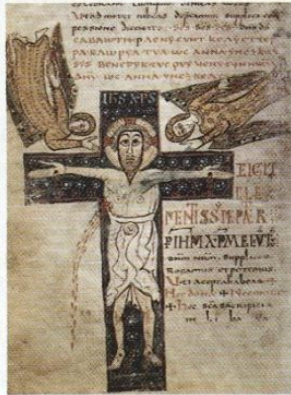
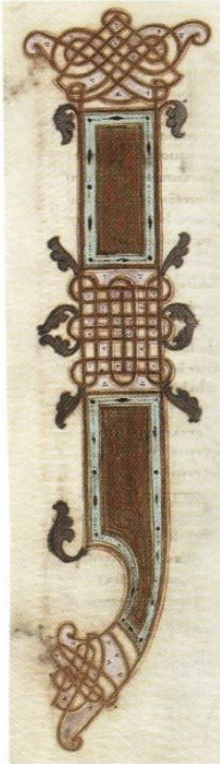


GRAPHIC DEVICES AND THE EARLY DECORATED BOOK



Edited by
Michelle P. Brown, Ildar H. Garipzanov
and Benjamin C. Tilghman

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are not simply an eye-catching frame for the page, but are essential to understanding its themes. Likewise, the calligraphic forms on the page are not there simply to delight the reader's eye, but to challenge the beholder to develop a richer reading of the text.

Art historians often assume that calligraphic and ornamental forms are largely devoid of content; in fact, its apparent lack of meaning is seen as one of the most fascinating things about ornament.³⁷ It would be foolish to argue that all ornament is as richly symbolic as I have argued that in the Book of Kells to be, but we should not be blind us to the potential of ornament to serve as a bearer of meaning. Nor should we ignore the fact that the symbolic possibilities of ornament are closely related to its particular vibrancy as a visual form.

The intense visual experience of looking at and reading fol. 183r, as well as the rest of the manuscript, stood for beholders as a visceral reminder that human knowledge of the divine was necessarily a mediated experience: the veil of text and images needed to be pulled back, the knots of scripture teased out.³⁸ Crucial to this process is not only a highly developed literacy, but a refined graphicacy as well, giving the ability first to make sense of the forms being presented on the page, and then also to perceive how those forms relate to create a web of references to the biblical text and its interpretations. On fol. 183r, we can discern some of the skills necessary to being fully graphicate in the early Middle Ages: an understanding of the iconographic possibilities of shape, pattern, and colour; the ability to see the resonances among disparate forms, and kinds of forms, within a composition; an ability to move among the parts while also apprehending the whole; and a sense of comfort with the visual challenges presented by complex forms. The Book of Kells, it seems, was designed to test all of these skills, and to reward their application.

³⁷ See, for example, the various approaches in E. Gombrich, *The Sense of Order* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979); and O. Grabar, *The Mediation of Ornament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

³⁸ For a consideration of this theme in Insular manuscripts, see L. Kendrick, *Animating the Letter* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999), p. 108; and J.-C. Bonne, 'Noeuds d'Écriture: Le Fragment de l'Évangélaire de Durham', in *Texte-Image, Bild-Text*, ed. by S. Dümchen and M. Nerlich (Berlin: Technische Universität, 1990), pp. 85–105.

GRAPHIC AND FIGURAL REPRESENTATION IN TOURONIAN GOSPEL ILLUMINATION

BEATRICE KITZINGER

In this essay, I consider the integration of the *Maiestas* image into gospel books from the ninth-century scriptorium at Tours, with a particular focus on the questions of 'graphicacy' at issue in this collection.¹ I examine how the *Maiestas* – a powerful visual motif that is equally powerful as a theological concept – may be incorporated into a gospel programme through the play between textual, graphic and figural elements in a manuscript's design. I will consider several specific cases in order to explore the following fundamental premises. Illumination may be broadly defined as an element of manuscript production that works to represent the contents and nature of a book. Drawing or painting provides a visual register in which to frame concepts thought to express the fusion between a text and its manuscript form. As such, the work of gospel-book illumination – broadly speaking – is to represent particular books in terms dependent on the nature of the gospel genre. Graphic and figural registers of decoration constitute discrete but interconnected visual systems of signification within a manuscript. Either or both may be marshalled to craft a programme of illumination that represents a particular book; and either or both may be implicated in the way an image *type* like the *Maiestas* is incorporated into the gospel genre. The way an image such as the *Maiestas* functions is likewise dependent on its context. The nature and argument of any one iteration of the type are defined through factors of medium, placement, and manuscript genre as much as through the specifics of composition.

I proceed from the further premise that the fundamental structure of the *Maiestas* composition – regardless of the particulars of any one image

¹ Fundamentally on the iconography of the *Maiestas* at Tours: H. Kessler, *The Illustrated Bibles from Tours* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 36–42. On the iconography at large: A.-O. Poilpré, *Maiestas Domini: Une image de l'Église en Occident Ve–IXe siècle* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2005), esp. pp. 138–54 on the close association of the *Maiestas* and the gospel book; and F. van der Meer, *Maiestas Domini: Théophanies de l'apocalypse dans l'art chrétien: Études sur les origines d'une iconographie special du Christ* (Vatican City: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 1938).

– is in itself recognizable and meaningful.² This point is worth stating because it speaks directly to the core concept of this volume. Processes of production and reception intersect within the category of graphicacy, and the way I propose to discuss the *Maiestas* within gospel books involves negotiating issues that arise in both the construction and the interpretation of images. The volume as a whole is dedicated to the idea that the visual qualities of writing and decoration form avenues by which books may be made to communicate conceptual information. To approach early medieval book painting in this way is to conceive of manuscript pages as sites of conjunction between, on the one hand, the design process of early medieval bookmakers, and on the other hand, the comprehension of that design by viewers both medieval and modern. The examples I have gathered here present a spectrum of ‘legibility’, ranging from the most explicit statements of *Maiestas* themes in text and figuration to less clear-cut examples, whose participation in *Maiestas* forms remains an open question. This type of gap in certain legibility between the conception and reception of decoration itself raises key questions about the nature of representation, the function of illumination within gospel programmes, and how we might approach the interpretation of each.

As a fully elaborated image, the *Maiestas* takes three principle forms: the *Maiestas domini* (Majesty of the Lord, see Fig. 5), *Maiestas agni* (Majesty of the Lamb) and *Maiestas crucis* (Majesty of the Cross, see Fig. 1). As Bianca Kühnel elucidated in her important discussion of the baseline composition

² As scholars have noted with respect to cases throughout the Middle Ages, it is possible to discuss the *Maiestas* as a composition so pervasive and so recognizable as such that it becomes an effective frame within which to introduce innovative – even radical – arguments into a book by swapping out the expected components of the image type for ones with contemporary political or theological charge. William Diebold discusses the manipulation of *Maiestas* frames based on the Codex Aureus of St Emmeram: ‘The Anxiety of Influence in Early Medieval Art? The “Codex Aureus” of Charles the Bald in Ottonian Regensburg’, in *Under the Influence: The Concept of Influence and the Study of Illuminated Manuscripts*, ed. by J. Lowden and A. Bovey (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), pp. 51–64. Jeffrey Hamburger cites a thirteenth-century case of direct substitution of Job and his friends for Christ and the evangelists: *St. John the Divine: The Deified Evangelist in Medieval Art and Theology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), at pp. 62–3. *Locus classicus* for this kind of play with canonical forms is the ‘apotheosis’ of Otto III in the Liuthard Gospels as described in E. Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957; repr. 1997), pp. 61–78. An interesting gospel case not often discussed is Cambrai, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 327, fol. 16v, dated c. 900, in which a personification of Ecclesia takes the central place with the cardinal virtues around her. In his discussion of the Tours *Maiestas* images as a group, Wilhelm Koehler remarked on their unity as an image ‘type’: ‘Bei allen stilistischen und auch ikonographischen Verschiedenheiten im einzelnen stimmen doch die Majestasbilder ... im allem Westenlichen so genau überein, daß wir berechtigt sind, von einem feststehenden Bildschema zu sprechen, das zwar abgewandelt wird, aber in seinen Grundzügen unverändert bleibt.’ W. Koehler, *Die karolingischen Miniaturen*, vol. 1: *Die Schule von Tours* (Berlin: Deutscher Verein für Kunstwissenschaft, 1930–3), pt. 2, at p. 240. Koehler’s corpus hereafter cited as *KM*.

that constitutes the *Maiestas* type, the skeleton of the *Maiestas* consists in a quincunx diagram that binds the variable figural elements into a spatial relationship of dominant centre and four-part frame.³ Christ occupies the centre, whether in human form or cast as one of his signs or figures (the cross or the lamb). The framing places are occupied by the four evangelists, usually in symbol form, which amplifies the eschatological overtones of the whole composition.⁴ Especially in the Touronian tradition, the image type includes space for additional framing quaternities, such as prophets or the evangelists in human form. The basic one-and-four configuration carries profound cosmological resonance, as Kühnel and Herbert Kessler have shown.⁵

Partly through its pictorial contents, partly through the texts that accompany it, and partly through its positioning, the *Maiestas* as I will examine it here becomes a site of reflection on the nature of the gospel genre. The image maps the theology of the gospel book within the Church, as the component parts of the *Maiestas* – the person of Christ (anthropomorphic or symbolic), the evangelists, and the cosmic quaternities their constellation represents – correlate directly to the status of the gospels as representative of Christ and his teaching within the early medieval Church and its liturgy.⁶ The deployment of the *Maiestas* in treasure bindings argues this point for

³ B. Kühnel, *The End of Time in the Order of Things: Science and Eschatology in Early Medieval Art* (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2003).

