inscription, which occupies the space of the dialog
between the angel and the two women, constitutes the angel’s statement to the women, as
recorded in Mark (16:6).
Here one must contemplate how the heavenly angel testified that Christ had risen from the dead.

Behold the place where they placed him.

The explicit reference to contemplation calls upon the viewer to go beyond the image before him and to see with the eye of his mind the true yet absent subject of the miniature: Christ himself.

Looking into Heaven: The Pentecost Sequence

To a large extent the manuscript’s final group of miniatures can be understood to repeat the structure of the preceding Easter group of miniatures. In each case the sequence begins with a miniature depicting a scene from the life of Christ—the Crucifixion and the Ascension, respectively—that has been paired with a full-page titulus. Following this primary opening, a secondary opening comprises a pair of narratively-linked miniatures, which in effect provide a visual elaboration upon the associated event from the life of Christ. Significantly, this structural correspondence between the two sequences of miniatures reflects a profound thematic parallel as well. In both instances Christ is depicted in an act of disappearance, which is then reflected upon by the secondary pair of miniatures in a way that ultimately emphasizes his divinity. Yet unlike the Easter sequence, the Ascension miniature and its titulus are separated from the secondary pair of miniatures by five folios—a difference due to the liturgical distance between the two feasts, which corresponds furthermore to the ten historical days that were believed to have passed between the moment of Christ’s Ascension and the descent of the Holy Spirit during Pentecost. Moreover, directly following the pair of miniatures depicting the Gathering of the Nations and Pentecost, there follows a series of four decorated text pages containing the liturgy
for the feast of Pentecost. This series of decorative text pages begins with the most elaborate initial page in the entire manuscript: a magnificent letter D (*Deus qui hodierna die...*), set within a highly ornate triple frame featuring four busts of virtues—personified as male figures—arranged in cross-like symmetry around the frame [FIGURE 82]. While seemingly unusual, the selection of these various pictorial elements—the Ascension, Pentecost, the Gathering of the Nations and the Virtues—finds in fact a solid justification in the preface to the Pentecost liturgy, which begins on the following page:

Per Christum dominum nostrum, qui ascendens super omnes caelos, sedensque ad dexteram tuam, promissum spiritum sanctum in filios adoptionis effudit. Quapropter profusis gaudiis, totus in orbe terrarum mundus exultat. Sed et supernae virtutes atque angelicae potestates, hymnum gloriam tuae concingunt.

*Through Christ our Lord, who, ascending over all the heavens and sitting at your right hand, did, according to his word, send down the holy spirit upon the children of his adoption. Wherefore all peoples upon this earth rejoice with exceeding great joy; the heavenly virtues likewise and the angelic powers sing a hymn to thy glory.*

The liturgy itself lists specifically each aspect of the manuscript’s final illuminated sequence, emphasizing in particular the causal relationship between the Ascension and Pentecost. Thus, despite its position at a short remove from the Pentecost miniatures and liturgy, the Ascension scene is nevertheless a crucial component of the sequence.

*   *   *

463 For a discussion of the sacramentary’s initials, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1970, *Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule II*, p. 65.


If the Crucifixion miniature visualizes the bitter suffering of Christ and the solemnity of his death, the Ascension miniature in contrast marks a moment of triumph [FIGURE 83]. Cloaked now in rich garments of purple and white, trimmed in gold, Christ soars above the group of apostles and ascends toward the miniature’s upper frame. His formerly limp and lifeless body has been transformed into one of dynamic vigor, with his torso arched forward and his legs bent in a position of implicit motion—his head looks upward to the hand of God, which grabs him by the wrist, thus receiving him into heaven. In further contrast, the deep purple background of the Crucifixion miniature has been replaced by a field of solid gold interrupted only by the semicircular cloud of color that represents Christ’s heavenly destination. The accompanying figures also react differently to the body of Christ. Unlike the mourning figures of John and Mary from the Crucifixion miniature—the latter of whom is conspicuously absent from the Ascension scene—the apostles, with their upright posture and upturned heads, stand as rapt witnesses to Christ’s departure. The Ascension miniature’s most majestic passage, however, takes shape in the figures of the two angels—or more accurately, the duo viri in vestibus albis (Acts 1:10)—who dominate the lower half of the composition while articulating the structure of the entire miniature. Near mirror images of each other, the two angels stand on either side of the picture’s central axis with their slender and elongated lower bodies turned toward each other while their torsos twist back, towering over the two groups of the apostles with whom they communicate. Almost as if providing a base from which Christ ascends, their wings spread uniformly across the miniature’s horizontal axis despite the fact that the angels stand at different levels on the ground—an effect that the artist achieved by depicting the left angel in a noticeably sharper curve than the right. Clearly demarcating the space of the apostles from that of Christ above, this barrier functions as more than a mere compositional device. By blocking the sight of
the apostles, who strain and struggle to see Christ, the modification of the angels’ wings allows the artist to engage directly with the profound implications of Christ’s Ascension as it was understood in both the subject’s iconographic and exegetical traditions. Indeed a comparison with the Gereon Ascension’s potential models reveals the efficacy of the artist’s modifications in this regard.

Although Bloch and Schnitzler characterize the Gereon Ascension as an “indissoluble mixture of Eastern and Western elements,” they are unable in the course of their analysis to bring to light any specifically Byzantine component of the miniature apart from the scroll that Christ holds in his left hand.\(^{467}\) In fact, despite an initial impression that might be somewhat skewed by the golden background and the prominence of the angels, the miniature resonates most clearly with Western prototypes.\(^ {468}\) The closest contemporary parallel to the Gereon miniature can be found in the Ascension scene from the Egbert Codex, which incorporates a similar arrangement of the two angels in relation to the two groups of apostles—joined in this case by Mary—and depicts several of the figures gesturing emphatically while Christ ascends above them [FIGURE


Apart from the subtly atmospheric background so characteristic of the Egbert-Codex miniatures, the key differences between the two depictions center on the figure of Christ, who in the Egbert miniature floats within a mandorla and bears a cross staff indicating his triumph over death. The Gereon artist has forgone both of these attributes in favor of a scroll as an attribute for Christ, and appears to have focused his efforts on depicting the hand of God set within a celestial realm. Although a similarly two-tiered composition clearly underlies the Egbert miniature, its artist has chosen a different strategy for thematizing the separation between the apostles and Christ—namely, the arms of the two angels raised high above their heads, a detail which visually emphasizes Christ’s distance from the apostolic group. Widening the scope of the comparison to include Carolingian works—primarily in ivory carving—reveals that both the varied and animated expressions of the apostles as well as the two-tiered nature of the composition draw on a long tradition in Western depictions of the Ascension. To take only two examples from a rather large group of possible candidates, a Carolingian ivory plaque carved in Metz (c. 860), now preserved on a book cover in Coburg, presents an animated scene of the Ascension where the two angels serve a mediating function between the lively group of apostles below and the depiction of Christ ascending above [FIGURE 85]. A similarly dramatic example can be found in an ivory carving of the Ascension, formerly in Berlin, where the angels stand on a ledge above the apostles, thus occupying a physically different space from the group [FIGURE 86].

---


471 The Berlin Ascension ivory (G I.140) was irreparably damaged in World War II. See, however, Volbach 1923, *Die Bildwerke des Deutschen Museums* I, p. 19; *Staatliche Museen zu
This iconographic combination of the mediating angels and the varied expressions of the apostles has its roots both in the biblical narrative of the scene as well as its commentary tradition.

As Robert Deshman has demonstrated, a close reading of the biblical account of the Ascension lies at the heart of the early medieval iconography of the scene. The relevant passage stems not from the Gospel accounts (Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51-52), but rather from the detailed description presented in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 1:8-11.

Indeed, the entire passage merits careful scrutiny for its relevance in the context of the Gereon miniatures. Christ begins by announcing the Pentecost to the apostles and foretelling their apostolic mission throughout the world—themes to be taken up in the final two miniatures of the sacramentary. In narrating the subsequent sequence of events relating to Christ’s Ascension, the author of the Acts narrative pays particularly close attention to the ability of the apostles to see the event—mentioning their vision no less than three times before the two angels address the apostles directly with a crucial question:

Viri galilaei quid statis aspicientes in caelum? Hic Jesus, qui adsumptus est a vobis in caelum, sic veniet quemadmodum vidistis eum euntem in caelum (Acts 1:11).

Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come as you have seen him going into heaven.

Importantly, Augustine provides the authoritative model for later exegesis on this passage when he explains how Christ’s disappearance from the apostles caused a necessary shift from corporeal vision to spiritual sight—necessary, because a reliance on corporeal vision alone would tempt the apostles to consider Christ merely as a man, whereas only spiritual vision would

allow them to recognize the divinity of Christ.⁴⁷³ Deshman, among others, traced the reception of Augustine’s thought in early-medieval exegesis, relating it in particular to the development of an important Anglo-Saxon variation on the Ascension iconography: the so-called disappearing Christ.⁴⁷⁴ Building on this important research, Herbert Kessler has demonstrated how Carolingian and Ottonian works of art could also engage directly with the theological implications of Christ’s Ascension—noting, for example, how subtle variations in the positioning of Christ’s body in two ivory plaques of the Ascension can orchestrate for the viewer a set of complex interactions regarding the faculty of vision in relation to Christ’s ascent.⁴⁷⁵

---

⁴⁷³ This sentiment finds its most cogent expression in one of Augustine’s sermons on the Ascension (sermon 264): “You see, they were fixated on the man, and unable to think of him as God. The time they would think of him as God would be if the man were removed from their sight; this would cut short the familiarity they had acquired with him in the flesh, and so they would learn at least through his absence in the flesh to think about his divinity” (Fixi enim erant in homine, et Deum cogitare non poterant. Tunc enim cogitarent Deum, si ab illis et ab eorum oculis homo auferretur, ut amputata familiaritate quae cum carne erat facta, discerent vel absente carne divinitatem cogitare). See PL 38: 1214. For the English translation, see The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century. Sermons III.7, trans. Edmund Hill (New Rochelle: New City Press, 1993), p. 229. For a fuller treatment of the Ascension in Augustine’s thought, see William Marrevee, The Ascension of Christ in the Works of St. Augustine (Ottowa: University of Ottowa Press, 1967).


There can be no doubt that the Gereon miniature and its titulus articulate and involve the viewer in precisely such a discourse. The Ascension titulus, for example, speaks to the crucial moment when the apostles catch their last glimpse of Christ before he is carried away and seated “at the right side of the father” [FIGURE 87]:

Istud operativum · simulat ascensum domini · super astra caeli et quomodo discipulis tam mirabili visu oculos pascentibus · ipse portatur ab angelis · sedem petiit apud dexteram patris.\(^{476}\)

*This operativum simulates the ascension of the Lord beyond the stars of the sky and how, the disciples having seen the miraculous sight, he himself is carried by the angels and sought a seat at the right side of the father.*

Referring to its counterpart as an *operativum*—perhaps as a conspicuous indicator of its sophisticated composition—the titulus points the viewer to the very moment of transition from the bodily sight of the apostles at the Ascension to Christ’s present state at the right hand of God.\(^ {477}\) In other words, the titulus lends the miniature a chronological precision: it is the moment after the apostles caught their last glimpse of Christ and yet just before he takes up his seat in heaven. As an “effective” image, the miniature itself takes up this theme. The apostles are no longer able to see Christ, who is already in the process of being received into heaven by his father. By thematizing the disappearance of Christ, both the miniature and the titulus compel the

---


\(^{477}\) For the word *operativum*, see Novum glossarium mediae latinitatis ab ann DCCC usque ad annum MCC, ed. Franz Blatt (Copenhagen, 1979), p. 522-523. Augustine himself provides a good instance of the word’s use in his *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*: “Quod graece λόγος dicitur, latine et rationem et verbum significat. Sed hoc loco melius verbum interpretamur, ut significetur non solum ad Patrem respectus, sed ad illa etiam quae per Verbum facta sunt operativa potentia” (*The Greek word logos signifies in Latin both reason and word. However, in this verse the better translation is word so that not only the relation to the father is indicated, but also the efficacious power with respect to those things which are made by the word*). See Augustine, *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, ed. Almut Mutzenbecher, CCSL 44a (1975), p. 136; for the English translation, see *Eighty-Three Diferent Questions*, trans. David L. Mosher (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press, 2002), p. 127.
viewer to contemplate the significance of the event and in so doing, the viewer is prepared for the second set of miniatures.

* * *

Just as with the pair of miniatures following the Crucifixion, the final opening of the Gereon Sacramentary presents its viewer with the ramifications of Christ’s disappearance in the form of a highly unusual scene on the left, paired with a much more common iconography on the right. In the first miniature, thirty-four figures have gathered before the most remarkably painted background of the entire manuscript [FIGURE 88]. What begins as a solid, deep-purple ground in the lower half of the miniature gives way—at approximately the level of the heads of the figures—to fiery streaks of blue, white and light purple. The purported cause of the atmospheric phenomena can be seen in the miniature’s upper register where a golden disc looms large over the men. Cropped by the upper frame, the disc bears a pearled minium border that is similar in nature to the haloes of figures found elsewhere in the manuscript. Surrounding the disc, tongues of fire emerge from under a band of purple wash that has been painted over them—serving perhaps as a transitional border between the solidity of the gold and the painterliness of the flames. Whether the depiction of an object or an effect, the celestial disc draws no attention from the figures below. In their own way, these figures constitute a remarkable compositional achievement. In direct opposition to the structured symmetry of the apostles in the facing Pentecost miniature [FIGURE 89], the men are split unevenly into two groups of twelve and twenty-two. The artist anchored his otherwise tumultuous composition in the decidedly frontal depiction of the six full-length bodies of the first row of men, whose feet are arranged uniformly across the miniature’s lower frame. From this base, he then staggered the heads of the additional
figures in such a way as to achieve maximum legibility of their faces—only the furthest row of men are occluded from view. Cloaked in a variety of rich garments, the figures appear to engage in an equally diverse range of expressions: a few isolated figures stare out at the viewer while several others appear to be communicating with one another—a few of the figures on the right-most margin appear to be focusing their attention across the gutter to the facing scene, with one even pointing subtly in the direction of the apostles.

Despite the bold novelty of its expression in the Gereon Sacramentary, the iconography of the Gathering of the Nations in the context of Pentecost is by no means unknown in early-medieval art—east or west. A ninth-century Byzantine manuscript containing the homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, for example, incorporates the subject into the Pentecost miniature itself, with the various nations split into two groups depicted in the lower register of the image [FIGURE 90]. Similarly, the Carolingian Bible from San Paolo fuori le mura in Rome combines in one monumental frontispiece the Ascension of Christ, Pentecost and the Gathering of the Nations—precisely the same three elements found in the Gereon Sacramentary [FIGURE

---

478 Bloch and Schnitzler consider the motif to be a “goldenen, violett-weiss umzüngelten Himmelssegment.” See Bloch and Schnitzler 1970, Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule II, p. 97.

479 For the iconography of the Gathering of the Nations with a brief discussion of the Gereon miniature, see Schiller 1976, Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst IV, p. 22-23.

In this important miniature, the various nations have been divided into four groups placed in the two lower corners of the Pentecost scene. Like the Gereon Sacramentary, the figures are characterized by their diverse and expressive gestures, which in this case are unequivocally directed toward the group of apostles sequestered within an octagonal vaulted structure with Mary throned at its center. With varying degrees of modification, this same format was taken up by several of the major Ottonian schools of manuscript illumination—Trier, Reichenau and Echternach—that preserved to a large extent the multi-register composition of the Carolingian model. In crafting his miniature, the Gereon artist no doubt drew upon this long iconographic tradition, yet he added his own intervention by separating out the constituent elements of the San Paolo composition and adapting each of them to a full-page format. Regarding the Gathering of Nations miniature, the artist may have sought additional inspiration from compositionally related iconographies featuring depictions of groups of men such as, for example, All Saints miniatures or representations of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste. In any case it remains clear, from both the iconographic tradition as well as the miniature’s placement within the Pentecost sequence, that


483 For the iconography of All Saints depictions, see Kirschbaum 1968, Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie I, col. 101-103; see also the All Saints miniature in the Dionysiou Lectionary, c. 1059 (Mount Athos, Dionysiou Monastery, Cod. 587m, fol. 126r). For depictions of the Forty Martyrs, see the Byzantine ivory reliefs in Berlin and St. Petersburg (G-W II.9 and II.10). Bloch and Schnitzler considered the Gereon miniature to be deeply influenced by Byzantine models. However, in terms of specific comparative material relating to the grouping of the figures into a single miniature, they proposed only a fourteenth-century icon of the apostles, now in Moscow. See Bloch and Schnitzler 1970, Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule II, p. 97.
the artist’s decision to include the Gathering of the Nations so prominently can only be understood within the immediate context of the Ascension and Pentecost miniatures.

Understanding the possible motivations underlying this final pairing of the Gathering-of-Nations and Pentecost miniatures in the Gereon Sacramentary proves particularly challenging given the lack of extensive tituli. The single inscription from this opening is written not in golden capitals, but rather in ink minuscule and mentions only the men from various nations gathered to celebrate the feast:

Parthi · et medi · et elamitae · mesopotamiae · et alii qui venerunt ad diem festum.484

Parthians and Medes and Elamites, the Mesopotamians and others who came to the feast day.

This modest inscription is in fact a paraphrase of one verse (Acts 2:9) from the detailed Pentecost narrative found in the Acts of the Apostles (2:6-13), which explains how a multitude of people came together and were “confounded in mind, because every man heard them [the apostles] speak in his own tongue” (et mente confusa est quoniam audiebat unusquisque lingua sua illos loquentes).485 As is so often the case with tituli in the form of biblical excerpts, the inscription can be understood to function as a cue to the viewer, bringing to mind the broader passage from which it has been excerpted.486 Returning to the source passage indicates that the listing of the

484 See Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule I, p. 42.

485 The passage from Acts merits fuller citation here, in translation with an abridged list of nations: “And when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded in mind, because that every man heard them speak in his own tongue. And they were all amazed, and wondered, saying “Behold, are not all these that speak Galileans? And how have we heard every man our tongue wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea…Cretes and Arabians: we have heard them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.” And they were all astonished and wondered, saying one to another “What meaneth this?” But others mocking, said: “These men are full of new wine.”

486 On this aspect of tituli as biblical citations, see Berschin 1980, Drei griechische Majestas-Tituli, p. 299-309.
nationalities stems from a larger speech voiced in fact by the gathered men themselves. In the context of their speech, the litany of ethnicities serves only to heighten the astonishment resulting from their miraculous comprehension of the apostles. Certain members of the crowd even go so far as to express skepticism, accusing the followers of Christ of being drunk as if they were full of new wine (Acts 2:13). Nevertheless, it remains difficult to judge whether the figures in the Gereon miniature can be understood to reflect this tension within the group—that is, between the astonished-yet-faithful men and the outspoken skeptics. If so, then the artist’s rendering of the strife is subtle to the point of ambiguity, with the only possible indicators being the separation of the figures into two groups and their expressive gestures toward one another. One is more inclined to see agitation in the figures from the San Paolo miniature, yet even there their disposition is ultimately ambiguous—the corresponding titulus moreover offers little elucidation and refers only to their astonishment. Given this potential ambiguity in the meaning of the gathered figures it is perhaps prudent to follow the model provided by the preceding Easter opening. As has been argued, the viewer is presented there with two narratively linked miniatures that constitute an argument about the nature of Christ’s resurrection, one that is furthermore cast in terms of the contrast between proper understanding—embodied in the figures of the women at the tomb—and that of ignorance or astonishment at the event—manifest in the group of stupefied guards. In a similar manner, the manuscript’s final opening juxtaposes the astonishment of the bystanders—in this case, the gathered men—with the privileged knowledge of the apostles. Furthermore, by emphasizing the role of the bystanders through their placement in the opening, the artist is able to pull the viewer himself into the narrative. After all, the

487 The relevent passage from the San Paolo titulus (fol. 292r/295r) reads: Spiritus accedens cunctorum corda replevit · quorum collectae mirantur famina gentes (The spirit approaching fills
bystanders are themselves viewers of the event, who are faced with their own dilemma of perception.

**Conclusion**

In closing this study of the Gereon Sacramentary’s pictorial program, it is worth considering for a moment a miniature that has hiterto been relatively neglected in the discussion: that is, the Majestas Domini [FIGURE 92]. At first glance, it might seem as if this miniature stands as somewhat of an outlier with respect to the broader cycle of miniatures. Not only does the miniature lack a titulus, but also it occupies a rather unusual position in the manuscript in that it is placed directly before the *Te igitur*—in other words, directly before the canon of the mass.

However, because a sacramentary is by its very nature a non-linear text—the use of which requires a constant turning of the pages between, first, the variable portions of the liturgical year and then the fixed, immutable core of the book (the canon of the mass)—the sequential position of the Majestas Domini miniature is in fact after the miniatures of the Easter and Pentecost groups—despite being placed physically toward the beginning of the manuscript. Therefore, by

---

the hearts of them all whose tongues amaze the assembled peoples). For the titulus and its translation, see Gachde 1963, *Painters of the Carolingian Bible*, p. 145, 408.

