MATERIALIZING THE WORD: OTTONIAN TREASURY BINDINGS AND

VIEWER RECEPTION

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Materializing the Word: Ottonian Treasury Bindings and Viewer Reception

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Ornately bound gospel books served as the centerpieces of liturgical and imperial ceremonies throughout early eleventh-century Germany. This project is the first examination of Ottonian treasury bindings as a discrete type and explores the ways in which these covers negotiated the complex relationships between viewers and the Word of God. A cross-disciplinary approach that draws on reception theory, aesthetics, history, liturgical studies, cognitive psychology, and neuroscience is used to provide a new model for working with liturgical objects once dismissed as primarily decorative.

Chapter 1 introduces the six case studies of the project: the *Codex Aureus of Echternach* (Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum); the *Reichenau Gospels* (Munich, Clm 4454); the *Pericopes of Henry II* (Munich, Clm 4452); the *Uta Codex* (Munich, Clm 13601); the *Theophanu Gospels* (Essen, Münsterschatz); and the *Aachen Covers* (Domschatz). The second chapter explores the traditions of early medieval cover design, which Ottonian creators copied and adapted. I propose that the patrons and artists of the treasury bindings utilized visual formulae in order to efficiently communicate with audiences. Chapter 3 begins with a reconstruction of the Easter liturgy of Bamberg Cathedral, and then examines the other ceremonies in which treasury bindings were used to establish the original viewing contexts of the

covers. Further situating the covers, the chapter ends with an exploration of the role of luxury bindings in the collections of religious institutions and elite patrons.

The final chapter explores the Ottonians' relationship to the written word, and offers an innovative analysis of how treasury bindings captured viewer attention and functioned in a performative context. To highlight how precious materials shaped viewer reception, the chapter reconciles a variety of medieval statements about the function and meaning of such materials with the findings of modern neuroscientists and cognitive psychologists. I demonstrate that Ottonian artists exploited innate and learned responses to different visual elements, such as reflective materials, centralized compositions, and the human face, in order to attract viewer attention. These visually captivating covers then reflected and amplified the spoken words of the liturgy and provided visual exegesis about the contained scripture.

writing sessions. I was very fortunate to share the daunting experience of relocating and navigating institutions in German-speaking lands with Olivia Gruber Florek, who was based in Vienna during my first year in Munich. Finally, from my very first seminar paper to the last sentences of my dissertation, David Boffa has patiently proofread and edited nearly everything I have written as a graduate student. I am more grateful than I can say for these friendships that sustained me during my years at Rutgers.

I am also indebted to several professors who challenged, guided, and supported me during my time at Rutgers. Susan Sidlauskas and Carla Yanni routinely offered practical, and therefore indispensible, advice. From my first semester, Sarah Blake McHam could not have been more supportive or giving of her time if she had been my primary advisor. She also kindly agreed to join the dissertation committee at the last minute. As a guest member of the faculty in the 2005-2006 academic year, Cynthia Hahn inspired much of the approach I eventually employed in my dissertation and greatly influenced my decision to make the move from Baroque to early medieval art history. Her enthusiasm and encouragement as well as her scholarship continue to inspire me. I am especially grateful to my friend and the department's student coordinator, Geralyn Covil; I have yet to come across a problem she cannot solve.

Over the two and a half years I spent living and working in Germany, I was fortunate to meet several scholars who shaped my project. During my time in Konstanz, I had several helpful discussions with David Ganz, who is currently at work on a book on early medieval manuscript covers. I also had many good-natured debates with Thomas Rainer, who recently published on the Theodolinda covers of Monza. Iris Lauterbach of the Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte kindly included me in the activities for the institute's fellows and gave me the opportunity to present my research. Less formally, but no less important, Heidi Gearhart showed me the ropes at the "ZI" and introduced me to Munich before she returned to the US. Claudia-Alexandra Schwaighofer, at the time working for the Staatliche Graphische Sammlung, provided friendship and insight into the world of German institutions. Claudia Höhl of the Hildesheim Dommuseum provided me with access to the 'Precious Gospels' of Bishop Bernward. Brigitte Gullath and Béatrice Hernad of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek enabled me to see the *Reichenau Gospels*. Dr. Hernad offered her expertise as she joined Thomas Rainer and me for four hours of viewing, manipulating, and discussing this manuscript and its treasury bindings.

I also wish to acknowledge two dear friends, Katherine Pieper and Sanjela Kurevija. For more than a decade Kate has edited my writing, encouraged me in everything I attempt, and pushed me to do my best work. Sanjela showed me a Munich that is wonderful and inspiring, and reminded me why I undertook my project in the first place when I felt overwhelmed.

Lastly, I owe the greatest debt of gratitude to my parents, Timothy and Cheryl Fisher. Their unfailing love, clear guidance, high expectations, and never-ending encouragement sustained me through the many challenges I faced. This dissertation is dedicated to them.

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**Introduction**

The present study examines the ways in which ornate covers of gospel texts

mediated between viewers and the Word of God in the late Ottonian period, roughly

AD 980-1050. The chronological limits thus encompass the production of works

under the well-established Saxon dynasty of the Liudolfing family during the rule of

Otto III (983-1002) and his successor Henry II (1002-1024). The endpoint of this

study is the commissioning of a richly bound gospel book by the last of a series of

Liudolf abbesses, Theophanu of Essen (d. 1058).[1] Labeled *Prachteinbände* in German

scholarship, these deluxe covers served as the centerpieces of liturgical and imperial

ceremonies in influential episcopal sees and monastic centers from Aachen to

Bamberg. The rather unwieldy term, treasury bindings, remains the best English

equivalent, because it captures the eye-catching material splendor of these liturgical

manuscript covers. Typically composed of sheets of gold applied to wooden cores, the

treasury bindings were further ornamented through the application of intricately

carved ivory panels and precious gems culled from across Europe. Exotic materials

from the Byzantine Empire and Islamic world also found their way onto these

treasury bindings, which were patronized by members of the upper echelons of

Ottonian society. Their commissions, including the cover of the *Uta Codex* (Munich,

Bayerische Staatsbiblithek Clm 13601) and the *Golden Cover* in the Aachen

Cathedral Treasury, presented worshippers with impressive, three-dimensional visions

of Christ and the Virgin Mary during the mass and other rituals. Viewers, most of

whom would never see the text contained within the manuscripts, caught glimpses of

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[1] For the *Theophanu Gospels*, see Berit H. Gass, "Das Theophanu-Evangeliar im Essener Domschatz (Hs.3)," in *…wie das Gold den Augen leuchtet: Schätze aus dem Essener Frauenstift*, ed. Birgitta Falk, Thomas Schilp, and Michael Schlagheck (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2007), 169-188. For the patronage of the Abbess Theoophanu, see Torston Fremer, *Äbtissin Theophanu und das Stift Essen: Gedächtnis und Indvidualität in ottonisch-salischer Zeit* (Essen: Verlag Peter Pomp, 2002).

these treasury bindings as the clergy processed the Gospels throughout the church and then read from them during the Liturgy of the Word.[2] Physically occupying a place between the written word and audiences, the treasury bindings shaped Ottonian reception of Scripture within the performative contexts of sacro-political ceremonies. Through the following investigation of the production, use, and collection of Ottonian liturgical manuscript covers within their specific environments, this dissertation explores how these objects negotiated the complex interactions between Scripture, patrons, and viewers.

Inspired by Late Antique and Carolingian precedents, Ottonian covers synthesize centuries of medieval book binding production. They also are better preserved, more often contain their original manuscripts, and more frequently have recorded patrons than the earlier covers. These bindings, moreover, provide unexploited sources of information about early medieval aesthetics and understandings of Scripture.[3] Although a focused examination of Ottonian treasury bindings allows for a culturally specific study of viewer response, these covers have received little scholarly attention in comparison to manuscript illumination, despite the fact that the covers had greater visibility than the illustrations.[4] This is true not only of the scholarship devoted to manuscripts and treasury bindings of the Ottonian

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[2] A point made by John Lowden in his excellent essay on Late Antique luxurious liturgical manuscript covers. "The Word Made Visible: The Exterior of the Early Christian Book as Visual Argument," in *The Early Christian Book*, edited by William E. Klingshirn and Linda Safran (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 45-46.

[3] For an introduction to the ability of manuscript arts, including treasury bindings, to speak to medieval aesthetics, see. Adam Cohen, "Magnificence in Miniature: The Case of Early Medieval Manuscripts," in *Magnificence and the Sublime in Medieval Aesthetics: Art, Architecture, Literature, and Music*, ed. C. Stephen Jaeger (New York: Palgrave Macmillon, 2010), 79-101.

[4] Compared to the extensive scholarship on medieval manuscript illumination, there are reletively few studies dedicated to the covers. These include: Hans Loubier, *Der Bucheinband von seinen Anfängen bis zum Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1926); Frauke Steenbock, *Der kirchliche Prachteinband im frühen Mittelalter: von den Anfängen bis zum Beginn der Gotik* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1965); and Paul Needham, *Twelve Centuries of Bookbindings: 400-1600* (New York and London: The Pierpont Morgan Library and Oxford University Press, 1979). For the techniques of book binding with a small section on treasury bindings, see J.A. Szirmai, *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 1999).

era, but also art historical literature about book production across the entire Medieval period. While the reasons for this neglect are numerous, it is worthwhile to point out perhaps the most important factor: treasury bindings have typically been classed as decorative art. Although a hold-over from early modern art academies, the valuing of history painting over works considered as decorative continues to influence the field of art history.[5] Featuring iconic representations of holy figures and emblematic, formulaic narratives and relying heavily upon—even celebrating—precious materials, the covers do not lend themselves to more traditional art historical approaches centered on the study of iconography. Although covering written texts, treasury bindings rarely offer iconographic puzzles that can be explained through a close reading of this text.

These very elements, which likely contributed to general scholarly neglect, however, make the covers particularly relevant for the field of medieval art history at this time. First, these overlooked covers offer a new site of investigation into word and image relationships in the Ottonian period. Compared to their Carolingian predecessors, the Ottonians and their use of the written word have received far less attention. Treasury bindings provide a point of entry into this issue and allow us to question some commonly held beliefs. Second, following the development of the so-called anthropological approach to medieval art over the last twenty years, we are better equipped to understand these ornately bound gospel books not as lower forms of artistic production, but rather as ritualistic objects that performed in a variety of ceremonies.[6] As will become apparent, these covers, which were both images and

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[5] Brigitte Buettner, "Toward a Historiography of the Sumptuous Arts," in *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, ed. Conrad Rudolph (Malden, MA and Oxford; Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 466.
[6] See for example, David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: University of Chicago

objects, served to make Christ present within Ottonian churches as well as provided visual exegesis on the nature of Scripture. Finally, thanks to advances in the fields of cognitive psychology and neuroscience, and current attempts to marry this research to art history, we can better comprehend something the Ottonian artists likely intuited—how precious metals, gems, and ivories on the covers worked together to attract viewer attention. This approach enables us to better address questions currently at the center of medieval art historical inquiry, about the reception of works at the time of their creation, in this case nearly a thousand years ago.

In order to delve deeper into these issues, it is first necessary to begin with a close study of the Ottonian covers and their context. Unfortunately, this investigation is somewhat hindered by the aforementioned scholarly neglect. Individual aspects of the covers, such as the ivories or metalwork, have typically been examined in isolation.[7] The most up-to-date discussions of complete covers appear in dissertations organized around individual patrons and in catalogues for German exhibitions of Ottonian material.[8] In these sources the covers are often interpreted as statements of the supposed artistic programs of their patrons, rather than parts of a broader artistic tradition. Thus, the most comprehensive treatment of early medieval covers in general is still Frauke Steenbock's 1965 book devoted to examples from the early fifth to the thirteenth century.[9] Although she briefly mentions the covers' function and audience,

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Press, 1994); Idem, *An Anthropology of Images: Picture, Medium, Body*, trans. Thomas Dunlap (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011); and Michael Camille, *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-Making in Medieval Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[7] Adolph Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der Zeit der karolingischer und sächsischen Kaiser, VIII.-IX. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1914-33). vol. 2, 1918; Wolfgang F. Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters* (Mainz: Verlag des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, 1952); Victor H. Elbern, *Die Goldschmiedekunst im frühen Mittelalter* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1988).

[8] For example, Michael Brandt and Arne Eggebrecht, eds., *Bernward von Hildesheim und das Zeitalter der Ottonen,vol.1*, ed. Michael Brandt and Arne Eggebrecht (Hildesheim: Bernward Verlag, 1993); or Josef Kirmeier, Bernd Schneidmüller, Stefan Weinfurter, and Evamaria Brockhoff, eds., *Kaiser Heinrich II., 1002-1024: Katalog zur Bayerischen Landesausstellung 2002* (Stuttgart: Theiss, 2002).

[9] Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*.

Steenbock's book is primarily a catalogue focused on stylistic development. More troubling is that her findings are often rather uncritically reiterated in the limited publications on early medieval treasury bindings, despite the significant developments in the field of medieval art history that have occurred over the last four decades.[10] What is required therefore is a reexamination of the material, along the lines of John Lowden's essays on Late Antique book covers and manuscript illumination and Anthony Cutler's studies of Byzantine ivories in which the surviving works are analyzed in their own right and very practical questions about production and function are posed.[11]

This dissertation therefore focuses on six case studies: the covers of the *Codex Aureus of Echternach* (Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum); the *Reichenau Gospels* (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 4454); the *Pericopes of Henry II* (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 4452); the *Uta Codex* (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 13601); the *Theophanu Gospels* (Essen, Münsterschatz); and the Aachen Golden and Silver Covers (Aachen Domschatz). After an introduction to these works in Chapter 1, the six case studies will be used as needed in the following thematic discussions of Ottonian treasury bindings and the mechanics of their reception.

The investigation into the ways in which treasury bindings mediated between Holy Writ and Ottonian audiences however is hampered from the outset because the Ottonians did not explicitly record their responses to treasury bindings. Fortunately, over the last thirty years art historians, inspired by work in the field of literary

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[10] For example, as the first section of Chapter 2 will demonstrate the oft-repeated assertion that Christian covers evolved from imperial diptychs is problematic.

[11] John Lowden, "Word Made Visible,"15-47; Idem, "The Beginnings of Biblical Illustration," in *Imaging the Early Medieval Bible*, edited by John Williams (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 9-59; and Anthony Cutler, "Barberiniana: Notes on the Making, Content, and Provenance of Louvre, OA. 9063," in *Tesserae. Festschrift für Joseph Engemann*, ed. Ernst Dassmann (Münster/Westfalen: Aschendorff, 1991), 329-339.

criticism, have developed a variety of methods to answer questions about viewer reception.[12] These include reception history, reception aesthetics, and neuroarthistory.[13] For my dissertation I therefore use a multipronged approach to overcome the limitations in primary source material and provide a new model for working with objects once dismissed as purely decorative. Although not his primary aim, Wolfgang Kemp in a 1998 essay enumerates several methods for investigating viewer reception, which I will use in the present study.[14] One method involves the study of the adoption and transformation of artistic formulas over time and space, since it follows that artists copied elements from earlier works they deemed effective or powerful. Institutional types of reception, recoverable through the history of collections, offer another facet to the more general understanding of viewer reception. The approach Kemp favors and labels Reception Aesthetics "attempts to reconstruct the implicit viewer, from aspects within the work itself."[15] An essential component of Reception Aesthetics is the reconstruction of the original context of the work.[16] A final method Kemp mentions explores the psychology of reception.[17] As mentioned above, this field of inquiry now has recourse to newer discoveries coming out of

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[12] Perhaps the most influential work in the field of literary criticism on reader-response includes: Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978) and Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an aesthetic of Reception*, trans. Timothy Bahti (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982). For a review of this approach in the field of medieval art history as well as introductory bibliography see, Madeline Harrison Caviness, "Reception of Images by Medieval Viewers," in, *Companion to Medieval Art*, 65-85.

[13] The term neuroarthistory was coined by John Onians to be distinct from neuro-aesthetics and signify a neuroscientific approach to the study of art. *Neuroarthistory from Aristotle and Pliny to Baxandall and Zeki* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 1-9.

[14] Kemp, Wolfgang. "The Work of Art and its Beholder: The Methodology of the Aesthetic of Reception," in *The Subjects of Art History: Historical Objects in Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Mark A. Cheetham, Michael Ann Holly, and Keith Moxey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 180-196.

[15] Ibid., 183.

[16] Ibid., 185. See also, Wolfgang Kemp, "Masaccios *Trinität* im Kontext," *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft* 21 (1986): 45-72.

[17] Kemp, "Work of Art," 182. The work of Ernst Gombrich helped pioneer this methodology. See for example, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (London: Phaidon, 1960), and *The Sense of Order: A Study in the Psychology of Decorative Art*, 2nd ed. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984). For a review of the contribution to the field of Gombrich as well as Michael Baxandall, see Onians, *Neuroarthistory*, 159-188.

neuroscience and cognitive psychology. Since this approach is by its nature

ahistorical, it must be combined with the more traditional methods of contextual art

history in order to be relevant to the study of reception among viewers that lived a

millennium ago. Recent studies of antique and medieval visuality (culturally

determined ways of seeing) by scholars such as Jaś Elsner, Cynthia Hahn, and

Michael Camille offer models for how to understand the cultural components of

vision.[18] Underlying my multifaceted approach is the premise of reader-response

criticism that the work and the audience each contribute to the construction of

meaning.[19]

My dissertation thus incorporates each of these methods in order to achieve a

fuller picture of Ottonian reception of the treasury bindings and through them, the

Word of God. The first two chapters lay the necessary groundwork for the discussion

of viewer-response in the later chapters. After introducing the six case studies and

their historiography in the first chapter, the second chapter focuses upon the traditions

of early medieval cover design that influenced the creators of Ottonian covers, who

copied and adapted these earlier models. I propose that the patrons and artists of the

treasury bindings utilized visual formulae in order to efficiently communicate with

audiences. Building on scholarship devoted to manuscript illustration, I also compare

the iconography and function of early medieval covers to that of the illuminations.

From this examination, I contend that instead of simply illustrating or commenting on

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[18] See for example, Jaś Elsner, *Art and the Roman Viewer: The Transformation of Art from Pagan World to Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Idem, *Roman Eyes: Visuality and Subjectivity in Art and Text* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007; Cynthia Hahn, "*Visio Dei*: Changes in Medieval Visuality," in *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance: Seeing as Others Saw*, ed. Robert S. Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 169-196; and Michael Camille, "Before the Gaze: The Internal Senses and Late Medieval Practices of Seeing," in *Visuality Before and Beyond*, 197-223.
[19] Wolfgang Iser, *Act of Reading*, 38.

the contained text, the covers relate to the content of the ceremonies in which they were used.

In my third chapter, I begin with a detailed reconstruction of the Easter Liturgy of Bamberg Cathedral, a church built and furnished under the aegis of Henry II. By placing specific treasury bindings in their liturgical contexts, as well as their physical environments, it is possible to answer key questions about how they were seen and by whom. I then examine the other contexts and ceremonies in which treasury bindings were used in the Ottonian period. To further situate the covers the chapter ends with an exploration of the role of luxury bindings in the collections of religious institutions and elite patrons. The *Theophanu Gospels* from the female community at Essen provide a useful starting point as they belong to an extant, well-documented Ottonian treasury. As the covers were gifts to the Church, the role of the patrons—whose figures appear on the *Theophanu Gospels* and other covers—must also be considered.[20] I contend that these covers functioned as effective tools to shape and preserve the collective memory of the owning religious institution or aristocratic family.[21]

Following these investigations of the objects themselves, the ways in which they were used, and the audiences who saw them, the final chapter offers an analysis of how treasury bindings captured viewer attention and mediated between the audience and Scripture. It begins by reconciling a variety of statements about the function and meaning of precious, reflective materials from early medieval written sources (inscriptions on liturgical art, dedication texts within manuscripts, and biblical

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[20] For the role of manuscripts as gifts, see Brigitte Buettner, "Past Presents: New Year's Gifts at the Valois Courts, ca. 1400," *Art Bulletin* 83, no. 4 (Dec. 2001): 598-625, and Cohen, "Magnificence in Miniature," 89-90.

[21] Eric Palazzo advances a similar argument in his discussion of books within the treasury, but does not focus on the role of covers in this creation of memory. "Le Livre dans les trésor du Moyen Âge. Contribution à l'histoire de la *Memoria* médiévale," in *Les Trésors de sanctuaries, de l'antiquité à l'époque romane*, ed. Jean-Pierre Caillet (Paris: Picard, 1996), 137-160.

exegesis) with the findings of modern neuroscientists and cognitive psychologists in order to understand how configurations of precious materials shaped viewers' responses. I demonstrate that Ottonian artists exploited innate and learned responses to different elements, such as reflective materials, centralized compositions, and the human face in order to attract viewer attention. Additionally, although the details of the covers would have been nearly impossible for most audience members to make out, experiments in cognitive psychology show us that humans are eminently capable of extracting what scientists term the gist of a visual scene.[22] I also examine the impact on worshippers made by the covers' luxurious materials and representations of Christ's body, and how these spoke to a Johannine conception of the incarnated, living Word.[23] For Ottonian viewers, the covers' tangible portrayals of Christ recreated the Incarnation—the moment when the Word became flesh—which was remembered and relived during the mass.

Mindful of the ceremonies in which the treasury bindings were used, I then focus on the relationships between the imagery of the covers and the spoken word of the liturgy and other ceremonies in tandem with other forms of liturgical art and the written gospel texts. For lay and clerical, illiterate and literate audiences, the Gospels often were experienced not as illuminated texts intended for close study, but rather as sumptuous objects to be seen as their words were read aloud. I argue that the covers reflected and amplified this aural experience of the Liturgy of the Word. For instance, the combination of narrative and iconic elements on the *Aachen Golden Covers* need not function as a single program. In the way that homilies and gospel readings emphasized and combined different pieces of Scripture, the cover's multivalent

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[22] For a brief review of the literature see the introduction in Christoph Rasche and Christof Koch, "Recognizing the gist of a visual scene: possible perceptual and neural mechanisms" *Neurocomputing* 44–46 (2002): 979-980.
[23] John 1:1-14.

imagery could present the Word in varying ways. Moreover, typologies, presented during every mass in which two readings were paired, were established not simply between scenes placed on a single cover, but through other images in the church as well as the memories in the minds of the audience.[24] In this way the covers, other forms of liturgical art, and the viewer worked together to create meanings.

The chapter concludes with a reevaluation of the Ottonians' use of the written word and an examination of the nature of reading during this period. I propose that not only were there degrees of literacy among the clergy and the laity, but also that many individuals seamlessly moved between written and oral modes in their daily lives. As the majority of reading involved speaking the text aloud, especially during the mass, it is important to keep in mind the performative context in which written and spoken words functioned together with the images that ornamented church spaces.[25]

Ottonian treasury bindings are now stored in specially designed museum cases and hidden away within the collections of German libraries, or individually presented behind glass vitrines in museums and modernized church treasuries. Thus, modern viewers' interactions with these objects are far removed from the experience of Ottonian audiences. In the years on either side of the first millennium, the bindings and the gospel manuscripts they contained were sacred objects that were treated with reverence, but they were not hermetically sealed, dead examples of the past within a collection. They were used over the centuries and altered to suit changing tastes. As will become apparent, they functioned as quasi-living entities that recalled and

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[24] For the basic interpretative model of typologies presented within the mass, see Marie Anne Mayeski, "Reading the Word in a Eucharistic Context: The Shape and Methods of Early Medieval Exegesis," in *Medieval Liturgy: A Book of Essays*, ed. Lizette Larson-Miller (New York: Garland Publishing, 1997), 63-65.

[25] Dennis H. Green, *Medieval Listening and Reading: The Primary Reception of German Literature, 800-1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 95-112.

recreated the past in the present. Rarely objects of prolonged meditation, the treasury bindings were props in performances that linked heaven and earth and spoke to the prestige of the men, women, and institutions that used them. It is only by returning the treasury bindings to their original contexts that we can begin to understand their power.

**Chapter One**

**Through Modern Eyes: Six Ottonian Treasury Bindings and their Art Historical**

**Reception**

Six key examples form the foundation of this study of Ottonian treasury bindings and their reception. Following the precepts of reception aesthetics, a close examination of the objects within their context allows for the essential identification of the ways in which the works appeal and signal to audiences.[26] According to viewer-response criticism the covers functioned as one half of the equation in the creation of meaning.[27] Before the second half of this equation—the different audiences, their cultural frameworks, and their expectations—can be investigated, it is therefore necessary to focus on the treasury bindings and their forms of address. The following formal analysis and brief historical contextualization of these six covers prompt the research questions about viewer reception that will be explored in this dissertation. Equally important, this chapter also summarizes the modern, critical reception of the covers within the art historical scholarship. This earlier literature continues to influence how art historians see these objects, with questions about dating and provenance at the fore. Furthermore, interpretations of the covers offered by art historians in the first half of the twentieth century are repeated rather uncritically throughout the art historical literature. Although the field of early medieval art history has dramatically changed since Adolf Goldschmidt and Frauke Steenbock wrote about the covers, this is rarely reflected in the limited examinations of treasury bindings since that time. Therefore, a reexamination of the scholarship on the specific case studies is necessary.

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[26] Kemp, "Work of Art," 183.
[27] Iser, *Act of Reading*, 26-27.

The earliest of the bindings under consideration is the cover of the *Codex Aureus of St Echternach* (c. 983-991; fig. 1), now housed in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg.[28] The Aachen Cathedral treasury owns two Ottonian covers, one in gold, the other in silver (figs. 2-3), which were likely intended as the front and back of a single Carolingian manuscript and date to the end of the tenth or the beginning of the eleventh century.[29] Three covers made in roughly the same twenty year period can now be found in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich. Two of these bindings, those of a gospel book (Clm 4454; fig. 4) and the *Pericope Book of Henry II* (Clm 4452; fig. 5), contain manuscripts most likely written and illustrated at the abbey of Reichenau, an island on Lake Constance.[30] The third, a book box for the *Uta Codex* (Clm 13601; fig. 6) has been assigned to the scriptorium of Regensburg in southeastern Germany.[31] The latest example, a mid eleventh-century gospel book cover (fig. 7) commissioned by Abbess Theophanu, the granddaughter of Otto II, remains in the treasury of Essen Cathedral, the church for which it was

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[28] Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, cat. no. 42, 119-121. For the most recent monograph about the manuscript and its treasury binding see, Anja Grebe, *Codex Aureus: Das goldene Evangelienbuch von Echternach* (Darmstadt: Primus-Verlag, 2007). For the facsimile and commentary by Rainer Kahsnitz, *Das goldene Evangelienbuch von Echternach: Codex Aureus Epternacensis, Hs 156142 aus dem Germanischen Nationalmuseum Nürnberg* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1982). A condensed version of these two volumes appeared as the catalog for the contemporaneous exhibition of the manuscript in Nuremberg. Rainer Kahsnitz, Ursula Mende, and Elisabeth Rücker, *Das goldene Evangelienbuch von Echternach: Eine Prunkhandschrift des 11. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1982).

[29] Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, cat. nos. 51 (Gold) and 52 (Silver), 133-137. Ernst Günther Grimme, *Das Evangeliar Kaiser Ottos III. im Domschatz zu Aachen* (Freiburg: Herder, 1984) and Herta Lepie and Ann Münchow, *Elfenbeinkunst aus dem Aachener Domschatz* (Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2006).

[30] Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, cat. nos. 47 (*Reichenau Gospels*) and 50 (Pericopes). For an up-to-date overview of the Bayrische Staatsbibliothek's collection of medieval luxury bindings, see Béatrice Hernad, *Prachteinbände 870 - 1685: Schätze aus dem Bestand der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek München* (Munich: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, 2001). For Clm 4454 the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek has made high-quality images of the complete manuscript and its cover available on its website, http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/~db/bsb00004502/images/. The Pericope Book of Henry II is also available in facsimile. *Das Perikopenbuch Heinrichs II: CLM 4452 der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek München*, eds. Florentine Mütherich and Karl Dachs (Frankfurt: S. Fischer Verlag, 1994).

[31] Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, cat. no. 62, 147-148. Adam Cohen, *Uta Codex: Art Philosophy and Reform in Eleventh-Century Germany* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000). For the facsimile edition, see *Zwei Regensburger Prachthandschriften: Das Sakramentar Kaiser Heinrichs II., der Uta-Codex* (Augsburg, Haus der Bayerischen Geschichte, 2003), CD-ROM.

originally created.[32] While these six covers are among the most famous works of

Ottonian art, they were selected for this project because of their relatively good state

of preservation and our knowledge about their patrons. Although these factors make

the six case studies exceptional, they are nevertheless representative of the larger

body of Early Medieval treasury bindings in that they share common media,

iconographical themes, and compositions.


**The Uta Codex (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbiblithek Clm 13601)**

Created in the early eleventh century for the *Frauenstift* (foundation for

women) of Niedermünster in Regensburg, the *Uta Codex* epitomizes deluxe Ottonian

liturgical manuscripts and therefore serves as a useful entrée into the topic.[33] In

addition to ornamental incipit pages and author portraits of the evangelists, the

manuscript contains four impressive frontispieces that combine intricate geometric

backgrounds, iconic figures, and complicated inscriptions, or *tituli*, (fig. 8). Through a

detailed analysis of both the complex images and extensive tituli, Adam Cohen

demonstrated that the *Uta Codex* is the 'quintessential bible of the literate."[34] In this

evangeliary, a collection of gospel readings, word and image work together to

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[32] Gass, "Theophanu-Evangeliar," 169-188; and Fremer, *Äbtissin Theophanu*, 95-109. Before these
studies, the relavent scholarship on the cover of the *Theophanu Gospels* was limited to catalogs. Adolf
Goldschmidt, *Elfenbeinskulpturen,* vol. 2, no. 58; Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, no. 62, 152-
154; Alfred Pothmann, *Die Schatzkammer des Essener Münster* (Munich: Schnell and Steiner, 1988),
6-7; Jutta Frings, ed., *Krone und Schleier: Kunst aus mittelalterlichen Frauenklösten* (Munich: Hirmer,
2005), 274-277, no. 155 (Rainer Kahsnitz); and Birgitta Falk, *Gold vor Schwarz: Der Essener
Domschatz auf Zollverein* (Essen: Klartext, 2008), 82-83.
[33] There is not an adequate English term to describe foundations such as Niedermünster and Essen as
these were not nunneries in the strictest sense. Jeffery Hamburger and Susan Marti, foreword to *Crown
and Veil: Female Monasticism from the Fifth to the Fifteenth Centuries* (New York: Columbia
University Press, 2008), xxii. Niedermünster was originally a foundation of canonesses, but under
Uta's tenure as abbess, it was reformed to follow more closely the Benedictine Rule. Cohen, *Uta
Codex*, 17-23.
[34] Cohen, *Uta Codex*, 182.

elucidate the nature of the Word of God.[35] What part does the cover play, however, in

this visual exegesis to a learned audience?

Sheltering this manuscript, a learned meditation on God's Truth revealed

through Scripture, is the wooden book box (fig. 9).[36] No mere container, the box is

sheathed in gold and emblazoned with gems. Its cover presents the viewer with a

three-dimensional representation of Christ in Majesty, whose staring, inlaid eyes meet

the gaze of the beholder. With his right hand Christ blesses the worshipper, while he

holds in his left a luxuriously ornamented book. On the cover of Christ's book are the

Greek letters, *alpha* and *omega*. For a manuscript with illuminations as replete with

scholarly *tituli* as the *Uta Codex*, these two letters are surprisingly the only original

inscriptions on its book box.[37] Instead of intricate images and lengthy inscriptions that

speak to the nature of knowledge, the cosmos, or the divine, as in the manuscript

itself, the cover of the book box provides a powerfully direct representation of Christ,

which is both tangible and timeless. The book he carries quickly communicates that

he is the beginning and the end, the eternal Word that took on human flesh, the same

Word that is materialized within the box in the form of Holy Writ. Unlike the

manuscript with its appeals to a highly literate audience, the cover uses a more

immediate form of address.

Even this cursory examination of the *Uta Codex* as a whole raises a number of

questions. Chief among these, is why is there this apparent disconnect between the

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[35] For a full list of the selected pericopes in the *Uta Codex*, see Jutta Rütz, *Text im Bild: Funktion und Bedeutung der Beischriften in den Miniaturen des Uta-Evangelistars,* Europäische Hochschulschriften Reiche 28, Kunstgeschichte, 119 (Frankfurt: Lang, 1991), 166-169.

[36] There is some question as to whether all the suriviving Ottonian treasury bindings were once parts of book boxes. Unfortunately, as most of the manuscripts were rebound over the centuries it is difficult to tell. It is likely that some with prominent three-dimensional figures may have been boxes and others were simply covers.

[37] Only the enamels on the cover and Christ's nimbus are original. All other enamels, including that of the Virgin Mary with the inscription AVE MARIA GRACIA PLENA, were added in the major reworking of the cover, which likely took place in the thirteenth century. Rainer Kahsnitz, "Ottonische Emails in Regensburg," in *Meisterwerke Bayerns von 900-1900*, ed. Renate Eikelmann (Munich: Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, 2000), 8-13

cover and the illuminations? Certainly the paintings and the covers share a rich, luminous quality created through the abundant use of gold and gems, or, in the case of the paintings, saturated jewel-like colors. Additionally, the elongated figure of Christ is stylistically similar to the figures inside the manuscript, some of which are also depicted enthroned. These aspects, in fact, have allowed scholars to assume that the book box and manuscript were made at the same time.[38] Nevertheless, the heavy reliance on intricate geometrical compositions for the illuminations is not found on the cover of the book box. Nor did the cover originally have the carefully selected secondary figures, often allegorical, which each of the paintings contain. The symbols of the four evangelists, as well as the enamels of Christ and the Virgin Mary, were added when the box was heavily reworked in the thirteenth century.[39]

It is certainly conceivable that the differences between cover and manuscript paintings are merely symptomatic of the two different hands responsible for their manufacture, the goldsmith and the illuminator. As mentioned above, the manuscript was produced in the Regensburg scriptorium specifically for use in Niedermünster. Unlike many Ottonian manuscripts, the provenance of the *Uta Codex* is secured thanks to a frontispiece depicting St. Erhard, the patron of Niedermünster, celebrating the Mass on folio 4r of the manuscript (fig. 10).[40] Art historians therefore have assumed that the book box was also created in this Bavarian center.[41] Unfortunately, as with the majority of creations from the Ottonian period, we cannot be certain if the manuscripts and their covers were fashioned together in the same locale.

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[38] Jutta Rütz, "Der Buchkastendeckel des Uta-Evangelistars in seiner Bedeutung für die Liturgie," in *Wort und Buch in der Liturgie: Interdisziplinäre Beiträge zur Wirkmächtigkeit des Wortes und Zeichenhaftigkeit des Buches*, ed. Hanns Peter Neuheuser (St. Ottilien: EOS Verlag, 1995), 459-465.

[39] For the later additions and alterations, see Hermann Schnitzler, "Zur Regensburger Goldschmiedekunst" in *Wandlungen christlicher Kunst im Mittelalter,* Forschungen zur Kunstgeschichte und christlichen Archäologie, vol. 2 (Baden-Baden: Verlag für Kunst und Wissenschaft, 1953), 171-188.

[40] Cohen, *Uta Codex*, 10-11.

[41] Hernad, *Prachteinbände 870 – 1685*, 21-22.

A further explanation may lie in the fact that the creators were highly cognoscent of the particular audiences and functions of the cover versus the manuscript illuminations.[42] In the case of the *Uta Codex*, it is reasonable to assume that the manuscript was intended to play an important role in the services conducted by male officiants for the female community of Niedermünster because it is a collection of pericopes, excerpts from the Gospels required for the masses of the liturgical year. The opulence of this manuscript also suggests that it was meant to be displayed upon the altar within its sumptuous container.[43] As the public face of the manuscript, the cover was designed for a different type of viewing. The sophisticated pairings of word and image within the manuscript, which beg for close viewing and encourage meditation, would simply not work upon the cover that was carried and exhibited during the liturgy. Thus, a different type of ornamentation was required for the audience of the cover.

This is not to suggest that the manuscript as a whole had two fixed audiences: the literate male clerics, for whom the illuminations were designed, and illiterate women, the viewers of the cover. It was certainly probable that Abbess Uta and the other canonesses meditated on the illuminations and their *tituli* as well as saw the cover during the mass.[44] Moreover, as will be explored in this dissertation, the reality of the Ottonian world was not one of literate versus illiterate audiences. In many ways, the culture of Germany in the late tenth and early eleventh century was still very much an oral one. How this impacted the reception of manuscript covers specifically, and Holy Scripture in general, will be explored in Chapter 4. Tellingly, in

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[42] John Lowden made this observation with regard to Late Antique book covers, but did not fully explore this in "Word Made Visible," 46-47.

[43] Cohen, *Uta Codex*, 191-194.

[44] Ibid., 193. For the literacy of women, see Katrinette Bodarwé, *Sanctimoniales litteratae: Schriftlichkeit und Bildung in den ottonischen Frauenkommunitäten Gandersheim, Essen und Quedlinburg*, Quellen und Studien, vol. 10 (Münster: Aschendorff, 2004) and Chapter 4.

the case of the *Uta Codex*, the cover was damaged, repaired, and modernized two
centuries after its creation, while the manuscript pages show little signs of use.[45] This
suggests that most viewers experienced the *Uta Codex* as an object to be seen as it
was carried in processions or displayed on the altar, rather than a text to be carefully
read.

Furthermore, unlike some manuscript painting, the cover by its very nature is
removed, and through this physical distance, freed from individual, specific portions
of the text. In this way the covers function analogously to illuminated frontispieces.
Indeed, Ottonian covers and manuscript frontispieces often have the same subject
matter, typically Christ in Majesty surrounded by representations of the four
evangelists or their symbols. An Ottonian treasury binding, however, was not simply
the preface to a section of Holy Scripture in the way in which a frontispiece was. Such
treasury bindings, and especially book boxes, were essentially containers of a sacred
object. As such, they have often been compared to reliquaries and the manner in
which they visually communicate the spiritual nature of their sacred contents.[46] While
there is no denying that both covers and reliquaries share this function, simply making
this analogy reveals little about this process or its effects. More helpful is to draw on
recent research concerning reliquaries, particularly the arguments of Cynthia Hahn,
which hypothesize that these objects spoke less to the nature of their contents and
instead engaged with metaphorical and rhetorical communication with the viewer.[47]

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[45] Cohen, *Uta Codex*, 192. The selection of Gospel texts are also arranged according to author rather
than according to the liturgical calendar, which also suggests that this was made more for display than
use.

[46] For example, see Jean Vezin, "Les livres utilisés comme amulettes et comme reliques," in *Das Buch
als magisches und als reprësentationsobjekt*, ed. Peter Ganz (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1992), 102;
Rosamond McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge: Cambridge University
Press, 1989), 147; and Cohen, "Magnificence in Miniature," 81-82.

[47] Cynthia Hahn, "The Voices of the Saints: Speaking Reliquaries," *Gesta* 36 no. 1 (1997): 20-31 and
"Metaphor and Meaning in Early Medieval Reliquaries," in *Seeing the Invisible in Late Antiquity and
the Early Middle Ages*, eds. Gisellede Nie, Karl F. Morrison, and Marco Mostert (Turnhout: Brepols,
2005), 239-264.

Thus one key, although not the sole, function of treasury bindings—which explains their dissimilarity from manuscript illuminations that illustrate or comment upon the text—was to communicate significant and often complicated theological concepts underlying the rituals of the liturgy.[48]

In this function, the cover and a two-page spread within the *Uta Codex* are indeed similar. As Cohen makes clear, these paintings do not function as straightforward illustrations of the gospel text or the *tituli*.[49] The two frontispieces on facing pages, the Symbolic Crucifixion (fol. 3v) and St. Erhard Celebrating the Mass (fol. 4r), while engaging with a number of learned sources as Cohen has proposed, also more simply speaks to the performance, meaning, and importance of the Eucharistic liturgy.[50] As we will see, the Crucifixion and the triumphal cross were the most common subjects after images of Christ in Majesty represented on Early Medieval covers. Tellingly, the Crucifixion was rarely depicted in the illuminations of manuscripts of the complete text of the Gospels and then only if it was part of an illustrated cycle of Christ's life.[51] Instead it was more typically found in sacramentaries, books that contained the words spoken by the officiant during the

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[48] Certainly this function of the covers has been long recognized. For example, Frauke Steenbock wrote, "Sie [the subjects of the covers] sind 'Abbild' dessen, was sich in der Liturgie gleichnishaft vollzieht," *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, 56. This aspect has not been fully explored; even Steenbock only devoted a mere three pages to it.

[49] Cohen, *Uta Codex*, 171-182.

[50] Henry Mayr-Harting rightly points out that at times Cohen's interpretations of the *tituli* and the frontispieces may be a little overly involved (not to mention beyond the vast majority of period viewers). Also, although some secular learning may have played a role in Regensburg as Cohen suggests, aspects of images like the Symbolic Crucifixion draw from the Bible and the liturgical sources. Henry Mayr-Harting, review of *The Uta Codex: Art, Philosophy, and Reform in Eleventh-Century Germany*, by Adam Cohen, *The Catholic Historical Review*, 88, no. 4 (October 2002): 759-761.

[51] Two of the most famous instances of a Crucifixion appearing in a gospel book are found in imperial commissions from Reichenau: the *Aachen Gospels of Otto III* and the second *Gospels of Otto III* (Munich, BSB Clm 5543). Although made in Hildesheim, a third example the so-called *Precious Gospels* of Bishop Bernward (Hildesheim, DS 18), was the commission of the former tutor of Otto III who would have been familiar with these earlier works. In all three of these richly decorated manuscripts, the Crucifixion image is part of an illustrated narrative cycle and is not a frontispiece.

Mass, or evangeliaries (such as the *Uta Codex*), suggesting a conscious decision to link this subject matter to the performance of the liturgy.[52]

It is hardly surprising then that representations of Christ's sacrifice on the cross would be a popular decoration for the covers for a book that would have been used during the celebration of that sacrifice. The reasons behind the selection of Christ in Majesty may not be as immediately comprehensible. Jutta Rütz's hypothesis that the image on the cover speaks to Christ's Second Coming and thus serves as a completion of an iconographic program that begins with the selected texts and the illuminations of the Christ child on his mother's lap (fol. 2v; fig. 11) and the Crucifixion (fol. 3r), is credible but rather limiting.[53] To begin to understand the significance of this iconography, the next chapter will examine some of the iconographic models that may have influenced the creators' decision to employ an image of Christ Enthroned. Chapter 3 will then investigate the role it may have played in the liturgy and other ceremonies.

Lastly, one is struck by the three-dimensionality of the representation of Christ on the cover of the *Uta Codex* (which would have been even more pronounced before the thirteenth-century modifications which raised the height of the jeweled frame). This prompts the question, how would a three-dimensional representation of the body of Christ shape viewers' understanding of the nature of the contained text? I take up this question in the last chapter, in part considering how the human brain responds to representations of the human body and how period authors justified what seems to be an innate need to give abstract concepts bodily forms.

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[52] Additional examples include: a late tenth-century sacramentary from Corvey (Munich, BSB Clm 1007), the *Codex Egberti* (Trier, Stadtbibl. MS 24), a Fulda Sacramentary (Göttingen, Universitätsbibl. MS theol. 321), the *Sacramentary of Bishop Abraham of Freising* (Munich, BSB Clm 6421), the *Pericope Book of Henry II* (Munich, BSB Clm 4452), the *Sacramentary of Henry II* (Munich, BSB Clm 4456), and the *Hidta Codex* (Darmstadt, Landesbibl., MS 1640).

[53] Rütz, "Buchkastendeckel des Uta-Evangelistars," 467-470. It is doubtful that the manuscript was used in such as way as to allow viewers to see both manuscript and cover as a single program.

**Reichenau Gospels (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Clm 4454)**

Certainly not every Ottonian treasury binding presented viewers with a representation of the body of Christ. The *crux gemmata* was an equally popular subject—sometimes appearing as a background feature or, at other times, as the chief iconographical element. In the case of this early eleventh-century gospel book from Reichenau (fig. 4), not only is the *crux gemmata* the primary decoration, but it also serves as the organizing principle of the cover's impressive geometrical composition. A frame embellished with foliate scroll filigree and emblazoned with a variety of gemstones and pearls encloses this magnificent jeweled cross that spans the height and width of the cover.[54] At the center of the cross is a large agate upon which has been affixed an Arabian amulet inserted into a filigreed golden setting. A border of closely set gems and pearls further highlights this entire centerpiece. The four rectangular spaces around the ovular shield created by the cross arms are themselves subdivided by saltire crosses. These smaller crosses are adorned at their centers with plaques each ornamented with a jewel surrounded by four pearls and four smaller gemstones. The four small plaques with their arrangements of five jewels thus echo while miniaturizing the composition of the cover as a whole. Fanciful quadrupeds and birds inhabiting scrolling vines are stamped onto the gold foil that was employed for quadrilateral fields created by the saltire crosses thus adding to the opulent appearance of the cover.[55]

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[54] There is some physical evidence that this front cover was made slightly smaller, because the edges of the embossed gold sheets do not exactly line up at the joints, as noted by Dr. Hernad during our examination of this cover.

[55] Such stamped decoration is not found on any other book cover of this period, but was used for the sheath of the ceremonial sword now in Essen. Peter Lasko, *Ars Sacra: 800-1200*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 124.

Fortunately, this treasury binding is still attached to its original manuscript, which contains the four Gospels and was made in the scriptorium of Reichenau.[56] Now in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, this manuscript and its binding were preserved in the Bamberg Cathedral Treasury until the beginning of the nineteenth century. It was likely given to the cathedral along with other richly bound manuscripts by the last Holy Roman Emperor of the Ottonian dynasty and founder of Bamberg Cathedral, Henry II (r. 1004-1024). The manuscript's illuminations represent a fairly standardized form of gospel book decoration. After the usual prolegomena appear canon tables with colorful architectural frames. The Gospels proper begin with an impressive frontispiece showing Christ in Majesty standing before the Tree of Life and encircled by an almond-shaped mandorla (fig. 12). The five part arrangement of the cover is echoed in the placement of the four evangelist symbols around the central figure of Christ. An author portrait paired with a magnificent initial page precedes each of the Gospel writers' accounts. There is a marked difference between the inside and the outside of this manuscript to a greater degree than that of the *Uta Codex*. Although gold and brilliant colors are used throughout these illuminations, these images share few pictorial commonalities with the geometric ornamentation of the cover, aside from the quincunx arrangement of the Christ in Majesty frontispiece, and do not repeat the living cross theme of the cover.

Interestingly, the cross iconography of the cover is rather outshone by the materials used to fashion it. The golden cover of the *Reichenau Gospels*, similar to the

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[56] Hildegard Willenbring, *Das Reichenauer Evangeliar Clm 4454 aus dem Bamberger Domschatz* (Berlin, 1995). Whether or not Reichenau was the artistic center, which produced some of the most famous manuscripts of the Ottonian period, has long been a matter of debate. The most serious arguments made against Reichenau as an important site of manuscript production came with Charles R. Dodwell and D. H. Turner's *Reichenau Reconsidered*: *A Re-assessment of the Place of Reichenau in Ottonian Art* (London: The Warburg Institute, Univ. of London, 1965). For the history of the debate and a well-reasoned case for a scriptorium at Reichenau, see Mayr-Harting, *Ottonian Book Illumination: An Historical Study*, 2nd ed. (London: Miller, 1999), 203-211.

majority of Ottonian treasury bindings, is essentially a collection in miniature. For instance, some of the gemstones have been drilled through their centers thus allowing them to be strung, which suggest an earlier existence as jewelry. At the lower right edge of the impressive border is additional evidence of Ottonian artists' practice of reuse: an antique gem engraved with a representation of Pegasus. Most striking, however, is the tenth-century Arabian amulet that marks the center of the gemmed cross.[57] As with other instances of *spolia* in the Early Medieval period, we lack written sources that explain either the motivations for or the significance of the reuse of objects from earlier periods and/or other cultures.[58] Nevertheless, the appropriation of old or exotic objects for the decoration of the covers, as well as the reuse of the treasury bindings themselves for new manuscripts, was common during this period and thus worthy of investigation.

It is unlikely, however, that most viewers were aware of these specific instances of *spolia*, which are practically invisible from any distance. The sheer luxury of the materials used on the bindings, on the other hand, would have been impossible for audiences to overlook. How such material wealth on a sacred object may have been understood is explored throughout this dissertation. The oft-stated assertion in modern scholarship that the use of precious metals and stones on manuscript covers served to make clear the sacred nature of the text needs further scrutiny. I argue in Chapter 2 for the importance of examining these covers in light of contemporaneous luxury objects. The use of precious materials for both gifts to the

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[57] Hernad, *Prachteinbände 870 – 1685*, 18-19.

[58] For an introduction, historiography, and recent bibliography on spolia, see Dale Kinney, "The Concept of Spolia," in *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, ed. Conrad Rudolf (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 233-252: Idem, "Rape or Restitution of the Past? Interpreting *Spolia*," in *The Art of Interpreting*, ed. S. C. Scott (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University, 1995), 52-63.

gods, as well as markers of status, undeniably has a long history.[59] Recognition of the

ability for certain materials to convey the spiritual import of the biblical text likely co-

evolved with the practice of ornamenting the manuscript, which is influenced perhaps

more by convention and tradition. In what follows, the manuscript covers will be

situated within their original collections to better understand their role as parts of

treasuries. I will also examine Ottonian written sources in light of recent findings of

modern neuroscientists and cognitive psychologists to understand how configurations

of precious materials attracted viewer attention.

Although the current study is focused upon viewer reception, it is ill advised to

ignore aspects of production.[60] Unfortunately, we know very little about where the

*Reichenau Gospels*, as well as the majority of treasury bindings, were created and by

whom. Scholars have proposed a variety of provenances for the *Reichenau Gospels*

cover including Reichenau and Regensburg.[61] Unlike the manuscripts themselves,

which at times contain information about their creation, the covers lack signatures or

other inscriptions that could aid this process. The possible sites of the covers'

manufacture are arrived at through comparison to other works of liturgical art as well

as manuscript illumination. However, this method, which is highly subjective to begin

with, is hindered because the provenance of the comparanda is hardly more certain.

For instance, the cover of the *Reichenau Gospels* has been compared to the Basel

Antependium, the portable altars in the Bayerisches Nationalmuseum in Munich and

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[59] Grahame Clark, *Symbols of Excellence: Precious Materials as Expressions of Status* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
[60] As John Miles Foley writes with regard to oral poetry, "composition and reception are two sides of the same coin. As with any language-based transaction, both composer and receiver must be fluent in the particular coded language (or register) they are using to communicate." "Plenitude and Diversity: Interactions between Orality and Writing," in *The Interface of Orality and Writing: Speaking, Seeing, Writing in the Shaping of New Genres*, ed. Annette Weissenrieder and Robert B. Coote (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 115.
[61] Hernad, *Prachteinbände 870 – 1685*, 21-22.

the Musée National du Moyen Âge in Paris, and the cover of the Fulda

Sacramentary—all of which have unclear origins.[62]

Moreover, as already stated, the covers need not necessarily have been

produced at the same location as the manuscript. Manuscripts created on the island of

Reichenau for the imperial family could have easily been transported in simple

bindings to be outfitted with ornate covers or book boxes in another town such as

Regensburg. After all, the Ottonians practiced itinerant kingship, frequently moving

from city to city, monastic center to monastic center. Typically staying no longer than

a few days at each site, the royal entourage which numbered into the hundreds could

have completed such a relatively simple task. Not only was the imperial court highly

mobile, but abbots and bishops frequently traveled with their retinues. [63]

We also have evidence of patrons commissioning luxury items from artists in

other centers. For instance, the then secretary of Archbishop Adalberon of Reims,

Gerbert of Aurillac (later Pope Sylvester II), wrote in the summer of 987 to the

Archbishop Egbert of Trier to request the creation of a processional cross by Egbert's

renowned goldsmiths and enamel workers.[64] What is especially interesting about this

letter is that the archbishop states that he will send drawn models for the creation of

this work. Such practices make the localization of such a work difficult because it

may have been influenced by the artists in Reims as well as the craftsmen in Trier

who would fashion the final piece. Adding to the possible confusion is the fact that

Archbishop Adalberon ordered that this cross be sent to Verdun in November of the

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[62] *Kaiser Heinrich II., 1002-1024*, Cat. no. 135, 307 (Gude Suckale-Redlefsen).

[63] John W. Bernhardt, *Itinerant Kingship and Royal Monasteries in Early Medieval Germany, c.936–1075* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 45-70.

[64] Cited in Kahsnitz, *Goldene Evangelienbuch*, 85. *Die Briefsammlung Gerberts von Reims*, MGH: Die Briefe der deutschen Kaiserzeits, vol. 2, ed. Fritz Weigle (Weimar: Böhlau, 1966), no. 104. "Destinato opera designates mittumus species. Admirabilem forman, et que mentem et materiam nostrum magnum ac célèbre ingenium vestrum nobilitabit cum adiectione vitri tum compositione artificis elegantis."

same year.[65] Thus, this now lost work was designed in Rheims, created in Trier, and used in Verdun. It is little wonder that we are at a loss to discover where such liturgical art was created.

Even more problematic for the attribution of a work to a particular site is the fact that scribes and artists also were not necessarily tied to only one locale. The acceptance as fact of artist mobility in the early medieval period flies in the face of some long-held assumptions of medieval craftsmen. Recent work regarding scribal artists allows for the reexamination of these beliefs. While this offers new insight into the creation of the Ottonian manuscript and their covers, it problematizes what we once took for granted. The image of early medieval manuscript illustrators has long been one of monks working in the scriptorium of their monastery. Scholars could therefore assume that similar illustrations were produced by a workshop located at an important monastic center. Ivory plaques supposedly were produced within the cloister as well, since their subjects and styles can be compared to manuscript paintings. Much ink has been spilt in assigning different illustrations to specific workshops or "schools."[66] To explain the influence of one manuscript upon another in a distant locale, art historians have supposed that the manuscripts themselves traveled between monasteries. However as Lawrence Nees effectively demonstrated in an article on Carolingian book painters, there is little evidence that the illustrators were monks. He also suggests that although a manuscript may be intended for use at a specific monastery, there is no evidence that it was necessarily made there.[67] Using

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[65] Cited in Kahsnitz, *Goldene Evangelienbuch*, 85. *Die Briefsammlung Gerberts von Reims*, no. 106. "Et quoniam per Verdunum iter nobis est, eo crucem vestra scientia, ut speramus, elaboratam, si fieri potest, kl. novemb. Dirigite. Sitque hoc pignus amicicie ita opus placens: dum oculis crebrius ingeretur, indissolubilis amor in dies augmentabitur."

[66] For example, Wilhelm Köhler and Florentine Mütherich's multi-volume opus dedicated to Carolingian manuscript painting. *Die karolingischen Miniaturen* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1930 -2009).

[67] "On Carolingian book painters: the Ottoboni Gospels and its transfiguration master," *Art Bulletin* 83, no. 2 (Jun 2001): 209-239.

contemporary written sources and the illustrations themselves, he offers considerable

evidence of itinerate painters beginning in the mid-ninth century. There are even more

indications of this in the Ottonian period. The classic example is the so-called

Gregory Master, a manuscript painter and possibly goldsmith as well. In addition to

the Gregory illustration in the late-tenth century *Registrum Gregorii* manuscript,

whence his name derives, he is likely responsible for manuscripts created not only in

Trier, but also Lorsch, Fulda, and Reichenau.[68]

       Similarly, there is no reason to suppose that goldsmiths were not mobile as

well. They did not require large workshops, merely a sheltered place to work. The

kind of work that went into creating the covers could often be achieved with hand

tools, which could be easily taken from site to site.[69] Although we have records of

some clergy or monastics working as early medieval goldsmiths, many could just

have likely been laymen. After all, craftsmen who could create the many objects not

destined for ecclesiastical use, such as such as chains, bracelets, rings, buckles,

utensils, and precious vessels—few of which survive—would have been much in

demand by lay patrons.[70] This is not to say that no monastics worked as artisans

during the Ottonian period or that all artists were itinerant. The aforementioned

artistic center in Trier under the oversight of Archbishop Egbert, famous for the

production of enamels, demonstrates that there were in fact fixed productions sites.[71]

Nevertheless, the modern imaginings of the workshops of goldsmiths and ivory

carvers with many assistants following the style of the master needs reexamining.

Although there may have been such workshops producing treasury bindings, the

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[68] Henry Mayr-Harting, *Ottonian Book Illumination*, 39-43.
[69] Elizabeth Coatsworth and Michael Pinder, *The Art of the Anglo-Saxon Goldsmith: Fine Metalwork in Anglo-Saxon England: Its Practice and Practitioners* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2002), 21-26
[70] Ibid., 213-214.
[71] For archaeological evidence of gold and silversmith workshops of the early medieval period, see Helmut Roth, *Kunst und Handwerk im frühen Mittelalter: Archäologische Zeugnisse von Childerich I.: Bis zu Karl dem Großen* (Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss Verlag, 1986), 57-65.

covers themselves are relatively small objects that could easily be the work of one or two craftsmen. As Anthony Cutler suggests for tenth-century Byzantine ivories, it is more accurate to speak of a master, who has a recognizable hand, rather than workshops.[72] Therefore, similar objects could be the work of a single person, who could move to where his skills were required, rather than an established school. This may be especially true of the "masterpieces." This reimagining of how such objects were produced further muddies the waters when it comes to establishing provenance. Thus, where the covers of the *Reichenau Gospels* and the majority Ottonian treasury bindings were made may never be satisfactorily answered. It is therefore more productive to look beyond the possibly unanswerable questions of provenance, to examine iconographical and socio-cultural issues bound up with the covers.

**The Pericope Book of Henry II (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Clm 4452)**

As with the treasury binding of the *Reichenau Gospels*, where the cover of the *Pericope Book of Henry II* (fig. 5) was produced is equally uncertain. Certainly, this unknown artist must have been closely attached to the royal court as he crafted the front cover from a diverse assemblage of "ready-made" objects which presumably originated from a collection of a noble patron, likely that of Henry II. These reused masterpieces include: a ninth-century ivory depicting the Crucifixion and Resurrection, twelve tenth-century Byzantine cloisonné enamels, and four late tenth-century enamel *tondi* with the symbols of the evangelists made in Western Europe.[73] The manuscript itself, a collection of gospel readings arranged according to the liturgical calendar, was written and illustrated on the island of Reichenau. Scholars have even been able to more precisely assign the manuscript to the so-called Liuthar-

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[72] Anthony Cutler, *The Hand of the Master: Craftsmanship, Ivory and Society in Byzantium (9th-11th Centuries)* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994*)*, 66-67.
[73] Hernad, *Prachteinbände 870 – 1685*, 17-18.