⁴ The image of Christ enthroned in heaven, surrounded by the four Living Creatures resonates with the End-Times visions of both John and Ezekiel. On the relevance of the *Maiestas* to the liturgical present as well as the apocalyptic future, see especially Poilpré, *Maiestas Domini*, where the iconography's ecclesiastical aspects are emphasized. See also P. Skubiszewski, "Maiestas Domini" et liturgie, in *Cinquante années d'études médiévales: À la confluence de nos disciplines*, ed. by C. Arrignon et al. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), pp. 309–408; T. Frese, *Aktual und Realpräsenz: Das eucharistische Christusbild von der Spätantike bis ins Mittelalter*, Neue Frankfurter Forschungen zur Kunst, 13 (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 2013); and the sustained work of Yves Christe.

⁵ With their notably strong diagrammatic frames, *Maiestas* compositions like the gospel frontispieces in the Tours Bibles most explicitly harness graphic cosmology to figuration, laying out an exegetical structure for the subjects of the *Maiestas*. Cf. especially examples in the computistic/astronomical handbook from Salzburg, dated 818: Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 387, fol. 134r (Kühnel, *The End of Time*, fig. 88).

⁶ On the theme of Christ's substitution and representation through the gospel book see especially É. Palazzo, 'Le "livre-corps" à l'époque carolingienne et son rôle dans la liturgie de la messe et sa théologie', *Quaestiones Mediaevi Novae* 15 (2010), 31–63; T. Lentès, 'Textus Evangelii. Materialität und Inszenierung des "Textes" in der Liturgie', in *Textus im Mittelalter. Komponenten und Situationen des Wortgebrauchs im schriftsemantischen Feld*, ed. by L. Kuchenbuch and U. Kleine (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), pp. 133–48; H. Kessler, 'The Book as Icon', in *In the Beginning: Bibles before the Year 1000*, ed. by M. Brown (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 2006), pp. 77–103. A descriptive treatment of the Roman and Frankish sources on the role of the gospel book in the mass appears in J. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development (Missarum Sollemnia)*, trans. by F. Brunner, 2 vols, replica edn (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1986; orig. edn, New York: Benziger Brothers, 1951), I, pp. 442–56, with mention of the book's substitution for Christ at p. 447.

the gospel book as a monolithic whole.⁷ The role given to the image in gospel books' interior programme takes the argument further: in a position integral to the manuscript, the *Maiestas* is made part of the deep structure of the gospel book – partner to the texts, the scripts and the further visual elements that all together constitute any single manuscript instantiation of the genre.

The *Maiestas* is an image with strong currency in the gospel programmes of ninth-century Francia.⁸ Its positioning varies. A place preceding the gospel text is most common, either as an overall frontispiece to the book, or integrated in the prefatory matter to Matthew (as in the Prüm Gospels, where the *Maiestas Domini* appears between Matthew's prologue and the canon tables;⁹ or the Lothar Gospels, where the image appears before Jerome's prefaces as the second visual element of the book, following the portrait of Emperor Lothar).¹⁰ Alternatively, the *Maiestas* may appear later in the volume (e.g., the Du Fay Gospels, where the *Maiestas* follows the *Capitulare evangeliorum* as the very last element in the book).¹¹

The pictorial character of *Maiestas* images is a theme unto itself. Here, I will treat such fully articulated images as the *Maiestas domini* of the Du Fay Gospels (see Fig. 5) as part of decorative systems developed in Tours that also employ other modes of representation to assimilate gospel manuscripts to the forms and concepts of the *Maiestas*.¹² Our point of departure will be Laon, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 63, dated by Wilhelm Koehler to

⁷ On treasure bindings, see especially D. Ganz, *Buch-Gewänder: Prachteinbände im Mittelalter* (Berlin: Reimer, 2015); Poilpré, *Maiestas Domini*, pp. 154–61 on the *Maiestas* motif in particular. See also the contribution by Ganz to this volume.

⁸ L. Nees, *The Gundohinus Gospels* (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1987), esp. pp. 131–88 (chapter 6).

⁹ Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, MS Theol. Lat. Fol. 733, fol. 17v (Tours, 844–51). *KM I.1*, pp. 256–60, 402–3. For *Maiestas* images integrated with Matthew, one might also particularly cite Paris, BnF, lat. 269, fols 36v–37r (Tours, 850–900), where Christ enthroned is placed on the recto side of an opening with Matthew's evangelist portrait, his figure angled in to face the inspired evangelist.

¹⁰ Paris, BnF, lat. 266, fol. 2v (Tours, 849–51). *KM I.1*, pp. 260–9, 403–5; M.-P. Laffitte and C. Denoël, with M. Besseyre, *Trésors carolingiens: Livres manuscrits de Charlemagne à Charles le Chauve* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 2007), cat. 12, pp. 102–3.

¹¹ Paris, BnF, lat. 9385, fol. 179v (Tours, 844–51). *KM I.1*, pp. 279–86, 406–8; Laffitte, Denoël and Besseyre, *Trésors carolingiens*, cat. 33, pp. 155–6. The *Maiestas* and accompanying verse (described further below) appear on a singleton bound into the final quire (fol. 179; fol. 178v is blank). The latest catalogue record (published online 19 Dec. 2011: www.gallica.bnf.fr) includes the observation that fol. 178v bears marks of wear, suggesting that fol. 179 may have been moved from the front of the volume to the back (notwithstanding the integral quires of the prefatory matter). It is worth noting that the currency of the image on the Continent extends beyond the central Carolingian territories, as evidenced, for instance, by two Breton gospel books: New York Public Library, MS 115 (the 'Harkness Gospels'), in which a full *Maiestas Domini* was executed before Matthew; and London, BL, Add. MS 9381, in which a *Maiestas* of the same format was intended before John.

¹² Benjamin Tilghman emphasizes the presence of *Maiestas* components within non-figural programmes in Insular gospel books in a related vein: 'The Shape of the Word: Extralinguistic Meaning in Insular Display Lettering', *Word & Image*, 27 (2011), 292–308.

844–51, produced under the abbacy of Vivian at Tours.¹³ This manuscript includes no fully figural *Maiestas* at all. Because it resonates with the image type nevertheless, Laon 63 provides a prime vantage point from which to consider the relationship between figural and graphic registers within the gospel genre, when we view this larger topic through the lens of the *Maiestas* and its role within the manuscript.

To begin with some categories that speak to the terms of ‘graphicacy’, the first initial in Matthew’s gospel in Laon 63 (fol. 26v) was designed with a notably even-handed fusion of graphic, figural, and literal avenues of communication (Fig. 1). Moreover, this page presents a case in which we can confidently gauge the intersection of production and comprehension in the communicative power of the composition. The ‘L’ and ‘I’ of *Liber* in Laon 63 read unequivocally as a *Maiestas crucis*. The series of compositional choices required to produce this reliably legible image are also readily apparent: the ‘L’ and ‘I’ were crossed, and the spaces among the letters’ lines were coloured and patterned such that the cross became a distinct visual unit. Then, the symbols of the four evangelists were disposed around the ligature to create a Majesty of the Cross.