An interesting point of comparison can be found in the Sacramentary of Charles the Bald (Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 1141, fols. 5r and 6r). In this fragmentary manuscript, one finds a doubled representation of the Majestas Domini, which forms part of the Preface to the canon of the mass. Directly before the *Te igitur*, however, there is a miniature of the Crucifixion, as is so often the case with illuminated sacramentaries. See Koehler (Mütherich), *Die karolingischen Miniaturen* V, p. 165-174; Tobias Frese, “Die Maiestas Domini als Bild eucharistischer Gegenwart,” in *Intellektualisierung und Mystifizierung mittelalterlicher Kunst*, eds. Martin Büchsel and Rebecca Müller (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 2010), p. 41-62. On the Gereon Majestas, see also Anton von Euw, “Die Maiestas-Domini-Bilder der ottonischen Kölner Malerschule im Lich des platonischen Weltbildes. Codex 192 der Kölner Dombibliothek,” in von Euw 1991, *Kaiserin Theophanu* I, p. 379-398, esp. p. 397-398.
linking the Majestas Domini to the canon of the mass, the artist was able to create an additional level of meaning for the sequences associated with the liturgies of Easter and Pentecost. The Majestas Domini—which is itself a visual representation of a timeless, invisible truth—provides the culmination for the series of miniatures following it. Moreover, the tituli hint at the essential role played by the Majestas Domini within the larger pictorial program by emphasizing, in their final lines, the divinity of Christ. The Nativity titulus, for example, refers to Christ as one who lives timeless and immortal in heaven (qui absque tempore in caelis vivit immortalis); the Crucifixion titulus speaks of Christ’s unchanging power over all things (omnia inmutabiliter potentem); and the Ascension titulus describes Christ as sitting at the right hand of the Father (sedem petii apud dexteram patris). Functioning as a keystone for the entire program, the Majestas miniature resolves the problematizing of vision posed by the earlier miniatures by pointing to an ultimate, essential truth that stands outside and parallel to the events of Christ’s human existence. Stepping back from the program, one can now see how the tituli and miniatures of the Gereon Sacramentary work in tandem to create a sophisticated christological program. By underscoring the complexity of their corresponding miniatures, the tituli compel the viewer not only to look again at the facing images, but also to do so with a contemplative eye. Indeed, as the program makes clear, understanding this profound and considered reflection on the nature of Christ requires that the viewer go beyond the images themselves in an attempt to glimpse the invisible truth that, ultimately, no painter can capture.
In terms of sheer scope and scale, the illumination of the magnificent gospel book in Darmstadt, known today as the Hitda Codex, far exceeds that of any other manuscript of the Cologne school.\footnote{As one might expect for a manuscript as well known as the Hitda Codex (Darmstadt, ULB, Hs. 1640), there exists a considerable body of scholarship, which includes several monographic studies on the manuscript as well as a number of significant recent additions to the literature. Of these, only a selection of the most pertinent references will be given here. A sensible starting point is still the excellent and thorough description of the manuscript with extensive references in the catalog of Darmstadt’s liturgical manuscripts: Leo Eizenhöfer and Hermann Knaus, \textit{Die liturgischen Handschriften der Hessischen Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek Darmstadt} (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1968), p. 96-100. For art-historical scholarship, see Elisabeth Schipperges, “Der Darmstädter Hitdacodex. Eine Kölner Handschrift,” \textit{Jahrbuch des Kölischen Geschichtsverein} 19 (1937), p. 235-301; Bloch 1968, \textit{Der Darmstädter Hitda-Codex}, p. 73-111; Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, \textit{Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule} I, p. 44-53, fig. 113-170; idem 1970, \textit{Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule} II, esp. p. 97-110; and von Euw 1991, \textit{Vor dem Jahr 1000}, p. 40-45. For more recent additions to the literature, see Kraus 2005, \textit{Worauf gründet unser Glaube}; Winterer 2010, \textit{Das Evangeliar der Äbtissin Hitda}; and most recently the essays collected in Beuckers 2013, \textit{Äbtissin Hitda und der Hitda-Codex}.} Counting all of its canon tables and decorative pages, one reaches the astonishing total of sixty-five illuminated pages, among which number no less than twenty-two full-page miniatures. The immensity of the undertaking alone would suffice to ensure the codex a prominent position in the history of medieval art. Add to that, however, the singular style of its painter as well as the presence of a dedicatory miniature linking the manuscript directly to the patronage of a noblewoman, the eponymous abbess Hitda, then the codex rightly attains the status of a monument in broader histories of medieval art and culture—an important witness to that moment when Ottonian patrons and painters began commissioning and fashioning large-scale christological programs for their deluxe illuminated manuscripts. Though justly renowned for this dual aspect of patronage and style—often exemplified in a wide range of scholarship by
the Dedication and Storm miniatures, respectively—much less attention has been given to the peculiarities of the manuscript’s narrative program and the close pairing of image and inscription that links the book to its predecessors in Milan and Paris. Without aspiring to be an exhaustive account of the codex, the present chapter attempts to redress this imbalance by offering a thorough study of the manuscript’s narrative program—that is, the four groups of narrative miniatures, each of which is placed before the respective text of the Gospels. These narrative sequences will be approached through an examination of the relationship between their miniatures and their corresponding tituli, as well as the engagement of both image and inscription with the viewer. Accomplishing this goal within the framework of a single chapter requires the exclusion of any lengthy discussion of the manuscript’s prefatory miniatures, its evangelist portraits, and its closing Crucifixion miniature. As a result of this focus, however, the chapter demonstrates in detail how specific manipulations of form and language on the part of the painter and author of the tituli, respectively, engage the viewer in contemplative processes of thought that converge on his or her own personal stake in the depicted events.

To a certain extent, the goal of this chapter marks a break with the prevailing scholarship on the manuscript, which may be generally characterized by a preoccupation with two closely related issues: the vexing question of Hitda’s identity and the concomitant matter of the date of the manuscript’s production. Regarding these knotty problems, recent scholarship has only exacerbated the debate to the point of becoming a methodological impasse between art-historical approaches to dating based on stylistic criteria, and strictly historical approaches to the study of identity grounded in archival research. Simply put, the results of these two approaches to both the date of the codex and the identity of Hitda have proven irreconcilable. Whereas art historians have traditionally dated the manuscript closer to the beginning years of the eleventh century,
extensive arguments have been put forth in historical studies, above all those of Gerhard Weilandt, that the figure of Hitda must be identified with Ida (d. 1060), abbess of St Mary’s in the Capitol in Cologne, who could only have donated the book at some point after 1031.490 Because the entire relative chronology of Cologne’s painterly manuscripts depends on a series of interdependent links, this discrepancy of more than a generation bears with it significant implications for the understanding of Cologne’s production of illuminated manuscripts in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Despite its importance, however, the debate cannot and need not be resolved here. Barring the possibility of a scientific analysis of the manuscripts, such a resolution would require—at a minimum—an extensive codicological, paleographical, and textual study of the group to help clarify the precise relationship of the Hitda Codex to the other painterly manuscripts. Therefore, with these uncertainties in mind regarding both the identity of the patron and the dating of the manuscript, it will suffice to sketch out only the most salient aspects of the book’s structure, codicology and prefatory program in order to lay the groundwork for a subsequent analysis of its unusual narrative miniatures.

*   *   *

As a gospel book, the manuscript contains the text of the four gospels along with three of Jerome’s prologues, the canon tables, chapter listings, gospel prefaces, and the capitula evangeliorum—an index of liturgical readings that occurs at the end of the book. The codicology of the manuscript makes clear that a distinction was made between the main textual components of the book and its illuminated pages. The former elements—comprising for each gospel the

490 For a good overview of the complex issue of the date of the Hitda Codex, see Gerhard Weilandt, “Der Hitda-Codex und seine Stifterin Ida von St. Maria im Kapitol – Eine Wiederbegegnung nach einem Vierteljahrhundert,” in Beuckers 2013, Äbtissin Hitda und der Hitda Codex, p. 57-74. For an unprecedented attempt to date the Hitda Codex much earlier, c. 969-976, see Kuder 2013, Der Hitda-Codex, p. 89-111.
chapter listings, the prefaces, and the main text—were written out in a regular sequence of twenty quaternios, each of which, except the first and the last, bears an original quire signature centered at the bottom of the gathering’s final page. To this organized core of text, ternios or occasionally binios were interspersed as needed in order to incorporate additional elements, including the illuminated sequences. For the most part, care was taken to ensure that the gospel text transitioned smoothly across these interspersed gatherings, which suggests that some idea of the overall structure of the codex was developed before the copying of the text began. Despite this attentiveness, however, there exist several oversights in the production of the codex—chief among these being the failure to copy the first page of text for Mark, Luke, and John, as well as general inconsistencies between the chapter listings and the actual divisions indicated in the gospel text. If one also takes into account the negligible presence of notations, corrections, and erasures throughout the manuscript, then it becomes apparent that a strictly liturgical use of the book was likely not its primary function.

In fact, the best evidence for the original context and function of the book can be found on the verso of its very first page. There an added, albeit near-contemporary listing of sumptuous liturgical objects begins with two lines which describe the circumstances of their donation to the convent dedicated to St. Walpurga at Meschede (North Rhine-Westphalia) [FIGURE 93]:

---

491 The first and last gatherings of the text block were left unnumbered: that is to say, folios 33v and 205v ought to have been numbered ‘I’ and ‘XX’, respectively. Perhaps their unmistakable position as the first and last of the text block made such numbering unnecessary.

492 The illuminated quires are not numbered. To give an example: gathering VI ends on fol. 73v and gathering VII ends on fol. 87v. The gathering for the Mark illuminated sequence has been placed between these two gatherings.

493 For example, the last sixteen capitula are missing from John’s chapter listing; also, in the main text of Luke’s Gospel the chapter numbering begins to break down with chapter LXXXVIII on fol. 158r.
Haec munera HIDDA peregrina istius loci procuratrix deo et Sanctae WALTBURGI dono dedit pro se suisque ex voto.\textsuperscript{494}

The pilgrim Hidda, procurator of this place, gave these offerings as a gift to God and to St. Walpurga, on behalf of her and those under her, in fulfillment of an oath.

While scholars have vigorously debated the significance of her two titles—that of “pilgrim” (\textit{peregrina}) and “procurator” (\textit{procuratrix})—there has been no doubt that the “Hidda” referred to here is the very same woman pictured a few folios later in the manuscript’s dedicatory miniature, where she is labelled as “Abbess Hitda” (\textit{Hitda Abbatissa}) \textsuperscript{495} Moreover, there has been a general consensus that the first of the three books mentioned in this listing of precious liturgical objects ought to be understood as referring to the Hitda Codex itself. If both of these assumptions hold true, then one may reasonably conclude that the abbess Hitda donated the magnificent gospel book as part of a larger endowment, which was carried out in fulfillment of an oath to St. Walpurga, perhaps in the context of a specific pilgrimage.\textsuperscript{496} The text further specifies that Hitda donated all of these objects not just on her own behalf, but also on behalf of her subordinates (\textit{pro se suisque}, which translates literally as “for her and those of her”).

Unfortunately, the wording of the inscription is too vague to draw any firm conclusions about who these people were, but it is worth noting that the same formulation appears again in the

\textsuperscript{494} See Bernhard Bischoff, \textit{Mittelalterliche Schatzverzeichnisse} I (Munich: Prestel, 1967), p. 62. For the full text of the treasury listing, see Appendix 2. It is particularly worth noting that the treasury listing occurs on the same leaf of parchment as the dedicatory miniature.


dedicatory titulus (fol. 5v), which essentially adumbrates the opening lines of the treasury list by specifying the four basic elements of the gift exchange (that is, the book, St. Walpurga, the abbess Hitda, and her subordinates):

Hunc librum sanctae walburgae Hitda · abbatissa pro se suisque.

The abbess Hitda [gives] this book to St. Walpurga for her and her subordinates.

It will be left to future studies to pursue the implications of the book’s status as both an ex-voto and as part of a larger endowment. For now, however, it will suffice to conclude that the circumstances of its production and donation offer compelling evidence to consider the book as more than just a luxury object. It is clear that the Hitda Codex was a book of both immense personal value, as well as one that belonged to a community. With this last point, the codex differs slightly from its predecessors in Milan and Paris—both of which were likely intended for a particular person, or at the very least for a limited and highly educated audience. The distinction is subtle yet most evident in a comparison of the dedicatory miniatures of the Milan Gospels and the Hitda Codex [FIGURES 27 and 94], which to a certain extent function as mirror images of each other. In the former miniature, a community gives the book to a specific person; whereas in the latter, the abbess Hitda offers the book to the patron saint of a community—in effect, giving it away rather than receiving it. The two miniatures are also placed differently within their respective sequences. The Hitda miniature opens the book, so to speak, and is followed by the Majestas Domini and the Jerome Portrait; whereas the Milan miniature is placed centrally in the prefatory sequence, after the Majestas Domini and before the Jerome Portrait—a placement which heightens the emphasis on the book’s recipient. Therefore, it is important to bear in mind the possibility that the Hitda Codex enjoyed a somewhat broader audience than the Milan Gospels or the Gereon Sacramentary. This might explain why its tituli
are comparatively more straightforward and less elaborate than those found in either of the previous two codices.

*   *   *

Although the tituli of the Hitda Codex generally refrain from the ambitious literary references of the Milan Gospels or the obscure philosophical terminology of the Gereon Sacramentary, there are nevertheless clear links with these important predecessors—particularly the latter of the two manuscripts.\(^{497}\) Quite unusually, and so far without explanation, these moments are confined largely to the non-narrative miniatures of the codex—that is, the author portraits as well as the Majestas and Crucifixion miniatures. Just as the tituli of the Milan Gospels refer explicitly to the “habit of the work,” and just as those of the Gereon Sacramentary radically rename its miniatures, so too the tituli of the non-narrative miniatures in the Hitda Codex highlight the pictorial status of their facing compositions. The Jerome titulus refers to its portrait as “hoc pictum,” and the Mark titulus refers to its portrait as “statua marci,” while the Luke and John tituli refer to the “imago lucae” and the “species picta,” respectively. As Christoph Winterer has demonstrated, the evangelist tituli use these picture-terms unmistakably as the subjects for verbs that cannot, in fact, be associated with images.\(^{498}\) In other words, the tituli state quite emphatically that it is the images that are sitting, not the men. Here, in succession, are the three evangelist tituli of the Hitda Codex (the Matthew portrait is bereft of its titulus):


\(^{498}\) See Winterer 2010, *Das Evangeliar der Äbtissin Hitda*, p. 48.
Seeing the evangelist tituli as a group reveals an underlying structure in their composition. The first part of each titulus refers directly to the miniature, establishing its status as a representation, identifying its referent, and finally ascribing it an action. The second part of the titulus deals with the specific evangelist in question. In both Mark and Luke, the pronoun “haec” refers no doubt to the events depicted in the sequence of miniatures directly preceding the evangelist portraits, whereas the John titulus refers to his special status among the evangelists.

499 For the Latin text of the titulus and a reproduction of the page, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule I, p. 50; fig. 142. The formulation “haec signa Christ” clearly refers to the foregoing miracles of Christ depicted in the Mark sequence.

500 Ibid., p. 51; fig. 154. For an interesting point of comparison regarding the formulation “perpetuae lucis,” see the corresponding titulus to Luke from the Nuremberg Codex aureus (MGH Poetae V, p. 443-445): “Es factus primis homo quatuor ex elementis; His, natus lucis nis, moriendo peribis. Hinc prece fac Lucae vivas cum perpetae luce” (You, man, are made from the four primary elements; unless you are born of the light, then by dying in these things you will perish. Hence pray to Luke that you may live with the perpetual light).

501 For the Latin text of the titulus and a reproduction of the page, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule I, p. 52; fig. 164. The formulation “speciali virginitatis prerogativa” finds an analog in the Annunciation titulus from the Gereon Sacramentary. See above, p. 150.
In fact, the curious formulations of the Hitda evangelist tituli partake in a much broader pictorial discourse that thematizes the relationship between an image and the physical object or essential truth which it strives to represent. In this regard, the Jerome titulus is particularly informative by virtue of its peculiar use of the verb “aequivocare,” which it links to the facing image [FIGURE 95]:

\[
\text{Hoc pictum a[e]quivocat Iheronimum \cdot ex quo huius corporis alienum nobis lucet vicinum.}^{502}
\]

This painted thing “equivocates” Jerome, from whom the foreign of this body shines for us as familiar.

Just like the evangelist tituli, the Jerome titulus begins by establishing a name for the miniature (\textit{hoc pictum}), identifying its referent (Jerome), and ascribing an action to the image (\textit{aequivocat}). It ends by referring to the work of Jerome as a translator, who made the foreign elements of the Gospels—that is, the Greek text—familiar to a Latin audience.\(^{503}\) Yet what does it mean for an image to “equivocate” a person? The definition of the Latin term, which is distantly related to its current usage in English, can be found quite readily in manuscripts of Boethius and Cassiodorus.\(^{504}\) In the latter author’s \textit{Institutions}, for example, the term “aequivoca” is defined as referring to those things that “are similar only in name, but beyond the name they differ in substance, as for example a man—the animal—and a man which is painted” (\textit{aequivoca dicuntur quorum nomen solum commune est, secundum nomen vero substantiae ratio diversa, ut animal}

\(^{502}\) For the Latin text of the titulus and a reproduction of the page, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, \textit{Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule I}, p. 46; fig. 118.

\(^{503}\) For an excellent discussion of the visual qualities of the Jerome miniature, see Winterer 2010, \textit{Das Evangeliar der Äbtissin Hitda}, p. 41-42.

\(^{504}\) See, for example, the discussion of “aequivoca” in an early-eleventh-century Cologne manuscript of Boethius’ \textit{Second Commentary on the Isagoge of Porphyry} (Dombibliothek, Hs. 188, fol. 52v).
Therefore, through its unusual wording, the Jerome titulus thematizes the nature of the relationship between the miniature and its subject—moreover, it does so in a manner that alludes directly to an established philosophical context involving images.

If the Jerome titulus helps explain the reason why the portrait miniatures were thought to be appropriate sites for the elaboration of a pictorial discourse, then the Majestas titulus proves crucial for understanding the possible motivations for including such a discourse in an illuminated gospel book. Like only one other inscription from the Cologne school, the Majestas titulus from the Hitda Codex speaks with an incisive clarity to very nature of images and how they were perceived to function [FIGURE 96]:

Hoc visible imaginatum figurat illud invisibile verum · cuius splendor penetrat mundum · cum bis binis candelabris · ipsius novi sermonis.

*This visible visualization gives form that invisible truth, whose brilliance penetrates the world with the twice-two lamps of this new word.*

In a formulation that is strikingly similar to the “hoc materiale inspectivum” of the Gereon Nativity titulus, the Majestas titulus describes and defines the facing image through a series of parallel juxtapositions coordinated by the verb “figurat” (*hoc – illud, visible – invisibile; imaginatum – verum*). The second part of the titulus points the viewer to the “brilliance of the invisible truth,” which is made accessible to the world through the four evangelists who are described as the “lamps of the new word” (the “new word” being Christ, whose halo bears the inscription *lux*). Thus, in a crucial maneuver, the Majestas titulus forges a link between the pictorial discourse of the portrait tituli and a christological light topos, which will recur throughout the broader program of miniatures. Whether expressed verbally or visually, this

---


506 On the light topos in the Hitda Codex, see also Rainer Warland, “Himmlischer Lichtglanz im Evangeliar: Zum Ästhetischen Konzept des Hitda-Codex,” in *Otium: Festschrift für Volker*
light topos will emerge as an integral component of the narrative miniatures—a component which furthermore links those miniatures to the broader pictorial program. At the heart of these efforts is an attempt not only to key the viewer to the “invisible truths” behind each of the miniatures throughout the program, but also to compel the viewer toward a more profound reflection on the nature of Christ and the direct implications that his incarnation and subsequent sacrifice hold for every individual.

In this regard, the essential framework of the manuscript—its governing axis—ought to be considered the pairing of the Majestas Domini and the Crucifixion miniatures, which, though separated by two-hundred folios, must be seen as pendants—or, as Christoph Winterer memorably described them, the manuscript’s “inner binding.”

Just as the Majestas miniature begins the book, the crucifixion miniature closes it [FIGURE 97]. This status is reflected even in its physical arrangement as the only miniature of the entire codex to be painted on the verso of a folio. In fact, the miniature follows directly upon the closing words of John’s Gospel. Although this placement at the very end of the codex—isolated from any of the manuscript’s other miniatures—might tempt one to regard the Crucifixion as an outlier, the language of its titulus clearly links the closing miniature to the broader pictorial program:

Ille cuius imaginem hic cernis pendentem in cruce · est conditor · ac rector universae creature.

---


508 For the text of the titulus, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule I, p. 52; fig. 169.
He, whose image you see here hanging on the cross, is the founder and ruler of all creation.

The Crucifixion titulus engages in the established pictorial discourse of the portrait tituli by referring not to Christ on the cross, but rather to his “image” hanging on the cross. The titulus then prompts the viewer to consider an invisible truth—namely, that the same being (referred to only as ille) whose “image” is shown here dead on the cross is in fact the divine creator, the “ruler of all creation.” By ending with an almost paradoxical reference to Christ’s divinity, the final words of the manuscript’s final titulus point the viewer back to the very beginning of the book—that is, to the miniature of the Majestas Domini. In such a way, this sophisticated and profound reflection on Christ’s dual nature is shown to constitute both the very core of the gospel book as well as the fundamental backdrop against which the intervening narrative miniatures ought to be seen.