Group, named for the scribe that appears in the *Aachen Gospels of Otto III* (Aachen

Cathedral Treasury, fol. 15v). Created in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries,

the Golden Age of Reichenau manuscript production, the manuscripts of the Liuthar-

Group also include the *Reichenau Gospels*, the Gospels of Otto III (Munich, BSB

Clm 4453), and the *Bamberg Apocalypse* (Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek Bibl. 140). The

luxurious treasury binding, however, has been attributed to workshops that range from

Reichenau to Regensburg to Bamberg.[74] Although Regensburg is often the favored

candidate, it is by no means certain that the binding was produced here.[75]

What is irrefutable, however, is for which site this richly bound manuscript

was destined. Henry II gave the manuscript—along with the *Reichenau Gospels* and

the Gospels of Otto III— to Bamberg Cathedral for its consecration in 1012.[76] An

inscription on the gilded copper band that borders the ivory centerpiece celebrates

Henry's patronage:

> +GRAMMATA QVI SOPHIE QVERIT COGNOSCERE VERE
>  HOC MATHESIS PLENE QVADRATVM PLAVDET HABERE
> EN QVI VERACES SOPHIE FVLSERE SEQVACES
> ORNAT PERFECTAM REX HEINRIH STEMMATE SECTAM
>
> He who seeks to understand the writings of true wisdom/
> will rejoice to have this fourfold work of knowledge/
> in which the true disciples of wisdom have shined.
> King Henry ornamented these perfect teachings with a wreath of honor.[77]

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[74] For Reichenau, see Percy Ernst Schramm and Florentine Mütherich *Denkmale der Deutschen Könige und Kaiser. Ein Beitrag zur Herrschergeschichte von Karl dem Grossen bis Friedrich II. 768 – 1250* (Munich: Prestel, 1981), cat. no. 112; for Regensburg, Hermann Fillitz, "Der Einband," in *Zierde für ewige Zeit: Das Perikopenbuch Heinrichs II.*, ed. Hermann Fillitz, Rainer Kahsnitz, and Ulrich Kuder (Frankfurt: S. Fischer, 1996), 107; and Bamberg, see Gude Suckale-Redlefsen, "Eine Kaiserliche Goldschiedewerkstatt in Bamberg zur Zeit Heinrichs II.," *Bericht des historischen Vereins für die Pflege der Geschichte des ehemaligen Fürstbistums Bamberg* 131 (1995): 129-175.

[75] The cover is attributed to a Regensburg workshop because of its similarities with that of the Carolingian Codex Aureus of St. Emmeram (Munich, BSB Clm 14000), which is known to have been in Regensburg in the Ottonian period, and because there is no evidence of a goldsmith workshop in Reichenau. Hermann Fillitz, "Einband," 107.

[76] Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, cat. no. 43, 47, and 50. Hartmut Hoffmann, *Bamberger Handschriften des 10. und 11. Jahrhunderts*, MGH: Schriften vol. 30 (Hannover: 1995), 88-90.

[77] Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, 131. I would like to thank Benjamin Eldredge for translating this inscription and checking those of earlier scholars.

This inscription is remarkable for a number of reasons. Inscriptions of any kind are fairly uncommon on Early Medieval manuscript covers, as we have seen on both the covers of the *Uta Codex* and the *Reichenau Gospels*. When it does appear, text on treasury bindings is typically limited to labels which identify the saintly figures or events, for example those on the *Codex Aureus of Echternach* (Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum; fig. 1). There are, however, a handful of surviving examples with longer dedicatory inscription like that of the pericope book which name the patron—for instance, the early seventh-century covers of Queen Theodelinda (Monza, Basilica of S. Giovanni Battista, fig. 13) and the "Precious Gospels" of Bishop Bernward of Hildesheim (Hildesheim, Domschatz No. 18, fig. 14).[78] The function of such dedicatory inscriptions as tools to shape and preserve the collective memory of the owning religious institution or aristocratic family will be explored in Chapter 3. At their most basic, these inscriptions likely insured the preservation of the treasury bindings on which they were written. To possess a luxury gift clearly marked with the image or name of the illustrious personage who gave it, was no small accomplishment for religious foundation.

Interestingly, few of these inscriptions on treasury bindings approach the level of sophistication of Henry II's Pericope Book cover. In a manner similar to the cover, which inserts twelve Byzantine cloisonné enamels into this Western object, the inscription also employs a number of Greek words transliterated into Latin (*grammata*, *sophie*, *mathesis,* and *stemmate*).[79] What the inscription could potentially reveal about the origin of the reused tenth-century Byzantine enamels as well as the Ottonians' conceptualization of such *spolia* is the second noteworthy aspect of this

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[78] For these inscriptions, see Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, cat. no. 79 (*Theodolinda Gospels*) and 158 (*Precious Gospels*).
[79] Christina Nielsen, "*HOC OPUS EXIMIUM*: Artistic Patronage in the Ottonian Empire," (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2002), 16.

dedicatory text. Much hinges on the last line of the inscription, which appears on the gilded band below the reused ninth-century ivory plaque, and the meaning of the word *stemmate*. In an influential publication in 1951, Olle Kållström translated this word as crown.[80] This last line then essentially would read as "King Henry decorated these perfect teachings [the Gospels] with a crown." Kållström took this to mean that the Byzantine enamels—which represent Christ, eight of the apostles, Luke, John the Theologian, and Jacob—originally formed a Byzantine crown, similar to that of Crown of Constantine IX Monomachos (Magyar Nemzeti Muzeum, Budapest; fig. 15).[81] This theory about the source of the enamels was repeated and embellished in subsequent German publications. Percy Ernst Schramm even proposed that the crown belonged to the Empress Theophano, who brought it with her to Germany as part of her dowry.[82] It was forty years after Schramm's publication that Gunter Wolf effectively demonstrated that this was impossible due to the estimated size and subject matter of the proposed crown.[83] Wolf also argued that in this period *stemma* did not mean crown, in the sense Kållström took it to mean, but rather wreath of honor.[84] Rainer Kahsnitz's hypothesis that the enamels came from an icon frame of a Byzantine book cover, like the example preserved in the treasury of San Marco in Venice, has therefore gained the most acceptance in recent literature.[85] According to this interpretation, *stemma* would then be a figurative crown—simply another way of saying that Henry honored the holy book with ornament.[86]

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[80] Olle Kållström, "Ein neuentdecktes Majestätsdiadem ottonischer Zeit," *Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst* 2 (1951): 61-72.

[81] Ibid., 64-66.

[82] Percy Ernst Schramm, *Herrschaftszeichen und Staatssymbolik: Beiträge zu ihrer Geschichte vom dritten bis zum sechzehnten Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1955), 638-642.

[83] Gunter G. Wolf, "Byzantinische Spolien auf dem Buchdeckel des Bamberger Perikopenbuches König Heinrichs II," *Aachener Kunstblätter* 61 (1995/97): 395-398.

[84] Ibid., 395.

[85] *Rom und Byzanz: Schatzkammerstücke aus bayerischen Sammlungen*, ed. Reinhold Baumstark (Munich: Hirmer, 1998), 136.

[86] As suggested by Hermann Fillitz, "Einband," 105.

In her 2002 PhD dissertation, Christina Nielsen, however, argued for a completely different understanding of the last line. Instead of crown, she understood *stemma* to mean lineage. Her translation ran thusly: "King Henry ornamented the complete work, distinguished by its lineage." Nielsen then proposed that "distinguished by its lineage" referred to not only the enamels, from the distant and highly-regarded Byzantine Empire, but also to the ninth-century Carolingian ivory. As Nielsen writes, "the inscription celebrating Henry's patronage is literally positioned between the Byzantine enamels and the Carolingian ivory plaque, thereby figuratively positioning his reign between these historical and foreign empires."[87] This dedicatory inscription, which calls attention to the origin of the reused objects, would thus be a godsend to art historians attempting to understand *spolia*, a topic, as mentioned, upon which period sources are primarily silent. Nielsen then proceeded to interpret the spolia as politically and personally significant to Henry and his newly founded archbishopric of Bamberg.[88]

The problems with this appealing reading are twofold. First, if *stemma* in fact means distinguished lineage it would modify Henry II and not the ornamentation. This, however, merely removes the convenient textual support to the claim that the creators reused the Carolingian and Byzantine objects because of their provenance. It does not entirely negate her interpretation that these pieces were intended to equate Henry with his Carolingian predecessors and Byzantine counterparts, for which she makes a compelling case. More problematic is the second issue, the validity of the more specific readings of elements of the covers. This can best be seen in Nielsen's interpretation of the new meanings assigned by the Ottonian creators to the Carolingian ivory plaque upon its reuse on the cover of Henry II's Pericope Book.

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[87] Nielsen, Hoc Opus Eximium, 13.
[88] Ibid., 56-59, 63.

The reused ninth-century ivory, part of the so-called Luithard group after the scribe of the Utrecht Psalter, distills Christ's Passion and Resurrection into one image.[89] The Crucifixion appears in the upper portion of the plaque along the central axis. The scene is densely packed with angels above the cross, Stephaton and Longinus on either side, *Ecclesia* catching the blood of Christ in a chalice, mourners to the far left, and two enigmatic figures on the right—one standing holding a banner (possibly a second version of *Ecclesia*) the other enthroned and holding a disc (possibly Jerusalem or Tellus). Following the established Carolingian iconography, a large serpent coils around the base of the cross.[90] In a separate register below the Crucifixion, the Three Marys approach the tomb of Christ only to find it empty. An angel with arm raised announces to them that Christ has risen. In the bottom-most register the dead are shown rising from their graves behind the allegorical figures of the Oceans, the Earth, and either the Jewish Temple or the city of Rome.[91]

Nielsen suggests that since the pericope book would have been used at the west altar in the newly built Bamberg Cathedral the site of Henry II's eventual burial, the scenes of Resurrection were entirely appropriate.[92] She adds that the allegorical figures of *Oceanus* and *Gaia* as well as the figures she identifies as Rome and Jerusalem speak to then King Henry II's imperial ambitions and his desire to have Bamberg take its place as a New Rome.[93] In addition to the ivory, Nielsen proposes that the enamel figures also had specific meaning with relation to Bamberg in that they spoke to the apostolic mission of Bamberg to convert the Slavs.[94]

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[89] Goldschmidt, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, vol. 1., cat. no. 41.
[90] Herbert Kessler, "Christ the Magic Dragon," *Gesta* 48, no. 2 (2009): 119-134.
[91] For the iconography of the ivory and the identification of the figure at the bottom as the Jewish Temple, see Celia Chazelle, *The Crucified God in the Carolingian Era: Theology and Art of Christ's Passion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 266-292.
[92] Nielsen, Hoc Opus Eximium, 55-57.
[93] Ibid., 63-65.
[94] Ibid., 59-61.

To test the validity of such interpretations it is necessary to view the cover of Henry II's Pericope Book within the context of other treasury bindings. Before we can assign specific meanings to these Ottonian masterpieces as Nielsen has done, we need to know how much of their iconography is merely conventional. It is for this reason among others that I examine the traditions of early medieval book binding and aspects of production in the following chapter. It is also essential not to lose sight of the fact that objects such as Henry II's Pericope Book were part of larger collections. This book was one of at least twelve richly bound manuscripts along with other forms of liturgical art, such as altars and crosses, which Henry II donated to the new cathedral.[95] It strains credulity that as part of a large donation such small elements of a single object, for example individual ivory or enamel figures, would be intended to carry such specific and precise meanings as modern art historians may wish to believe.[96] I suggest we begin to get a more accurate understanding of how such covers may have been designed and interpreted when we understand them as part of large liturgical collections. Also by working with a larger sample size of treasury bindings, instead of using a case study, we may better ascertain the role of *spolia* on such items.

Returning to the inscription, an aspect that has not been sufficiently explored is the use of the perfect tense of *fulgere*. Unlike stemma, the meaning of this word, to shine, has never been controversial. It is hardly fortuitous that the sacred teachings contained within this deluxe manuscript encased in gold and gems would be described as shining. Such metaphors in Ottonian inscriptions and other writings help us

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[95] Bamberg inventory of 1127-28. Reprinted in Bernhard Bischoff, *Mittelalterliche Schatzverzeichnisse,1: von der Zeit Karls des Grossen bis zur Mitte des 13. Jahrhunderts.* Veröffentlichungen des Zentralinstituts für Kunstgeschichte in München, IV (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1967), 17-19.

[96] Additionally, Anthony Cutler argues that it is important to distinguish between reuse and use when discussing spolia. He writes, "[m]edieval people emphasized its [the work's/the obect's] immediacy; its value depended as much on its utility in the present and in the foreseeable future as on its antiquity." "Reuse or Use? Theoretical and Practical Attitudes Toward Objects in the Early Middle Ages," in *Ideologie e pratiche del reimpiego nell'alto Medioevo: 16-21 aprile 1998* (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'alto Medioevo, 1999), 2: 1078.

understand how the rich materials of the covers may have been interpreted. The trope of shining brilliance is mentioned in several dedicatory inscriptions within not only Ottonian but also Carolingian manuscripts, for example the *Codex Aureus of St. Emmeram*.[97] Such word play reveals the cultural frameworks viewers would have had in mind when they saw and responded to shimmering examples of liturgical art.

**Codex Aureus of Echternach (Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg)**

Evidence that many aspects of treasury bindings were standardized in the Ottonian period is provided by the glittering golden cover (fig. 1) housed in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg, which includes many of the same elements as that of the *Pericopes of Henry II*: an ivory Crucifixion, glowing enamels, precious gemstones, and a frame of saintly figures. The cover also combines the organizational patterns of both the *Reichenau Gospels* and Henry II's pericope book in that a *crux gemmata* lies beneath a rectangular central plaque and frame. Although it now covers a famous mid-eleventh-century manuscript, the *Codex Aureus of Echternach*, this treasury binding was created some fifty years earlier, around the year 985. The distinctive patterns and colors of the enamels indicate that it was fashioned in the aforementioned workshops of Trier under the oversight of the Archbishop Egbert (977-993).[98]

The ivory plaque at its center offers viewers a visually striking representation of the Crucifixion.[99] Christ's oversized and carefully rendered hands are nailed to the cross that extends across the entire panel. His feet rest on a *suppedaneum* supported by a personification of *Terra.* The cross nimbus focuses attention on Christ's open

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[97] "This book glitters through his [Charles the Bald's] command and gold." Translated by William Diebold, The Artistic Patronage of Charles the Bald (PhD diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1990), 264.
[98] For the enamels, see Hiltrud Westermann-Angerhausen, *Die Goldschmiedearbeiten der Trierer Egbertwerkstatt* (Trier: Spee-Verlag, 1973), 53-72.
[99] Goldschmidt, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, vol. 2, cat. no. 23.

eyes, which gaze to meet those of Longinus who, with his back to the viewer, pierces

the crucified Lord's side. Following the established iconography, Stephaton stands on

Christ's left as he holds aloft the vinegar soaked sponge. Also traditional are the

personifications of the sun and the moon at the upper corners of the plaque. The ivory

unusually retains significant traces of paint—blue for the cross; green for *Terra*'s

garments, Longinus's spear, Stephaton's bucket and sponge, and the roundels with *Sol*

and *Luna*; red for the background—and gilding. When this paint was applied is

uncertain. Although most scholars presume it is of a later date, this is primarily due to

a long-standing assumption which has recently been brought into question that early

medieval ivories were left unpainted.[100] If the panel had been painted originally, this

would doubtlessly have rendered the details of the ivory more comprehensible from a

distance.

Even more remarkable are the drastic reduction of the number of figures and

the increase in the scale of these figures compared to late Carolingian ivories, for

example the ninth-century ivory on the cover of the Pericopes of Henry II. The clarity

of the composition naturally draws attention to the individual figures, which are

rendered with surprising attention to human anatomy. This is especially noticeable

and significant in the representation of the body of Christ. In high relief and centrally

placed, Christ's finely modeled body is covered only by a knee-length *perizoma* and

is thus on display for viewers. The soldiers stand upon the decorative acanthus frame

as if on a ledge as their arms overlap the border, therefore breaking the confines of the

depicted space and entering that of the viewer. The emphasis on three-dimensionality

and attention to the body of Christ on this cover corresponds to that of the previously

discussed *Uta Codex*. It is worth exploring the connection between this emphasis and

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[100] Carolyn Connor, *The Color of Ivory: Polychromy on Byzantine Ivories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

the rise in popularity of monumental crucifixes, such as the well-known Gero Crucifix
(c. 970) in the Cologne Cathedral, and the related theology in the Ottonian period.

That the ivory Crucifixion on the cover of the Codex Aureus of St Echternach
does indeed date to the Ottonian period, however, has been a matter of debate. At the
end of the nineteenth-century, Wilhelm Vöge assigned it to a group of ivories, which
also included the Moses and Doubting Thomas diptych in Berlin (fig. 16) and a
*Maiestas Domini* also in Berlin (fig. 17), which he considered the products of a single
artist, his so-called German Master.[101] As the ivory was attached to the treasury
binding with goldwork datable to c. 985 and enamels localized to Trier, it and the
related ivories where thus given the same date and provenance. In the 1956 facsimile
of the Codex Aureus, however, Peter Metz proposed that this ivory Crucifixion plaque
was in fact a replacement for the original late tenth-century ivory and was added when
the cover was reused in the mid-eleventh century for a new manuscript[102]. He arrived
at this conclusion because of the gap on the right side between the edge of the ivory
and gold and enamel border. He then proposed that the present ivory may have been
produced for the open market and was simply what was available at the time of the
rebinding. Metz's theory received support in 1960 with the publication of an article by
Karl Oettinger, who proposed a mid-eleventh century date for the ivory based on
stylistic comparison to works created during the reign of Henry III (1039-1056).[103]

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[101] Wilhelm Vöge, "Ein deutscher Schnitzer des X. Jahrhunderts," *Jahrbuch der Preußischen Kunstsammlungen* 20 (1899): 117-125. For the historiography of this group and its *German* master, see "'Except I Shall See ... I Will Not Believe' (John 20:25): Typology, Theology, and Historiography in an Ottonian Ivory Diptych," in *Object, Images, and the Word: Art in the Service of the Liturgy*, ed. Colum Hourihane (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 263-270.

[102] *Das Goldene Evangelienbuch von Echternach im Germanischen National-Museum zu Nürnberg* (Munich: Prestel, 1956): 111, n. 130.

[103] Karl Oettinger, "Der Elfenbeinschnitzer des Echternacher Codex Aureus und die Skulptur unter Heinrich III. (1039 - 56)," *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen, N.F.* 2 (1960): 34-54. Victor Elbern also suggested an eleventh-century date for the ivory, although not quite as late as the one suggested by Oettinger. Kurt Böhner and Victor Elbern, eds., *Das erste Jahrtausend : Kultur und Kunst im werdenden Abendland an Rhein und Ruhr* (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1964): 1030.

The belief that the current ivory replaced a lost or damaged original was repeated by Frauke Steenbock in her catalogue of treasury bindings and has since gained acceptance by the majority of scholars who believed the style of the gold reliefs pointed to a different hand than that of the ivory.[104] Steenbock further suggested that the subject matter of the original ivory would have a Maiestas Domini and not the Crucifixion. She based this hypothesis partly on the example of the ninth-century Codex Aureus of St. Emmeram with its depiction of Christ in Majesty, which she presented as the prototypical model for covers that combined a centralized figurative field and *crux gemmata*. Steenbock also argued that an ivory representing Christ in Majesty would be better suited to the subject matter of the surrounding gold frame—the evangelist symbols and allegorical figures of the four rivers of paradise.[105]

More recently this theory has been called into question. Rainer Kahsnitz in his commentary for the 1982 facsimile edition argued that the ivory would naturally contract over one thousand years thus accounting for the gap now present on the right edge of the central plaque.[106] Such shrinkage cannot be substantiated, since the ivory shows no other signs, i.e. cracking, that would support this hypothesis. Nevertheless, equally imperfect fits can be seen on many early medieval manuscript covers and such relatively small gaps may have been of no consequence to period creators and viewers.[107] Ivory was in relatively short supply in the late tenth/early eleventh century and a plaque of this size may have been all that was available, whenever it was inserted. Additionally, even if the gold and ivory work were contemporaneous, they need not have been produced by the same artist, thus accounting for the stylistic differences noted by some scholars.

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[104] Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, 120.
[105] Ibid., 41.
[106] Kahsnitz, *Goldene Evangelienbuch,* 43.
[107] Grebe, *Codex Aureus*, 28.

Stylistic analysis is also inconclusive since Vöge's "German Master" worked in an extremely idiosyncratic style that has no real comparison in either the late tenth or mid-eleventh century.[108] The current ivory does indeed seem to have been designed for the cover, as the vertical cross arms on the ivory align with the crux gemmata of the metal frame.[109] In the most recent publications by American scholars, the late tenth-century date or a slightly earlier date than that proposed by Oettinger has been maintained.[110] Even though treasury bindings were often radically changed over the years, perhaps it makes the most sense to assume the most straightforward course of events, that the ivory was not replaced, until there is pressing evidence to the contrary.

Although the central panel may have originally been a Christ in Majesty, the Crucifixion also fits with the rest of the subject matter of the cover. The *crux gemmata* combined with a saltire cross divides the golden frame into eight sections. As mentioned above, in each of the four panels above and below the ivory appear the symbol of one of the four evangelists and an allegory of one of the four rivers of paradise. The vertical sides of the golden frame are ornamented with eight standing figures, each clearly labeled. The Virgin Mary and St. Peter, the patron saint of Echternach, stand at the uppermost section of these repoussé plaques.[111] Below Mary is the earliest surviving depiction of St. Willibrord. A member of the Benedictine order, Willibrord became the Bishop of Utrecht and founded of the monastery at

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[108] Although Lasko believed this artist worked in the middle of the eleventh century, he found it difficult to find comparanda. "To place the whole group into a stylistic context at any time in the late tenth or early eleventh century is not easy, nor is it all that much easier to see it as work of around the middle of the century. Perhaps the reflections of the style to be found in Spanish ivories in the early fifties give as good an indication of the date as can be found…Perhaps a possible connexion with Flanders, north-eastern France, or even England should also be mentioned," (*Ars Sacra*, 141). Diebold points out that Lasko, a refugee from Nazi Germany, "was intent on putting these ivories, traditionally represented as quintessentially German, anywhere *but* in Germany," ("Except I Shall See," 270).

[109] Grebe, *Codex Aureus*, 28.

[110] Christopher Hughes, "Visual Typology: An Ottonian Example," *Word & Image* 17, no. 3 (July-Sept. 2001):185-198, and Diebold, "Except I Shall See," 264-270.

[111] For the iconography of the golden frame, see Kahsnitz, *Goldene Evangelienbuch*, 49-58, and Grebe, *Codex Aureus*, 28-30.

Echternach to facilitate his efforts to convert the Frisians, a Germanic people who

settled along the coasts of modern day Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands. Upon

his death in 739 he was buried at Echternach. Across from Willibrord stands another

Benedictine monk, St. Boniface, who continued Willibrord's mission to the Frisians

and was the first archbishop of Mainz. Under the horizontal arms of the crux gemmata

are SS. Benedict and Ludger, a noble Frisian and follower of St. Boniface who

founded the abbey of Werden. The selection of these particular saints in addition to

the four rivers of paradise and the four evangelist symbols speaks to a missionary

theme.[112] The figures turn toward the central panel and can be understood as taking

part in the *adoratio crucis* (the Adoration of the Cross).[113] Moreover, the chosen

saints suggest that this treasury binding was intended for the monastery of Echternach

from its inception. As Gunther Wolf suggests, it likely was donated to the monastery

to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the death of its founder, St. Willibrord.[114]

The last two figures allow this cover to be dated with greater precision than

many examples of liturgical art. On the left appears a young Otto III labeled as *rex*

and on the right his mother Theophano labeled as *imperatrix*.[115] Otto III's mother, an

imported Byzantine princess, served as regent from the time of Otto II's sudden death

in 983 as her only son was only three years of age. She acted in this capacity until her

own death in 991. Her claim to the regency was contested by Duke Henry II of

Bavaria, who went as far as kidnapping the young Otto III in 984 in one of his many

attempts to usurp power. The kingdom was divided between his supporters and

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[112] Grebe, *Codex Aureus*, 30 and Hiltrud Westermann-Angerhausen, "Did Theophano Leave Her Mark on the Ottonian Sumptuary Arts," in *The Empress Theophano: Byzantium and the West at the Turn of the First Millennium*, ed. Adelbert Davids (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 263-264.
[113] Westermann-Angerhausen, "Did Theophano Leave Her Mark," 264.
[114] "Zur Datierung des Buchdeckels des Codex Aureus Epternacensis," in *Kaiserin Theophanu: Prinzessin aus der Fremde—des Westreiches Große Kaiserin*, ed. Gunther Wolf (Cologne: Böhlau, 1991), 240-245.
[115] Ibid.

Theophano's until Archbishop Willigis of Mainz succeeded in having the young king

returned to his mother. Interestingly, one of Duke Henry's supporters during this

conspiracy was Egbert the Archbishop of Trier. The cover, possibly for the

celebration of the important anniversary for Echternach in 989, may have been the by-

product of Egbert's eventual reconciliation with Theophano and her son.[116]

Art historians thus assume that Theophano acted as the chief patron of this

book cover.[117] By placing herself on the golden frame, she situates herself as an

intercessor between Christ depicted at the center of the book cover and the viewer.

Through this act of patronage she also takes part in a tradition with a long history, that

of imperial or royal gift giving. This tradition would be carried on by her son, Otto III,

as well as his successor, Henry II. The choice of having a visual representation of

both her and her son on the cover, rather than merely an inscription recording her

patronage is worthy of further study. The only other Ottonian patron to have him or

herself depicted on a treasury binding was Theophano's granddaughter and namesake,

the Abbess Theophanu of Essen, who appears offering the manuscript to the Virgin

Mary (fig. 18). Ottonian male patrons, on the other hand, seem to have been content

with inscriptions. Whether this is merely due to the accidents of survival or gender

differences with regard to patronage is a question that may not be answerable. The

impact of such gift giving—whether by male or female patrons—on collecting and

viewer reception, however, can be further examined.

**The Aachen Covers (Aachen Domschatz)**

Another example of royal gift giving, in this instance two panels—one of gold

and one of silver with ivory centerpieces—which presumably formed a single book

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[116] Adam Cohen, "Abbess Uta of Regensburg and Patterns of Female Patronage around 1000," *Aurora* 4 (2003): 46, n. 42.
[117] Cohen, "Abbess Uta," 46.

cover, most likely were donated by Henry II to Aachen Cathedral. The treasury

binding would therefore have been part of a larger group of donations given over

several years that then King Henry II made to this symbolic site of both the

Carolingians and the Ottonians.[118] The two other surviving donations, the famous

ambo (fig. 19) and the *Pala d'Oro*, or golden retable (fig. 20), are formally and

stylistically related to the golden cover, which combines figural repoussé plaques and

bands of gemstones, enamels, and gold filigree.[119] Hermann Schnitzler in fact

suggested that the Pala d'Oro, the gold cover, and the Basel Antependium now in the

Musée Nationale du Moyen Âge, Paris (fig. 21) were fashioned in the same Fuldanese

workshop based on the stylistic similarities of the repoussé figures to manuscript

painting in that center.[120] This localization and a date of late in Henry's reign for both

the gold cover and the *Pala d'Oro* has achieved general acceptance in German

scholarship. The ambo, on the other hand, has been assumed to have been created at

least a decade earlier, sometime at the beginning of Henry's reign as king (1002-

1014).[121] Eliza Garrison, however, proposed that the ambo as well as the gold cover

were donated at the same time, before Henry II's imperial coronation in 1014.[122]

Although this must have been the case with the ambo, which clearly states in an

inscription that it was donated by *Rex Heinricus*, it is impossible to say with regard to

the book cover precisely when it was created or donated. The most recent literature

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[118] For an overview of these donations and Henry II's role, see Eliza Garrison, "The Art Policy of Emperor Henry II (1002-1024)," PhD diss., (Northwestern University, 2005), 62-94.

[119] Ernst Günther Grimme, *Das Evangeliar Kaiser Ottos III. im Domschatz zu Aachen* (Freiburg: Herder, 1984), 88.

[120] Hermann Schnitzler, "Fulda oder Reichenau," *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch* 19 (1957): 39-132.

[121] Grimme, *Der Aachener Domschatz*, 29-30, 38-43; Hermann Fillitz, "Ottonische Goldschmiedekunst," in *Bernward von Hildesheim und das Zeitalter der Ottonen,vol.1*, ed. Michael Brandt and Arne Eggebrecht (Hildesheim: Bernward Verlag, 1993): 185-186; and most recently, Herta Lepie and Georg Minkenberg, *The Cathedral Treasury of Aachen*, trans. Manjula Dias Hargarter (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2010), 70-72.

[122] Garrison, Art Policy of Emperor Henry II, 71, 80. She also argues for an earlier date for the Pala d'Oro as she suggests it was given by Henry II for the Easter celebrations in 1005, the only year he celebrated Easter at Aachen (Garrison, 81).

dates the silver repoussé decoration of the other cover to the late twelfth-century, but the evidence for this is scant.[123] The victims of poorly executed nineteenth-century restoration, the covers and the *Pala d'Oro*, perhaps can never be exactly dated.

Unlike the covers discussed above, it is difficult to identify for which deluxe liturgical manuscript within the Aachen treasury the gold and silver plaques were intended. Scholars are divided as to whether the covers, seemingly a pair since they each use the pieces of the same tenth-century Byzantine triptych, originally adorned a famous Carolingian gospel book, or the late tenth-century *Aachen Gospels of Otto III*, written by the Reichenau scribe Liuthard.[124] What is known is this: the 1848 inventory of the treasury stated that the *Gospels of Otto III* were covered only in leather. Until 1870 the Carolingian manuscript had the gold cover attached to the front and the silver cover affixed to the back. In August 1870 Canon Franz Bock had the silver cover removed and attached to the *Gospels of Otto III*, where it remained until its rebinding in 1972.[125] Since the manuscripts share roughly the same dimensions, there is no overwhelming physical evidence to solve this problem. It could well be that Henry II commissioned new covers for the Carolingian gospel book, created in Charlemagne's so-called Palace School. After all, Henry through his donations seemed intent with linking himself to the great Carolingian leader.[126] Nevertheless, it seems unlikely that the *Gospels of Otto III*, replete with golden illuminations, would not have had precious covers and here are two Ottonian pieces close at hand. It is therefore doubtful that we will ever be able to satisfactorily demonstrate which manuscript originally received this decoration.

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[123] Lepie and Minkenberg, *Cathedral Treasury of Aachen*, 72.
[124] Steenbock believed that it was always intended for the Carolingian manuscript. *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, 134. Grimme, on the other hand, argues there is no way to tell to which manuscript it originally belonged. *Evangeliar Kaiser Ottos III,* 85-88.
[125] Grimme, *Evangeliar Kaiser Ottos III,* 85-88.
[126] Garrison, Art Policy of Emperor Henry II, 62-94.

Potentially more productive questions center on how the iconography of the

golden cover may have related to the performance of the liturgy and how the cover

worked in tandem with the other liturgical furniture of this highly specialized chapel.

The Aachen covers provide an invaluable case study, because we know more about

the early eleventh-century appearance and use of this site and its treasury than other

centers. The dismantling and reuse of a Byzantine triptych is also worthy of further

investigation, as this becomes a common practice in what is now France and Germany

beginning in the late tenth-century.[127] This practice will continue for centuries and

become more widespread with instances occurring in Spain and Italy.

Examining the more securely dated decoration of the *Aachen Golden Cover*,

we find another instance of what Steenbock considered to be part of the "Codex

Aureus Group."[128] A *crux gemmata* made up of gemstones and enamels divides the

surface. At its center the artist inserted the middle panel of a Byzantine triptych

ornamented with the Virgin Hodegetria who points to the Christ Child with her right

hand. This type was extremely popular in Byzantium and appeared on panel paintings

as well as stone and ivory sculpture. Additional ivory triptychs featuring the Virgin

Hodegetria made their way to the West and were also appropriated for use on

liturgical manuscript covers—for example, that of the front cover of the *Poussay*

*Gospels* (Paris, BnF, Ms. lat. 10514; fig. 22) and a gospel book in Bamberg

(Staatliche Bibliothek, Lit. 1; fig. 23).[129] The wings of the triptych used on the *Aachen*

*Golden Cover* can be found on the silver cover.[130]

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[127] Barbara Zeitler, "The Migrating Image: The Uses and Abuses of Byzantine Icons in Western Europe," in *Icon and Word: The Power of Images in Byzantium*, ed. Antony Eastmond and Liz James (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 185-203; and William North and Anthony Cutler, "Ivories, Inscriptions, and Episcopal Self-Consciousness in the Ottonian Empire: Berthold of Toul and the Berlin Hodegetria." *Gesta* 42, no. 1 (2003): 1-18.

[128] Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, 37-38.

[129] Ibid., cat. nos. 54 and 61.

[130] Ibid., cat. nos. 51-52.

A frame of precious gems and impressive gold filigree borders the gold cover. In the four spaces shaped by the cross arms and the ivory panel appear scenes from Christ's life as well as the symbols of the evangelists. Beginning at the top left hand corner and continuing counter-clockwise are: the Nativity and Mark, Matthew and the Crucifixion, the Resurrection and Luke, and John and the Ascension. During the restoration the positions of Matthew and Mark were reversed.[131] Of scenes on the cover, the Crucifixion and Resurrection duplicate scenes on the *Pala d'Oro*, which is decorated with a more complete Passion cycle. On both the cover and the retable, the individual scenes are much simplified with only the merest hint of backgrounds and are limited to only the most necessary figures.

The silver cover, which may very well be a twelfth-century replacement for the original Ottonian piece, lacks both gemstones and enamels. Representations of the gospel writers at their desks appear in panels above and below the ivory centerpiece. The symbols of the evangelists descend from the arch frames to inspire the authors. To the left and right of the ivory wings,which have been placed side-by-side, are the archangels Gabriel and Michael. John the Evangelist with a martyred saint, possibly St. Theodore Stratelates, appears on the ivory wing now on the left; while John the Baptist and another martyred saint, perhaps St. George or St. Demetrious are shown on the right. Barbara Zeitler, among others, has pointed out that the Western artist has created a new viewer experience, far different than it would have been in Byzantium.[132] In its current arrangement, the ivory figures turn to face each other rather than an image of Christ, something which Byzantine viewers would have found odd. Additionally, the silver cover presents John the Evangelist twice in both silver and ivory. This suggests to Zeitler that, "paramount in the decision to use the ivories

[131] Ernst Günther Grimme, *Der Aachener Domschatz* (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1973), 30.
[132] Barbara Zeitler, "Migrating Image," 192-193.

was their preciousness and their Byzantine, or at least perceived exotic origin, not the creation of a programmatically coherent image."[133] Was this the case with all instances of reuse of Byzantine ivories? Was the material, notable because of its exoticism what was valued? These questions will be taken up in the next chapter with additional examples, but it is safe to assume that one cannot generalize based on a single case.

I further suggest that the doubling of the same figure—which occurs on the cover itself—or of individual scenes—as it happened with regard to the covers, retable, and even the ambo—may have posed no problem because the way in which these objects were used during the liturgy. I suggest in Chapter 4 that instead of a single program, the decoration of an object or a group of objects may have been deliberately multivalent in order to best serve the needs of the services in which they were used.

**Gospels of Abbess Theophanu of Essen (Essen Domschatz)**

The ornately bound *Theophanu Gospels* of Essen (fig. 7) were part of a rich treasury of an Ottonian abbey church, which is now, with extensive thirteenth-century additions, Essen Cathedral. Damaged during World War II, the cathedral was rebuilt thus allowing visitors to get a sense of the Ottonian sections of the building—the octagonal *Westwerk* and crypt—which survived the Gothic interventions.[134] Also unusual is the fact that other priceless pieces used in the liturgy performed for the female community of Essen during the eleventh century are preserved to this day in the cathedral's treasury. These include a cult statue of the Virgin and Child, a reliquary crown, a ceremonial sword, a nail reliquary, three processional crosses, and

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[133] Ibid., 194.

[134] Klaus Lange, *Der Westbau des Essener Doms. Architektur und Herrschaft in ottonischer Zeit* (Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Münster 2001), 1-12.

a candelabrum in the form of a menorah.[135] The covers of this gospel book, similar to

those housed in Aachen, are therefore invaluable for a study on viewer reception as

we know much more about the setting in which they were used and the collection of

which they were an important part. Significantly, the fourteenth-century *Liber*

*Ordinarius* of Essen reveals that the *Theophanu Gospels* continued to be used during

the Good Friday liturgy well after the Ottonian period.[136]

Theophanu ruled the house of Essen from 1039-58 giving us an approximate

date for the gospel book and its cover.[137] In the eighteenth century, the Abbess

Franziska-Christine ordered the removal of the front and back cover from the

manuscript, which was decorated with canon tables, evangelist portraits, and

ornamental initial pages as was common during the Carolingian and Ottonian

periods.[138] The treasury binding also continues many of the trends found on works

created for members of the previous generation of Theophanu's family: an ivory

centerpiece surrounded by precious gems and frame of gold with saintly figures in

repoussé. The ivory, which is densely packed with figures, represents three moments

from the life of Christ: the Nativity, Crucifixion, and Ascension.[139] The Nativity is

depicted in the bottom third of the plaque. Mary lies in bed as the midwife arranges

the covers. Behind them lies Christ in his cradle with the ox and ass on either side.

The crucified Christ, who is crowned by the hand of God, appears directly above the

infant Jesus. Mary, John, *Ecclesia* and *Synagoga* are found below the cross, with

Longinus and Stephaton standing before them. The two thieves as well as the dead

rising from their graves fill out the rest of the scene. In the uppermost register, Christ

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[135] Pothmann, *Schatzkammer des Essener Münster*; Falk, ed., *Gold vor Schwarz*, 54-93; and Falk, Schilp, and Schlagheck, eds. *...wie das Gold*, passim.
[136] Gass, "Theophanu-Evangeliar," 177.
[137] Ibid., 169-188.
[138] Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, 153.
[139] Goldschmidt, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, vol. 2, cat. no. 58.

ascends to heaven. In a clever use of space the ivory carver has placed the apostles and Mary, who witness his Ascension, in the spaces above the horizontal cross arms. The evangelists and their symbols appear in the corners of this highly detailed ivory. The fact that these figures are closely connected with the image of the crucified Christ suggests that if there were indeed an earlier ivory on the *Codex Aureus of St. Emmeram*, it may not necessarily have been a depiction of Christ in Majesty as Steenbock proposed.

Scholars have suggested that the ivory was created in a workshop in Cologne which had been influenced by the ivory sculpture of Liege for two reasons. The first is based on stylistic grounds; the ivory seems to be a close copy of a work presumably created in Liege and now in the Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels (fig. 24).[140] It is believed that the ivory now on the *Theophanu Gospels* is a copy of that in Brussels because of a seeming misunderstanding on the part of the artist working in Cologne. On the Brussels plaque the Gates of Heaven open up to receive the ascending Christ.[141] The copyist changed these gates to books, either by mistake or design. The fact that Christ on the *Theophanu Gospels* wears a *perizoma* and not the full-length *colobium* as seen on the Brussels ivory also points to Cologne as the likely provenance, since the shorter loin-cloth was popular in representations of the Crucifixion in that area.[142] The second reason is that Abbess Theophanu's brother was the Archbishop of Cologne and could have facilitated the ivories' creation and transportation.[143]

The gold frame, on the other hand, has been attributed to a workshop in the Essen-Werden region. Scholars base this attribution partly on the clearly Essen-

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[140] This connection was noted by Adolf Goldschmidt, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, vol. 2, cat. no. 55.
[141] Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, 153.
[142] Ibid., 152-153.
[143] Anna Pawlik, "Buchdeckel des Theophanu-Evangeliars," in Falk, ed., *Gold vor Schwarz*, 82.

related subject matter of the repoussé decoration. Christ, encircled by a mandorla and flanked by angels, appears at the top strip of the frame. On the long sides, Peter (left) and Paul (right) stand above SS. Cosmas and Damian, the patron saints of the Essen abbey church. Below is the aforementioned dedication scene. The clearly labeled Abbess Theophanu presents the richly bound Gospel book to the enthroned Virgin and Child. Theophanu is introduced by SS. Pinnosa and Walburga, whose relics were objects of great devotion in Essen.[144] Stylistically the repoussé figures are linked to works created for the nearby Werden Benedictine monastery: a bronze crucifix (fig. 25) and the stone reliefs of St. Ludger's tomb (fig. 26).[145]

The back cover (fig. 27) as on many Ottonian examples, including the *"Precious" Gospels* of Bishop Bernward of Hildesheim (Hildesheim, Domschatz; fig. 13), the *Pericope Book of Henry II* (fig. 28), and the *Regensburg Sacramentary of Henry II* (Munich, BSB clm 4456; fig. 29), is ornamented with engraved and gilded copper. In this instance, the decoration consists of the Lamb of God within a quatrefoil medallion at the center, which is surrounded by four tondi with engraved representations of the evangelists' symbols. These medallions were originally placed over purple silk. The same quincunx composition was also used on the back cover of Henry II's Pericope Book, although in that instance the *Agnus Dei* is surrounded by allegorical depictions of the Cardinal Virtues. Similar arrangements are found in manuscript illumination from the sixth-century onward. Whether this motif originated in cover decoration or manuscript painting requires further research. What is clear is that these panels were definitely intended to function as a flat surface on which the manuscript could be safely laid. It is unlikely that the front and back covers of such

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[144] Fremer, *Äbtissin Theophanu*, 98-100.
[145] Jutta Frings, ed., *Krone und Schleier,* 274, and Dietrich Kötzsche in *Rhein und Maas: Kunst und Kultur: 800-1400: kleiner Führer durch die Rhein-Maas Ausstellung in der Kölner Kunsthalle*, ed. Anton Legner (Cologne: Schnütgen-Museum, 1972), 191.

manuscripts were meant to be seen side-by-side when the manuscript was open, in a manner similar to Late Antique diptychs. The engraved flat surfaces instead suggest that these covers might have originally been the front and back panels of a book box, like that of the *Uta Codex*.

The covers of the *Theophanu Gospels* are valuable as a case study because they stand at a watershed moment. Created in the middle of the eleventh century they crystallized the Early Medieval experiments in clothing the Word of God. This rather set form, firmly established in the Ottonian period, will be continued throughout the Romanesque period across much of Europe. An examination of such Ottonian treasury bindings thus offers an important vantage point from which to view liturgical manuscript covers across the whole of the Middle Ages.

**Conclusion**

Building upon the above discussion of each of the six case studies, the many threads about the covers' appearance and the scholarly approaches to these treasury bindings can now be woven together. Throughout this examination, the preference among researchers toward investigations of the style, date, and provenance of the treasury bindings should be readily apparent. Although this scholarship has afforded us an important foundation from which to build, it is now advantageous to ask different questions about production. Moreover, by examining the choices the Ottonian creators made in copying and altering older models, we can begin to understand which aspects these viewers considered important.

Additionally, it has been established that the covers were given as gifts to specific ecclesiastical sites and likely were meant to communicate on behalf of their patrons. The question is now what messages might the covers have been sending and

whom did they address. Before ascribing detailed, political meanings to the ornamentation of the treasury bindings, it is first necessary to understand the context in which they were used and the nature of the audiences who would interpret them. In examining the viewing conditions in which the covers were seen, it is also possible to begin to explain the apparent disconnect between the illuminations and the covers in terms of their iconography and relationships to the written word.

Finally, the six different covers are united in their use of precious metals, jewels, ivories, pearls, and enamels. The artists and patrons combined numerous raw and readymade materials in the creation of visually dynamic displays. It can safely be assumed that this material splendor spoke to the rarified nature of the contained text as well as to the power of the patrons and owning institutions. To communicate a wealth of meanings, these materials needed to both capture the attention of audiences and build upon the associations viewers would make, based on personal experience and cultural norms. In what follows, this co-creation of meanings by the artists, patrons, objects, and viewers will be examined in detail to better understand how the covers mediated between the Word of God and Ottonian audiences.

**Chapter Two**

**Through the Eyes of the Creators: The Role of Artistic Working Practices and**

**Visual Formulae in the Production of Treasury Bindings**

The cover of the *Codex Aureus of Echternach* (fig. 1)*,* now in Nurnberg, combines a number of components found on the majority of Ottonian treasury bindings: precious materials; an ivory centerpiece; a bilaterally symmetrical, geometric composition; a central representation of Christ; and a frame of secondary figures. Created at the end of the tenth-century, this treasury binding reused visual formulae for covers that were developed over five centuries. For example, several Carolingian precedents for the ornamentation, composition, and iconography of this Ottonian cover exist, such as the treasury binding of the *Codex Aureus of St. Emmeram* (fig. 30) and the front cover of the *Lindau Gospels* (fig. 31). Indeed, many of the shared components of the Ottonian and Carolingian covers appeared on some of the earliest attempts to ornament the relatively new medium of the codex. This formulaic nature of Ottonian liturgical manuscript covers, which likely contributed to the general neglect of treasury bindings in art historical scholarship, surprisingly offers some of the best evidence for early medieval audiences' reception of treasury bindings. In selective copying from older works, the creators of the cover of the *Codex Aureus of Echternach* and other Ottonian bindings made clear which elements that they found most attractive and effective.

When understood as visible records of the choices made by Ottonian artists and patrons, the six covers presented in this study direct the investigation toward questions about the selection of specific materials, iconography, and compositions. To begin to answer these questions it is necessary to examine the larger tradition of

treasury bindings, which not only offered models for, but also shaped the expectations of Ottonian artists and patrons. These earlier experiments in clothing the Word were themselves determined by artists' working processes, which relied heavily on formulae. The creators of the earliest covers drew from the rich visual vocabulary of Late Antiquity and shaped it in new ways that would be adapted and adopted by later creators. It is therefore necessary to reinvestigate the production of these Late Antique covers, which served as inspiration for the Ottonians. For such an approach, it is advantageous to chronologically organize the material around individual aspects shared by the majority of the covers, rather than by the covers' composition (i.e. frame type/Crucifix type) or by treating each separately, as Steenbock did.[146] While her study and catalogue are invaluable, since they carefully bring together and analyze a collection of early medieval covers never before treated monographically, it is nevertheless useful to step away from the modern designations she used. Instead, this chapter focuses on the precious materials, geometric compositions, and other visual formulae that the Ottonian artists and their predecessors developed to attract attention to the manuscripts and postulates the reasons for these choices. Additionally, comparing the covers to contemporary manuscript illumination allows greater understanding of which aspects of production were driven by the unique function of the covers as illustration and ornamentation of the written word and also as containers of sacred text.

**Formulating Viewer Response: The Influence of Five-Part Late Antique Ivory Covers**

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[146] Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, 11-49. Her designations include: five-part diptychs and diptychs (which are further subdivided), the cross type (made up of crux gemmata examples, the crucifixion group, and the Codex Aureus group), and the Image/Frame type.

Early medieval artists' use of formulae in the creation of treasury bindings has not

gone unnoticed by art historians. In fact, a specific formula, the five-part composition,

is one of the most remarked upon features in the rare publications on medieval covers.

There are several Ottonian examples of this compositional formula: *Aachen Golden*

*Cover*, the *Theophano Gospels*, and (despite the further subdivisions) the *Codex*

*Aureus of Echternach*. Each of these covers consist of a central panel surrounded by

four framing fields ornamented with either narrative scenes, in the case of the Aachen

cover, or iconic figures, as seen on the other two bindings. Such Ottonian treasury

bindings and earlier Carolingian covers are understood as the direct descendants of

Late Antique five-part ivory covers, perhaps the best-known early medieval covers

and those most often the subject of art historical analysis.[147]

Four nearly complete examples of the five-part ivory type survive: one in the

Milan Cathedral treasury (fig. 32) and three labeled the Ravenna group, comprised of

the St. Lupicin covers housed in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (fig. 33), the

Etchmiadzin covers in Armenia (fig. 34), and fragments of a cover originally stored in

the cloister of St. Michael in Murano, but now held in museums throughout Europe

(fig. 35).[148] The traditional interpretation of these Late Antique covers, repeated in

most scholarship, contends that artists appropriated the five-part formula from the

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[147] I agree with John Lowden's contention that these were indeed book covers. "Word Made Visible," 35. The function of these ivory plaques as book covers however has not always been accepted. For example, see David H. Wright, review of *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters* 3rd ed., by Wolfgang Fritz Volbach, *Art Bulletin* 63, no. 4 (Dec 1981): 675-677. The catalog for the Metropolitan Museum of Art's *Age of Spirituality* exhibit the five-part panels are treated as plaques and mentions only that they were reused as book covers. Kurt Weitzmann, ed., *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to the Seventh Century* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Princeton University Press, 1979), 530-531.

[148] The label Ravenna-group is due to the covers' stylistic and iconographic connections to the famous Cathedra of the sixth century bishop of Ravenna, Maximian, now in the Museo Nazionale, Ravenna. Although Josef Strzygowski first attributed this group of objects to Ravenna, he later argued that the workshop was in Syria. *Etschmiadzin-Evangeliar: Beiträge zur Geschichte der armenischen, ravennatischen und syro-ägyptischen Kunst,* Byzantinische Denkmäler 1 (Vienna: Mechitaristen-Congregation, 1891) and Idem, *Hellenistische und koptische Kunst in Alexandria nach Funden aus Aegypten und den Elfenbeinreliefs der Domkanzel zu Aachen vorgeführt*, Bulletin de la Société archéologique d' Alexandrie 5 (1902). Others have assigned the covers to workshops in either Alexandria, Constantinople, or, more generally, the eastern part of the empire.

hypothesized, imperial variety of consular diptychs, known in German scholarship as

*Kaiserdiptychen*.[149] The existence of these five-part imperial diptychs is primarily

inferred through one plaque made-up of five pieces of ivory, the so-called *Barberini*

*Diptych* now in the Louvre (fig. 36). *Kaiserdiptychen* are believed to be elaborations

upon the consular variety, which were hinged pairs of oblong panels commissioned

by late Roman officials in commemoration of their appointment and of which we

have numerous surviving examples.[150] Christian covers from Late Antiquity as well as

those from the Carolingian and Ottonian periods have been judged by how closely

they correspond to and adapt models provided by these imperial five-part panels. The

iconographic interpretations of these covers generally tend to stress imperial

borrowing over other aspects of the covers.

This oft-cited, straightforward development from the *Kaiserdiptychen* to early

medieval liturgical manuscript covers is an over simplification. Such analysis also

does not take into account more recent scholarship on ivory carving and the

production of art in Late Antiquity. Using this literature we can begin to reevaluate

the role that diptychs of the both consular and "imperial" variety played in the

evolution of Christian book covers. In the following, I therefore present the traditional

interpretation of the development of five-part ivory biblical manuscript covers. By

focusing on the surviving objects, instead of hypothesized lost models, I suggest a

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[149] Notable examples include: Richard Delbrueck, "Das fünfteilige Diptychon in Mailand," *Bonner Jahrbücher des Rheinischen Landesmuseums in Bonn und des Rheinischen Amtes für Bodendenkmalpflege im Landschaftsverband Rheinland und des Vereins von Altertumsfreunden im Rheinlande* 151 (1951): 96-107; André Grabar, *L'empereur dans l'art byzantin: recherches sur l'art officiel de l'Empire d'Orient* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1936), 196-200; Idem, *Christian Iconography: A Study of Its Origins* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), 80; Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, 11-21; Bruno Reudenbach, "Die Lorscher Elfenbeintafeln: zur Aufnahme spätantiker Herrscherikonographie in karolingischer Kunst," in *Iconologia sacra: Mythos, Bildkunst und Dichtung in der Religions- und Sozialgeschichte Altereuropas*, ed. Hagen Keller und Nikolaus Staubach (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1994), 403-416; and Herbert Kessler, "The Book as Icon," in *In the Beginning: Bibles before the Year 1000*, ed. Michelle Brown (Washington D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 2006), 79.

[150] Cecilia Olovsdotter, *The Consular Image: An Iconological Study of the Consular Diptychs*, BAR International Series 1376 (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 2005), 1-2. See also, Richard Delbrueck, *Die Consulardiptychen und verwandte Denkmäler* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1929).

new model for understanding how the Christian covers were produced. I contend that while the artists of the ivory covers drew on existing formulae, these did not only come from the realm of imperial art. This reexamination allows us to better understand the visual environment from which the earliest five-part covers emerged and the choices the artists made in adapting older models to new objects. Additionally, since the subjects of the Late Antique ivory covers are used to explain the iconography of Ottonian examples, it is worthwhile to reexamine these hypothesized Late Antique models and the factors of production that influenced their appearance.

The prevailing interpretation of the origins and iconography of Late Antique five-part ivory covers can be best summarized through an examination of the sixth century Etchmiadzin covers (fig. 34), now covering a tenth-century gospel book. The central piece of each five-part assemblage displays an enthroned figure with attendants—on what was likely the front, the Virgin and Child, and on the back cover, the adult Christ.[151] The upper panels of both the front and back covers share the same subject matter: two angels presenting an equal-armed cross encircled by a wreath. Turning to the Virgin plaque, the two lateral panels are each divided in half so that they present four distinct scenes—the Annunciation and Joseph and Mary with the Water of Conviction on the left panel and the Nativity and the Journey into Bethlehem on the right. The Adoration of the Magi with the Virgin seated in a wicker chair on the left is found on the lower panel. Christ's miracles are the subject of the scenes on the side panels as well as the lower piece of the Christ plaque. Although the identification of some of the scenes are disputed, they most likely include: the curing the dropsiac (upper left), the healing the blind man at Siloe (lower left), the healing of

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[151] John Lowden convincingly argues that five-part ivory representing the Virgin and Child was in fact the front cover, and not the Christ panel as has long been asserted. Lowden, "Word Made Visible," 39.

the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda (upper right), the healing of two possessed men (lower right).[152] Finally, Christ's entry into Jerusalem unfolds across the entire width of the lower panel.

The iconographic and compositional similarities between the Etchmiadzin covers and the famous Barberini ivory are readily observable, thus explaining why scholars have likened the early ivory covers to so-called imperial diptychs. Both utilize the five-part layout in a seemingly similar fashion. Above the central figure, who is ennobled in the middle panel (enthroned or, in the case of the Barberini example, on horseback), is the heavenly realm. Below are scenes of paying homage. On the Barberini ivory, barbarians from different parts of the Byzantine Empire, clearly marked by their clothes and headgear, pay tribute to the emperor. On the Virgin panel of the Etchmiadzin covers, the Magi, who wear the same long pants and Phrygian caps as can be seen on some of the barbarians on the Barberini ivory, offer their gifts to the Christ child. On the back cover of the Etchmiadzin gospel book is another scene of homage; the figures kneel down to honor Christ as he enters the city of Jerusalem. The base for the Column of Arcadius, erected c. 402 (fig. 37), an earlier imperial commission, features a similar organizational structure, though it uses victories, or angels carrying wreaths above the image of the emperor under whom figures pay homage. The marble base for an Egyptian obelisk erected in Constantinople by Theodosius I in the year 390 (fig. 38) also exhibits comparable organization, although it lacks the upper, 'heavenly' register.[153]

As mentioned above, scholars have therefore assumed that the Late Antique book covers adopted the composition and iconography of the five-part diptychs,

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[152] For the identification of the scenes with an argument for the identification of the healing of the blind man, see Pieter Singelenberg, "The Iconography of the Etschmiadzin Diptych and the Healing of the Blind Man at Siloe," *Art Bulletin* 40, no. 2 (June 1958): 105-112.

[153] Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, 11; Richard Delbrueck, *Consulardiptychen*, cat. no. 48 and 62; Grabar, *Empereur dans l'art*, 74-84.

which were themselves based on earlier imperial imagery, but which transformed the image of the emperor into that of Christ. Likewise, the image of the enthroned Virgin is thought to have developed from ivory depictions of the empress, of which we have two ivory plaques (figs. 39-40). In the traditional interpretation, these ivories with the likeness of the empress would have been the centerpieces of a five-part composition and acted as pendants to those of the emperor.[154] Early Christian covers, including hypothesized now-lost Christian examples that more closely matched five-part imperial diptychs, then preserved this imperial iconography and organization until the time of "Carolingian Renaissance" in the early ninth century, when it was copied and reinterpreted on covers such as the *Lorsch Gospels* (fig. 41) or an example now in Frankfurt (fig. 42).[155]

This hypothesized development from imperial object to Christian book cover, however, relies to a large degree on speculation and assumed lost prototypes. Additionally, it glosses over some important non-imperial features of these early covers, which can shed light upon aspects of their production and reception.[156] It must first be noted that not a single complete imperial diptych survives. What do survive are 12 pieces of ivory, which likely made up 8 five-part panels.[157] None of these panels appear to have been part of the same large-scale diptych. Therefore, art historians have been forced to speculate about their original appearance. As

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[154] See for example, Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, 16.

[155] Goldschmidt, *Elfenbeinskupturen*, vol. 1, cat. nos. 13 and 14 (Lorsch) and 75 (Frankfurt). Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, 82. For a more nuanced few of Carolingian use of Late Antique imagery, see Ulrike Koenen, "Die Schrift im Bild: Zur Ausstattung des Lorscher Evangeliars," in *Le Maraviglie dell' Arte: Kunsthistorische Miszellen für Anne Liese Gielen-Leyendecker zum 90. Geburtstag*, ed. Anne-Marie Bonnet and Roland Kanz (Cologne: Böhlau, 2004), 9-25.

[156] Hermann Schnitzler does point to the impact of Eastern apsidal mosaics on the iconography of the enthroned Virgin and a model created in the same artistic sphere as the Throne of Maximian in Ravenna. "Die Komposition der Lorscher Elfenbeintafeln," *Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst* (1950): 30. Nevertheless, art historical scholarship traditionally sees Early Medieval apse iconography as developed from that of imperial art. For example, see Christa Belting-Ihm, *Die Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei vom vierten Jahrhundert bis sur Mitte des achten Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden, Steiner: 1960).

[157] Anthony Cutler, "Diptych," in *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (New York : Oxford University Press, 1991), 1: 637.

mentioned above, some scholars, who traced the development of diptychs in reverse,

beginning with the Christian covers, have proposed that one side would depict the

emperor and the other the empress. With regard to the Barberini ivory, scholars have

also suggested that the pendant piece instead showed the emperor in civilian garb.[158]

Still, all of these reconstructions are hypothetical, at best. As Anthony Cutler has

pointed out, there is no physical or technical evidence that supports the belief that

five-part ivories, such as the Barberini panel or the pieces representing empresses in

Florence and Vienna, were ever diptychs.[159]

Furthermore, the centerpieces of the Barberini panel and, to a lesser extent, the

empress panels, are extremely thick. If one supposes that the corresponding wing was

equally substantial, the full diptych would have been much too unwieldy for an object

that was intended to be opened and closed.[160] Even if one assumes that the other piece

was thinner and carved in low relief, this surviving panel is so heavily undercut it

would likely have been too fragile to be used as a book cover for a secular text, as

Émile Molinier and others have proposed.[161]

Beyond such impracticalities, relying on the rather circular reasoning

presented in earlier scholarship for the existence of imperial diptychs is unhelpful.

Scholars utilized early Christian covers to reconstruct the original appearance of these

lost imperial examples, even as they attempted to demonstrate that the imperial

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[158] Rainer Kahsnitz, "Koimesis - dormitio - assumptio : Byzantinisches und Antikes in den Miniaturen der Liuthargruppe," in *Florilegium in honorem Carl Nordenfalk octogenarii contextum*, ed. Per Bjurström, Nils Göran Hökby, and Florentine Mütherich (Stockholm: Nationalmuseum, 1987), 104.

[159] Anthony Cutler "Barberiniana," n. 54, 338.

[160] As Cutler points out in a footnote, "The diptych theory, were it sustainable, has implications for the supposition that the leaves were intended as book covers…To be symmetrical—a quality desirable in either situation—the hypothetical counterpart to the extant leaf would have had to be approximately as thick as the one that survives. Thus, whichever leaf was applied to the read cover of a book, apart from the invitation to breakage that so deeply undercut an ivory offered, it would have been highly impractical in this situation. Together, the two covers, each more than 36 mm deep, would be thicker than many surviving late antique and early medieval codices." Cutler, "Barberiniana," 338.

[161] Émile Molinier, *Histoire générale des arts appliqués à l'industrie du Ve siècle à la fin du XVIIe*, 1. Ivoiries (Paris: E. Lévy et cie, 1896), 10-11.

diptychs served as models for the later covers.[162] We simply do not know how five-part ivories with imperial subject matter originally appeared, what purpose they served, or for what audience they were intended.