Because the Laon *Maiestas crucis* is a combination of figure and letter, it is worth pointing out that the cross-ligature here is related to the famous Carolingian crucifixes at the Canon of the Mass in the Gellone Sacramentary and the so-called Coronation Sacramentary.¹⁴ A brief consideration of the Laon Matthew in light of the sacramentary examples reveals several key facets of this compositional strategy. The coordination of letter forms and the sign of the cross opens representative possibilities for the book at hand in all these cases, because an image results from the elaboration of the text forms. Genre and context matter greatly for the pictorial argument in these images made of fused letters and figures. In the sacramentary instances, the argument turns on the nature of the Eucharist.¹⁵ For the gospel book, I argue that the position of crosses or crucifixes at Matthew 1 resonates with Incarnation theology.¹⁶ Irrespective of genre, drawing on the book’s own letters to create an image of an unmistakable type stitches the fabric of the codex itself into the concepts invoked by the resulting compositions. In

¹³ *KM* 11, pp. 269–79, 405–6.

¹⁴ Respectively: Paris, BnF, lat. 12048, fol. 143v; and Paris, BnF, lat. 1141, fol. 6v. See Hahn, in the present volume.

¹⁵ For the Gellone Sacramentary, see especially C. Chazelle, *The Crucified God in the Carolingian Era: Theology and Art of Christ’s Passion* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 79–99. For the Coronation Sacramentary: Frese, *Aktual- und Realpräsenz*, pp. 143–7; R. Reynolds, ‘Eucharistic Adoration in the Carolingian Era? Exposition of Christ in the Host’, *Peregrinations*, 4.2 (2013), 70–153, at pp. 145 ff., 152–3 for the manuscript; Palazzo, ‘Le “livre-corps”’, pp. 41–50; and É. Palazzo, *L’Invention chrétienne des cinq sens dans la liturgie et l’art au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2014), pp. 266–78.

¹⁶ B. Kitzinger, ‘The Liturgical Cross and the Space of the Passion: The Diptych of Angers MS 24’, in *Envisioning Christ on the Cross: Ireland and the Early Medieval West*, ed. by J. Mullins, J. Ní Ghrádaigh and R. Hawtree (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2013), pp. 141–59, at pp. 153–7.



FIG. 1 GOSPEL BOOK (VILLE DE LAON, BIBLIOTHÈQUE MUNICIPALE, MS 63, FOL. 26V), 844-51, TOURS

the gospel context, the choice to meld figure and letter renders the Laon *Maiestas* a composition that transcends straightforward identification among the gospels, the gospel book, and the person of Christ, indicating instead how all these elements merge and equate. Such an equation is inherent in the incorporation of the image's subject and the gospel genre that is achieved through giving the *Maiestas* the role of frontispiece or book cover. Here, conceptual imbrication of the book's subject (Christ) and its form (written testimony) is *derived* through the manuscript iteration of the gospel text when letter and figure are coordinated as they are in Laon.

In that process of derivation, the cross-ligature of Laon 63 might be said to amplify the compositional process legible in the *Te igitur* crucifixes. Where the designers of the Gellone Sacramentary capitalized on a deep-seated tradition of identifying the letter 'T' with the cross, the designers in Tours recognized the representative potential of an 'L-I' ligature and deployed it to generate the powerful sign.¹⁷ In Laon 63, the cross-sign was further elaborated into an image – but an image that maintains a transparent relationship to the graphic signs from which it was built. Because of the oscillation between letter-forms and figural forms in the Laon Matthew, the composition articulates the *Maiestas*'s integral status to the gospel manuscript in which it appears. The addition of the evangelist symbols binds the letters – and through the letters, the book itself – into a theologically-loaded composition that points up the presence of the cross-sign and the absence of Christ's person. A representation of that person, here, is not supplied by figuration. It is supplied first by context: the account of Christ within the gospel text. It is also supplied by the manipulation of the letter-forms, which instantiate scripture, into the cross-sign that stands for Christ. The figural elements amplify the articulation of the cross and its connection to Christ's person: the addition of the evangelist symbols renders the ligature unmistakable as a deliberate iteration of the cross-sign, and also enforces identification between the sign and Christ's person in the creation of a *Maiestas crucis*. Further, through their identification with the cross, the status of the manuscript's letters themselves as visual signs comes to the fore. The page as a whole thus comes to represent a principle of substitution: the presence of the gospel testimony, realized through the gospel codex, stands in for the presence of Christ himself within the Church.

¹⁷ On the identification of 'T' and the cross, see especially R. Suntrup, 'Te igitur-Initialen und Kanonbilder in mittelalterlichen Sakramentarhandschriften', in *Text und Bild. Aspekte des Zusammenwirkens zweier Künste in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit*, ed. by C. Meier and U. Ruberg (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1980), pp. 278–382. The cross-ligature at Matthew appears regularly in Tours: examples include London, BL, Add. MS 11848 (fol. 18v) and Add. MS 10546 (the Moutier-Grandval Bible, fol. 353r); Paris, BnF, lat. 3 (fol. 313r), lat. 1 (the First Bible of Charles the Bald, fol. 330r), lat. 266 (the Lothar Gospels, fol. 23r), lat. 10848 (p. 27), and lat. 9385 (the Du Fay Gospels, fol. 19). Recognition of the sign is explicit enough that in the Wolfenbüttel Gospels (Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 16 Aug. 2, fol. 5r) the ligature cross is put to work: a dedication scene appears beneath it.