* * *

As previously mentioned, the tituli to the narrative miniatures in the Hitda Codex appear at first glance to be of a different nature than those of the prefatory sequence or the author portraits. On the whole, they lack any trace of obscure vocabulary, and not a single one refers to the pictorial status of its facing miniature—often, it is left to a simple “hic” (here) to provide an implicit indication of the image at hand. Moreover, the narrative tituli are generally rather concise, expressing usually one, or at most two concepts related to the depicted subject matter. Nonetheless, it is important to bear in mind that the narrative tituli do not stand entirely apart from the explicitly formulated concerns of their counterparts. After all, each sequence essentially ends with an author portrait and its titulus, before transitioning to the gospel text. Therefore, the

---

509 On this point, see also Winterer 2010, Das Evangeliar der Äbtissin Hitda, p. 43-44.
viewer is provided with a persistent reminder of the representational status of the book’s miniatures. Also, both the miniatures and the tituli of the narrative sequences refer in several instances to the christological light topos inaugurated by the Majestas Domini opening at the beginning of the book. Indeed, as the following examination will demonstrate, the narrative tituli of the Hitda Codex are far more than mere descriptions of isolated gospel events. Together with their facing miniatures, the tituli were designed to engage the viewer in a more profound reflection on his or her own personal stake in the depicted events.

Virgo paritura: The Matthew Sequence

The narrative program of the Hitda Codex begins with a sequence of four miniatures depicting the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Adoration of the Magi, and the Presentation at the Temple. Following directly upon the canon tables and the prefatory matter to Matthew’s Gospel, the illuminated sequence occupies a gathering of its own. Originally planned as a ternio with the Nativity and Adoration miniatures at its core, the gathering was modified during the production process through the introduction of a single leaf, that of the Presentation miniature, which was inserted between the verso of the Adoration miniature and Matthew’s evangelist portrait. Evidently this expansion of the sequence resulted in some confusion during the writing of the tituli—a step in the process that likely occurred after the painting of the miniatures but before the binding of the gathering. Consequently, Matthew’s evangelist portrait lacks a corresponding titulus and instead presents the incipit to the gospel text, in effect doubling the text of the following leaf. Of course, the precise cause of this oversight will likely never be known for certain, but it is worth noting that the decorative text pages in each of the other three sequences
comprise without fail a series of four tituli and an incipit.\textsuperscript{510} Simply applying this pattern to the Matthew gathering—four tituli and an incipit—would result in the erroneous placement of the Matthew incipit. Whatever its cause, the mix up either went unnoticed or was deemed too insignificant to merit correction and thus the Matthew portrait remains the only miniature in the codex without a corresponding titulus.

Taking as its subject the birth of Christ and the subsequent epiphany of his incarnation, the Matthew sequence marks the beginning of a broader christological cycle that spans the four books of the Gospels. Such a role, however, stands at odds with the interests of Matthew as a narrator: that is to say, Matthew devotes far more space to both the genealogy of Christ and the plotting of Herod than to a detailed account of Christ’s birth or childhood. In fact, it is not until Luke—the third gospel—that one finds substantial accounts of three of the sequence’s miniatures: the Annunciation, the Nativity, and the Presentation at the Temple. The only scene in the sequence that is proper to Matthew’s gospel is the Adoration of the Magi, which forms part of Matthew’s larger narrative concerning Herod’s efforts to have the infant Christ killed. Unable to resolve the inherent discrepancy between the need to begin the christological cycle chronologically with Christ’s birth and the desire to have the selected miniatures reflect the contents of Matthew’s narrative, the designer of the program deviated here from the approach to scene selection at work in the subsequent sequences by including several events mentioned only in Luke’s Gospel. The Hitda Codex is certainly not an isolated example of this narrative dilemma—in fact, it would be no stretch to say that any artist interested in creating a christological program of miniatures for a gospel book must somehow come to terms with the

\textsuperscript{510} Even the gathering containing the miniatures of the Luke sequence maintains this pattern of four tituli and an incipit, due to the fact that the extra titulus page was appended to the preceding
problems posed by the four-fold nature of gospel narrative.\footnote{For the approach to depicting gospel narrative in the *Codex aureus* in Nuremberg, for example, see Metz 1956, *Codex aureus epternacensis*, p. 51-52.} Therefore, if the Matthew sequence stands out in the Hitda Codex, it is only in contrast to the more unusual and conspicuously faithful adherence to the individual gospel narratives displayed by the remaining three sequences.

Unlike the choice of subject matter, which is not entirely remarkable, the visual qualities of the four Matthew miniatures set them apart from their contemporaries in other works of art. Indeed, from the overall caliber of the execution to the particulars of palette and proportion, the four miniatures also rank among the most exceptional of the entire manuscript. Building on the inherent significance of their subject matter, which is reinforced by the tituli, the miniatures elaborate the importance of Christ’s birth in part through the aptly visual metaphor of the divine light introduced to the world with his incarnation. Signaled as a leitmotif already in the manuscript’s prefatory sequence, this christological light topos points the viewer to the divine truth behind the events depicted.\footnote{For the christological light topos, see the previous discussion of the Hitda Majestas titulus, p. 218-219.} In this regard, the miniatures set the stage for the subsequent ministry cycle by compelling the viewer to contemplate the implications of Christ’s dual nature as both man and God.

* * *

Emerging from a palette of innumerable shades of pink, the Annunciation miniature offers the most dramatic rendering of the underlying themes of the Matthew sequence [FIGURE 98]. Much of the force behind the image derives from the visual tension between the two

\footnote{\textcopyright 2010 W. Winterer.}
protagonists: Gabriel and the Virgin Mary. Whereas the former jumps gesture-first into the scene, with his foot and the tip of his wings still outside the frame, the latter stands in profile, leaning slightly forward yet with her feet anchored firmly in the right-hand corner of the composition. In contrast to the angel, her gesture is unusual and difficult to interpret: she lifts up her right hand in acknowledgement of the angel’s greeting, yet holds out her left in front of her, covered behind the folds of her garment. As if reacting to the two figures, space bends as clouds of pink, white, and gold swirl around them, so much so that the cityscape has been reduced to a mere canopy for the Virgin. The artist has enlivened the space to such an extent that in terms of formal innovation the miniature surpasses even the Gereon Annunciation miniature, which must be seen as a major source of inspiration [FIGURE 58].\footnote{For a discussion of the relationship between the two closely-related miniatures, see Schipperges 1937, \textit{Der Darmstädtener Hitdacodex}, p. 267-268; Bloch and Schnitzler 1970, \textit{Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule} II, p. 93-94. For a recent argument that attempts to reverse the commonly held position among scholars, see Kuder 2013, \textit{Der Hitdacodex}, p. 97-102.}

Moreover, the treatment of space far exceeds any basis in biblical narrative, even though the overshadowing of the Virgin mentioned in Luke (1:35) certainly provided the ultimate impulse for this virtuoso display of painting.\footnote{For a discussion of the overshadowing of the Virgin, see above p. 147-150.} It is no simple cloud that has been painted here. Whatever the illuminator thought as he applied the thick bands of white paint that separate the angel from the Virgin, aptly described by Kessler as the “sonic boom” of the angelic greeting, it is clear that they mark a rupture in space—the first of several that occur throughout the miniature program.\footnote{See Kessler, \textit{Hoc visibile imaginatum}, p. 301.} Extending the juxtaposition of the figures, the artist has rendered their two realms in quite different ways. Whereas Mary inhabits a relatively stable field of solid pink, the angel introduces a dynamic space marked by a striated ground flecked with gold and flourishing ornament. With its dampened hues of dark pink and
dulled white, the angelic space foreshadows the enlivened backgrounds of the miracle miniatures. In so doing, the illuminator initiates the viewer into a method of painting employed throughout the remainder of the program, attuning the eye to the importance of space not just as a bearer of meaning, but also in itself a source of signification.516

Viewed with the facing titulus in mind, the prominent role of paint in the Annunciation miniature may at first seem puzzling. Unlike the corresponding text from the Gereon Sacramentary, the Annunciation inscription makes no mention of the overshadowing of the Virgin, which is featured so conspicuously by the artist. Instead the text summarizes the event in a quite matter-of-fact manner while also clearly indicating its future implications:

Regis caelestis hic angelus fatur · et virgo annunti[ati]ve salutatur · mundi redemptorem paritura · et ipsa futura caeli regina.517

\textit{Here the angel of the heavenly king speaks and the Virgin is greeted with the annunciation that she will bear the redeemer of the world and she herself will become the queen of heaven.}518

With the clever juxtaposition of deponent and passive verbs, \textit{angelus fatur – virgo salutatur}, the author of the titulus used grammar to reinforce the directionality of the Annunciation and the Virgin’s role as the recipient of the divine message. Moreover, while being informed that the depicted moment heralds the birth of the “redeemer of the world,” the viewer receives no information regarding the manner in which this will occur. Only upon contemplating the visual

\footnotesize

516 Kessler has demonstrated the significance of the dynamic quality of paint—particularly pink—in the Hitda Annunciation miniature as well as related Carolingian miniatures, see ibid., p. 301.

517 For the Latin text of the titulus, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, \textit{Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule} I, p. 47, fig. 124.

qualities of the miniature does the viewer come to realize that the moment of Christ’s incarnation is ultimately a luminous affair. Looking closely, he or she might notice how the cascading wall of light between the two figures terminates with a patch of golden foliage that has sprouted on the ground before the Virgin and across which a lone sliver of white paint extends to touch her foot. Turning the page, the viewer encounters a quiet resolution to this dramatic display of luminous paint in the figure of a swaddled infant, who is labeled as being light itself.

* * *

Shifting to a palette comprised largely of blue, white, and minium, the Nativity miniature creates an entirely different impression from that of the boldly turbulent Annunciation [FIGURE 99]. Architecture dominates the upper portion of the composition, while the monumental figure of the reclining Virgin serves—figuratively, at least—as its base. Centered in the middle of the picture, the swaddled infant lies in a crib that rests between the Virgin’s bed and the five-columned manger housing the ox and the ass. Peter Bloch has suggested that the triple arch featuring so prominently in the central portion of the miniature may have called to mind the historical church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, known through the reports of pilgrims.\footnote{Without pointing to any specific pilgrim reports in particular, Bloch states that “auch hier ist nicht der armelige Stall geschildert, sondern die mächtige Geburtskirche, wie sie in Pilgerberichten über das Heilige Land beschrieben war.” See Bloch 1968, \textit{Der Darmstädter Hitda-Codex}, p. 96. His supposition, however, was not maintained in the subsequent analysis of the miniature’s iconography, where the arcade is considered instead as deriving from a misunderstanding of Byzantine architectural depictions. See Bloch and Schnitzler 1970, \textit{Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule} II, p. 100.} While surviving accounts of the historical church do not lend much credence to such a hypothesis, a similar architectural structure does occur in other Ottonian representations of the Nativity, most notably an ivory relief in Bonn and, to a much lesser extent, the various Nativity miniatures of
the Echternach manuscripts. In the Hitda Codex, the three arches serve a compositional function by isolating the figures from one another—an observation which marks a further point of contrast to the dynamic engagement of the figures in the Annunciation miniature. The sense of isolation is most palpable in the figure of the Virgin, who appears lost in thought, resting her head on her covered arm and quite emphatically turning her back to the infant. Like Joseph, she remains too preoccupied to take notice of the baby. Having examined the iconographic sources of this unusual turning away of the Virgin, scholars have come to the conclusion that the Hitda artist may have drawn inspiration from a middle Byzantine composition, which, though difficult to adduce among extant contemporary Byzantine miniatures, likely depicted the Virgin turning her attention to the foreground of the composition where a secondary scene would have shown Christ being bathed by attendants. Whatever the ultimate source of this puzzling iconography, its effect is clear. The infant Christ represents a paradoxical centerpiece: while marking the compositional core of the miniature, it is emphatically not its focal point. The contemplative repose of Mary and Joseph key the viewer to a more significant aspect of the event that is in fact not depicted by the artist.


\[521\] For the Byzantine iconography of the Nativity, see Schiller 1966, *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst* I, p. 76-77. To give just two examples from the eleventh century of the motif of the Virgin turning her head away from the Christ-child, see Mount Athos, Dionysou, Cod. 61, fol. 70r; and Dionysou, Cod. 587m, fol. 131v. See also, Robert Deshman, “Servants of the Mother of God in Byzantine and Medieval Art,” *Word & Image* 5.1 (1989), p. 33-70.
Picking up on this paradox, the Nativity titulus elaborates on the ambivalent depiction of the Christ child in the facing miniature. In an effect similar to that of the Gereon Nativity titulus, the author of the Hitda inscription establishes a juxtaposition between what the viewer sees in the miniature—that is, Christ born as man—and a deeper truth that is ultimately invisible—that is, the divinity of Christ:

\[\text{Hic in pr[a]esepis imo iacet natus · qui in caelo sedet altus · nullo loco comprehensivus.}\]

*Here deep in the crib lies the newborn who sits high in heaven, contained by no place.*

The use of the emphatic “hic” (*here*) underscores the distinction between the visible image and the invisible truth, while the evocative description of Christ in heaven (*qui in caelo sedet altus*) conjures for the viewer a mental image of a Majestas Domini composition not unlike the miniature from the manuscript’s own prefatory sequence. In addition to the juxtaposition of *imo* and *altus*, the final portion of the titulus, which refers to the inability of any place to contain Christ (*nullo loco comprehensivus*), heightens the contrast between the visible infant and the invisible God by pointing the viewer to the detail of the tightly swaddled baby, whose wrappings bear sumptuous golden straps. In fact, as has been demonstrated with respect to the

522 For the Latin text of the titulus, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, *Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule* I, p. 47, fig. 126.


524 For tituli which refer to the swaddled infant, see the Ekkehard titulus from Mainz: Kieffer 1881, *Versus ad picturas*, p. 17. See also the titulus to the Nativity medallion in the Ragnaldus Sacramentary: Koehler 1930, *Die karolingischen Miniaturen* I, p. 395.
corresponding miniature from the Gereon Sacramentary, the authors of contemporary Nativity tituli were quite fond of such paradoxical juxtapositions.\footnote{525}

Seen as a pair, the opening miniatures of the Annunciation and the Nativity forge a link between the introduction of divine light into the world and the ultimate transcendence of Christ’s divinity. Perhaps this accounts for the relative absence of painterly elements in the Nativity miniature—a particularly remarkable observation in comparison with the charged significance of paint in the preceding miniature. The only trace of the light that featured so prominently in the Annunciation miniature can be found in the ambiguous white bands of paint added under the arches that flank the crib, illuminating the space of Mary and Joseph.\footnote{526} The contrast between the two miniatures is jarring yet not without purpose. Just as an illuminator can manipulate paint into being in itself a site of signification, so too can he point the viewer away from the miniature and toward a transcendent truth. What is more, a similar pattern will emerge with the final two miniatures of the sequence.

* * *

Alike in both palette and treatment of the background, the final two miniatures of the Matthew sequence reiterate the major themes of the preceding Annunciation and Nativity scenes. For its part, the Adoration miniature continues the thematization of light initiated with the Annunciation miniature—in this instance, however, building on the importance of the guiding star in Matthew’s narration of the event [FIGURE 100]. Set against a rich background of dark purple, the composition features three figures, who are labeled as magi and who approach from

\footnote{525}{For a discussion of Nativity tituli along with a selection of relevant examples, see above p. 169-171.}

\footnote{526}{Extending this observation, one should note that significant shifts in the background do occur. Above the architectural backdrop a deep purple constitutes the ground, whereas a space of bright blue and white fills the arches around Mary and Joseph.}
the left with their covered hands outstretched toward Christ, who in turn sits enthroned on his mother’s lap.527 Much like the Annunciation, the architectural setting has been reduced to such an extent that it would appear to function more as a canopy for the Virgin and Child than as an indication of a particular location. Yet the precise arrangement of the architectural elements suggests that the Virgin and Child are seated directly underneath the crossing of a church—that is, the point at which two perpendicular parts of the building intersect. Moreover, the seamless transition from architectural exterior to a magnificent interior column, which frames the Virgin and Child at the right-most margin of the miniature, further heightens the effect of intersecting perpendiculars through the creation of a space delineated by a near ninety-degree angle. This conspicuous employment of architecture may in fact constitute a visual reference to the idea of Christ as the cornerstone of the Church—an idea not without relevance in the context of the Epiphany.528

Another remarkable aspect of the architecture is the way in which it interacts with the unusual cloud of white paint that extends across the upper portion of the composition and falls like a mist around the building. Only the tower of the church rises above this cloud and extends into the space reserved for the star of the Nativity. Comprising a hollow circle of white paint surrounded by copious rays of gold, the guiding star is equated formally with the cloud of light,


which is itself hemmed with flourishing gold ornament that appears to follow the magi as they approach the Virgin and child. In yet another parallel with the Annunciation miniature, the innovative treatment of light in the Adoration is not without a biblical basis. In this case, however, the source derives not from Matthew’s account of the narrative, but rather from the latter part of a passage in Isaiah (60:1-3), which would have been read during the Epiphany liturgy as a prophecy of the event itself:


Arise, be enlightened, O Jerusalem; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold darkness shall cover the earth and a mist the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the gentiles shall walk in thy light, and kings in the brightness of thy rising.

Just as it does in the Epiphany liturgy, light features extensively in the miniature: from the guiding star and the radiant cloud to the figure of Christ as the very embodiment of light, even his mother appears illuminated with her brilliant garb shimmering against the dark ground. The Adoration titulus coordinates these four luminous elements of the miniature by drawing a parallel between Christ in his mother’s lap and the action of the star in heaven:

In sinu matris adoratur ex magis quem novitas stellae predicavit in astring. 530

He, whom the novelty of the star has proclaimed in the sky, is adored by the magi in his mother’s lap. 531

---

529 This passage is mentioned as a reading in Everger’s Lectionary (fol. 11v). On this passage and the liturgy of the Epiphany, see Kehrer 1909, Die heilige drei Könige, p. 51-53.

530 For the Latin text of the titulus, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, Die ottonische Köln Malerschule I, p. 47, fig. 128.

531 For comparable translations, see Bloch 1968, Der Darmstädter Hitda-Codex, p. 96; Kraus 2005, Worauf gründet unser Glaube, p. 95; Winterer 2010, Das Evangeliar der Abtissin Hitda, p. 51.
Furthermore, by referring to the newness of the star (*novitas stellae*) rather than the star itself, the titulus incorporates a strand of exegesis introduced by Augustine’s sermons on the Epiphany. Perhaps in response to the gospel narrative’s ambiguity on the matter—Matthew’s text makes no mention of the star as being new—Augustine continuously insisted upon the novelty of the star as a way of arguing against those who would see Christ’s birth as being governed by astrological powers. For Augustine, the new and unusual light was nothing other than the voice of the heavens proclaiming the glory of God: “What was is it, but a magnificent tongue of heaven to declare the glory of God, to cry aloud with unheard-of brilliance the unheard-of child-bearing of the Virgin.” For the Hitda artist, in turn, the importance of light at the Epiphany provided an opportunity for an elegant elaboration on the use of paint as an essential means of signification.

* * *

In contrast, the Presentation miniature eschews the pictorialization of light altogether and presents the viewer instead with a paradox similar in tenor to that of the Nativity miniature [FIGURE 101]. Certainly one of the most tranquil scenes of the entire narrative program, the event plays out against an undisturbed background of deep purple, with a schematic cityscape occupying the right-most portion of the composition. The painter has manipulated his depiction of the architecture so that the façade of the building transforms into an archway through which the figure of Simeon emerges—depicted here as an old man, hunched over yet with monumental

---

532 Augustine’s preaching on the Epiphany comprises sermons 199 to 204 (PL 38, col. 1026-1039). Regarding the novelty of the star, Augustine explains: “This star confounded the futile calculations and divinations of the astrologers, when it pointed out to star-worshipers the creator of heaven and earth as the proper object of worship. When he was born, you see, he brought light to a new star, just as when he was slain he obscured the sun.” See Augustine, *Sermones* (PL 38), col. 1031.

533 Ibid., col. 1031.
proportions. Curiously, he receives the swaddled infant not from Mary, as is so often the case in
the iconography of the event, but rather from an unidentified figure, who is almost certainly
Joseph, despite bearing no resemblance to the corresponding figure in the Nativity miniature.\footnote{534}
Whatever his identity, the lack of both halo and inscription—features otherwise shared by Mary,
Christ, and Simeon—makes clear that his role remains secondary and that the iconographic
development stems more from a desire to depict Mary as holding the offering of doves rather than an
effort to accord Joseph greater importance.\footnote{535} Mary, along with her retinue, constitutes the
counterweight of the composition. Moreover, the two unidentified women behind her underscore
the action of her offering by conspicuously echoing her gesture, lending the event something of a
processional quality. Seen purely in terms of composition, the artist has established a visual
parallel between the offering of the doves and the presentation of Christ—a comparison in which
Christ, naturally, receives pride of place as both the geometric center of the composition and the
only figure to stare directly out at the viewer.