Furthermore, neither the surviving fragments of five-part ivories with imperial subject matter, nor the four ivory book covers can be dated with any precision. It is therefore almost impossible to know with any certainty that imperial diptychs, if indeed they ever existed, served as prototypes for the Christian covers. Although most art historians have identified the figure in the Barberini ivory as the emperor Justinian (r. 527-565) and the empress in the ivories in Florence and Vienna as Ariadne (d. 515), these identifications, and thereby the dating of the pieces, are by no means certain.[163] Most identifications rest on the assumption that a depiction of an emperor or empress is a portrait in the modern sense of the word, a naturalistic likeness of the individual features of the person portrayed. As Liz James, Anne McClanan, and others have demonstrated with regard to Late Antique representations of empresses, this was not the case. In these depictions, it was the position—whether empress, emperor, or consul—that was represented, not the individual.[164] Therefore, we can only approximate the date for these ivories in the sixth century. The dating of Christian book covers is equally problematic. Based on stylistic comparison to other ivories (often the more reliably dated consular diptychs), a date in the early to mid-

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[162] For this interpretation and earlier scholarship, see Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, 11-21.

[163] Delbrueck identified her as Ariadne because of comparisons of her features to those of clipaea "portraits" we know to be Ariadne on consular diptychs to *Consulardiptyche*, 205-208. The author of the catalog entry in the Metropolitan's Late Antique exhibit for this object, James D. Breckenridge, suggests that while it may be Ariadne, it may have been created posthumously, (Weitzmann, ed., *Age of Spirtuality*, 31-32). Grabar suggested that these represent Constantina, the wife of Maurice (*Empereur dans l'art,* 13). More recently, the Empress Sophia (d. 601) has been proposed for both ivories. Anne McClanan, *Representations of Early Byzantine Empresses: Image and Empire* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 173-175. However, there is doubt that both ivories represent the same person, Liz James, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium* (London: Leicester University Press, 2001), 137-139.

[164] James, *Empresses and Power;* McClanan, *Representations of Early Byzantine Empresses*; Archer St. Clair, "Imperial Virtue: Questions of Form and Function in the Case of Four Late Antique Statuettes," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 50 (1996): 147-162.

fifth century has been proposed for the *Milan Diptych*, while the three covers in Paris,

Ravenna, and Etchmiadzin are considered to be products of the mid-sixth century.[165]

Even if we take for granted the rough dates traditionally assigned to these works, the

Milan book covers would in fact predate the earliest surviving five-part "imperial

diptychs." In order to preserve the traditional, linear narrative in which Christian art

adopts imperial models, scholars have assumed that the Milan example is based on

now lost prototypes. However, the influence for the five-part format could easily be

reversed. Since creators wished to face the entire codex cover in ivory, this format

could have been developed because of the specific shape of a codex, a relatively

recent invention at the time. It then could have been adopted for other uses. As with

the earlier theories about the direction of influence, there is unfortunately no way of

knowing which was the model and which was the copy.

Interestingly, however, if we look more closely at the earliest ivory cover, the

*Milan Diptych*, the arrangement of scenes does not follow the organizational

principles seen in other objects, such as the aforementioned obelisk and column bases

and the Barberini ivory. Imperial iconography in general is much less pronounced on

the Milan covers. Instead of Christ and the Virgin and child, the two central panels

present a *crux gemmata* and the Lamb of God. In the place of angels bearing a

triumphal cross enclosed in a wreath are narrative scenes: the Adoration of the Magi

and the Nativity. In the lower panel, where, according to the organizing principles

discussed above, images of homage or tribute, such as the Adoration of the Magi,

should be placed, the carver represented the Miracle of Cana and the Massacre of the

Innocents. These departures from the "rules" could be explained away by arguing that

as an earlier work the Milan covers predate the wholesale adoption of imperial

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[165] Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, 70-72.

iconography for depictions of Christ, if it were not for the sixth-century St. Lupicin (fig. 33) and Murano (fig. 35) covers. These too show a disregard for the imperial structuring of the world. Although both have the victories/angels above, only one of the panels of the Paris cover has a scene that can be interpreted as paying homage: Christ's Entry into Jerusalem. The two scenes on the other panel, Christ and the Samaritan Woman and the Raising of Lazarus, in no way speak to Christ's role as King of Heaven. The Murano diptych deviates further from the presumed model. First, the artist has added a second, lower register to both middle pieces. On the front cover, the Virgin and Child are joined by the Three Magi. The Nativity is represented underneath the enthroned figures. The lower, horizontal piece then shows the Annunciation, Test of the Water, and the Flight into Egypt. On the middle piece of the back cover the Old Testament story of the Three Youths in the Fiery Furnace appears below the enthroned Christ. The bottom panel presents another Old Testament story, that of Jonah. The selection and placement of the scenes in these three covers suggest that the creators either misunderstood the point of the imperial models or, what is perhaps more likely, were uninterested in fashioning Christ and the Virgin Mary into emperor and empress.

The compositional similarities between the imperial five-part panels and the Christian ivory covers are not as close as they appear at first glance. In essence, the Barberini panel depicts a single vignette: the victorious emperor.[166] He is crowned above, honored below, and attended on either side. As Wolfgang Kemp noted, on Christian book covers not only has the number of picture fields increased, since the lateral panels are usually divided to create multiple individually framed scenes, but the "mode" of representation has changed. Unlike the emblematic, unified image of

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[166] As noted by Hermann Schnitzler. "Komposition der Lorscher Elfenbeintafeln," 34.

the Barberini ivory, on the Christian covers the individual narrative scenes encircle the icon-like image.[167] This layout prompts a different type of viewing. The viewer is compelled to make connections and comparisons between these dissimilar elements.[168] It is clear that although both the Barberini panel and the Christian covers are each formed from five joined pieces of ivory, how the creators utilized the space in each example is very different.

A brief examination of Carolingian covers which adapt these Late Antique models provides clues for how the earlier covers were received. The ivory covers of the *Lorsch Gospels*, presumably created in the years following Charlemagne's coronation in Rome in the year 800, resemble both the Barberini ivory and the covers from the fifth and sixth centuries. The classicizing style and subject matter of the Lorsch covers has long drawn notice; Charles R. Morey believed that the upper panels on both covers and the lower plaque on the Virgin panel are repurposed from a Late Antique cover. [169] Certainly, the Lorsch cover reintroduces the full-length standing figures on either side of the central panel, like that of the Barberini ivory. A standing figure of Christ treading on the beasts replaces an image of Christ Enthroned, or the emperor on horseback. Bruno Reudenbach attributes this deviation from the supposed norm to the creators' desire to represent a triumphal Christ in the mold of a Roman leader treading on fallen opponents.[170] Certainly the classicizing columns, the beardless Christ, the more naturalistic proportions of the figures, and the treatment of the drapery all point to a Late Antique model, possibly an imperial work similar to the Barberini ivory rather than other Christian covers. Indeed the *Lorsch Gospels* cover derived from a specific court context, which was indeed interested in reviving Late

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[167] Wolfgang Kemp, *Christliche Kunst: ihre Anfänge, ihre Strukturen* (Munich: Schirmer-Mosel, 1994), 204.
[168] For example, see Elsner, *Art and the Roman Viewer,* 282-287;
[169] Charles R. Morey, "The Covers of the Lorsch Gospel," *Speculum* 4, no. 4 (1929): 411-429.
[170] Reudenbach, "Lorscher Elfenbeintafeln," 409-410.

Antique imperial forms, similar to a now-lost base for a crucifix (c. 820) that is

modeled upon a triumphal arch and commissioned by Charlemagne's biographer.[171]

Nevertheless, the *Lorsch Gospels* represent a *unicum* and should not be taken as

representative of all Carolingian covers. Nor should it be used to demonstrate an

easily traced development from imperial ivories to Christian covers. For example, the

ivories in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (fig. 43) and the Frankfurt Stadtbibliothek

(fig. 42) which mimic the five-part format have very little to do with the revival of the

Golden Age of the Roman Empire. Instead, the Oxford panel, which based its

secondary scenes on an early fifth-century five-part cover, draws on a primarily

Christian tradition.[172] The Frankfurt cover also replaces the iconic central figure with

a narrative panel depicting the Temptation of Christ, thus further disregarding

imperial models. This suggests that the triumphant imperial theme was not seen as the

most significant feature to copy from earlier works.

Additionally, these two ivory covers, one with Christ Treading on the Beasts

(Oxford) and the other with the Temptation of Christ (Frankfurt) as their central

images, point to another important aspect of Carolingian copying. Although made to

look like a five-part panel, the Oxford example is in fact a single piece of ivory. The

Frankfurt example is also not a true five-part composition, but is cobbled together

from irregular pieces of ivory the creators had at hand. This suggests that the desire of

the artists and/or patrons to recreate the appearance of covers that were

"conventional" and perhaps esteemed because of their antiquity was strong enough to

overcome limited ivory resources. Apart from these three examples, most Carolingian

covers do not use ivory to recreate the five-part layout in this way. It was likely that

ivory's luxurious nature, connection to older traditions, and ability to be worked with

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[171] For the base of Einhard's cross, see Hans Belting, "Der Einhardsbogen," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 36, no. 2/3 (1973): 93-121.

[172] Goldschmidt, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, cat. no. 5.

great detail were the reasons behind its use in this and in the Ottonian period. It is also probable that ivory plaques, often with a single scene, surrounded by frames of precious metals and gems came into use in the Carolingian period. This, too, was presumably caused by available supplies and viewer expectations. Signs of the limited availability of ivory in the ninth century include Late Antique plaques that were sanded down, recarved, or whose reverses were used.[173] Ivory book covers and diptychs used in the liturgy, which partially arose from traditions of applying ivory veneers to all classes of objects, preconditioned the conceptual frameworks of later viewers. The expectations the earlier objects created were brought to bear when later creators envisioned the appropriate appearance for covers.

Returning to the Late Antique examples, although it is doubtful that Christian covers stemmed directly from the *Kaiserdiptychon*, it would be inaccurate to assert that individual elements were not drawn from the rich vocabulary of Late Antique public art, which was largely imperial. Nevertheless, to interpret each iconographical aspect of the covers as imperial with a thin veneer of Christianity, as has been previously attempted, is equally erroneous. For instance, the very organization of the covers with a central iconic image surrounded by narrative scenes is much closer to objects and monuments with mythological or cultic subject matter than any surviving work with imperial iconography. Diverse examples include: the so-called *Tabulae Illiacae*, small reliefs with illustrations of scenes from epic poems about the Trojan War; a relief with Hercules and Omphale at the center around which are depicted the Labors now in the Museo Nazionale, Naples; and a number of large reliefs from Mithraea, places of worship for followers of the Mystery Cult of Mithraism, found

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[173] Archer St. Clair and Elizabeth Parker McLachlan eds., *The Carver's Art: Medieval Sculpture in Ivory, Bone, and Horn* (New Brunswick, NJ: The Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 1989), 2-3.

throughout Europe.[174] Although one could trace a linear development that incorporates the varied manifestations of this layout over time, a single example does not necessarily lead to another and could certainly be concluded independently. What is significant is that the format of the early ivory covers that includes an iconic figure at the center and narratives as a framing device had already been established outside of the realm of imperial art.

The claim that the enthroned figures at the center of the covers are based solely on representations of the emperor or empress is equally untenable. As this is typically used to explain the meanings ascribed to Ottonian covers with Christ Enthroned, it is important to examine this assertion. The image of the seated Virgin holding the Christ child likely developed from, or at least had recourse to, icons and other depictions of Isis holding the infant Horus, which were popular not just in Egypt but throughout the empire.[175] Indeed, as Thomas Mathews and Norman Muller write, "by Late Antiquity Isis had become the most widely venerated divinity of the Graeco-Roman world as she was gradually identified with the most popular and most powerful goddesses of the whole Mediterranean, from the Magna Mater to Aphrodite (Venus) to Tyche (Fortuna)."[176] No attempt is made, moreover, to mimic the appearance or regalia of the empress on the ivory covers. The Virgin wears a relatively simple mantel in these depictions, most likely carved in Constantinople. Although appearing as early as the fifth century in the West, the *Maria Regina*, queen

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[174] Kemp, *Christliche Kunst*, 64-68.
[175] Thomas Mathews and Norman Muller, "Isis and Mary in Early Icons," in *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium*, ed. Maria Vassilaki (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 3-11.
[176] Ibid., 4.

of heaven, does not arrive in the east until much later.[177] Christ and the Virgin in full

imperial regalia appear in the East for the first time in the fourteenth-century.

Not only do Christ and the Virgin lack obvious imperial garb, but also the

traditional seat of the Roman emperor, the *sella curulis*. Essentially a folding chair

with S-curved legs, the *sella curulis* originated in Etruscan times, was used

throughout the Roman Imperial period, and became more ornamental by the Late

Antique era.[178] Not only represented in depictions of the emperor, in the fifth and

sixth centuries this seat can be seen in the ivory depictions of consuls, even those who

were not emperors, in order to demonstrate that they were the emperor's

representative. Although Thomas Mathews incorrectly asserts that the *sella curulis* is

never used for Christ (it appears on the famous Junius Bassus sarcophagus and on the

ivory diptych of Christ and the Virgin now in Berlin), it is certainly rarely used.  As

he points out, Christ's throne, represented on everything from monumental mosaics to

tiny ivories, is usually much closer to thrones of the gods or personifications of cities

in numismatic imagery. This is not to say, as Mathews polemically does, that this type

of throne lacks imperial connotations.[179] Creators responsible for fashioning the

image of the emperor, who often bestowed divine attributes upon the earthly ruler,

also used thrones in imperial representations to ennoble the subject.[180] The divide

between divine and imperial, even after the adoption of Christianity, continued to be

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[177] Judith Herrin, "The Imperial Feminine in Byzantium," *Past and Present* 169 (Nov. 2000): 15-17 and Henry Maguire, 'The Heavenly Court', in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, ed. Henry Maguire (Washington, D.C., Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1997), 257-258.

[178] Thomas Mathews, *The Clash of Gods: A Reinterpretation of Early Christian Art*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 103-109.

[179] "The absence of imperial references does not mean that the Saint Pudenziana mosaic is without political implications, but only that the politics are not those of the emperor but rather of the bishop," Mathews, *Clash of Gods*, 113.

[180] Another example of a symbol traditionally thought to belong to the emperor, but can be seen being held be different figures signifying that they are his representative is the *mappa*. See, Archer St. Clair, "Imperial Virtue," 153-255. Niels Hannestad, "The Ruler Image of the Fourth Century: Innovation or Tradition," in *Imperial Art as Christian art, Christian Art as Imperial Art: Expression and Meaning in Art and Architecture from Constantine to Justinian* (Roma: Bardi Editore, 2001), 93-107.

blurred, further negating a causal relationship. This is evident in the fact that, although supposedly banned, the cult of the emperor and his family continued well into the Late Antique period.[181]

The use of thrones suggests that the creators of the ivory covers were drawing upon the existing visual vocabulary of the period to communicate ideas efficiently and effectively. For example, a figure seated upon a throne connoted someone of importance, imbued with divine authority. As more recent art historical studies of Late Antiquity have demonstrated, demarcations between imperial and religious, pagan and Christian art were not as defined as modern art historians have traditionally believed.[182] Late Antique viewers and craftsmen residing in the main metropolitan centers such as Rome, Constantinople, and Antioch had a different experience than the art historians of the twentieth century, seated before their collection of organized slides and image databases.[183] Certainly images of the empress and emperor at times functioned as powerful symbols. They also acted as representatives for the ruler who was depicted, as is recorded in several written sources, which art historians often cite to demonstrate the power of images in Late Antiquity.[184] Rarely mentioned, though, is that imperial images were so prevalent, they became commonplace. Representations of the imperial family found their way onto weights and even cake molds. As Richard Gordon writes,

> To think of participants at festivals as far from Rome as Britain or Pannonia nibbling at the head of the sacrificant emperor on their way home suggests a quite extraordinary degree of banalization of what at the time of Augustus had been a solemn, original, and difficult motif.[185]

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[181] St. Clair, "Imperial Virtue," 156-160.
[182] Elsner, *Art and the Roman Viewer*, 251-287; and *Imperial Art as Christian art*.
[183] Kathleen Wright, "The Place of the Work of Art in the Age of Technology," *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 22 (1984): 565-582.
[184] Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, 102-107.
[185] Richard Gordon, "The Veil of Power: Emperors, Sacrificers and Benefactors," in *Pagan Priests: Religion and Power in the Ancient World*, ed. Mary Beard and John North (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 218-219.

Although the power of such images at times could be "switched-on," to use McClanan's apt phrasing, perhaps their greatest impact, at least for Christian art, arose from their ubiquitous and "banal" presence in the visual culture of the period. After all, why create a new sign when an effective one is already at hand?

The Late Antique covers did not develop their subject matter *ex novo* and therefore did not require a direct precedent like the supposed *Kaiserdiptychon*. The iconography of these covers was already conventional and popular in other forms of Christian art, which was also a mix of traditions and influences. These emblematic scenes are found on everything from sarcophagi and catacomb paintings to boxes and combs. In fact, an examination of other types of ivory and bone objects reveals that no single subject is unique to the covers. Interestingly, such abbreviated representations of like scenes are less common in illustrated biblical manuscripts. When one considers how manuscript illumination and ivories would have been created this is not surprising. The same craftsmen who carved scenes onto pyxides and combs likely were responsible for fashioning the ivory panels of the covers. Although still a luxury material, ivory does not seem to have been in short supply during this period, as it would come to be in later centuries.[186] Christian patrons could continue the long tradition of having a veneer of ivory applied to a variety of both cult and domestic objects.[187] It is not unreasonable to assume that craftsmen ornamented objects with the 'stock' scenes to which patrons had become accustomed.

Interestingly, this rather standardized practice of creating book covers contrasts notably with the production of Late Antique manuscript painting, which as

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[186] Anthony Cutler, *The Craft of Ivory. Sources, Techniques, and Uses in the Mediterranean World: A.D. 200-1400* (Washington, D.C., Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1985), 25; and St. Clair and McLachlan eds., *The Carver's Art*, 2-3.
[187] Connor, *Color of Ivory*, 36-45.

John Lowden has demonstrated, was experimental rather than formulaic.[188]

Manuscript illumination during the fifth and sixth centuries was still a relatively new

art form, and it is likely that very few illuminated manuscripts were produced at this

time. There was not a general consensus on how a biblical manuscript in codex form

was to be illustrated. Unlike the scrolls which preceded them, the codex offered new,

larger, and more stable surfaces on which to work. There was thus a great range of

possibilities for their decoration: author portraits (St. Augustine's Gospels); almost-

literal illustrations closely tied to the text (Cotton Genesis, Vienna Genesis, the

Sinope Gospels, and Ashburnham Pentateuch); a narrative scene or scenes used to

preface a text (Quedlinburg Itala, Rabbula Gospels, Syriac Bible); and even extra-

textual scenes or figures perhaps used to comment upon the text (Vienna Genesis,

Ashburnham Pentateuch, Rabbula Gospels, Ejmiastsin Gospels, or often in Canon

Tables).[189] This should not be surprising. While manuscript illumination challenged

painters with an entirely new field: the codex page, ivory carvers and metal workers

were faced with a familiar flat rectangular surface.[190] They could therefore more

easily draw upon the compositions and figures which they were accustomed to

producing.

To better appreciate the implications of this type of formulaic production for

our understanding of production and reception of early medieval liturgical book

covers, it is useful to look at a parallel process of creation, that of oral poetry, as

described by proponents of Oral Formulaic Theory. The theory of Oral Formulaic

composition, developed originally by Milman Parry and Albert Lord, explains how

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[188] John Lowden, "Beginnings of Biblical Illustration," 50-56.
[189] Ibid.
[190] For the transition from roll to codex, see Robert H. Colins and T. C. Skeat, *The Birth of the Codex* (London: Published for The British Academy by The Oxford University Press, 1983); and Kurt Weitzmann, *Illustrations in Roll and Codex: A Study of the Origin and Method of Text Illustration* (Princeton, Princeton University press, 1947).

oral poets express key ideas through set formulae that neatly fit the meter and facilitate improvisation.[191] Although originally used to understand Homeric epics, this theory has since been employed to comprehend how oral poets from different times and places created their works.[192] Supporters of this theory have argued that the shrewd use of formulae is far from mindless copying; rather, the employment of these formulae is carried out creatively and thoughtfully to achieve the poet's ends.[193] As Lord wrote, "in making his lines the singer is not bound by the formula. The formulaic technique was developed to serve him as a craftsman, not to enslave him."[194] In a similar fashion, Late Antique artists need not have felt compelled to conform to the imperial formula and therefore could combine conventional scenes in new ways. The already-developed emblematic scenes fit neatly onto the small pieces of ivory that had to be combined for practical reasons (the size and shape of elephant tusks) as well as economic reasons to create a veneer for the exterior of a codex.

Long before the rise of scholarship devoted primarily to reader/viewer response, Parry in his 1923 master's thesis deftly used the example of the working methods of classical Greek sculptors not only to counter the idea that the use of formulae in the creative process was a meaningless, mechanistic activity, but also to suggest formulae's impact on reception.[195] As Parry claimed, the sculptor, who was naturally dependent on how his subject was depicted in earlier art, worked in fixed

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[191] Milman Parry, *L'Epithète traditionnelle dans Homère: essai sur un problème de style homérique* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1928), 13.

[192] For a sense on the range of studies inspired by the work of Parry and Lord, see John Miles Foley, *Oral-Formulaic Theory: A Folklore Casebook* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1990), as well as the journal *Oral Tradition*.

[193] Lord defended the validity of the theory and attempted to clarify misconceptions in "Perspectives on Recent Work on Oral Literature," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 10, no. 3 (1974): 187-210. For the ten most common misinterpretations of Parry and Lord's work on formulae, see Gregory Nagy, *Homeric Questions* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 19-27.

[194] Albert Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature, 24 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), 54.

[195] Milman Parry, "A Comparative Study of Diction as One of the Elements of Style in Early Greek Epic Poetry," M.A. thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1923. Parry's thesis is cited and discussed in Foley, *The Theory of Oral Composition: History and Methodology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 21.

schemas. These schemas, however, were formulae which his society had determined were the most fitting and beautiful, and were thus full of meaning for contemporary viewers. Similarly, by the fifth century—when the first ivory covers were likely created—Early Christian society clearly favored and imbued with meaning events surrounding Christ's Incarnation, his miracles, and Old Testament prefigurations, since these scenes appear on various objects and in different contexts. To use these established scenes on covers was effectively to tap into viewers' conceptual frameworks. As John Miles Foley writes with regard to oral poetry, "composition and reception are two sides of the same coin. As with any language-based transaction, both composer and receiver must be fluent in the particular coded language (or register) they are using to communicate."[196] Far from being little more than convenient building blocks, formulae act as idiomatic signals, and as such they enable very economical communication.[197]

Given this structured dialogue, the audience is therefore an equally important partner. Not only could artists employ set formulae to create new works, but the individuals who used and saw these covers could do the same. As art historians have long noted, narrative scenes take on new meanings when they are combined and juxtaposed. What this factor of production makes clear, however, is that one reading made by a modern scholar certainly was not the only reading possible. For example, the *Milan Diptych* might very well present a nuanced representation of the structure of the Christian cosmos and time, as Wolfgang Kemp proposes.[198] Similarly, as Jean-Pierre Caillet suggested, the Virgin's prominence on the covers of the Ravenna group could celebrate her newly elevated role in the sixth century and emphasize Christ's

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[196]Foley, "Plenitude and Diversity," 115.
[197] Ibid., 111.
[198] Kemp, *Christliche Kunst*, 43-46.

two natures.[199] These sixth-century covers also may have communicated the concept of Christ as miracle-worker. The fluid nature of these emblematic scenes, which could be recombined and interpreted at will, is much closer to the essence of the adaptable spoken word of homilies than to that of the written word, which was set down upon the pages of the contained manuscript. Reading passages from biblical texts aloud and then commenting upon them in homilies formed the very essence of the earliest Christian rites and continued to be the core of the Liturgy of the Word.[200] Just as certain passages could be selected and highlighted, so too could individual scenes or groups of scenes on the covers be commented upon and discussed.[201] This manner of viewing and interpreting the covers within the context of the spoken liturgy will be further examined in the following chapters.

To summarize, rather than stable models that transferred imperial iconography to later medieval artists and patrons, the Late Antique ivory covers were products of specific circumstances. When faced with the relatively new codex format they drew from a number of sources and traditions in order to tap into viewer's experiences and efficiently communicate with these audiences. Their solution, a geometric arrangement with a prominent center, offered later viewers a clear visual pattern that enabled hierarchical arrangements of iconic and narrative images. What makes the use of central iconic figure or device particularly effective at capturing viewer attention

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[199] "Remarques sur l'iconographie Christo-Mariale des grands diptyques d'ivoire du VIe siècle: incidences éventuelles quant à leur datation et origine," in *Spätantike und byzantinische Elfenbeinwerke im Diskurs*, ed. Gudrun Bühl, Anthony Cutler und Arne Effenberger (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2008), 17-29.

[200] Josef A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development (Missarum sollemnia)*, trans. Francis A. Brunner (New York: Benziger, 1951), 1: 391-393. For the oral performance of the Gospels in the first century, see Richard A. Horsley, "The Gospel of Mark in the Interface of Orality and Writing," in Weissenrieder and Coote, eds., *The Interface of Orality and Writing*, 144-165.

[201] A similar relationship between spoken word and visual art—in this instance the wall paintings in the synagogue of Dura Europos and Rabbinic discourse—has been suggested by Annabel Jane Wharton, *Refiguring the Post Classical City: Dura Europos, Jerash, Jerusalem and Ravenna* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 45-51.

will be explored in the final chapter. It is important to mention again the conservative

nature of treasury bindings after the Late Antique period. The creators of later covers

will continue to use certain elements already established at an early date. One

therefore must be careful to avoid ascribing exact meanings to this iconography as

statements made by specific patrons, since, as will become apparent, these covers

replicate similar patterns and subjects over the centuries.

Although the direct relationship between hypothesized five-part imperial

diptychs and Late Antique covers has been called into question, it is important to

remember that the consular variety of ivory diptychs composed of two hinged panels

were preserved in church treasuries and were used to record the names of the

deceased. The continued use of ivory diptychs for texts required for the liturgy, in this

case, the names of those remembered during the mass, points to the conclusion that

viewers were preconditioned to find ivory as appropriate coverings for such

objects.[202] Rather than seeing the Christian covers as an evolution from these secular

objects, it is important to remember that they would have been used side by side as

props in the performance of the mass.

## "It is Better to Spend One's Money Thus": Precious Materials on Late Antique and Early Medieval Covers

Although Late Antique five-part ivory covers have received the bulk of

scholarly attention, during this period these covers likely did not represent the primary

solution for how to appropriately clothe the Word of God.[203] From a very early date,

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[202] János Szirmai points out, although such wooden tablets, with or without wax, were used across Europe and the Near East since the Bronze Age, their crude construction has little in common with the methods for joining the leaves of a codex. *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding*, 3-4. For the continued use of diptychs, see Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, 21.

[203] The reasons for this disproportionate attention to the ivory covers in comparison to the gold and silver covers are numerous. Paramount is the fact that these survive (although often in pieces) in greater

the application of gold and silver seems to have been the preferred method for ornamenting the most luxurious biblical manuscripts, and almost every other type of liturgical object. The reliance upon precious, inherently valuable materials is perhaps the most striking feature of not only the six case studies presented here, but also the vast majority of treasury bindings, apparent even in our modern terminology for these objects. The creators' celebration of material splendor is most clearly seen on the cover of the *Reichenau Gospels*, which, as previously mentioned, combines a large agate with shimmering gold, reflective jewels, and lustrous pearls. Other covers further luxuriate in this overt materiality, incorporating glowing enamels and ivory plaques into similar arrangements. It is beneficial to examine the larger practice of using these precious resources on liturgical manuscript covers and other forms of church ornamentation before the specific meanings Ottonians attached to these materials can be dealt with. After all, Ottonian artists inherited not only the earlier covers fashioned from precious materials, but also the meanings attached to them.

Although many of the earliest covers in gold or silver do not survive, we have written reports which speak to their existence. Constantine the Great ordered an unprecedented fifty copies of Scripture in 332, which were "to be written on well-prepared parchment by copyist most skillful in the art of accurate and beautiful writing," for newly founded churches, and it is likely they received ornate bindings.[204] As Eusebius reports, the order was quickly filled and he was able to send the emperor

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numbers than metal covers. These ivory plaques were also much more durable than the more common leather covers. Compared to precious metals, ivory does not lend itself to recycling. For this material to be reused only a few options were available: ivory panels could be sanded-down and recarved, reworked, or simply inserted into new settings. The prominence of ivory covers in the literature, however, results equally from conventional approaches and long-established biases in the field of art history. First is the overarching interest in the study of iconography, to the detriment of understanding objects with non-figurative or simply straightforward subject matter. Ivory, more so than precious metals or leather, could be worked more easily with intricate and detailed scenes.

[204] Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 4. 36. trans. Averil Cameron and Stuart G. Hall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). Discussed in Harry Y. Gamble, "Bible and Book," in Brown, ed., *In the Beginning,* 32-33. See also, Kessler, "Book as Icon," 79.

the sacred texts in "magnificently and elaborately bonded volumes."[205] These impressive covers would have set the manuscripts apart from the majority of texts, which typically received plain leather bindings.[206] The fact that these leather bindings, such as seventh-century Coptic leather covers now in the Morgan Library in New York, were gilded to give the illusion of more costly material, demonstrates a preference for shimmering covers in the Late Antiquity.[207] Enhancing this glittering appearance, precious gems were applied to gold and silver covers not long after the inception of the codex format, as Jerome's famous attack on the conspicuous consumption practiced by wealthy Christian women makes clear. In his letter dated to 384 he writes, "parchments are dyed purple, gold is melted into lettering, manuscripts are decked with jewels, while Christ lies at the door naked and dying."[208] Despite this condemnation, such ornately decorated manuscripts appear in the hands of saintly figures depicted on everything from catacomb walls and apse mosaics to icons and liturgical furnishings. The practice of ornamenting the church and its liturgical furniture with precious metals and stones was so prevalent, thirty years later Jerome was compelled to be more flexible. He admitted that while using wealth for the poor was ideal, it was better to spend it on such decoration "than to hoard it up and brood over it."[209]

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[205] Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 4. 37.

[206] For instance of the twelve, single-quire papyrus codices discovered near the Egyptian village of Nag Hammadi in 1945, which date to the fourth century and retained their original leather bindings, only one, Codex II, received any sort of decoration. *L'art copte en Égypte: 2000 ans de christianisme* (Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, 2000), 46; and Szirmai, *Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding*, 7-14.

[207] Needham, *Twelve Centuries of Bookbindings*, 12.

[208] Jerome, *Epst.*, 22. 32. Trans. W.H. Fremantle, G. Lewis and W.G. Martley. In *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 6.* ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1893.

[209] Jerome, *Epst.,* 130. 14. "Others may build churches, may adorn their walls when built with marbles, may procure massive columns, may deck the unconscious capitals with gold and precious ornaments, may cover church doors with silver and adorn the altars with gold and gems. I do not blame those who do these things; I do not repudiate them. Everyone must follow his own judgment. And it is better to spend one's money thus than to hoard it up and brood over it."

Unfortunately for art historians, very little of the fabulous wealth of the Church from this time, which is described in numerous written sources, is preserved. Only the remains of six covers made of either silver (in territories of the Eastern Roman Empire) or gold (in the West) survive from the Late Antique period. Of the six examples which survive, all but the Western example, the Theodolinda covers (fig. 13), were found in large buried hoards of ecclesiastic silver plate. Although these examples were buried and therefore not accessible to later creators, the hoarded silver covers provide important evidence for the creation of treasury bindings during this early period that is otherwise lost to us. Turing first to four silver plaques, which most likely constituted covers of two manuscripts, we know that these once belonged to the church of St. Sergius in the village of Kaper Koraon, in what is now Syria.[210] The church's silver treasures, which also included chalices, patens, ewers, fans, and crosses, were buried to protect them from the threat of an Arab attack and were never retrieved, allowing us to understand the place of silver bindings within the treasury.[211] Two of these plaques, now housed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (fig. 44), were likely the front and back covers of a liturgical manuscript, possibly a book of epistles, and date to the sixth century.[212] On each plaque a haloed figure stands beneath an arch supported by two spiral columns. One (presumably Paul) holds an open book, the other (Peter) a cross. The plaques are framed with a border of scrolling grape vines, in which are nestled birds released from their cages. Both sides of the cover from Kaper

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[210] Marlia Mundell Mango convincingly demonstrated that the hoards referred to as the Stuma, Riha, Hama and Antioch treasures actually formed a single silver treasure that was unearthed in Stuma in 1908, and subsequently divided. *Silver from Early Byzantium: The Kaper Koraon and Related Treasures* (Baltimore, MD: Walters Art Gallery, 1986), 20-24.

[211] Susan A. Boyd, "Art in the Service of the Liturgy: Byzantine Silver Plate," in *Heaven on Earth: Art and the Church in Byzantium*, ed. Linda Safran (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 156.

[212] For the Kaper Karaon and the Sion covers, see Margaret E. Frazer, "Early Byzantine Silver Book Covers," in *Ecclesiastical Silver Plate in Sixth-Century Byzantium: Papers of the Symposium Held May 16-18, 1986 at the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore and Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C.*, ed. Susan A. Boyd and Marlia Mundell Mango (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1992), 71-76.

Koraon (fig. 44) are more heavily damaged. The better preserved plaque in the

Metropolitan Museum of Art's collection shows two figures carrying manuscripts and

supporting a large cross between them. A fragment now in the Louvre once formed

part of the other plaque and shows a similar figure (most likely an evangelist) and the

left arm of the cross.

The remains of six more plaques, comprising three covers, were found in the

village of Kumluca in southeastern modern-day Turkey and once belonged to the

shrine of Holy Sion. Although the number of objects is roughly the same as in the

Kaper Koraon Treasure, the cumulative weight of the Sion Treasure is six times

heavier and the craftsmanship of its objects is superior. The treasure is now divided

between the Dumbarton Oaks collection, which owns the four best-preserved plaques,

and the Antayla Archaeological Museum, which has the fragments of the third

cover.[213] On each plaque of the largest cover a cross stands beneath a heavily

ornamented arch. The plaques are framed with meander borders and retain some of

their original gilding (fig. 46).[214] The other set of plaques in the Dumbarton Oaks

collection each received the same ornament: Christ holding a gem-studded book and

flanked by two Apostles (fig. 47). Two spiral columns support a triangular pediment,

above which stand two peacocks. The fragments in the Antayla Archaeological

Museum likely formed a book cover with similar decoration.

Although the function of each of these silver plaques is debated, it is more

than probable that they were book covers. They survive in matched pairs and their

subject matter is compatible with this function. More tellingly, the average size of not

only the silver covers, but also the surviving gold and ivory examples corresponds to

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[213] Susan A. Boyd, "A Metropolitan Treasure from a Church in the Provinces: An Introduction to the Study of the Sion Treasure," in Boyd and Mango, *Ecclesiastical Silver Plate*, 5-18.

[214] For the iconography of the covers see, Ernst Kitzinger, "A Pair of Silver Book Covers in the Sion Treasure," in *Gatherings in Honor of Dorothy E. Minor*, ed. Ursula E. McCracken, Lilian M. C. Randall, and Richard H. Randall, Jr. (Baltimore: Walters Art Gallery, 1974), 3-17.

the average dimensions of the still-extant illustrated Late Antique manuscripts. The

average and median heights of the surviving covers are approximately 34 cm, while

the width is around 27 cm. The average dimensions of deluxe manuscripts from this

period (which most likely would have had impressive covers) are approximately 32 x

25.8 cm and therefore slightly smaller than the covers.[215]

Working from the well-founded assumption that these silver plaques were

book covers, two points emerge when one compares them to the other pieces from the

same treasures and ecclesiastical silver in general. First, only a negligible amount of

silver was required for the revetment of these covers. Second, to be examined below,

the figurative and decorative elements are not unique to the covers. The heaviest of

the plaques, the less-damaged cover with the triumphant cross from the Sion Treasure,

today weighs roughly 495 grams. Even assuming it originally weighed closer to 500

grams, this is still not much more than a pound and a half (Late Roman/Byzantine).[216]

Comparatively, each paten from this treasury of a rural church weighed roughly ten

times that amount, while a censor weighed four times as much.[217] Liturgical objects in

Rome or Constantinople would have been even heavier, as it was weight—and not

size or amount of decoration—that differentiated objects given by wealthier patrons

from other donations.[218] Although some figures may be exaggerations, written sources

give us a sense of the sheer amount of silver in metropolitan churches. Silver was not

only used for smaller items such as covers, chalices, and patens, but also for

revetment of doors, altars, ciboria, ambos, ceilings, and in the case of Hagia Sophia in

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[215] I use the dimensions and manuscripts listed in Lowden, "Beginnings of Biblical Illustration", to arrive at these figures.
[216] Researchers have calculated the Late Roman/Early Byzantine pound to be approximately 324 grams. Christopher Entwistle, "Late Roman and Byzantine Weights and Weighing Equipment," in *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*, ed. Elizabeth Jeffreys, John Haldon, Robin Cormack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 38-40
[217] For the weights of these objects, see Boyd and Mango, *Ecclesiastical Silver*, 19-34.
[218] Ruth E. Leader-Newby, *Silver and Society in Late Antiquity: Functions and Meanings of Silver Plate in the Fourth and Seventh Centuries* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 94.

Constantinople, the synthronon (rows of benches for the clergy, arranged in a

semicircular tier in the apse of a church). The *Liber Pontificalis* reports that

Constantine gave the Lateran seven altars, each weighing 200 pounds, and a silver

*fastigium* weighing 2,000 pounds.[219] Interestingly, among the many thousands of

objects listed in the *Liber Pontificalis*, book covers are never mentioned. John

Lowden convincingly proposes that this is because they did not contain much weight

as precious material and could not be separated from their manuscript to be

weighed.[220] While gifts such as Constantine's were only viable for the highest

members of Late Antique society, the amount of silver required to cover a manuscript

could be purchased and donated by a much larger segment of the population. In a

homily to raise money to finish the silver ciborium of St. Drosis in Antioch, the

Patriach Serverus stated that everyone, even the poorest, could afford a pound of

silver.[221] Many objects from both the Sion and Kaper Koraon Treasures do in fact

weigh one Roman pound.[222] A book cover thus offered a relatively affordable means

of giving to the Church. An inscription on the smaller of the Sion covers, which reads

"for the memory and repose of Prinkipios, deacon, and Stephane and Leontia,"

indicates they were meant as just such a gift.[223] The fact that two relatively small sites

possessed several richly bound manuscripts suggests that this was probably the

situation in other areas of Europe and the Near East at this time.

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[219] L. Duchesne, *Liber Pontificalis* (Paris : E. de Boccard, 1955-1957), 172, 177, 179, 182, 183, 232, 244. For the *fastigium*, see Molly Teasdale Smith, "The Lateran 'Fastigium' A Gift of Constantine the Great," *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana* 48 (1970): 149-175; and Ursula Nilgen, "Das Fastigium in der Basilika Constantiniana und vier Bronzesäulen des Lateran," *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte* 72 (1977): 1-31.
[220] Lowden, "Word Made Visible," 32.
[221] *Les Homiliae Cathedrales de Sévère d'Antioche. Homélies XCIX à CIII*, ed. and trans. I. Guidi, *Patrologia Orientalis* vol. 22 (1930), 247. Cited and Translated in Marlia Mundell Mango, "Monetary Value of Silver Revetments and Objects" in *Ecclesiastical Silver*, 133.
[222] Mango, "Monetary Value," 133.
[223] Translated in Frazer, "Early Byzantine Silver Book Covers," 74.

These early covers would set the expectation that Holy Scripture was to be given similar treatment for centuries to come. Foremost among the circumstances leading to more widespread use of treasury bindings, was the aforementioned problem of wealth for Christians and the Church.[224] The possession of wealth was directly at odds with Christ's teachings. As seen with Jerome's begrudging admission, one way to solve this problem was to put money to use in the church. During the Constantinian era, wealth began pouring into the churches as evidenced by the emperor's donations recorded in the *Liber Pontificalis*. Believers not only took over the long-established pagan tradition of giving costly objects as votive offerings to holy sites, but in the case of Constantine, the treasures from the pagan temples as well.[225] Christians also adopted and continued the antique belief that it was not wealth that was inherently bad, but only its misuse.[226] The employment of silver and gold to cover manuscripts both built on traditions of giving and was a proper way to utilize wealth. This practice, which will be explored more in Chapter 3, continued up to and beyond the Ottonian period.

When silver and gold were used to cover Scripture, the wealth of meanings and associations these materials had acquired over centuries was transferred to the bindings and more importantly to their scriptural contents. For instance, gold as a divine attribute was a poetic trope in the oral traditions describing the gods of pagan antiquity. Helios' golden chariot and Apollo's gold lyre and bow are only two examples.[227] In Late Antiquity the metal was also a marker of imperial power; emperors wore diadems of gold and gems and Constantine was said to have been

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[224] See Justo L. González, *Faith and Wealth: A History of Early Christian Ideas on the Origin, Significance, and Use of Money* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990) and Dominic Janes, *God and Gold in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 153-164.
[225] Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, 3.54.
[226] Janes, *God and Gold*, 77.
[227] Ibid, 19.

buried in a golden coffin.[228] More generally precious metals were used as status symbols when fashioned into accessories to adorn the bodies of the elite. Whether used for coinage or simply traded, precious metals had clear economic value as well as symbolic meanings. Removing these materials from circulation to ornament a book cover was, therefore, a significant action. Such giving was linked not only to votive offerings, but also the common practice of paying of tribute which reinforced societal hierarchies. Not simply influenced by the traditions of the pagan world, the use of precious metals for the covers of Holy Writ also had a scriptural precedent in that God ordered the Ark of the Covenant to be clad entirely in gold (Exodus 24: 1-22). This divine mandate likely impacted the decision to afford Christian Scripture the same luxury.

The new context of gold and silver within the Christian church in the form of book covers and other liturgical art meant that new associations and meanings were created in the minds of the viewers. It is probable that the meanings assigned to silver and gold by the Church Fathers and early exegetes at some level were meant as justifications for the use of these materials within the Church. In his discussion of gold within the Church in Late Antiquity, Dominic Janes examines the symbolism attached to gold, silver, and gems in the writings of the Church Fathers and later exegetes like Bede. As Janes argues, Christian interpretations of precious materials are most evident in their commentaries of the Song of Songs and the Book of Revelation, biblical books rich with descriptions of gold and jewels.[229] While there is not a single interpretation for such materials, the associations of light-reflecting materials to concepts such as divinity, purity, and wisdom run throughout their texts. The fact that the Heavenly Jerusalem was described in John's Revelation (21: 1-22:5)

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[228] Ibid., 27-28, 41.
[229] Janes, *God and Gold*, 61-93.

in terms of material splendor, an undoubtedly evocative metaphor at the time of its composition, added another layer of meaning to the precious ornaments of the earthly church. Potentially problematic gifts to the Church from elite members of society, stemming from pagan gift giving and aristocratic value systems, could be re-imagined as evocations of the world to come and therefore their presence could be justified.

Returning to the iconography of the silver covers, we see that this too is part of a general trend in the realm of ecclesiastical silver. Certainly the subject matter of these covers corresponds to a certain extent to their function. Standing figures carrying richly bound manuscripts or a triumphal cross appear on each of the covers (and in the case of one of the Kaper Koraon covers both). As mentioned above, the figures which flank Christ on the Sion Cover have been read as evangelists, while those on the Kaper Koraon as Peter and Paul, the authors of the Epistles. While these "author portraits" and even Christ holding a manuscript directly relate to the contained text, such figures appear on other pieces of ecclesiastical silver not so immediately connected to the written word, such as chalices, flasks, and boxes.[230] Similarly the triumphal cross, which Ernst Kitzinger sees as "not a mere generic symbol" when it appears on the Sion cover but as having specific meaning, is the single most common ornament for silver items.[231] The cross, in all its forms, appears on every type of silver ecclesiastical object, from patens to spoons. The use of figures carrying manuscripts or the cross to decorate book covers thus seems to be part of standard workshop practice rather than stemming from the contents of the manuscripts which these plaques would cover.

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[230] For examples, see: Mango, *Silver from Early Byzantium*, catalog numbers 3, 15, 42, 57-59; Boyd and Mango, *Ecclesiastical Silver Plate*, no. 18; and fig. 43, 79 and 80 in Galit Noga-Banai, *The Trophies of the Martyrs: An Art Historical Study of Early Christian Silver Reliquaries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[231] Kitzinger starting from the 'cyprus trees' on either side of the cross, reads the cross as the Tree of Life and references an eschatological paradise. The architectural frame acts as a door, thus the manuscript is the gateway to this paradise, *Pair of Silver Book Covers*, 7-17.

Indeed, the cross constitutes not only the primary decoration but also the organizational principle of the only surviving golden cover, the so-called Theodolinda Covers, as well as many deluxe manuscript covers represented in other media. Ottonian creators would use the cross in different manifestations as well. An inscription across these golden covers ornamented with colorful cameos and precious gems declares that they were a gift from the Lombard queen Theodolinda (c. 570-628) to the church in Monza.[232] The *crux gemmata*—a type associated with not only Christ's victory over death but also with the monumental cross erected on Golgotha by the emperor Theodosius in 417—divides the surface of each cover into four rectangular fields.[233] At the center of these fields an antique cameo was inserted. Large precious stones decorate the centers of each *crux gemmata*. This 'gemmed-cross type' seen on the Theodolinda covers would be a standard form of manuscript decoration throughout the Early Medieval period; notable examples include the back cover of the *Lindau Gospels* (Morgan Library) and the Ottonian covers for the *Reichenau Gospels.* This is hardly surprising, as the cross was the Christian symbol *par excellence*. Not only did the victorious Constantine have a standard of the cross ornamented with gold and gems, the *crux gemmata* was installed on a gold paneled ceiling of his palace.[234] Monumentally represented in the apse mosaic of St. Pudenziana in Rome, the *crux gemmata* was also fashioned in miniature as we have seen on one panel of the *Milan Diptych*.

When we look at book covers represented in other media, they are typically ornamented with the *crux gemmata* or, more often, a central stone surround by four

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[232] DE DONIS D(e)I OFFERIT/ THEODELENDA REG(ina) GLORIOSSISSEMA/ s(an)c(to) IOHANNI BAPT/ IN BASELICA/ QVAM IPSA FVND(avit)/ IN MODICIA/ PROPE PAL(atium) SVVM. Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, 79.

[233] Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, 28-30.

[234] Eusebius, *Life of Constantine,* cited and discuseed in Janes, *Gold and God*, 50.

other gems at the corners.[235] For instance, Christ holds a richly bound manuscript

ornamented with a cross not unlike the Theodolinda covers on the famous icon from

St. Catherine's Monastery at Mount Sinai (fig. 48). On a sixth-century diptych now in

Berlin, an older, bearded Christ holds a book embellished with five large (fig. 49).

Mosaicists working in Ravenna also commonly relied on this style of decoration when

they represent book covers in their monumental work (fig. 50).[236] The careful,

deliberate recreation of golden, bejeweled covers in such representations demonstrates

not only their evident popularity, but suggests one reason for it: their colorful,

shimmering nature, which catches the viewer's attention.

The lack of narrative imagery on either the surviving covers or representations

of them is remarkable. In the case of images of book covers in ivory or mosaic, this

lack is explained by the practical and technical considerations which necessitated a

type of visual shorthand. Mosaicists, essentially manipulators of color and light,

naturally selected the light-reflecting facets of the covers on which to focus. For the

Late Antique covers themselves, the lack of any examples with narrative imagery

could be ascribed to a matter of survival, if it were not for the fact that practically no

piece of preserved ecclesiastical silver from Late Antiquity has narrative scenes, even

in abbreviated forms.[237] This cannot be blamed entirely on the limitations of the

medium. Silver objects not intended for use in the liturgy, such as the famous David

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[235] In "Word Made Visible," Lowden confines his study to include only representations of bindings on the covers themselves, since supposedly the creators of the covers would more closely reproduce the appearance of objects for which they were responsible than other artisans. Nonetheless, depictions in these other media, if used critically, can be equally useful. There is in fact very little difference in the representation of treasure bindings as seen on the covers themselves and in all other media. Each of these instances represents a distilled version of treasure bindings, in other words, what elements were considered necessary for the depicted object to read as a luxury manuscript.

[236] Thomas Rainer has gathered many exempla of such covers for his analysis of representations of the closed codex in Early Medieval art and its meanings. *Das Buch und die vier Ecken der Welt:von der Hülle der Thorarolle zum Deckel des Evangeliencodex* (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2011), 152-160.

[237] The lack of narrative scenes on ecclesiastical silver is noted by Ruth Leader-Newby. Only two silver boxes, possibly reliquaries, have emblematic representations such as the youths in the fiery furnace. Leader-Newby, *Silver and Society*, 103-109.

Plates, or with mythological subjects, were ornamented with narrative scenes. Ruth Leader-Newby suggests that "it is perhaps possible that liturgical vessels were conceived as components of the exegetical scheme of the church decoration as a whole, rather than independent bearers of meaning."[238] Individual figures, such as the Kaper Koraon covers, might then function similarly to comparable figures in mosaic programs, which worked in tandem with other iconic imagery and narratives scenes. Whether or not her interesting hypothesis is correct, the choice not to illustrate the gospel narratives is still significant and will be explored in later chapters.

In this way the covers differ dramatically from the images inside the manuscripts. The creators certainly understood the difference between the inside and outside, [239] but basic aspects of production influenced their choices as well. Interestingly, the covers' iconic images, such as the cross or individual standing figures, are rare in the earliest biblical illustrations. On the whole, the placement of the illustrations and selection of scenes or figures in contemporary manuscript illumination is usually closely related to the text, whether illustrating or commenting upon it. As discussed above, the manuscript illuminations in early illustrated biblical books were experiments in ornamenting text in the relatively new codex format. Conversely, the creators of the covers—who would also ornament patens, chalices, and even spoons—were not faced with a new medium, only a new faith. It is also highly unlikely that silver and goldsmiths would work closely with the scribes, or even were scribes themselves, as the miniaturists may have been, because craftsmen in the Rome of Late Antiquity belonged to specialized guilds.[240] It is therefore not surprising that the subject matter of silver and gold covers would differ from the illuminations.

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[238] Ibid., 94.
[239] Lowden, "Word Made Visible," 46-47.
[240] Janes, *God and Gold*, 36.

One can observe a parallel process in the ornamentation of the most common type of binding in Late Antiquity: leather. Perhaps the most famous of the early survivors of leather bindings are those Nag Hammadi Gnostic manuscripts, which were discovered in 1945 near a village some 300 miles south of Cairo.[241] Only one of these leather bindings, Codex II (fig. 51), received any sort of decoration. A single piece of reddish-brown leather wraps around this manuscript with an envelope-like flap extending from the front edge of the upper cover. This flap is decorated with a small *ankh*, while the rectangular front cover is broken up into two squares, each divided by saltire crosses. The back cover is divided by a large saltire cross which is composed of alternating bands of incised lines and tinted running-spirals. That the cross was a common solution for ornamenting the rectangular field of the cover's surface is demonstrated in its use on the eighth-century leather cover of a gospel book now in Fulda as well as on many later treasury bindings.[242] Covers with crosses are also represented on ivory and silver objects as well as in mosaics and manuscript illumination. Examples can be seen, for instance, in the St Vincent lunette inside the so-called Mausoleum of Galla Placidia (fig. 52) and the famous Ezra illustration in the Codex Amiatinus (fig. 53).[243]

Although these examples are more ornate than the Nag Hammadi cover, the aforementioned Hamouli cover in the Morgan Library's collection essentially received a similar treatment of incised, stamped, and tinted symmetrical designs (fig. 54).[244] At the center of the front cover is a small, equal-armed cross which is surrounded by rotationally symmetrical, interlace patterning. Below this central

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[241] See above, note 206.

[242] Loubier, *Bucheinband*, 66-68.

[243] Formerly known as the St. Lawrence lunette. For the new identification of the saint see, Gillian Mackie, "New Light on the So-called St Lawrence Panel at the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia in Ravenna," *Gesta* 29 (1990): 54-60.

[244] Needham, *Twelve Centuries of Bookbindings*, 13-16.

design is a framed rectangular field filled with a simple cable pattern. In a compartmentalized band at the top another cross is framed by more interlace and rosettes. Further embellishing the cover are small circles punched into the gilt ground. The rarely published back cover is similarly decorated, with some slight variations, these elements—a framed, centralized design ornamented at intervals with circular devices—can be found on all the decorated leather covers found at the site (fig. 55). This arrangement, with its focus on a centrally located, compartmentalized decorative element appears on the majority of covers made throughout the Christian world beginning with the introduction of the codex format and continuing through rest of the medieval period and beyond, even into the early modern era.

That these motifs and arrangements would be so widely used is not surprising, since they formed part of Late Antique visual culture. When faced with new objects to ornament, leather workers like silversmiths would naturally turn to patterns already in use. For example, the designs found on the Hamouli leather bindings can be seen on other objects created by leatherworkers, such as satchels and sandals, examples of which are now housed in the Deutsches Ledermuseum in Offenbach.[245] This visual vocabulary was not found solely on objects for which the decorators of the bindings were responsible; they adorned the makers and patrons' environment from the floors to the walls to their very garments. Floor mosaics throughout Northern Africa, the Eastern Mediterranean, and Europe show the same dependence on decorative elements which came to the fore in the Roman Empire, of which interlace is the most common.[246] Interlace motifs surrounding a central element are also found on numerous textiles unearthed in Egypt and dating to the Late Antique period. The same

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[245] Günter Gall, *Deutsches Ledermuseum: Kunsthandwerk, Volkskunde, Völkerkunde, Fachtechnik; Deutsches Schuhmuseum* (Offenbach: Deutsches Ledermuseum, 1961).

[246] James Trilling, "Medieval Interlace Ornament: The Making of a Cross-Cultural Idiom," *Arte Medievale* 2 Ser. 9 (1995/1996): 59-86.

design as the Morgan's Coptic gospel book cover, albeit with a different central

medallions, can be seen on adornments for tunics, curtains, and wall hangings in the

Coptic collection of the Textile Museum in Washington, D.C.[247] Although many of

these textiles were discovered in Egypt, it does not necessarily follow that they were

all produced there.[248] Instead it is better to consider these as representative of the

widespread decorative visual culture of Late Antiquity. It is hardly coincidental that

these motifs would continue to be used throughout what was once the Roman Empire

and would appear on covers made centuries later in not only Egypt, but also France

and Germany as well as the British Isles. Evidence demonstrates that this kind of

dispersion does not require the direct influence of Coptic productions on European

creations.[249]

The ease with which common motifs could be applied to the new field of

manuscript bindings, whether of leather, gold, or silver, is evinced in the writings of

Cassiodorus, the fifth century author, statesman, and founder of the Monastery in

Vivarium in southern Italy. In his *Institutiones Divinarum et Saecularium Litterarum*

he writes,

> We have provided workers skilled in the covering of books [in codicibus
> cooperiendis] so that a handsome external form may clothe the beauty of
> sacred letters…For them [the bookbinders] we have represented becomingly,
> if I am not mistaken, numerous types of designs [facturarum] depicted in one
> book, so that the learned person can himself choose which form of covering
> [tegumenti] he should prefer.[250]

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[247] For example see catalog numbers 79-83 in James Trilling, *The Roman Heritage: Textiles from Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean 300-600* (Washington, D.C.: Textile Museum, 1982).

[248] Trilling, "Roman Heritage," 13-14.

[249] Trilling, "Medieval Interlace," Lawrence Nees, "Weaving Garnets: Thoughts about Two "Excessively Rare" Belt Mounts from Sutton Hoo," in *Making and Meaning in Insular Art*, ed. Rachel Moss  (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), 9.

[250] *Inst.* 1.30.3, ed. R. A. B. Mynors, *Cassiodori Senatoris Institutiones* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1937), 77. Cited in Lowden, "Word Made Visible," 18.

As with ivory covers, it seems as though certain patterns were also already in circulation and could be selected by the creator or the patron to 'clothe' the written word.

## Insular Borrowings, Transformations, and Innovations

With the arrival and spread of Christianity in Ireland and the British Isles, came the increased influence of the written word through Scripture. Well demonstrated in the realm of Insular manuscript illumination, the artists responsible for the creation of biblical manuscripts drew on local traditions and Continental models. The same can be said of the covers they produced to shelter these texts. Since the creations of Insular monks were transported to the Continent and inspired later manuscript covers, an examination of their experiments in ornamenting the Word is relevant for our purposes.

Tellingly, the disconnect between the imagery of the covers and that of the illuminations found with the Late Antique examples does not appear to be the case for Insular creations. These seem to be the exceptions that prove the rule. I qualify these statements because, unfortunately, we have very little in the way of manuscript covers, or indeed any goldsmith work, from England, Scotland or Ireland before the Norman Conquest. Numerous written sources demonstrate, however, that deluxe liturgical manuscripts received ornamented bindings of precious materials. The author of the eighth-century *Vita Sancti Wilfrithi*, records that in the seventh century Wilfred commissioned a "casing of purist gold set with the most precious gems" for a gospel book he gave to the abbey of Ripon. The ninth-century Anglo-Saxon monk Aethelwulf mentions in the history of his monastery that even the books in his cell were covered with plates of gold. The famous Lindisfarne Gospels (c. 720), as

befitting such a luxurious manuscript, had a cover ornamented with precious gems, as the colophon on the last leaf makes clear.

> Eadfrith, Bishop of the Lindisfarne Church, originally wrote this book, for God and for St Cuthbert and—jointly—for all the saints wholes relics are in the island. And Ethiluald, Bishop of the Lindisfarne islanders, impressed it on the outside and covered it—as he well knew how to do. And Billfrith, the anchorite, forged the ornaments which are on it on the outside and adorned it with gold and with gems and also with gilded-over silver—pure metal.[251]

This precious cover is mentioned again in a legend recorded in Durham monk and historian Symeon's *Historia Dunelmensis Ecclesiase* from the first decade of the twelfth century. In 875, when two churchmen attempted to flee the attacking Danes by boat with the shrine of St Cuthbert, the saint's gospels were washed overboard. Through the miraculous intervention of the same saint, the manuscript was recovered. As the story goes, the refugee church men found "the sacred manuscript of the Gospels itself, exhibiting all its outward of splendor of jewels and gold and all the beauty of its pages and writing within, as though it have never been touched by water."[252] In this instance, it is likely that the cover was made shortly after the manuscript was completed. Other sources demonstrate the practice of creating a shrine, or book box, for important manuscripts often considered relics of an important saint. For example, in 916 King Flann of Ireland commissioned a metal cover, or *cumdach*, for the Book of Durrow in honor of St Columba.[253]

Turning to the meager remains, we see that the same ornament used within the manuscripts appeared without. As before, the cross is an essential design element. Rare survivors include a late seventh-century leather binding, two book shrines, and several plaques or bosses that may have once adorned covers. Two covers produced

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[251] Cited and translated in Michelle Brown, *The Lindisfarne Gospels: Society, Spirituality and the Scribe* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 103-104, 109.
[252] Cited and translated in Brown, *Lindisfarne Gospels: Society, Spirituality, and the Scribe*, 111.
[253] George Henderson, *From Durrow to Kells: The Insular Gospel-Books, 650-800* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1987), 29. For other examples, see C. R. Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art: A New Perspective* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 202.

on the continent, but with strong Insular influences—the back cover of the Lindau

Gospels and the Genoels-Elderen diptych—also give some sense of the appearance of

the now-lost examples. The earliest of these survivors is the molded leather cover of

the Cuthbert Gospel of John (formerly the Stonyhurst Gospel, BL Loan MS 74; fig.