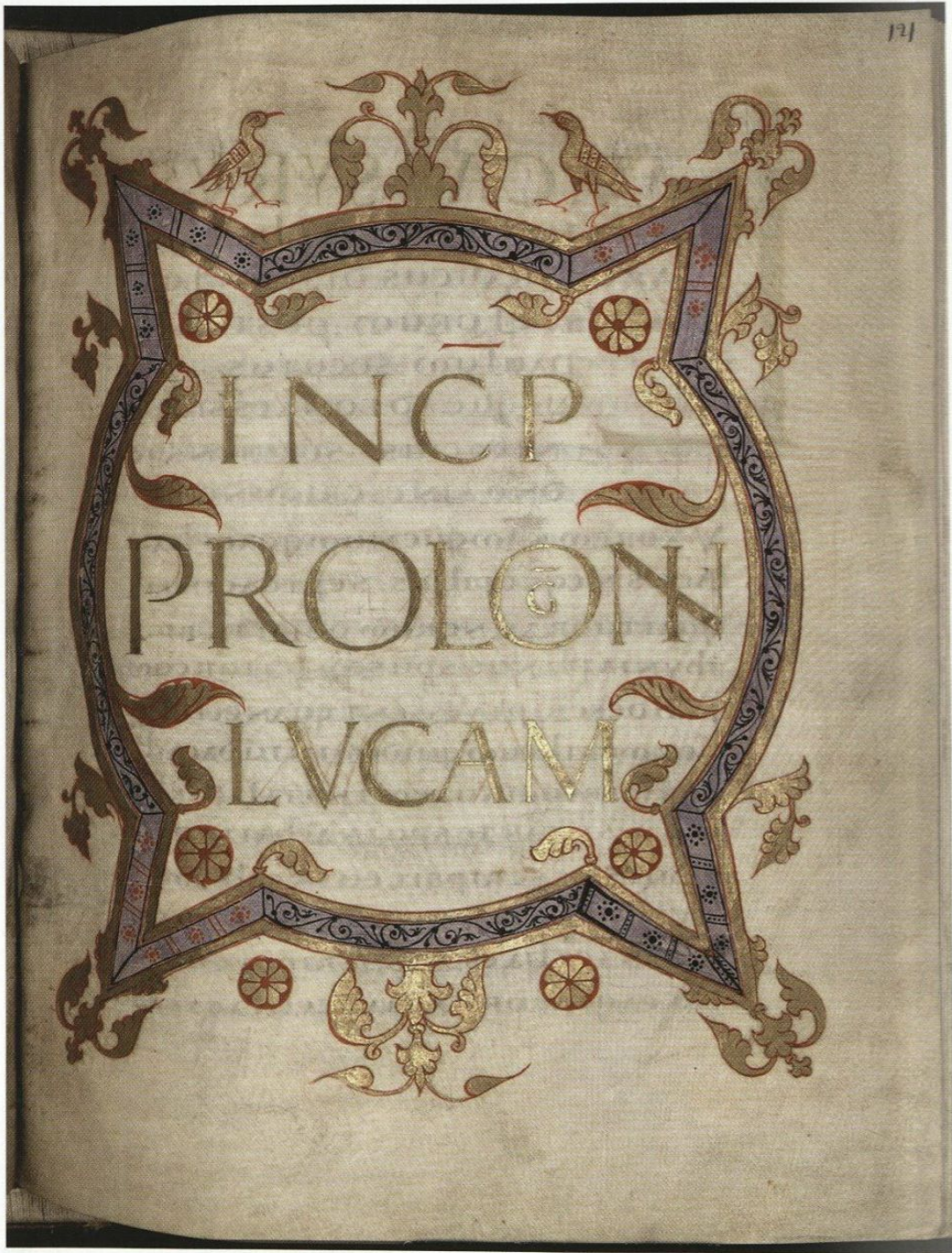


FIG. 2 GOSPEL BOOK (VILLE DE LAON, BIBLIOTHÈQUE MUNICIPALE, MS 63, FOL. 1214), 844-51, TOURS

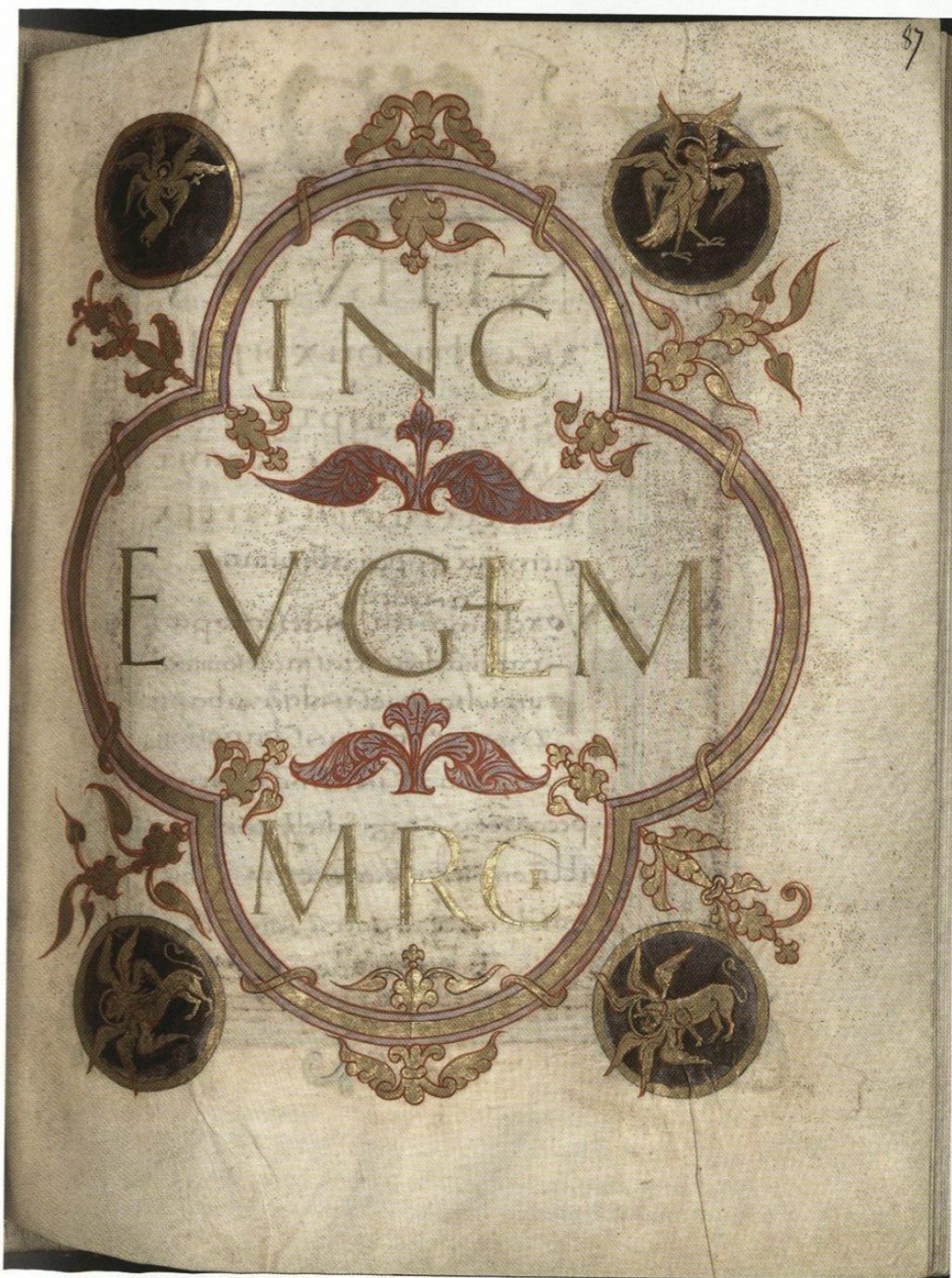


FIG. 3 GOSPEL BOOK (VILLE DE LAON, BIBLIOTHÈQUE MUNICIPALE, MS 63, FOL. 87R), 844-51, TOURS

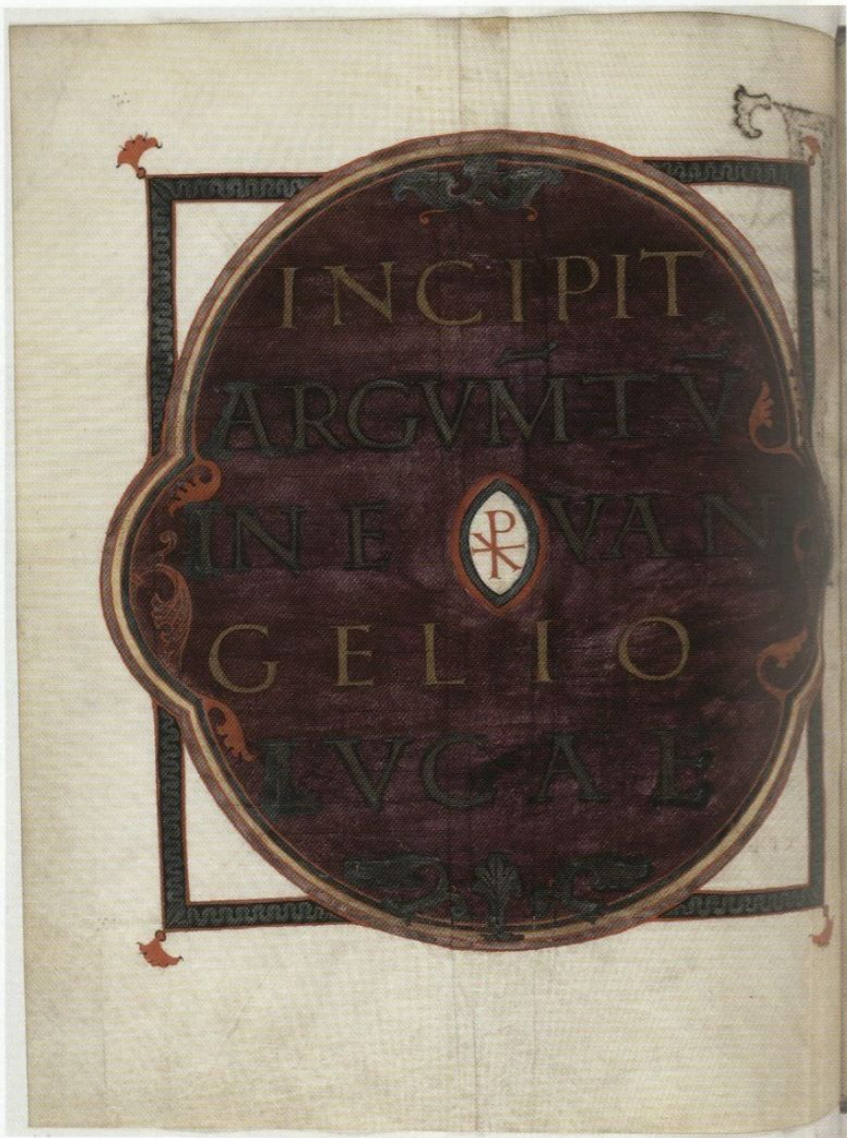


FIG. 4 DU FAY
 GOSPELS (PARIS,
 BNF, LAT. 9385,
 FOL. 88V), 844–51,
 TOURS

The whole of the visual programme in Laon 63, in fact, constitutes an assertion of the relationship of the gospel and the gospel book to the *Maiestas* and its cosmology. These relationships play out in a prolonged counterpoint of figure and diagram. With the exception of John, the incipit to each gospel prologue is framed in forms defined by diagrammatic patterns of circle, square, and lozenge (Fig. 2). These forms bear no inherent iconography; their allusive cosmological significance is born in their play with number and their currency in early medieval contexts that lend the patterns meaning – contexts such as sarcophagi, chancel panels, and

ecclesiastical books.¹⁸ In Laon 63, a resolution of such allusive pattern into image occurs at the gospel incipits proper, when the addition of evangelist symbols turns further quincunx configurations and quatrefoil frames into *Maiestas*-type compositions (Fig. 3).¹⁹

At Matthew, the *Maiestas* configuration is fused with script and scripture, and the evangelist symbols frame the cross. The composition therefore counts readily as a *Maiestas crucis* and involves the gospel text itself in that image-type's rhetoric of substitution. If we read the gospel incipits as *Maiestas* configurations too, however, we could argue that the pair of form and context presents a disjunction. At the centre of these quintinities appears neither a figuration nor a sign of Christ's person, nor yet the substance of the gospel text, which also could stand in his stead. Rather, the evangelists cluster around a piece of standard apparatus in the gospel genre: the announcement of the beginning of each scriptural account.