As is the case with the Adoration, the Presentation titulus coordinates the main elements of
the miniature—that is, Mary offering the doves and Christ carried by Simeon—yet stops short of
qualifying their relationship to each other. Instead, the titulus poses a paradox for the viewer,

\footnote{534}{For the iconography of the Presentation in the Temple, see Schiller 1966, \textit{Ikonographie der
christlichen Kunst} I, p. 100-103; and Dorothy Shorr, “The Iconographic Development of the
context, see Bloch 1968, \textit{Der Darmstädter Hilda-Codex}, p. 97; Plotzek 1970, \textit{Das
Perikopenbuch Heinrichs III}, p. 130-136; Höhl 1996, \textit{Ottonische Buchmalerei in Prüm}, p. 154-
163. See also the iconographically interesting point of comparison offered by a miniature from
the eleventh-century Autun Troper (Paris, BnF, Arsenal MS 1169, fol. 11v).

\footnote{535}{On different approaches to the question of Joseph’s identity here and its implications, see Ehl
1922, \textit{Die ottonische Kölner Buchmalerei}, p. 113-114; and Kraus 2005, \textit{Worauf gründet unser
Glaube}, p. 183-184.}
Hic turturum libamine a sancta Maria · impletur scriptura · et Christus a Symeone portatur in ulnis · quem non capit quantitas spere caelestis.\textsuperscript{536}

*With the offering of the doves here scripture is fulfilled by Mary, and Christ, whom no expanse of the heavenly sphere can contain, is carried in the arms of Simeon.*\textsuperscript{537}

The characterization of the miniature as a paradox recalls a similar strategy at work in the Nativity titulus, where the inscription prompts the viewer to contemplate the dual reality of Christ as both human—born as an infant—and divine—enthroned in heaven. While drawing upon this favored trope of Nativity inscriptions, the Hitda author also appears to have formulated his Presentation titulus in line with other examples of early-medieval presentation tituli, many of which focus on the act of Christ being carried in Simeon’s arms.\textsuperscript{538} An example of one such titulus from the eleventh century—attributed to the noted reformer, Peter Damian—casts the action in almost the exact same terms as the Hitda inscription: “the heavens cannot contain him, whom Simeon grasps in his arms” (*non capitur caelis, Simeon quem stringit in ulnis*).\textsuperscript{539} In the Hitda Presentation, however, the paradox indicated by the titulus plays out explicitly in the miniature itself. Staring directly at the viewer, the infant presents himself as the unmistakable subject of the painting—a subject that constitutes, in its very representation, a contradiction in terms. Wrapped tightly in a swaddling cloth, yet adorned with purple and gold, the infant in the

\textsuperscript{536} For the Latin text of the titulus, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, *Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule* I, p. 47, fig. 130.


\textsuperscript{538} See, for example, tituli from the Echternach manuscripts in Nuremberg (MGH Poetae V, p. 442) and the Escorial (Boeckler 1933, *Das goldene Evangelienbuch*, p. 24); and also Ekkehard’s titulus for the cathedral at Mainz (Kieffer 1881, *Versus ad picturas*, p. 18).

\textsuperscript{539} For the tituli of Peter Damian, see *L’Opera poetica di S. Pier Damiani*, ed. Margareta Lokrantz (Uppsala: Almquist & Wiksells Boktryckeri, 1964), p. 53.
hands of Simeon is shown to be both regal and helpless, both divine and human. Concluding with this powerful restatement of Christ’s dual nature, the Matthew sequence of miniatures and tituli comprises an array of painterly abstractions and pictorial paradoxes that prompt the viewer not only to consider the deeper theological significance underlying the subject matter of the miniatures, but also, quite ambitiously, to regard the paintings themselves as sources of meaning.

The Signs of Christ: The Mark Sequence

With the manuscript’s second sequence of narrative miniatures, the designer of the program set aside the subject of Christ’s childhood and initiated a series of nine miniatures dedicated in turn to his public ministry. In so doing, the designer of the program closely followed the narrative order of Mark’s first chapter, selecting for illumination Christ’s baptism (1:9-11), as well as the two miracles accomplished directly thereafter: the exorcism at Capernaum (1:23-28) and the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law (1:29-31).540 Taken together, the three miniatures of the Mark sequence introduce the public ministry of Christ (the signa Christi) in such a manner that emphasizes the revelation of his divinity. Furthermore, the latter two miniatures of the sequence introduce a schematic approach to pictorial composition that persists with minimal variation—and one major exception—throughout the remaining miniatures accompanying the Gospels of Luke and John.541 This compositional approach distills the respective miracle narratives into a

540 The sequence skips over only three, non-miraculous events in the progression from the first to third miniatures: Christ’s temptation in the desert, the calling of the apostles, and Christ’s teaching in the synagogue.

singular encounter between Christ, who is depicted majestically in larger-than-life stature, and a supplicant or recipient of his power, who is depicted either alone or in the presence of a group of on-lookers. The Demoniac miniature—second in the Mark sequence—stands as one of the most extreme examples of this compositional reduction of narrative. The Baptism miniature, in contrast, distinguishes itself through both its remarkably dynamic composition as well as its programmatic role as a pivot: both ending Christ’s childhood narrative and inaugurating his public ministry.

* * *

Having made full use of the space available within the picture frame, the Hitda artist staged the baptism of Christ against the backdrop of a river landscape complete with trees, several fish and a personification of the river Jordan, all of which are cast in a dusky palette of grey, blue, and brown. The event itself unfolds within a relatively confined and structured space, the various elements of which can be grouped into three registers governed by a strong vertical axis, which is noticeably off center. The alignment of the dove of the holy spirit with Christ’s partially submerged body constitutes the chief vertical element of the picture, which draws the eye of the viewer through the miniature from the heavenly sphere at the top down to the personification of the river Jordan in the lower righthand corner, thus guiding him or her through the essential elements of the baptism narrative. Further coordinating the various elements of the composition, the selective use of gold links the heavenly stars with the figures of John and Christ as well as the banks of the river, from which a rich golden foliage springs forth. The combination of the dense, yet clearly structured composition with both the expressive

---

542 Perhaps in an attempt to intensify further the dramatic moment of the baptism, the artist has set the figures of Christ and the dove to the right of the miniature’s geometric center—a
handling of paint and the animated representation of the figures lends the miniature a sense of
dynamism rivaled only by the Storm miniature at the end of the Luke sequence.

Despite such outstanding visual qualities, scholarly considerations of the Baptism
miniature have for the most part stressed the purported predominance of Byzantine influences,
visible above all in the landscape setting, the representation of the river Jordan and the inclusion
of John’s camel-hair garment. As plausible as such a connection may at first seem, both the
arguments and the objects cited for comparison ultimately fail to persuade. One need only
compare the Hitda Baptism miniature with the corresponding scene from the Menologion of
Basil II [FIGURE 103]—an early-eleventh-century product of the imperial workshop at
Constantinople—to see how little the former shares with this preeminent example of
contemporary Byzantine illumination. In light of such considerations it would be prudent to

______________________________
displacement that necessitated, moreover, the extension of John’s right arm to an impossible
length, therefore emphasizing his gesture as he anoints Christ.

543 Bloch 1968, Der Darmstädtter Hitda-Codex, p. 98; Bloch and Schnitzler 1970, Die ottonische
Kölner Malerschule II, p. 103-104; Kraus 2005, Worauf gründet unser Glaube, p. 212; Winterer
2010, Das Evangeliar der Äbtissin Hitda, p. 54. It should be noted that Bloch and Schnitzler
characteristically tempered their appraisal of the miniature’s iconography as being an
impenetrable mix of Western and Byzantine influences. For the iconography of the baptism in
Ottonian miniature painting, see the following authors with references to the more general
literature: .

544 The most salient points of comparison can be found in Byzantine ivory carvings such as the
plaque adorning the Otto-Adelheid Gospels in Quedlinburg (G-W II:25) or the diptych from the
Milan Cathedral Treasury (G-W II:42). Though considerably more numerous, the surviving
examples from contemporary Byzantine miniature painting prove less relevant as candidates for
potential models. Given the near dozen or so Byzantine miniatures of the baptism that date to the
period of the Hitda Codex, it is particularly problematic how Bloch and Schnitzler point without
hesitation to miniatures from such geographically and chronologically wide-ranging manuscripts
as a Coptic gospel book dated to 1180 or a thirteenth-century manuscript of the homilies of
Gregory Nazianzus in an effort to capture—or to conjure—some trace of a lost Byzantine model
of the ninth or tenth century.

545 On the date of the Menologion of Basil II (Vatican, BAV, Vat. Gr. 1613) and its use as a
model for subsequent manuscripts throughout the eleventh century, see Anna Zacharova, “Los
see the role of Byzantine iconography as providing at most a point of departure for the illuminator of the Hitda Codex rather than serving as a formal source for the composition. By shifting the discussion away from a search for models—in a strictly formal sense—and toward a broader awareness of analogous pictorial strategies, one can begin to sketch a fitting art-historical context for the remarkable Hitda miniature.

In surveying the pictorial traditions of representing Christ’s baptism, it becomes apparent that Carolingian and Ottonian artists—particularly those working in ivory—were quite adept at infusing their scenes with a dramatic sense of dynamism, with some examples even taking on animated and expressive qualities akin to those of the Hitda miniature. In this regard, the importance of the Carolingian ivories of the Metz school should not be overlooked.

Ocho artistas del Menologio de Basilio II,” in El Menologio de Basilio II, eds. Immaculada Pérez Martín and Francesco D’Aiuto (Madrid: 2008), p. 186-189. Other relevant examples of Byzantine miniatures of the baptism include: Berlin, SB, MS Hamilton 264, fol. 50v; Jerusalem, Patriarchate Library, Cod. Taphou 14, fol. 173r; Mount Athos, Panteleimon, Cod. 6, fol. 161r; Dionysiou, Cod. 61, fol. 77r; Vatican, BAV, Cod. Gr. 1947, fol. 87v; Paris, BnF, MS Gr. 64, fol. 64v; MS Gr. 533, fol. 154; MS Gr. 74, fol. 6r; MS Coislin 239, fol. 120r.

For relevant comparanda, particularly regarding the figure of John, see the baptism miniatures from the Echternach Lectionary in Brussels (BRB, MS 9428, fol. 18v), the Codex aureus in Nuremberg (GM, Hs 156142, fol. 19v), the Bernward Gospels in Hildesheim (Domschatz, Hs 18, fol. 174v), the Benedictional of Aethelwold in London (BL, Additional MS 49598, fol. 25r); the Warmund Sacramentary in Ivrea (Cod. LXXXVI, fol. 27r); and the Salzburg Gospels in the New York (PML, M. 781, fol. 40v). For depictions in ivory, see the front cover of the Drogo Sacramentary (G I:74), the plaque in Antwerp (G I:66), and the lost Ottonian ivories from Liège and Cologne, formerly in Berlin (G II:52, 79).

Representations such as those found on the ivory cover of the Drogo Sacramentary or the ivory casket in Braunschweig—the latter with a likely medieval provenance from the Ottonian abbey at Gandersheim—stand as important witnesses to the potential of artists already in the ninth century to lend the narrative of Christ’s baptism a quality of visual intensity, largely through the emphasized articulation of the river Jordan or the cosmic setting of the scene.\textsuperscript{548} The carver of the Drogo Sacramentary’s front ivory cover, for example, animates his Baptism panel through a stylized amplification of the river’s waves, which rise up from their source to submerge Christ’s lower body before sinking back down to ground level [FIGURE 104].\textsuperscript{549} Apart from Christ, who marks the focal point of the scene, every single figure of the composition—from the personification of the Jordan, to John the Baptist, the dove of the holy spirit, and the group of three angels—augments this dynamic quality through an explicit gesture or move toward Christ. With his radically foreshortened left hand and outstretched right arm, the figure of John the Baptist is particularly effective in this regard and offers furthermore a strikingly close parallel—in both gesture and garb—to the same figure from the Hitda baptism. Whereas in the Drogo


Ottonian Baptism ivory adorning the cover of a ninth-century gospel book in Munich [FIGURE 105]. In this masterful composition—as elegant as it is strong—the visual dominance of the vertical axis corresponds to its conceptual importance as an emblematic representation of the trinity, encompassing in succession the right hand of God, the dove of the holy spirit, and the nude body of Christ. Just as the dove descends from above, both the river and the earth around it surge upward toward Christ; the heavens part and the flanking figures of John and the accompanying angel gesture toward him while nevertheless maintaining their distance. The illuminator here has significantly reduced the Baptist’s role in the event, lending the scene instead the character of a revelation.

Given such demonstrated interest on the part of Carolingian and Ottonian artists in visually adapting the baptism narrative in such a way that intensifies the setting, thus emphasizing the revelatory nature of the event, one ought to consider as well the literary and exegetical traditions of Christ's baptism—as it was developed from Late Antiquity through the Early Middle Ages—and the extent to which they provide a broader context for the Hitda miniature. The enlivenment of the setting, for example, finds parallels as early as the late-antique biblical epics of Juvencus.

---

and Sedulius.\textsuperscript{551} Also, in addition to the theophanic relationship between Christ and the natural world, patristic writers would come to give particular attention to the relationship between Christ and John the Baptist, emphasizing thereby the reciprocal and yet paradoxical nature of Christ’s baptism. In his first homily on the Gospel of Mark, Jerome offers an early example of the important theological principle—based ultimately on the account from the Gospel of John—that John’s baptism with water was superseded by Christ’s baptism with the spirit.\textsuperscript{552} Along similar lines, the baptism homilies of both Gregory and Bede draw a distinction between John’s baptism through water and Christ’s baptism through the spirit.\textsuperscript{553} In an important variation on this theme, Augustine consistently—though not exclusively—used the metaphors of the lamp (\textit{lucerna}) and the light (\textit{lumen}) to recast the relationship between the two figures.\textsuperscript{554} For Augustine, John was a lamp in the night through which the divinity of Christ might be known to man; and yet this lamp


\textsuperscript{553} See Gregory, \textit{Homiliae in evangelia} (CCSL 141), VII.70-82, p. 48-49; Bede, \textit{Homiliarum evangelii libri II} (CCSL 122), I.12, p. 80-87.

\textsuperscript{554} These two terms are ultimately based on a description of the Baptist taken from Gospel of John (5:35), which reads: “Ille erat lucerna ardens et lucens, vos autem voluistis exultare ad horam in luce eius” (\textit{He was a burning and a shining light, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light}). For an overview of Augustine’s interpretation of the Baptist, see Joseph Lienhard, “John the Baptist in Augustine’s Exegesis,” in \textit{Augustine: Biblical Exegesis}, eds. Joseph C. Schnaubelt and Frederick Van Fleteren (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), p. 197-213, esp. 200-201.
was not the true light, but rather merely illuminated by it.\textsuperscript{555} The wording of the accompanying titulus in the Hitda Codex leaves little doubt that its author drew upon this broad exegetical background when crafting his own text for the Baptism miniature:

\begin{quote}
Hic a Iohanne baptizatur aquis · de quo ipse illuminatur spiritu lucis.\textsuperscript{556}
\end{quote}

\emph{Here he is baptized in water by John, the one from whom he himself \textit[i.e. John] is illuminated by the spirit of light.}\textsuperscript{557}

With these two lines, coordinated by a parallel use of passive verbs with instrumental ablatives, the author of the titulus invokes a major strand of patristic exegesis on the baptism while at the same time incorporating the event into the overarching light topos that permeates the manuscript’s broader program of miniatures. Yet the author’s formulation here proves not so obscure as it may at first seem.\textsuperscript{558} For example, other tituli, such as those of Prudentius or

\textsuperscript{555} Only two relevant passages will be cited here. For the first, see Augustine, \textit{In Iohannis evangelium tractatus CXXIV} (CCSL 36), p. 32: “Tamen quia quasi in nocte apparuit in corpore mortali, lucernam sibi accendit unde videretur” (Yet because he appeared in mortal body, as if in night, he lit a lamp for himself whereby he might be seen). For the English translation, see Augustine, \textit{Tractates on the Gospel of John}, trans. John Rettig (Washington, D.C., The Catholic University of America Press, 1988), p. 94. For the second citation, see Augustine, Sermon 380: “Iohannes lumen illuminatum, Christus lumen illuminans” (John, the light illuminated; Christ the light illuminating).

\textsuperscript{556} For the Latin text of the titulus, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, \textit{Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule I}, p. 48, fig. 136.


\textsuperscript{558} Making no mention of Augustine’s pervasive light-based interpretation of the relationship between Christ and the Baptist, Kraus argues instead that the formulation of the Hitda titulus refers to the Byzantine liturgy, where the feast of the Epiphany was known as the “illumination” (φωτισμός), see Kraus 2005, \textit{Worauf gründet unser Glaube}, p. 213.
Ekkehard, allude precisely to the apparent paradox of Christ’s baptism. In a similar vein, the reference to light was taken up both by writers and artists as well.

Going beyond this broader context, the conspicuous parallel structure of the Hitda titulus points the viewer directly to the artist’s rendering of the exchange between Christ and the Baptist, where the disposition of the glances proves crucial. Christ, whose halo identifies him as light, nods benevolently toward John with his arms outstretched in an *orans* gesture. John, in contrast, does not meet Christ’s gaze, but rather directs his sight pointedly at the descending dove of the holy spirit—his left hand, too, reinforces his line of sight as it gestures toward the

---

559 The titulus of Prudentius ends with a statement of this paradox: “sed spiritus aethere missus testatur tinctum qui tinctis crimina donet” (*the spirit sent from heaven bears witness that it is he who forgives sin to the baptised who has himself been baptised*), see Prudentius II, trans. H. J. Thomson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 360-361. Examples of other such formulations include the last two verses of the baptism titulus written by Ekkehard for the Cathedral at Mainz, see Kieffer 1881, *Versus ad picturas*, p. 18; as well as the titulus of the baptism medallion in the Ragnaldus Sacramentary, see Koehler 1930, *Die Karolingischen Miniaturen I*, p. 394. Even such a widely distributed text as the *capitula* to John’s gospel—found on fol. 166r of the Hitda Codex—refers to the paradoxical nature of Christ’s baptism, see De Bruyne 1914, *Sommaires*, p. 303; on the potential influence of the gospel *capitula* on several tituli in the Hitda Codex, see Kraus 2005, *Worauf gründet unser Glaube*, p. 94-98.


561 As Kraus has mentioned, Christ’s pose here may refer to Luke’s account of the baptism narrative (3:21), where he is said to be praying during the baptism (*baptizato et orante*), see Kraus 2005, *Worauf gründet unser Glaube*, p. 245.
dove. What the Baptist sees is in fact the fulfillment of prophecy as it is stated in the Gospel of John (3:33): “he upon whom you shall see the spirit descending and remaining on him, he it is that baptizes with the holy spirit” (super quem videris spiritum descendentem et manentem super eum, hic est qui baptizat in spiritu sancto). Serving as the focal point of the miniature, the dove physically joins Christ to the heavenly sphere, and in so doing underscores both his divinity and ultimately the reciprocal nature of the event. By emphasizing the dove of the spirit and the significance of Christ’s share in the baptism, the miniature calls to mind for the viewer the salvific implications of the event and perhaps even the direct implications of his or her own baptism.

* * *

Different in nearly every respect from the preceding Baptism miniature, the second miniature of the Mark sequence depicts the healing of the demoniac set against an abstract, striated background with no hint of a landscape or architectural setting apart from the nondescript plot of earth on which the figures stand [FIGURE 106]. A reduced palette sharply divides the background into an upper zone of light pink—shot through with bands of white—and a lower zone of dark blue, which merges imperceptibly with the strip of earth in the lower margin. Christ, nimbed once again with a cross-halo inscribed as Lux, stands to the left, towering over the possessed man to whom he gestures with his right hand. Spewing out of the man’s mouth, a demon in the form of a winged homunculus falls toward the ground while simultaneously looking up at Christ; his right foot remains lodged in the man’s mouth, which suggests that the artist has attempted to capture the precise moment of the exorcism. The

562 The Hitda Baptism miniature is not the only Ottonian depiction of the subject to thematize John’s vision of the dove, see also the Echternach Lectionary in Brussels, (BRB, MS 9428, fol.
demon’s face and, above all, the highly unusual depiction of his hair cast him as a sinister


caricature of the possessed man, whose arms fall forward in a conspicuous parallel with the
falling spirit.\footnote{563} Furthermore, the man’s upper body hunches over so that only his eyes and the
crown of his head breach the line demarcating the lower and upper zones of the background—the
latter being the space dominated by Christ. While the combined effect of these formal and
compositional features may lack the dynamism of the Baptism miniature, the exorcism scene
nevertheless evokes a powerful and focused intensity that is entirely removed from any narrative
specificity. Indeed, the composition is reduced here to such an extent that the miniature could
just as easily be understood as a generic representation of Christ’s power to expel demons rather
than the depiction of a particular gospel event.\footnote{564}

Although basic similarities exist between the Hitda miniature and certain other Ottonian
depictions of exorcisms, such as the miniature representing the exorcism of the deaf and mute
man from the Echternach Lectionary in Brussels [\textbf{FIGURE 107}], these convergences can be

\footnote{563} Schipperges describes the arms of the demon as being “in ohnmächtiger Wut gegen Christus
erhoben.” See Schipperges 1937, \textit{Der Darmstädter Hitdacodex}, p. 264. His gesture is in fact
particularly difficult to characterize: his mouth is agape and both of his arms are raised in a type
of inverted \textit{orans} pose. Scholars have variously described the pose of the demoniac as deriving
from a gesture of supplication, obeisance, or submission. See also the depiction of the scene from
the nave mosaics of San’ Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna.