56), which was placed in the coffin of the eponymous saint. The layout of the front

cover, which was once painted, is not dissimilar from the roughly contemporaneous

Coptic cover in the Morgan Library or the carpet page on folio 192v in the Book of

Durrow.[254] A rectangular frame encloses a square central field ornamented with a

vegetal motif, whose symmetrical curling vines end in four raised bosses, above and

below which are narrow rectangular strips of interlace. The use of interlace, bosses,

and symmetry is also found on the earliest surviving Irish book shrine, which dates to

the eighth century (fig. 57). Discovered in the summer of 1987 offshore a small

artificial island, or *crannog*, in Lough Kinale, Co. Longford, this book shrine once

consisted of a wooden box onto which the surviving bronze plates were nailed.[255] The

front cover of the box received the most decoration: a cross with cusped sides and

adorned with interlacing animal motifs and at whose ends and center were affixed five

cast bronze bosses. Four open work gilt-bronze roundels fill the spaces between the

arms of the cross. The border of the entire composition is decorated with a complex

pattern of bird head and trumpet spirals. The cross is also the main ornament of the

eleventh-century book shrine, known as the *Soiscéal Molaise* book shrine (fig. 58),

whose archaizing style suggests it was modeled on an earlier cover, possibly the now-

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[254] The similarities between the Morgan Library's Coptic cover and insular carpet pages and covers
have long been noted. In 1950 Françoise Henry pointed to a passage in a poem glorifying the
monastery of Bangor, the missionary saint Columban's home monastery to demonstrate that
connections existed between Egypt and Ireland. "…Domus deliciis plena//Super petram
constructa//Necnon vinea vera//Ex Aegypto transducta…" "Les débuts de la miniature Irlandaise,"
*Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 6 Pér. 37 (1950) : 30. For a more recent discussion see, Brown, *Lindisfarne
Gospels*, 312-315.
[255] Eamonn P. Kelly, "The Lough Kinale Book-Shrine," in *The Age of Migrating Ideas: Early Medieval
Art in Northern Britain and Ireland,* ed. Michael R. Spearman and R. J. Higgitt (Dover, New
Hampshire: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1993), 168-174.

lost golden cover of the Book of Kells,[256] Around the arms of the cross are the

stylized symbols of the four evangelists, an arrangement found in manuscript

illumination as well.[257] A cross, this time a *crux ansata* like that of the Theodolinda

covers, surrounded by fields of zoomorphic interlace also appears on the late eighth-

century back cover of the Lindau Gospels, which mixes Insular and continental

traditions (fig. 59).[258] The handful of surviving square bronze plaques, which likely

were applied to book covers, present the viewer with mystical representations of the

Crucifixion (fig. 60).

The similarity between these and the so-called carpet pages painted inside the

manuscripts is readily apparent and not all together surprising. Art historians have

long claimed that the carpet pages, as well as other aspects of Insular manuscript

painting, were directly influenced by the art of metal workers. Not only were

ornamental motifs of jewelry and other precious objects taken over in the carpet

pages, but also the color palette. The prestige of metalwork was freighted with

meaning for this culture. The Angles and Saxons, as well as the Franks on the

Continent, could be rightly described as treasure societies. Treasures of intricately

worked precious materials were hoarded, buried with the dead, and used as markers of

status.[259] Jewelry in the Anglo-Saxon world also served as heirlooms that helped

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[256] Henderson, *From Durrow to Kells,* 195. For the dating of this object see, Lee Bolton, *Treasures of Early Irish Art: 1500 B.C. to 1500 A.D. From theCcollections of the National Museum of Ireland, Royal Irish Academy, Trinity College, Dublin* (New York, 1977), 182-183.

[257] For example, the cross page in the *Book of Durrow*, fol. 2, the *Litchfield Gospels*, the *Macdurnan Gospels* fol. 4, and the *Book of Kells* fol. 27v. For a discussion of the shrine's iconography, see Paul Mullarkey, "The Figural Iconography of the *Soiscéal Molaise* and the Stowe Missal Book Shrines," in Moss, *Making and Meaning in Insular Art*, 50-59.

[258] For the eighth-century date as well as a brief historiography on the cover see, Victor H. Elbern, "The 'Earlier' Lindau Book Cover: An Integrated Analysis," in *From Attila to Charlemagne: Arts of the Early Medieval Period in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, ed. Katharine Reynolds Brown, Dafydd Kidd, and Charles T. Little (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000), 322-335.

[259] Elizabeth M. Tyler, ed., *Treasure in the Medieval West* (Woodbridge, UK: York Medieval Press, 2000).

preserve the memory of individuals and institutions.[260] The meanings ascribed to

metalwork when copied and referenced in other media such as stone carving, as well

as manuscript painting, could be given to these new objects.[261]

Paul Mullarkey suggests that the ornamentation of the *Soiscéal Molaise* was

based upon manuscript illumination, which would be "a reversal of the convention

where fine metalwork is said to have influenced the decorative scheme in Insular

manuscripts."[262] However, was this necessarily the case with other Insular covers?

Could these carpet pages have been influenced by lost covers of either painted or

gilded leather or even of precious metals? We know Christian missionaries from the

continent brought manuscripts with them.[263] These could very well have had leather

covers, ornamented similarly to Coptic examples, the eighth-century cover from

Fulda, or more importantly the covers represented in the Ezra miniature of the *Codex

Amiatinus*.[264] The painted leather cover of the *St. Cuthbert Gospels* demonstrates that

the use of decorated leather covers was taken over by the Anglo-Saxons. The manner

in which surviving leather covers or even the Theodolinda covers divide and

ornament the surface certainly offers a closer parallel to many full-page Insular

manuscript paintings than any Late Antique continental illustrations. Moreover, the

representation of the evangelist symbols around the cross seems to have been an

established theme for book covers in Late Antiquity, demonstrated by a catacomb

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[260] . Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, 189.

[261] Not only were the object created by goldsmiths were valued, but the artists themselves were respected, even admired. Coatsworth and Pinder, *The Art of the Anglo-Saxon Goldsmith*, 227-246.

[262] Mullarkey, "Figural Iconography," 58.

[263] Bede*, Ecclesiastical History of England*, Book I, Chapter XXIX, trans. by L. C. Jane (London: J. M. Dent, 1903), "the same Pope Gregory, hearing from Bishop Augustine, that he had a great harvest, and but few labourers, sent to him, together with his aforesaid messengers, several fellow labourers and ministers of the word… and by them all things in general that were necessary for the worship and service of the church, viz., sacred vessels and vestments for the altars, also ornaments for the churches, and vestments for the priests and clerks, as likewise relics of the holy apostles and martyrs; besides many books."

[264] As this miniature is thought to copy a continental model, this would provide evidence for book covers in Western Europe during the Early Middle Ages.

painting in Naples. Dating to the fifth century, the painting shows Bishop

Quodvultdeus holding a richly-bound manuscript with this very theme (fig 61).[265]

Finally, the placement of the carpet pages, often as frontispieces or to mark a

particular point in the text, suggests that these pages not only appeared like the covers,

but also functioned similarly. Perhaps cover designs influenced manuscript painting,

or at least its conceptualization. Both likely drew inspiration from, or in the case of

the covers even used, indigenous metalwork designs to further enhance their

appearance and importance.


**The Carolingian Filter**

The Ottonian patrons and creators did not simply inherit the Late Antique

models discussed above. Although Late Antique works (i.e., ivory diptychs) were still

in existence in church treasuries, the Ottonians had more direct models: Carolingian

treasury bindings. The Carolingian experiments in ornamenting liturgical manuscript

covers distilled earlier precedents and introduced new elements that the Ottonian

creators would copy and adapt. It is useful to examine what aspects they maintained

and what iconography they introduced. In considering the ways in which the

Carolingians made use of the past, however, it is important to note that the theoretical

construct of the so-called Carolingian Renaissance, popular until around the third

quarter of the previous century, no longer holds sway. Rather than understanding

Carolingian art primarily through the lens of *renovatio Romanorum imperii*, we have

come to see that the artists, scholars, and rulers of the eighth and ninth centuries had a

complex relationship with the past and its creations.[266] The surviving book covers and

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[265] Umberto Fasola, *Le catacomb di S. Gennaro a Capodimonte* (Roma : Editalia, 1975), 155-160.
[266] For the historiography of the "Carolingian Renaissance," see Lawrence Nees, *A Tainted Mantle: Hercules and the Classical Tradition at the Carolingian Court* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), 5-17. Indeed even at the height of this construct's popularity it was

ivory fragments of former covers clearly demonstrate the range of ways Carolingian

artists reused, adapted, and transformed Late Antique models as well as Insular

creations.

The range of Carolingian interpretations and the varied degrees of dependence

on earlier models is most evident through a comparison of the cover decoration of the

mid-ninth century *Drogo Sacramentary* (fig. 62) to that of the previously discussed

*Lorsch Gospels*. The *Lorsch Gospels* quite clearly were modeled on Late Antique

imperial precedents and Christian book covers. While the creators of the covers of the

*Drogo Sacramentary* continued the established practice of employing ivory to

ornament the bindings, the way in which they used the material was unlike what was

seen on early covers. On both the front and back cover are nine individual ivory

panels placed in rows of three. The front cover mixes scenes from Christ's life, typical

for Late Antique ivory covers, with something new, depictions of a Carolingian

bishop performing a variety of rituals.[267] On the back cover, all nine of the ivories

show the bishop performing the mass. The Late Antique models were thus

transformed to more appropriately function on a new type of liturgical manuscript: the

sacramentary, which included the prayers the officiant recited during the mass and

other rituals.

Another Carolingian contribution was increasing the prominence of the

crucified Christ and the *Maiestas Domini*, or Christ in Majesty on book covers.

Bianca Kühnel, writing about science and eschatology in Early Medieval art, called

attention to the increased use and development of the *Maiestas Domini*, "the visual

understood that Carolingian artists relied on the work of Late Antiquity and not the earlier classical period.

[267] Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband,* 85-86; and Roger Reynolds, "A Visual Epitome of the Eucharistic *Ordo* from the Era of Charles the Bald: The Ivory Mass Cover of the *Drogo Sacramentary*," in *Charles the Bald: Court and Kingdom*, edited by Margaret Gibson and Janet Nelson (Oxford: B.A.R., 1981), 265-289.

representation that is the quintessence of eschatological expectations in Christian

medieval iconography," around the year 800 and again before the year 1000.[268] The

iconographic subject of Christ in Majesty was not wholly new in the Carolingian

period. As we have seen, Christ Enthroned was a popular subject for Late Antique

ivory covers. Significantly, Christ seated on a globe as the ruler of the world or the

*Traditio Legis* were also popular subjects for monumental apse decoration in the

fourth through sixth centuries.[269] The same apocalyptic image tellingly was reborn in

the mosaic decoration of the Aachen Palatine Chapel (c 792; fig. 63).[270]

What the Carolingian period did develop was the quincunx pattern and

diagrammatic quality of late eighth and early ninth century representations of the

*Maiestas Domini*.[271] Classic examples include manuscript paintings in the mid eighth-

century *Gundohinus Gospels* (fig. 64) and the *First Bible of Charles the Bald* (fig. 65,

c. 846) as well the book cover of the *Codex Aureus of St. Emmeram* (fig. 30, c. 870).

Seeking to understand the origins of this type, Künhel looked to its

development from compositions centered on the cross. Although she cites several

book covers—such as the Lough Kinale book shrine, the second Lindau cover (fig.

31), and the cover depicted in the Neapolitan catacombs (fig. 61)—as part of a larger

compositional type which influenced *Maeistas Domini* imagery, she falls short of

suggesting that this convention of decorating covers directly impacted Carolingian

manuscript painting and ways of ordering the world.[272] Growing equally from

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[268] Bianca Kühnel, *The End of Time in the Order of Things: Science and Eschatology in Early Medieval Art* (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2003), 19-20.

[269] Examples include the presumed decoration on Old Saint Peter's and the mosaic apse of San Vitale.

[270] Although some scholars once doubted that Christ Enthroned was the original subject of the mosaics, this seems primarily based on misconceptions about the Carolingian's use of the image of Christ. Charles McClendon, *The Origins of Medieval Architecture: Building in Europe, A.D. 600-900* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 120.

[271] Kühnel, *End of Time*, 40-52. See also, For the Maiestas Domini as a representation of the Church, see Anne-Orange Poilpré, *Maiestas Domini: Une image de l'Église en Occident Ve-IXe siècle* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 2005).

[272] Ibid., 76-77.

workshop practices (the use of the cross on all types of liturgical silver and gold) and practical considerations (there are limited ways to divide a rectangular field) as theological concerns, the cross on the cover punctuated at its center with a boss or precious gem and surrounded by four stones or other elements was elaborated and imbued with further significance over the centuries. The early experiments in cover design, seen for instance on the treasure bindings represented in Ravennate mosaics, as something outside the biblical manuscript and its narrative may have shaped the thinking of manuscript painters who used the *Maiestas Domini* as a frontispiece for the gospels. The frontispieces, like the bindings, not only covered the following pages of text but also communicated abstract imaginings of the Word.[273] These contemplations in paint then made their way back onto the covers as can be seen on the binding of the *Codex Aureus of St. Emmeram*. Later, in the Ottonian period the quincunx *Maiestas Domini* would become a frequent theme for the back covers of manuscripts, while the front displayed an image of the Crucifixion.[274]

Although iconic images of Christ (trampling the beasts or enthroned at the end of time) or moments from his life (the Temptation or the Baptism) were used, the Crucifixion was by far the most popular subject for Carolingian covers.[275] As we have seen, since the beginning the cross had been a frequently employed decorative element, yet it is only in the ninth century that the crucified Christ appears on treasure bindings. This seems to be part of a larger trend. Although images of the Crucifixion are preserved from as early as the fifth century and continued to be produced in the West since then, until the end of the eighth century this moment was rarely

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[273] Herbert Kessler, *The Illustrated Bibles from Tours* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 36-58.

[274] Examples include the Majesties of the Lamb on the back of the Pericopebook of Henry II and the Theophanu Gospels and the later *Burkhardt Gospels* Ms Mp. theol. fol. 68. It was also used for the back side of a portable altar now in the Schatzkammer in Munich.

[275] This can be ascertained from even a quick glance through the plates in Goldschmidt, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*.

depicted.[276] Around the year 800, however, the Crucifixion appeared not only in manuscript painting and covers, but also as free-standing three-dimensional sculptures covered in gold and silver which were hung above the altar. Unfortunately none of these survive; we know of their existence exclusively through written sources. One of the earliest instances is Charlemagne's present to Old St. Peter's of an almost life-size silver sculpture of Christ on the Cross after his coronation in Rome.[277] Further, Beate Fricke has compiled numerous records of gold or silver clad monumental crucifixes dating from throughout the ninth century.[278] It is not unreasonable to assume these appeared somewhat like the Crucifixion on the second cover of the *Lindau Gospels*.

Although there is likely no single answer to explain the explosion of Crucifixion imagery and crucifixes in the Carolingian period, liturgical practices seem to be at the heart of it. Concurrent with the rise of crucifixion imagery was the development of the *Adoratio crucis* liturgy, which took place on Good Friday.[279] On this day, the adoration of the cross replaced the taking of the Eucharist. In the Roman rite of the eighth century this adoration was accompanied at the beginning and end by the antiphone "*Ecce lignum crucis, in quo salus mundi pependit. Venite adoremus*," (Here is the wood of the cross, on which was hung the savior of the world. Come let us adore).[280] Although there were undoubtedly local variants, *ordines* describe a solemn ceremony which recalled Christ's human (i.e. bodily) suffering.[281] It has been supposed that the widespread practice of representing Christ's body on the cross

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[276] For the history of the iconography of the Crucifixion, see Marie-Christine Sepière, *L'Image d'un Dieu Souffrant (IXe-Xe siècle): Aux origins du crucifix* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1994).

[277] Lasko argues that a copy of this was made in 1540 in leather and is now in the collection of the Vatican Museum, (Lasko, *Ars Sacra*, 11-12). However, this is most likely a copy of a mid-twelfth century crucifix. Katharina Christa Schüppel, *Silberne und Goldene Monumentalkruzifixe: Ein Beitrag zur mittelalterlichen Liturgie- und Kulturgeschichte* (Weimar: VDG, 2005), 21-46.

[278] Beate Fricke, *Ecce fides: die Statue von Conques, Götzendienst und Bildkultur im Westen* (Munich: Fink, 2007), 133-150.

[279] Sapière, *Image d'un Dieu*, 27-23; Fricke, *Ecce Fides*, 135; and Chazelle, *Crucified God*, 36-37.

[280] Michel Andrieu, *Les Ordines Romani du haut Moyen Âge*, vol. 5 Louvain, "Spicilegium sacrum lovaniense" bureaux, 1961) 287-297.

[281] Chazelle, *Crucified God*, 37.

evolved from this ceremony. It is probable that this ceremony encouraged the use of the crucified Christ on book covers as well as in monumental form.[282]

Ongoing theological debates which worked their way into contemporary homilies about the nature of the Eucharist as Christ's body may have also promoted the rise of crucifixion imagery. Some of the key Carolingian theologians were involved in these debates, such as Hincmar, the archbishop of Reims and advisor to Charles the Bald, and may have directly influenced the designs of particular ivories. Celia Chazelle proposes this conclusion in regard to the Carolingian ivory Crucifixion reused on the *Pericopes of Henry II*.[283] Although her arguments for Hincmar's involvement in the creation of this detailed scene are convincing, many other surviving ivories appear to be rather standard crucifixion images and their numbers suggest they were widely produced without a *concepteur* proscribing their iconography.

Although it is difficult to fully understand how and why such images were produced, what is apparent is that unlike the cross with the symbols of the evangelist, the Crucifixion is geared less towards explaining the nature of the contained Scripture and more toward the ceremonies occurring outside of the manuscript, specifically Christ's sacrifice, reenacted during the mass. Other moments from Christ's life—such as the Baptism, miracle working scenes, or Passion cycles—also seem intended to

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[282] To help justify the use and even veneration of a man-made three-dimensional image of Christ, which defies the Old Testament ban on images, theologians called upon and expanded the long standing comparison between Christ on the cross and the Brazen Serpent. The story is recounted in Numbers 21:4-9. To punish the Israelites for speaking against him, God sent down venomous snakes. After Moses prayed on the behalf of the now repentant people, the Lord ordered him to make "a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live." Beginning with the Church Fathers and taken up again in the Carolingian period, the bronze serpent was aligned with Christ. Moreover, this command to make a healing image was taken as a sign of God's approbation of man-made images. Fricke, *Ecce Fides*, 136-137.

[283] It was also likely Hincmar was involved in the creation and conceptualization of the throne of Charles the Bald, Nees, *Tainted Mantle*, 235-257.

reference the liturgy rather than illustrate the narrative of the gospel story.[284] Even

*Maiestas Domini* formula with representations of the four gospel writers, which spoke

to the unity of the Gospel, also offered a representation of the Second Coming. Placed

on the altar, this subject matter served as a counterpoint to the ceremony which

celebrated Christ's first entry into the world. It thus seems that covers with the

*Maiestas Domini* and the Crucifixion were part of general trends in monumental

liturgical art that ornamented the sacred space and made concrete theological concepts

of the meaning of Christ's sacrifice on the cross or his Second Coming. The covers,

like other forms of *ars sacra*, visually amplified moments of the liturgy while

inspiring and alternatively drawing on the illuminations inside the manuscripts. The

effectiveness of this method meant that Ottonian creators not only copied these

subjects, but as we will see, often exaggerated them.


**Appropriating the Past: Ottonian Treasury Bindings**

        Although the earlier successful experiments in the production of manuscript

covers—themselves determined by traditions and practical considerations—shaped

the expectations and thus the choices of Ottonian artists and patrons, Ottonian creators

were by no means blithely drawing on the art of earlier centuries. Instead the

Ottonians selectively borrowed and copied from Late Antique and Carolingian art.[285]

Two commissions by Bernward, the early eleventh-century bishop of Hildesheim, are

often referenced to illustrate this point: the bronze column with scenes from Christ's

life modeled on the famous Column of Trajan (completed in 113) and the bronze

doors whose Old Testament scenes derived from now-lost ninth century manuscript

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[284] Examples of such covers include Steenbock catalog numbers 15, 16, 25, and 32.
[285] For the Ottonians' use of the past see, Hiltrud Westermann-Angerhausen, "Spolie und Umfels in Egberts Trier," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 3 (1987): 305-336; Thomas Head, "Art and Artifice in Ottonian Trier," *Gesta* 36 no. 1 (1997): 65-81; and Lieselotte E. Stamm-Saurma,

paintings. In the realm of manuscript covers, the situation is no different. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the *Uta Codex* referenced an important earlier cover, that of the *Codex Aureus of St. Emmeram*, which the nearby abbey possessed and which was illustrated inside the *Uta Codex*.[286] The Ottonians also strategically utilized several formulae that had been developed over the intervening centuries. As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, these include: the use of ivory and precious metals, centralized, iconic representations of Christ and his mother, cross motifs, and elaborate framing devices.

The cover of the book box of the *Uta Codex* is a good example of how the Ottonians utilized older models and transformed them into something new. The cover is dominated by high-relief, golden representation of Christ Enthroned. This motif had a rich and well-established history, as explained above. It is better to suppose that this extremely common iconography was equated in the minds of its female viewers to other instances of Christ in Majesty found throughout the churches, rather than with enthroned figures on consular diptychs or a depiction of the emperor,. Indeed a much more meaningful source was closer at hand and is in fact represented within the *Uta Codex* in the miniature of St. Erhard Celebrating the Mass. In this frontispiece, an important gift to the church of St. Emmeram is on the altar: the *Codex Aureus,* created around 870 on the orders of Charles the Bald. In 893, it was given, along with a ciborium (also depicted in the miniature), to the monastery of St. Emmeram in Regensburg by King Arnulf.[287] The continued importance of the *Codex Aureus* to the monastery is demonstrated by the renovations it received under Abbot Ramwold (975-1001).[288] Tellingly, the *Codex Aureus* is represented as a book box in the *Uta*

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[286] Cohen, *Uta Codex*, 28-32.
[287] Otto Karl Werkmeister, *Der Deckel des Codex Aureus von st. Emmeram: Ein Goldschmiedewerk des 9. Jahrhunderts.* Baden-Baden/Stasbourg: Verlag Heitz 1963), 1-2.
[288] Cohen, *Uta Codex*, 18.

*Codex* illumination, rather than a simple binding. This may have been its original state, since we know it was given a new leather binding in 1608, onto which the precious cover was affixed.[289] I suggest that the cover of the *Uta Codex*, which was written, decorated, and used in Regensburg, was meant to be a copy of this precious gift. Adam Cohen and others have demonstrated that the illuminations inside the *Codex Aureus* inspired the illuminator of the *Uta Codex*, but the connection between the covers of these two manuscripts has not been explored. On first glance the *Uta Codex* seems only slightly related to the Carolingian cover, in that it is made from the same materials and has as its primary decoration the Enthroned Christ, who holds a codex and blesses the viewer with his right hand. On closer examination, however, it appears that there was a deliberate effort made to also duplicate the frame. On both covers, four large rectangular green stones appear at the corners. The gems of the wide borders are arranged similarly in a repeating pattern. This rectangular pattern is made up of four stones placed at each corner with a larger central stone at the center around which scrolling filigree work is placed. Unfortunately, later additions to the *Uta Codex* have disrupted this pattern. Although gemmed frames are common on Ottonian covers, none are quite as close to the *Codex Aureus* as that of the *Uta Codex*.

The *Uta Codex* is therefore a copy, but in the medieval sense as first described by Richard Krautheimer in the 1940s, rather than a one-for-one duplication in the modern sense of the word.[290] To qualify as a copy, only certain key features needed to be recreated. The departures from the Carolingian exemplar can be attributed to changes in taste; the Ottonian aesthetic shows a preference for large gesticulating figures set against clear backgrounds. This specific "reuse" of a Carolingian work, for reasons both practical (it offered a clear pattern to follow) and symbolic (it recalled an

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[289] Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, 90.
[290] "The Carolingian Revival of Early Christian Architecture," *Art Bulletin* 24 (1942): 1–38.

important donation to the nearby abbey) is symptomatic of Ottonian production of manuscript covers. There are, however, significant alterations from the model in the copy. The creators have exaggerated Christ's size as well as the degree of relief, and through the removal of additional scenes have made him more prominent. Here we see a very literal representation of Christ's presence in the Church through the Word of God. Rather than a diagram of the universe centered upon Christ, what the female community of Niedermünster was offered was face to face communication with the divine. This aspect of the cover and its relationship to the liturgy will be further explored in later chapters. The same exaggeration of the body of Christ is also apparent on the cover of the *Codex Aureus of Echternach*. Unlike the reused Carolingian ivory on the cover of the early eleventh-century *Pericopes of Henry II*, which offers a highly detailed representation of Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension, the ivory centerpiece of the Echternach cover depicts only Christ, Stephaton, and Longinus. Although the Echternach cover uses well-established formula of the Crucifixion, it modifies it to focus attention on the body of Christ. As I will argue in Chapter 4, the emphasis on the human body of Christ captures viewer attention more powerfully.

The *Uta Codex* offers a useful lesson: instead of reaching to distant sources to serve as direct models for iconographic elements, it is better to look to more accessible models that distilled earlier forms. This is also true of the cover of the *Reichenau Gospels*. Thomas Rainer, in a recent publication primarily dedicated to the *Theodolinda Covers,* proposes that the quadripartite arrangement of the surface of the *Reichenau Gospels* was the most visually prominent aspect of this cover. From this observation, he interprets the cover's design as, in part, an evocation of the golden

doors of the Torah shrine.[291] Although he provides some compelling visual and

textual evidence that demonstrates that early medieval Christian viewers would have

known about this Jewish object, I contend that this is a somewhat unrealistic

reconstruction of a chain of influence. Moreover, although the four panels of the

cover are the most noticeable feature when viewing reproductions, when seen in

person the cross clearly stands out from the ground. As we have seen, the *crux*

*gemmata* was the favored Christian symbol for liturgical manuscript covers from the

earliest instances. It seems far more likely that the creators continued this tradition

rather than reached backward to more distant Jewish models.

Ottonian creators not only copied the formulae of earlier monuments and

objects, but also incorporated older creations into their artworks. Reused objects

adorned other forms of liturgical art, beyond the production of treasury bindings, such

as the *Pericopes of Henry II* and *Reichenau Gospels*. Perhaps the best-known instance

is the Lothar Cross (c. 1000) given by Otto III to the Aachen Cathedral Treasury, onto

which the artist fastened a cameo of the Emperor Augustus and an intaglio of the

Carolingian ruler Lothar II (855-869).[292] The challenge facing art historians is to

make sense of these instances of spoliation. It is quite possible that some instances of

spolia were a deliberate harnessing of the past to make a statement about the present.

Other borrowings, however, were likely just as unconscious or driven by expediency.

In order to judge the effectiveness of spolia to communicate political or theological

meanings, it is useful to judge on a case-by-case basis and reconstruct the settings in

which the objects were used and the nature of the audience who viewed them.

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[291] Rainer, *Buch und die vier Ecken*, 211-214.
[292] József Deér, "Das Kaiserbild im Kreuz: ein Beitrag zur politischen Theologie des frühen
Mittelalters," *Schweizer Beiträge zur allgemeinen Geschichte* 13 (1955): 48-110. See also, Ilene
Forsyth, "Art with History: the Role of Spolia in the Cumulative Work of Art," in *Byzantine East,
Latin West: Art Historical studies in honor of Kurt Weitzmann* (Princeton: Department of Art and
Archaeology, Princeton University, 1995), 153-162.

A mixture of practical and symbolic reasons probably lay behind the reuse of Byzantine ivory triptychs for Ottonian treasure bindings. As we have seen in the examination of the Aachen golden and silver covers, upon reaching the West, the ivory triptychs were dismembered and divided between several objects, typically book covers. Although ivories with the Virgin Hodegetria seem to have been among the most popular, ivories with other subjects were also reused. For example, Sigebert, bishop of Minden (1022-1036) had a triptych dismembered so that it could ornament two liturgical manuscripts. The central ivory with the Enthroned Christ, now in the Berlin Staatsbibliothek, was used for a lectionary, while the wings were mounted on an epistolary.[293] Not only were triptychs reused, but also it seems as if pieces from an iconostasis were also reemployed for book covers for the so-called Prayer Books of Henry II and his wife, the Empress Kunigunde (figs 66-67), which were actually soloist books for the mass.[294] That the manuscripts were made specifically for these ivory covers is apparent because they mimic the rounded top edge of the ivories.

How should such spolia be interpreted? Were the reused Byzantine ivories purely practical or did they have a special significance? At one level, it is possible that the ivories were imported so that the Ottonians could reproduce the formula of Carolingian manuscript covers: an ivory set within a frame of gems and gold. The central panels of triptychs worked nicely for this purpose because of their shape, size, and iconography. The fact that the triptychs were disassembled suggests a very pragmatic use of the Byzantine material. Placed in new settings or rearranged and

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[293] Anthony Cutler, "A Byzantine Triptych in Medieval Germany and its Modern Recovery," *Gesta* 37, no. 1 (1998): 3-12.

[294] Kurt Weitzmann, "Die byzantinischen Elfenbeine eines Bamberger Graduale und ihre ursprüngliche Verwendung," in *Studien zur Buchmalerei und Goldschmiedekunst des Mittelalters. Festschrift für Karl Hermann Usener*, eds. Frieda Dettweiler, Herbert Köllner und Peter Anselm Riedl (Marburg: Verlag des Kunstgeschichtliches Seminar der Universität, 1967), 11-20.

combined, the subject matter of the ivories took on new meanings.[295] Additionally,

this indicates that the original messages and readings of the triptychs were of little

interest to the new owners. Inscriptions upon the ivories, as seen on the plaques used

by Bishop Sigebert as well as Bishop Bernward of Hildesheim (fig. 14), which

reference their patronage, again show that the new users had no qualms about

changing the original appearance of the ivories in order to literally make their mark.[296]

This is not to say that the Byzantine ivories in themselves lacked meaning as

exotic luxury items. The Ottonians clearly wished to link themselves to the Byzantine

emperors, seen in their attempts to marry a Byzantine princess, which culminated with

Otto II's marriage to Theophanu, the niece of the Emperor Nikephoros.[297] Although

traditional scholarship assumed many of the reused Byzantine material in Ottonian

artworks came to Germany as part of Theophanu's dowry, this is unlikely.[298] Instead,

the marriage to Theophanu and the reuse of Byzantine objects represented more

generally the Ottonian interest in the empire to the East, which they could use to

cement their own authority. Despite this, it would be disingenuous to overstate the

importance and influence of Byzantium. William North and Anthony Cutler, in an

article about the status of Byzantine ivories in the West, suggest a more nuanced

interpretation:

> Byzantium, far from being considered a source of inviolable treasures and
> unchallenged aesthetic, seems rather to have been regarded as but one of the
> many rich sources of artistic inspiration and raw material—Greco-Roman, late
> antique, Carolingian, and Islamic—all of which the Ottonian artists and
> patrons exploited, combined and adapted to create new objects that would
> adequately express the aims and self-consciousness of a new and would-be
> universal empire and its ruling elite.[299]

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[295] Zeitler, "Migrating Image," 185-203.
[296] North and Cutler, "Ivories, Inscriptions," 10-11.
[297] Adelbert Davids, "Marriage Negotiations between Byzantium and the West and the name of
Theophano in Byzantium (eighth to tenth centuries)," in Davids, ed., *Empress Theophano*, 99-111.
[298] See Chapter 1.
[299] North and Cutler, "Ivories, Inscriptions," 2.

Rather than understanding Ottonian art as derivative, it is important to acknowledge

the creative way in which patrons and artists used the materials and traditions of the

past and other cultures. To use Ilene Forsyth's term, Ottonian art is cumulative. As

she argues the reused objects are held together in the Ottonian matrix and speak to

fusion of the Ottonian Empire's cultural foundations.[300] However, it is important to

note that the audience for such a message would have been extremely limited, as

discussed in the next chapter. Individual covers, such as the *Pericopes of Henry II* or

the *Aachen Golden Cover*, incorporated diverse objects and traditional designs to

meet the needs of Ottonian patrons.

One desire of artists and patrons, to have an iconic, central figure on the

treasury bindings born out of Late Antique and Carolingian traditions, meant that the

Byzantine ivories were eminently suitable for their needs. These premade icons

allowed the creators to easily insert a figure of Christ or the Virgin at the center of

their compositions. As icons, their function was to make contact with viewers and it is

probable that they were intended to have this same function on the Ottonian covers.

The reused ivories literally provided Holy Scripture with a public face.

The fact that treasury bindings from the eleventh century onward reuse the

formulas of older examples speaks to the efficacy of early treasury bindings as key

performers during the mass. Not only did artists return time and again to the same

formulaic subjects, but also to the materials themselves and the ways in which they

worked together. This becomes immediately apparent through an examination of later

medieval covers that copied the compositions, subjects, and a material of the Ottonian

covers. For example, an eleventh century cover belonged to the Benedictine

monastery of Santa Cruz de la Serós in northeastern Spain, reuses objects in a way

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[300] Forsyth, "Art with History," 153.

analogous to Ottonian bindings (fig. 68).[301] The cover combines gilded silver;

gemstones; a sapphire seal inscribed in Arabic; and, at its center, a tenth-century

Byzantine ivory representing the Crucifixion that had once been the central panel of a

triptych. A second manuscript cover commissioned by the same Spanish patron

demonstrates even more clearly what the creators considered to be the most important

elements of the first cover (fig. 69).[302] Like the first, it has a gilded silver frame stuck

with precious stones, and in this case enamels as well, all of which are surrounded by

filigree. At its center lies another Crucifixion, with the same five figures posed in

roughly the same manner. In this instance, however, the figures are rendered in

individual ivory pieces and affixed to the silver gilt background with large nails.

These ivory figures, presumably of local manufacture, functioned as a copy of the

Byzantine ivory adorning on the other cover. The wholly Spanish cover then not only

drew upon the Byzantine Crucifixion plaque for its iconography, but also replicated

the overall aesthetic of this cover. Furthermore, the manner in which the Spanish

Crucifixion was manufactured most likely indicates a limited supply of ivory. For

example, in both instances John carries a manuscript and gestures towards Christ, but

in the second cover his right hand is represented in front of his body to fit within the

confines of the available ivory. A distilled version of the first, the second cover

reveals what components were necessary to meet the patron's expectations: an ivory

Crucifixion surrounded by a luxurious frame. To conform to this formula, later artists

and patrons devised creative solutions when these materials were scarce. In Italy,

ivories created locally but along the lines of Byzantine exemplars were used instead

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[301] Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, cat. no. 67. See also, cat. no. 304, "Book Cover with an Icon of the Crucifixion," in Helen C. Evans and William D. Wixom, *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843-1261* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997), 446; and *The Art of Medieval Spain: A.D. 500-1220* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993), cat. no. 128.
[302] Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, cat. no. 68.

of imported ivories.[303] Alternatively, wood was fashioned on Byzantine ivory

exemplars in place of the rarer commodity, as can be seen on a twelfth-century cover

from the Spanish city of Girona (fig. 70).[304] Each of these examples demonstrates the

lasting influence of formulae developed over time and crystallized in the Ottonian

period. The reasons explicating the effectiveness of the formula of a central figure

created in ivory surrounded by frames of precious metals and gems will be explored

in the final chapter.

**Conclusion**

     The power of tradition is readily apparent in the use of gold and gems upon

the covers of the *Codex Aureus of Echternach* and the *Uta Codex*, which were the

descendants of the earliest covers. These earlier covers received this treatment

because of established value systems in Late Antiquity and the problem of wealth in

the early Church. Additionally, the subject matter and compositions of many of the

early medieval covers were culled from a variety of readily available sources.

Although some of the earliest imagery of the covers was determined by how they

were produced and the types of artists responsible for them, they continued to be

copied and adapted over the centuries because they were successful solutions and

effective. While the treasury bindings often spoke to the contents of the manuscripts

they sheltered, they more directly referenced the ceremonies taking place around

them. The next chapters will explore how Ottonian covers were used in these

ceremonies and how they enriched and were enriched by the spoken words of the

mass and other rituals.

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[303] See, for example, the twelfth century ivory and silver cover from the Church of Santa Anna in Frontale, now in the Morgan Library's collections. *Glory of Byzantium*, cat. no. 303.
[304] Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, cat. no. 85.

**Chapter Three**

**Seen, Unseen, and Glimpsed: Treasury Bindings within the Liturgy and the**

**Treasury**

The previous chapter established that many aspects of the covers, from the iconography to the materials, were in a large part determined by viewers' and patrons' expectations—which were shaped by earlier traditions—as well as the working practices of artists who deftly employed visual formulas. Such formulas continued to be used because, rather than being mere shortcuts, they were meaningful elements that effectively and efficiently communicated with viewers. Before examining how meanings were constructed in these interactions between viewers and the often-formulaic covers, however, it is first necessary to identify more concretely the varied audiences of the treasury bindings.[305] As ornately bound liturgical manuscripts appeared in a number of sacro-political ceremonies, the foremost being the mass, it is equally important to reconstruct the viewing contexts, a term which here embraces both the performances and the spaces in which they took place.

Instead of merely rehearsing the place of luxury gospel books within the general outlines of the mass or listing other liturgical instances in which richly bound manuscripts were used, as is typically done in the rare publications devoted to treasury bindings, this chapter situates specific works within their physical and ceremonial environments. The focus of this chapter is largely on Bamberg Cathedral, the covers in its treasury, and the liturgical events that took place there, although other sites will be examined as well. By returning ornately bound manuscripts such as the *Pericopes of Henry II* (fig. 4) or the *Reichenau Gospels* (fig. 3) to their viewing

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[305] Here I follow the interpretive art historical model that localizes the creation of meaning in interactions between art and viewers rather than the solely through the artist's intentions, which is inspired by Reader-Response literary criticism. See the introduction of this dissertation.

contexts, it is possible to answer better questions about who saw the treasury bindings and when. Such questions include: could the laity see the manuscript covers during the mass; how often and for how long were the covers on display; and how readable were details of the bindings for different viewers? Upon consideration of these issues, it becomes apparent that although it is possible that certain viewers could gaze upon the covers and meditate upon their imagery, the primary viewing experience consisted of fleeting glimpses during rich, multimedia performances. Equally significant is the impact on viewers of not seeing these manuscripts. Treasury bindings were typically hidden from view, locked away within sacristies or treasuries only to be displayed during important liturgical celebrations.[306] These practices of collection and concealment in addition to the varied performances, spaces, and additional props reconstructed in this chapter in turn shaped how viewers responded to the treasury bindings.

**Treasury Bindings and the Bamberg Cathedral Liturgy: A Case Study**

Bamberg Cathedral is ideal for a reconstruction of the liturgical environment of Ottonian treasury bindings for a number of reasons. Foremost is the fact that the bishopric of Bamberg, the original cathedral, as well as the cathedral treasury are Ottonian creations, chiefly brought about by then King Henry II. The territory had been given to Henry II's father, Duke Henry II (the Quarrelsome), by Otto II in 973.[307] It seems that Henry II, shortly after he became king following Otto III's sudden death in 1002, began construction of what would become Bamberg Cathedral

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[306] This is often repeated in the literature on liturgical manuscript covers as well as reliquaries, but the impacts of such occasional use require further investigation.

[307] Werner Jacobsen, *Vorromanische Kirchenbauten: Katalog der Denkmäler bis zum Ausgang der Ottonen*, vol. 3 Nachtragsband (Munich: Prestel 1991), 42.

on the site of a former castle chapel.[308] Since the territory for the diocese of Bamberg

had to be carved out from that of the bishopric of Würzburg—something to which

Bishop Henry of Würzburg was opposed—a synod was specially convened in

Frankfurt in 1007. In front of both supporters and opponents, Henry II dramatically

pushed for the approval of Bamberg's elevation at this assembly by repeatedly

throwing himself to the floor in a sign of penitence when it looked as though they

would rule against him.[309] Through his influence, and that of his supporters, the

creation of the diocese of Bamberg was approved. Further cementing his personal ties

to Bamberg, the final dedication ceremony of the newly built cathedral took place on

6 May 1012, Henry's fortieth birthday, and it was in the nave of the cathedral that

Henry and his wife chose to be buried. Although Henry's three-aisled basilica was

partially destroyed by fire in 1081, and rebuilt only to be completely destroyed in

1185, the original plan and the positions of the cathedral's numerous altars are known

through written sources and archaeological investigations (fig. 71).[310]

 Also highly relevant for the present study is the fact that the eleventh-century

collection of treasury bindings and library of Bamberg Cathedral is relatively well

documented and preserved. Thietmar of Merseburg in his *Chronicon*, written between

1012 and 1018, reported that Henry, while negotiating with Bishop Henry before the

Frankfurt synod, "was gradually accumulating everything necessary for the

celebration of the divine mysteries."[311] Among these required objects was a large

collection of liturgical manuscripts, many of which had ornate covers, culled from

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[308] Two provisional altars were consecrated in 1007. The date of 1004 which is often given for the laying of the first stone is not recorded in medieval sources. Friedrich Oswald, ed., *Vorromanische Kirchenbauten: Katalog der Denkmäler bis zum Ausgang der Ottonen*, vol. 1 (Munich: Prestel, 1966).

[309] Thietmar of Merseburg in his Chronicon describes the synod. An English translation is provided in *Ottonian Germany: The Chronicon of Thietmar of Merseburg*, trans. Peter Warner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 259-260.

[310] Jacobsen, *Vorromanische Kirchenbauten*, 42-43; Walter Sage, "Die Ausgrabungen im Bamberger Dom," in *Kaiser Heinrich II.*, 93-109; and Renate Baumgärtel-Fleischmann, ed., *Die Altäre des Bamberger Domes von 1012 bis zur Gegenwart* (Bamberg: Bayerische Verlagsanstalt, 1982), 9-14.

[311] Thietmar, *Chronicon*, 257.

across Henry's empire. Remarkably, two of the case studies of this dissertation—the

covers of the *Pericope Book of Henry II* and the *Reichenau Gospel Book*—survive to

the present day, as do an impressive seven additional manuscripts and their original

Ottonian covers.[312] These include: two further gospel books (figs. 72-73);[313] two

sacramentaries (figs. 74, 23);[314] two *cantatoria* (soloist's books with the chants sung

between the readings of the mass; figs. 66-67);[315] and a collection of writings about

the mass and priestly duties by several authors including Amalarius of Metz (d. ca.

850) and Theodulf of Orleans (d. 821) (fig. 75).[316] This unequalled collection of

treasury bindings, however, represents only a portion of the number of liturgical

manuscripts given to the cathedral in the eleventh century. According to an inventory

dating from 1127, the Bamberg Cathedral treasury contained twelve books covered in

gold and gems, nine ornamented with silver, two with ivory (the graduals), and

ninety-six more "sine auro et argento et ebore."[317] Of these less ornate manuscripts,

the compiler of the inventory notes that these included: ten "missals", nine psalters,

four *canones*, five plenaria, five lectionaries, four ordinaries, two *officiali*, three

benedictionals, and a homilary. More manuscripts, possibly numbering in the

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[312] The five most ornate treasuring bindings were taken to the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Hernad, *Prachteinbände 870 – 1685*, 9.

[313] The famous *Gospels of Otto III* (BSB, Clm 4453) and a ninth century gospel book from Mainz (BSB, Clm 4451).

[314] The *Sacramentary of Henry II* (BSB, Clm 4456) written and illustrated in Regensburg and an early eleventh-century sacramentary produced in Fulda (SBB, Msc. Lit.1). It is not certain whether the Fulda sacramentary was part of the original manuscripts gathered together by Henry II. Also debated is whether it was first used at the Abbey of Michelsberg in Bamberg, which was founded shortly after the cathedral and which possessed the famous Reichenau-made manuscript of the Book of Revelation, the so-called *Bamberg Apocolyspe* (SBS, Msc. Bibl. 140). See Hartmut Hoffmann, *Buchkunst und Königtum im ottonischen und frühsalischen Reich*, MGH, Schriften vol. 30. (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1986), 139-140

[315] SBS Msc. Lit. 7 and 8. For the contents and function of a *cantatorium*, see Eric Palazzo, *A History of Liturgical Books from the Beginning to the Thirteenth Century*, trans. Madeleine Beaumont (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1998), 74-75.

[316] For a list of the complete contents of SBB, Msc. Lit. 131, see Friedrich Leitschuh, *Katalog der Handschriften der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Bamberg*, vol. 1 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1966), 278-281.

[317] Bischoff, *Mittelalterliche Schatzverzeichnisse*, 17-19.

hundreds, were to be found in the cathedral library.[318] Certainly some of these

manuscripts came into the cathedral's possession after the death of Henry in 1024;

nevertheless it seems likely that a large percentage was acquired by the king.[319]

These numbers begin to put into perspective the role richly bound manuscripts

such as the *Pericope Book of Henry II,* the *Reichenau Gospels*, the *Gospels of Otto*

*III,* and the *Sacramentary of Henry II* played within the liturgical life of the cathedral.

Also useful in this regard is the condition of these deluxe manuscripts; their pages

show few signs of wear and tear, which suggests that the cathedral's clergy

infrequently flipped through, or read from these manuscripts.[320] Thus it seems that

although the *Pericope Book of Henry II*, for example, contained the readings for most

Sundays and important feast days, it is doubtful that this manuscript was used

consistently throughout the liturgical year. Much of the secondary literature proposes

that such manuscripts were only brought out on special occasions. For instance, it is

conceivable that the richly bound pericope book was used during the dedication

ceremony in 1012 as it contains the pericopes for just such a mass.[321] Almost certainly

this manuscript played a role in liturgical events during Henry II's sojourns in

Bamberg when he and his entourage attended masses at the cathedral. These royal and

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[318] For the numbers of manuscripts in the library of Bamberg Cathedral, see Hartmut Hoffmann, *Bamberger Handschriften des 10. und 11. Jahrhunderts*, MGH, Schriften, vol. 30 (Hannover: Hahn, 1995), 78, 87. Although the Cathedral library suffered losses over the centuries, it still possesses some 138 codices which date before the first quarter of the eleventh-century. Some of these certainly came to Bamberg at a later date, however, Henry's contributions likely made up a large percentage of this number. Bernhard Schemmel, "Bücherschätze Heinrichs II. für Bamberg," in *1000 Jahre Bistum Bamberg 1007-2007: Unterm Sternenmantel*, ed. Luitgar Göller et al. (Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2007), 56-77.

[319] Rainer Kahsnitz, "Heinrich II. und Bamberg, die Reichenau und das Perikopenbuch," in *Zierde für Ewige Zeit*, 14-18.

[320] This is often noted in monographs devoted to the individual manuscripts. See, for example, an essay about the pericopes in the *Bamberg Apocalypse* (SBB, Ms A. II, 42), Peter Wünsche, "Das Evangelistar in seinem liturgische Gebrauch," in *Das Buch mit 7 Siegeln, die Bamberg Apokalypse: Eine Ausstellung der Staatsbibliothek Bamberg in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Haus der Bayerischen Geschichte*, ed. Gude Suckale-Redlefsen and Bernhard Schemmel (Luzern: Faksimile Verlag, 2000), 149–158.

[321] This pericope, Luke 19: 1-10, is found with an accompanying image of Jesus dining in Zacchaeus house, which is represented as a church, (fol. 200r). Ulrich Kuder, "Die Bilder und Zierseiten," in *Zierde für Ewige Zeit*, 131. The consecration ceremony at Bamberg is explored below.

later imperial visits probably often coincided with the important celebrations of the liturgical year. We know for instance that Henry celebrated Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday in Bamberg in the spring of 1016. [322] On these high feast days Henry II and his court were key lay viewers of treasury bindings and as such will be considered below in the reconstruction of the Easter Triduum celebrations of Bamberg.

## Creating and Recreating the Liturgy at Bamberg Cathedral: Liturgical Manuscripts

Replacing the palatine chapel of a small town with a cathedral intended to serve a new bishopric meant that Henry II had to import not only liturgical furniture and manuscripts but also a large number of clerics to carry out the "celebration of divine mysteries." In addition to the newly-appointed Bishop Eberhard I, probably a cousin of Henry II, [323] the cathedral required a contingent of canons and other clerics who could carry out the mass and the Divine Office. It fell to these men, especially the priests holding the office of cantor, to modify liturgical ceremonies developed for other sites, which were recorded in a variety of manuscripts created across the empire.[324]

Around the first millennium the celebration of the mass required, in addition to the gospel books at the center of this study, several manuscripts designed to meet the needs of the specific members of the clergy who carried out the service, whether

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[322] Thietmar, *Chronicon*, 325.
[323] *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, vol. 3 (Munich: Artemis, 1984-1986), 1519.
[324] For the importance of the office of cantor in organizing the liturgy, see Margot Fassler, The Liturgical Framework of Time and the Representation of History," in *Representing History, 900-1300: Art, Music, and History*, ed. Robert A. Maxwell (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 168.

cantor, subdeacon, deacon, or presbyter.[325] It was not until many years later that a

single book containing all the parts of the mass, known as a missal, became popular

north of the Alps.[326] Thus, for even the most basic of Sunday masses the clergy of

Bamberg required at the very least a sacramentary, a gradual, an epistolary, and a

gospel book or evangeliary. The celebrant—whether one of the cathedral's priests or

the bishop of Bamberg—primarily needed the sacramentary. This manuscript usually

contained (in the following order): a calendar with a list of all the celebrations both

universal and local; the unchanging prayers of the mass, known as the canon; and

formulas for the portions of the mass that varied from day to day.[327] The changeable

elements included the prayers for masses of both the temporal (the majors feasts of

Advent, Easter, and Pentecost) and sanctoral (feasts of the saints) cycles. By the time

of Bamberg's consecration, a new type of liturgical manuscript had been developed

that incorporated the texts of the sacramentary. Known as a pontifical, this type of

liturgical book was designed for the use of the bishop and included, in addition to the

prayers in the sacramentary, rubrics for specific liturgical ceremonies.[328] As the

sacramentary contained the sacred words spoken by the officiant during the mass,

these manuscripts were often richly illuminated, with special emphasis placed upon

the pages containing the text of the canon.[329] Such a sacramentary (BSB, Clm 4456),

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[325] For an introduction to medieval liturgical manuscripts see Palazzo, *History of Liturgical Books*, and Cyrille Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy: An Introduction to the Sources*, rev. and trans. William G. Storey and Niels Krogh Rasmussen (Washington, D.C.: Pastoral Press, 1986).

[326] This type of manuscript was developed in part due to the rise of so-called "missa privata," in which the mass was conducted by a priest alone. For the development of the private mass, see Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 156-159.

[327] Palazzo, *History of Liturgical Books*, 21-27.

[328] Ibid., 195-207.

[329] For the decoration of sacramentaries, see Robert G. Calkins, "Liturgical Sequence and Decorative Crescendo in the Drogo Sacramentary," *Gesta* 25 (1986): 12-23; and Laura Kendrick, *Animating the Letter: The Figurative Embodiment of Writing from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999), 83-85.

complete with a treasury binding of ivory and gems, was given to Bamberg by Henry

II, who had also provided the cathedral with a pontifical (SBB, Msc.Lit.53).[330]

Henry's munificence meant that two *cantatoria*, books for the chant, were also

enclosed in luxury covers. Although referred to as the prayer books of Henry II and

Kunigunde (Henry's wife), these manuscripts, one written in Seeon (SBB, Msc. Lit.

7) and the other in Regensburg (SBB, Msc. Lit. 8), in fact contained the texts of the

gradual, a piece sung between the reading of the epistle and gospel text in the first

half of the mass.[331] Unlike the also necessary antiphonals (also known as graduals),

which contained all the texts and sometimes musical notation of the five chants of the

proper and which were often work-a-day manuscripts showing real signs of use, the

*cantatoria* were largely symbolic books. Writing in the first half of the ninth century,

the famous liturgist Amalarius of Metz, known for his allegorical interpretations of

the mass, described the use of these manuscripts: "The cantor, [at the ambo], without

being obliged to read his texts, holds in his hands [the *cantatorium* whose cover is

decorated with ivory] plaques."[332] In the case of Bamberg's *cantatoria*, the front and

back ivory covers were made from four repurposed tenth-century Byzantine panels,

each ornamented with a single standing figure—Peter, Paul, Mary and Christ,

respectively. The importance of the cover over that of the manuscript is also

demonstrated by the fact that the manuscripts were trimmed to match the rounded

tops of the ivory panels that may have once formed part of an iconostasis beam.[333]

The honorific nature of these *cantatoria*, as well as the gradual chants they contained,

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[330] The gemstones were likely removed during restorations of the covers in the late eighteenth century and used to replace missing jewels on the other covers. Hernad, *Prachteinbände 870 – 1685*, 19-20.
[331] The gradual, based upon psalmic texts, was one of the five chants of the proper, which changed throughout the liturgical year, as opposed to the chants of the ordinary (the Kyrie, eleison, Sanctus, Agnus Dei and Credo), which remained the same. Palazzo, *History of Liturgical Books*, 63-74 and Edward Foley, "The Song of the Assembly in the Medieval Eucharist," in *Medieval Liturgy: A Book of Essays*, ed. Lizette Larson-Miller (New York: Garland Publishing, 1997), 203-220.
[332] "Cantor, sine aliqua necessitate legendi, tenet tabulas in manibus." Cited and translated in Palazzo, *History of Liturgical Books*, 74.
[333] Weitzmann, "Byzantinischen Elfenbeine," 13.

functioned to mark the importance of the gospel reading that followed. Thus, it was not merely the covers of the gospels books that spoke to the importance of Scripture but also the other forms of liturgical art and manuscripts used in conjunction with them.

The reading from the Gospels formed the high point of the first half of the mass, the Liturgy of the Word. The importance of the text was signaled not only by the gradual and *alleluia* chants, but also through the use of the most ornate bindings to cover gospel books. Proclaiming Scripture during weekly gatherings, a practice taken over from the Jewish tradition, had been an essential component of the earliest Christian services.[334] Although the length and number of passages read aloud changed over the centuries and differed from place to place, by the Ottonian period it was common practice to read two lessons: the first from the Epistles and the second from the Gospels.[335] Although the celebrant would kiss the gospel book at the beginning of the mass, very early in the development of the Western liturgy the reading of the biblical texts by someone other than the officiant became the norm.[336] In a cathedral setting the epistle pericope was read by the subdeacon, while the gospel pericope was read by the deacon. Well before the dedication of Bamberg Cathedral the gospel lections for the liturgical year were established. All that would have been required then was a gospel book with an appended *Capitulare Evangeliorum*, a list of the pericopes for most days of the year.[337] For ease of use, a pericope book or evangeliary with only the required text, often arranged according to the temporal and sanctoral

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[334] For the oral performance of the Gospels in the first century, see Horsley, "Gospel of Mark," 144-165.

[335] For the history and structure of the Roman Rite, which was used in and profoundly influenced by the North since the Carolingian period, see Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite*.

[336] Ibid., 409-410.

[337] Theodor Klauser, *Das römische Capitulare Evangeliorum: Texte und Untersuchungen zu seiner ältesten Geschichte 1 Typen* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1935). The tenth and eleventh centuries represent a transition from gospel books with appended lists of pericopes to evangeliaries as the most popular type of liturgical manuscript for the Liturgy of the Word, (Palazzo, *History of Liturgical Books*, 92-93).

cycles, could be used by the deacon instead. Thus the fact that Henry II gave to Bamberg Cathedral four manuscripts containing the gospel text with treasury bindings as well as an additional evangeliary covered in imported Byzantine silk (SBB, Msc. Bibl. 95) is significant.[338] It suggests multiple uses for such gospel manuscripts in the liturgical life of the cathedral and/or that as gifts to the church they may have embodied a kind of spiritual as well as economic capital.

By the Ottonian period each type of these required manuscripts, aside from gospel books, had undergone centuries of development from the original liturgical *libelli*. These small books were probably no more than a quire in length and contained local collections of prayers or blessings.[339] Although a certain degree of standardization had taken place under the Carolingians, who had imported and developed the papal liturgy of Rome, liturgical manuscripts continued to be shaped by the local needs and agendas of the centers in which they were created.[340] As Margot Fassler writes, "there was never one single established medieval liturgy anywhere in the Latin West."[341] In fitting out Bamberg Cathedral, Henry II and the cathedral's clergy collected liturgical manuscripts from important scriptoria across Germany—including those in St. Gall, Regensburg, Reichenau, Mainz, and Fulda—each of which had distinct traditions based on its own complex histories of liturgical scholarship and development. A further challenge to the newly installed clergy of Bamberg Cathedral lay in the fact that the individual types of liturgical manuscripts rarely worked seamlessly together, even those created in the same scriptorium.[342]

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[338] Catalogue no. 6 in *1000 Jahre Bistum Bamberg*, 104.

[339] Palazzo, *History of Liturgical Books*, 37-38.

[340] For the creation of liturgical manuscripts for political ends, see Eric Palazzo's account of the sacramentaries produced in tenth-century Fulda. *Les sacramentaires de Fulda: étude sur l'iconographie et la liturgie à l'époque ottonienne* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1994).

[341] Fassler, "Liturgical Framework," 158.

[342] Ibid.

Modern scholars interested in the medieval liturgy of Bamberg face a similar challenge, as it is necessary to piece together what liturgical manuscripts were available to the cathedral's clergy and to extract from these a sense of the varied ceremonies of the church over time. Fortunately for the purposes of this study, historians specializing in paleography, medieval liturgy, and art history have carried out significant research on this subject. The work of paleographers Friedrich Leitshuh and, more recently, Hartmut Hoffmann has been especially helpful in establishing the probable origin of the manuscripts and the specific holdings of the Bamberg Cathedral library.[343] In 1976 Renate Kroos published an article that not only detailed some of the available liturgical sources but also examined what these documents reveal about the architecture of the Bamberg Cathedral.[344] Due to the nature of the sources, most of which postdate the fire and demolition of Henry's cathedral at the end of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth century, Kroos' article focuses primarily on the late Romanesque church built on this site. Most relevant for the present study is the impressive dissertation by Peter Wünsche, published in 1998, which examines in detail the cathedral liturgy of the Easter Triduum, i.e., Maundy Thursday through Easter Sunday, from Bamberg's foundation through the sixteenth century.[345] In this publication Wünsche not only compiles a list of the available sources but also recounts in detail the contents of Bamberg's liturgical manuscripts in relation to these Easter celebrations.[346]

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[343] Leitshuh, *Katalog der Handschriften*, and Hoffmann, *Bamberger Handschriften*. Also useful in this regard is a catalogue by art historian Gude Suckale-Redlefsen, *Die Handschriften des 8. bis 11. Jahrhunderts der Staatsbibliothek Bamberg* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2004).

[344] Renate Kroos, "Liturgische Quellen zum Bamberger Dom," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 39 (1976): 105-146.

[345] Peter Wünsche, *Kathedralliturgie zwischen Tradition und Wandel: zur mittelalterlichen Geschichte der Bamberger Domliturgie im Bereich des Triduum sacrum* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1998).