I suggest that we understand this design decision in the light of genre-specificity. Tours gospel illumination demonstrates a sustained pattern whereby motifs related to Christ's person and motifs related to the form of the book itself are woven through the gospels' visual presentation. Having studied fully figural evangelist portraits, Beat Brenk made the essential argument that the composition and transmission of the gospel text is the central subject of Carolingian gospel illumination.²⁰ I would argue that this kind of self-reflexive presentation appears in visual-compositional aspects of Carolingian gospel manufacture that extend beyond the full-page image programmes. Its ubiquity suggests a heightened attention to the function of illumination in defining genre in the gospel context. Crucially, the genre of the gospel book does not consist only in the text of scripture: components of commentary, study and liturgical use (such as the canon tables, hieronyman prologues, and the *Capitulare evangeliorum*) also constitute the book-type, as do the factors of translation and physical transmission (which become

¹⁸ Patrik Reuterswärd gives unusually extended attention to the question of how context could reframe generalized patterns with iconographic significance: Reuterswärd, *The Forgotten Symbols of God: Five Essays Reprinted from Konsthistorisk Tidskrift* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1986). Victor Elbern also explores meaningful, non-figural motifs in various artistic contexts: e.g., Elbern, 'Bildstruktur-Sinnzeichen-Bildaussage. Zusammenfassende Studie zur unfigürlichen Ikonographie im frühen Mittelalter', *Arte Medievale*, 1 (1983), 17-37. On the issue of meaning determined by context, see also the contributions in *Zum Problem der Deutung frühmittelalterlicher Bildinhalte: Akten des 1. Internationalen Kolloquiums in Marburg a.d. Lahn, 15. bis 19. Februar 1983*, ed. by H. Roth (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1986).

¹⁹ Lest we doubt the specificity of the composition's apocalyptic reference, the four creatures at Matthew and Mark have six wings, reflecting John's account in Revelation, while those at Luke and John bear only two: the more common form of evangelist symbols.

²⁰ B. Brenk, 'Schriftlichkeit und Bildlichkeit in der Hofschule Karls des Grossen', in *Testo e immagine nell'Alto Medioevo: 15-21 Aprile 1993, Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo*, vol. 2 (Spoleto: Settimane di studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 1994), pp. 631-82.

an explicit theme for figuration in depictions of Jerome).²¹ The incipit illumination of Laon 63 demonstrates how integral these components were to the conception of the gospel codex in Tours.

The integration of *Maiestas* forms with components of the gospel book other than the Word itself or a figural representation of Christ has the effect of uniting elements proper to the genre of the gospels as *transmitted scripture* with visual forms that carry connotations of the complex theology surrounding the representation of the gospels' central subject (Christ). In other words, the Laon frames do not assimilate the incipit texts to the person of Christ; they integrate the matter of the gospel book itself into the wider system of signification and substitution that gospel *Maiestas* images, in turn, work to communicate.

The Laon Gospels are not alone among Tours productions in lacing compositionally charged forms through the apparatus of a gospel manuscript. In the Du Fay Gospels, a particularly elaborate prefatory sequence introduces each evangelist's account: a full-page incipit precedes the prologues, followed by a second incipit for the gospel proper. This second incipit statement faces a verse on each of the evangelists; and the following opening displays the evangelist's portrait on the verso, opposite the elaborate beginning of his text on the recto. The incipit statements for Matthew, Luke and John are rendered within a simple almond-shaped mandorla frame, on backgrounds of purple or blue; Mark's appears within a square frame that mirrors the format for the facing verse. The incipit statements for Matthew and Luke's prologues are further disposed around a small mandorla at the centre of the visual field, in which Christ's monogram appears (Fig. 4). The frame for the whole is a variant on the quatrefoil: for Matthew, a regular quatrefoil, positioned horizontally; for Luke, an irregular quatrefoil, positioned vertically (perhaps better described as a figure-of-eight mandorla with lateral lobes).²²

In the Du Fay Gospels, as in Laon 63, pages of prefatory matter are structured through forms that conjure the *Maiestas* image type. In Laon 63, this resonance is refined through the addition of figural evangelist symbols. In Du Fay, it is refined at the prologues through the addition of a potent graphic sign: the *chi-rho* form of the Christological monogram. This sign

²¹ H. Kessler, 'Jerome and Vergil in Carolingian Frontispieces and the Uses of Translation', in *Les Manuscrits carolingiens: Actes du colloque de Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, le 4 mai 2007*, ed. by J.-P. Caillet and M.-P. Laffitte (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), pp. 121–40; also D. Ganz, 'The Vatican Vergil and the Jerome Page in the First Bible of Charles the Bald', in *Under the Influence*, pp. 45–50.

²² The lobed form of Luke's mandorla-type frame recurs as a setting for Christ and the evangelists in Troyes, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 960, whose programme I have described as an 'extended *Maiestas*' composition. In two other Breton gospel books (Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 85, and Boulogne, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 8), a figure-eight mandorla without the lateral lobes is associated with the evangelist portraits. B. Kitzinger, 'Troyes, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 960: Approaches to Gospel Illumination in 9th–10th Century Brittany', *Rivista di Storia della Miniatura*, 17 (2013), 29–42.

correlates directly to the person of Christ, and its reading is not fluid.²³ Both manuscripts also include the full resolution of such *Maiestas*-resonance into a complete rendition of the image itself. In Laon, this occurs in the *Maiestas crucis* at Matthew. In Du Fay, it appears in the *Maiestas domini* that concludes the book, framed by an outer mandorla that echoes those at the gospel incipits of Matthew, Luke and John (Fig. 5). The *Maiestas domini*, positioned on a verso, is conceived as the pendant to one of Theodulf's verses on the four evangelists and their symbols, rendered on purple ground on the recto side of the folio.²⁴ The image itself is accompanied by a titulus that speaks to the characterization of Christ within the composition, as well as his relationship to the evangelists: 'Clearly seen you remain in the sublime seat, Redeemer / The heralds stand by, you fill them all with light.'²⁵ Through a juxtaposition of text and image, the relevance of the figural *Maiestas* to the gospel genre is defined – an identification of subject and vehicle that is sustained through the incipit pages that coordinate monogram, frame, and the gospel apparatus.

The Du Fay gospel book is fitted with full-page images of the evangelists composing their texts: Matthew dips his pen and displays an open book, Mark bends over his transcription, Luke looks up from his writing to

²³ The omission of the monogram at Mark and John seems to me more a matter of balance within the programme than a legible statement differentiating the evangelists. The pattern reflects even-handed alternation rather than the grouping of Matthew with John and Mark with Luke, reflecting apostolic status (see R. Kahsnitz, "Matheus ex ore Christi scripsit": zum Bild der Berufung und Inspiration der Evangelisten, in *Byzantine East, Latin West: Art-Historical Studies in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann*, ed. by D. Mouriki (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 169–80). The planning at John – the evangelist most often firmly assimilated to Christ – seems to have gone awry: the purple-grounded rectangular prologue incipit is squeezed into the left-hand column of fol. 135r, with prologue initial beginning the right-hand column. This contrasts with the generous spacing of the other gospel prefaces, where the prologue incipit occupies the entire verso of an opening facing the prologue initial and text on the recto (fols 15v–16r, 58v–59r, and 88v–89r). This suggests that the distribution of decoration was also not intended particularly to emphasize the characteristics of the evangelists as individuals, but rather to support variety and balance through the programme as a whole.