\footnote{564} It is thus hardly surprising that in treating the miniature scholars have often labelled the scene
either generically as the healing of a possessed man or erroneously as a representation of the
much more common iconography of Christ healing the demoniac at Gerasa: see, Ehl 1922, \textit{Die
ottonische Kölner Buchmalerei}, p. 117; Schipperges 1937, \textit{Der Darmstädter Hitdacodex}, p. 293;
includes four of the seven distinct exorcism stories preserved in the synoptic gospels, Bloch and
Schnitzler are no doubt correct in their argument that the miniature does in fact take as its basis
the exorcism in the synagogue at Capernaum reported by Mark as occurring after the baptism of
Christ and before the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law.
ascribed largely to fundamental pictorial conventions for depicting demons and demoniacs.\textsuperscript{565}

Both the extreme rarity of depictions of the particular event among known works of art—Byzantine and Western—as well as the lack of any identifiable attributes relating to the narrative lead one to conclude that the Hitda artist devised his scene largely \textit{ad hoc} rather than relying on an established pictorial tradition.\textsuperscript{566} Consequently, one ought to consider the potential conceptual motivations underlying the selection of this particular scene, and in so doing, examine as well the ways in which the miniature works in tandem with its titulus to engage both the exegetical traditions associated with this biblical event as well as the manuscript’s broader program, which centers on the development of a christological light topos.

A close congruence between miniature and titulus can be seen in the way each is conspicuously formulated in terms of light and darkness. Quite explicit in this regard, the miniature not only identifies Christ as light through the epithet inscribed on his halo, but also through the rigorous division of the background into light and dark zones that engage directly with the overlaying figures. The titulus verbally elaborates on this division in such a precise way that some scholars have suggested that it may have been written with the miniature at hand:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Spiritus inmundus tenebras petit · qui verbo lucis hominem fugit.}\textsuperscript{567}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
The unclean spirit, who by the word of the light flees the person, seeks the darkness.\textsuperscript{568}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{565} For the miniature from the Brussels Echternach Lectionary (BRB, MS 9428, fol. 42r), see von Euw 2007, \textit{Das Echternacher Evangelistar}, p. 171-173.

\textsuperscript{566} After arguing for the specific identification of the scene, Bloch and Schnitzler make a similar conclusion regarding the relevance of iconographic analyses in this instance: “Wäre diese Deutung richtig, müßte sie den Hinweis auf die byzantinischen Elfenbeintafeln des 6. Jahrhunderts freilich entwerten.” See Bloch and Schnitzler 1970, \textit{Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule} II, p. 104. Previous to this statement they argued that the roots of the iconography were to be located in Byzantine art.

\textsuperscript{567} For the Latin text of the titulus, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, \textit{Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule} I, p. 48, fig. 138.
Taking the demon as its subject, the titulus pointedly refers to his curious trajectory into the darkness (*tenebras petit*), which stands at odds with the iconographically far more common upward flight of expelled demons. Thus the text—regardless of whether it was written in response to the miniature or served instead as a prompt for the artist—calls upon the viewer to attach semantic values to the color blocking of the miniature’s background. With this cue from the titulus, the viewer might even go on to notice how the demon blends in with the dark background and the strip of earth below, or how, in contrast, the demoniac’s eye, casting its sight steadfastly toward Christ, basks in the light of the upper zone. A diligent reader might also note verbal links between the Baptism and Exorcism tituli: the instrumental ablative—the driving force behind the event—switches from “the spirit of the light” (*spirito lucis*) in the former to “the word of the light” (*verbo lucis*) in the latter. Indeed, the third titulus will continue with this construction in an amplified and more explicit form, mentioning “the word and touch of Christ” (*verbo et tactu Christi*).

Such a link between baptism—a ritual cleansing—and the story of Christ expelling an unclean spirit is not coincidental. From quite early on, theologians interpreted the exorcism of the unclean spirit as an allegory of Christ’s power to cleanse the spirit of the faithful. Speaking as Christ rebuking the demon, Jerome performs this moralizing transposition in one of his homilies on Mark:

> Exi de domo mea: quid facis in hospitio meo?… relinque mihi hospitium praeparatum.  

---


Go out from my dwelling place! What are you doing in my guest chamber? ... Leave the guest chamber that has been prepared for me.  

For Jerome, the human soul is the dwelling place of Christ; the story of the man possessed by the unclean spirit thus represents, in moral terms, the defilement of the place where Christ ought to be. In his sermon on the same passage, Caesarius of Arles similarly recasts the event as a moral allegory with direct implications for every individual. Other authors, including Ambrose and Bede, interpret the exorcism of the unclean spirit together with the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law from fever as representing Christ’s ability to purify both the soul and the body, respectively. The latter exegete, in his commentaries on Mark and Luke, makes this connection explicit:

Si virum a daemonio liberatum moraliter animum ab immunda cogitatione purgatum significare dixerimus, consequenter femina febribus tenta sed ad imperium domini curata carnem ostendit a concupiscientiae suae fervore per continentiae praecepta frenatam.

If we say that the man freed from the demon morally signifies the soul purged of impure thoughts, then it follows that the woman taken in fever, but cured at the command of the Lord, stands for the flesh curbed from the heat of its desire by the teachings of restraint.

The established exegetical background, which links both of the miracles featured in the Mark sequence through a morally inflected reading, strongly suggests that the miniatures cannot be

---

570 For the English translation, see Jerome, *Homilies*, p. 142.

571 The relevant passage from Caesarius’ 79th sermon reads: “Sed si in alieno corpore daemonem sic timemus, quantum timere debemus, ne per malos actus eum in nostris cordibus nutriamus” (If we fear the devil in the body of another so much, how much more should we be afraid that we may nourish him in our hearts by bad actions?). For the Latin text, see Caesarius of Arles, *Sermones* (CCSL 103), p. 324. For the English translation, see Caesarius of Arles, *Sermons*, trans. Mary Mueller (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010), p. 363.


considered in isolation from one another. This is not to say, however, that the depicted events merely reiterate a central theme—say, the power of Christ to purify the bodies and souls of the faithful. Rather, differences in the form and language of the miniatures and tituli suggest an escalation that lends the sequence, in this case, the character of a condensed narrative.

*   *   *

According to the narrative of the second gospel, the healing depicted in the final miniature of the Mark sequence follows directly upon the episode of Christ and the demoniac. Having entered the house of Peter and Andrew, Christ encounters Peter’s mother-in-law, who has succumbed to a terrible fever. Mark’s version makes quick work of the miracle, recounting the entire event in a single verse (1:31): “And he came and lifted her up, taking her by the hand, and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them” (*Et accedens elevavit eam, adprehensa manu eius, et continuo dimisit eam febris, et ministrabat eis*). In painting this scene, the Hitda artist once again shows himself to be capable of simultaneously submitting the gospel narrative to a close reading while also freely adapting the text to suit his needs [FIGURE 108]. Take, for example, his presentation of the two protagonists. The artist has depicted the woman in such a way that corresponds to the handful of details provided by Mark’s text: having been lifted up, she stands with her hand—or in this case, her wrist—held by Christ.\(^574\) On the other hand, in contrast to both the gospel narrative and the entire pictorial tradition of the scene, Christ sits enthroned to the left of the composition, as if he were a ruler receiving an audience. Unable to adduce any textual or iconographic basis for this detail in the entire corpus of Western and

\(^{574}\) Just as in the preceding miniature of Christ healing the demoniac, the Hitda artist here has deviated widely from the established pictorial tradition of representing this miracle. Often following the version of the event preserved in Luke (4:38-39), early-medieval illuminators exclusively depicted Peter’s ill mother-in-law reclining on a bed. For the iconography of the
Byzantine comparanda, Bloch and Schnitzler tentatively suggested that the artist here was perhaps attempting to avoid the monotony of an overly repetitive approach to the composition of the miracle miniatures. \(^{575}\) Yet when one considers that this scene constitutes the only moment in the entire cycle of miniatures in which Christ makes physical contact with another person, then it seems much more likely that the artist has modified his depiction of Christ to signal the importance of the event within the context of the broader miniature program. The foregrounding of Christ’s touch occurs not just through the disposition of the main figures in the miniature, but also through the titulus facing the scene, which reads:

\[
\text{Verbo et tactu Christi fugit febris a socru Petri \& et varius pariter morbus circumstantes deserit homines.}^{576}
\]

Through the word and touch of Christ, the fever flees from Peter’s mother-in-law and so, too, various ailments leave the bystanders. \(^{577}\)

The author of the text here employed the same basic grammatical construction—the instrumental ablative—found in the previous two tituli, yet expanded upon them to include a specific mention of Christ himself and his touch (\textit{verbo et tactu Christi}), rather than a reference to the light motif employed thus far in the Mark tituli (\textit{spirito lucis}; \textit{verbo lucis}). The importance of light, however, has been by no means diminished in this miniature. On the contrary, the Hitda artist has amplified the importance of the light-infused background by featuring it here as a rupture in


\(^{576}\) For the Latin text of the titulus, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, \textit{Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule} I, p. 48, fig. 140.

the architectural cityscape. Bordered by an undulating fringe of white and gold, the field of color fades from dark purple around Christ to a near-white lavender at its opposite extreme. The artist has created a dynamic space for the miracle through which Christ’s healing power is shown to spread beyond the woman to include the bystanders at the margin of the scene. Furthermore, through careful formal and compositional modifications, the artist integrated these marginal figures into the act of Christ’s healing. As the titulus indicates, they, too, are healed through Christ’s power. Both smaller in stature and elevated apart from the two protagonists, the marginal group stands almost as if waiting to approach Christ. The single exposed hand among the three depicted figures undoubtedly mimics that of Peter’s mother-in-law, while their covered left-hands prevent this mirroring effect from detracting from the centrality of the woman’s healing. As Kraus has rightly observed, the second figure in the marginal group stares out directly from the picture plane, suggesting that this group serves at least in part as a means of implicating the viewer into the space of the miracle as a marginal figure in his or her own right.

When seen in succession, the miniature of Christ healing Peter’s mother-in-law signals the culmination of the Mark sequence through an escalation noticeable across several levels. In terms of setting, the miniatures progress in such a way that the significance of light receives ever greater visual treatment: from the heavenly sphere in the Baptism miniature to the rigorously divided background of the second miniature and, finally, the cloud of light encompassing the figures in the third miniature. Concomitantly, the sequence increasingly demonstrates the salvific implications of Christ’s ministry through both a deepening engagement with the viewer as well as through a recourse to the relevant commentary traditions. After first witnessing the inauguration of Christ’s ministry with the baptism, the viewer then turns to a captivating demonstration of Christ’s ability to heal in the figure of the demoniac, and then sees, finally, how Christ’s
miraculous powers extend beyond the depicted supplicant to include even him- or herself. A knowledge of the commentary tradition relating to the three events would only bolster the viewer’s sense of engagement. In his homily on the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law, for instance, Jerome explains how every individual is sick with a fever and then exhorts his readers to rise up and let Christ touch his or her hands.\textsuperscript{578} Just as early exegetes consistently interpreted these three episodes as allegories of spiritual restoration, so too do the miniatures and tituli of the Mark sequence engage the viewer in acts of contemplation that revolve ultimately around his or her own personal stake in the events depicted.

\textit{Perpetual Light: The Luke Sequence}

Understanding the logic behind the selection and arrangement of miniatures in the Luke sequence presents one of the greatest challenges to any analysis of the pictorial program in the Hitda Codex. In contrast to the sequences of Mark and John, comprising three narrative scenes each, the Luke sequence presents four pairs of miniatures and tituli placed before the evangelist portrait and the illuminated initial page. As with the Matthew sequence, the arrangement is codicologically anomalous and ought to be considered an adjustment—at an intermediary stage in the planning—to the otherwise standard arrangement of three narrative miniatures per sequence.\textsuperscript{579} An examination of the codicology of the Luke sequence indicates that the modifications can be characterized as an expansion in order to include the first miniature: Christ

\textsuperscript{578} The relevant passage from homily 76 reads, in translation: “O, may he come to our house and enter in and by his command cure the fever of our sins! Each one of us is sick with a fever…May he also touch our hand, that our works may be cleansed. Let us now, at last, rise up from the couch; let us not lie prostrate.” See Jerome, \textit{Homiles}, p. 144-145.

\textsuperscript{579} For the codicology of the Matthew sequence, see above p. 221.
healing the man with the withered hand (fol. 114r). The titulus to this miniature has been appended to the end of the preceding gathering in such a way that required the expansion of that quaternio into a quinio. The presence of the quire signature ‘X’ on folio 112v—the penultimate leaf of the quinio—clearly indicates that this gathering was originally intended to be tenth in the series of twenty sequentially numbered quaternios that were reserved solely for the copying of the prologues, capitula, and text of the Gospels. Moreover, because the gospel text transitions seamlessly from quaternio ‘VIII’ to the anomalous quinio ‘X’, one can be sure that this change in the plan for the codex occurred after the initial laying out of the gatherings, but before the actual writing of the text.

With one notable exception, the process of selecting the scenes for illumination proves comparable to that of the Mark and John sequences. Indeed, it seems likely that an attempt was even made to begin the sequence roughly where the Mark miniatures left off. Thus, according to the order of Luke’s narrative, only three potential miracle scenes were skipped over between the last miniature of the Mark sequence and the first miniature of the Luke sequence: the miraculous catch of fish (5:1-11), the cleansing of the leper (5:12-16), and the healing of the paralytic (5:17-26). Likewise, the choice of the second miniature in the sequence—the raising of the widow’s son at Nain (7:11-17)—follows closely upon the first, omitting only the healing of the

580 See above p. 212.

581 In other words, fol. 104 (which shares the same leaf of parchment as the Withered-Hand miniature on fol. 113) does not disrupt the flow of the gospel text.

582 One may speculate as to why these scenes were skipped over: as Schiller notes, depictions of the miraculous catch of fish were extremely rare in the Middle Ages, see Schiller 1966, Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst I, p. 176. While common as an iconography, the cleansing of the leper could have been seen perhaps as thematically too similar to the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law. Finally, preference appears to have been given to the account of the healing of the paralytic from John’s Gospel, where the scene is illustrated as the second miniature in that sequence (fol. 170r).
centurion’s servant (7:1-10), which was perhaps disqualified for representing a miracle performed at a distance or because the raising of the widow’s son distinguishes itself as a miracle reported exclusively by Luke.\(^{583}\) The one highly problematic point in the sequence arises with order of the third and fourth miniatures: the healing of the blindman at Jericho and the storm at sea. According to Luke’s narrative, the logical choice for the third miniature ought to be that of Christ stilling the storm at sea (8:22-25), followed at quite a remove by the healing of the blindman at Jericho (18:35-43).\(^{584}\) As it is in the codex, however, the narrative order of these two scenes has been reversed with the storm at sea marking the fourth and final miniature of the sequence. Because this discrepancy stands out as the only instance of a narrative reversal within any of the four gospel sequences of the Hitda Codex, it merits particular consideration.\(^{585}\)

Two explanations for the narrative reversal emerge as candidates for the most plausible scenario: either the order of the two miniatures in the codex is incorrect and the result of an error during the original compilation of the gathering, or the reversal was intentional for programmatic reasons and the order is correct as it stands now in the codex.\(^{586}\) Both of these possibilities prove

---


\(^{584}\) In fact, the last two miniatures of the Luke sequence span the greatest narrative distance of the entire program. No less than eight distinct miracles are skipped over between the stilling of the storm and the healing of the blindman at Jericho.

\(^{585}\) The Matthew sequence, of course, represents a special case where the pictorial narrative was constructed from both Matthew’s and Luke’s account of Christ’s childhood. See above, p. 222-223.

\(^{586}\) A third possibility exists, despite being highly unlikely: that is, the order of the miniatures is correct, but the identification of scene as the healing of the blindman at Jericho is incorrect. A brief passage occurring in Luke’s narrative between the healing of the widow’s son and the calming of the storm mentions Christ healing several blindmen when John’s disciples approach him with their questions (7:21). This biblical passage notwithstanding, the unequivocal designation of Jericho as the miniature’s setting along with the presence of only a single
valid to varying degrees; unfortunately, neither proves definitive. The first scenario is
codicological in nature. As two miniatures painted on opposite sides and ends of the same
bifolio, their order depends entirely on how one folds the single sheet of parchment. Folding the
bifolio over on itself results in one sequence of miniatures, whereas folding the sheet under itself
results in precisely the opposite arrangement. Given that the tituli were written only after the
background and decorative borders were painted—a point made clear by the production errors
regarding the tituli facing the Matthew portrait and the Widow’s Son miniature—one must
imagine a moment when the two miniatures were faced by painted decorative pages that were
absent of inscriptions. Having been folded the wrong way, the gathering was compiled, the tituli
were inscribed accordingly and the order was thus set. The second hypothesis rests on the ability
of modern scholars to intuit something of the argument behind the intentional and singular
reversal of the otherwise consistent progression in each of the four gospel cycles. Bloch and
Schnitzler were well aware of this discordant moment in the narrative program, yet could offer
no explanation for its occurrence.\textsuperscript{587} Kraus, in contrast, has argued that the order is not only
correct, but also significant. With an interpretation that strains credulity, Kraus maintains that
through its rearrangement the Storm miniature achieves greater prominence as a “paschal image”

\textsuperscript{587} Regarding the order of the Luke sequence, they write: “Beim Lukasevangelium schließt sich
dem Autorenbild eine Miniaturengruppe an, bei der die fortlaufende Reihenfolge der
Wunderberichte aus dem 6. bis 8. Kapitel ohne erkennbaren Grund insofern aufgegeben ist, als
mit der Blindenheilung von Jericho eine erst wesentlich später, bei Lk 18,35f., berichtete
Episode eingeschoben wird.” See Bloch and Schnitzler 1970, \textit{Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule}
II, p. 98. In his earlier commentary to the facsimile edition of the codex, Peter Bloch put forth an
argument that the narrative program was governed by the associated liturgical pericopes of the
miniatures; this hypothesis, however, has been consistently rejected by scholars and was not
maintained in the subsequent double-volume reference work on the Cologne manuscripts. See
and thus marks the climax of what she sees as the underlying theological principle of the Luke sequence. Given the documented oversights that occurred during the production of the codex, the evidence would seem to point in favor of the first scenario—in other words, the quite reasonable, and heretofore entirely unnoticed possibility that the order of the final two miniatures has been reversed.

* * *

Running the gamut of potential subject matter from a bodily healing to a resurrection, a miraculous rescue to a cure of blindness, the sequence of four miniatures prefacing the Gospel of Luke distinguishes itself as the only one in the codex to focus exclusively on Christ’s miracles. Although this emphasis depends to a certain extent on Luke’s own tendencies as a narrator as well as the position of his text as third in the canonical grouping of the four gospels, the thematic consistency is nevertheless remarkable and to a certain extent the Luke cycle may be considered emblematic of the interests underlying the manuscript’s program as a whole.

Progressing through the series, the viewer first encounters a representation of Christ healing the man with a withered hand, fashioned according to the compositional approach already made familiar by the Demoniac miniature. The artist, however, has modified this basic scheme in several respects [FIGURE 109]. The lone encounter between Christ and his ailing counterpart has been expanded to include a large group of bystanders, comprising seventeen figures piled up behind the sick man. Composed primarily of floating heads, which the artist uses to fill in even the smallest interstitial space, this crowd of men has been placed roughly at the

level of Christ’s own head. Even in comparison with the hieratically dictated proportions of the other miracle miniatures, the difference in scale here between Christ and his counterparts is simply astounding. Despite being positioned lower on the ground than the group of figures across from him, his colossal body soars past them, with the top of his halo noticeably surpassing the highest point of the crowd. In formal terms, this modification proves consequential. By placing Christ’s head at the level of the crowd but his hand at the level of the sick man—whose line of sight makes contact with Christ’s gesturing fingers—the artist has managed to depict two aspects of the miracle narrative in a single, unified composition. Adding to this coherence by bridging the space between the two poles of the composition, the light-infused striated background has taken on an additional paradisical character through the inclusion of golden foliate motifs as well as several thin, leafy bands of white paint. This lush flourishing of the background stands in pointed opposition to the limp and desiccated hand that constitutes the subject of the miniature. If there were any doubt as to the source of this enlivened space, the beams of light marking Christ’s nimbus—a visual echo of the background in both palette and pattern—make the association unmistakable. In order to gauge the combined effect of these various formal modifications one need only look to the corresponding miniature from the Egbert Codex [FIGURE 110]—the single other example of this scene in the corpus of Carolingian and Ottonian art—where a rather prosaic version of the iconography, bereft of the Hitda artist’s characteristic approach to scale, composition and background, accompanies the pericope taken from Mark’s version of the event.589

Far from incidental, the formal qualities of the Hitda miniature bear directly on essential elements of the miracle narrative. Therefore, one may consider as well the extent to which the miniature articulates something of the event’s conceptual underpinnings. All three synoptic accounts agree in framing the miraculous healing of the withered hand as part of an ongoing attempt of the Pharisees to discredit Christ by testing his adherence to Mosaic law—in this case, specifically the proscription against work on the sabbath. In thwarting their trap, Christ not only heals the man, but also decisively establishes his relationship to the Law. Furthermore, the gospel narrators state quite clearly that the healing in no way diminishes the hostility of the Pharisees toward Christ: Mark refers to the lamentable blindness of their hearts (caecitate cordis eorum), whereas Luke describes them as being driven mad (repleti sunt insipientia). In this regard, however, both the miniature and the titulus from the Hitda Codex take a noticeably different tack. The titulus refers not to the blindness or madness of the Pharisees—as even the gospel capitula to the event do—but rather to the “thoughts of the incredulous men,” which have been conquered by Christ:

Incredulorum cogitationibus victis · virtus Christi in medio · manum aridam restauravit infirmo.  