[346] The main findings of his Wünsche's dissertation as well as information on the celebration of Palm Sunday were published in article form that same year. Peter Wünsche, "Die Kathedrale als heilige Stadt: zur liturgischen Topographie des Bamberger Dom," in *Heiliger Raum: Architektur, Kunst und*

Drawing on this plentiful secondary literature, we can get a sense of the liturgy of Bamberg cathedral in the Ottonian period. Seen in relation with contemporary and later liturgical manuscripts of Bamberg, the Regensburg sacramentary (BSB, clm 4456) that Henry gave to the church appears to be something of an outlier. This manuscript, which contains the well-known ruler portrait of Henry II being crowned by Christ (fig. 76), was probably originally written for Regensburg Cathedral by the monks of St. Emmeram. A "mixed-type" of sacramentary, this manuscript follows older rubrics for the liturgy than the other Bamberg liturgical manuscripts, although certainly these older elements were incorporated into the newer collections of rubrics, for example those of the Easter vigil. It was likely given to Bamberg as much for its luxurious nature as for the text it contained. One of the most impressively illuminated Ottonian manuscripts, this sacramentary drew inspiration from the Carolingian *Codex Aureus of St. Emmeram*, for its pattern heavy, gilded illuminations.[347]

The *Pontifical of Henry II* (SBB, Msc.Lit.53), another of the king's donations to Bamberg, probably better reflects the cathedral's liturgy. Created at Seeon Abbey in southeastern Bavaria, this manuscript, which also contains a ruler portrait of Henry II (fig. 77), was likely designed for use at the newly constructed cathedral of Bamberg.[348] It contains one of the most complete copies of the Romano-Germanic Pontifical (*Pontificale Romano-Germanicum*, abbreviated PRG).[349] The PRG was a compilation of liturgical documents created by the monks of St. Albans Abbey under the direction of Archbishop Willigis of Mainz in the middle of the tenth century. It is composed of more than 250 sections of varying length containing rubrics for different

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*Liturgie in mittelalterlichen Kathedralen und Stiftskirchen*, ed. Franz Kohlschein und Peter Wünsche (Münster: Aschendorff, 1998), 25-58.

[347] Hoffmann, *Buchkunst und Königtum*, 293-294.

[348] The cathedral's patrons Mary, Peter, and George are mentioned in the litany for church consecrations. Hoffmann, *Buchkunst und Königtum*, 406.

[349] Wünsche, *Kathedralliturgie*, 25-26.

ceremonies, votive masses, benedictions, and explanations of the mass.[350] Through

the influence of Ottonian rulers the PRG was widely circulated and its rubrics

adopted. It represents what is arguably one of the most influential contributions of the

Ottonians; imported to Rome, it formed the basis of Roman pontificals of the twelfth

century and thus helped shape the liturgy of the West.[351] As the first substantial

liturgical book specifically for the use of bishops, it also reflects the growing

importance of the episcopal office in the tenth and eleventh centuries.[352]

Contained within the PRG was a long series of rubrics that detailed the

celebration of the mass throughout the year and which include the *incipits* (opening

lines) of texts to be read and sung as well as descriptions of the liturgical actions.

These texts are found in the *Pontifical of Henry II* from folio 89r-127v.[353] Designated

as *Ordo Romanus* 50 (OR 50) by the twentieth-century liturgist Michel Andrieu, it

was probably compiled at Mainz shortly before the creation of the PRG.[354] In creating

OR 50, the monks of St Albans drew upon the practices found in older sacramentaries

of varying origins and types as well as different ordos often contained in *libelli*.

Written in Germany but drawing on documents that had adapted Roman source, OR

50 presented an idealized version of a Roman liturgy.[355]

Contemporary and later additions to Bamberg Cathedral suggest that the

clergy followed the liturgy laid out in PRG rather than in the *Sacramentary of Henry

II* (although this does not strictly preclude the use of this volume). In addition to the

*Pontifical of Henry II,* Bamberg possessed a second Ottonian pontifical (SBB, Msc.

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[350] Cyrille Vogel and R. Elze, *Le pontifical romano-germanique du dixième siècle*, vol. 1 *Le Text, NN. I-XCVIII* (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1963), XVI-XVII; Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 237-249; and Palazzo, *History of Liturgical Books*, 201-207.

[351] Eric Palazzo, " La liturgie de l'Occident médiéval autour de l'an mil: état de la question," *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 43 (2000): 379-380.

[352] Ibid., 381-382.

[353] Andrieu, *OR*: 5, 72-79; Hoffmann, *Buchkunst und Königtum*, 406.

[354] Ibid., 72-32. For an English introduction to the nature and contents of the *Ordines Romani*, see Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 135ff. and Palazzo, *History of Liturgical Books*, 173-179.

[355] Wünsche, "Kathedrale als heilige Stadt," 34 and passim.

Lit. 50), possibly written in Bamberg itself. Although OR 50 is not fully contained

within this example, it is very close to the manuscript from Seeon.[356] Additional

pontificals, also corresponding to the PRG, were added to the library over the next

century and a half. Sometime in the middle of the eleventh century a sacramentary

from Fulda (SBB, Msc. Lit.1) entered the collection.[357] Although sacramentaries

produced in Fulda were the result of another attempt to create an authoritative version

of the liturgy which was in competition with that of Mainz,[358] the rites for Easter, at

least, correspond fairly closely with those of OR 50.[359] Finally, the earliest of

Bamberg's *Liberi Ordinarii*— manuscripts that are specifically related to the rites of

the church in which it was made and used—also demonstrates the predominance of

this version of the liturgy.[360] Written around 1196 by the cantor of Bamberg

Cathedral, the *Breviarium Eberhardi Cantoris* lists the readings and sung pieces for

the divine office and the mass of the site throughout the liturgical year.[361] As the

eastern portion of the fire-damaged cathedral was not demolished until 1215 and the

new cathedral was not to be consecrated until 1237, the liturgy Eberhard describes

would have taken place in the original church. Unlike the later *Liberi Ordinarii* of

Bamberg Cathedral, the latest dating to the fifteenth century, this manuscript provides

only the barest outlines of the rites; nevertheless, it is clear that it follows OR 50 fairly

closely. It is therefore possible to use the liturgy outlined in OR 50, comparing it to

that contained in the *Sacramentary of Henry II*, for the following reconstruction of the

celebration of Easter at Bamberg Cathedral during the end of the Ottonian period.

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[356] Wünsche, *Kathedralliturgie*, 27-28; and Andrieu, *OR*: 5, 29-31.

[357] Hoffmann, *Buchkunst und Königtum*, 140.

[358] Palazzo, *Sacramentaires de Fulda*, 179-182.

[359] As shown through the work of Wünsche, *Kathedralliturgie*, passim.

[360] SBB Msc. Lit. 116. For an introduction to medieval ordinaries, see Palazzo, *History of Liturgical Books*, 221-228.

[361] Edmund Karl Farrenkopf, *Eberhardus cantor Bambergensis*: *Die Mittelalterliche Gottesdienstordnung des Domes zu Bamberg* (Münster: Aschendorfsche Buchdruckerei, 1969).

**The Role of Treasury Bindings in Bamberg's Celebration of the Easter Triduum**

Easter was the most important feast of the medieval Church. As such it is more than probable that deluxe gospel books with treasury bindings were used during the day-long celebration. The services of Easter Sunday, which offered participants a feast for the senses, would have seemed even more spectacular coming after the solemn, more austere liturgical ceremonies of Good Friday, which will be discussed below. The celebration of Easter, "the mother of all holy vigils,"[362] at Bamberg also served as the backdrop for significant political maneuvering and kingly displays. The most consequential instance occurred in April 1020 when Pope Benedict VII arrived in Bamberg on Maundy Thursday—making him the first pope to travel to Germany in more than a century and half—in order to meet with Emperor Henry II to gain his assistance in papal attempts to loosen the Byzantines' hold on southern Italy.[363] There they were joined by Ismahel (Melo) of Bari, the former leader of the Lombards who had suffered defeat under the Byzantines a couple of years earlier at the Battle of Cannae. Ismahel, whom Henry had granted the empty title of Duke of Apulia, died shortly after the pope's Easter visit, but not before giving Henry II the famous "Star Cloak" (fig. 78) that is still preserved at Bamberg Cathedral and may have been worn during the papal visit.[364] In addition to taking part in the celebrations of the Easter Triduum, Benedict VIII consecrated the collegiate church of St Stephan with Henry

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[362] Augustine, Sermon 219, PL 38, 1088.

[363] Edward H. Holthouse, "The Emperor Henry II" in *The Cambridge Medieval History* vol. 3 (New York: MacMillan, 1922), 250-251.

[364] Although some have dated the cloaks completion to after Ismahel's death on April 23 1020. Renate Baumgärtel-Fleischmann, "Kaisermäntel," in *Kaiser Heinrich II*, 382.

and the Empress Kunigunde in attendance, and most importantly placed the diocese of

Bamberg directly under control of the papal See.[365]

Certainly Pope Benedict VIII's visit to Bamberg was an extraordinary event.

Nevertheless, it is important to consider this occasion as well as the other times Henry

attended mass at Bamberg to begin to understand the nature of the lay audience for

treasury bindings. The celebration of high feast days such as Easter, in which ornate

liturgical manuscripts made an appearance, provided a stage for Ottonian rulers to

make their presence felt in whichever cathedral or abbey church they celebrated. This

ceremonial presence during ecclesiastical rites, which in the thinking of the period

'honored' the chosen site, was an essential element of Ottonian peripatetic rule and

reinforced the sacral nature of their kingship.[366] As Gerd Althoff writes,

> With only a little exaggeration one can say that the medieval kings apparently
> exercised power essentially through ritual acts…these symbolic acts, as
> described in the sources, were apparently so effective that to a large extent
> they made other means of exercising power superfluous."[367]

Such displays of regal or imperial authority required an audience, and there was an

expectation that different members of ruling elite would meet at such occasions. The

meetings that took place on high feast days seemed to have been planned well in

advance; for example, the invitations issued during Christmas 1014 to Udalrich of

Bohemia and Boleslav of Poland were for them to take part in the Easter court taking

place the following year in Merseburg.[368] The inability to attend was worthy of note,

as Thietmar records the absence of Henry II's uncle, King Rudolf of Burgundy, from

the celebrations of "joyous feast of Easter" in Bamberg in 1016, making it necessary

for the emperor to travel to see him in Strasbourg, "where the bountiful kindness of

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[365] For the history of Bamberg diocese, see *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, vol. XVI, 457-471.
[366] Gerd Althoff, *Otto III*, trans. Phyllis G. Jestice (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 20 and passim; and Bernhardt, *Itinerant Kingship*, 76-79.
[367] Althoff, *Otto III*, 23.
[368] Bernhardt, *Itinerant Kingship*, 59

mutual love also smiled upon each king's entourage."[369] Even the most conservative

estimates of the itinerant court at around 50-100 members would mean that during the

Easter mass at Bamberg Cathedral the places closest to the high altar (i.e., the

positions which offered the best views of the richly bound gospel books) would be

taken up by members of Henry's entourage. [370] During years in which Henry did not

celebrate Easter at Bamberg local magnates most likely took part. Some of their

family members, after all, were the canons of Bamberg Cathedral, who, unlike those

of the collegiate foundation of St Stephan, had to be members of the nobility.[371]

Thus on Easter day 1016 the congregation and clergy of Bamberg Cathedral,

composed of members of imperial and noble families, witnessed an elaborate

ceremony consisting of four main parts: the service of light and accompanying

Liturgy of the Word, baptisms, a second Liturgy of the Word and Eucharistic

celebration, and finally vespers.[372] As will become apparent, gospel books enclosed in

treasury bindings worked alongside liturgical vessels, candles, vestments, and other

furnishings to create an atmosphere of splendor in which time and space were

condensed.

Beginning in the morning, the clergy would assemble in the sacristy to assume

what the OR 50 designates as celebration wear.[373] In a cathedral setting these

vestments were made of silk and ornamented with gold embroidery and would have

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[369] Thietmar, *Chronicon*, 325-326.
[370] It is conceivable though that this entourage numbered into the hundreds. Bernhardt, *Itinerant Kingship*, 58.
[371] Luitgar Göller, "Domstift und Kollegiatstifte," in *1000 Jahre Bistum Bamberg*, 43-44.
[372] Wünsche, "Kathedrale als heilige Stadt," 46-47. For a list of actions and read and sung pieces of the Easter celebrations according to OR 50 see, Wünsche, *Kathedralliturgie*, 272-273.
[373] "Ipso die, hora septima, ingrediuntur sacrarium sacerdotes et levitae et induunt se vestimentis sollemnissimis, cum quibus vigilias sanctas celebrare debent,diaconi dalmaticis, subdiaconi lineis aut sercis albis," Vogel and Elze, *PRG*: 2, 93. For an analysis of when these ceremonies occured, see Wünsche, *Kathedralliturgie*, 280.

been truly spectacular.[374] Despite the garments' fragility, Bamberg still retains some

of its Ottonian vestments and liturgical textiles primarily because these were

associated with Henry II and Kunigunde, who were canonized in 1147 and 1200,

respectively.[375] Unfortunately, all of these textiles were reworked over the centuries.

For example, a cloth ornamented with the repeating images of an enthroned king,

which was once used to cover the grave of Henry II, was reworked into a cloak when

it was no longer required for its original function.[376] Of the liturgical garments

preserved in Bamberg's Diocesan Museum from the eleventh century, only the co-

called Blue Cloak of St. Kunigunde (fig. 79) was designed specifically to be worn

during the liturgy.[377] Created in Regensburg and influenced by Byzantine designs, this

blue silk cloak is completely covered in fine gold embroidery. When worn by the

bishop the image of the enthroned Christ surrounded by roundels with busts of male

and female figures would appear on the wearer's back. Nativity scenes are found in a

series of medallions below the central image of Christ. Although the color and the

choice of scenes suggest that this was probably worn during Advent and Christmas,

the cloak is a useful example to consider when imagining the appearance of the

outermost garment worn by the bishop during Easter. Based on this example and

others it is possible that the liturgical garments would be decorated with scenes not

unlike those of the book covers and would equal them in their sumptuousness.[378]

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[374] The inventory from 1127 lists numerous liturgical vestments, many of which are described as golden. Bischoff, *Mittelalterliche Schatzverzeichnisse¸* 19.

[375] For the canonization of Kunigunde miracles involving the ability for her "garments" at Bamberg cathedral to heal the sick were recorded. Baumgärtel-Fleischmann, "Die Kaisermäntel," 379. See also the catalogue for the 1955 exhibit at the Bayerische Nationalmuseum, Munich which coincided with the modern restorations. *Sakrale Gewänder des Mittelalters: Ausstellung im Bayerischen Nationalmuseum München* (Munich: Hirmer, 1955), 17-24.

[376] This is now called the choir cloak of St. Kunigunde. Baumgärtel-Fleischmann, "Die Kaisermäntel,"384-385.

[377] Ibid., 380-381.

[378] For example pearls were applied to so-called Tunic of Henry II (sometimes Kunigunde) also in the Diocesan Museum of Bamberg, *Sakrale Gewänder*, 29-30.

Although the most important liturgical vestments were embroidered with iconic and narrative scenes, others were likely more simple, made from luxurious fabrics, sometimes imported from the East, which could be patterned with imagery that we would consider primarily secular. An example of such is the so-called chasuble of Bishop Bernward, a golden colored vestment ornamented with pairs of birds enclosed in medallions which was created around the millennium, possibly in Byzantium.[379] Even before the Ottonian period, it was common practice for lay individuals to give their precious garments and textiles to the Church for liturgical use. It thus seems likely that in these cases the luxurious nature, rather than the motifs, was important.[380] Certainly noble members of the lay community would also wear impressive garments during high feast days, which not only marked the wearers' status but also added to the general splendor of the occasion.[381] This may have been the original function of the aforementioned gift of the Duke of Apulia, the Star Cloak of Henry II, although the emperor may have immediately given it to the Church since it is known to have been in the possession of Bamberg Cathedral before Henry's death in 1024.[382] Even if the cloak—embroidered with a Maeistas Domini, the Alpha and the Omega, and astrological symbols—was worn first by Henry, it can also be understood as a type of liturgical garment, considering the sacral nature of the emperor as Christ's representative on Earth. Here again there would be repetition between the imagery of the garments and the book covers, in which narrative elements from different moments from the life of Christ, iconic representations, and imaginings of the Second Coming are brought together in individual objects.

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[379] *Bernward von Hildesheim*, cat no. VIII-35, 584-588.

[380] For examples, see Elisabeth van Houts, *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe: 900-1200* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 115-117.

[381] For a discussion of Anglo-Saxon medieval textiles and vestments, see Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, 129-187.

[382] Baumgärtel-Fleischmann, "Die Kaisermäntel," 382-383.

After the clerics assumed these sumptuous vestments and took up the required books (possibly the Sacramentary of Henry II), candles, and censers—a ritualistic process which was accompanied with specific prayers—they would reassemble outside the church to begin the service of lights. This took the form of a procession in which seven penitential songs were sung and processional candles were lit from the Easter fire which was kindled outside for this purpose.[383] The procession would then silently make its way into the cathedral, probably from the northeast. As mentioned above, the cathedral constructed under the aegis of Henry II was twice damaged by fire in the twelfth century and replaced with the current structure, which is significantly larger than the eleventh-century church. A sense of scale as well as general appearance of Henry's church is provided, however, by the reconstructed abbey church of St. Michael's in Hildesheim.[384] Approximately seventy-two meters in length, Bamberg Cathedral, like St Michael's, was a three-aisled church with double choirs. Also like the abbey church in Hildesheim, the Bamberg Cathedral had a wooden ceiling, although it would have been slightly lower since there was no gallery in the transept (fig. 80). Unlike the stone vaults of today's cathedral, the wooden ceiling would have made the church during Henry's time less imposing, and liturgical objects, such as the manuscripts in their treasury bindings, would have made more of a visual impact. During the first part of the Easter liturgy, this interior would slowly become more illuminated as the procession made its way down the central nave to the west choir. Dedicated to St. Peter, the west choir was raised above the level of the nave since the crypt was below and accessed by a pair of staircases before it in the

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[383] Wünsche, "Kathedrale als heilige Stadt," 48.
[384] St. Michael's Church, which was destroyed during World War II, is a couple meters longer than Henry's church. For the dimensions of both see, Oswald, *Vorromanische Kirchenbauten*, 1: 119-121, 42.

transept.[385] Seven candles were lit before the main altar here before the ceremony of blessing and lighting the Paschal candle by a subdeacon, which took place in the middle of the church.[386] This rite bridged both time and distance, as it reenacted the Resurrection of Christ in a space that recalled the layout of St. Peter's in Rome.[387]

After the dramatic lighting of the church, which had been darkened since Good Friday, the first Liturgy of the Word began as a lector ascended to the ambo and read clearly and plainly "in principio creavit Deus caelum et terram," (Gen 1:1) and thus recalled how God created the light from darkness.[388] The lector/s responsible for reading this and the series of additional Old Testament texts likely would have carried the required biblical books during the procession into the church. No treasury binding for a pandect or individual Old Testament books is preserved at Bamberg. Since Old Testament readings were rare during the mass, and such texts were instead usually read during the Office, it is likely that the manuscripts the lectors read from during the Easter vigil did not have treasury bindings set with ivory and gems. Instead these manuscripts probably had cloth covers, such as an evangeliary in the Bamberg cathedral collection (SBB Msc. Bibl. 95; fig. 81), which may have had overlays of incised metal, as seen on the cover of the collection of liturgical writings, or had tooled and gilded leather bindings. As these readings in part prepared the way for the gospel text in the second Liturgy of the Word that announced that Christ had risen, it is not surprising that the manuscripts and their bindings would be less ornate.[389] In addition to the opening lines of the Bible, the lectors read three or five more pericopes

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[385] Walter Sage, "Ausgrabungen," 101-102; Baumgärtel-Fleischmann, *Altäre*, 13-14: and Kroos, "Liturgische Quellen,"115-116.
[386] Vogel and Elze, *PRG*: 2, 97-99.
[387] For the evocation of St Peter's in Rome, see Renate Baumgärtel-Fleischmann, "Der Bamberger Dom," in *Heiliger Raum*, 65.
[388] Vogel and Elze, *PRG*: 2, 100.
[389] According to Jungmann, when Old Testament texts were used during the fore-mass they were selected because of their prophetic worth and value as illustrations for the New Testament, *Mass of the Roman Rite*: 1, 396.

depending on whether the lections followed those outlined in OR 50 or the

*Sacramentary of Henry II.*[390] The three pericopes common to both systems include

one from Exodus recounting Moses Parting the Red Sea and two from the Book of

Isaiah.[391] The sacramentary, based on older franco-roman forms, also includes

additional readings from Genesis and Exodus as well as one from Jonah.[392] Between

these pericopes hymns based on related biblical texts were sung and orations were

spoken by the bishop or, if he chose to remain seated, another priest.[393] Thus, what

took place during this and all other performances of the Liturgy of the Word was a

performed biblical exegesis; typologies were set up through the series of texts and

meanings were expounded in the hymns and the orations.

After this first Liturgy of the Word centered on readings of redemption the

clergy processed toward where the catechumens awaiting baptism had been receiving

their final tests and instructions. This was probably near the east choir, dedicated to

the cathedral's second patron, St George. The practice of conducting baptisms at

Easter was already well established by the Ottonian period. At this point in history

those baptized were children, as indicated by the use of "infantes" in OR 50. As

mentioned before, in creating the PRG the monks of St Albans were constructing their

version of the Roman papal liturgy. Thus the requirement of a procession to another

part of the church for the baptismal rites and the circumambulation around the place

of baptism was meant to evoke the liturgy of the Lateran with its separate baptistery

(a domed octagonal structure with space around the centrally placed font for such

processions).[394] The manifold meanings of the sacrament of baptism were expanded

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[390] Wünsche lists the readings for both systems. *Kathedralliturgie*, 305, 307. The readings are found in the sacramentary on fol. 126r-127v.
[391] Exodus 14, Isaiah 4, and Isaiah 54.
[392] Genesis 22, Exodus 12, and Jonah 3.
[393] Vogel and Elze, *PRG*: 2, 99-100.
[394] Wünsche, "Kathedrale als heilige Stadt," 49.

not only during the lengthy rite, but also in the epistle lection from Colossians in the second Liturgy of the Word, which encourages one to live as one who has been made new in Christ. In addition to other liturgical objects required for the rite of baptism, such as the chrism containing for the oil blessed on Maundy Thursday, the bishop would have required the lengthy texts for the ceremony. These blessings and prayers—many of them clearly written in gold letters—were included in the *Sacramentary of Henry II* (fol. 132v-135v). It is conceivable that this manuscript in its luxurious binding was carried to the place of baptism and used during the rite. In this setting, near the baptismal font on Easter Sunday, the treasury binding's imagery showing the Crucifixion and the Marys' discovery of the empty tomb could have taken on specific connotations to those closest to the cover (the clergy), different from connotations it had when used at the altar at other times. Just as the rite of baptism recalled the removal of sin and the promise of salvation and resurrection for members of the Church, so too did the cover, with the depiction of the dead rising from their graves below Christ on the cross.

After the completion of the baptisms the Easter mass, which is similar to a typical Sunday mass, began in the afternoon accompanied by a tolling of the church's bells—silent since Friday. This required a second "entry" of the clergy accompanied by song. This is likely when the Gospels were brought to the main altar in the West, if they had not already been carried in for the first Liturgy of the Word. It was during such entries, in which the deacon carried the closed gospel book through the church, that the lay audience would be able to glimpse the treasury binding. A cross between objects and images, the treasury bindings of the *Pericopes of Henry II* or the *Reichenau Gospels* would have thus been seen briefly and in motion. Only those individuals closest to the processional route, likely from the higher echelons of

Ottonian society, would be able to make out the details of these covers. For example, a viewer can be no more than approximately five or six feet from the cover of the pericope book to ascertain even the larger iconographical elements of the minutely detailed ivory (28.1 x 12.8 cm), such as the Crucifixion or the empty tomb. Similarly, the figures of the Byzantine enamels used as a framing device blur into unrecognizable blobs of color for anyone beyond this relatively close distance. In comparison, the geometric patterning and cross forms on the cover of the *Reichenau Gospels* are visible from twice that distance.

These practical aspects of viewing have significant ramifications for the reception of the political messages ascribed to this cover by modern art historians. For a lay audience member to uncover Henry's positioning of his rule between his predecessors, the Carolingians, and his contemporaries in the Byzantine Empire, he would have to be able to identify the ivory as Carolingian and the enamels as Byzantine as the cover was carried past him. Although members of the Ottonian nobility had access to Byzantine objects and therefore might be able to recognize the enamels as imported exotica, only the previous owner of the Carolingian ivory, Henry II, and maybe those closest to him would likely know the ivory's origin. For even the educated, high-ranking lay viewers, whose support Henry needed to validate his questionable claim to the throne in the early years of his rule, the messages supposedly communicated by the cover would be indecipherable. What might be readable instead is the rich nature of the materials used on the pericope book or the *Reichenau Gospels*, which spoke to Henry's ability to mobilize material wealth to furnish spectacularly his favored foundation. As a processional cross covered in gems was also carried during the entrance, viewers would experience a repetition of cross related imagery.

At the conclusion of the entrance procession the gospel book was placed upon

the altar. As mentioned above, in the eleventh-century Bamberg Cathedral the high

altar was elevated above the level of the nave. Unlike during the later Middle Ages,

this would not have been behind a large roodscreen and therefore was likely visible to

the laity. Also dissimilar from later centuries were the types of objects allowed to rest

on the altar. During the Ottonian period only a ciborium, gospel book, sacramentary,

chalice, paten, and their contents were permissible.[395] It is possible that a cross was

allowed on the altar, but it is not certain. Instead gemmed crosses or crucifixes might

be suspended above the altar or placed on a column behind the altar.[396] Candles also

may have been set in candlesticks on the ground rather than on the altar. Reliquaries

seem to have been banned from the surface of the altar at least up until the ninth

century.[397] It is probable that the acceptable objects on important feast days in a major

church formed a set of sorts, and were likely made of gold and possibly ornamented

with figural imagery. A number of representations of the mass in both ivory carving

and manuscript painting depict the simple arrangement of impressive objects upon the

altar. For example, a late tenth-century ivory from a treasury binding shows a bishop

performing the mass (fig. 82) with only the chalice, paten, and required books.

Without a clutter of other objects, the ornamented gospel book would have had a

greater visual impact. It is assumed that the richly bound gospel books were set upon

the altar so that worshippers could have seen their ornamentation. Such a display is

seen in the manuscript painting of St Erhard celebrating the mass within the *Uta*

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[395] Theodor Klauser, *A Short History of the Western Liturgy: An Account and Some Reflections*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 100-101.

[396] Annika Elisabeth Fisher, "Cross Altar and Crucifix in Ottonian Cologne: Past Narrative, Present Ritual, Future Resurrection," in *Decorating the Lord's Table: On the Dynamics between Image and Altar in the Middle Ages*, ed. Søren Kaspersen and Erik Thunø (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2006), 45; and Joseph Braun, *Das christliche Altargerät in seinem Sein und in seiner Entwicklung* (Munich: Hueber, 1932), 467-469.

[397] Even after this period reliquaries only briefly made an appearance on altars. Cynthia Hahn, "The Meaning of Early Medieval Treasuries," in *Reliquiare im Mittelalter*, ed. Bruno Reudenbach and Gia Toussaint (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2005), 1-2.

*Codex*, which shows the *Codex Aureus of St. Emmeram* propped against the Arnulf Ciborium (fig. 9). If this in fact was the practice, as is quite possible, again only the largest iconographic details and the contrast created between the different materials would have been visible to most viewers.

In addition to the materially impressive appearance of the holy vessels, the altar itself may have been sheathed in precious materials.[398] The first extant inventory of Bamberg Cathedral, recorded before the more destructive second fire that damaged the fixed furnishings of the church, mentions six altar tables, one of which was ornamented with gold and gems.[399] We have two extant antependiums commissioned by Henry II for other churches, those of Aachen and Basel. At Bamberg the altar could have been ornamented with iconic figures as in Basel, narrative scenes as in Aachen, or simply geometric patterns similar to the cover of the *Reichenau Gospels*. Richly ornamented altars can be seen in illuminated manuscripts, although of course the validity of such images must be taken with some reservations. Either way the altar's decoration would have echoed the ornamentation seen on the book covers. An altar cloth, which like the vestments may have been made of expensive or imported fabrics, would also add to the impressive appearance of the altar and provide a backdrop for the manuscripts in treasury bindings.

While the laity saw each of these elements from a distance, the cathedral clergy had a better vantage point, but only at different moments in the mass. The first of these was at the end of the entrance, when the bishop, and then the deacons, would kiss or make reverence before the altar and the gospel book upon it. This practice was

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[398] For altars and their ornamentation, see Joseph Braun, *Der christliche Altar in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, 2 vols. (Munich: Koch, 1924); Sible de Blaauw, "Altar Imagery in Italy Before the Altarpiece," in *The Altar and Its Environment: 1150-1400*, ed. Justin E. A. Kroesen and Victor M. Schmidt (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 47-55; Cynthia Hahn, "Narrative on the Golden Altar of Sant'Ambrogio in Milan: Presentation and Reception," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 53 (1999): 167-187.
[399] "V tabule altarium et sexta triangularis auro et gemmis ornate," Bischoff, *Mittelalterliche Schatzverzeichnisse*, 17.

in fact represented on a Carolingian manuscript cover for the *Drogo Sacramentary* (c. 850; fig. 14).[400] Although the gospel book would be read from later in the service, at this point its function as a sacred object is emphasized through this reverential treatment. The singing of *Gloria in Excelsis* and the reading of the epistle by the subdeacon from the south side of the altar also served to prepare the way for the gospel reading.[401] After the subdeacon read from the letter to the Colossians, the cantor would ascend part way up the ambo to sing the *alleluia* and gradual. The texts for this chant are found in both of the cathedral's eleventh-century graduals.[402] Thus, the cantor likely carried one of these, perhaps that decorated with the Virgin and Christ ivory panels, to the ambo or pulpit and held it, as described in Amalarius above, as he sang. Although a richly ornamented ambo, like the one Henry II gave to the Aachen Palatine Chapel, is not mentioned in the earliest treasury inventory, the cathedral likely had some sort of raised pulpit. In his place on a lower step of the ambo, the cantor may have held the ivory covered manuscript in such a way that it might be seen at least partially by the laity.

After the singing of the gradual, the gospel book, whether the *Pericopes of Henry II* or the *Reichenau Gospels*, was taken from the altar to the ambo. The deacon arranged his vestments in such a way that his hands were covered as he lifted and carried the gospel book.[403] Although normally acolytes carrying candles would accompany the deacon, OR 50 disallows their use on Easter Sunday, perhaps so as not to detract from the Pascal candle and the candles before and on either side of the

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[400]Roger Reynolds, "Image and Text: A Carolingian Illustration of Modifications in the Early Roman Eucharistic 'Ordines'," *Viator* 14 (1983): 70-72.

[401] For a discussion of the Gospel and Epistle sides, see Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite*: 1, 411-419

[402] Wünsche, *Kathedralliturgie*, 276-277.

[403] Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite*, 1: 411.

altar.[404] The use of incense in the procession to the ambo, however, was allowed on

Easter as it was at every Sunday mass.[405] As the deacon read the gospel account of the

discovery of the empty tomb, clergy and laity alike would hear the same news the

angel delivered to the women at the tomb a millennium ago: Christ has risen. After

reading the text which encapsulates the essence of the Easter celebration, the gospel

book was reverentially returned to the altar, so that the Eucharistic service might

begin and those recently baptized in Christ could take part.[406] For all but the deacon,

therefore, the gospel reading was experienced aurally. It was set within a multi-

sensory performance of sight, smell, and sound. Even if members of the congregation

could not see the details of the treasury bindings, they watched and in a way

participated in the ritualistic treatment of Scripture.

In its place upon the altar—whether propped up or laying flat on the surface—

the gospel book within its treasury binding would have been in view of the officiant,

either the bishop or a priest, as he quietly spoke the prayers of the canon with his back

to the congregation.[407] The majority of these prayers were likely known to the

celebrant, who therefore would have not had to read them word for word from the

sacramentary or pontifical. The canon of the mass in the *Sacramentary of Henry II*

confirms this assumption since the text of the canon is so heavily decorated it is

almost illegible. The eyes of the celebrant freed from reading might fix upon the

figural decoration of the cover of the *Pericopes of Henry II*, perhaps seeing the three

angels above the cross as he and the *schola* sang the thrice-repeated word of *Sanctus*.

As the priest ran through the litany of saints' names in his plea for their intercession,

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[404] Vogel and Elze, *PRG*, 2: 111. For the typical use of candles, see Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite*: 1, 445

[405] Vogel and Elze, *PRG*, 2: 111; and Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite*, 1: 446

[406] Rütz, "Buchkastendeckel," 448-449.

[407] Godefridus J Snoek, *Medieval Piety from Relics to the Eucharist: A Process of Mutual Interaction* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 37-44; Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite*, 2: 90-100.

beginning with the Virgin and the Twelve Apostles, their likenesses in the Byzantine enamels stared back at him. Finally, as he recounted Christ's institution of the Eucharist and later after the consecration when the cantor and *schola* sang the *Angus Dei*—which celebrates Christ for taking away the sins of the world—the officiant had before him the representation of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. The priests at other sites likely had a similar experience with treasury bindings depicting these moments such as Echternach Abbey or Essen. Unlike the laity or even other members of the clergy, the celebrant had a longer time to view the cover, whose subject matter made visible, even tangible, the words and symbolism of the canon.

The *Pericopes of Henry II* may however have been more visible to the laity on the Friday before the celebration of Easter, in which Christ's death on the cross is solemnly remembered. According to the Roman tradition based upon the pontifical situational liturgy, the mass and veneration of the cross on Good Friday were not supposed to take place within the bishop's church. In Rome this meant that the ceremonies were held in the church of Sta Croce in Gerusaleme rather than the Lateran.[408] Outside of Rome certain changes had to be made to this tradition, such as the rule that the rites should be performed barefooted (an impossibility in the cold spring seasons in the north) and more importantly the practice of celebrating in another church.[409] Instead it seems that in Bamberg the ceremonies of Good Friday were performed at the cross altar rather than the main altar in the west choir. As Peter Wünsche argues this is yet another way the cathedral space was transformed into a representation of the holy city.[410] The cross altar was located in the nave before the

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[408] Wünsche, "Kathedrale als heilige Stadt," 42.
[409] Andrieu, *OR,* 5: 49-79.
[410] Wünsche, "Kathedrale als heilige Stadt," 42-45.

steps to the elevated choir.[411] Thus during the Liturgy of the Word in which the

deacon reads Christ's Passion according to John—a long pericope found in the

*Pericopes of Henry II* following a two-page spread showing Crucifixion and

Deposition (fol. 107v-108r)—the gospel text and its treasury bindings would be closer

to the laity. During this reading, two deacons would come and clear away the altar

cloth "like robbers" as it is described in OR 50.[412] Unlike other services the Gospels

would not be returned to the denuded altar, which symbolizes the deprivation caused

by the Crucifixion. Perhaps they were held for the remainder of the services or carried

back to the sacristy. Unfortunately the sources are silent on this matter. We do have

anecdotal evidence that a gospel book was used during the ceremonial dramatization

of the burial and resurrection of Christ on Good Friday and Easter Sunday in the

Ottonian period. According to his medieval *vita*, Bishop Ulrich of Augsburg (d. 973)

buried the remaining consecrated bread after the Friday mass at the church of St

Ambrose by laying a stone on it. On Easter Sunday, Ulrich took out the Eucharist and

carried it and a gospel book to the church of St John and then Augsburg Cathedral,

thus reenacting Christ's *elevatio* and making Christ present in the town of Augsburg

through the Eucharist and the Gospels.[413]

We can say with some certainty that the Crucifixion imagery of the cover of

the pericope book would have been especially meaningful on Good Friday. The

Carolingian ivory in fact reflects the practice of *Adoratio crucis*, mentioned in both

the *Sacramentary of Henry II* and OR 50, which occurred after the Liturgy of the

Word on this day.[414] During this service a cross was brought in front of the altar and

as clergy and laity alike venerated the cross and sang *Ecce lignum crucis* a cloth

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[411] Baumgärtel-Fleischmann, *Altäre,* 11-14. The position of the cross altar in the middle of the nave
seems typical for many basilicas, Fisher, "Cross Altar," 54.
[412] "In modum furantis," OR 50, XXVII, 12.
[413] Cited and translated in Snoek, *Medieval Piety*, 46.
[414] See Wünsche, *Kathedralliturgie*, 192-198.

covering the cross was slowly removed. According to Celia Chazelle, this unveiling is recalled in the ivory, as one of the angels above Christ appears to hold a cloth above the cross, in a way revealing him to the witnesses below him.[415] For the deacon who carried and read from the pericope book and those closest to him the imagery would have foreshadowed the coming ceremonies. If the richly bound book remained near the altar during the veneration of the cross, it could add further meaning to the commemoration of Christ's suffering and death.

From this examination of the Easter liturgy several aspects become apparent. First and foremost is that the primary audience for the complex messages contained in the details of the treasury bindings would have been the clergy. Even this audience of canons, however, did not have a prolonged time within the mass to contemplate the covers. The deacon and the celebrant likely gazed upon the covers for longer periods of time as they carried out their duties. The lay audience, made up of important members of Ottonian society, likely glimpsed only the larger figural decoration and the rich materials as the manuscripts were used as both props and objects of veneration before them. Secondly, the treasury bindings themselves were just one part of the rich decoration of the church, which included vestments, other liturgical vessels, and furniture. The same subjects likely appeared not only on the sacramentary and the gospel book but also on these other forms of *ars sacra*, creating a visual environment of repeated motifs. The meanings behind this visual iconography were expanded through spoken blessings, read biblical texts, gestures, and ritual actions that occurred during moments such as baptism and communion.

Although the focus here has been upon Bamberg Cathedral, similar performances should be imagined for the other churches in the Ottonian Empire. We

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[415] Chazelle, *Crucified God*, 273.

know, for example, Henry II was in attendance during the Easter celebrations in the Aachen Palatine Chapel in 1005.[416] As this space is smaller and could not accommodate the numbers of worshippers that Bamberg Cathedral could, the liturgical covers as well as other types of furnishings such as the ambo or altar frontal would have been more visible. Although the settings, treasuries, and local liturgical practices were specific to each site, the general experience of the richly bound gospel books would have been roughly the same.

**The Further Liturgical Life of Bamberg Cathedral**

Certainly the celebration of Christ's death and resurrection during the Easter Triduum was not the only time richly bound gospel books were used during the mass. This fact begins to answer the question of how and when, if ever, the other gospel books with treasury bindings, such as the *Reichenau Gospels* or the *Gospels of the Otto III*, may have been used. It is possible that certain deluxe gospel books or evangeliaries were selected over others in the cathedral's treasury for use on specific holidays based on their iconography. In addition to Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension combined on a single ivory of the *Pericope Book of Henry II* and the *crux gemmata* on the *Reichenau Gospels*, Bamberg possessed covers with the Dormition of the Virgin (*Gospels of Otto III*), and a pairing of the Annunciation with the Nativity and the Baptism of Christ (BSB, Clm 4451). In this last instance, the present-day covers of a ninth-century gospel from Metz, it is not certain whether the Annunciation and Nativity plaques were the original decorations of the back cover. The two ivory plaques could very well have both been front covers until seventeenth-century

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[416] Garrison, "Art Policy of Emperor Henry II," 81.

restorations.[417] Regardless, what we see in Bamberg is an impressive array of

subjects, covering the key moments in the life of Christ, adorning individual gospel

books. It is possible that these manuscripts were used during the mass of particular

feast days according to the covers' iconography. Similar reasoning presumably lay

behind the decisions of the manuscripts as illuminators working in Reichenau on the

*Pericope Book of Henry II* who consciously paired narrative images that directly

related to the gospel passage and the feast day with the appropriate pericope.

In addition to the high feast days, ornately bound liturgical manuscripts were

also used during other ceremonies at Bamberg Cathedral. The very first of these was

likely the consecration in May 1012. Thietmar of Merseburg, an eyewitness, though

falling back on the literary tropes of the period, describes the event and the audience

in his chronicle.

> When the cathedral in the city of Bamberg had been completed all the leading
> men of the realm gathered there on 6 May…to participate in its consecration.
> Patriarch John of Aquileia and more than thirty other bishops undertook the
> consecration of this bride of Christ. Though a sinner, I was present as well and
> saw how the church had been decorated in a manner altogether worthy of the
> Highest King.[418]

On this day all seven of the altars were consecrated by different leading archbishops

from Cologne, Trier, Mainz, Salzburg, Magdeburg, and Hungary.[419] At the beginning

of the ceremony a bishop of Bamberg entered the church before a long procession.

Inside the cathedral he used his staff to write every letter of the alphabet on the floor

of the church.[420] It was thought that the complete alphabet would contain all the

possible prayers and blessings.[421] This practice points to a belief in a quasi-magical

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[417] Hernad, *Prachteinbände 870 – 1685*, 15.
[418] *Chronicon*, 278-279.
[419] Phillip Jaffé ed.*, Monumenta Bambergensia*, Bibliotheca rerum Germanicarum, 5 (Berlin: Weidmann, 479-481.
[420] Vogel and Elze, *PRG,* 1: 135-136
[421] Raymond W. L. Muncey, *A History of the Consecration of Churches and Churchyards* (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, 1930), 41-47.

nature of the written word that was held by educated and probably literate leading clerics. Later in the day when the mass was performed in the richly decorated, newly consecrated church the sacred nature of text would be highlighted again through the use of liturgical manuscripts in treasury bindings.

The gospel lection for the mass following the consecration of a church, which was contained within the *Pericopes of Henry II* (fol. 200r-201r) and accompanied by an illumination, recounted the story of the wealthy tax collector Zacchaeus (Luke 1:1-10). Upon entering Jericho, Jesus notices Zacchaeus, who had climbed up into a tree for a better view, and invites himself into the tax collector's home much to the surprise of the crowd, who considered Zacchaeus to be a sinner. The tax collector promises to give half of his possessions to the poor and repay those he had wronged. Jesus then tells him "today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." Read at the consecration from the lavishly ornamented pericope book, which was just a part of the wealth given to the cathedral by Henry II, the lection makes clear the correct use of wealth and the promise of salvation for the givers. On that day this passage helped create a conceptual framework for understanding objects like the pericope book for the elite lay and ecclesiastical participants in the consecration.

Another important ceremony in which richly bound manuscripts were used and which served to make visible the relationships between Bamberg and the king was the royal *adventus*, or entrance.[422] During such entrances, which also took place in monastic settings, members of a cathedral's clergy and citizens of the town would welcome the king. Local monastics may have attended these events as well. The *adventus*, whose origins extend back to the Roman Empire, involved the ceremonial

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[422] For Ottonian *adventus*, see David Warner, "Ritual and Memory in the Ottonian Reich: The Ceremony of Adventus," *Speculum* 76, no. 2 (Apr., 2001): 255-283; Bernhardt, *Itinerant Kingship*; and

entry of the ruler to a community and would usually be planned some time in advance. Although we lack a description of an *adventus* in Ottonian Bamberg, an example of such an entry is recorded in the *Ordo Farafensis*, an ordinary for the royal abbey of Farfa, located approximately 60 kilometers from Rome. There Otto III was met by the abbot and monks who carried not only processsional crosses, but also three Gospel books, which were proffered for the king to kiss.[423] These likely would have been highly ornamented. The singing of praises by the brothers would accompany such welcomes and a procession would follow afterward. Not every *adventus* was royal, however, as dukes, bishops, and abbots also made ceremonial entries. Although the level of ceremony depended on an individual's rank, there seems to have been expectation of a certain degree of lavishness.[424] For example, a bishop of Verona complained that upon his arrival at St. Gall an evangelistary of inferior value had been carried before him and that later during the mass he had been given a silver, rather than golden, chalice.[425] Additional sources recount the *adventus* ceremonies conducted in France at this time; for instance in 1021 Duke William of Aquitaine was received with a procession in Limoges, wherein the monks of the local monastery carried with them evangelistaries and censers.[426] During the symbolic ritual of *adventus* the nature of the gospel book as sacred object was emphasized over its function as a text to be read. More than that, these impressive gospel books served as marks of status and honor due to a visitor.

At the other end of Bamberg Cathedral's Ottonian history were the masses said for the deceased Henry II following his death in July 1024 in Göttingen.

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[423] Cited and translated in Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, 53.
[424] For rank, see the usurpation of kingly prerogatives by Duke Hermann of Saxony at Magdeburg. Bernhardt, *Itinerant Kingship*, 54.
[425] Heinrich Fichtenau, *Living in the Tenth Century: Mentalities and Social Orders*, trans. Patrick Geary (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 52.
[426] Ibid, 53.

Following his burial at Bamberg in front of the cross altar, memorial masses was said for Henry's soul every year on the anniversary of his death.[427] It is likely that the liturgical objects, including the manuscripts within their treasury bindings, which he gave to the church, were used for during these anniversary masses. The *Pericopes of Henry II* contained two different lections for such masses both from John's gospel, which follow illuminations on facing pages of the dead rising from their graves and the Last Judgment.[428] The resurrection of the dead was repeated on the cover of the pericope book, and likely would have been seen by the audience, primarily, if not exclusively, composed of the clergy when used during memorial masses. The development of these specialized services and prayers for the dead, especially within monastic circles, was in addition to the Romano-Germanic Pontifical, one of the primary contributions of liturgists around the millennium.[429] Masses for the deceased were an important form of liturgical memory and were a vital service carried out by the Church. Although they were canons rather than monks, the clergy of Bamberg Cathedral during the first half of the eleventh century were intended to live the communal life and model themselves upon the brothers of St Michael's at Hildesheim. In addition to the operation of the cathedral they were expected to pray for the soul of their patron and founder.[430] Later generations of these men not only preserved the memory of Henry II, but also pushed for his canonization.[431]

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[427] Bernd Schneidmüller, "Die Einzigartig Geliebte Stadt-Heinrich II. und Bamberg," in *Kaiser Heinrich II*, 48.

[428] John 5:45-29 and 6:37-40 on fols. 201v-203v.

[429] Anselmus Davril and Eric Palazzo, *La vie des moines au temps des grandes abbayes, Xe-XIIIe siècle* (Paris: Hachette littératures, 2000), 121-154; and Palazzo, "Liturgie de l'Occident," 373

[430] Göller, "Domstift und Kollegiatstifte," 43.

[431] Klaus Guth, "Die Verehrung der Bistumspatrone im Mittelalter," in Göller, ed., *1000 Jahre Bistum Bamberg*, 30.

The memorial masses connected the living with the dead through a symbolic form of gift exchange.[432] As the historian Otto Oexle proposes, this allowed the dead, and not just the sainted dead, to be present in the lives of the living.[433] In the secular Carolingian world and beyond there was an expectation that an heir would say prayers for the soul of his or her benefactor and keep the ancestor's memory alive as a way to redress the imbalance between giver and recipient. Not merely a counter-gift in an economic sense, this practice of offering prayers to benefactors served to link the former, present, and future owners of the wealth or property.[434] Although the safeguarding of the memory of the dead was an activity shared by different members of society (especially Ottonian noblewomen, as will be examined below), increasingly often during the Middle Ages it became the special purview of the Church, in part because they were better equipped than individuals for preserving these memories.[435]

The case of Henry II's donations of liturgical objects is exceptional in combining these various facets of medieval *memoria*. According to Thietmar, Henry, lacking any children, decided to make the Church his heir, thus insuring that his memory would be maintained and his soul vouchsafed through the clergy.[436] His donations to the church of Bamberg, including the pericope book, not only formed one side of the social and symbolic exchange, but also, similar to the memorial masses, made the cathedral's founder and patron present in the realm of the living. In

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[432] Georges Duby was the first to use an anthropological/economic model to describe medieval giving to the church. *The Early Growth of the European Economy: Warriors and Peasants from the Seventh to the Twelfth Century*, trans. Howard B. Clarke (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), 48-57. In her book on donations to Cluny Barbara Rosenwein effectively argued that around the millennium lay giving to the Church was not an economic exchange (wealth for prayers), but rather part of a symbolic exchange that was imbued with social meaning and linked the givers to a variety of individuals and communities. *To Be the Neighbor of Saint Peter: The Social Meaning of Cluny's Property, 909-1049* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

[433] "Die Gegenwart der Toten," in *Death in Middle Ages*, ed. Herman Braet and Werner Verbeke (Louvain: Louvain University Press, 1983), 19-77.

[434] Patrick Geary, *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 79-83.

[435] Ibid, 90-91. See also, Patrick Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 48-80.

[436] Thietmar, *Chronicon*, 258.

the years following his death the gifts like the liturgical manuscripts served as heirlooms, which by their very nature represent the past in the present.[437] After his canonization they became relics, more acutely connecting the realms of the living and the dead. Thus the donated liturgical manuscripts and treasury bindings, to borrow the phrasing of Elizabeth van Houts, functioned as "pegs for memory."[438] The use of inscriptions with names made these objects especially effective for this purpose. As mentioned in the first chapter, a narrow strip between the Carolingian ivory and Byzantine enamels of the pericope book records Henry's name. Certainly only the clergy, and only those closely handling the manuscript, would be able to read this inscription. This is logical and practical, as it was these individuals responsible for reciting the deceased's name, not only during masses for the dead but also during the weekly mass. Stretching back long before the Ottonian period, the recitation and thus preservation of the names of the deceased was an important aspect of the liturgy. [439] Significantly, these were recorded in specific manuscripts or on diptychs beginning in the Late Antique period.[440] Although donor portraits, such as those within the manuscripts, could preserve memories, only through inscriptions were the all important identities of individuals portrayed made clear. As a combination of material gift, image, and written record set within rituals for remembrance, the treasury binding of the *Pericopes of Henry II* was much more than simply a liturgical prop.

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[437] Dale Kinney use of visual cultural terminology of heirloom to bring new perspective to early medieval objects. "First-Generation Diptychs in the Discourse of Visual Culture," in *Spätantike und byzantinische Elfenbeinbildwerke*, 155-158.

[438] Houts, *Memory and Gender*, 93-102.

[439] There was also a secular practice of namesakes that served this purpose. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*, 73-77.

[440] Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, 21. The continued existance of consular diptychs in church treasuries also likely influenced an ivory now in Prague used for a book cover representing an apostle, which Cutler considers an eleventh century creation rather than a reworked Late Antique ivory as suggested by Goldschmidt. Anthony Cutler, "Late Antique of Medieval? The 'Consul' in Prague Castle Library and the Question of the 'Recarved' Ivory Diptychs," reprinted in *Late Antique and Byzantine Ivory Carving,* Variorum Collected Studies Series (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 706.

The fact that throughout the liturgical ceremonies performed at Bamberg the clergy was the primary audience for the treasury bindings should not be taken to signify the limited functions or impact of these objects within Ottonian society. That a deacon, priest, or bishop had greater time to examine the covers during the mass and reflect on their imagery made sense considering their duties and the mentalities of the period. Through their training these men were also better equipped to interpret the messages and add their own meanings to the decoration of the treasury bindings. Although written in the twelfth century, a text by Hugh of Amiens explaining the differing roles of the clergy points out that the deacon's function was to educate and bring god's word to the laity through their reading of the Gospels.[441] Given a gospel book upon ordination, the deacon could communicate to others the complex theological ideas displayed on the covers and contained within the text.[442] From another point of view the priest or bishop could be seen as the laity's representative as both performer and viewer during the Eucharistic celebration. Over the course of the early Middle Ages, the laity took a less active part within the performance of the mass. Communion was taken much less regularly by the congregation and the canon was said silently.[443] During the Ottonian period the priest or bishop stood in place of the worshipping community and lifted the laity's prayers up to God. As he communicated with God on their behalf, could he not also have served as their eyes, by proxy?

That the chief audience of the details of the treasury bindings was the clergy also does not necessarily negate the existence of political messages imbedded within

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[441] Jan Michael Joncas, "A Skein of Sacred Sevens: Hugh of Amiens on Orders and Ordination," in *Medieval Liturgy*, 95-96.
[442] Roger Reynolds, "The Ordination of Clerics in the Middle Ages," in *Clerical Orders in the Early Middle Ages: Duties and Ordination* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 7. See also the other essays in this compilation of Reynolds' work on clerical orders and duties.
[443] Snoek, *Medieval Piety*, 44.

the ornamentation of these covers. During the eleventh century church and state were inexorably intertwined; Ottonian bishops, who were usually members of the aristocracy, were key political figures and valuable allies for a ruler. If the subject matter of the ivory cover of the pericope book did speak to Henry's imperial intentions, what better audience than his cousin, the bishop of a new diocese towards the eastern edge of his realm?[444] Furthermore, the missionary goal to convert the Slavic population east of the bishopric was stated to be a primary aim of the foundation of the bishopric of Bamberg.[445] With the representations of the apostles on the pericope binding used during the mass, the bishop had his mission visually represented before him.

In addition to the varied functions and contexts of Bamberg's treasury bindings described in this chapter, luxurious gospel book covers throughout the Ottonian empire appeared in still more ceremonies. These included coronations, oath taking, and church councils when a gospel book was placed on a throne. Although we know gospel books were used at these times, it is not recorded whether they were always enclosed in ornate bindings.[446] Considering the Ottonian kings' and bishops' reliance on ritual and display as their method for wielding power and the recorded expectations for *adventus* ceremonies, it is probable that they were. What becomes clear from examining these rituals in addition to those described in the preceding examination is that the liturgical manuscripts with treasury bindings were important players in performances, rather than simply books designed to be read. To understand how viewers saw and understood these covers it is essential to remember that these performative contexts changed and with these changes the meaning of treasury

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[444] As claimed by Nielsen, Hoc Opus Eximium, 59-65.

[445] The mission is recorded in the Protocol of the Frankfurt Synod in 1007. Munich, Bayerische Hauptstaatsarchiv, Bamberger Urk. 21, reproduced in *Bernward von Hildesheim*: 2, 93-94. For an English translation see, Nielsen, Hoc Opus Eximium, 59-60.

[446] Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, 52-53.

bindings was also likely transformed. As we will see in the next chapter, to conceptualize better the unfixed signification of treasury bindings and viewer reception it is useful to compare this form of visual communication with that of the spoken word in the Ottonian period.

## Treasury Bindings in Female Communities

Up until this point the discussion has focused primarily on male audiences, patrons, and users of treasury bindings, largely because at Bamberg Cathedral these men were the major players involved in the liturgy. During most church services men and women were segregated. Elaborate planning went into arranging the placement for the readings so that during the gospel pericope the deacon would not face the women's side but still face the east as was mandated.[447] Nevertheless, during the Ottonian period women were both patrons and viewers of richly bound manuscripts in their own right. Examining the cases of the female communities of Niedermünster and Essen allows us to understand better their commissions and their interactions with treasury bindings.

The foundation of Niedermünster, for canonesses from noble families, was located between the cathedral of Regensburg and the Danube. A half a century before the *Uta Codex* would have been in use in the second decade of the eleventh century the previous church had been replaced with a three-aisled basilica with a short transept and three shallow apses through the patronage of Henry II's grandfather, Duke Henry I.[448] Duke Henry was later buried at Niedermünster and his wife entered the community there.[449] The present-day Romanesque church is not much larger than

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[447] Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite*, 1:426.
[448] Oswald, *Vorromanische Kirchenbauten*, 276-277, and Jacobsen, *Vorromanische Kirchenbauten*, 349-340.
[449] Cohen, "Abbess Uta," 47-48.

this Ottonian building, which was approximately 45 meters in length.[450] Even in the nave towards the rear of the church the three-dimensional figure of Christ on the book box of the *Uta Codex* could have been visible from its position on the altar, but was it visible to the canonesses? The male clergy would have performed the mass itself. During the Ottonian period it seems to have been the practice to hide female monastics and canonesses from the view of the laity who could attend services at the church, and to separate the women from the male clerics.[451] At some churches this meant the women occupied the spaces in the gallery; however there does not seem to have been such a structure at Niedermünster.[452] Although they were likely separated from other worshippers, perhaps in a side aisle, the women of the abbey probably had at least a limited view of the altar. The fact that the figure of Christ was created in high relief and is almost a foot tall and that the cover lacks minute ornamentation indicates that it may have been designed so that the women not present at the altar could still see the cover clearly.

Perhaps the subject matter of Christ enthroned offered these women, who under the reforms instigated by Abbess Uta had to comply now with the Benedictine Rule, a tangible image of their symbolic bridegroom. It is possible that this manuscript was used in the ceremonies in which a new member received the veil or at the naming of a new abbess. Lead by the bishop, the rites were also public. For instance, when Princess Sophia, the future abbess of Gandersheim, received the veil

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[450] Ibid.
[451] Gisela Muschiol, "Time and Space: Liturgy and Rite in Female Monasteries of the Middle Ages," in *Crown and Veil,* 199.
[452] Carol Jäggi and Uwe Lobbedey, "Church and Cloister: The Architecture of Female Monasticism in the Middle Ages," in *Crown and Veil*, 112-113.

in 987 or 989, in attendance were her mother, the Empress Theophanu, and younger

brother, then King Otto III.[453]

Although the Essen community was not founded by the Ottonians— begun

instead during the mid-ninth episcopacy of Altfrid, Bishop of Hildesheim—it became

an important foundation for the Luidolfings who installed female members of the

family there as abbesses in the late tenth century.[454] It was during this period that

Essen experienced a "Golden Age" with not only the commissioning of many works

of liturgical art, but also an extensive rebuilding program following the 946 fire.[455]

During the tenure of Theophanu as abbess (1039-1058), in which the richly bound

gospel book bearing her image was used, the foundation's church had a basilican plan

with an elaborate west end that was begun under Abbess Mathilda II (fig. 83). Clearly

recalling the appearance of the Carolingian Aachen Palatine Chapel, the church

exterior had a *Westwerk* with an octagonal, domed tower flanked by a pair of

staircases leading to the second story. Inside was a half-dome supported by four piers

below which was a two-storied structure that opened up to the nave through three

arches on both levels, clearly echoing the design in Aachen (fig. 84).[456] This space,

however, was not intended for the female community of Essen. These women instead

occupied the galleries above the nave.[457] From this position they still likely could

have seen the altar area in the east, behind which stood a marble column surmounted

by a cross, a gift from the Abbess Ida (d. before 974) which possibly alluded to the

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[453] Ludger Körntgen, "Zwischen Herrschern und Heiligen: Zum Verhältnis von Königsnähe und Eigeninteresse bei den ottonischen Frauengemeinschaften Essen und Gandersheim," in *Herrschaft, Liturgie und Raum: Studien zur mittelalterlichen Geschichte des Frauenstifts Essen*, ed. Katrinette Bodarwé and Thomas Schilp (Essen: Klartext, 2002), 17.

[454] Bodarwé, *Sanctimoniales Litteratae*, 32-60.

[455] For this construction and especially the *Westbau,* see Lange, "Westbau des Essener Doms," 1-12, and Fremer, *Äbtissin Theophanu*, 68-82.

[456] Albert Verbeek, "Die architektonische Nachfolge der Aachener Pfalzkapelle," in *Karl der Große,* 4. Das Nachleben, ed. Wolfgang Braunfels and Percy Ernst Schramm (Dusseldorf: Schwann, 1967), 131-156.

[457] Jäggi and Lobbedey, "Church and Cloister," 114-115.

gemmed cross placed at the site of the Crucifixion. Across from this cross, in the western portion of the church, was a bronze, seven-branched candlestick, a gift from the Abbess Mathilda, which still stands *in situ* and references the menorah found within the sanctuary of the Jewish Temple.[458] Thus, the *Theophanu Gospels* were used within an environment that bridged time and space through the referencing of the Jewish *sancta sanctorum*, a copy of the monument on the site of Christ's Resurrection, and an imperial architectural copy. Within this richly meaningful setting, the many gifts of liturgical art commissioned by the abbesses, including the *Theophanu Gospels*, processional crosses, and famous gilded statue of the Virgin and Child, were used during the performances of the mass and other ceremonies.

In addition to outfitting their place of worship, the abbesses of Essen, along with those of Gandersheim and Quedlinburg, used their patronage to preserve the history of the Luidolfing house. This facet of their patronage has received a considerable amount of scholarly attention in the last decade and a half.[459] While Gandersheim and Quedlinburg can boast of impressive written histories, the foundation of canonesses at Essen left behind a remarkable history preserved in luxury liturgical objects. By the time Abbess Theophanu commissioned her treasury binding towards the middle of the eleventh century, the *Schatz* of Essen already included the aforementioned processional crosses, bronze candelabrum, and the gold-covered Essen Madonna.[460] These donations memorialized the extended Luidolfings and also made clear the important role of women within this dynasty.[461] Through her donation of the treasury binding, on which she is clearly depicted both in image and inscription, Theophanu linked herself with the Ottonian abbesses of Essen's "Golden

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[458] Vera Henkelmann, "Der Siebenarmige Leutcher des Essener Münsters und die Memoria der Äbtissin Mathilde," in Falk et al.,...*wie das Gold*, 151-167.