²⁴ 'Primus ab humana quia coepit promere gente, / Humani formam schematis inde vehit. / Avia terribili perstringit voce secundus, / Scribitur et species inde leonis ei. / Estque sacerdotii quia rebus tertius orsus, / Forma juvencalis hinc sibi rite datur. / It quia verborum pennis super aethera quartus, / Hinc aquilae specimen celsa petentis habet.' (The first began with how he proceeded from human beings, / And therefore carries the form of human kin. / The second with a terrible voice denounces ways that are wayward, / And therefore the appearance of a lion is ascribed to him. / To the third, because he began with priestly matters, / Is properly ascribed the shape of a young bull. / The fourth flies over the skies with words elevated / And therefore has the shape of an eagle flying aloft.) English: *Theodulf of Orléans: The Verse*, trans. by T. M. Anderson (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2014), p. 131. The verse at the end of the volume repeats the inclusion of Theodulf's poem on the very first folio of the manuscript, backed by an incipit to Jerome's prefaces on the verso (*KM I.1*, p. 407; *MGH Poet. 1*, Carm. 41.1, p. 534, verses 85–96). The manuscript also includes verses by Alcuin on the four evangelists, written in silver and positioned on the recto sides of the evangelist portraits (*MGH Poet. 1*, Carm. 71.1, p. 293, lines 1–20; fols 18r, 61r, 91r, 137r).

²⁵ 'Conspicuus resides sublimese sede redemptor. / Precones astant lumine cuncta replens.'

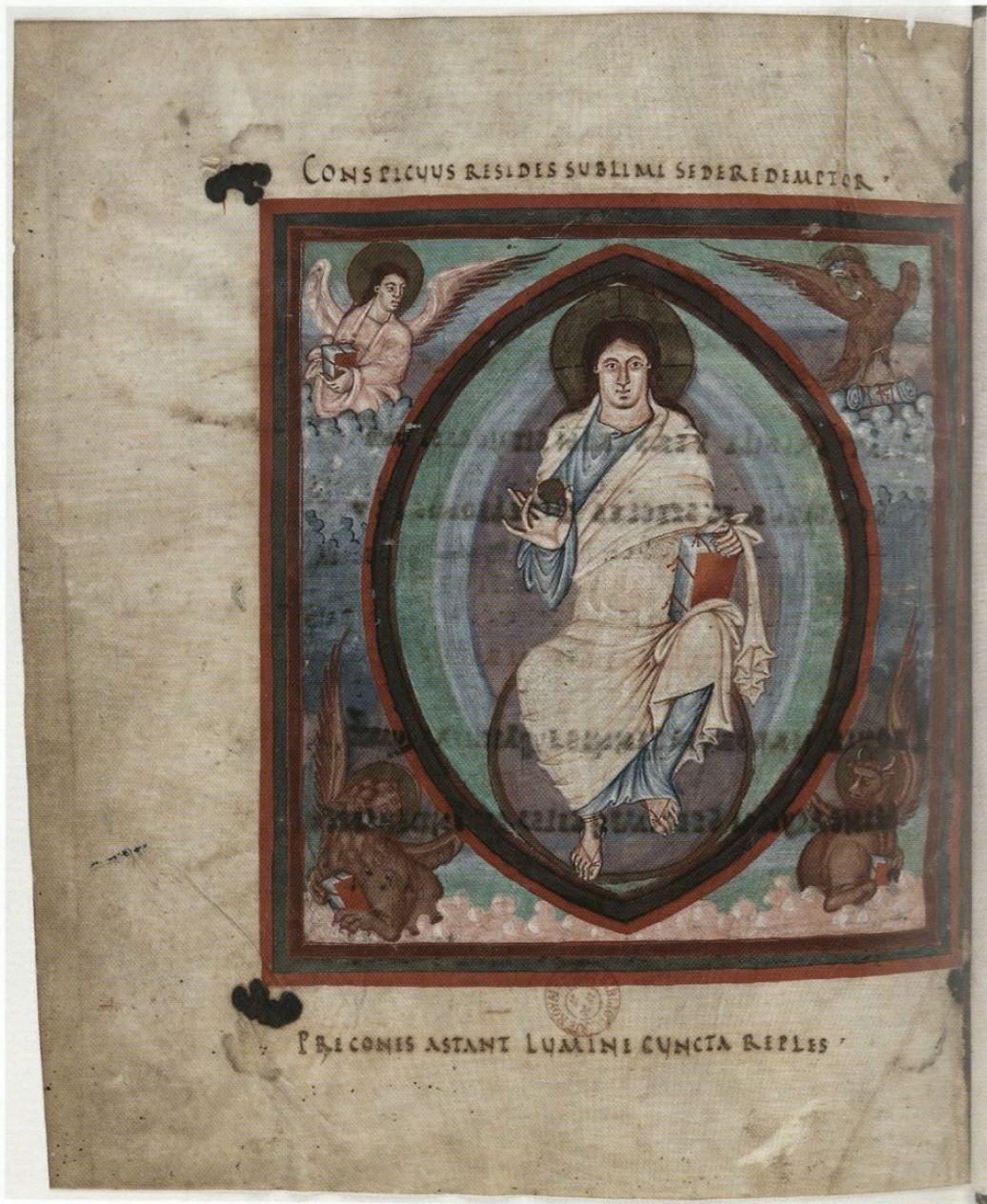


FIG. 5 DU FAY
GOSPELS (PARIS,
BNF, LAT. 9385,
FOL. 179V), 844–51,
TOURS

acknowledge his symbol, John cradles his open book. The symbols positioned in the upper right-hand corners of the pictorial field, separated from the evangelist figures by a pronounced purple arc containing the appropriate Sedulian verse, all bear physical manifestations of their testimony: codices for the angel, lion and bull, and a scroll for the eagle. In classic fashion, the Du Fay bookmakers exercised figural representation to make a theme of the gospels' nature as texts both inspired and produced, mediated by

transcription and themselves representative of mediation between the ecclesiastical contexts for which a gospel manuscript was produced and the absent person of Christ – narrated in the evangelists' accounts and visualized in the image of Majesty. The function of decoration at large in the Du Fay programme is to interpret the nature and significance of the texts at hand. In this task, figural imagery partners with texts additional to scripture and to the standard gospel apparatus (the tituli), and also with framing devices that bring the standard apparatus (the prologues) into the decorative fold. The representation of the gospel book *per se* is not limited to the pictorial contents of figural images but is brokered by multiple visual and textual systems working together.

The notion of gospel illumination as a coordination of multiple modes of signification is made exceptionally clear in the presence of the *Maiestas* throughout the Prüm Gospels held in Berlin. At the same time, this manuscript raises fundamental questions concerning the interpretation of such diverse systems of representation. The figural scaffold of the Prüm programme is essentially equivalent to that in Du Fay. A full-page *Maiestas domini* precedes the canon tables, conceived as part of the general prefatory matter and accompanied by a titulus that elaborates on the depiction of the heavenly throne.²⁶ Framed depictions of the scribal evangelists, together with their symbols and the Sedulian verses, precede each gospel account. From there, the graphic and figural strategies of representation in the two manuscripts diverge. At the incipit to Matthew in Prüm appears one of the few sequences of New Testament narrative within a gospel programme to survive from the ninth century: between the three lines of the incipit statement the Journey to Bethlehem, the Nativity, the Annunciation to the Shepherds, and the Presentation in the Temple unfold in delicate gold silhouette (fol. 23r).²⁷ Overleaf, Matthew's 'L-I' cross ligature (with the cross articulated in red) is framed by four medallions with profile male heads at the corners of the bordered field, defined by the name of King David in the lower two roundels. The first page of Mark's text features a recumbent lion with a blue halo facing a descending winged lion, a jewelled codex between them, both roaring (fol. 80v; Fig. 6). At Mark's incipit (fol. 80r), the medallion motif dominates in two meticulously balanced quincunx compositions involving haloed roaring lions on gold, cross-patterns on silver, and unnamed male heads on gold. Luke's incipit works along the same line as Mark's, but all figuration has been stripped away (fol. 117r; Fig. 7). In the upper register, four X-interlace patterns in silver frame the same pattern, augmented with a more elaborate central lozenge and a figure-eight in gold. Below, four quatrefoil-and-circle interlace units in gold

²⁶ *'Hac sedet arce d[eu]s / mundi rex / gloria caeli'* (Here in glorious height sits the God of the world, king of heaven). In Christ's cruciform nimbus appear the designations *Rex - Lex - Lux*, further characterizing his person.