_Having conquered the thoughts of the incredulous men, the power of Christ restores the withered hand for the sick man in the middle._

The miniature in turn presents these men rapt in attention, with their collective eyes focused on Christ. The sole gesturing figure of the cohort raises his hand not in condemnation, as Bloch and

---

590 For the Latin text of the titulus, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, _Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule_ I, p. 50, fig. 146.

Schnitzler see it, but rather in acquiescence. Moreover, just as the titulus implicates a two-step process to the miracle—first the thoughts of the men are conquered, then the hand is restored—so too the triangulation of hands in the miniature coordinate the dual trajectory of Christ’s _virtus_. At this point the titulus cleaves to the gospel text as it describes the sick man standing in the middle, whose hand is “restored” at Christ’s command. The miniature, in contrast, deviates from the biblical account in so far as the man has been placed hunched over in front of the Pharisees—at eye level with Christ’s gesturing hand—so that the two parties merge into one block of figures. Additionally, the flourishing of the background directly beneath the withered hand functions as a visual gloss on the act of restoration—comparing his ailment to a barrenness made verdant by Christ.

In contemplating the conquered thoughts of the bystanders or the flourishing of a once withered hand, a contemporary viewer of the miniature might well have called to mind similar tropes in the commentary tradition on the miracle, wherein the withered hand morally signifies—as Bede puts it in his commentary on Luke—mankind “withered by a barrenness of good works,

---


593 The Luke narrative has Christ saying explicitly to the man: “Arise and stand forth in the middle” (Surge, _et sta in medium_); also, according the the Latin, the withered hand was restored: “and he stretched it forth and his hand was restored” ( _et extendit et restituta est manus eius_).

594 The account in Luke clearly states that the right hand of the man was withered—also, the man stood in the middle, between Christ and the crowd. For just such an arrangement, see the composition in BnF MS Gr. 74, fol. 23r.

595 In a telling point of comparison, the corresponding titulus from Ekkehard’s program for the cathedral at Mainz refers to the restorative act of the withered hand as a flourishing, or literally a “turning green” (virescit): “Aridus iste manum, cito credens se fore sanum, Christo porrexit, quae voce potente virescit” ( _Believing himself soon to be healed, this withered man extends to Christ his hand, which through his command turns green_). See Kieffer 1881, _Versus ad picturas_, p. 19.
but cured through the compassion of Christ.⁵⁹⁶ For other authors, such as Jerome or Ambrose, the man’s withered hand also designated an inherent moral deficiency, for which every individual could find treatment through recourse to Christ.⁵⁹⁷ By establishing a link between the curing of the withered hand and the conquering of the minds of the incredulous, the miniature and its inscriptions subtly create a similar moralized context for the event.

* * *

Following the miraculous healing of the withered hand, Luke recounts how Christ called together the twelve apostles, cured a multitude of the ill and the possessed, then preached his sermon on the mount. Subsequently, on the way to Nain after healing the Centurion’s servant, Christ encountered a funeral procession including pallbearers, a crowd from the city and a widowed mother, whose son had just died. Having told her not to weep, he took pity on the woman and ordered her son to rise from the dead, at which point the young man sat up and began to speak—much to the amazement of the assembled crowd. Reported only in the third Gospel, this miraculous resurrection forms the subject of the second miniature of the Luke sequence. In his pictorial rendering of the narrative, the Hitda artist fused the various elements of the story into a single, unified composition, which he set against one of the most daringly conceived backgrounds of the manuscript’s entire program [FIGURE 111].

Although reduced in stature relative to the previous miniature, the figure of Christ nevertheless dominates the composition as he stands to the left, absent his disciples. He gestures

---


toward the once-dead youth, who, still wrapped in his funeral shroud, sits up in response. The youth’s bier rests upon the shoulders of a pallbearer, who himself looks toward Christ, as does the group of attendants behind him.\(^{598}\) The boy and his funeral party emerge from a fantastically wrought cityscape, wherein the gate at the far right of the composition gives way to a highly skewed depiction of the crenellated city walls, which curve upward sharply until they terminate at the upper margin of the miniature. The schematic depiction of the walls encloses a nearly incomprehensible architectural jumble, which is surely meant to represent the city of Nain.\(^{599}\) As if building on the notion of the walls as a threshold, the artist has transformed the miracle’s setting into a meeting of two worlds, the junction of which can be seen in that ambiguously depicted band of white paint running down the inner side of the city walls and merging imperceptibly with it. The light-infused, striated background, to which the white band of paint pertains, designates Christ’s space. Topped by bands of white and pink, the charged background darkens to a deep purple around Christ only to lighten again around the kneeling figure of the widow. Quite noticeable as the sole female figure in the composition, the widow serves a mediating function through her supplication and thus bridges the gap between Christ and the funerary procession. Overall, the impression evoked by the modification of the background and the arrangement of the composition is one of dynamic confrontation.

Despite its carefully constructed nature, the miniature deviates in two critical respects from both the biblical account as well as from prevailing trends in the visual tradition of the

\(^{598}\) It appears as though the artist had begun to paint a second pallbearer at the opposite end of the bier, yet abandoned the attempt after completing only the head of the figure. A conspicuous, dark wash of paint covers the portion of the composition where the figure’s body would have been, suggesting that the artist either miscalculated the allotted space for the figure or experienced particular difficulty with the passage.

\(^{599}\) For depictions of architecture in the Hitda Codex, see Schipperges 1938, *Der Hitda-Codex*, p. 249.
Contemporary representations of the event tended to focus on one of these two pivotal moments from the biblical narrative. The Ottonian wall painting from the church of St. George on the Reichenau, for example, presents the widowed mother in mourning with her hands at Christ’s feet while the resurrected youth sits up in the bier with his right hand raised in a speaking gesture [FIGURE 112]. Running along its lower border, the surviving titulus to the scene further emphasizes these two aspects of the iconography, mentioning how the boy sits up and speaks, thus relieving his mother from all her sorrow. Although remarkably similar in composition to that of the Reichenau wall painting, the miniature from the Hitda Codex nevertheless depicts the mother with her covered hands raised in prayer and the youth partially reclined, with only his head emerging from the shroud. In a similar


601 Based on the ten known representations of the subject in Ottonian art, scholars have postulated the existence of two essential iconographic types: the Echternach type and the Reichenau type. Objects from the former group consistently depict Christ’s physical contact with the bier, whereas objects from the latter group—to which the Hitda miniature has been assigned—emphasize more often than not both the widowed mother kneeling before Christ as well as the youth’s gesture in response to his resurrection.

602 “Mortue, surge citus residensque loquensque revive. Sic matris viduae tristia cuncta abole.” (Dead man, rise up now; in sitting up and speaking, return to life. Banish thus all sorrows from your widowed mother). See Berschin 1994, Die Tituli der Wandbilder, p. 10.

603 Winterer has noted the detail of three golden points, which have been painted slightly above the widow’s covered hands—it is difficult to imagine what these could be apart from a stray application of the same detailing that occurs elsewhere on her garment. See Winterer 2010, Das Evangeliar der Abtissin Hitda, p. 58.
vein, the titulus also differs from that of the Reichenau example in that it focuses solely on the youth’s recognition of Christ’s divinity through his role as creator:

Hic filius viduae defunctus · sui factorem cognoscit vivificatus.\textsuperscript{604}

Having been returned to life, the dead son of the widow recognizes here his maker.\textsuperscript{605}

The grammatical infelicity of sui instead of suum notwithstanding, the reference to the boy’s factor—quite literally, his maker—recalls two particularly evocative passages from the books of Ecclesiastes (2:12) and Isaiah (17:7). The latter passage describes a similar moment of recognition, couched in the language of prophecy: “In that day man shall bow down to his Maker, and his eyes shall look to the Holy One of Israel” (\textit{in die illa inclinabitur homo ad factorem suum et oculi eius ad sanctum Israhel respicient}). The allusion further underscores the emphasis of the titulus on the recognition of Christ as creator. The assertion of recognition, which plays out both in the language of the titulus and the pointed glances of the miniature’s figures, ought to be understood as extending beyond the confines of the text-image relationship to implicate the viewer as well. The unusual emphasis on the youth’s recognition links the event to internalized, mental processes in which the viewer, too, can participate. Fully in line with the established commentary tradition on the miracle—a tradition, which overwhelmingly allegorizes the event as a personalized account of spiritual revival—the viewer here is called upon to

\textsuperscript{604} For the Latin text of the titulus, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, \textit{Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule} I, p. 50, fig. 149. The curious appearance of the titulus can be explained as the result of a technical error, in which the artist or scribe had originally written “incipit evangelium secundum Lucam.” Bands of gold cover up this text, upon which is written the text of the titulus in black ink. In fact, the mistake is not so careless: the corresponding side of the same folio displays the Initial Page to Luke. This mix up provides a glimpse into the process of producing the manuscript.

contemplate the salvific power of Christ to renew not just the dead in body, but also all those dead in spirit. Ever quick to point out that those whom Christ miraculously resurrected would only die again at a later time, Augustine was most insistent on the spiritual significance of the event:

Sed omnis homo habet oculos, quibus videre potest mortuos resurgere ita, ut resurrexit filius huius viduae...unde autem videant homines resurgere mortuos in corde, non omnes habent, nisi qui iam resurrexerunt in corde.⁶⁰⁶

All of us have eyes with which we can see the dead rise in the way the son of this widow rose...Not all, however, have the wherewithal to see those who are dead in the heart rise again; to see that, you need to have already risen in the heart yourself.⁶⁰⁷

As Augustine states here, understanding the implications of Christ’s miracle requires that one internalize the event by undergoing his or her own personalized, spiritual resurrection.

*   *   *

The third—perhaps originally fourth—miniature of the Luke sequence builds on the demonstrated interest in the interior or personalized aspects of Christ’s miraculous healings. However, setting aside the previously discussed sequential problems posed by the arrangement of the final two miniatures, there remains one final narrative puzzle to consider before proceeding to an analysis of the miniature. In every other case apart from the Matthew sequence, a general tendency may be observed in which the selected miracles for each sequence follow closely upon one another according to the chronological progression of the respective gospel text. With the miniature of the blindman at Jericho, however, a substantial break in the narrative occurs such that no less than ten miraculous events are passed over in Luke’s account between

---

⁶⁰⁶ This passage derives from Sermon 98. See Augustine, *Sermones*, PL 38: col. 591.

⁶⁰⁷ For the English translation, see Augustine, *Sermons on the Old Testament* III/4, p. 44. He goes on to mention how “there is more to raising up someone to live for ever, than to raising up someone who will only die again.”
the stilling of the storm and the healing of the blindman at Jericho. Seen in terms of the conventional chapter divisions to which the miniatures belong (namely: 6, 7, 18 and 8), the anomaly of the third miniature becomes even more apparent. Moreover, this particular instance of Christ healing the blind was certainly not the exclusive version of the rather popular subject matter in late-antique and early-medieval art.\textsuperscript{608} And finally, neither the miniature nor the titulus lend prominence to the scene nor do they provide any other clues that might help explain why it was selected.\textsuperscript{609} One is faced, then, with two possible scenarios for explaining the scene selection. Assuming that the designer of the program wanted to include an example of one of Christ’s most prominent types of miracles—the healing of the blind—and had no option of placing the scene in the Matthew, Mark or John sequences, then the only remaining choice would have been Luke’s account of the blindman at Jericho—the single notable instance of that miracle type in the third Gospel. The nature of the manuscript’s program makes this scenario plausible for the sequences of Matthew and Mark, where the allotted spaces for miniatures were claimed by Christ’s childhood narrative, his baptism and the two miracles following directly thereafter. Less clear is why the designer chose not to select the story of the man born blind, told exclusively and at great length in John’s Gospel, where the miracle takes up the entirety of


\textsuperscript{609} Given the prominent interest accorded to a christological light topos at several points throughout the program, it is puzzling to observe that neither the miniature nor the titulus have anything remarkable to say in the topic.
The other possibility lies in the event’s status as the final miracle of Christ’s public ministry, a status on which all of the synoptic accounts agree. Assuming it took its proper place at the end of the Luke sequence, the miraculous healing of the blindman at Jericho would mark, then, both the conclusion of the synoptic narrative of Christ’s ministry as well as a break from the subsequent group of miniatures prefacing John’s Gospel, which begins chronologically with the first miracle reported by John after Christ’s baptism. These two hypothetical scenarios are by no means mutually exclusive, nor do they fully uncover the possible motives underlying the atypical selection of the healing of the blindman miniature.

Such narrative discrepancies notwithstanding, the miniature and its titulus do in fact demonstrate a thematic link with their predecessors in the Luke sequence: the artist has once more rendered the gospel narrative in such a way that underscores the internal, spiritual aspects of the healing. In this case, however, such an emphasis proves already latent within the gospel account of the miracle. According to Luke’s narrative, Christ encounters a blindman on the way to Jerusalem, after gathering his disciples and foretelling his impending passion. As the group draws near to Jericho the blindman, begging on the wayside, hears them approach. Defying rebukes from the crowd, he cries out after Christ, whom he recognizes as the “son of David,” and begs to be granted sight. Christ assents with the command: “Behold! Your faith has made you well” (Respice; fides tua te salvum fecit.).

Focusing on the blindman’s display of faith, the

---

610 Pushing further into the realm of speculation, one could argue that perhaps it was more important that the narrative program close with the miniature of Christ and the Adulteress, which occurs before John’s account of the healing of the man born blind.

611 For an alternative interpretation of the event, see Kraus 2005, Worauf gründet unser Glaube, p. 272-275, 299-303.

612 The translation here modifies that of the Douay-Rheims version, which renders the passage as: “Receive thy sight; thy faith hath made thee whole”.

266
illuminator appears to have interpolated additional aspects of Mark’s narrative into the miniature, which accounts for both his bare chest and his approach toward Christ [FIGURE 113]. With his eyes closed shut, the man nevertheless looks up toward Christ as he approaches with his hands outstretched in supplication. Secondary to the encounter between Christ and his ailing supplicant, a group of six apostles occupy an ambiguous space both behind and in front of the miniature’s leftmost frame. Of these figures, four of whom are nimbed, the painter has depicted only the body of Peter in full length. Distinguished by his telltale hoary visage, Peter acts—in gesture, clothing and stature—as a mirror image of Christ, whom he stands behind, thus visually identifying the apostles as an extension of Christ’s ministry. In capturing the moment directly before the act of healing, the miniature sets up what the titulus, and by extension the viewer, must bring to completion. Indeed, the facing text presents the viewer with the tersely formulated core of the miracle narrative, emphasizing thereby the instrumental role of the blindman’s faith in bringing about the healing:

Privatus visu · habitum videndi fide meruit a Christo.  

*Through his faith, the man deprived of sight gained the ability to see from Christ.*

Both the artist and the author of the titulus have avoided a heavy-handed approach to what could have been a potentially dramatic encounter between Christ as the light of the world (John 8:12)

---

613 Mark provides the fullest account of the miracle, even identifying the otherwise anonymous blindman as a certain Bartimaeus, son of Timaeus. According to Mark, the blindman casts off his garment and walks toward Christ (*proiecto vestimento suo exiliens venit ad eum*). Matthew’s version of the miracle, in contrast, mentions two unnamed blindmen begging by the wayside (20:29-34).

614 For the Latin text, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, *Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule* I, p. 50, fig. 150.

and the blindman walking in the darkness. Late-antique and early-medieval commentators on the miracle, however, were not so circumspect in drawing such connections. For Jerome and Hrabanus Maurus the blind are those who do not know Christ; for Bede they are all those who do not know “the brilliance of eternal light.” Augustine preached extensively on Matthew’s version of the miracle, explaining that the blindmen on the side of the road, crying out to Christ, stood for each one of the faithful who struggles with his or her innate spiritual blindness. For these faithful, according to Augustine, “the eye is healed when it understands Christ’s divinity.” Therefore, if there is any conceptual thread running through the treatment of the Luke miniatures considered thus far, then it is surely the subtle yet consistent emphasis on the internalized, spiritual aspects of Christ’s miracles—and the potential for such an emphasis to implicate the viewer directly at a personal level. From the thoughts of the incredulous, to the recognition of the widow’s son and the touching faith of the blind beggar, the miniatures and tituli coax the viewer into contemplating the true site of Christ’s miracles within the individual believer.

*   *   *

Whatever its proper position within the Luke sequence may be, the fourth miniature of the group ought to be considered within just such a personalized context. Only then will many of its

---

616 See John 8:12, where Christ describes himself as both the light of the world and the light of life, directly following his encounter with the Adulteress.


peculiarities come into focus as meaningful elements of a miniature that not only possesses outstanding visual qualities in its own right, but also forms part of a larger, conceptually coherent program. Because it ranks among the most famous and most reproduced examples of illumination from the entire Middle Ages, the Storm miniature of the Hitda Codex runs the risk of being seen with an autonomy greater than that of its counterparts [FIGURE 114]. Like the Wedding-at-Cana miniature, moreover, its composition and its subject matter break from the otherwise consistent pattern of representing New-Testament miracles as an encounter between Christ and a supplicant. Yet despite its status as a relative outlier in terms of composition, subject matter and creative innovation, the miniature belongs without question to the series in which it is inextricably embedded. Taking as its ostensible subject the miracle of Christ calming the storm on the sea of Galilee (Matt. 8:23-27; Mark 4:36-40; Luke 8:22-25), the painting depicts an event that, according to Luke’s narrative, occurs following Christ’s raising of the Widow’s son and just before the spate of miracles ending with the healing of the blindman at Jericho. However, as scholars have been quick to point out, the Hitda artist has in fact refrained from portraying the miracle itself. Instead, in a brilliant display of his keen interest in the precise timing of his narrative depictions, he chose to paint the very moment that necessitated the miracle, marking the absolute height of dramatic intensity: while the storm rages at full force, ripping the sail from its tethers and plunging the boat into certain peril, a lone hand emerges from the center of the crowd to graze the shoulder of the sleeping divinity. As any viewer aware of the story knows, in the split second following the moment depicted by the artist, Christ will be roused from his slumber to quell the storm and rescue his apostles from disaster. Therefore, the effectiveness of the miniature derives in large part from a perfect alignment of visual and narrative tension, both of which are meant to be resolved in the mind of the viewer.
For his part, the artist has marshaled the full array of tools available to a painter in order to convey something of the terror of being caught in a storm at sea. Any hint of a ground or horizon line has been eliminated in favor of a turbulent wall of water contained only by the frame. As if animated by the fury of the storm, the boat has taken on a menacing life of its own, bucking against the borders of the miniature with its tail raised high and head lowered in a scowl. With eyes wide and brows furrowed, the anxious apostles look collectively at the alarming sight of the sail flailing hopelessly in the wind—by any account a virtuoso display of expressive painting. Only one of them looks back toward Christ, who, alone in an image that is otherwise entirely off kilter, evokes calm and stability as he sleeps soundly with his head propped against his forearm. Considering this miniature in terms of the role of artistic choice and the importance of purely visual means in rendering narrative, it would be difficult to imagine a more instructive comparison than that between the Hitda miniature and the same subject depicted in the Aachen Gospels of Otto III [FIGURE 115]. In certain respects, the latter miniature offers a fuller account of the event, casting the miracle as a continuous narrative that depicts Christ both asleep and miraculously commanding the elements. Furthermore, all the constituent parts of the storm scene are there: the rolling waves, gusts of wind, a billowing sail and gesticulating apostles. Nevertheless, the Aachen miniature palpably lacks any sense of dramatic tension or viewer

---

engagement. Critical in this regard is the absence of the touch on Christ’s shoulder—the trigger which, once seen, sets off the miracle in the mind of the viewer.\footnote{For the importance of the apostle touching Christ, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1970, \textit{Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule} II, p. 108; Plotzek 1970, \textit{Das Perikopenbuch Heinrichs III}, p. 161-162.}

Despite its modest appearance, the titulus to the Storm miniature plays a significant role in coordinating the viewer’s understanding of the event. By focusing exclusively on the second part of the narrative—in other words, the climax of the miracle—the titulus picks up where the miniature leaves off:

\begin{quote}
Imperio summi · obediunt mare et venti.\footnote{For the Latin text of the titulus, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, \textit{Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule} I, p. 51, fig. 152.}
\end{quote}


Referring to an action that is not even depicted in the miniature, the titulus heightens the tension between the viewer’s understanding of the miracle story and the particular moment portrayed before his or her eyes. Its wording, moreover, takes the form of a biblical paraphrase of a verse common to all three synoptic accounts of the miraculous event. In fact, the titulus can be understood to answer the question posed by the bewildered apostles after having witnessed Christ calming the storm: “Who do you think this is that commands both the winds and the sea and they obey him?” (\textit{Quis putas, hic est, quia et ventis imperat et mari et oboediunt ei?})\footnote{The quotation here is taken from Luke 8:25 with the translation modified from that of the Douay-Rheims. The closely worded passages from Matthew and Mark can be found at 8:27 and 4:40, respectively.}

The titulus thus emphasizes the affirmation of Christ’s divinity in light of his power over the
elements. In so doing, however, the inscription breaks from the otherwise consistent string of references to the interior or personalized aspects of Christ’s miracles found in the preceding tituli. Yet for any viewer familiar with the commentary tradition related to this miracle, such aspects would not be far from thought. Early exegetes—from Ambrose and Jerome, to Augustine, Gregory, and Bede—consistently moralized Christ’s miraculous calming of the storm into an account of every individual’s spiritual struggle against the storms of the world.  