[459] For example, see the work of Katrinette Bodarwé, Birgitta Falk, and Torsten Fremer.

[460] See note 32.

[461] Nielsen, "Hoc Opus Eximium," 66-131; and Fremer, *Äbtissin Theophanu*, passim.

Age" as she lived in a Germany now under the control of a different dynasty, the

Salian. Not only did Theophanu commission the manuscript and its treasury binding,

but also she ordered construction of a new exterior crypt in the east end of the church,

"as if a man," according to an eleventh-century source.[462] This crypt would be the site

of her future burial. Through these commissions she honored the church and ensured

the survival of her memory and that of her family. This can clearly be seen in the

dedicatory inscription of the new crypt, which states that this place of prayer was

consecrated on 9 September 1051 by the Archbishop Hermann (Theophanu's brother,

the Archbishop of Cologne) at the request of his sister, the *nobilissima* Abbess

Theophanu of Essen.[463] As seen on the cover of her gospel book, she offered these

gifts to God and the Virgin, served as an intercessor for her community, and

simultaneously procured a kind of immortality for herself.

Not simply seen from afar, it is possible that the gifted objects in the Essen

treasury, the visible history of the foundation, were carried by the female members of

the community during processions as was done in later centuries.[464] At such times,

processed gospel books served as markers of status and education for these women,

themes that will be explored in the next chapter. The symbolic nature of richly bound

books is not as unlikely as it might seem; in representations of abbesses from the

tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries in both manuscripts and tomb sculpture the

women are shown carrying manuscripts within treasury bindings.[465] Preserved for

centuries, the treasury binding of the *Theophanu Gospels* and the other objects in the

treasury served as this female community's visible patrimony, their link to their past.

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[462] Fremer, *Äbtissin Theophanu*, 74.
[463] Cited and translated from Latin by Fremer, *Äbtissin Theophanu*, 73.
[464] Gass, "Theophanu-Evangeliar," 177.
[465] See, for example, the tomb sculpture of the Abbesses of Quedlinburg, as discussed by Cynthia Hahn in "Relics and Reliquaries: The Construction of Imperial Memory and Meaning, with Particular Attention to Treasuries at Conques, Aachen, and Quedlinburg," in Maxwell, ed., *Representing History*, 144-145.

The treasury objects allowed for the external storage of the community's memories in a way similar to written histories. Brought out from storage and used in the liturgy and other ceremonies, however, these objects functioned more like oral histories in which the past is performed anew and made present.

**Within the Treasury: Collection, Storage, and History-Making**

When carried in processions and used during the mass, the treasury bindings appeared all the more impressive because on these occasions they came out of hiding. Unfortunately, we know little about how Ottonian manuscripts with treasury bindings were stored and often have to hypothesize based on late medieval practices. Even the room in which they were kept is not certain, although we know they were not kept with the manuscripts in collegiate and monastic libraries.[466] Since they were required for the liturgy, it is reasonable to assume that they were kept in the sacristy of the church. Yet where the sacristies were located in the Ottonian structures, most of which are long demolished, has not been established through archeological investigations, and, despite the request of Pierre Alain Mariaux, they may never be.[467] Scholars assume that liturgical manuscripts and their precious bindings were kept in lockable cabinets or chests within the treasury room or sacristy. Such a cupboard dating from around 1230 has been preserved from the Halberstadt cathedral treasury.[468] Although in the thirteenth century the Abbesses of Quedlinburg constructed a specialized space for the treasury which may have had tables on which

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[466] Needham, *Twelve Centuries of Bookbindings*, 22.
[467] Pierre Alain Mariaux , "Collecting (and Display)," in Rudolf, *Companion to Medieval Art*, 214.
[468] Hans-Joachim Krause, "Zur Geschichte und Funktion des spätromanischen Schranks im Halberstädter Domschatz," *Sachsen und Anhalt* 19 (1997): 454-494.

objects could have been displayed, there is no evidence for such a display within a room during the Ottonian period.[469]

As Cynthia Hahn points out, these treasuries had to maintain their status as strongholds in order to ensure future donations.[470] Thies also meant that the precious materials, once given to the Church, could only be removed from the treasury and converted back into economic capital in special circumstances, one of which was the ransoming of prisoners.[471] The protection afforded liturgical manuscripts within the church treasuries must have been tacitly accepted, because such books were considered a safe place to preserve institutional records. Indeed, even the inventories of the treasuries were often kept in liturgical manuscripts within these collections.[472]

Although a church's *ornamenta*, which included deluxe liturgical manuscripts in treasury binding, may have been kept out of sight the majority of the time, this does not mean it was out of mind. The memory of a foundation's spectacular holdings could color individuals' impressions of a specific church and encourage further gift giving. In a laudatory poem praising Bamberg, Abbot Gerhard of Seeon compares the newly founded bishopric to the Old Testament "City of Books," *Cariath Sepher*, but says it should also be esteemed for its arts. He describes Bamberg thus, "Here a weight of silver shines brightly with mountains of gold. Radiant silks are laden with various gems."[473] The allusion here is to an accumulated hoard of precious objects, the sheer number of which has impressed itself on the mind of this viewer.

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[469] For the Quedlinburg treasury room, see Hahn, "Relics and Reliquaries," 142-143.

[470] Hahn, "Meaning of Early Medieval Treasuries," 1.

[471] Janes, *God and Gold*, 135.

[472] Beate Braun-Niehr, "Das Buch im Schatz, im Dienst von Liturgie, Heiligenverehrung, und Memoria," in *...das Heilige sichtbar machen : Domschätze in Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft*, ed. Ulrike Wendland (Regensburg: Schnell und Steiner, 2010), 122.

[473] "Hic onus argenti collucet montibus auri, Adduntur variis radiantia serica gemmis," *MGH Poeta Latini*, ed. Karl Strecker and Gabriel Silazi (Berlin: Wiedmannschen Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1939), vol. 5, fasc. 2:397-398.The complete poem Latin and German translation by Klaus van Eikels can also be found in *Kaiser Heinrich II.*, 206-207.

In fitting out Bamberg Cathedral's treasury and library, Henry sought to make it the equivalent of well-established collections at older foundations. One wonders if some of the manuscripts were acquired purely for their symbolic status as a way to show that Bamberg would become a new place of learning. Obtaining the number of manuscripts the foundation required resulted in some rather questionable collecting practices on the part of Henry, at least by modern standards. For instance, a significant portion of the manuscripts, some of which had treasury bindings, were taken from the collection of Otto III. Henry had earlier waylaid the funeral procession that was carrying Otto's body back from Rome for burial in Germany and forcibly took the imperial insignia. Sometime later he also must have taken possession of the deceased king's manuscripts.[474] In a chronicle from Petershausen Abbey, Henry's furnishing of Bamberg Cathedral is characterized quite differently than in Thietmar's account. The author claims that Henry despoiled other churches and took their treasures.[475] Whether understood in this negative light or from the positively glowing viewpoint of the Abbot of Seeon, Henry was remarkable as a collector. Even during his lifetime his collection for his "heir", Bamberg Cathedral, formed audiences' perception of him and shaped how he would be remembered.

To probe the Ottonian practice of collecting and conceptualization of collections and collectors, modern formulations of what constitutes a collection are useful in that they highlight what medieval treasuries are not. Studies on the histories of collecting have focused primarily on the early modern phenomenon of "Cabinets of Curiosities," and modern museums. Although sometimes included in discussions of the pre-history of modern collections, medieval treasuries have little in common with

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[474] Florentine Mütherich, "The Library of Otto III," in *The Role of the Book in Medieval Culture*, ed. Peter Ganz (Turnhout: Brepols, 1986), 24.

[475] Reprinted in Hoffman, *Buchkunst und Königtum*, 14. For an excellent discussion of this passage and its relevance for the study of Ottonian spoliation and the treasury binding of the *Pericopes of Henry II*, see Nielsen, Hoc Opus Eximium, 41-52.

these later collections. First, the objects within the Ottonian treasuries continue to have a function beyond merely being a piece of a collection since they were used during the performance of the mass. According to an often-cited theorist of collecting, however, this means that accumulated treasury bindings, processional crosses, chalices, etc. held within the sacristies are not collections.

> If the *predominant* value of an object or idea for the person possessing it is intrinsic, i.e., if it is valued primarily for use, or purpose, or aesthetically pleasing quality, or other value inherent in the object or accruing to it by whatever circumstances of custom, training, or habit, it is not a collection. If the predominant value is representative or representational, i.e., if said object or idea or ideas, such as being one of a series, part of a whole, a specimen of a class, then it is the subject of a collection.[476]

Second, the treasury bindings are not representative in that they do not represent an entire class of objects (all other treasury bindings), because there were often multiples of the same object as seen in the treasury of Bamberg. The numerous ornately bound manuscripts are not "samples."[477] The treasuries were thus not like the *ur*-collection, Noah's ark, which removed beings from the outside world and placed them in a new context in which their value was to represent the exterior world.[478] In many respects the church treasuries functioned more as hoards than collections. The value in inventories was placed on numbers and weights, a record of accumulation.

Nevertheless, the Ottonian church treasuries were an accumulation of objects that could be understood as a whole entity, which represented an economic and spiritual capital of the holding institution, and thus a collection. The objects within them, such as the treasury bindings, functioned as individual souvenirs or heirlooms

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[476] Walter Durost, *Children's Collecting Activity Related to Social Factors* (New York: Columbia University, Teachers College, 1932), 10. His formulation is quoted and discussed in Susan M. Pearce, *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1995), 20-21; and Mieke Bal, "Telling Objects: A Narrative Perspective on Collecting," in *The Cultures of Collecting*, ed. John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), 110-111.

[477] Susan Stewart conceptualizes collections as offering examples, not samples, in the way of a souvenir. They offer metaphor rather than metonymy *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 150.

[478] Ibid., 152.

that when combined represented a history of giving at the site. In preserving the

treasury bindings, crosses, reliquaries, and luxurious textiles, which were created and

given at a specific moment in time, the Ottonian practice of collecting reveals a

valuation of the object's ability to link the past to the present. Individual moments in

material form, the treasury bindings when combined in a church's treasury created a

narrative, a history in which the specific site was valued and honored. As Amy

Remensynder has demonstrated with the treasury at Conques, the narrative the objects

told could be transformed and changed according to need.[479]

As mentioned before, treasury bindings themselves were collections in

miniature. Although many of the pieces such as the ivories, gems, or enamels (not to

mention the manuscripts themselves) had a history of their own, when combined onto

the surface of a liturgical manuscript they accrued new meanings. The sums of the

different objects when placed on the covers became greater than the parts, the very

essence of a collection. The covers as seen in Chapter 1 were works of *bricolage,*

constructed from other objects and pieces in an additive manner.[480] The composition

of the covers can be compared to that of the treasury, in which individual pieces from

the past were put to use in the present. As the covers were altered and transformed

with new pieces added to them, they were in a sense living, open-ended works. The

treasuries too were collections that were never finished, narratives without an end,

which lived through the continued donations.[481] Joined with other treasury bindings

and additional forms of a church's *ornamenta*, each manuscript formed a piece of the

foundation's narrative of its past. This story, however, represented only one of the

many that the treasury bindings told. The treasury bindings' ability to be open to a

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[479] Amy G. Remensnyder, "Legendary Treasure at Conques: Reliquaries and Imaginative Memory," *Speculum* 71, no. 4 (Oct., 1996): 884-906.
[480] See Fricke, *Ecce Fides*, 281-310
[481] Hahn, "Meaning of Early Medieval Treasuries," 3.

variety of interpretations and serve as a visual form of story-telling will be further explored in the next chapter.

**Conclusion**

In addition to the varied functions and contexts described in this chapter, treasury bindings appeared in still more ceremonies. These included coronations, oath taking, and church councils when a gospel book was placed on a throne. Although we know gospel books were used at these times, it is not recorded whether they were always enclosed in ornate bindings.[482] Considering the Ottonian kings' and bishops' reliance on ritual and display as their method for wielding power and the recorded expectations for *adventus* ceremonies, it is probable that they were. What becomes clear from examining these rituals, in addition to those described in the preceding examination, is that the liturgical manuscripts with treasury bindings were important players in performances, rather than simply books designed to be read. To understand how viewers saw and understood these covers it is essential to remember that these performative contexts changed and with these changes the meaning of treasury bindings was also likely transformed. As we will see in the next chapter, to conceptualize better the unfixed signification of treasury bindings and viewer reception, it is useful to compare this form of visual communication with that of the spoken word in the Ottonian period.

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[482] Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, 52-53.

**Chapter Four**

**Visions of the Word: Treasury Bindings at the Intersections of Written, Oral, and Visual Communication**

Lay and clerical viewers in important Ottonian centers across the realm experienced Scripture both aurally, during the readings of the Liturgy of the Word, and visually, either through reading the text and/or glimpsing closed, richly ornamented liturgical manuscripts. The specifics of these early eleventh-century ceremonies and the nature of the audiences discussed in the last chapter enable a more accurate interpretation of viewer response to these objects and the ways in which the treasury bindings negotiated between Ottonian audiences and the Word of God. Seeking to better understand the complex dialogue between viewers and luxuriously bound gospel books, this chapter examines two interrelated themes. The first is the mechanics of visual perception and the ways by which covers elicit viewer attention. The second is the convergence of visual (the cover's iconography), oral (the words spoken during the mass), and written (the contained text) communication. The aim of both of these investigations is to discover how the covers were influenced by Ottonian conceptualizations of Scripture and the written word and the means by which the covers in turn shaped viewers' responses to and beliefs about the Word.

At one level the covers provided visual manifestations of the biblical text, composed primarily of the material record of God's promises to believers and an account of Christ's teachings. During the mass this text, unlike the covers, was seen by a comparatively small group of men. This chapter argues that the creators of the covers intuitively harnessed innate responses to visual stimuli to capture viewers' attention and impart beliefs about the essence of Scripture. Drawing on theories of

visual perception proposed by cognitive psychologists and neuroscientists, it is possible to see how specific elements of the covers' appearance—the light reflecting, colorful materials; the three-dimensional representations of holy figures; and the emphasis of the center—engaged viewers. The efficacy of these designs in provoking viewer response is testified through their widespread use across Western Europe before, during, and after the Ottonian period; the covers' effectiveness is given further support in the written responses of theologians to justify the employment of these materials and images, even when they were directly at odds with church teachings. It follows that if precious materials and sculpted figures were not extremely effective and highly valued, there would be no motivation to defend them to ensure their continued use. Tapping into the evidence provided by modern scientific theories and early medieval writings, we can begin to appreciate how these ornate covers mediated between Scripture and viewers.

The reconstruction of the reception of treasury bindings and their manuscripts also necessitates an examination of medieval reading practices and the nature of literacy in early eleventh-century Germany. Although levels of literacy were significantly higher than what was once stated in the scholarship, Ottonian society still relied primarily on oral communication. I propose that this facet of Ottonian culture impacted the design of treasury bindings, which served as interfaces between spoken and written words. These richly covered gospel books were seen, at least by some, not only during the reading of the lections, but also throughout the services as praises were sung, creeds were recited, and sacred prayers were whispered. It is therefore instructive to consider how the covers communicated in tandem with the ritualized speech of these ceremonies as they constructed viewers' perceptions of the Word of God. This is not to imply that the covers simply illustrated the spoken words

of the mass in lieu of illustrating the written text; these, after all, overlap. Instead this chapter proposes that the treasury bindings reflected and amplified the aural experience of the Liturgy of the Word for viewers. Scholarship on oral traditions in semi-literate societies and the mechanics of ceremonial, oral communication places the seemingly formulaic "speech" of the covers in a new light.

While the first sections of this chapter investigate *how* the covers communicated, the concluding portion briefly proposes *what* they communicated. The materials, the iconography, and the way in which treasury bindings and their gospel manuscripts were used spoke to the universal, multifaceted, and often paradoxical nature of the Word that was eloquently described in the opening to the Book of John. As we have seen even in the discussion of the treasury bindings and the manuscripts in the mass, Scripture was not simply a text; it could also function as an object. The treasury bindings made clear that the Word was more than writing. It was incarnational, it was at the very center of creation, and it was the true light.

## Capturing Viewers' Attention: The Covers' Designs and Visual Perception

In his monograph on the symbolism of gold in Late Antiquity, Dominic Janes wrote, "to be effective symbols must be striking to the viewer. If gold had the power of attracting interest, it is not surprising to find that objects intended to catch attention were adorned with the metal."[483] A similar observation can be made about the material splendor in general of the treasury bindings. The precious materials, which modern audiences and likely period viewers overwhelmingly noticed first,[484] had to

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[483] Janes, *God and Gold*, 12-13.

[484] Anecdotal evidence of this is provided from an informal test of viewers' initial response to reproductions of the treasury bindings. Thirty undergraduate students in two art history courses at Rutgers University were asked to record their initial responses to a projected image (roughly twice the size as the original) of the front cover of the *Pericopes of Henry II*. Overwhelmingly the first two or three words they used to record their reactions were ornate, luxury, gold, and ivory.

capture viewers' attention before the material could communicate the spiritual and/or political significance of the manuscript to audiences. The same goes for the iconography of the covers. The task for the creators of these covers was to draw on established techniques and devise new methods for attracting the eyes of viewers. As discussed in Chapter 2, this was achieved through trial and error over the centuries. The artists responsible for the six covers of this study used reflective materials, framing devices, centralized designs, dramatic contrasts, and three-dimensional depictions of the human body in part to connect with viewers. As these elements were used on covers over centuries, we can safely assume that their solutions were effective.

The question now facing us is why these visual elements of the treasury bindings were and are efficacious. Although there have been studies about culturally driven aspects of visual perception and the meanings ascribed to specific materials, moderns, ancients, and medievals have struggled to explain why certain material things, such as gold or gems, draw viewer attention or, in other words, are attractive. Semir Zeki, a leading expert on the visual brain, suggests a reason why we continue to find it difficult to adequately express in words the effective power of visual arts even if we recognize it. As he points out our visual systems have evolved over many more millions of years than our linguistic systems.[485] A relatively new approach to art history which incorporates findings and theoretical models from neuroscience and cognitive psychology, however, gives us the tools and vocabulary to speak more concretely about viewer response to the visual arts. Using devices that enable scientists to track the minute movements of the eye as well brain imaging technology, researchers have produced quantitative results that aid them in theorizing about the

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[485] Semir Zeki, *Inner vision: An Exploration of Art and the Brain* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 9. For an introduction to Zeki's work see Onians, *Neuroarthistory*, 189-203.

mechanics of visual perception and attention. Art historians are fortunate in that the

methods these scholars use to understand real-world perception involve showing

human test subjects visual representations (drawings, photographs, computer-

generated images), which makes their research directly relevant to the questions art

historians pose.

Not surprisingly, since medieval artists were themselves viewers, the creators

of treasury bindings hit upon methods that directly exploited several neurological and

cognitive responses to visual stimuli, which scientists are beginning to explore. Zeki,

who considers artists to be neurologists in a sense, writes about this process:

> They are those who have experimented upon and, without ever realising it,
> understood something about the organization of the visual brain, though with
> techniques that are unique to them…They do so by working and re-working a
> painting until it achieves a desirable effect, until it pleases them, which is the
> same thing as saying until it pleases their brains. If, in the process it pleases
> others as well—or pleases other brains as well—they have understood
> something general about the neural organisation of the visual pathways that
> evoke pleasure, without knowing anything about the details of that neural
> organization or indeed knowing that such pathways exist at all.[486]

The same claim can be made for Ottonian goldsmiths and ivory carvers, who as we

have seen experimented in these ways. One of Zeki's primary arguments is that art

and the visual systems share a common function in that they both search for

essentials.[487] Zeki focuses on modern art that exaggerates individual elements such as

color or movement to flesh out this claim. For historians of medieval art, this search

for essentials is directly relevant as well as a familiar concept. It is a trope in

discussions of medieval art that artists often forwent mimetic naturalism in order to

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[486] Zeki, *Inner Vision*, 3. The search for essentials is further explained in a more recent contribution, Semir Zeki, "The Art of the Brain," *Sichtweisen: zur veränderten Wahrnehmung von Objekten in Museen*, ed. Bernhard Graf and Astrid B. Müller (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2005), 115-116. Merlin Donald adds another dimension to this, writing, "Art is *constructivist* in nature, aimed at the deliberate refinement and elaboration of mental models and worldviews," in "Art and Cognitive Evolution." In *The Artful Mind: Cognitive Science and the Riddle of Human Creativity*, ed. Mark Turner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 4-5.
[487] Zeki, *Inner Vision*, 8-9.

present essentials (hierarchies, relationships, spiritual man, etc.). The very narrative

scenes on the covers, as is often noted, have been distilled into their essentials.[488] I

propose that the covers were so effective in capturing viewers' attention and shaping

their thinking because they exaggerated and heightened specific visual stimuli to

which the visual systems were already highly sensitive.[489] Modern theories about

visual perception and attention allow us to deconstruct these ornate covers into the

individual elements that each served to attract the eyes of viewers. As we will see, the

design of the covers also guided viewers' attention to elements that were considered

important or informative. What these artists did, in the words of psychologist and

neuroscientist Merlin Donald, was a kind of "cognitive engineering", as the covers

they produced "were intended to influence the minds of an audience."[490]

Although the attraction to precious materials and the human body could not

always be easily accounted for by medievals, the attractive nature of such things was

recognized and the power of this attraction (at times considered dangerous) was

appreciated by the authors of Late Antique and Early Medieval texts. One of the most

useful insights for our purposes was made by Augustine in his *Confessions*, in which

he wrote about a curiosity which was stimulated "by the lust of the eyes." After first

discussing the many garments, pictures, and vessels which men have manufactured

for "enthrallment of the eyes," Augustine then writes,

> There is also a certain vain and curious longing in the soul, rooted in the same
> bodily senses, which is cloaked under the name of knowledge and learning;
> not having pleasure in the flesh, but striving for new experiences through the

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[488] Wolfgang Kemp, "Medieval Pictorial Systems," in *Iconography at the Crossroads. Papers from the Colloquium Sponsored by the Index of Christian Art, Princeton University 23-24 March 1990*, ed. Brendan Cassidy (Princeton: Index of Christian Art, Princeton University, 1993), 121; and Erich Dinkler, "Abbreviated Representations," in *Age of Spirituality*, 396.

[489] The theory that all art is in essence an exaggeration or caricature was postulated by neuroscientist Vilayanur Ramachandran. Although this is an overstatement and cannot really be applied to all artistic creations throughout the world, for the Early Medieval period it seems applicable. *A Brief Tour of Human Consciousness: From Impostor Poodles to Purple Numbers* (New York: Pearson, 2004), 40-59.

[490] Donald, "Art and Cognitive Evolution," 4.

> flesh. This longing--since its origin is our appetite for learning, and since the sight is the chief of our senses in the acquisition of knowledge--is called in the divine language "the lust of the eyes." For seeing is a function of the eyes; yet we also use this word for the other senses as well, when we exercise them in the search for knowledge. We do not say, "Listen how it glows," "Smell how it glistens," "Taste how it shines," or "Feel how it flashes," since all of these are said to beseen. And we do not simply say, "See how it shines," which only the eyes can perceive; but we also say, "See how it sounds, see how it smells, see how it tastes, see how hard it is." Thus, as we said before, the whole round of sensory experience is called "the lust of the eyes" because the function of seeing, in which the eyes have the principal role, is applied by analogy to the other senses when they are seeking after any kind of knowledge.[491]

In the following passage, Augustine goes on to describe how attention can be involuntarily drawn by stimuli (beautiful or not) using as his example a lacerated corpse. Several aspects of Augustine's statements about vision, knowledge acquisition, and language are worth further scrutiny. First, his understanding of the purpose of vision as the means to acquire knowledge which is motivated by curiosity is both inspired by Aristotlian thought and is surprisingly close to formulations of modern psychologists, although the terminology has changed.[492] Second, through examples, he explains how attention is driven both by viewers as well as stimuli. In the jargon of cognitive psychologists what he is describing is the influence of both top-down (subjective control) and bottom-up (stimulus driven) factors for visual

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[491] Augustine, *Confessions*, Book 10:35-36. "huc accedit alia forma temptationis multiplicius periculosa. praeter enim concupiscentiam carnis, quae inest in delectatione omnium sensuum et voluptatum, cui servientes depereunt qui longe se faciunt a te, inest animae per eosdem sensus corporis quaedam non se oblectandi in carne, sed experiendi per carnem vana et curiosa cupiditas nomine cognitionis et scientiae palliata. quae quoniam in appetitu noscendi est, oculi autem sunt ad noscendum in sensibus principes, concupiscentia oculorum eloquio divino appellata est. ad oculos enim proprie videre pertinet, utimur autem hoc verbo etiam in ceteris sensibus, cum eos ad cognoscendum intendimus. neque enim dicimus, `audi quid rutilet,' aut, `olefac quam niteat,' aut, `gusta quam splendeat,' aut, `palpa quam fulgeat': videri enim dicuntur haec omnia. dicimus autem non solum, `vide quid luceat,' quod soli oculi sentire possunt, sed etiam, `vide quid sonet,' `vide quid oleat,' `vide quid sapiat,' `vide quam durum sit.' ideoque generalis experientia sensuum concupiscentia (sicut dictum est) oculorum vocatur, quia videndi officium, in quo primatum oculi tenent, etiam ceteri sensus sibi de similitudine usurpant, cum aliquid cognitionis explorant." Translated in *Confessions and Enchiridion*, trans. Albert C. Outler (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1955).

[492] Richard D. Wright and Lawrence M. Ward, *Orienting of Attention* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 9. For a summary of Aristotle's theories of visual perception based on observation, see Onians, *Neuroarthistory*, 22-29.

attention.[493] In what follows, I will show how the covers elicited responses and drew

the attention of viewers, whose attention was also driven by culturally-shaped,

subjective, and internal factors.

Also interesting is Augustine's choice of words in his discussion of the

primacy of sight over the other senses, so powerful it shaped the language. The

attributes of objects which he states are perceived through vision alone include

glowing, glistening, shining, and flashing. As this is set within his consideration of the

potent yet problematic power of visual stimuli it is not unlikely that he considered

these aspects especially effective in drawing attention to man-made objects.

Significantly, this same vocabulary is used in inscriptions on the cover of the

*Pericopes of Henry II* as well as other early medieval liturgical art. Although the word

*fulsere* (have shined) on the pericope cover directly modifies the wisdom of the

disciples recorded in the Gospels, its appearance on the reflective cover is not

coincidental. Another example is provided by the dedicatory inscription within the

richly bound Le Puy Bible, commissioned by Theodulf, an important member of

Charlemagne's court, which runs:

> The work of this codex was commissioned by Theodulf, out of love for the
> one whose sacred law reverberates here. From the outside this shines through
> precious stones, gold, and purpure. Its radiance within is even stronger,
> though, on account of its great glory.[494]

The shining, glimmering nature of the metal and gems of the golden altar of Sant'

Ambrogio was also referenced in its inscription, with the caveat that the contained

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[493] Scientists still debate whether top-down or bottom-up factors are more influential for visual attention. For several essays about the subjective nature of visual attention, see Emily Balcetis and G. Daniel Lassiter, eds., *Social Psychology of Visual Perception* (New York: Psychology Press, 2010).
[494] CODICIS HUJUS OPUS STRUXIT THEODULFUS AMORE
ILLIUS HIC CUJUS LEW BENEDICTA TONAT
NAM FORIS HOC GEMMIS, AURO SPLENDESCIT ET OSTRO
SPLENDIDIORE TAMEN INTUS HONORE MICAT.
Cited and translated in Erik Thunø, "The Golden Altar of Sant' Ambrogio in Milan: Image and Materiality," in Kaspersen and Thunø, eds., *Decorating the Lord's Table*, 70. See also Adam Cohen, "Magnificence in Miniature," 81, 94 n. 16.

relics are even more potent than the gold.[495] The authors of these inscriptions were highly aware that it was the reflective nature of the materials that made them attractive, in every sense of the word.

Although other visual stimuli and their effects upon viewer attention have been explored by scientists (and will be discussed below), the study of specific materials is still in its infancy.[496] It is therefore necessary to extrapolate from what has been generally established about visual processes to hypothesize about seeing the gold and gemstones of the covers. Fundamentally, when light hits an object it is reflected back in two different ways; the reflection is either specular (meaning that light from a single direction is reflected into a single direction at an equivalent angle from the surface) or diffuse (the light is reflected in a broad range of directions). Most materials will reflect light in both ways, although depending on their composition may reflect more in one manner. Gold and polished gems are highly specular, whereas stucco produces diffuse reflections. When light falls on golden objects a specular highlight (a bright spot of light) appears. In different eye-tracking studies test subjects eyes are drawn to specular highlights on objects reproduced in photographs.[497] This is likely because these highlights have high visual saliency, a quality which makes an item or element stand out from its neighbors. Scientists hypothesize that saliency is what captures visual attention.[498] For the specular

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[495] Thunø, "The Golden Altar," 67.

[496] Edward Alderson, "On Seeing Stuff: The Perception of Materials by Humans and Machines," in *Human Vision and Electronic Imaging IV: Proceedings of SPIE--the International Society for Optical Engineering*, ed. Bernice E. Rogowitz and Thrasyvoulos N. Pappas (Bellingham, Washington: SPIE, 2001), 12.

[497] For example a study on perceiving visual realism found that viewers fixated on specular highlights. Such eye-tracking studies assume that where the eye focuses is the locus of visual attention. Mohamed Elhelw et al., "A gaze-based study for investigating the perception of visual realism in simulated scenes," *ACM Transactions on Applied Perception* 5, no. 1 (2008).

[498] Isabella Fuchs et al., "Salience in Paintings: Bottom-Up Influences on Eye Fixations," *Cognitive Computation* 3, no. 1 (2011): 25-36. See also the other contributions in that volume which is dedicated to saliency and attention and "A Brief and Selective History of Attention," in *Neurobiology of*

highlights of gold or gems, the saliency is derived from the sharp contrast in luminance (perceived lightness).[499] The human visual system is extremely sensitive to changes in luminance (what artists call value); changes in luminance are how we perceive depth, three-dimensionality, and movement.[500] The perception of each of these is essential not only for us to interact with our environments, but for our very survival. For example, luminance changes are how we know a new object, person, or animal has entered our visual field.[501] Luminance can also be gauged through central and peripheral vision and is independent of color.[502] Significantly, the visual system is more sensitive to abrupt changes in luminance, for example the specular highlight against the diffused reflection of the golden surface.[503]

What does all this tell us about the attractiveness of gold and gems on the treasury bindings, such as those of the *Reichenau Gospels*? I would argue that the creators of the covers, through their own experimentation and reuse of earlier traditions, drew upon an essential aspect of visual perception: sensitivity to luminance changes. Through their manipulation of the media, they highlighted or exaggerated the materials' saliency (the pop-out effect). For example, by working the gold in three dimensions—either through the application of gold leaf to a wooden core on the figure of Christ on the *Uta Codex* or through repoussé on the covers of the Echternach and Theophano gospel books—the artist multiplied and exaggerated the specular reflection of the material. Numerous reflective surfaces are created (even at microscopic levels) since the gold was not polished to a perfectly smooth, flat, and

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Attention, ed. Laurent Itti, Geraint Rees, and John K. Tsotsos (Amsterdam and Boston: Elsevier Academic Press, 2005), xxxiv-xxxv.

[499] For the ability of luminance contrasts to capture attention, see Alper Açık et al., "Effects of luminance contrast and its modifications on fixation behavior during free viewing of images from different categories," *Vision Research* 49 (2009):1541–1553.

[500] Margaret Livingstone *The Art of Seeing* (New York: Harry N Abrams, 2002), 37.

[501] For the perception of new objects, see Steven L. Franconeri, Andrew Hollingworth and Daniel J. Simons, "Do New Objects Capture Attention?" *Psychological Science* 16 (2005): 275-281.

[502] Livingstone, *Art of Seeing*, 37.

[503] Ibid., 58. This is demonstrated by the Cornsweet optical illusion.

uniform surface. Through the use of filigree and the setting of numerous polished gemstones onto this reflective surface—each of which specularly reflects the changing light sources of the environment—these eye-catching effects are further multiplied. Moreover, the glittering, shining effect, so often noted by period viewers, could be perceived peripherally, which I suggest might draw the eye in the direction of the gold and gem encrusted bindings. Since the covers were themselves carried in settings illuminated both by natural light and flickering candlelight (meaning the direction of the light sources would vary) they presented ever-changing reflections that, because of their instability, were likely more noticeable or attention-grabbing than a constant or regularly flashing visual stimulus. For instance, when viewing the *Reichenau Gospels* in person, one is struck by the feeling of instability of the surface; individual elements seem to pop-out, notably the arms of the cross, at different moments depending on the angles from which it is viewed.[504] The creators of this object used materials, which were by their nature attractive because of the saliency of their specular highlights, and manipulated them in such a way as to exaggerate this essential feature. How the materials and their effects were construed, however, depended on the individual viewer and cultural conditioning. As we have seen in the inscriptions cited above, the authors interpreted these reflective materials as visual metaphors. This type of subjective seeing, or visuality, will be further explored in the following sections.

Another element, which unites the six covers of this study as well as the vast majority of medieval treasury bindings, is a strong central feature. Ivory panels, themselves featuring a central figure, were placed at the centers of the *Codex Aureus of St. Emmeram*, *Aachen Golden Cover*, the *Pericopes of Henry II*, and the

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[504] This effect was noticed not only by me, but also Dr. Thomas Rainer and Dr. Beatrice Hernad, of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, when the manuscript in its binding was brought out of storage for our inspection. Significantly, this effect is not perceptible when one views a photographic reproduction.

*Theophano Gospels*. Similarly, a three-dimensional figure of the enthroned Christ sits

at the center of the *Uta Codex* while a multilayered oval shield occupies the

intersection of the *crux gemmata* on the *Reichenau Gospels*. While the composition of

these covers falls into one of Steenbock's four main classifications groups (Crux

Gemmata, Crucifixion, Codex-Aureus, and Image/Frame types), what unites them is

this accentuation of the center.[505] Steenbock noted the emphasis the cover designers

placed on the center, through the use of large gems, cameos, enamel plaques, and

representation of the crucified Christ, and proposed that this had a cosmic

significance. Basing her argument primarily on the *Reichenau Gospels*, she proposed

that the centralized design, borrowed from Late Antique schemas of cosmological and

sacro-imperial themes, placed a symbol of Christ (the oval shield) at the center of a

depiction of paradise, which was represented by the animal background and the

quadripartite arrangement that recalled the four corners of the world, rivers of

paradise, and evangelists.[506] Comparing this cover to many others she proposed that

the cross (sometimes only represented by a central embellishment in the middle of a

rectangular cover) or more specifically Christ's sacrifice upon the cross was

understood as the element that brought order to the cosmos.[507] This interpretation of

the centralized designs with their emphasis on the crossing, which she thoroughly

supports with visual comparanda and textual evidence, might very well have been that

of period viewers. The question that this reading raises, however, is how the

centralized design element communicated this concept, or to put it another way,

engineered this cognitive response.

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[505] Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, 25-44.

[506] Ibid., 29-30. Steenbock drew upon the work of Viktor Elbern on aniconic imagery, "Die Stele von Moselkern und die Ikonographie des frühen Mittelalters," *Bonner Jahrbuch* 155/156 (1955-1956): 200-206.

[507] Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, 28-31. This same cross-centered arrangement also appeared in Carolingian scientific diagrams. Bianca Kühnel, "Carolingian Diagrams, Images of the Invisible', in *Seeing the Invisible in Late Antiquity*," 359-389.

It seems that in a manner similar to harnessing innate responses to reflective materials the artists took advantage of a basic principle of human vision, the tendency to first fixate the gaze on the center, whether it is the center of a picture or painting, an object, or a word.[508] In eye-tracking studies in which viewers are presented with a reproduction of a painting or a natural scene the first fixation is in the center.[509] Such studies offered quantifiable data to support Rudolf Arnheim's theories, based upon observations of groups of students in art classes, of the "power of the center."[510] Moreover, viewers paid very little or no attention to the outer regions of the works, regardless of whether they were abstract or representational.[511] Even when viewers are given a specific visual search task, such as finding the human figure, the viewers' first fixation is upon the center of the image.[512] By placing the most important elements for general comprehension at the center of the covers, an artist requires less effort on the part of the viewer to receive the primary message. According to gestalt principles, which are essentially descriptions of visual perception, "visually right" compositions are those that are efficiently structured. Such efficient communication was especially important because the covers, as we saw in the last chapter, were not the objects of prolonged visual meditation.

The most important features of the covers were not only situated at the most effective point; they were also underscored in a number of ways. Different materials were used for the central features, such as spoliated gems and ivory plaques. Although

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[508] Derrick J. Parkhurst and Ernst Niebur, "Stimulus-Driven Guidance of Visual Attention in Natural Scenes," in Itti, ed., *Neurobiology of Attention*, 241.

[509] See for example, Paul Locher et al., "Visual Interest in Pictorial Art During an Aesthetic Experience," in *Art and Perception: Towards a Visual Science of Art: Part 2,* ed. Baingio Pinna (Leiden, Brill: 2008), 158.

[510] Rudolf Arnheim, *The Power of the Center: A Study of Composition in the Visual Arts*, revised ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 71-92 and passim.

[511] Locher et al., "The Structural Framework of Pictorial Balance," *Perception* 25 (1996): 1419-1436.

[512] Markus Bindeman et al., "Face, Body, and Center of Gravity Mediate Person Detection in Natural Scenes," *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance* 36, no. 6 (2010): 1479.

the origins of reused objects like the Islamic amulet at the center of the *Reichenau Gospels* or the ivories of the *Pericopes of Henry II*, the *Aachen Gospels,* and the *Gospels of Otto III* may have held special significance for the donors or creators, it was highly unlikely that they had those same meanings for the vast majority of the audience.[513] However, they were visually salient for all viewers, in that they contrasted the ground through luminance, color, and three-dimensional shape, which would have made them better at capturing attention.

The central devices typically were set-off further by contrasting frames of gemstones, enamels, and/or filigree. The Middle Ages has been referred to as "the great age of the frame," and it is apparent that these artists used them to literally frame viewer response.[514] As eyes are drawn to local contrasts and corners in the quest for visual information, the frames caught attention but also signaled a new element, the central feature.[515] Although composed of visually salient materials, the framing devices composed of uniform, geometric patterns—for instance rows of pearls or enamels—likely were passed over more quickly by the eyes, especially as they are at the borders of the fixated object. This may be because viewers focus on the most visually informative aspects and often pass over "empty" or redundant features, a behavior which has been demonstrated in eye-tracking studies of visual scenes.[516] This does not mean that these areas are not seen and processed, simply that they do

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[513] For personal meanings of the ivories, see Cutler and North, "Ivories, Inscriptions," 1-18.

[514] Glenn Peers, *Sacred Shock: Framing Visual experience in Byzantium* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), 1. Although Peers is discussing Byzantine art, a similar claim for the West has been made by William Tronzo. "On the Role of Antiquity in Medieval Art: Frames and Framing Devises," in *Ideologie e Pratiche*, 2: 1085-1111.

[515] For the attention-grabbing aspects of contrast and corners see, Christoph Zetzsche, "Natural Scene Statistics and Salient Visual Features," in *Neurobiology of Attention*, 231.

[516] Christoph Zetzsche, "Natural Scene Statistics," 226, and John M. Henderson and Fernanda Ferreira, "Scene Perception for Psycholinguists,"in *The Interface of Language, Vision, and Action: Eye Movements and the Visual World*, ed. Henderson and Ferreira (New York: Psychology Press, 2004), 21-22.

not hold viewer attention as well. Ottonian artists took advantage of this fact in the structuring of their designs.

Not only are the centers highlighted through materials and compositional features, in many cases the central feature is a three-dimensional representation of a human figure. For instance, Christ's crucified body occupies the central, vertical axis of the *Pericopes of Henry II*, the *Codex Aureus of Echternach*, and the *Theophano Gospels*. The representation of Christ enthroned, which dominates the cover of the *Uta Codex*, is also placed along this axis. Similarly, on the *Aachen Golden Cover* the Virgin and Child stare out towards the viewer from the center of the cover. This portion of the covers then was doubly attractive, because observers routinely show a preference for focusing on representations of the human body, and especially faces. In psychological experiments, researchers have discovered that viewers invariably fixate on human bodies and faces in both free-viewing and task-oriented tests.[517] Viewers' scan patterns demonstrate that when a person is shown an image, the attention is focused on the human figure, the face, and the eyes. Moreover, the depicted person's gaze directs the viewer's own gaze.[518] This is hardly news to art historians, who have long noted this behavior.[519] What is novel is the knowledge that there are specific regions in the brain that respond purely to representations of the human face and the human body and not to animals or objects.[520] This attention to the human form may be learned to the point that it is practically automatic.[521] Scientists hypothesize that the reason for this behavior is based in the fact that we are social beings and that "the

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[517] Alfred L. Yarbus, *Eye Movements and Vision* (New York: Plenum Press, 1967).

[518] Henderson and Ferreira, "Scene Perception," 10-11.

[519] For example, John Shearman, *Only Connect: Art and the Spectator in the Italian Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 77-78 and passim.

[520] Markus Bindeman et al., "Face, Body, and Center," 1477–148; Marius V. Peelen and Paul E. Downing, "The neural basis of visual body perception," *Nature Reviews Neuroscience* 8 (2007): 636-648.

[521] Wright and Ward, "Orienting of Attention," 232-233.

human face is undoubtedly the most important social stimulus our species process

every day."[522] Without the ability to recognize and read the human face and body, we

would not be able to function within human groups, as the correct perception of other

humans enables the understanding of others' intentions, moods, etc. The artists of the

covers thus had recourse to these automatic responses and used this behavior and

attraction to communicate with viewers. As demonstrated in Chapter 2, the earliest

ivory covers made use of iconic figures in center of the compositions. Later, the

Hodegetria ivories from Byzantium, with their bold presentation of the Virgin and

Child that were placed at the center of several Ottonian treasury bindings, were likely

prized and reused not simply because of their exotic place of origin, but because they

were effective at capturing viewer attention and communicating with worshippers.

  I propose that similar, innate and/or trained responses to the human body and

face, elements that are extremely and efficiently informative and expressive, lay

behind Christians' need to depict the human form despite the Old Testament

prohibition of graven images. Period viewers recognized the power of such images,

whether icons or narrative scenes, and sought to justify their use within the Church.

Examples of these rationalizations can be found in medieval reports of miracle-

working images or statues as well as *archeropoietae*, images not made by human

hands.[523] The often-cited statement made by Gregory the Great in a letter to the

iconoclastic bishop of Marseilles that "what Scripture is to the educated, images are to

the ignorant (idiotae)" is perhaps the most famous justification of images within the

Church and one which has garnered significant attention from art historians, who

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[522] Roxane J. Itier, Christina Villate, and Jennifer D. Ryan, "Eyes Always Attract Attention but Gaze Orienting is Task-Dependent: Evidence from Eye Movement Monitoring," *Neuropsychologia* 45, no. 5 (2006): 1020.

[523] For examples, see Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, 47-77. See also the famous apology of the reliquary statue of Saint Foy by Bernard of Angers and the editor's essay. *The Book of Sainte Foy*, trans. Pamela Sheingorn (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995).

sought to understand its implications.[524] Gregory's dictum, partially politically

motivated, raises the questions of whether pictures were Scriptures for the illiterate

and how they functioned as such.[525] Rather than taking statements such as Gregory's

at face value, I support Beat Brenk's position that

> The idea some ecclesiastics had that the Christian image is a sort of 'Bible for
> the illiterate' is nothing more than wishful thinking which also reveals the total
> embarrassment of the Church when confronted with the issue of image.[526]

Images of the holy figures whether as icons or within narratives, as they are found on

the treasury bindings, were used because they were attractive on a variety of levels

and encouraged the engagement and even veneration of viewers. As they were so

effective and affective it was advantageous to support their use, while directing their

power into the appropriate channels.

The individual aspects described above likely drew and even helped maintain

viewer attention, but how might the covers have been seen as a whole? As

demonstrated in the previous chapter these bindings were rarely used in a way that

enabled prolonged, fixed gazes. Even the deacon who carried the covers and read

from their manuscripts likely did not spend a significant time focusing on the detailed

ornamentation and figures of covers like those in Aachen or Echternach. He, after all,

had several tasks to perform and carried the manuscript in a way so other viewers

could see its front cover. When left on the altar, the officiant as discussed before may

see the cover during the performance of the mass, but he too had a variety of duties to

perform which required his visual attention. The vast majority of viewers merely

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[524] Gregory the Great, *Epistola*, XI, 10 (CCSL, 140A, ed. D. Norberg), 873-876. English translation provided by Caecilia Davis-Weyer, *Early Medieval Art, 300-1150*: *Sources and Documents* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 47-49.

[525] Lawrence G. Duggan, "Was Art Really the 'Book of the Illiterate," *Word and Image* 5 (1989): 227-252 and Celia Chazelle, "Pictures, Books and the Illiterate: Pope Gregory I's Letters to Serenus of Marseille," *Word and Image* 6 (1990): 138-153.

[526] "Visibility and (Partial) Invisibility of Early Christian Images," in Morrison et al. eds., *Seeing the Invisible in Late Antiquity*, 147-148.

glimpsed these objects as they were carried into the church during the *introitus* or to the ambo during the singing of the gradual. Did this mean the brief viewing experience was incomplete and therefore unlikely to prompt meditation on the nature of Scripture, the incarnation or sacrifice of Christ, or his glorious Second Coming? I would suggest the answer is no, because the human visual system is able to get the gist of a complex visual stimulus within a few milliseconds.

Although scientists still debate the mechanism of gist response, they agree that humans can process the gist of a presented scene in a very short time, typically in milliseconds.[527] Gist is defined by researchers as a general semantic interpretation and is made up of the basic-level category, the spatial layout, and a few objects.[528] This ability is readily observable in our daily life. The best example may be our ability when flipping through television channels to quickly identify the general nature of the program, whether it is a gritty crime drama, news broadcast, or sitcom.[529] In a study by Paul Lochner and his colleagues, they discovered the initial reactions of observers to works of art occur very quickly (within thirty seconds) and are based on this perception of the gist.[530] Their findings coincide with the recorded times viewers take at museums to focus on a work before moving to the next. Even when presented with blurry images of scenes, test subjects were able to identify the essence of the scene.[531] Significantly, at the same time one perceives the gist of the visual input, there is also

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[527] For a brief review of the literature see the introduction in Rasche and Koch, "Recognizing the Gist," 979-980.

[528] Mary Potter, "Short-term Conceptual Memory for Pictures," *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Learning and Memory* 2 (1976): 509-522; Aude Oliva, "Gist of the Scene," in Itti et al. eds., *Neurobiology of Attention*, 251; and Henderson and Ferreira, "Scene Perception," 11-12, 30.

[529] Oliva,"Gist of the Scene," 251.

[530] Paul Locher et al., "Visual Interest in Pictorial Art," 157-158.

[531] Aude Oliva and P. G. Schyns, "Course Blobs or Fine Edges? Evidence that Information Diagnosticity Changes the Perception of Complex Visual Stimuli," *Cognitive Psychology* 34 (1997): 72-102.

an activation of a framework of associated semantic information, which helps guide

future attention and expectations.[532]

All of these findings are highly relevant to understand the reception of the

treasury bindings during the various ceremonies in which they were used. The fact

that the gist of a scene can be indentified very quickly with limited visual input allows

us to assume that many viewers likely perceived the material splendor, the centralized

compositions, and perhaps the larger figures despite the fact that the covers were not

the objects of prolonged visual meditation. This would respond to the type of

reception of images described by Beat Brenk, in which the essence of the monument

or narrative was perceived.[533] Moreover, the fact that associations from earlier visual

experiences are activated helps us imagine that even if the covers were only partially

visible these experiences would help fill in the gaps.[534] Because the decorative

elements of the covers were seen in different manifestations throughout churches

across the empire, past experience likely aided the resolution of ambiguities. For

example, within the Essen religious community, the female viewers would have been

accustomed to seeing representations of the crucified Christ, because their abbesses

patronized several processional crosses and crucifixes.[535] Even if the details of the

ivory affixed to the *Theophano Gospels* were nearly impossible to make out, the

expectations for appropriate church ornament, derived from past experience, would

allow for these women to identify the subject of the central plaque. Knowledge that

donor figures were placed at the bottom of both crosses and covers may have enabled

them to assume that a similar feature was on the cover of the gospel book being

carried past them. Similarly, although the exact identity of the narrative scenes would

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[532] Oliva, "Gist of the Scene," 251.
[533] Brenk, "Visibility and (Partial) Invisibility," 147-148.
[534] Iser, *Act of Reading*, 38 and passim.
[535] For the Essen treasury see, Torsten Fremer, "Äbtissin Theopanu," 95-108; and Christina Nielson, Hoc Opus Eximium, 66-131.

have been difficult to discern on the Aachen covers, viewers in Henry II's circle may have assumed that they were narrative in nature based upon their knowledge of other liturgical art. Even without identifying the subjects of the scenes, they could gather that they were narrative and similar to those on the altar frontal within the same church. Moreover, the associated memories about the general nature of biblical narratives would be prompted.

At the same time visual memory and associations inflected the viewing of the covers, the spoken narratives, recited names, and sung praises also influenced the semantic frameworks viewers brought with them when they saw the covers. At a very basic level, it can be said that spoken language influences attention and changes perception. Cognitive studies have explored some of the different ways in which speech directs viewer attention. For example, as objects are mentioned viewers turn their gaze to these objects even before the utterance is finished.[536] It is conceivable then that Ottonian worshippers may have fixated on representations of Christ on the covers when his name was pronounced or focused on the richly-bound manuscripts during the singing of the gradual, which directed attention to the coming reading. Yet these relationships between the spoken words and the richly-bound gospel books were obviously much richer than this simple focusing of attention and are therefore the subject of the next section.

**Treasury Bindings and the Spoken Word**

While the previous section examined the stimulus-driven aspect of viewer reception of the Ottonian treasury bindings, it is important to note that these factors, though compelling and attention-grabbing, were only one facet of the overall

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[536] Zenzi M. Griffin, "Why Look? Reasons for Eye Movements Related to Language Production," in Henderson and Ferreira, *Interface of Language and Vision*, 213-247; and Andriy Myachykov and Michael I. Posner, "Attention in Language," in *Neurobiology of Attention,* 324-325.

negotiation between viewers and Scripture. As we have seen the covers were not experienced in a vacuum, but rather were the essential component of the oral reading of the lections. It was not merely this performed text within the manuscript, however, that influenced the way in which these covers were seen and interpreted. Other elements of the service, including the music, prayers, homilies, and creeds, also created the context in which the treasury bindings were seen. Although many of the patrons and users of the manuscripts were likely literate, as we will see below, all members of society still functioned within communities where spoken communication was prevalent. While covering a written text, the treasury bindings also inhabited this oral world. As Michael Camille rightly pointed out more than twenty-five years ago, "medieval pictures cannot be separated from what is a total experience of communication involving sight, sound, action and physical expression."[537] Scholarship on the mechanics and reception of oral communication, among other things, makes us cognizant of factors that come into play during these multi-media experiences and brings into focus important aspects of the covers that mimic or amplify this type of communication. Through this we can better understand the covers within their cultural matrix.

When examining the intersections between written, oral, and visual communication it is important to note that not only were texts performed aloud during the liturgy, but it is likely that most acts of reading during the Ottonian period involved giving voice to written texts. Thus reading for the Ottonian audience was a very different, much more social experience than our modern, silent reading. Since antiquity texts had been read aloud, making them accessible to an audience larger than

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[537] Camille, Michael. "Seeing and Reading: Some Visual Implications on Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy." *Art History* 8, no. 1 (March 1985): 43-44.

the individual reader who held the manuscript in his hands.[538] The practice of reading

aloud, however, was not done primarily for the benefit of the illiterate; rather this

seems to have been an integral part of the reading process at least until the later

Middle Ages. Even when a reader was reading a text for himself and by himself, it

was often the practice to quietly speak the words.[539] Readers who did not voice the

text were the exception, and thus worthy of note, rather than the rule.[540] Moreover,

there seems to have been a preference, even among literates, to hear a text rather than

read it for themselves. As Michael Clanchy wrote in 1993,

> Whatever the language, and whether the record was held solely in the bearer's memory or was committed to parchment, the medieval recipient prepared himself to listen to an utterance rather than to scrutinize a document visually as a modern literate would. This was due to a different habit of mind; it was not because the recipient was illiterate in any sense of that word.[541]

This voicing of text is one facet of what Patrick Geary calls the "orality of the literate"

and shows how written and oral communication were inseparably linked during the

period.[542]

The treasury bindings occupied a place between the written and the oral, and at

their most basic level served to set the stage for these performances of the Word.

Anthropologists and oral historians have noted similar staging during other

formalized, traditional oral performances in a variety of cultures. In such

performances special modes of dress, instruments, gestures, and props cue audiences

to attend to the performance and structure the way in which the audience will receive

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[538] D. H. Green, *Medieval listening and Reading*, passim; Jocelyn Penny Small, *Wax Tablets of the Mind: Cognitive Studies of Memory and Literarcy in Classical Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 1997), 19-25.

[539] Green points out that there may have well been silent reading earlier than Saenger suggests, but again this was probably not typical. Green, *Women Readers in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 7-23.

[540] Mary Carruthers suggest that this, however, has been overstated. *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 170-171.

[541] Michael Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1993), 266-267.

[542] "Land, Language and Memory in Europe 700 1100," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* IX (1999):169-184.

it.[543] John Miles Foley, a leading scholar on oral traditions, argues that to understand

oral poetry it is necessary to take this context into account.

> It is the performance, the audience, the poet, the music, the specialized way of speaking, the gestures, the costuming, the visual aids, the occasion, the ritual, and myriad other aspects of the given poem's reality. To put the matter as directly as possible, an oral poem's context is nothing more or less than its language, most fundamentally and inclusively construed.[544]

I suggest that the treasury bindings, part of the context of the spoken words of the

mass, should similarly be seen as a specialized, efficient language. For example, the

Aachen covers along with other liturgical furnishings—such as the ambo and altar

frontal—and the mosaic ornamentation of the Palatine Chapel framed the aural

experience of Scripture by removing the spoken text away from the realm of the every

day. The reflective, eye-catching materials, both rare and intrinsically valuable,

signaled a change from the world outside the church walls. Similarly, the Palatine

Chapel's iconic representations of Christ—enthroned in the dome mosaic, seated in

majesty on the altar frontal, and held in the arms of his mother on the golden cover—

showed that he was quite clearly not entirely of this world, despite his human form.[545]

Thus in a sense the cover, like the vestments of the clergy, spectacularly clothed a key

performer in the mass, sacred Scripture.

For Ottonian viewers, all of whom spoke German dialects as their native

tongue, the use of Latin as the language of the Church also set these performances

apart from commonplace existence. In order to fully understand the text read aloud

during the ceremonies and services in which treasury bindings were used, the listener

would not have to be literate but he would have to be Latinate. This does not mean

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[543] John Miles Foley, *How to Read an Oral Poem* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 85-86.

[544] Ibid., 60.

[545] For the dome mosaic, see Hubert Schrade, "Zum Kuppelmosaik der Pfalzkapelle und zum Theodorich-Denkmal in Aachen," *Aachener Kunstblätter* 30 (1965): 25-37; and Wolfgang Grape, "Karolingische Kunst und Ikonoklasmus," *Aachener Kunstblätter* 45 (1974): 49-58.

that an illiterate layman or woman with no formal education would have been totally

barred from the spoken words of the mass. Certain formulas would have been used

repeatedly and proper names of the biblical figures or the saints would have been

recognizable. We have to assume that these individuals were offered a basic religious

instruction. Certainly they may have known the Lord's Prayer and the Apostle's

Creed as these were standard components of the mass in the Ottonian period. Henry II

on a visit to Rome in fact pushed for the papal liturgy to include the creed, which

covers the basic tenants of the Christian faith.[546] If a homily was delivered it is quite

possible that it was done in the vernacular and the intellectual content was rather

low.[547] Certainly, however, due to the fact that it was the language of the Church and

Scripture rather than believers' native tongue, Latin acquired certain reified

connotations, which likely were reflected in the design of the covers.[548] The covers,

with their bold geometries and staring iconic figures, were as far removed from the

objects one interacted with on a normal basis as the formalized Latin language was

from the dialects spoken every day.

Perhaps the most defining characteristic of oral communication is its personal

nature. Until very recently oral communication had to take place face-to-face. While a

written missive could connect individuals across an empire oral modes necessitated

human interactions.[549] Through oral performances of the biblical text during the mass

the written word was transformed into face-to-face interpersonal communication. By

voicing the text, the lector or deacon in a sense vivified it and took the place of Christ

and the evangelists. This same personalization of the text was also achieved through

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[546] Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite*, 1: 469-470.
[547] Michael Richter, *The Formation of the Medieval West: Studies in the Oral Culture of the Barbarians* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1994), 64.
[548] Camille, "Seeing and Reading," 33.
[549] Interestingly during the Middle Ages writing was personalized in that it was thought of as the meeting of or dialogue between of two memories. Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 169-170.

the use of large iconic figures on the *Uta Codex* or the *Aachen Covers*. These attention-grabbing figures provided the written text with a human face, with which viewers could interact. The gestures of the figures could be interpreted using the same set of skills viewers used in their daily interactions, which enabled effective communication. The covers here and in other instances thus embodied the written text, which itself was a record of the oral teachings of Christ and his disciples.[550] These same lection readings were repeated cyclically every year; yet rather than just being repetitions of a text they functioned as re-creations of the original utterances.[551] Time and space were condensed and Christ's presence was made perceptible through the oral reading and the treasury bindings. The experience of the recreation and embodiment of a written text likely shaped how Ottonians thought about Scripture as more than just a written text.

The repetitions of spoken formulas in the mass, such as the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed, and the repetitions of the same scenes and figures presented on liturgical art were also highly pragmatic. Walter Ong notes that in cultures without writing what is not repeated cannot be remembered and is therefore lost.[552] In order to preserve traditions and memories constant repetition is necessary. Interestingly, in the writing of the medieval and Renaissance period he notes that the authors seem addicted to amplification of their subjects in a way which modern readers may find redundant.[553] He interprets this as a hold-over from pre-literate days. I suggest that it

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[550] For the orality of Scripture, see William A. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture and the History of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); and David Trobisch, "Performance Events in Early Christianity: New Testament Writings in an Oral Context," in *The Interface of Orality and Writing: Speaking, Seeing, Writing in the Shaping of New Genres*, ed. Annette Weissenrieder and Robert B. Coote (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 171-172, 178.

[551] For repetitions and recreations, see John Miles Foley, *Immanent Art: From Structure to Meaning in Traditional Oral Epic* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 10.

[552] Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: Technologizing of the Word* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 40.

[553] Walter J. Ong, "African Talking Drums and Oral Noetics," *New Literary History* 8 (1977) reprinted in Foley, *Oral Formulaic Theory: A Forkloric Case Book* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1990), 121.

is symptomatic of a continued perceived need to insure the survival of information. The Ottonians had the written word with which to record and preserve memories, but as there were limitations to how easily this material could be accessed and by whom, it was still worthwhile to use speech and the arts to hand down this information and make it present in one's daily life. Moreover, in oral presentations to large audiences, for example homilies, redundancy is advantageous since an audience will never understand every word that the speaker says.[554] Similarly, the fact that the same scenes and figures were depicted on the Aachen cover as were on the altar frontal and the dome mosaic helped transmit Christian history to an audience who rarely got a good look at any one object. With the many multisensory stimuli tugging at one's attention, it is probable that such redundancy was hardly noticed.