²⁷ I am preparing a separate study of this particular page, where I treat the rendition of the scenes and the context of this narrative image at Matthew.

flank a silver roundel filled with a grid pattern rendered in purple and dark brown ink. Finally, at John's incipit, a gold eagle grasping a scroll appears in the upper register as the centre of a quincunx among silver roundels with rosette patterns. Six gold and two silver rosettes are evenly distributed in



FIG. 6 PRÜM GOSPELS (BERLIN, STAATSBIBLIOTHEK PKB, MS THEOL. LAT. FOL. 733, FOL. 80V), 844–51, TOURS



three rows in the lower register, creating two interlocking quincunxes with the silver roundels in the central positions.

In the Prüm Gospels, the five-part compositional model of the *Maiestas* is explicitly (figurally) established at the outset as a component of the book's programme. This initial statement of a theme presents an ambiguity as to how we should (or should not) understand the incipit pages, which exercise alternative principles of representation. The lions at Mark and the eagle

FIG. 7 PRÜM
GOSPELS
(BERLIN, STAATS-
BIBLIOTHEK PKB,
MS THEOL. LAT.
FOL. 733, FOL. 117R),
844-51, TOURS

at John are 'legible' because they correlate to the respective evangelists' symbols (and exegetical traditions) at the obvious contextual junctures in the manuscript. No other element in the incipit compositions, however, may be so concretely defined. Without a compositional or material context that would help to crystallize a reading, we have no grounds to suppose that rosettes or interlace patterns 'mean' anything in and of themselves (suggestive as the 'cosmic' forms in Luke's lower register might be on their own) – just as without the 'David Rex Imperator' inscription on the medallions at Matthew, the range of possible reference in the roundels with their profile heads expands.²⁸ We might approach a reading of the incipit motifs if we see them primarily in terms of pattern, rather than dwelling on their component parts – suggestive of the *Maiestas* structure as those patterns are. Whether we have grounds to suppose, however, that the recurrent quincunx pattern at the incipits – playing a framing four off a central, distinct one – does amount to an echo of the *Maiestas* throughout the book must remain an open question.

However we read (or do not read) the incipit patterns in Prüm, the primary principle that defines the programme as a whole is the counterpoint of multiple visual registers. As a priority of design, such relationality is evident in microcosm in the careful alternations of form and direction that define Mark's incipit, where the alternation of silver and gold and the direction of the profile heads maintain strict balance. On a larger scale, the narrative register at Matthew plays off the symbolism at Mark, where two possible readings of the lion (as Christ, or the Lion of Judah, and as the evangelist's symbol) are rendered as discrete figures that complement one another in direct juxtaposition.²⁹

A similar counterpoint is inherent to the very presence of the *Maiestas* in a gospel context. The historical accounts in the text stand in temporal relation to this image of Christ enthroned, often verbally characterized as God outside of time and/or related to the eschatological position of the Church. Including evangelist portraits layers the factor of ecclesiastical history and the genesis of the codex at hand into a visual programme that is conceived as a veritable florilegium of visual systems. Resonant graphic signs and patterns further lace the book as a whole with intersecting modes of illumination that work together to represent any particular instance of the gospel genre. The variety of compositional registers in Prüm invokes the familiar idea of medieval interest in multiple modes of reading. In another

²⁸ On the incorporation of medallions into manuscripts as a system of signification, see I. Garipzanov, *The Symbolic Language of Authority in the Carolingian World* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008); also relevant is H. Maguire, 'Magic and Money in the Early Middle Ages', *Speculum*, 72.4 (1997), 1037–54.

²⁹ On the range of reference in Carolingian exegesis on the roaring lion (usually associated with Mark), see R. Pizzinato, 'Exitus and Reditus: The Codex Aureus of Sant Emmeram as Pictorial Exegesis' (unpublished PhD dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 2012), esp. pp. 100–1, 120, 127–9.

light, it speaks to the deliberate composition of the gospel book as a theatre for diverse kinds of reading and comprehension – bringing us back to the idea that the illuminated book represents a crux of production and reception.

The decorated pages of the Prüm Gospels work in relation to one another because they are a sequence integral to the codex. They create variety within the gospel quaternity, while the decorative rhythm of the evangelist portraits also asserts the unity of the compilation. The programme is further gently interlaced on the level of individual motifs. At the beginning of Luke's text (fol. 117v), the 'Q' initial picks up several patterns evident elsewhere: X-shaped side panels in the bowl echo the forms of the incipit, while patterns at the letter's top and bottom reprise the quatrefoil-*chi* crosses from the silver roundels at Mark. The grid from the silver roundel at Luke's incipit is repeated in the arch of the 'Q'. In the frames to the full-page images, star-swirls on all four sides of the *Maiestas's* border yield to rosettes at Matthew, lozenges at Luke, and the grid-pattern again at John. Perhaps most strikingly, the elaborate interlace unit that occupies the central place in the upper register at Luke's incipit had appeared once before in a prominent place in Prüm, in the lower bowl of the 'B' incipit initial at Jerome's preface (fol. 1v).

None of the abovementioned motifs is unique to the Prüm Gospels. However we move to read, or to resist reading, content into the patterns in Prüm based on their resonance with the *Maiestas* composition, one's dominant sense on looking through the manuscript is that of its affinity with other books from Tours. If we focus on the level of geometric pattern, temporarily ignoring the design choices (such as the narrative sequence at Matthew or the details of the evangelist portraits) that render Prüm a spectacularly singular gospel book, the number of 'ornamental' connections to other manuscripts grows quickly. The X-patterns with interlace centres from Luke's incipit appear prominently, for instance, in the Raganaldus Sacramentary, as do rosettes of precisely the type used for the quincunx arrangements in Prüm's John incipit.³⁰ The profile medallions, famously, pervade Tours productions. The grid pattern recurs in the First Bible of Charles the Bald.³¹ It is worth reintroducing the Laon Gospels here as well: several of this manuscript's quatrefoil and interlaced frame-shapes – without the evangelist symbols that strengthen their cosmic associations – appear, with variation, in other Tours manuscripts, and by no means only in gospel contexts.³²

³⁰ Autun, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 19, e.g., fols 97v–98r.

³¹ Paris, BnF, lat. 1, e.g., fol. 88v, where the grid pattern fills an 'I' initial at the beginning of Ruth. The X-interlace pattern treated above also appears in this manuscript, e.g., at fol. 101v.

³² A particularly strong connection between the lozenge-and-rectangle frame for Mark's preface in Laon (fol. 83r) appears in the lections incipit to the Chartres *Liber comitis* (Chartres, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 24, fol. 3v; also relevant is Chartres' prologue incipit at fol. 2r). For discussion of other, complementary, aspects of incipit pages see the contributions by Bawden and Brown to the present volume.

The question of context is, of course, inextricable from the question of 'legibility' and interpretation. Does the combination of the gospel genre, the steady repetition of the quincunx pattern over multiple gospel openings, and the presence of the figural *Maiestas* constitute a context determinate enough to justify a reading of the Prüm incipits as part of the alliance figurally forged in this manuscript between the gospel book and Christ in Majesty? I see few alternatives to acknowledging both the possibility and the ambiguity on this front staged by the coordinated systems of figuration, graphic design, and textual components in Prüm (along with Laon and Du Fay).³³ A clearer argument can be made, though, for the importance of acknowledging the *presence* of these coordinated systems, and the way in which they knit the entire gospel codex into a decorative scheme.

The decorative scheme of the Prüm Gospels as a whole returns us to the definition of gospel illumination as representation: representation of a particular gospel book as an instance of its genre, with conceptual priorities specific to that genre articulated through visual means. No manuscript, after all, need be illuminated, and so the presence of illumination itself counts as a move toward representation, above and beyond the pictorial specifics of any one case. The distribution of illumination, in turn, becomes a factor we can 'read' in the effort to parse the character of such representation. We would not necessarily give much weight to an incipit statement, for instance, unless a visual intervention encouraged it. In the Tours gospel books we have examined, however, this emphasis on the incipits leads us in some respects to the heart of the representative work performed by illumination.

The fact that the prefatory matter – not scripture – receives great visual attention in the manuscripts we have discussed is related to the fact that the manuscripts' provenance at Tours is so immediately legible. Both factors speak to an interest at Tours in using illumination to represent the nature of the gospel book *per se*: a book representative of Christ's story and person, and their accompanying theology, but also a book representative of its own process of production and transmission – translated, transcribed and compiled, comprising both scriptural text and apparatus. To work in a house style, with house motifs, however imaginatively, is to integrate a manuscript with a tradition of manufacture.³⁴ The more that tradition grows and the more diverse it becomes, the more the idea of a book's manufactured

³³ Recent work on the problem of signification in ornament is highly relevant to this type of ambiguity and contextually based reading: see, for example, L. Webster, 'Encrypted Visions: Style and Sense in the Anglo-Saxon Minor Arts, AD 400–900', in *Anglo-Saxon Styles*, ed. by C. Karkov and G. Hardin Brown (Albany: SUNY Press, 2003), pp. 11–30; B. C. Tilghman, 'The Symbolic Use of Ornament and Calligraphy in the Book of Kells and Insular Art' (unpublished PhD dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 2009).