Augustine, for example, states this interpretation most forcefully in a sermon on Matthew’s version of the miracle:


*I want to urge you not to let faith sleep in your hearts against the storms and waves of this world…by giving way to someone else’s evil you suffer shipwreck. And why is that? Because Christ is asleep in you. What does it mean, that Christ is asleep in you? That you have forgotten Christ. So wake Christ up, remember Christ; let Christ stay awake in you, think about him.*

The emphasis here on the urgency of waking Christ from his slumber offers a powerful analog to the Hitda miniature’s own dramatic rendering of the miracle: just as Augustine implores his audience to rouse Christ in their hearts, so too the miniature calls upon its viewer to visualize the act in his or her own mind.

---


625 The quotation derives from sermon 63. See Augustine, *Sermones* (PL 38), col. 424.

As the titulus to the portrait of John attests, the author of the fourth gospel was widely considered throughout the Middle Ages to have enjoyed Christ’s particular favor among the apostles—a status often linked to his pious virginity. Furthermore, his special proximity to Christ was thought to constitute one of the main reasons for the noticeable theological inflection of his gospel text and its subsequent deviation from the synoptic accounts of Christ’s life. Indeed, the evangelist’s treatment of nearly every aspect of Christ’s life—including his public ministry—differs from that of Matthew, Mark, and Luke to such an extent that the designer of the Hitda Codex’s miniature program must have grappled with the peculiarities of John’s text when planning the sequence of three miniatures that preface the fourth gospel. Assuming—if one may—that one of the designer’s objectives was to extend the series of miracles begun with the Mark sequence through to the fourth gospel, then the potential options would have been quite limited. For one, John mentions only seven distinct miracles performed by Christ during his public ministry. Of these seven, two take as their subject miracle types already represented in the Luke sequence—that is, a resurrection of the dead and a healing of a blindman—and a further two may be counted as miracles that do not lend themselves particularly well to pictorial

---

627 For the John titulus in the Hitda Codex, see above p. 216.

628 For the role of John in medieval art, see Jeffrey Hamburger, St. John the Divine: The Deified Evangelist in Medieval Art and Theology (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). For a thorough overview of the John’s treatment of miracles, see Foubister 1982, The Nature and Purpose of Jesus’ Miracles in the Gospels, p. 299-365. To give only a brief sense of John’s peculiarity regarding miracles, he makes no mention of Christ’s excorcisms, nor healings of lepers nor any miracles associated with women.

629 At the very end of his Gospel, John records an eighth miraculous event with the catch of fish (20:6-14), which occurs, however, after Christ’s death and is therefore not counted here.
representation—that is, a healing at a distance and Christ walking on water.\textsuperscript{630} The remaining
three miracles of John’s Gospel comprise the turning of water into wine during the wedding at Cana, the healing of the paralytic at Bethsaida, and the multiplication of five loaves to feed five-thousand men. It is thus hardly surprising that the designer of the program included the first two of these remaining miracles in the John sequence. The logic underlying the selection of the third miniature proves only somewhat less certain. Portraying the episode of Christ and the Adulteress, this final miniature distinguishes itself as the only non-miraculous event—apart from the Baptism—depicted in the sequences of Mark, Luke, and John. Such a distinction notwithstanding, the three miniatures of the John sequence do in fact constitute a clear, chronological progression of events from the beginning of Christ’s ministry, according to John, skipping over only a few notable scenes in the process.\textsuperscript{631}

* * *

Described by John as the \textit{initium signorum} (the beginning of miracles), the transformation of water into wine during the wedding at Cana—reported solely in the fourth gospel—occurs directly after Christ’s baptism in the Jordan and thus designates the beginning of his public ministry. The wine having run dry at a wedding celebration, Christ’s mother entreats her son to action, at which point he ostensibly rebuffs her. He then orders six stone vessels to be filled with water and taken to the chief steward of the wedding, who, after tasting it, calls on the bridegroom, wondering why he has saved the good wine for last. Despite its prominent position

\textsuperscript{630} For the iconography of Christ walking on water, see Schiller 1966, \textit{Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst I}, p. 176.

\textsuperscript{631} Only four notable events have been skipped over between the first and last miniatures of the John sequence: the purging of the temple, Christ and the Samaritan woman, the healing of the ruler’s son at a distance, the feeding of the five-thousand men. After the episode of Christ and the Adulteress, John recounts how Jesus healed the man born blind, raised Lazarus from the dead and washed the feet of his disciples—at which point the Passion narrative begins.
in the gospel narrative and its enduring popularity as a subject for pictorial representation in medieval and renaissance art, the miracle nevertheless represents something of an oddity among Christ’s public works. Far from the order of magnitude of resurrections, healings, exorcisms or miraculous rescues, the miracle could hardly be understood to alleviate the dire circumstances of Christ’s supplicants. For this reason, some scholars have labeled the transformation as a “luxury miracle,” proposing thereby that John included the story largely for symbolic purposes. In any case, the evangelist’s narration of the event leaves little room for doubt that its significance lies not in the miraculous act itself, the precise mechanism of which remains entirely unmentioned, but rather in the effect it has on those in attendance, including Christ’s disciples. In this regard, John explicitly states that, as a result of this sign, Christ manifested his glory and his disciples believed in him.

Faced with the rich potential for variation inherent in the narrative—from the festive setting, to the cast of characters and several critical moments to depict—the Hitda artist has largely eschewed the prevailing pictorial solutions offered by Carolingian and Ottonian treatments of the miracle, rendering the scene instead in his by now characteristic manner [FIGURE 116]. With Mary nowhere in sight, the artist has reduced the event to an encounter between Christ and an unidentified figure, almost certainly meant to represent the chief steward.

---

632 For the relevant references as well as a refutation of such an argument, see Foubister 1982, The Nature and Purpose of Jesus’ Miracles, p. 320.

633 As John states at the end of the miracle narrative (2:11): “…et manifestavit gloriam suam, et crediderunt in eum discipuli eius.”

Only the conspicuous row of six large vessels—alternating in color from ocher to purple, and lined up along the ground from behind the righthand frame of the miniature to just over Christ’s left leg—makes the identification of the subject matter unmistakable. The two groups of men gathered behind the protagonists at opposite ends of the composition stand no doubt for the disciples and the wedding guests, respectively. Positioned to the right of the chief steward, the most prominent of these men has been tentatively identified by scholars as the bridegroom, who looks on at the scene with his covered hand raised up to his face in a display of amazement. Moreover, his restrained composure offers a striking foil to the emphatic, mirrored gestures of Christ and the steward, which the artist has set against the single light-blue strip of the striated background. Clearly the visual focal point of the composition, the exchange of gestures between Christ and the steward encapsulates the condensed miracle narrative, distilling it into what is essentially a call and response between the two. Once again, the Hitda artist has refrained from giving the viewer any visual indication of the actual miraculous transformation itself, as other contemporary artists—such as the illuminator of the Brussels Echternach lectionary—were wont to do [FIGURE 117]. In the Brussels miniature, for example, Christ blesses the water as a servant pours it into one of the six vessels. Adding to the potential quandary regarding the Hitda miniature, the directionality of the gestures—with Christ addressing the steward, who in turn points to the vessels—would seem to indicate a version of the event at odds with the wording of the corresponding titulus, which explicitly mentions how Christ addressed the inanimate vessels, ordering them “to offer” the guests wine:


636 For the miniature from the Brussels Echternach Lectionary, see von Euw 2007, Das Echternacher Evangelistar, p. 156-158. See also the relief from the golden altar in Milan, Victor Elbern, Der karolingische Goldaltar von Mailand (Bonn: Kunsthistorisches Institut, 1952), p. 31-32.
Hic ter binis vasis · iussit Christus ex aqua vinum prebere convivis.\textsuperscript{637}

*Here Christ commanded the twofold-three vases to offer the guests wine from water.*\textsuperscript{638}

Yet a problem arises only if one insists on understanding the titulus as being nothing more than a verbal rendering of the picture. Given the attentiveness to chronological precision demonstrated throughout the manuscript, the discrepancy between image and inscription here ought to be understood instead as a meaningful difference in temporality. Seen in this regard, the past tense of the main verb “iussit” proves consequential as an indication that the miraculous transformation of the water into wine has already occurred in the miniature. Thus the real subject of the picture becomes not the marvelous wine itself, but rather the crowd’s proper understanding of what has just transpired.

Such a modification should not be too surprising in the context of a miniature program that concerns itself overwhelmingly with the direct implications of Christ’s actions for the well-being of his human counterparts. The shift in emphasis coincides, furthermore, with the efforts of medieval exegetes and commentators on the miracle, who were quick to demonstrate that Christ’s action at the wedding was more than a simple party trick. Augustine once again laid the interpretive foundation for the miracle, devoting his ninth tractate on John’s Gospel to the event. There, the authoritative theologian established an extensive reading whereby the turning of water into wine represents Christ’s fulfillment of Scripture, with the six vessels representing the six  

\textsuperscript{637} For the Latin text, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, *Die ottonische Kölnische Malerschule I*, p. 51, fig. 158.

ages of the world from creation to the present. Interpreted in such a manner, the significance of the miraculous transformation hinges on the proper understanding of Christ’s divinity as the word-made-flesh:

Quomodo autem fecit de aqua vinum? Cum aperuit eis sensum, et exposuit eis scripturas, incipientes a Moyse per omnes prophetas.

But how did [Christ] make wine from water? When he opened their understanding to them and explained the Scriptures to them, beginning with Moses through all the Prophets.

For Augustine, understanding Christ’s divinity transforms the tasteless law into an intoxicating truth. Later exegetes would expand upon this fundamental interpretation to incorporate the personal relevance of the miracle for the faithful. Bede, for example, used Augustine’s interpretation as a starting point for an introspective reading of the water’s transformation, in which each instance of an individual’s contemplation of Scripture amounted to a miraculous transformation: “if you understand the blessing…then he has truly made wine out of water for you, since he has opened to you the spiritual sense, by whose new fragrance you are intoxicated” (si intellegis benedictionem quae promissa est Abrahae in te de gentibus credendis munus esse conpletum, nimium de aqua tibi vinum fecit quia spiritalem sensum cuius nova flagrantia debriaris aperuit.).

The point here is not that the miniature and its titulus advance any one

---


640 See Augustine, *In Iohannis evangelium tractatus CXXIV* (CCSL 36), p. 93.

641 For the English translation, see Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, p. 199.

642 The passage here is taken from a part in the homily where Bede spiritually interprets each of the six vessels. See Bede, *Homiliarum evangeli libri II* (CCSL 122), p. 100. For the translation, see Bede, *Homilies on the Gospels*, trans. David Hurst (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Studies, 1991), p. 141. See also the moralized account of Caesarius of Arles, who, at the end of Sermon 169, warns his readers against loving the world and choosing its pleasures lest their “wine” be turned back into “water.” See Caesarius, *Sermons*, p. 419.
specific interpretation of the event in particular, but rather that through their distinct formulations they foster a contemplative viewing of the event, emphasizing for the viewer not one specific meaning, but rather a process of thought.

*   *   *

In the span between the first and second miniatures of the John sequence, the evangelist mentions only three notable events from Christ’s ministry that could potentially serve as suitable subjects for a pictorial program: the purging of the temple, the Samaritan woman at the well, and the healing of the ruler’s son at a distance. Therefore, picking up the narrative directly following this last event, the second miniature depicts the next significant miracle that occurs after the wedding at Cana. On returning to Jerusalem, Christ visits a place called Bethsaida—described as a pool of water surrounded by five porches, upon which a multitude of the ill and infirm wait to be healed. In a strikingly vivid manner, the evangelist relates how the sick gathered in anticipation of an angel who descends from time to time and stirs up the pool, at which point the first person to enter the water will be fully restored to health. As a manifestation of his divine insight, Christ singles out a particular man among the crowd, who, lacking anyone to carry him to the pool, has suffered under his unidentified illness for thirty-eight years. Christ asks this man if he wishes to be made healthy (vis sanus fieri?), and upon his reply Christ commands him with three imperatives: rise, take up your bed, and walk (surge, tolle grabattum tuum, et ambula.).

643 Some modern scholars have come to view this passage as a later interpolation into John’s account of the miracle, see Foubister 1982, The Nature and Purpose of Jesus’ Miracles, p. 323.

644 As another example of a sabbath-healing, John dedicates the remainder of the miracle narrative to Christ’s discourse when faced with the accusations of the Pharisees. Also, it should be noted that John’s account of the miracle shares much in common with the synoptic account of Christ healing a paralytic in Capernaum (Matt. 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26), particularly in his words to the incapacitated man, which are repeated nearly verbatim in all four versions of the healing.
By this point it may come as no surprise that, despite such a rich and evocative description leading up to the miracle, the Hitda painter has excluded from his composition all but the precise moment of the man’s healing [FIGURE 118].

Even more so than in previous miniatures, the artist has managed to depict the miracle in the very process of occurring—with the once-paralyzed man about to accomplish the second of Christ’s three commands. Standing sharply hunched over at the bottom right-hand corner of the frame, he grasps his bed with both hands and begins to lift it off the ground, all the while looking emphatically upward toward Christ. The remaining elements of the composition conform to the artist’s habitual rendering of miracles, resembling most closely the withered-hand miniature.645 In both instances, the monumental figure of Christ stands alone opposite a group of onlookers representing the Pharisees, whom the artist has consistently represented not as an angry mob, but rather as an awestruck crowd. The treatment of the background, however, introduces a noticeable difference between the two closely related miniatures. Lacking the flourishing details of the withered-hand miniature, the background here largely comprises fluid bands of blue and white paint that divide the space of the miracle into three zones conspicuously coordinated by the disposition of the two protagonists: a lower zone for the paralytic, whose head rises slightly above it; a middle zone framing Christ’s gesture, and an upper zone framing Christ’s head.

In all these respects, the miniature marks a decisive break from contemporary pictorial renderings of the event, many of which employed continuous narrative in order to include several aspects of John’s story at once.646 In the corresponding scene from the Nuremberg Codex

---

645 Other scholars have noted the resemblance as well, see Bloch 1968, Der Darmstädter Hitda-Codex, p. 101; and Kraus 2005, Worauf gründet unser Glaube, p. 319.

646 For the iconography of the miracle, see Boeckler 1961, Wunderszenen, p. 15-16; Schiller 1966, Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst I, p. 178-179; Bloch and Schnitzler 1970, Die
aureus, for example, three separate events unfold in quick succession [FIGURE 119]: to the left, Christ gestures at the bedridden paralytic man; in the middle, an angel touches the pool of water while a group of men clamor to submerge themselves; and finally to the right, the once-paralyzed man carries his bed as he exits the scene, partially cut off by the miniature’s frame. In a similar manner, the miniature from the Egbert Codex depicts the first two of these scenes, thus leaving out the actual result of the healing itself. In a telling point of contrast with this latter example, the Hitda miniature is in no way incomplete, despite its chronological specificity. Indeed, the titulus provides the viewer with two additional elements of the miracle narrative:

> Verbo divino grabattum portat salvus · qui in eo iacebat semivivus.

> Through the divine word, the saved man carries the bed in which he lay half alive.

Taking the man as its subject—and Christ’s command as the effective agent—the inscription juxtaposes two drastically different states of the paralytic man: half-alive lying in the bed, and healthy carrying the bed. In so doing, the author of the titulus has established a temporal

---


649 For the Latin text of the titulus, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, *Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule* I, p. 51, fig. 160.

650 For comparable translations, see Bloch 1968, *Der Darmstädter Hitda-Codex*, p. 102; Kraus 2005, *Worauf gründet unser Glaube*, p. 98; Winterer 2010, *Das Evangelar der Äbtissin Hitda*, p. 61. Based on a curious reading of “semivivus” as referring to a middle-aged man, Bloch and Schnitzler see the word as relating to the thirty-eight years mentioned in the gospel text, where, in fact, it refers to the duration of the man’s illness, not his age. Kraus quite rightly understands the term as standing in pointed contrast to “salvus.” See Bloch and Schnitzler 1970, *Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule* II, p. 109; Kraus 2005, *Worauf gründet unser Glaube*, p. 320.
framework that provides the viewer with references to both a past and an immediate future moment, neither of which is actually depicted in the corresponding miniature. Through this juxtaposition, then, the miniature’s chronological specificity—depicting the transition between the former state and the latter—becomes all the more apparent.

By emphasizing the raising of the bed, the artist has not only depicted the miraculous event in media res, but also he has cued the viewer to a moment in the narrative that received particularly focused attention from theologians throughout the late-antique and early-medieval periods. Whether expounding John’s text or the synoptic account of the miracle, exegetes consistently singled out the detail of the man’s bed as one meriting further reflection. Ambrose, for example, understood the bed to be the human body, a “bed of pain” upon which “the soul lay sick with the cruel torment of conscience.”\footnote{For the English translation, see Ambrose, \textit{Exposition on the Holy Gospel According to Saint Luke}, p. 151.} Jerome, Caesarius of Arles, Gregory, Bede, and Hrabanus Maurus join him in seeing the paralytic man and his bed as an allegory of the soul in its body.\footnote{For exegesis on the paralytic man, see Gregory, \textit{Moralia in Iob}, (CCSL 143B), p. 1178-1180.} While acknowledging this line of thought, Augustine charts a different course by understanding Christ’s dual command to rise and take up the bed as a symbol of his dual commandments to love God and one’s neighbor.\footnote{For Augustine’s interpretation of this miracle, see his Tractate 17 (CCSL 36, p. 169-179) and his Sermon 125 (PL 38: col. 688-698).} In contrast to these authors, the miniature points the viewer to the crucial moment in the narrative, yet stops short of providing him or her with a definitive interpretation of the event. In such a way, the miniature and the titulus create a space for a contemplative approach to the miracle—an approach that necessitates the viewer’s own engagement to make sense of the pictured event.
As several scholars have noted, the final miniature of the manuscript’s narrative program—the episode of Christ and the Adulteress (John 8:1-11)—distinguishes itself as the sole depiction of a non-miraculous event from the onset of the ministry cycle, marked by Christ’s baptism. It remains difficult, however, to assess whether contemporary viewers—much less the designer of the program—would have made much of such a distinction. After all, the miniature is out of place neither in the broader context of early-medieval ministry cycles nor in the more specific context of the Hitda Codex’s own miniature program.\(^654\) As with the previous two sequences, the designer of the program followed the respective gospel account closely in making his or her selection of the scene. The miniature’s subject is mentioned only in the fourth gospel, where it occurs shortly after the healing of the paralytic at Bethsaida. Indeed, only two miracles stories were passed over in the transition from the second to the third miniatures: the feeding of five-thousand men (6:1-15); and Christ walking on water (6:16-21). Moreover, the only other options for notable events from Christ’s public ministry would have been the healing of the man born blind (9:1-41), or the raising of Lazarus (11:1-44), both of which count as examples of subject types already depicted in the Luke sequence. Therefore, the choice of the third and final miniature of the John sequence proves logical at a basic, narrative level. In addition to its primary role as part of a narrative sequence, the miniature accords well with the aims and tendencies of the program established thus far and consequently marks a fitting end to the set of four illuminated sequences.