Significantly, the narratives or individual figures on the covers—the Crucifixion, the Maiestas Domini, the Virgin and Child—were familiar largely thanks to this repetition throughout the churches. As mentioned above, in Essen the Crucifixion was not only to be found on the *Theophanu Gospels* but also figured in the round on the many processional crucifixes in the treasury. The gospel account of the Crucifixion, as we have seen in the liturgy of Bamberg Cathedral, was told anew annually. In addition to being sculpted in ivory and placed on a book used during Easter, the story was theatrically recreated before the worshippers' eyes as the candles were extinguished, the altar cleared, and the cross adored on Good Friday. The condensed narrative of the event on the book covers therefore was not telling a new narrative in visual form, but was instead recalling a story already known by heart. In this respect the visual communication of the covers functions similarly to a certain type of formalized oral communication, the epic.

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[554] Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 40.

Studies of orally presented epics have also noted the generation and reliance on "heavy-figures," heroes like Achilles or Beowulf, as well as set pieces such as weddings or banquets.[555] These heroic characters were used because they were well known and highly referential. The mere mention of a name evoked a set of remembered deeds and qualities in the minds of listeners. Mentioned in new situations, these heavy-figures brought with them entire histories.[556] Certainly Christ, the Virgin, the evangelists, and individual saints found on the covers and referenced at different moments in the liturgy can be classed as such figures. As Walter Ong writes with regard to a range of oral traditions,

> the typical oral narrative, for example, poetry or prose, normally recounts in familiar formulas what the audience has heard before, so that communication here is in fact an invitation to participation, not simply a transfer of knowledge from a place where it was to a place where it was not."[557]

By tapping into viewers' knowledge of Christ's passion, the Crucifixion imagery on the covers encouraged viewers to remember and, in a sense, to recreate within themselves the narrative. Since only a moment from the larger story is represented on the covers—or simply the figure— there existed large gaps within the narrative. Such lacunae, as literary reception theorist Wolfgang Iser writes, act as invitations for the audience to participate.[558] The audience would bring their past experience and subjective vision with them as they saw these works within the context of the mass. The referential figures placed at the center of the covers were not Scriptures for the illiterate. Rather than images that taught, they were images that reminded. These reminders, furthermore, triggered the imaginations of the viewers.

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[555] Eric A. Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), 134-142; Ong, "African Talking Drums," 123-124; Donald K. Fry, "The Memory of Caedmon," reprinted in Foley, ed., *Oral Formulaic Theory Casebook*, 71-82.
[556] Foley, *Immanent Art*, 19.
[557] Walter Ong, "African Talking Drums," 132
[558] Wolfgan Iser, "Indeterminancy and the Reader's Response in Prose Fiction," in *Aspects of Narrative: Selected Papers from the English Institute*, ed. J. Hillis Miller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), 4-45.

The way in which biblical texts were presented during the Liturgy of the Word, in which two readings from different books of the Bible were paired, was not only reflected in the arrangement of the treasury bindings but also shaped how their imagery may have been perceived. For example, I suggest that the combination of narrative and iconic elements on the Aachen Golden Covers need not function as a single program. For the viewers who closely interacted with the covers—the deacons, lectors, and priests or bishops—the holistic meaning of the four narrative scenes of Christ's life could change depending on the viewer, the text to be read, and the time of year.[559] In the way that homilies and gospel readings emphasized and combined different pieces of Scripture, the cover's multivalent imagery, a visual form of exegesis, could present the Word in varying ways. This flexible presentation of Scripture is closer to a predominately oral culture's expanded notion of a word (as both utterance and event), than our concept of a word as a piece of text.[560]

For viewers placed at a distance from the treasury binding, the larger figures at the center of the covers could still prompt further associations, as suggested above. The selection and pairing of different readings during the Liturgy of the Word meant that all viewers were accustomed to a kind of biblical exegesis, typologies. The liturgy trained worshippers in making connections between different moments in the life of Christ and between Christ and his biblical precursors by providing examples during the Sunday lections.[561] For example, when the *Codex Aureus of Echternach* was used during the abbey's mass, it would have been seen during the singing of the different chants that were based on the Psalms. Christ's sacrifice would be related to the Old Testament psalmic passages and interpreted with these typologies in mind.

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[559] I similar type of visuality is proposed for the many narrative fresco in the synagogue at Dura Europas. It is presumed that they functioned like rabbinical exegesis. See, Annabel Jane Wharton, *Refiguring the Post Classical City,* 38-60.

[560] Foley, *How to Read*, 17-21.

[561] Mayeski, "Reading the Word," 63-65.

Moreover, for liturgical art it was likely not necessary that two moments be depicted in visual form side-by-side on the same object for the audience to observe and interpret. Comparable images and symbols of Christ were found throughout the church. For example, the Golden Aachen cover, with its representation of the Virgin and Child, would have been placed at the altar. The connections between Christ's incarnation (depicted on the cover) and subsequent sacrifice (evoked by the altar) would have been given visual expression. The fact that Christ was represented on the cover also added another semantic layer. Christ was made present again during the services. The pairing of texts and/or images to make such connections was considered necessary for a true understanding of the Scriptures, which a linear reading of the text would not provide.[562] Moreover, the audience was far from passive during these moments, and shared in not only the narrative but also the larger tradition of the story of Christian salvation and its telling.[563] Their memories and knowledge, influenced by the larger customs and values of Ottonian society, helped the audience interpret the treasury bindings and the Scripture which they sheltered.

**Ottonians and the Word**

Existing in a world of visual and oral ceremonies, the liturgical manuscript covers nevertheless were inextricably bound to the written word. The very existence of writing technology in Ottonian Germany meant that everyone's lives were in some way shaped by the written word. What remains to be seen is how. As demonstrated in Chapter 3, the written word in the form of ornate gospel books and other liturgical

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[562] Kendrick, *Animating the Letter*, 89.
[563] Richter, *Formation of the Medieval West*, 96. For this type of response, see Henry Glassie, *Passing the time in Ballymenone: Culture and History of an Ulster Community* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 140-145.

manuscripts was visible to the general populace.[564] The treasury bindings of these

manuscripts marked the site of not just a written text, but *the* text, Holy Scripture. The

symbolic power of biblical text is reflected in the language itself; in medieval Latin

*scriptura* meant both writing in general and Holy Writ.[565] Certainly smaller, less well-

endowed churches did not have the same quality or number of luxurious books as the

foundations lavished with attention by the imperial family, such as Bamberg, Aachen,

and Essen. Nevertheless, the existence of written Scripture, regardless of its

ornamentation, and the practice of reading from these texts during the liturgy, a

practice dating back to the very foundations of Christianity, meant that all persons

would have at least a basic acquaintance with writing and text, even if they were

among the population modern scholars consider illiterate, a number that may have

been as high as 95 percent of the populace.[566] For others, obviously, the relationship

to the written word was more profound. These individuals included the patrons and

nearest viewers of the treasury bindings and are thus worthy of scrutiny even if they

are not representative of the largest segment of the population. In examining the

Ottonians' relationship to and interpretation of the written word it is important to

remember that "writing can never dispense with orality."[567] The visual arts, written

text, and oral communication functioned side-by-side in Ottonian Germany and it is

counterproductive to suggest that one form out-shone or completely supplanted

another.[568] Therefore this final section aims to highlight the ways the written and oral,

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[564] Janet Nelson, "Literacy in Carolingian Government," in *The Uses of Literacy in Early Mediaeval Europe*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 265.
[565] Clanchy, *From Memory*, 14. Clanchy adds that office 'clerks' (clerici) and the church's clergy (clerici) were also synonymous.
[566] Gude Sukale-Redlefsen, "Prachtvolle Bücher zur Zierde der Kirchen," in *Kaiser Heinrich II.*, 52.
[567] Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 8.
[568] Currently, the picture of this combination of means of communications seems to be the general consensus regarding Carolingian culture, and I believe it should also be considered for the Ottonians.

together with the treasury bindings, communicate beliefs about the richly complex nature of Holy Scripture.

The attention-grabbing precious gems, imported enamels, and spoliated ivories on covers like the *Pericopes of Henry II* leave modern viewers in little doubt of the value assigned to the gospel text by the Ottonian creators and patrons. Holy Scripture contained here and within other Ottonian treasury bindings has been afforded the same honor through material wealth as relics encased in their gem-studded reliquaries and leaders swathed in impressive regalia.[569] The material splendor of the bindings, among modern audiences at least, is typically the aspect first noticed by viewers and is a key piece of evidence in the investigation of Ottonian attitudes towards the written word, in general, and the Gospels, in particular.[570] Nevertheless, it is somewhat difficult to extrapolate from this facet alone the specific meanings Ottonian viewers may have attached to these materials and the relationship of those connotations to the written word. Were the materials understood to speak to the power and prestige of the patron and/or the Church or did they reference the spiritual, quasi-magical nature of the contained text?

Certainly, comparison of the covers to the more fully research subjects of imperial insignia and reliquaries, which also harnessed material splendor, sheds some light on these questions. Most art historians assume that regalia such as crowns, scepters, and ornamental swords spoke to the sacral nature of Ottonian kingship.[571]

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[569] This same point has been made often by historians of medieval literacy. For example, Clanchy, *From Memory,* 155; and Rosamond McKitterick, *Carolingians and the Written Word*, 147.

[570] Anecdotal evidence to this is provided from my extremely informal tests of viewers' initial response to reproductions of the treasury bindings. Thirty undergraduate students in two art history courses at Rutgers University were asked to record their initial responses to a project image (roughly twice the size as the original) of the front cover of the *Pericopes of Henry II*. Overwhelmingly the first two or three words they used to record their reactions were ornate, luxury, gold, and ivory.

[571] For a summary of scholarship about the sacral nature of kingship in the Ottonian period, see Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957); Karl Leyser, *Rule and Conflict in an Early Medieval Society: Ottonian Saxony* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979); and Mayr-Harting, *Ottonian Book Illumination*, 60-68.

Similarly, it is generally accepted that the gold and gems covering the relics of the saints reflected the spiritual power of the remains of the saints, whose bodies, according to Gregory the Great in a letter from 594, "glitter with such great miracles and awe in their churches that one cannot even go to pray there without considerable fear."[572] From these comparisons it may be assumed that the chief Ottonian response to Scripture was primarily one of reverence to a spiritually powerful entity. Such an interpretation, however, is rather simplistic. The means to nuance this limited understanding of the Ottonians' relationship to the written word and the role treasury bindings played in this interaction is through an examination of the uses of literacy among specific viewers of the bindings—the clergy at Aachen, Echternach, and Bamberg; imperial patrons such as Otto III and Henry II; and the women at the foundations of Essen and Niedermünster.

When compared to Carolingian liturgical manuscript covers, such as those of the *Codex Aureus of St. Emmeram*, the *Lorsch Gospels*, and the *Lindau Gospels*, the six main covers of this study are similar in subject matter, composition, and materials.[573] It is surprising therefore to note how differently the Carolingians and the Ottonians are presented in historical and art historical scholarship with regard to their relationships to and uses of the written word. The fact that comparatively little work has been done on issues of literacy or the interactions between word and image during the Ottonian period in contrast to the Carolingian is simply the tip of the iceberg.[574] Over the last thirty years scholars have demonstrated the central importance of writing

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[572] *Epist*. 4.30, *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Church*, 2nd ser. (Grand Rapids, MI: W.R. Eerdmans Pub, 1976), 12:154-155. Such interpretations were presented in the seminal article by Ellert Dahl on Saint Foy and repeated in much of the literature on reliquaries. "Heavenly Images: The Statue of St. Foy of Conques and the Signification of the Medieval 'Cult-Image' in the West," *Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam pertinentia*, 4, 8 (1978): 175-192.

[573] See Chapter 2.

[574] As noted by Elisabeth van Houts in 1999, the period between the end of the Carolingian Empire and the thirteenth century has been neglected, although monographs such as hers have begun to fill this lacuna. Houts, *Memory and Gender*, 3.

during the Carolingian period, in effect rescuing the era from long-held assumptions about the nature of the "Dark Ages."[575] Repeated throughout both the Anglo-American and German scholarship, however, is the assertion that the Ottonians used writing to govern and in other aspects of life far less than their Carolingian predecessors.

The common acceptance of the Ottonians' eschewing of the written word in public life is seen for example in John Bernhardt's book on the Ottonian *iter*,

> There is little doubt that the Ottonian kings made less use of the written word in government than the Carolingians had at the height of their power. In fact, the east Frankish kingdom of the Carolingians already used the written word in government less than did its west Frankish or Italian contemporaries.[576]

This allows Bernhardt to emphasize then the importance of his chosen subject, the royal/imperial visits to key Ottonian centers. Whereas Bernhardt acknowledges that the diversity of document types from the period suggests the Ottonians used writing more than the limited surviving examples would indicate, others such as the German historian Hagen Keller present the case more emphatically.[577] In a 1989 article, Keller writes:

> Despite the continuity of the idea and the model of Charlemagne, everything that was of particular importance for high Carolingian imperial organization—centrality, office, law-giving and writing—was absent in its successor states. Indeed they simply came to an end.[578]

More recently, Gerd Althoff wrote of the Ottonian period, "there was next to no administration, hardly any institutions, and a scarcely visible dependence on the written word in any area of public life."[579] The intensity of such statements, however,

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[575] For the Carolingians see the groundbreaking work of Rosamond McKitterick, especially *The Carolingians and the Written Word*. See also, Janet Nelson, "Literacy in Carolingian Government," 258-296.

[576] *Itinerant Kingship*, 5.

[577] Ibid.

[578] Hagen Keller,"Zum Charakter der 'Staatlichkeit' zwischen karolingischer Reichsreform und hochmittelalterlichen Herrschaftsausbau," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 23 (1989): 257.

[579] Althoff, *Otto III*, 16.

makes them suspect. Additionally, as a chief aim of Althoff's work is to demonstrate

the significant role of representational or symbolic behaviors

(*Herrschaftsrepräsentation*) in constructing medieval kingship—a previously

neglected and yet central aspect—the role of writing is minimized.

In a 2010 article David Bachrach critiques scholarship on both the eastern

portions of the Carolingian empire and the Ottonian successors and points out that

underlying much of these claims are ideological justifications of a perceived

inadequacy of the Germans compared to the French.

> The Carolingian empire, built on Roman administrative and fiscal foundation,
> was seen as a precursor to France. German scholars, embarrassed by
> Germany's failure to develop as a nation state along the lines of its more
> westerly competitors, sought refuge in the romantic-nationalist ideology of the
> free Germanic warrior, resistant to the 'civilizing' domination of Rome.[580]

Lest one assume that such viewpoints primarily date to the rise of German

nationalism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Michael Richter's

1994 monograph *The Formation of the Medieval West: Studies in the Oral Culture of

the Barbarians*, in which he glamorizes the oral, 'barbarian' culture of the Germanic

peoples, shows the continuation of such thinking.[581] Again, although his focus

usefully redressed a perceived neglect on the part of historians of the oral facet of East

Frankish/Ottonian culture, by minimizing the role of the written, it does this at the

expense of gaining a more complex and perhaps more accurate view of these cultures.

While political historians paint a picture of a culture that is far from literate,

German historians who research the royal fisc (treasury) present the Ottonians far

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[580] David S. Bachrach, "The Written Word in Carolingian-Style Fiscal Administration under King Henry I, 919-936," *German History* 28, no. 4 (2010): 399.

[581] Michael Richter, *Formation of the Medieval West*. Although the book was strongly criticized by a number of reviewers, it was not enough to prompt a reevalutation of questions of Ottonian literarcy. Thus, similar ideas are presented in works published in the last two or three years. See for example, Mayr-Harting's introductory comments on the Ottonians which present Ottonian government as lacking in adminstration or bureaucracies and instead based on the iterinrary and 'crown-wearings.' This is despite the fact that the book precedes to examine the rich education of a powerful Ottonian archbishop and brother of Otto I. Henry Mayr-Harting, *Church and Cosmos in Early Ottonian Germany: The View from Cologne* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 4-5.

differently. They have demonstrated, from a large body of written records, that the

Ottonians and their predecessors in the eastern portion of the Carolingian empire used

the Western Carolingian models to manage estates.[582] It would be nearly impossible

for the Ottonians to govern and manage issues of property without a significant

amount of written records.[583] As Bachrach points out these documents would be time

sensitive and unlikely to be preserved.[584] Certainly, the surviving governmental

documents of the Ottonian period do not equal the numbers preserved in Carolingian

collections. Nevertheless, the written word continued to be used in public life in

conjunction with oral communication and symbolic kingship. For example, three

decades ago Karl Leyser highlighted the impressive number and quality of *diplomata*

produced by the Ottonian royal chapel and chancery, while exploring other types of

governance.[585] It therefore behooves art historians to keep in mind the continued

relevance of the written word in Ottonian culture, despite the temptation to assign to

images, sculptures, and imperial insignia the bulk of political and ecclesiastical

power. As the Carolingians had before them, the Ottonians inherited Late Antique

concepts of the written word and more specifically, Holy Scripture.

The nature of literacy during the Ottonian period, indeed the whole early

medieval period, cannot be distilled into simple dichotomies. There were degrees of

literacy and the written word served a variety of uses. Individuals fell somewhere

along a spectrum of completely unlettered to highly talented readers and writers. It is

an oversimplification to see the clergy as literate and the laity as illiterate. Not all

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[582] See the historiography and bibliography provided by Bachrach, "Written Word," 402-404.
[583] As Bachrach rightly points out that the memorization an epic poem or the Psalms is quite different than remembering a long list of names or census information. It is important not to confuse oral performances with the orality of daily life. Bachrach, "Written Word," n. 96, 417.
[584] Ibid., 410.
[585] "Ottonian Government," in *Medieval Germany and its Neighbours, 900-1250* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1982), 72-73.

clerics could read or were fluent in Latin.[586] More importantly, as we have seen the

nature of reading during the Ottonian period meant that one's inability to decode

letters did not preclude one from accessing written texts. The prevalent practice of

voicing texts, though significant, was only one way in which literacy and orality were

intertwined during this period. Even in her revisionist work on the importance of

writing in the Carolingian era, McKitterick is careful to point out the central role of

orality throughout the Middle Ages. Written documents, such as the charters at the

center of her study, often served to record oral transactions.[587] Patrick Geary

effectively demonstrated written texts such as those regarding territorial boundaries

often were incomplete, and therefore ineffectual, without additional information that

would have been communicated orally.[588] In law courts judges often required to both

see and hear contracts.[589] Although we have seen that education at one level involved

the study of texts by antique authors and Church Fathers, much of one's education

would take place orally and visually. Family histories were handed down orally from

mother to daughter.[590] Histories and epic narratives were passed down in oral

performances, such as those of the jongleur. Not merely secular forms of

entertainment, the stories recited by these men were enjoyed by clerical members of

the elite classes as well.[591] Liturgical art and luxury objects also continued to be used

to record history and mark economic transactions despite the existence of writing. In

addition to the treasury bindings, which as we have seen preserved memories,

medievals also used symbolic objects in addition to written documents for property

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[586] Green, *Women Readers*, 4-5.
[587] For example, "The key institution where decision –making took place was the assembly, whether realm-wide or local. There the medium was the spoken word: magnates and lesser men participate in deliberations viva voce, hear, literally, the word of the king (*verbum regis*) or his representative. Decisions might be set down under lists of headings (*capitula*), but they conveyed in *adnuntiationes*, oral statements to faithful men." (Nelson, "Literacy in Carolingian Government," 266-267).
[588] "Land, Language and Memory," 169-184
[589] Ibid.
[590] Houts, *Memory and Gender*, 65-92.
[591] Richter, *Formation of the Medieval West*, 241-254.

transfers and contracts.[592] In the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, therefore, the written and the oral modes coexisted in Ottonian society. In some cases they coexisted within a single person. As will become apparent, the patrons of the treasury bindings navigated life, religion, and politics through both written and oral communication.

The patrons of the treasury bindings likely easily walked the line between oral and literate modes. Moreover, for these men and women the written word, rather than a monolithic entity, was something that had different uses and statuses depending on the text and the context. Two such viewers, readers, and patrons of biblical manuscripts with impressive treasury bindings were Otto III and his successor Henry II. The quantity and quality of the manuscripts commissioned or at least gifted by Henry to both Bamberg and Aachen have already been examined; these include his *Pericopes*, the *Reichenau Gospels*, and the *Aachen Golden Covers*. From Otto III we have among other manuscripts the famous gospel book ornamented with a Byzantine ivory of the *Dormition* and taken by Henry to be given to his pet-foundation, Bamberg Cathedral. It is likely that this gospel book was intended for liturgical use at the imperial court.[593] These two foremost users of these manuscripts in their treasury bindings were highly educated and literate. This, however, was not necessarily the rule during the period. For example, Otto I (d. 973) apparently learned Latin late in life, and the Salian king Conrad II (d. 1039) was referred to as *rex idiota*, due to his inability to read or write Latin.[594] Otto III on the other hand was educated under the foremost scholars of the day, one of whom was Bernward, who became the bishop of Hildesheim and who was a patron of the arts and his own richly bound gospel book.[595] Otto also studied with Gerbert of Aurillac, the future Pope Sylvester II, who was

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[592] Clanchy, *From Memory*, 331-332.
[593] Mütherich, "Library of Otto III," 13. This use seems more likely than the personal perusal of the manuscript by Otto III, as suggested by Mayr-Harting, *Ottonian Book Illumination*, 157-178.
[594] Hoffmann, *Mönchskönig*.
[595] Thietmar, *Chronicon*, 157.

noted for his knowledge of Greek and the sciences, and who had a Greek teacher provided by his mother, the Empress Theophanu.[596] In addition to luxurious liturgical manuscripts, Otto's collection included literary works and histories by antique authors (some in duplicate), scientific and medical works, patristic texts, and law books.[597] Unlike the liturgical manuscripts used by the priests of his chapel on select occasions, these texts were presumably used as receptacles for the storage information which could be retrieved by Otto III. However as many of these were gifts to Otto, the books also served as markers of important personal and political relationships rather than simply as containers of texts. In the highly literate community of Otto's court and chapel, liturgical manuscripts, especially gospel books, were designated through their splendor as having a different function and status. Undoubtedly literate, Otto III still depended on the established rituals and symbolic gestures examined by Althoff and other scholars of medieval *Herrschaft* in addition to the written word to communicate his authority.

Similarly, Henry II's education, which, somewhat unusually for the eldest son, mirrored that of sons destined for the Church, was entrusted to Bishop Abraham of Freising (d. 994). The future emperor also spent time in Hildesheim and depended on the guidance and assistance of Bishop Bernward.[598] Additionally, according to Thietmar Henry was a "brilliant pupil […] nourished by Bishop Wolfgang," the bishop of Regensburg in Henry's native Bavaria.[599] Here Henry's education and future manuscript collection practices were likely influenced by Abbot Ramwold, who had the Carolingian *Codex Aureus of St. Emmeram* restored and fitted with his

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[596] Mütherich, "Library of Otto III," 15.
[597] Ibid., 13-21.
[598] For a discussion of their relationship and the impact on Henry's art patronage, see Garrison, "Art Policy," 23-26.
[599]Thietmar, *Chronicon*¸ 205.

own portrait.[600] Bishop Wolfgang had brought the aged Ramwold from St Maximian in Trier, an important monastery in the Gorze reform movement, to oversee the implementations of like reforms at the abbey of St. Emmeram.[601] In addition to restoring the luxurious Carolingian manuscript and cover, Ramwold gathered both art and manuscripts for St. Emmeram. Under these men Regensburg became a cultural center and large producer, as we have seen, of manuscripts.[602] While the amassing of books by Ramwold for St. Emmeram and later by Henry II for Bamberg aided in the promotion of education according to precepts of the Gorze reform, the number of manuscripts, some of which were duplicates, suggests that these men understood the collection of texts as powerful symbols, reflecting the status of these sites as places of learning. This message seems to have been understood, as least by the aforementioned author of a laudatory poem about Henry's Bamberg.[603]

The education of these emperors was like that of the elite bishops and abbots, who were often members of the ruling families, which entailed the study of Latin and rhetoric, typically through classical texts and the writings of the Church Fathers, among other things. For men such as Archbishop Bruno of Cologne, the brother of both Henry II and Otto III's fathers and a man who was noted by his contemporaries for his learning, education could also include the study of the liberal arts.[604] Presumably some individuals from noble families learned these same skills, if perhaps not to the same degree.[605] Most historians agree that during the early Middle Ages far more individuals could read than write and writing was considered a rather

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[600] For an introduction to both Abbot Ramwold and Bishop Wolfgang, see Cohen, *Uta Codex*, 17-20.
[601] Ibid.
[602] Sukale-Redlefsen, "Prachtvolle Bücher zur Zierde der Kirchen," 56.
[603] See Chapter 3.
[604] Mayr-Harting, *Church and Cosmos*, 10 and *passim*.
[605] Unfortunately, collections of manuscripts and documents that would reveal the extent to lay literacy rarely survive. For the impact of accidents of survival on our understanding of this topic, see Warren Brown, "When Documents are Destroyed," 337-366.

mechanical activity.[606] It was also likely that members of the noble class knew Latin, although many probably had a limited or imperfect grasp of the language.[607] While these men may have used writing to record inventories, make contracts, and ensure property transfer to their descendants, they also experienced the written word as an object within the mass.

While it is certain that male patrons and users of manuscripts and their treasury bindings were literate the question remains if this was case with their female equivalents. To what extent did female patrons such as the Empress Theophanu (possible patron of the *Codex Aureus of Echternach*'s cover), the Abbess Uta of Niedermünster, and Abbess Theophano of Essen use or interact with the written word? Fortunately, in the last twenty years considerable research has been conducted on questions of female education and literacy in the Ottonian period. As we saw in the previous chapter, female members of the imperial family living in and heading these communities used several means, including writing, an oral tradition, and liturgical art, to preserve familial and institutional memories. Katrinette Bordarwé's exhaustive research on the sites of Gandersheim, Essen, and Quedlinburg has demonstrated that not only did the woman of these institutions understand Latin, which they learned first from the Psalms and Gospels, but some could read and write it.[608] Learning from their elders in these female communities, young women became familiar not only with the patristic texts but also with classical works. The work of the remarkable Hroswitha of Gandersheim, author of histories of the Luidolfing family and her community, not only reveals the high facility with Latin and composition some women had, but also

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[606] Clanchy, *From Memory*, 47; and Green, *Women Readers*, 4.

[607] Unlike Romance speakers living during the Early Carolingian period, whose language was much closer to the Latin used by the Church, for German speakers it was truly a foreign language. McKitterick, *Carolingians and the Written Word*, 21-22 and Roger Wright, *Late Latin and Early Romance in Spain and Carolingian France* (Liverpool: F. Cairns, 1982).

[608] *Sanctimoniales Litteratae*.

the general level of education in her community.[609] The target audience, after all, for Hroswitha's Latin plays modeled on the work of the Roman playwright Terence were the women of Gandersheim.[610]

Other female patrons and users of treasury bindings and manuscripts were also literate and Latinate. Although Adam Cohen is reluctant to assign the authorship of the *Uta Codex*'s complex tituli to the Abbess, her involvement in its creation is not impossible, based on what we know about her counterparts at other *Frauenstiftungen*. Even if she did not compose the *tituli* for her evangeliary, she and the other women at Niedermünster were the audience for this book. The excellent condition of the manuscript, unlike that of the ornate box, suggests that this manuscript was little read.[611] Perhaps this function of this manuscript, which references the works of Augustus, Boethius, and Carolingian exegetes, was largely symbolic of the learning and reforms that arose from Uta's leadership at Niedermünster. Similarly the Empress Theophano as Byzantine princess—although not of the highest order—would have likely acquired literate skills as well as a new language and details of court ceremony when it was decided that she was to marry Otto II. Not only did she serve as regent but she also oversaw the education of her children.[612] Like Uta, Theophano equally could have played a part in the commissioning of the golden cover that now enshrines the *Codex Aureus of St. Emmeram.*

Although these women could not take part in the performance of the liturgy, they nonetheless could shape it through commissioning deluxe liturgical manuscripts. Through these richly bound manuscripts they associated themselves with not only the

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[609] Katharina M. Wilson, ed., *Hrotsvit of Gandersheim - rara avis in Saxonia?: A Collection of Essays* (Ann Arbor: Medieval and Renaissance Collegium Pub. Co., 1987).
[610] Johanna Maria van Winter, "The Education of the Daughters of the Nobility in the Ottonian Empire," in Davids, *The Empress Theophano*, 94-98.
[611] Cohen, *Uta Codex*, 192-194.
[612] Judith Herrin, "Theophano: The Education of a Byzantine Princess," in Davids, *The Empress Theophano*, 64-85.

written word, but more specifically with Holy Writ. Tellingly, Uta, Theophano, and Theophano's granddaughter and namesake, the Abbess of Essen, inserted themselves into the liturgy through images of themselves on either the illuminated pages, in the case of the Regensburg abbess, or on the cover. The signification of commissioning a luxurious gospel book and the power of Scripture is shown quite clearly in the portraits of the two abbesses. Holding their richly bound manuscripts, the pictorial counterparts of Uta and Abbess Theophanu are offered glorious visions of the Virgin and child. Not merely texts to be read, these manuscripts are shown as gateways to heavenly realms. The fact that these literate, elite men and women patronized not only the manuscripts but also the luxurious bindings suggests that the gold and gems were not meant merely to impress illiterates or that the spiritual nature of the contained manuscripts was not important to a literate audience.

Within these circles Scripture, unsurprisingly, had an unequaled status. While gospel books shared many qualities with the other texts the Ottonians encountered, they nevertheless were set apart. For example, as Michael Clanchy writes, before the twelfth century there was a "general distrust of texts."[613] While this may certainly be the case for governmental or contractual texts, this was never an issue with canonical biblical texts, which after all were considered to be divinely inspired. The fact that many individuals preferred to listen to rather than read a text is more reflective of general reading practices rather than a simple mistrust of the written word. In the same way that there was a range of degrees of literacy there was likely a range in interpretations of Scripture throughout the Middle Ages. For some it was a text to be read, for others it was a magical talisman that could ward off evil. More importantly, Scripture could be both things to the same individual depending on the situation. This

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[613] Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, passim and Small, *Wax Tablets*.

range of interpretations need not strictly coincide with an individual's facility with

reading and Latin. For example, the highly educated Augustine believed that the

Gospel of John had the power to reduce a fever when placed under the patient's ailing

head.[614] Ottonian audiences' relationship to Scripture was similarly complex and

multifaceted.

**Conclusion: Materializing the Word**

Above, I have explored the mechanics of viewer reception of the treasury

bindings and the ways in which creators harnessed the power of the materials and

employed geometric compositions to capture viewer attention. Building on this

previous analysis, I now return to certain visual aspects of the treasury bindings—the

reflective, precious materials, their centralized compositions, and the three-

dimensional depictions of Christ—to offer possible interpretations of their visual

rhetoric. While it is impossible to do justice to the visual exegesis of the covers in this

limited space, this section suggests fruitful avenues for future research.

As this study has demonstrated, the Ottonians were heirs to a great inheritance.

Their impressive cathedral and monastic libraries were treasuries of patristic and

Carolingian interpretations of Scripture.[615] Ottonian clerics continued liturgical

practices established in earlier periods, in which manuscripts of the Gospels were

processed, kissed, enthroned, and generally treated with the reverence due sacred

objects and persons. Critically, the Ottonians inherited the practice of ornamenting

Scripture with luxurious covers, as demonstrated in Chapter 2. Before the first

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[614] Claudia Rapp. "Holy Texts, Holy Men, and Holy Scribes: Aspects of Scriptural Holiness in Late Antiquity," in *The Early Christian Book*, ed. Klingshirn and Safran (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 202; and Edmond LeBlant, "Le premier chapitre de Saint Jean et la croyance a ses vertus secretes," *Revue archeologique*, 3d ser., 25 (1894): 8-13.

[615] For example, see the holdings of the library of Bamberg Cathedral, which included the writings of Augustine, Cassiodorus, Jerome, Bede, Gregory the Great, and Paschasius Radbertus as well as Classical texts. Hoffmann, *Bamberger Handschriften*.

Ottonian patron commissioned a treasury binding, the reified status of gospels

manuscripts was already well established. Moreover, the nature of ornately bound

gospel books as symbolic objects, rather than texts to be read, had been proclaimed

through liturgical art for centuries. Unlike depictions in Early Christian mosaics,

catacomb paintings, and ivories, in which Scripture is represented as an open book

with the written text displayed to the viewer, by the middle of the fifth century Holy

Writ was overwhelmingly shown/depicted as a closed, richly ornamented codex.[616]

Perhaps the most important inheritance the Ottonians received was Holy

Scripture itself. Scripture's very nature as a physical, written text shaped the minds of

Early Medieval believers in that it changed how people remembered and what they

valued. Although oral communication continued to be an important factor in Ottonian

society and instrumental in shaping viewers' responses to the treasury bindings and

their contained text, the existence of written Scripture meant that it was never a purely

oral society. Verbatim memorization became important during Late Antiquity and the

Middle Ages, because there was an authoritative text, Holy Writ. The varied methods

to memorize texts and information, which constituted the "art of memory" described

by Carruthers for the medieval period and by Small for Antiquity, were only

necessary because of the existence of the written word.[617] As anthropologist Jack

Goody has argued, such techniques and verbatim memory are rarely valued in purely

oral cultures.[618] Instead, in the Ottonian period—as in Late Antiquity and the

Carolingian era—which had not only writing, but Scripture, there was the concept of

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[616] For examples of the open and closed codex in Early Medieval Art and a discussion of their meanings, see Rainer, *Buch und die vier Ecken*, 141-168. The best illustration of this change can be found in the mosaics of Ravenna. In the Orthodox baptistery and the so-called Mausoleum of Galla Placidia Scripture is presented as an open book. In San Vitale and Sant' Apollinare Nuovo the books are shown closed.
[617] Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, passim and Small, *Wax Tablets*.
[618] Jack Goody, *The Power of the Written Tradition* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000), 40-41.

an authoritative original.[619] Not only was Scripture authoritative, it was also believed

to be eternal. Both Old and New Testament (Isaiah 40:8, and 1 Peter 1:25) assert that

the grass and flowers may wither, "but the Word endures forever." The eye-catching

materials used to decorate the Word spoke to this text's authoritative, unequaled

nature, and communicated the lasting presence of the Word. The gleaming covers,

such as those of the *Pericopes of Henry II*, were constructed from the same materials

as imperial insignia and other symbols of temporal power. These materials were also

known for their permanence. For example, in his discussion of materials, Pliny the

Elder—a writer to whom medieval exegetes frequently turned—not only stressed the

brilliant nature of gold, but claimed that its value lay in the fact that it did not rust and

that it could pass through fire unscathed.[620]

What then might the gemstones on the covers have signified? Discussion of

medieval meanings for specific gems is fraught with difficulty. This is in no small

part due to the fact that there was not a general consensus on the meanings of

particular gemstones. Authors of lapidaries, such as Pliny the Elder, Epiphanius of

Salamis, and Isidore each discussed gems in different ways.[621] Jerome himself

struggled centuries earlier to reconcile the many meanings ascribed to specific gems

in the Bible.[622] By the time Ottonian craftsmen were fashioning their covers, the

practice of interpreting lapidary symbolism was well established.[623] However, there

were often as many interpretations of the meanings of the gems as there were

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[619] This is clearly evident in the Carolingian attempts at a variety of monasteries to produce a corrected Bible text. Rosamond McKitterick, "Carolingian Bible production: The Tours Anomaly," in *The Early Medieval Bible: Its Production, Decoration, and Use*, ed. Richard Gameson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 63-77.

[620] Pliny the Elder, *Historia Naturalis*, 33. 19. 6-16.

[621] Janes, *God and Gold*, 77-84.

[622] Ibid., 80.

[623] Genevra Kornbluth, *Engraved Gems of the Carolingian Empire* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 16; and Gerda Friess, *Edelsteine im Mittelalter: Wandel und Kontinuität in ihrer Bedeutung durch zwölf Jahrhunderte (in Aberglauben, Medizin, Theologie und Goldschmiedekunst)* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1980).

individuals interpreting them. Although frustrating for modern scholars trying to unearth the symbolism of jewels and colors, the range of interpretations is instructive in itself. The brilliant eye-catching nature of the gems, like many other aspects of the covers, served as invitations to viewers to look and, more importantly, make meanings.

While it is likely impossible to ascertain what the individual stones on the cover of the *Uta Codex* and other Ottonian treasury bindings signified, when understood as part of a collection of gems their meaning is easier to uncover. As discussed above, the cover of the *Uta Codex*, a copy of the *Codex Aureus of St. Emmeram*, offered viewers a vision of Christ surrounded by a frame of glowing gems. Although more evident in the Carolingian cover, on which the settings of the gemstones are fashioned to appear as miniature buildings (fig. 85), this border of gemstones on the cover of the *Uta Codex* also likely evoked Heavenly Jerusalem as described in chapter 21 of Revelation. The Heavenly Jerusalem, represented not only on these covers, but also in medieval mosaics and manuscript illumination, was described as being formed of pure gold with walls adorned with precious stones.[624] In his commentary on Revelation, Bede interpreted each of the gems mentioned in the text as the virtues upon which the Heavenly Jerusalem is built.[625] Not simply markers of status then, gems and gold provided the material that spurred scriptural exegesis.[626] When these materials were used on reliquaries and treasury bindings they served as a preview of what was to come.[627] Moreover, as the text of Apocalypse of John makes clear, the Heavenly Jerusalem had no temple within (21: 22), but rather Lord God

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[624] One of the best examples is the ninth-century arch mosaic decoration in the St. Prassede in Rome.
[625] Janes, *God and Gold*, 83.
[626] Ibid.
[627] See for example Dahl discussion of the materials used on the reliquary statue of St. Foy in Conques, which show the saint as she lives in the Heavenly Jerusalem. Dahl, "Statue of St. Foy," 182-186.

Almighty and the Lamb. Indeed, this is exactly what both the Carolingian and

Ottonian covers offer; at their centers are glorious visions of Christ enthroned.

Interestingly, the cover of the *Reichenau Gospels* also bordered with precious

gems, presents not an image of Christ in Majesty but rather a large agate at the center

of a *crux gemmata*. The use of this stone in the stead of a representation of Christ was

noted and discussed by Steenbock and is also useful for our understanding of the

meaning of precious materials on the covers.[628] As Steenbock points out, this same

scheme with a central element at the intersection of the cross arms appears on covers

from both before the Ottonian period and after. A large precious stone lies at the

center of each of the early seventh-century *Theodolinda Covers*, and there likely was

one on the early twelfth-century binding from Helmarshausen (fig. 86).[629] Most

surprising, is the reuse of a sculpture Antique head of chalcedony (one of the precious

materials that make up the Heavenly Jerusalem) at the center of the *crux gemmata* on

the *Gospels of St. Lebuinus* (fig. 87) in Utrecht from the late eleventh or early twelfth

century.[630] As previously mentioned, this arrangement was also found on covers

represented in mosaics or on ivories. From these examples, Steenbock rightly

concludes that these central elements on the jeweled crosses are clearly meant as

stand-ins for Christ. As mentioned above, the cover of the *Reichenau Gospels*

presents a four-part diagram of the cosmos. The agate as a symbol of Christ therefore

stands at the center of this representation of the Christian universe.

Placed at the center of the treasury bindings, the large agate on the *Reichenau*

*Gospels* would likely, as demonstrated in the first section of this chapter, have been

the first element viewers fixated upon. Considered quasi-magical,[631] the agate could

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[628] Steenbock, *Kirchliche Prachteinband*, 25-31.
[629] Ibid., cat. no. 79.
[630] Ibid., cat. no. 86.
[631] Ibid., 30.

have been interpreted by some viewers as consubstantial to Christ, since these

impressive stones, created miraculously by God, were nonetheless material,

tangible.[632] As part of an elaborate geometric configuration of precious stones, the

centerpiece and the cover as a whole could have been interpreted as a representation

of the Church. Here we have Christ the "keystone" (Ephesians 2:20) surrounded by

shimmering stones, the "living stones" (1 Peter 2:5), his followers who build the

spiritual house of God.[633] The agate and the reused Arabian amulet inserted on top of

it on the *Reichenau Gospels* therefore were valued not just as exotica or *spolia*, but

because of their ability to present the complex nature of Christ. In using these

materials for the cover of a gospel book, they communicated the nature of Scripture as

both a material record of the Word of God and as a reflection of the abstract, eternal

*Logos* mentioned at the beginning of John (1:1-14), which was God and was with

God.

As we have seen Christ not only was figured as a precious stone at the center

of the Ottonian treasury bindings, but often his crucified body was represented in

ivory as on the covers of the *Codex Aureus of Echternach*, the *Pericopes of Henry II*,

and the *Theophanu Gospels*. Goldschmidt's catalogue of Carolingian and Ottonian

ivories provides many more examples of ivory plaques of the Crucifixion that once

adorned treasury bindings. As discussed in Chapter 3, this subject matter was

eminently suitable for an object used at the altar where Christ's sacrifice was

memorialized and reenacted. However, both the ivory medium and three-dimensional

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[632] Jean-Claude Bonne proposes this interpretation of the variegated marble on a portable altar. "Entre l'image et la métier: La choséité du sacré en Occident," in *Les images dans les société médiévales: pour une histoire compare*, ed. Jean-Marie Sansterre et Jean-Claude Schmitt (Brussels: Institut historique belge de Rome, 1999), 77-111.

[633] For Christ as the keystone in the Gothic portal sculpture, see Peter Low, "'You Who Once were Far Off': enlivening scripture in the Main Portal at Vézelay," *Art Bulletin* 85, no. 3 (Sept. 2003): 496-489. For "living stontes," see Karl Möseneder, "Lapides vivi: über die Kreuzkapelle der Burg Karlstein," *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 34 (1981): 39-69.

nature of the representation of Christ are highly significant. As we have seen, despite

limited ivory supplies, creators of Ottonian treasury bindings as well as later covers

continued to use ivory plaques carved with the Crucifixion. Craftsmen and patrons

thus offered viewers tangible representations of Christ created in a material that was

not only luxurious and imported, but was also *organic*. On these treasury bindings,

Scripture is clearly provided with a physical body. The Word has been made flesh (or

at least tusk). In this way the covers visibly depicted the increasingly more common

belief that following consecration, the Eucharistic bread transformed into the body of

Christ.[634]

The covers, by providing viewers with three-dimensional representations of

Christ, referenced and in a sense recreated the Incarnation of the Word. Biblical and

Late Antique conceptualizations of the Gospels, which the Ottonians inherited,

highlighted the nature of the Gospels as the living and divine presence of the Word of

God, essentially Christ-like. According to the Pauline epistles, the Law handed down

to Moses, while important, was dead compared to the living law of the New

Testament (2 Cor. 3: 6-13). When the earlier manifestation of the Word (the Old

Testament Law) was not understood, it was made flesh through the Incarnation of

Christ, the "true light." Laura Kendrick has examined this "animistic exegesis"

throughout the Middle Ages and discussed the ways in which manuscript illumination

served as a form of biblical commentary, by imbuing the written word with life.[635]

The tactics the manuscript painters employed included the use of vegetal initials and

replacing letters with depictions of Christ. But perhaps this Johannine

conceptualization of the Word was seen mostly clearly in the widespread medieval

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[634] The interpretation of the concecrated bread as the Real Presence of Chirst of Carolingian theologian, Paschasius Radbertus not only was in the library of Bamberg Cathedral, but was achieving more widespread acceptance. (Fisher, "Cross Altar," 49-50). For the controverse surrounding Christ's presence in the Eucharist in the Carolingian period, see Chazelle, *Crucified God*, 209-240.
[635] Kendrick, *Animating the Letter*, 65-109.

practice of *chrysography*, writing in gold, which was found not only within manuscripts, but also in Roman apse mosaics, which visually reflected the divine presence within the word.[636] Nearer at hand and significant to Ottonian patrons, the Aachen Palatine chapel used a gold mosaic ground for the lengthy inscription that runs beneath the gallery. Such golden inscriptions when combined with iconic images of Christ, the Word Made Flesh, spoke to their shared natures.[637]

While golden letters in manuscripts and on church walls at one level acted as images that reflected the divine presence in the Word, treasury bindings made Christ's presence in the Word explicit. This can be most clearly seen on the cover of the *Uta Codex*. This manifestation of Christ is physically attached to the container of the written word and holds a representation of a richly bound codex, making their connection apparent. As we have seen, the *Uta Codex* cover was just one instance in which Ottonian viewers were presented with the human figure of Christ made tangible. These three-dimensional representations of Christ, however, did more than just directly engage worshippers; they also allowed for face-to-face communication with the written text. The covers thus approximated the experience one was to have when reading the Gospels, a vision of God's face.[638] Such an experience is described in 2 Corinthians (4:6): "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Christ Jesus." The treasury bindings, quite literally the public faces of the manuscripts, dramatically replicated the metaphorical, shimmering light of knowledge that existed between the covers. As the inscription on the *Pericopes of Henry II* made clear, those seeking true wisdom should rejoice at the fourfold work of knowledge

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[636] Erik Thunø, "Inscription and Divine Presence: Golden Letters in the Early Medieval Apse Mosaic," *Word and Image* 27, no. 3 (2011): 279-291.
[637] Ibid.
[638] Kendrick, *Animating the Letter*, 66.

from the divinely inspired hands of the evangelists. During the mass this concept was presented to viewers. Manifested in these shining objects, the divinely inspired light of wisdom was not to be forgotten.

**Conclusion**

Ottonian treasury bindings offered viewers visual manifestations of Christ's lasting earthly presence through Scripture. Through their sumptuous materials and varied representations of Christ they connected viewers to the sacred text they sheltered. Bound to the text, the covers nonetheless were no mere illustrations of moments from this narrative, but rather actors in the rich, multimedia performances of the mass and other rituals. The often-formulaic iconography of the covers tapped into the memories of worshippers and thus engaged them in the making of meanings, as it recreated the Christian past or foreshadowed the apocalyptic future in the present day. Serving as repositories of the owning institution's history, the treasury bindings frequently memorialized both their influential Ottonian patrons as well as the act of giving.

Long overlooked in the art historical literature, the luxurious manuscript covers offered untapped sources of information about the production of liturgical art in the early medieval period, the relationship of the Ottonians to the written word, and way in which images functioned during the liturgy. As the first chapter demonstrated, the fixation in earlier scholarship on questions of provenance and dating, while important, meant that these more productive avenues of inquiry were left unexplored. Chapter 2 showed that the very formulaic appearance of early medieval covers, which likely contributed to their scholarly neglect, is instructive in itself. By tracing the adoption and transformation of the subject matter and that of the materials used on treasury bindings over the centuries, it was possible to gain insight into the minds of the creators. Additionally, by working closely with the surviving objects, rather than postulating lost works and prototypes, I offered a new perspective on the working

practices of the creators of these treasury bindings. Pragmatically drawing on established traditions, these artists harnessed the ability of formulae to quickly communicate with viewers.

By reconstructing the liturgical context and physical environment of early eleventh-century Bamberg Cathedral in which the *Pericopes of Henry II* and the *Reichenau Gospels* were used, I was better able to identify the nature of the covers' audiences and more accurately describe the way in which these men and women saw the treasury bindings. Brought out from storage on the most important feast days, the majority of viewers only glimpsed the covers as the manuscripts were processed to the altar and then taken to the ambo. It is essential to be mindful of how such works were actually seen, as it casts doubt on the effectiveness of political messages made through the use of spolia on the covers. Although art historians have the luxury of thoroughly and exhaustively examining and interpreting the iconography of the covers, it is important to be aware that this is likely not how they would have been seen and understood. From the reconstruction of the ceremonies at Bamberg as well as Aachen and Niedermünster it became apparent that the subject matter and material sumptuousness of the richly bound liturgical manuscripts were repeated throughout the church spaces on altars, processional crosses, mosaics, and vestments. In Chapter 4, I suggested that one should not read the decoration of the treasury bindings as closed and fixed programs. Instead their meanings and even narratives were created across objects and nuanced by the spoken words of the mass. The physical space and the differences between the liturgical objects served as an invitation for the viewers to participate in making meanings of the whole.

The priceless ornamentation of the treasury bindings clearly reflected the value the Ottonians placed on the written word. This observation led to a questioning of the

traditional view in earlier scholarship that the Ottonians made little use of the written word, instead using symbolic objects, gestures, and the spoken word to govern and propagandize in comparison to their Carolingian predecessors. By examining not only how Holy Scripture was honored through precious materials, but also reading practices and degrees of literacy in the Ottonian period, I argued that written, oral, and visual modes of communication continued to be of importance in both secular and ecclesiastical life in the Holy Roman Empire.

As an investigation of the reception of Ottonian treasury bindings, this study employed several methods to overcome the lack of contemporary written sources that describe the response of Ottonian audiences. As discussed above, this included an examination of the transformation of motifs over the centuries and the reconstruction of the original viewing contexts. As a further tool to help answer questions of viewer response, I also drew upon recent studies from the fields of cognitive psychology and neuroscience. Another lens through which to view the covers, this approach allows us to better understand how the treasury bindings connected with viewers. I contend that the light-reflecting materials, centralized compositions, and iconic, staring figures both captured the attention of viewers and aided efficient and powerful communication with these audiences. These findings, I suggest, are directly relevant for the larger study of Early Medieval liturgical and monumental art. Their shining surfaces noted in written sources in the Middle Ages and modern art historical scholarship, apse mosaics and reliquaries used many of these same strategies to engage viewers. Through this engagement the sumptuous arts connect worshippers to the sacred. Standing at the boundary between the written word and the viewer's environment, Ottonian liturgical manuscript covers invited viewers to contemplate the

divine presence of Christ in Holy Writ. The Word, which through Christ became

flesh, was made material and tangible through ivory, gold, and parchment.

**Illustrations**
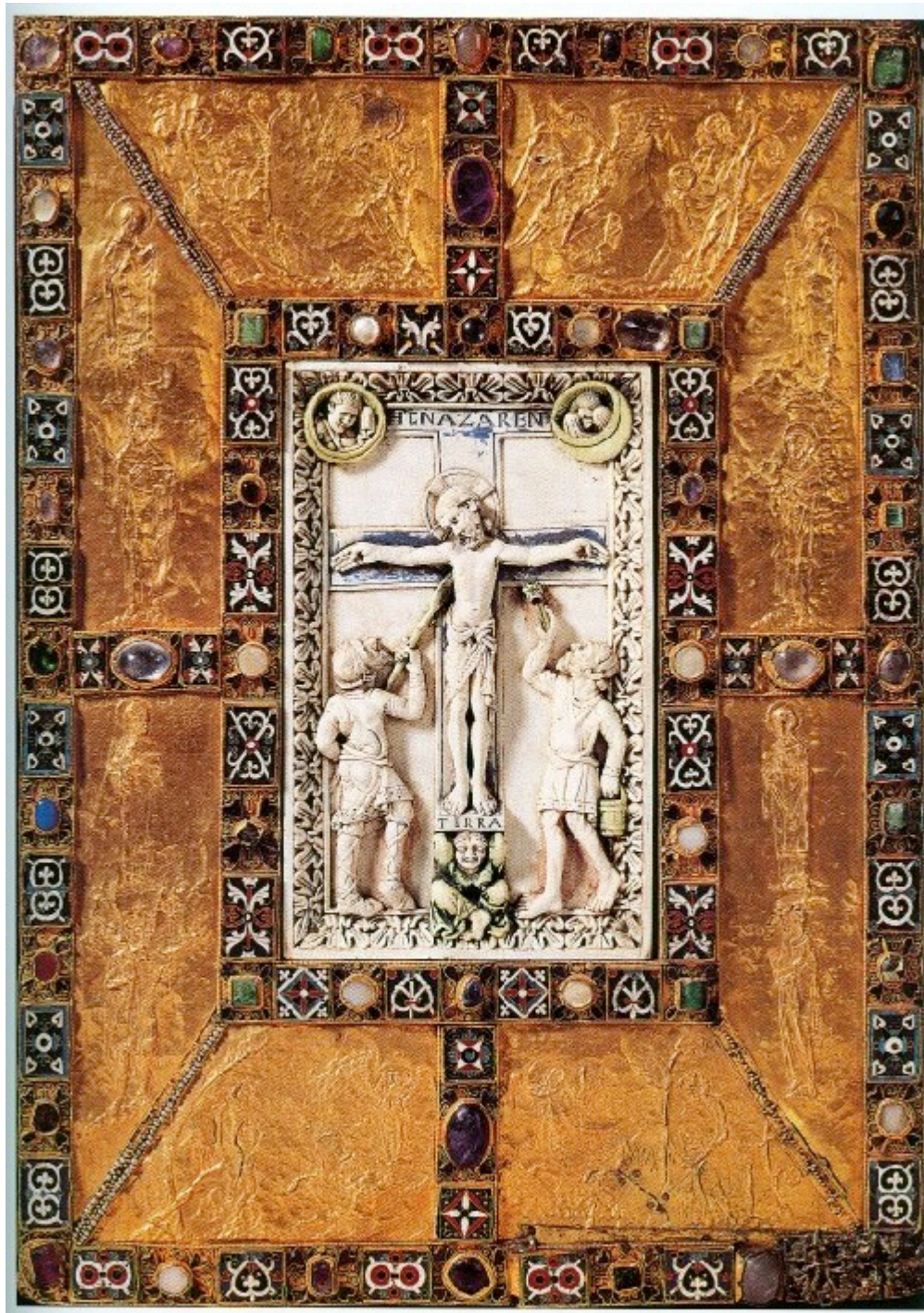


Figure 1: Front cover of the *Codex Aureus of Echternach*, Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg

Figure 2: *Aachen Golden Cover*, Aachen, Cathedral Treasury

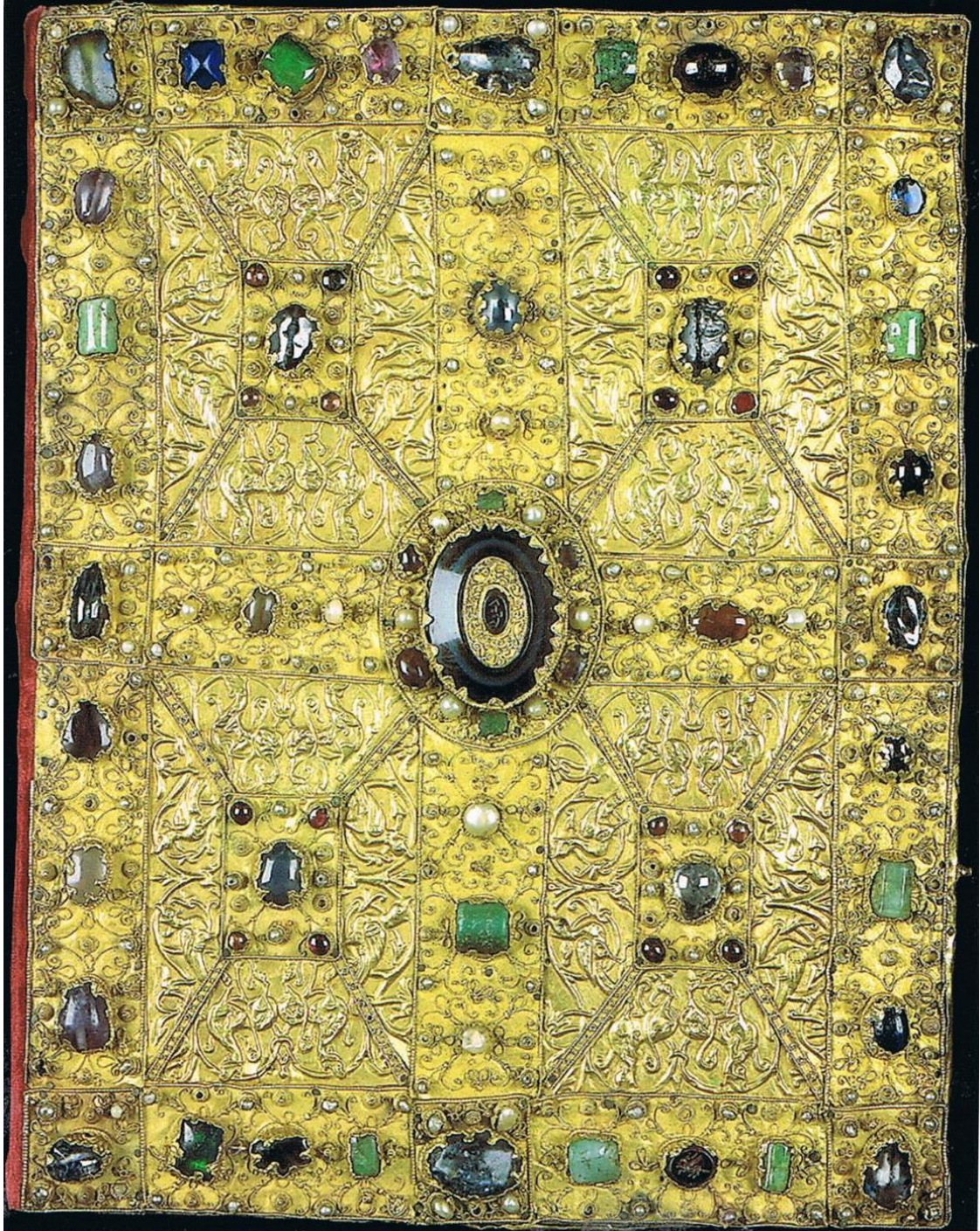Figure 3: *Aachen Silver Cover*, Aachen, Cathedral Treasury

Figure 4: Front cover of the Reichenau Gospels, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 4454

Figure 5: Front cover of the *Pericopes of Henry II*, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 4452

Figure 6: Front cover of the book box of the *Uta Codex*, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 13601

