# The Leo Bible and the Joshua Roll

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The Leo Bible and the Joshua Roll

Emine Fetvacı

When I started graduate school in 1998, I already knew I wanted to work on manuscripts. My area of specialization was (and still is!) Islamic art, but I wanted to learn as much as I could about manuscripts and their production in other contexts, too. For a reading course with Professor Ioli Kalavrezou, my friend Diliana Angelova and I focused on Byzantine manuscripts. Among our delightful tasks was looking at the facsimiles of Byzantine manuscripts at the Fine Arts Library. I still remember how the heavy pages of the facsimile of the Leo Bible felt against my hand. The details of the parchment as they were reflected on the facsimile became etched in my memory, as this was the first time I was seeing anything of the sort. I cannot forget the thrill of getting close to the pages, and being able to look, for as long as I wanted, at the details of the faces, the costumes, the shoes. I even remember where I was sitting, the table closest to the entrance of the library, and to the copy machine, which was the social hub of the library! Equally memorable was unrolling the facsimile of the Joshua Roll. Even though we were familiar with the individual scenes from slides, this was the first time we could examine how they linked with each other, and experience what it meant to use a scroll. In those years while I was still doing coursework, these experiences with facsimiles were foundational. They not only fed the flame of curiosity about how books were made and used, questions that have remained at the center of my scholarship, but they also prepared me for the daunting experience of handling real manuscripts at libraries in other parts of the world, where the staff could never be as welcoming, helpful, and forgiving as the staff of the Fine Arts Library.

The Leo Bible [facsimile] (Zurich, 1988), fol. 1. XFA4495.201.9 Folio.

36 The Fine Arts Library at 50
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