\(^{654}\) For the inclusion of the scene in other pictorial cycles, see the convenient iconographic overview provided by Schlosser 1892, *Schriftquellen zur Geschichte der karolingischen Kunst*, p. 331. To this list should be added the frescoes at Mustair and Sant’ Angelo in formis.
In purely visual terms, the miniature exhibits strong parallels with the final miniature of the Mark sequence, which depicts the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law [FIGURES 108 and 120]. Both compositions feature Christ enthroned to the left, opposite a female protagonist, who is accompanied by a crowd to the right. Furthermore, the artist has set both miniatures against the backdrop of a cityscape that has been ruptured by an amorphous cloud of light encompassing both Christ and the bystanders. In the final miniature of the John sequence, however, the bands of light swell and ebb in such a way that mimics the posture of Christ, who is depicted hunched over on his throne, writing on the ground with his finger. Despite the crucial point of contrast posed by this last detail, Christ’s touch effectively saves the women in both miniatures: in the Mark miniature, it is touch as physical contact, whereas in the John miniature, it is touch as the fulfillment of the law, written by the finger of God. Just as with the earlier Mark miniature, Christ’s action forms the focal point of the Adulteress miniature—the message he traces in the ground, however, stands out as an unusual inclusion of text into the miniature program.655

As one might expect, the detail of Christ writing on the ground forms a major point of interest in both the gospel narrative itself as well as in Ottonian depictions of the subject. According to John, Christ stoops down twice to write on the ground. The first instance occurs after the Pharisees bring the woman to him and ask “what do you say?” (Tu ergo quid dicis?), at which point Christ writes on the ground and then replies “let he that is without sin among you, cast the first stone at her” (qui sine peccato est vestrum, primus in illam lapidem mittat). Directly following this well-known line he writes on the ground once more and the Pharisees begin to leave one by one until the woman is left alone with Christ, at which point he looks up and asks if

655 Apart from the instance of Christ writing on the ground, text appears in the miniatures only as identifying inscriptions—and even then mostly in the Childhood and Baptism miniatures. Two
anyone has accused her. In each case, therefore, Christ’s writing on the ground can be understood to precede his speech, but the crucial detail of what exactly he wrote remains unmentioned by the evangelist. Faced with such a complicated sequence of events, artists tended to collapse the scene into either a simple confrontation between Christ and the adulteress, or a compressed rendition of the second instance of writing, with the Pharisees depicted in the process of leaving. As an example of the latter pictorial strategy, the corresponding miniature from the Egbert Codex offers the most significant comparison for the Hitda miniature [FIGURE 121]. There, Christ sits turned away from the woman and leaning toward the ground, where he writes with his finger “terra terram accusat” (earth accuses earth), the same exact phrase that the Hitda artist includes in his miniature. As Otto-Karl Werckmeister noted already in 1963, the inscription likely derives from one of Augustine’s sermons, where he expounds upon Christ’s famous response to the Pharisees, which he reads as a lesson in self-reflection. The painted citation not only provided the Ottonian artists with an apt solution to the vexing problem of what Christ wrote on the ground, but also it manages to distill Augustine’s teaching, condensing his sermon into a simple expression of reflexivity: like accuses like. The men who have brought forth the poor woman must come to realize that they—just like her—stand before Christ as sinners.

exceptions are the small golden inscriptions identifying Christ in the third Mark miniature and Jericho in the third Luke miniature.


657 Werckmeister 1963, Der Deckel des Codex Aureus, p. 31-32.
Two points reinforce this appeal to identify with the adulteress. First, in contrast both to the gospel text and to the prevailing pictorial traditions of the subject, the Hitda illuminator has modified the group of Pharisees so that several prominent figures at the front of the crowd stand fixated with their attention focused clearly on Christ. Meanwhile, the rest of the men turn their heads conspicuously away from the scene and thus signal their imminent departure. Although subtle, the juxtaposition here proves significant as a way of visually demonstrating that the implications of Christ’s teaching extend beyond the specific case of the adulteress woman—a point made especially clear in light of the modified background that effectively brings the group of men into Christ’s space. The second and most explicit statement of the need to identify with the woman can be found in the miniature’s titulus:

Mulier peccatrix hic erit exemplum christianis · iudice vero iudicante · nulli peccatori misericordiam denegari.  

_The sinful woman here will be an example to Christians that, in judging, mercy is denied to no sinner by the true judge._

Picking up on the rhetoric of Augustine’s sermon, which is addressed in part to those who judge on earth, the titulus stresses the clemency of Christ—the true judge—that pertains to every sinner, not just the adulteress woman. In fact, as the titulus discloses, the figure of the woman serves primarily as an “exemplum christianis” (an example to Christians). Apart from generally identifying the woman as a sinner, the titulus noticeably leaves out any specific reference to the gospel narrative, much less her pending absolution. It remains unclear whether this lack of narrative specificity ought to be understood as a consequence of the miniature’s role as the

658 For the Latin text of the titulus, see Bloch and Schnitzler 1967, _Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule_ I, p. 51-52, fig. 162.

Conclusion of the narrative program or rather its special status as a depiction of a non-miraculous event. Whatever the reason, the titulus marks an unusual moment of clarity regarding the purpose of the depicted event—and, by extension, the purpose of the miniature itself. Moreover, the insight offered here applies equally well to the broader set of miracle miniatures. Through their role as exempla, the miracle miniatures of the Hitda Codex engage the viewer in acts of contemplation, prompting a reflection on the ways in which they function as allegories of introspection.

Conclusion

With the final miniature of the narrative program, the viewer is brought to that memorable moment in the fourth Gospel when Christ, after dismissing the adulteress, proclaims to the pharisees that he is both the light of the world as well as the source of the light of life for every individual: “I am the light of the world. He that follows me walks not in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (ego sum lux mundi qui sequitur me non ambulabit in tenebris sed habebit lucem vitae). Whether or not this important passage figured in the decision to conclude the narrative program with the Adulteress miniature, it certainly provides a fitting occasion to consider anew the relationship between the narrative miniatures and the broader pictorial program of the Hitda Codex. As has been demonstrated, these miniatures do not simply reiterate the major events from the life of Christ—from his birth and death, to his resurrection. On the contrary, the gospel miniatures focus on two distinct aspects of his life. As one would expect, the cycle begins with an emphasis on the birth and incarnation of Christ, which is not at all unusual as the subject matter for the Matthew sequence. Thereafter, however, the miniatures begin to
chart a notably different course by focusing exclusively on episodes from the public ministry of Christ. This particular aspect of the gospel narrative provides the content for the remaining three gospel sequences and thus constitutes a major focal point of the program. Such a highly selective approach to narrative enabled the designer of the program to emphasize those moments in which Christ is shown interacting with men and women who are in need of his aid. However unusual this approach to narrative may be for an illuminated gospel book from this period, the choice of subject matter is by no means unheard of in medieval art—indeed, ministry cycles in other media are well attested. Moreover, the book’s status as an ex-voto may have provided an underlying impulse for the desire to emphasize Christ’s ability to intervene directly in the lives of the faithful. This is all to say that the real achievement of the Hitda Codex lies not simply in its choice of subject matter, but rather in its ability to transform a series of events from the life of Christ into meaningful encounters for the viewer. The efficacy of these encounters derives in large part from the close integration of miniature and titulus as the two constitutive elements of a single opening. As such, the viewer is compelled to regard both elements equally and to reflect on the ways in which they complement each other. What is at stake in this process of contemplating the image in light of the corresponding text—and vice versa—is not just the value of the scenes as representations of the historical actions of Christ, but also—and more importantly—the extent to which the scenes relate directly to the viewer of the manuscript and his or her relationship to Christ. In such a way, the narrative miniatures participate in the manuscript’s broader pictorial program, making visible for the viewer the “invisible truth” of the new word.
CONCLUSION

The foregoing study of the three most significant manuscripts from Cologne’s painterly group of Ottonian illumination began as an attempt to reconcile the innovative formal qualities of their expressive miniatures with the unusual wording of their corresponding full-page tituli. Accomplishing such a goal required, at first, a broader inquiry into the deeply-rooted preconceptions and art-historical biases at work in earlier scholarly assessments of both the style of the miniatures as well as the nature of their inscriptions. Regarding the evaluation of their painterliness, for example, the first chapter demonstrated how the remarkable handling of pigment on display in the miniatures paradoxically came to be seen as the surest sign of their regressive or imitative status vis-à-vis Carolingian or Byzantine illumination. As a consequence of this mindset, it became difficult for scholars such as Bloch and Schnitzler to regard the formal innovations of the Cologne miniatures as an internal development. Therefore, a driving assumption underlying their research was the need to determine the source of such innovation, which was often linked to the specter of an otherwise nonexistent Carolingian or Byzantine manuscript. In a similar fashion, and with a few important exceptions, the Cologne tituli were the subjects of oversight on the part of both art historians and philologists alike. Whether it was because of a few scribal errors that occurred during the copying of the inscriptions—as in the Milan Gospels—or because they were not written in verse and thus lacked any noteworthy literary value—as in the Gereon Sacramentary or the Hitda Codex—scholars until recently generally held the texts to be little more than mere descriptions of the images (Bildbeschreibung, as Bloch and Schnitzler would have it). Moreover, modern photographic conventions that privilege the isolated miniature—cropped out of its context—are also partially to blame for this
oversight, as is a general reluctance on the part of art historians to submit such inscriptions to the same level of scrutiny as their corresponding miniatures.

One of the principal assertions of this dissertation, however, has been that very arrangement—at a formal level—of image and inscription in these manuscripts offers the best argument in favor of a fundamental reconsideration of their art-historical value. Because they were designed and created as diptych-like pairings across the opening of the manuscript, image and text assert both their own autonomous importance as well as their status as pendants. Although they vie equally for the attention of the viewer, these two components of the opening should not be understood as competing elements or as substitutes for one another. On the contrary, this dissertation has uncovered the ways in which image and inscription in the Cologne manuscripts are closely intertwined and the extent to which they function as complements designed either to aid the viewer in understanding a deeper truth behind the depicted subject matter, or to help the viewer place the opening within the context of a broader program of illumination. Indeed, along with acknowledging this characteristic disposition of text and image across the opening of the manuscript, this dissertation has also stressed the importance of understanding the role of these openings as individual units in larger sequences of illumination, which in turn combine to constitute a single pictorial program for the manuscript. Simply from a codicological stand point, it is clear that the designers of these programs considered the miniatures and tituli in terms of sequences. Furthermore, with each of the three manuscripts under consideration, it has become clear that the pictorial program was created largely ad hoc. In other words, existing models and traditions were consciously manipulated and adapted in order to create an entirely new program of illumination which was designed to suit a specific purpose—likely even a specific person.
When combined with the impressive scope and scale of their pictorial programs, this creative handling of otherwise traditional pictorial elements lends these three manuscripts an almost individual character, which sets them apart from many of their more-famous contemporaries. One need only think of the Egbert Codex, for example, to gauge the effectiveness of the Cologne manuscripts in creating innovative programs of illumination that convey, if not a specific and definable message, then certainly a clear tone and a desired approach to the viewing of its miniatures. In contrast, with that renowned manuscript made for archbishop Egbert of Trier, which possesses both an informative dedicatory miniature as well as an elaborate cycle of narrative miniatures, one would be hard pressed to glean any sort of guiding principle underlying the selection of its miniatures, much less an overarching thematic message intended for its viewer. The same may be said for the gospel books of Otto III in Aachen and Munich, both of which have generally eluded attempts at characterizing the deeper significance of their own extensive miniature programs—this despite the fact that they are clearly associated with a specific ruler.

Although the Cologne manuscripts studied here were neither imperial commissions nor were they intended for episcopal patrons, they nevertheless contain remarkably ambitious and sophisticated programs of illumination that reflect an impressive level of thought and consideration on the part of their makers. Through a close study of both their miniatures and tituli, it was possible to recover something of the essential character of each of the three manuscripts. The second chapter, for instance, demonstrated how the now-fragmentary prefatory sequence of the Milan Gospels relates that book to a venerable tradition of Carolingian poetry and epigraphy. Moreover, it was shown how the broader program of the manuscript focuses its attention on the intended recipient, who is so magnificently depicted in the book’s dedicatory
miniature. With its conspicuously moralizing tone, the program emphasizes the attendant
demands for virtuous behavior that the gift of the Gospels places on the young man. Taking as its
subject the Gereon Sacramentary in Paris, the third chapter likewise provides the first thorough
assessment of that manuscript’s extraordinary pictorial program. Although it unfortunately lacks
a dedicatory miniature, the Gereon Sacramentary was almost certainly intended as a gift for a
specific person—or at least a close-knit group of individuals who would have been able to
understand the obscure terminology of its tituli and their repeated allusions to philosophical
contexts. The chapter demonstrated that these tituli are far from superficial displays of erudition.
Rather, in conjunction with their corresponding miniatures, the tituli construct an extensive
christological program aimed at a more profound understanding of the dual nature of Christ.
Focusing on the well-known Hitda Codex in Darmstadt, the fourth chapter suggested that, in
contrast to the manuscripts in Milan and Paris, Hitda’s book was intended for a somewhat
broader audience. This supposition is based primarily on two observations: first, the book formed
part of a larger endowment intended for a specific community; and second, its tituli are generally
more straightforward and accessible than those of the preceding two manuscripts. Nonetheless,
the analysis of its peculiar narrative program revealed a distinctly personal element to the
selection of the miniatures as well as the articulation of their subject matter. This personal
element manifests itself as a consistent effort to emphasize the interior aspects of the depicted
miracle scenes, and, by extension, the continued relevance of Christ’s miracles for the individual
viewer. A crucial observation pertaining to the programs of all three manuscripts is the extent to
which they refrain from conveying a single, definable message. Instead, they tend to emphasize
modes of thought or particular types of viewer engagement. In such a way, the Cologne
manuscripts may serve as important examples for understanding the ways in which the pictorial programs of other illuminated manuscripts operate.

Finally, recognizing the *ad-hoc* nature of the pictorial programs offers some potential insight into the motivations lying behind the sophisticated interplay of text and image in the Cologne manuscripts. Given the centrality of the main texts of these manuscripts (either the Gospels or the sacramentary), it is not surprising that the subject matter of the miniatures is for the most part quite standard when compared to other deluxe versions of these texts (that is, author portraits, dedicatory miniatures, the Majestas Domini, the Crucifixion, etc.). Yet by manipulating the inscriptions and the formal qualities of the miniatures, the designers and painters of the Cologne manuscripts were able to transform their copies of these standard texts into individualized creations which could then participate in the more specific cultural and social contexts of their immediate environment. Although the specific circumstances surrounding the use and reception of these manuscripts will likely never be known for sure, their cunning approach to the joining of word and image nevertheless ensures that these books will continue to stand as powerful testaments to the perceived potential of the illuminated manuscript around the turn of the first millennium.
APPENDIX 1.1

CONTENTS OF THE MILAN GOSPELS

1v: Liber-vitae Poem (Hic liber est vitae toto diffusus in orbe)
2r: Majestas Titulus (Est deus in caelo cuius hic habetur imago)
2v: Dedication Miniature
3r: Dedication Titulus (En operis habitus quod poscit hic tibi promptus)
3v: Jerome Portrait
4r: Prologue (Novum opus facere me cogis)
7r: Prologue (Plures fuisse)
9v: Preface (argumenta) to Matthew
10r: Chapter Listings (capitula) to Matthew
11r–16v: Canon Tables
17r: Blank Page
17v–18r: Titulus to Matthew
18v: First Incipit to Matthew
19r: Matthew Portrait
19v: Second Incipit to Matthew
20r: Initial Page (Liber generationis)
20v–76r: Text of Matthew's Gospel
76v: Blank Page
77r: Blank Page
77v: First Incipit to Mark
78r: Mark Portrait
78v–79r: Titulus to Mark
79v: Second Incipit to Mark
80r: Initial Page (Inicium evangelii)
80v–116v: Text of Mark's Gospel
117r: Blank Page
117v: First Incipit to Luke
118r: Luke Portrait
118v–119r: Titulus to Luke
119v: Second Incipit to Luke
120r: Initial Page (Quoniam quidam)
185r: Blank Page
185v: First Incipit to John
186r: John Portrait
186v–187r: Titulus to John
187v: Second Incipit to John
188r: Initial Page (In principio erat verbum)
188v–228r: Text of John's Gospel
228v: Blank Page
229r-237r: Capitula evangeliorum
APPENDIX 1.2
CONTENTS OF THE GEREON SACRAMENTARY

4v–9v: Calendar

11v–12r: Annunciation Titulus and Miniature
12v–13r: Nativity Titulus and Miniature

13v–14r: Incipit, Preface to the Canon of the Mass
14v–15r: Preface to the Canon of the Mass
15v–16r: Majestas Domini and the Canon of the Mass (Te igitur)
16v–20r: Canon of the Mass
20v–21r: Gregory Titulus and Portrait

21v–22r: Beginning of Liturgy for Nativity
22v–58r: Liturgy from Nativity through Palm Sunday (with Exultet)

58v–59r: Crucifixion Titulus and Miniature
59v–60r: Miniatures of Pilate and the Guards and Women at the Tomb
60v–61r: Decorative Pages for the beginning of the Easter Liturgy
61v–71r: Liturgy from Easter to the week before Ascension

71v–72r: Ascension Titulus and Miniature
72v–76r: Liturgy from the Ascension to week before Pentecost

76v–77r: Miniatures of the Gathering of the Nations and Pentecost
77v–78r: Beginning of Pentecost Liturgy
78v–79r: Decorative Pages for Pentecost Liturgy

79v–190v: Various Liturgical Prayers, Votive Prayers, and Miscellaneous Masses
APPENDIX 1.3
CONTENTS OF THE HITDA CODEX

1v: Added Treasury Listing
1r: Gospel Prologue (Novum opus)
2v: Gospel Prologue (Sciendum etiam)
3r: Gospel Prologue (Plures fuisse)
5r: Blank Page
5v–6r: Dedicatory Titulus and Miniature
6v: Majestas Domini Titulus

7r: Majestas Domini Miniature
7v–8r: Jerome Titulus and Miniature
8v–14r: Canon Tables
14v: Explicit Canon Tables

15r: Preface to Matthew (argumentum)
15v–19r: Chapter Listings to Matthew (capitula)

19v–20r: Annunciation Titulus and Miniature
20v–21r: Nativity Titulus and Miniature
21v–22r: Adoration Titulus and Miniature
22v–23r: Presentation Titulus and Miniature
23v–24r: First Matthew Incipit and Portrait
24v–25r: Second Matthew Incipit and Initial Page (Liber generationis)
25v: Matthew Text

70v: Preface to Mark (argumentum)
71v–73v: Chapter Listings to Mark (capitula)

74r: Blank Page
74v–75r: Baptism Titulus and Miniature
75v–76r: Demoniac Titulus and Miniature
76v–77r: Peter’s Mother-in-Law Titulus and Miniature
77v–78r: Mark Titulus and Portrait
78v–79r: Mark Incipit and Initial Page (Inicium evangelii)
79v: Blank Page

80r: Mark Text, beginning at 1:9

107r–112v: Chapter Listings to Luke (capitula)
113r: Blank Page
113v: Withered Hand Titulus

114r: Withered Hand Miniature
114v–115r: Widow’s Son Titulus and Miniature
115v–116r: Blindman Titulus and Miniature
116v–117r: Storm Titulus and Miniature
117v–118r: Luke Titulus and Portrait
118v–119r: Luke Incipit and Initial Page (Quoniam quidam)
119v: Blank Page

120r: Luke Text, beginning at 1:14

165r: Preface to John (argumentum)
165v–167v: Chapter Listings to John (capitula)

168r: Blank Page
168v–169r: Wedding at Cana Titulus and Miniature
169v–170r: Paralytic Titulus and Miniature
170v–171r: Adulteress Titulus and Miniature
171v–172r: John Titulus and Portrait
172v–173r: John Incipit and Initial Page (In principio)
173v: Blank Page

174r–207r: John Text, beginning at 1:15

207v–208r: Crucifixion Miniature and Titulus
208v–209v: “Iste est ordo seu consuetudo ecclesie messchedensis…” (Added)

210r–218v: Capitulare evangeliorum
APPENDIX 2
THE TREASURY LISTING FROM THE HITDA CODEX


The pilgrim Hitda, procurator of this place, gave these offerings as a gift to God and to St. Walpurga, on behalf of her and those under her, in fulfillment of an oath:
- Three crosses ornamented with gold and precious stones.
- One cross in gold and ivory.
- One image [figure?] of Saint Mary made in gold and precious stones, with the cover in which it is carried.
- One book in gold and gems, and two in gold.
- One golden thurible.
- Four banners.
- Three ampules, one of which is onyx, the other two crystal.
- Three communion napkins.
- One casubile in silk with a golden stole.
- Three icons.
- Three cases or boxes.
- Two altar hangings.
- Four curtains.
- One animal hide [cover?].
- Two small containers for the eucharist, one of stone, the other ivory.
- Three scarlet cushions for carrying the books.

If anyone takes any of these away from the use of the saints or diminishes them in any way, may he or she be cursed! The Lord comes. So be it; so be it. Amen.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Texts and Translations


Rather of Verona. *Ratherii Veronensis Opera, Fragmenta, Glossae*, eds. Peter L.D. Reid, François Dolbeau, Bernard Bischoff, and Claudio Leonardi. CCCM 46A. Turnhout:


Secondary Literature


Fiorillo, Johann. Geschichte der zeichnenden Künste in Deutschland und den vereinigten Niederlanden I. Hannover: Brüder Hahn, 1815.


Jordan, Louis and Susan Wool (eds.). *Inventory of Western Manuscripts in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana: from the Medieval Institute of the University of Notre Dame, the Frank M. Folsom Microfilm Collection.* Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986.


Nilgen, Ursula. “Das Himmelfahrtsbild im Perikopenbuch Heinrichs II..” In *Sancta Treveris: Beiträge zu Kirchenbau und bildender Kunst im alten Erzbistum Trier. Festschrift für*