Figure 7: Front cover of the *Theophanu Gospels*, Essen, Münsterschatz
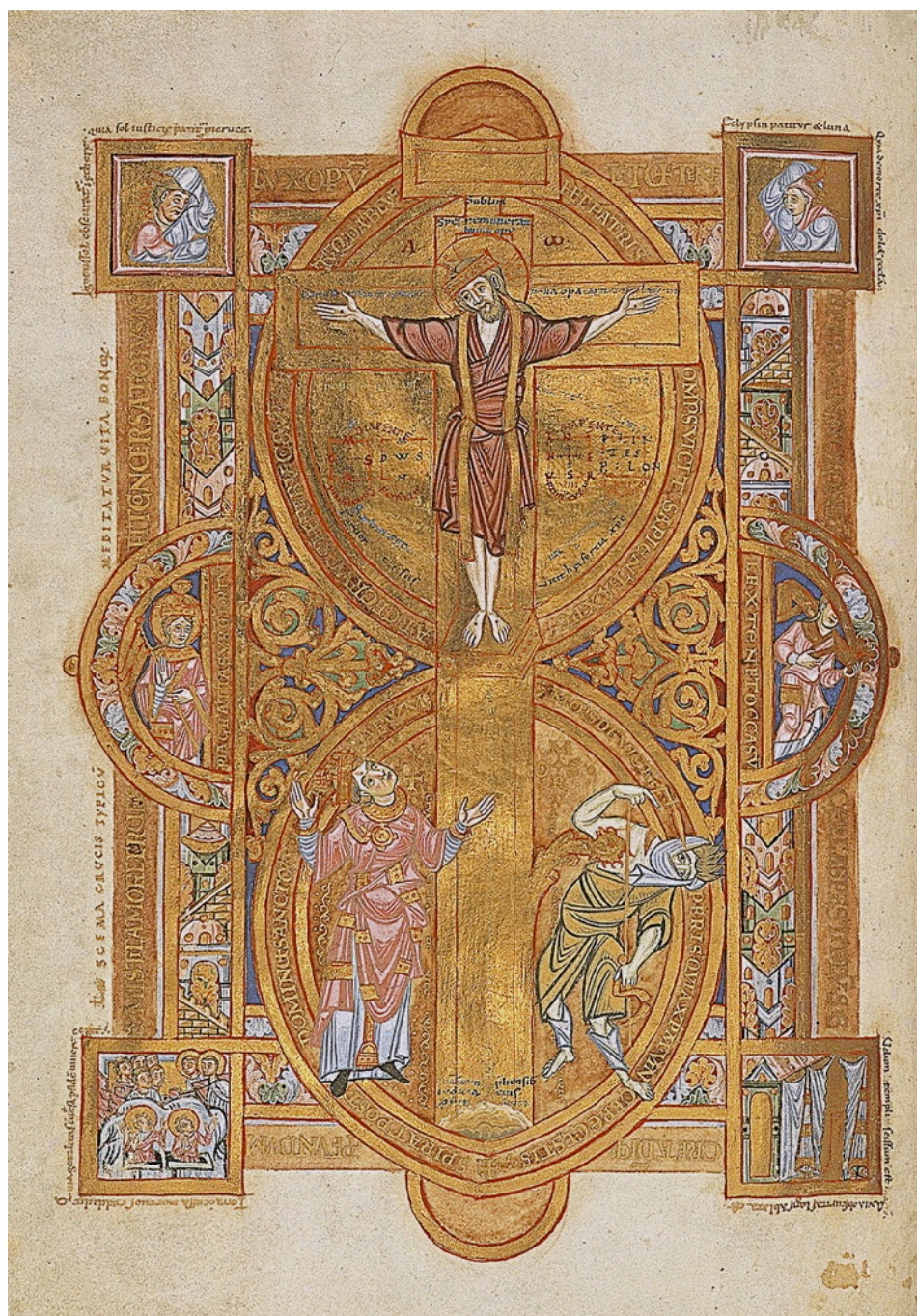
Figure 8:  Symbolic Crucifixion, *Uta Codex,* fol. 3v

Figure 9:  Side view of the book box of the Uta Codex
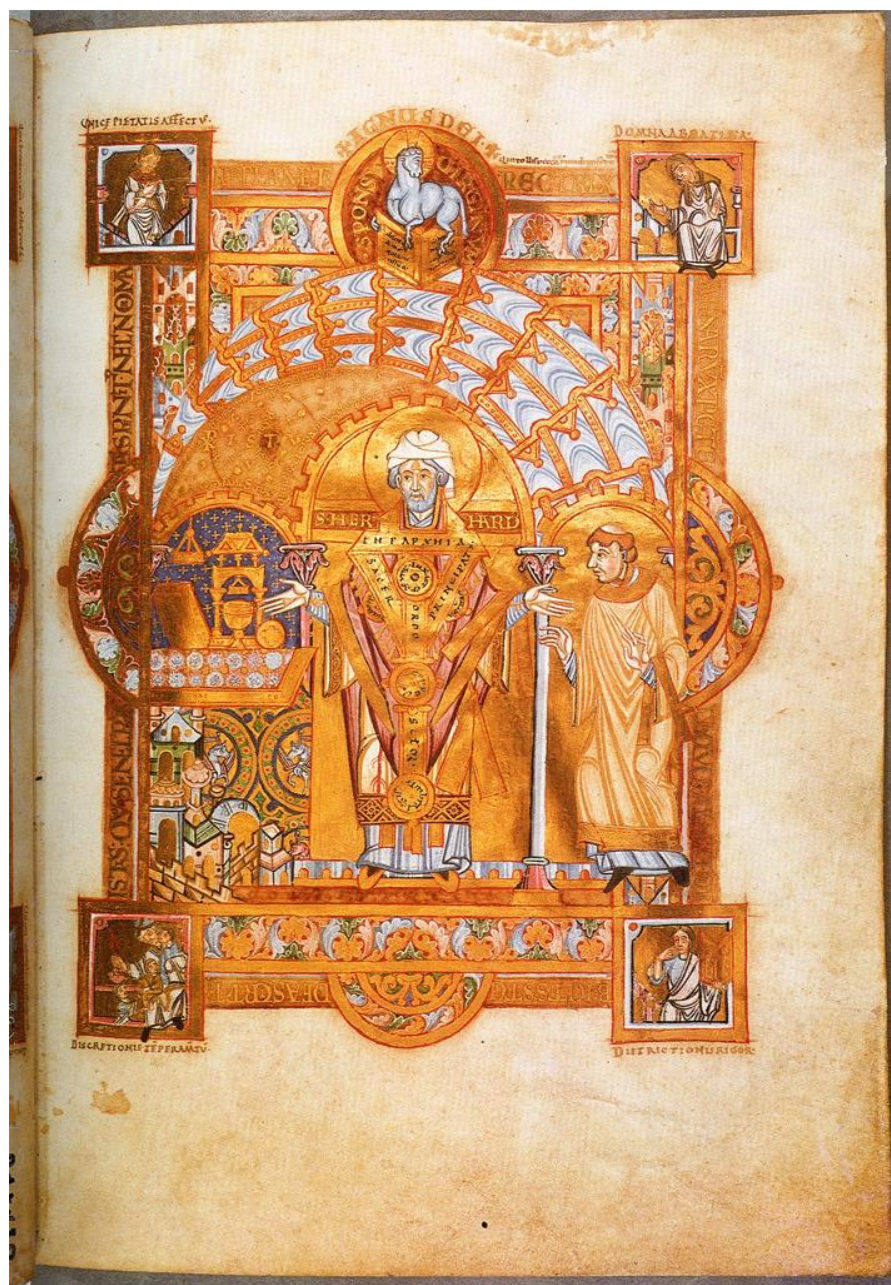
Figure 10: St. Erhard Celebrating the Mass, Uta Codex, fol. 4r
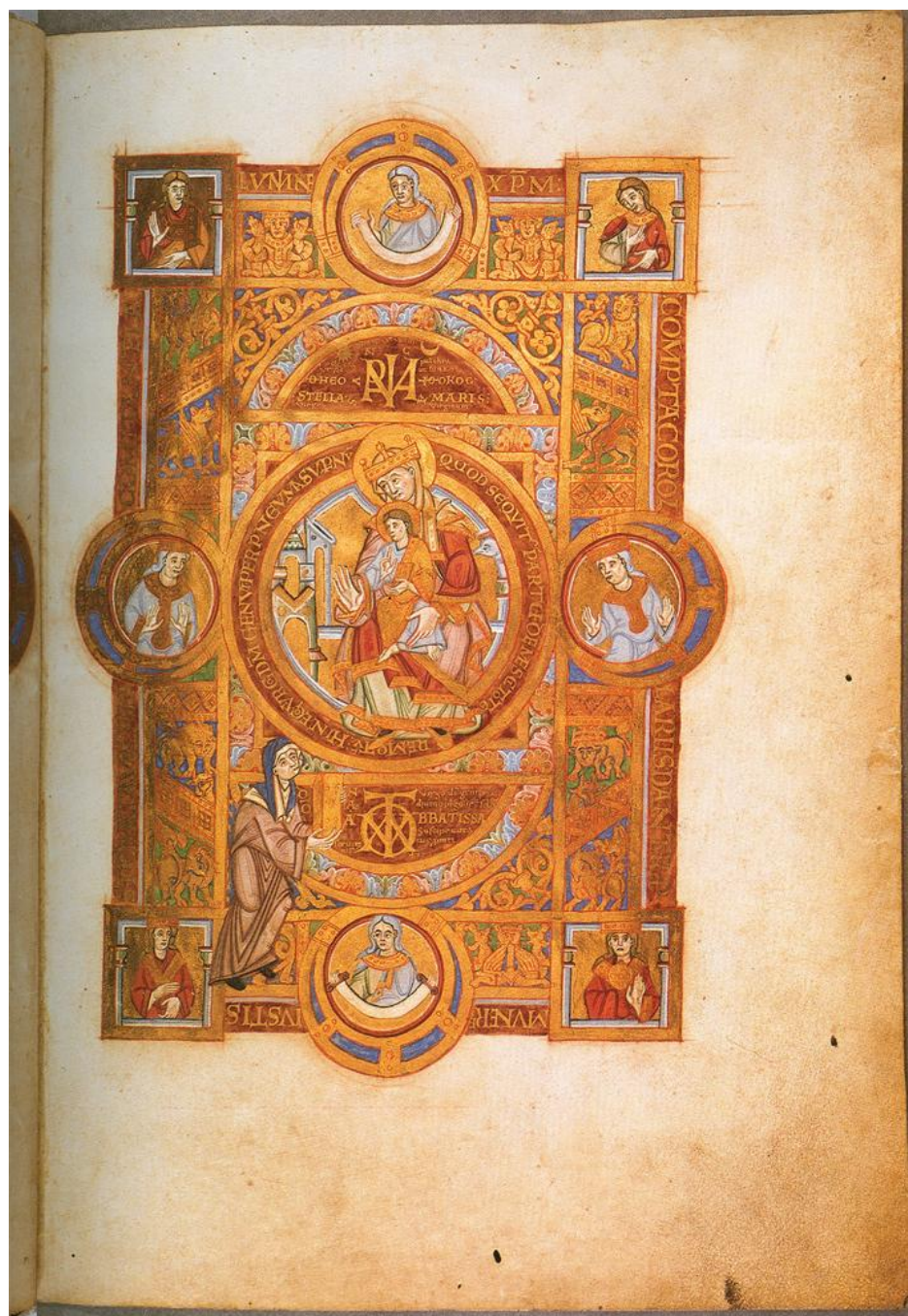
Figure 11: Dedication Frontispiece, Uta Codex, fol. 2v

Figure 12: Maiestas Domini, Reichenau Gospels

Figure 13: Covers of Queen Theodelinda, Monza, Basilica of S. Giovanni Battista
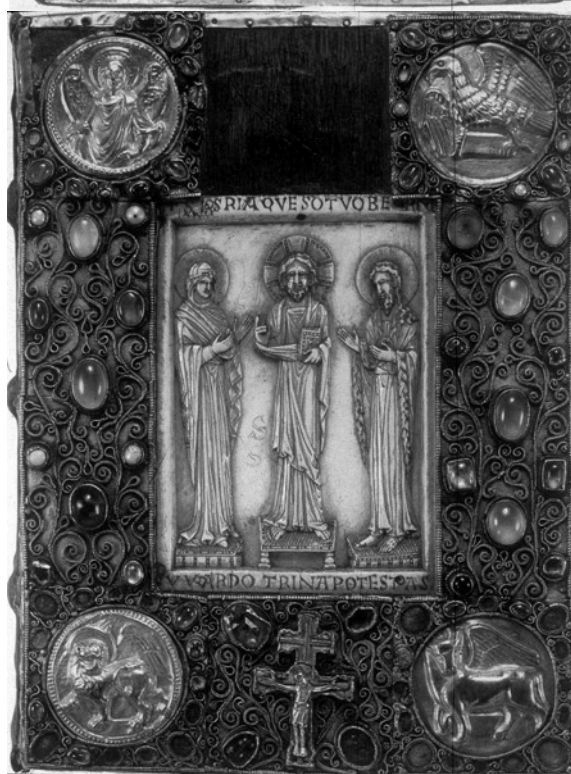
Figure 14: Covers of the Precious Gospels of Bishop Bernward of Hildesheim, Hildesheim, Domschatz No. 18



Figure 15: Crown of Constantine IX Monomachos, Magyar Nemzeti Muzeum, Budapest
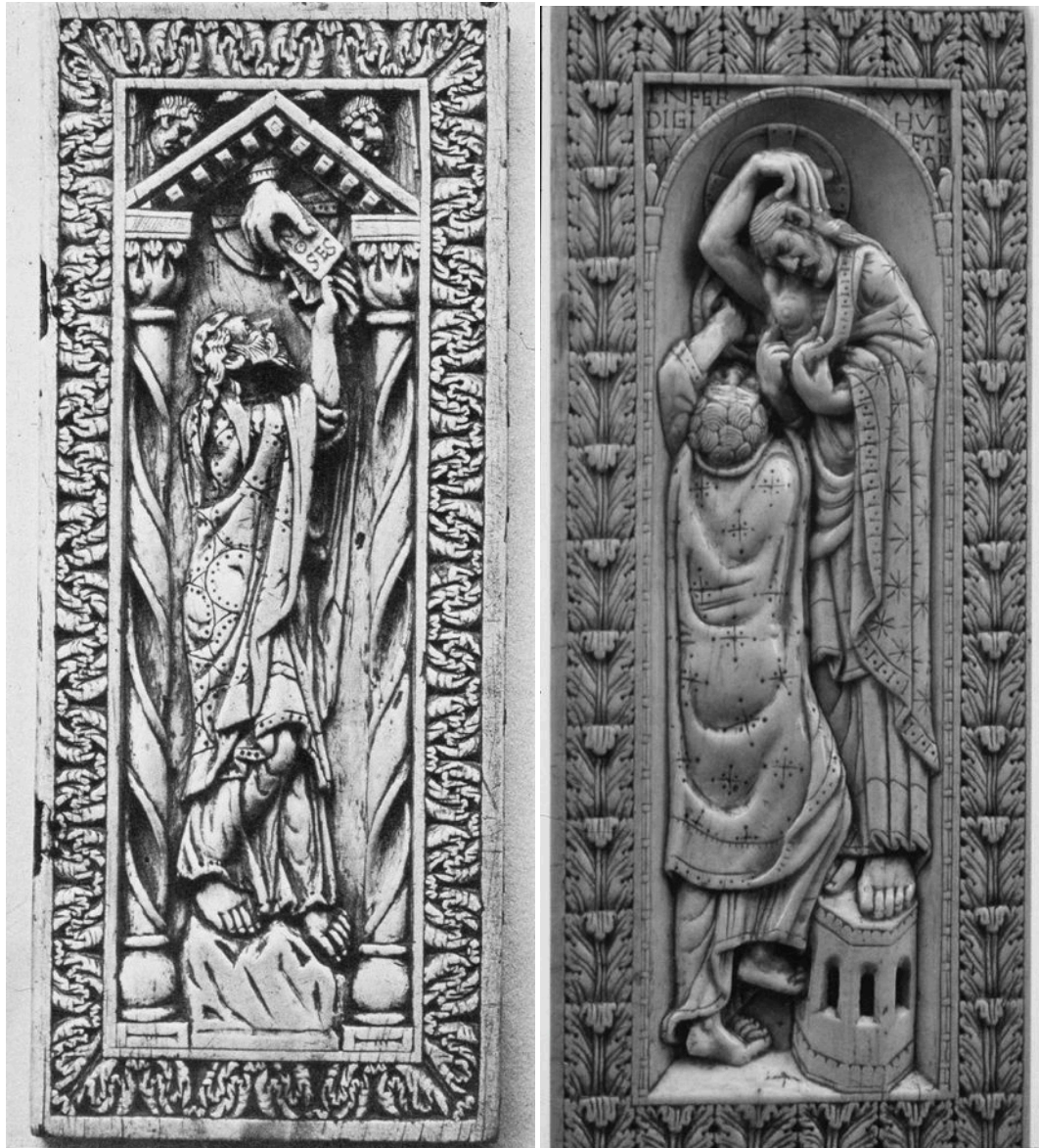
Figure 16: Moses and Doubting Thomas Ivory Diptych, Staatliche Museen, Berlin

Figure 17: Ivory plaque of the Maiestas Domini, Staatliche Museen, Berlin

Figure 18:Detail of the front cover of the Theophanu Gospels, Essen

Figure 19:     Ambo of Henry II, Aachen Cathedral

Figure 20:Golden Retable, Aachen Cathedral

Figure 21:Basel Antependium, Paris, Musée Nationale du Moyen Âge

Figure 22: Front cover of the Poussay Gospels, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. lat. 10514

Figure 23: Cover of a Gospel Book, Bamberg, Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Lit. 1

Figure 24:Ivory plaque with the Crucifixion, Brussels, Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire

Figure 25: Werden Crucifix, Essen-Werden, Abbey of Saint Ludger

Figure 26: Stone reliefs of St. Ludger's tomb
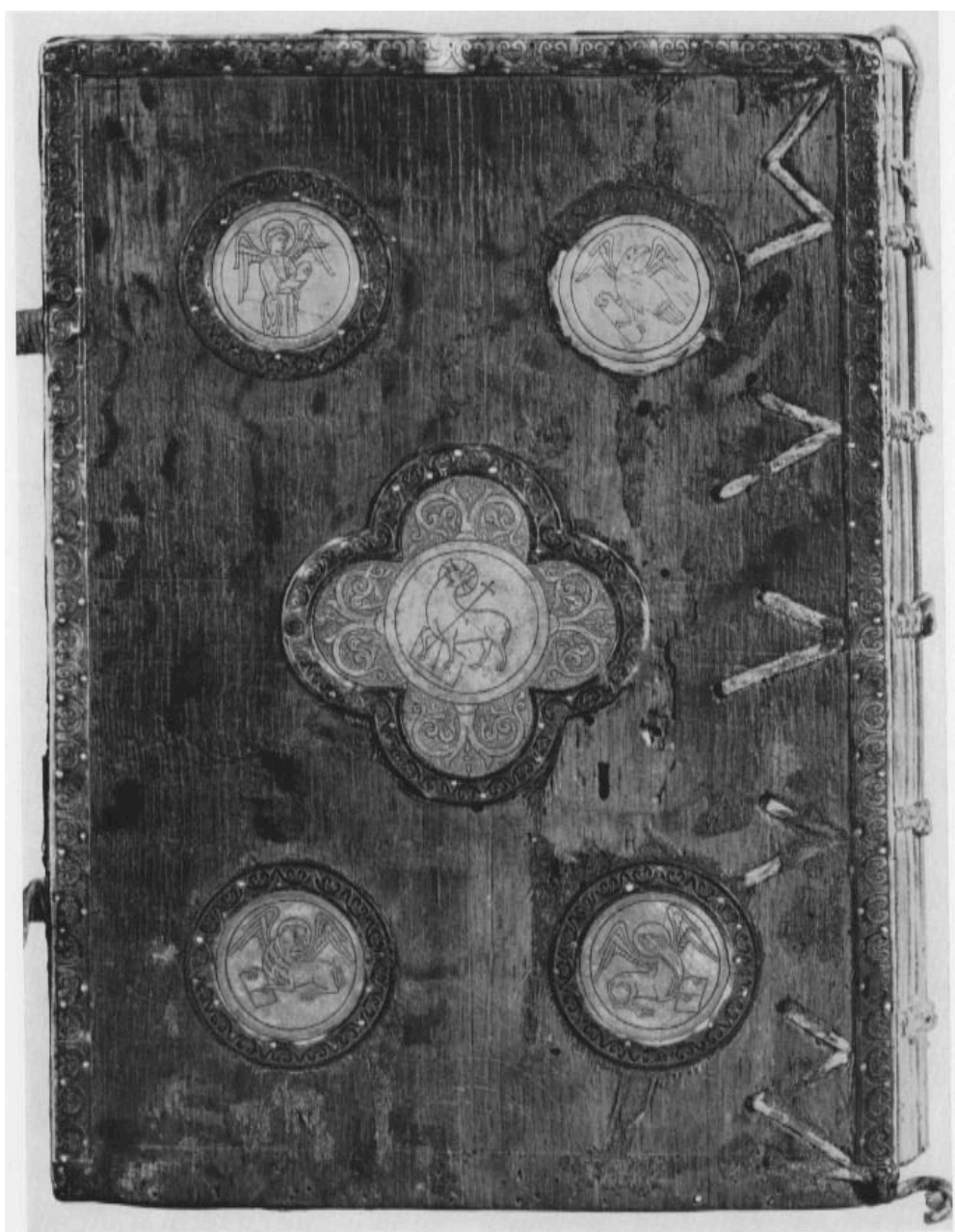
Figure 27: Back cover of the Theophanu Gospels, Essen, Münsterschatz

Figure 28:Back cover of the Pericopes of Henry II, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 4452

Figure 29: Back cover of the Regensburg Sacramentary of Henry II, Munich, B
Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 4456

Figure 30: Cover of the Codex Aureus of St Emmeram, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 14000

Figure 31: Front cover of the Lindau Gospels, New York, Morgan Library, MS M1

Figure 32: Milan Diptych, Milan Cathedral

Figure 33: St. Lupicin Covers, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France

Figure 34: Etchmiadzin  Gospels Cover, Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, Yerevan, Armenia
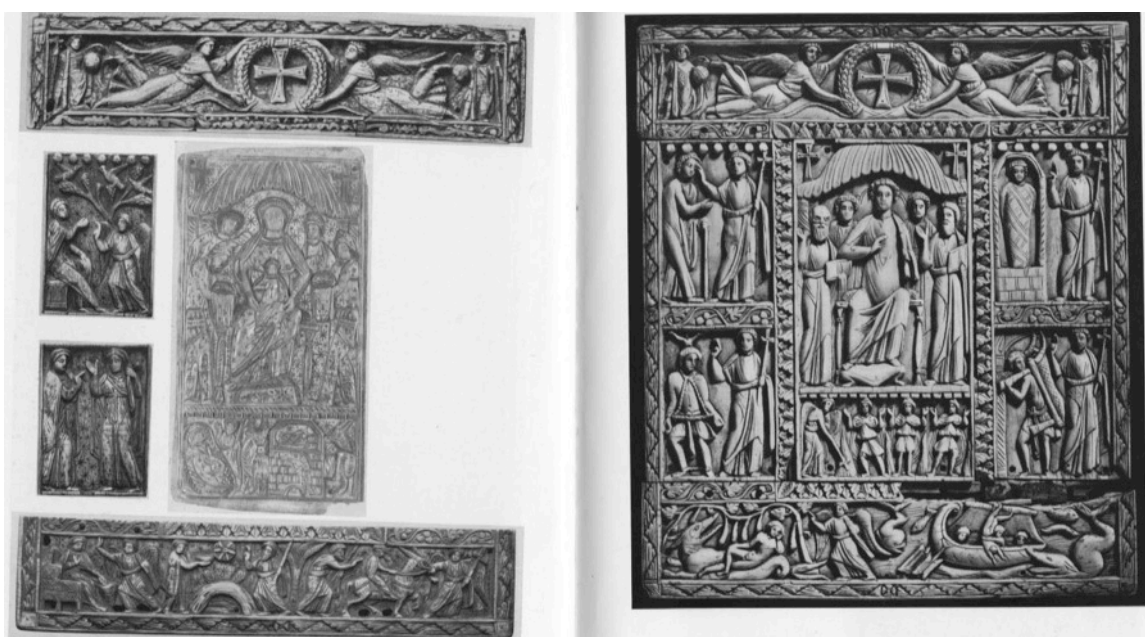
Figure 35: Ivory Covers from Murano, Ravenna, Museo Nazionale

Figure 36: Barberini Ivory, Paris, Louvre
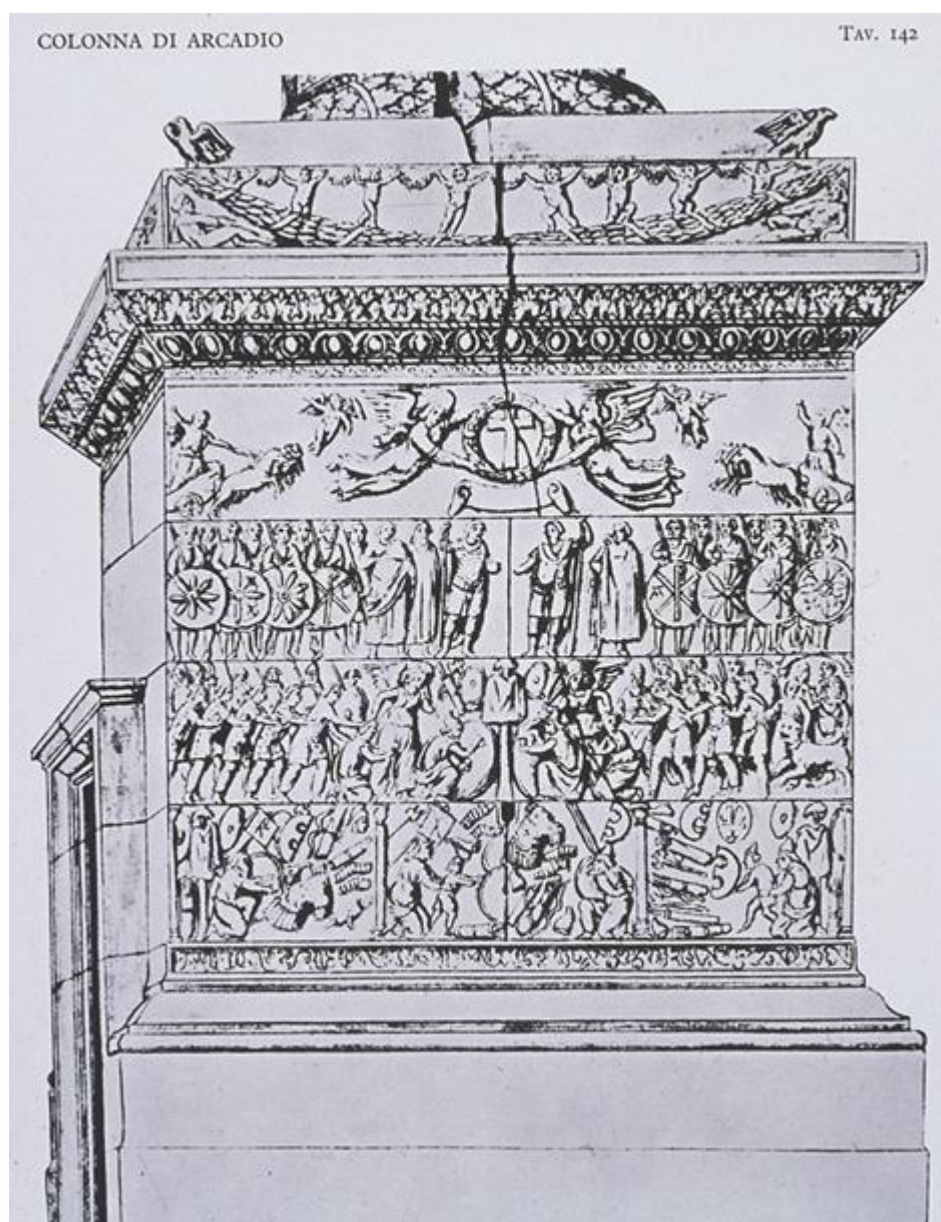
Figure 37: Base of the Column of Arcadius (destroyed), Constantinople. Drawing from 1574

Figure 38: Base of the Obelisk of Theodosius I, Constantinople

Figure 39: Ivory of a standing empress, possibly Ariadne, Florence, Bargello

Figure 40: Ivory of an enthroned empress, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum

Figure 41: Covers of the Lorsch Gospels. Virgin: London, Victoria and Albert Museum. Christ: Rome, Vatican Palace

Figure 42: Ivory Cover, Frankfurt, Liebieghaus Museum
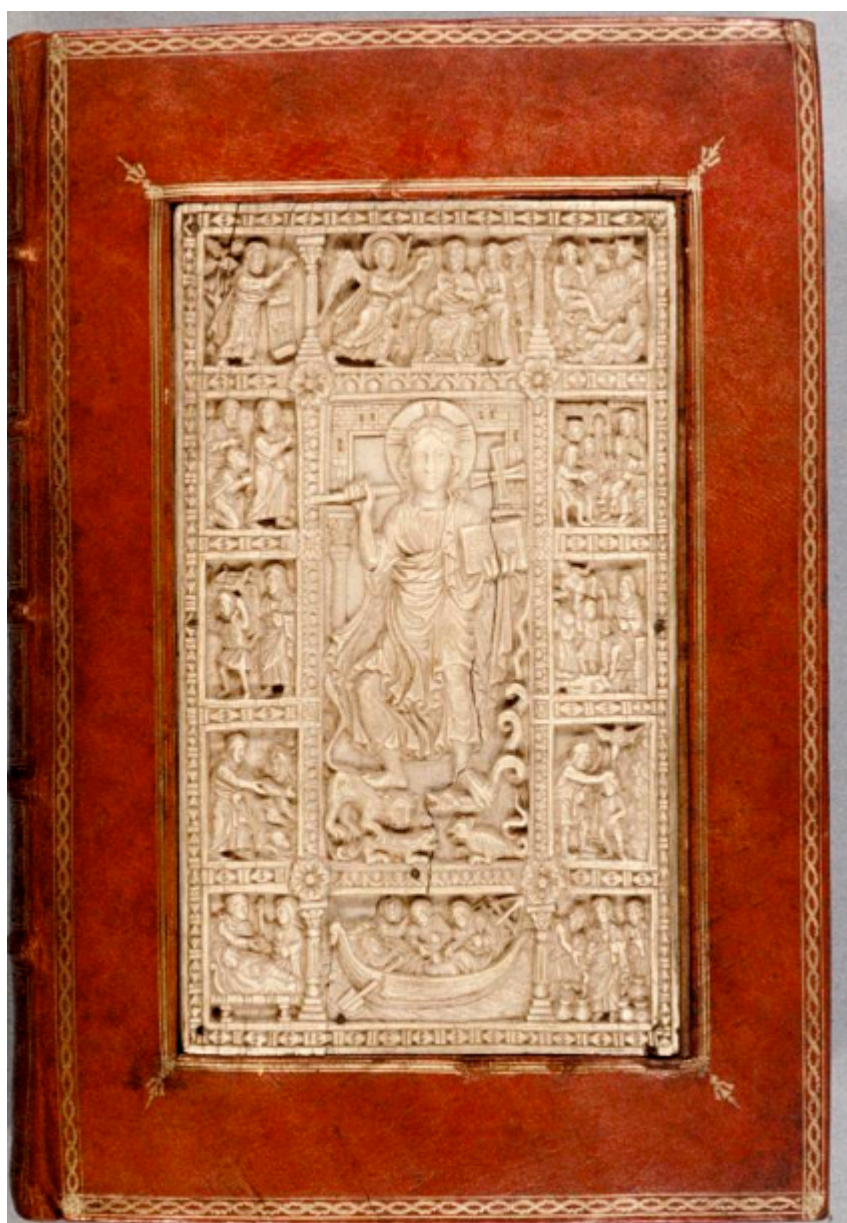
Figure 43: Ivory Cover of a Lectionary, Oxford, Bodleian Library
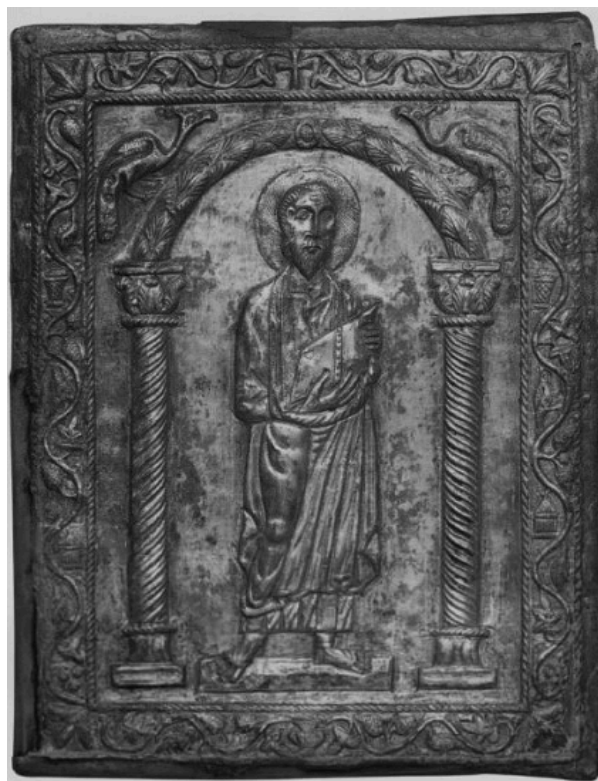
Figure 44: Kaper Koraon Silver Covers, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



Back    Front

Figure 45:Kaper Koraon Silver Covers. Left: New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Right: Paris, Louvre

Figure 46: Silver Cover from the Sion Treasure, Dumbarton Oaks

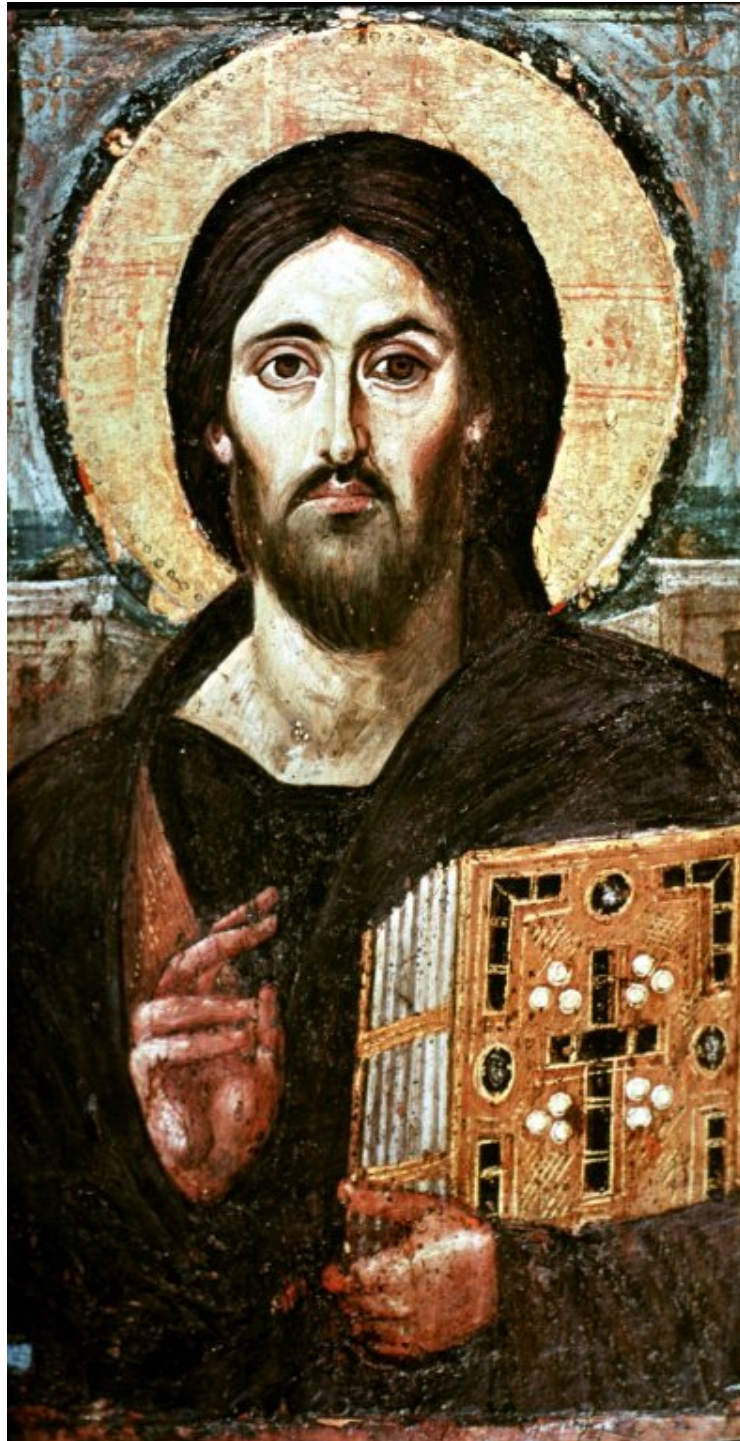Figure 47: Silver Cover from the Sion Treasure, Dumbarton Oaks

Figure 48: Icon of Christ, Sinai, Monastery of St. Catherine

Figure 49: Diptych with Christ & Virgin & Child, Berlin, Staatliche Museen

Figure 50: Detail of the Justinian Mosaic in San Vitale, Ravenna

Figure 51: Leather cover of Codex II from Nag Hammadi

Figure 52: St Vincent Lunette, from the so-called Mausoleum of Galla Placidia

Figure 53: The Scribe Ezra Restoring the Scriptures, from the Codex Amiatinus, Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana

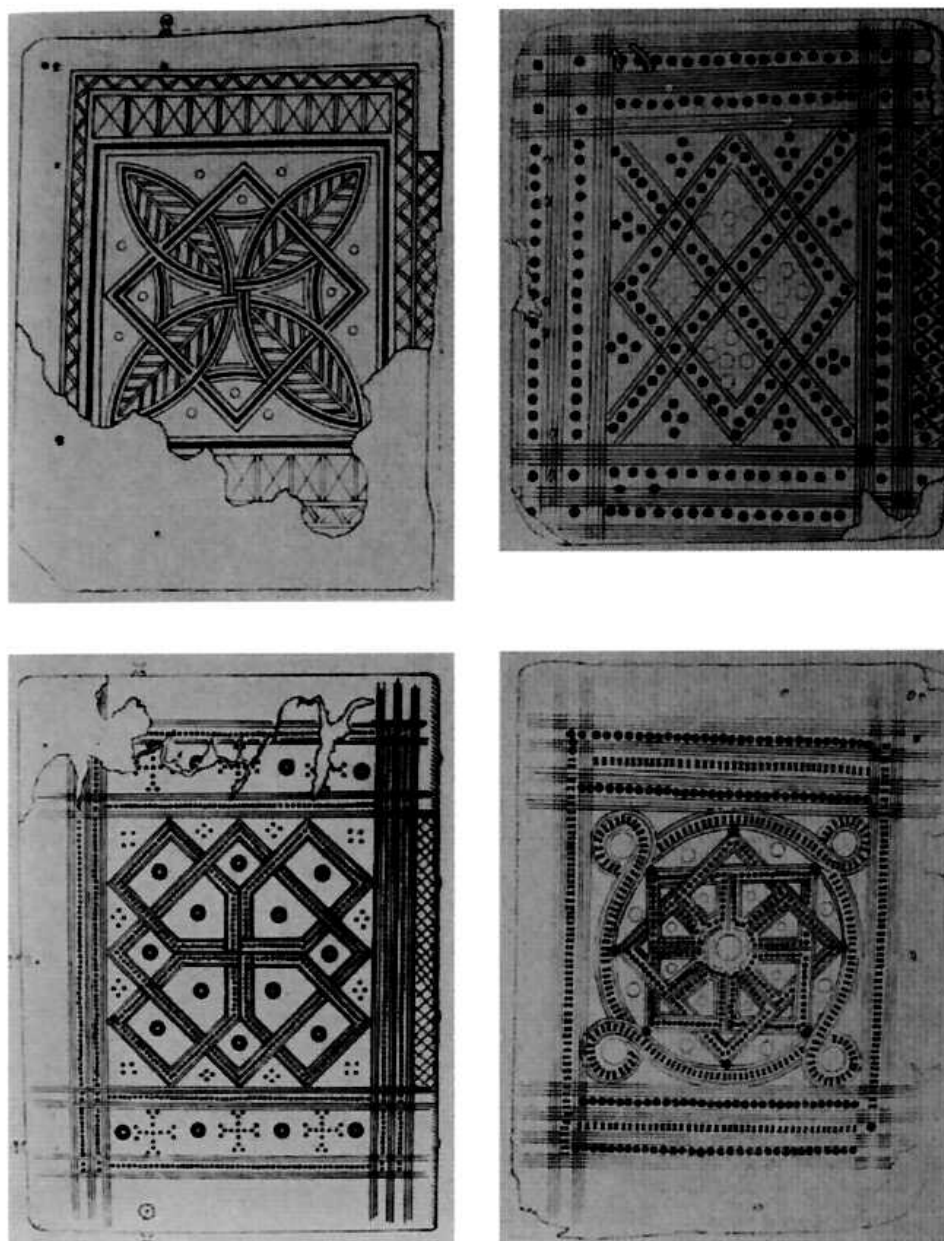Figure 54: Leather book covers removed from MS M. 569, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library

Figure 55: Reconstruction drawings of decorative designs on some ninth-tenth century Coptic leather book covers from Hamouli

Figure 56: Leather cover of the St.Cuthbert Gospel of John, London, British Museum

Figure 57: Lough Kinale book-shrine

Figure 58: Soiscéal Molaise book shrine, Dublin, National Museum of Ireland

Figure 59: Back cover of the Lindau Gospels, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library

Figure 60: Crucifixion from Rinnagan, Dublin, National Museum of Ireland

Figure 61: Mosaic of Bishop in the S. Gennaro Catacombs, Naples

Figure 62: Covers of the Drogo Sacramentary, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 9428

Figure 63: Restored dome mosaic of the Aachen Palatine Chapel

Figure 64: Maiestas Domini from the Gundohinus Gospels, Autun, Bibliotheque municipale ms 3

Figure 65: Maiestas Domini from the First Bible of Charles the Bald, fol. 3v, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France (MS lat. 1)

Figure 66: Ivory plaques of St. Peter and St. Paul. Used as a cover of Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Msc. Lit. 7

Figure 67: Ivory plaques of Christ and Mary. Used as a cover of Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Msc. Lit. 8

Figure 68: Book Cover, formerly of Santa Cruz de la Serós, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art

Figure 69: Book Cover, formerly of Santa Cruz de la Serós, New York,
Metropolitan Museum of Art

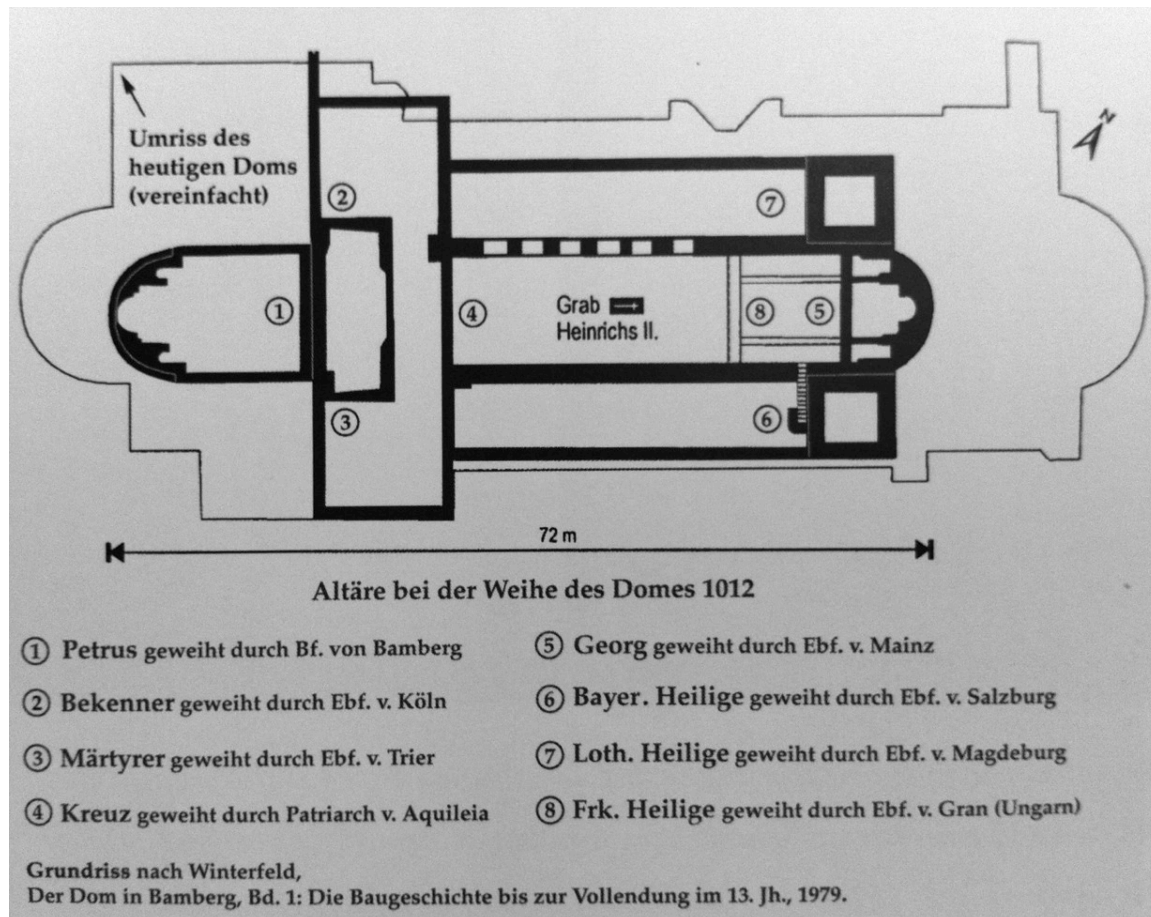Figure 70: Wood gospel book cover, Girona, Cathedral Treasury

Figure 71:  Ground plan Bamberg Cathedral, after Winterfeld

Figure 72: Cover of the Gospels of Otto III, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 4453
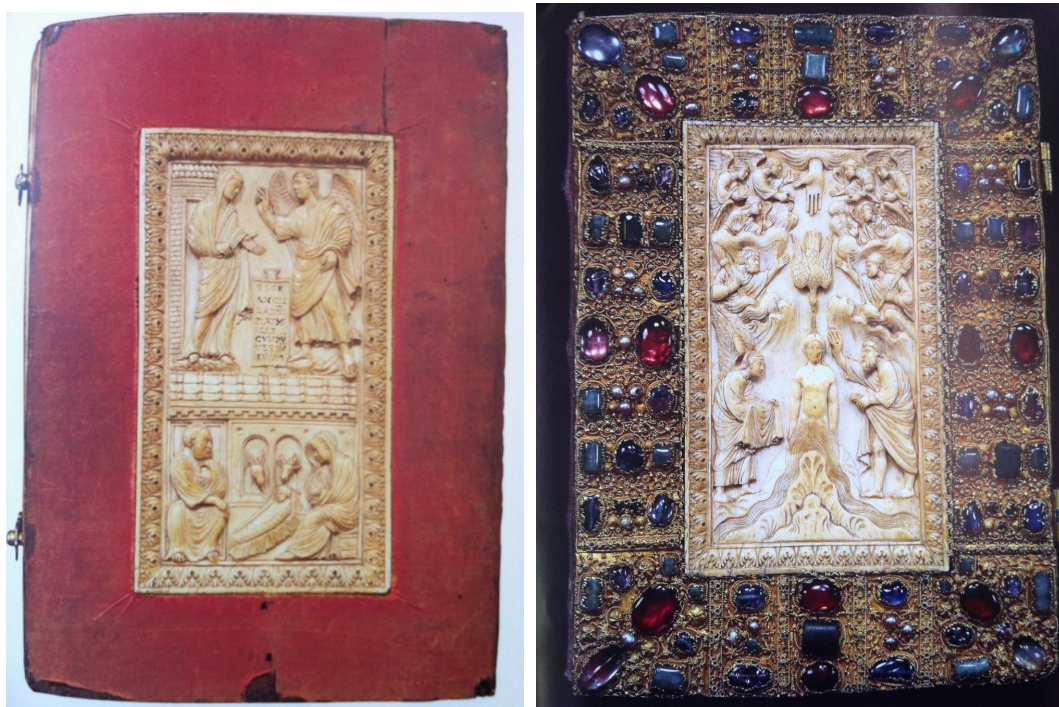
Figure 73:  Back and covers of a gospel book, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek
Clm 4451

Figure 74: Front cover of the Sacramentary of Henry II, Munich, Bayerische
Staatsbibliothek Clm 4456

Figure 75: Ruler portrait of Henry II (fol.11r) in the Sacramentary of Henry II
Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Clm 4456

Figure 76: Ruler portrait of Henry II (fol.11r) in the Sacramentary of Henry II
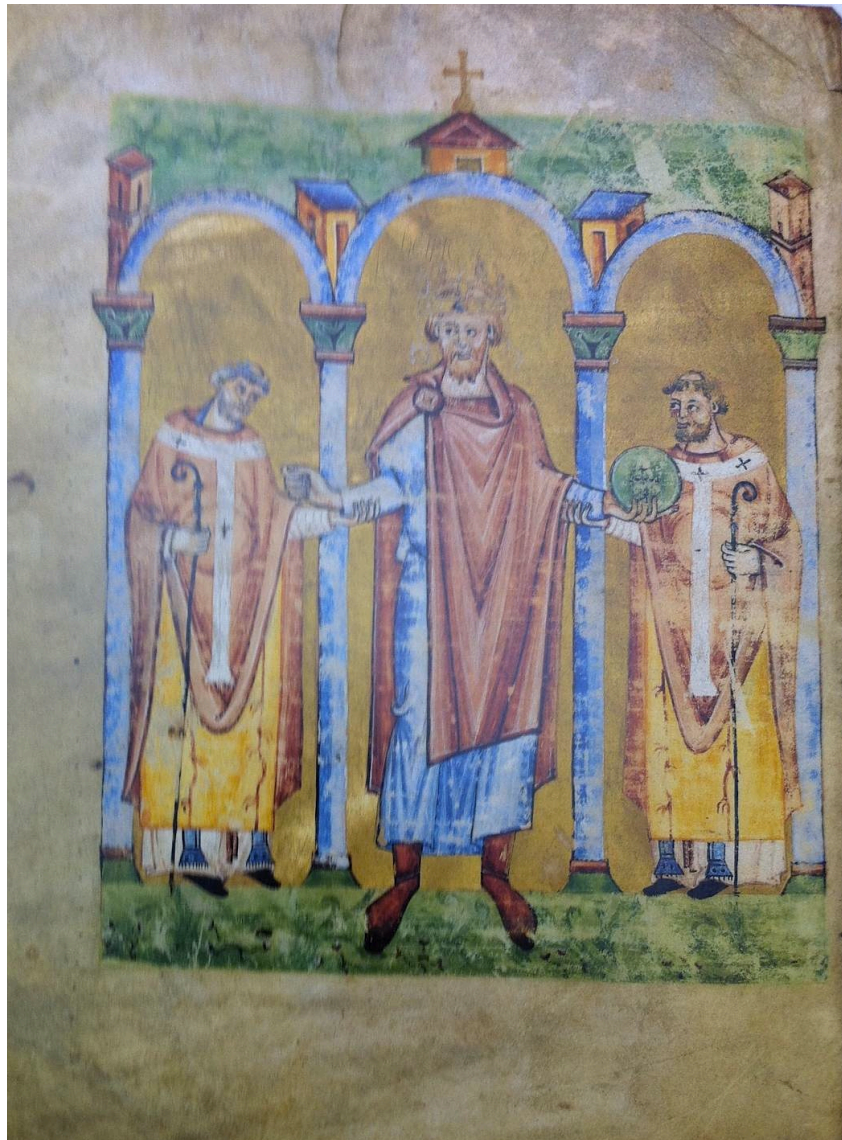Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Clm 4456

Figure 77: Ruler portrait of Henry II, in Pontifical of Henry II, Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek Msc. Lit.53

Figure 78:  Star Cloak of Henry II, Bamberg, Cathedral Treasury

Figure 79: Cloak of St. Kunigunde, Bamberg, Cathedral Treasury
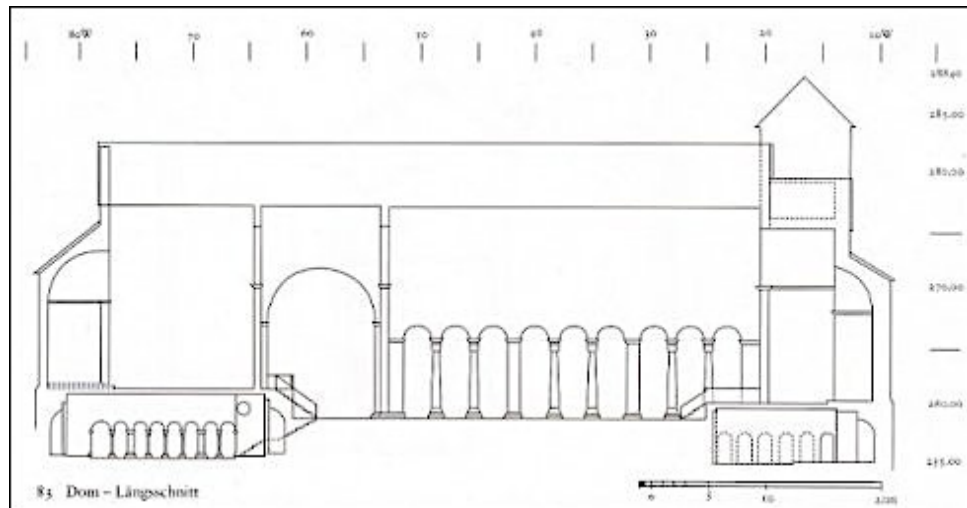
Figure 80: Bamberg Cathedral, early 11th century, elevation

Figure 81: Silk covered binding of an evangeliary, Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek
Msc. Bibl. 95
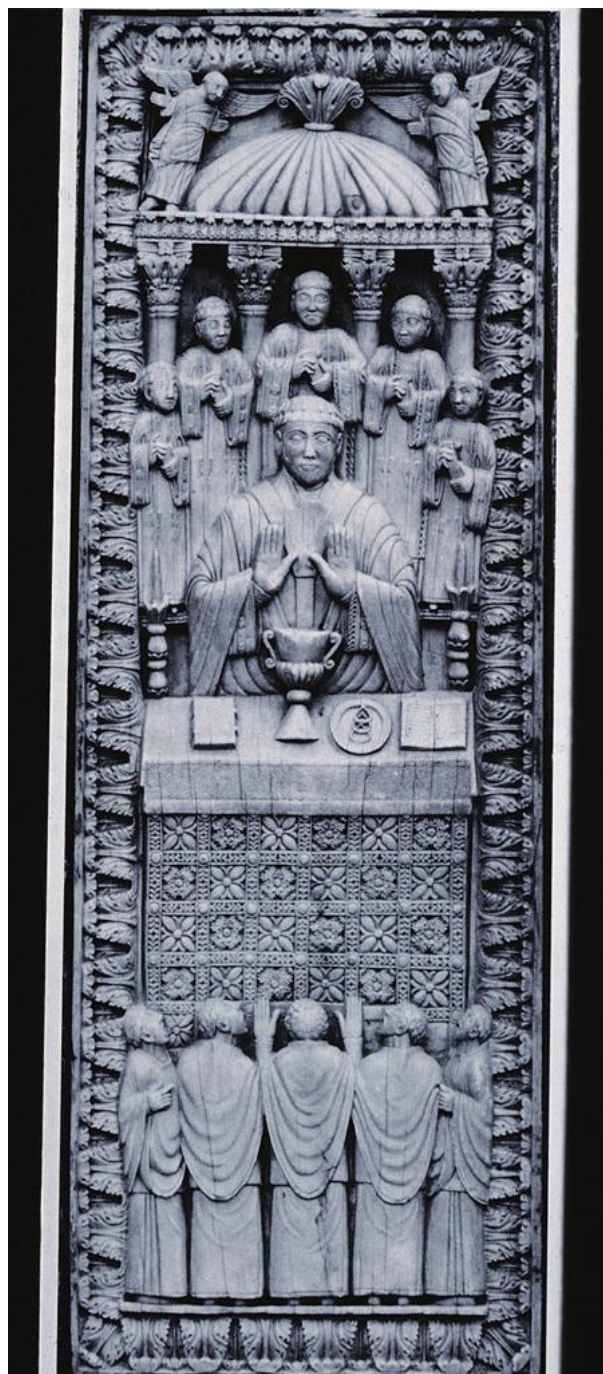
Figure 82: Ivory with a depiction of the mass now on a book cover, Frankfurt, Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek, MS Barth. 181

Rekonstruktion des Theophanu-Baus nach Zimmermann

Figure 83: Reconstruction of Essen Abbey Church, after Zimmerman

Figure 84: West Choir of Essen Münster

Figure 85: Side view of the cover of the Codex Aureus of St Emmeram, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 14000

Figure 86: Book cover of a gospel book from Helmarshausen, Trier, Cathedral

Figure 87: Cover of the Gospels of St. Lebuinus, Utrecht

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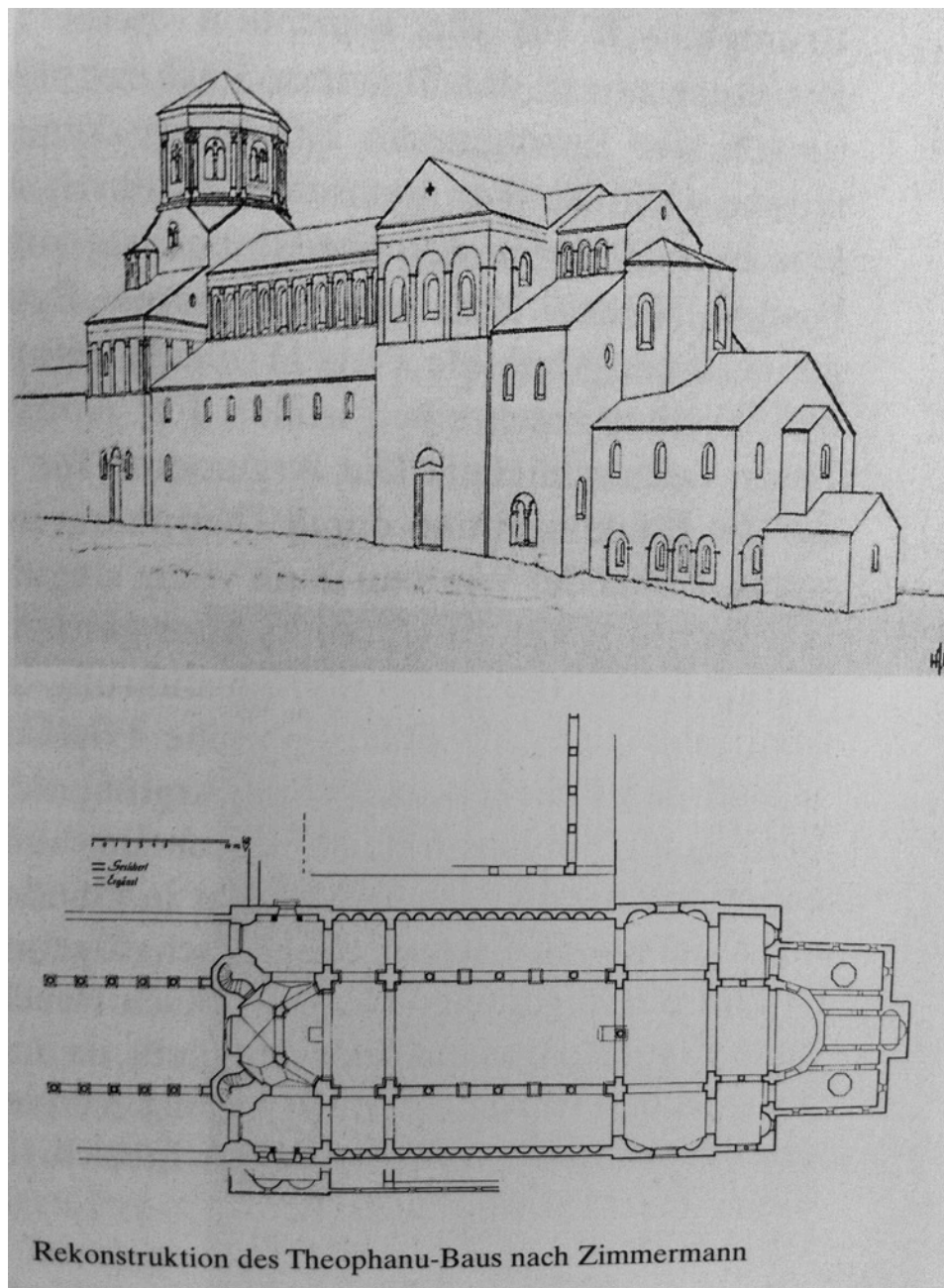Açık, Alper et al. "Effects of Luminance Contrast and its Modifications on Fixation Behavior during Free Viewing of Images from Different Categories." *Vision Research* 49 (2009): 1541–1553.

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