³⁴ On production at Tours in this light, see especially D. Ganz, 'Mass Production of Early Medieval Manuscripts: The Carolingian Bibles from Tours', and R. McKitterick, 'Carolingian Bible Production: The Tours Anomaly', both in *The Early Medieval Bible: Its Production, Decoration and Use*, ed. by R. Gameson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), respectively pp. 53–62 and 63–77.

status and the recognition of its manufacture at *Tours* become conceptual constituents of illumination, characteristic of manuscripts' visual impact and what their programmes represent.³⁵ Similarly, to emphasize the gospel incipits in terms that integrate them with the visual interpretation of gospel matter – be that the narrative and symbolic components of Prüm's Matthew and Mark, the presence of Christ's monogram in Du Fay, or the graphic affiliation with the *Maiestas* at Laon – is to reflect upon how the apparatus of a gospel book becomes an integral and meaningful part of the genre, and of any particular codex as a whole.

On this note, I would like to close by discussing another feature of some Touronian programmes: the close attention paid to the nature of the gospel book as a codex. Several formal choices in these manuscripts extend the interplay of textual, graphic and figural systems that orchestrate the affinity between the gospel book and the *Maiestas* into especially explicit statements of the part played by the physical book in defining the nature of the gospel genre. In the Lothar Gospels, the second element in the manuscript is a figural *Maiestas domini*.³⁶ Where the titulus to the Prüm *Maiestas* commented on Christ's status as king of heaven, the inscription here is devoted to the harmony of the gospels ('Here the four glow, flowing from one source: the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John').³⁷ In Prüm, the gospel book is affiliated with the cosmology of Majesty by virtue of the image's integral place within the codex. In the Lothar Gospels, the titulus reverses that vector: because the *Maiestas* is verbally contextualized in the language of gospel harmony, the image of Christ comes explicitly to represent the self-reflexive strain of gospel illumination by visualizing the unifying source of the four gospels.³⁸

Canon tables II–VI of the Lothar Gospels extend the themes of identification between Christ and the gospel accounts, and the illuminated

³⁵ One could launch a longer discussion of style on the basis particularly of the Prüm Gospels, with its juxtaposition of silhouette and fully painted images – two pictorial modes that also become relational registers within the book. The silhouette images represent an alternative tradition in Tours illumination, while their gold material and lack of modelling also give them greater continuity with the most important sites of lettering. My thanks to Joshua O'Driscoll for conversations on this issue.

³⁶ The image faces a verse exalting Jerome's work of translation (fols 2v–3r): '*Hic Damasi species rutilat formata beati / Hieronimi atque beati splendet forma sub illa / Huius apostolici parens iussis studiose / Dum transferre laborat quod pater ipse precatur.*' (Here the formed appearance of blessed Damasus glows and the form of blessed Jerome shines beneath it, while by the order of his apostolic parent he zealously works to translate what the father himself implores.) While this circumstance might seem to strengthen the argument that the *Maiestas* is assimilated to the transmitted nature of the gospel book at large, the language of the titulus suggests that it may have been intended to face a missing image of Pope Damasus and Jerome. In that case, an additional verse on the *Maiestas* or the evangelists possibly appeared on the recto side of the missing folio.

³⁷ '*Quattuor hic rutilant uno de fonte fluentes / Matthei Marci Lucae Libri atque Johannis.*'

³⁸ Poilpré discusses the close relation of the *Maiestas* image to Jerome's letters on the gospels – a point particularly relevant to a case such as the Lothar Gospels, where the *Maiestas* directly precedes the prefaces: *Maiestas Domini*, pp. 138–41.

gospel book's status as a representation both of Christ's testimony and of its own genre. On fols 14v–15r, two roundels flank the arches of the canon tables, containing elaborate versions of Christ's monogram. On fol. 14v the roundels are furnished with purple grounds; on fol. 15r the monograms have the additional element of alpha and omega pendants hanging from the crossbar. On fols 15v–16r, the pattern of the roundels framing the arches is repeated, but they contain bound codices with gold covers, instead of the Christological monogram.³⁹ In the transition between folios 15r and 15v, the codex substitutes for the graphic sign of Christ. Both gospel codex and monogram represent substitutions for Christ's person in the first place, and the two openings stage an equivalence between these two proxies – both identified, moreover, with the gospel book's own systems of graphic, figural, and textual representation (much like the *Maiestas* ligature in Laon). In the full context of the Lothar Gospels' visual programme, the canon tables work together with the figural *Maiestas* to stage common themes in diverse registers.

The opening sequence of the St Gauzelin (or Arnaldus) Gospels held in Nancy constitutes a crowning confluence between the *Maiestas*, Christ's graphic signs, and the definition of the gospel-as-gospel-book at Tours.⁴⁰ The gospel harmony verse encountered in the Lothar Gospels appears three times in St Gauzelin, in a context of kaleidoscopic movement between graphic, figural and verbal registers of representation – all of which have the definition of the gospel book as their central theme. On fol. 1r, a single codex, bound shut and adorned with three crosses, sits amid the following definition: 'This is the book of life, this the source and origin of books, from whence flows whatever in the world anyone understands.'⁴¹ Then follows a text on the role of the gospels in fighting sin (fols 1v–2r). Its bookend composition is what we might call a *Maiestas verbi*, with Christ's monogram surrounded by four codices, framed by the verse on gospel harmony (fol. 2v; Fig. 8). The 'four glow' titulus was also marshalled to accompany the *Maiestas agni* facing Jerome's prefaces, where a Lamb holding lance and cross-staff, facing a chalice, is framed by the evangelist symbols within a

³⁹ These two openings are the only ones to follow this pattern. Up until fol. 14v, a single roundel appears within the arch, specifying the number of the table. On fols 16v–17r, a platform with hunting centaurs crowns the arches. The last table on fol. 17v is topped by a flat beam with goats' heads at the corners and two roundels toward the centre, the left-hand one conceived as a rosette (along the model of Prüm) and the right-hand in plain gold. Birds adorn most of the arches, with lions at fol. 12r (the first table).

⁴⁰ The prefatory sequence from fols 1r–2v was added in a second campaign after the manuscript was finished: see *KM* I.1, pp. 383–4, also *KM* I.2, pp. 94–6; and P. Underwood, 'The Fountain of Life in Manuscripts of the Gospels', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 5 (1950), 43–138, at pp. 127–31.

⁴¹ '*Hic liber est vitae / Hic et fons et origo librorum / Unde fluit quicquid / Q[usiqu-abraded] in orbe sapit.*' An ambiguity is present in the representation of this codex: the elongated horizontal format and the placement of the three crosses also recall an altar frontal.

lozenge, and by four prophets positioned around the lozenge in roundels, with two cherubim flanking it (fol. 3v).

The two *Maiestas* compositions in St Gauzelin (introduced to the book in two stages of production) form a modulated pair: gospel harmony is named as the banner concept for both, but the former (fol. 2v) presents a variation on the theme established in the latter (fol. 3v). The *Maiestas agni* sets a frame for the theological-eschatological context in which the gospel book was made and used, blending the concept of gospel harmony with typology and eschatology. As in the Lothar Gospels, the pair of the harmony titulus and figural *Maiestas* channels a reading of the image towards its relevance for the gospel genre. Meanwhile, the added *Maiestas verbi* and harmony frontispiece concretize the characterization of the gospel book as a book – written, bound, representative of the evangelists and their testimony as the monogram is representative of Christ. The reiteration of the titulus and the fundamental quincunx composition points up the difference between the symbolic-figural mode of the *Maiestas agni* and that of the *Maiestas verbi*. While the *Maiestas agni* reflects on the work of symbols in communicating the meaning of Christ's sacrifice and its telling by the evangelists, the foregoing composition reflects on the continuity between the graphic sign

FIG. 8 ARNALDUS OR ST GAUZELIN GOSPELS (NANCY, CATHEDRAL TREASURY, FOLS 2V-3R), 834-43, TOURS



and the written word as substitutes for the person of Christ. As the instance of written scripture at hand, represented by its illumination, the St Gauzelin Gospels is imbricated in its own Christology, and becomes the central subject of its own visual programme. Along with the foregoing examples given here, the St Gauzelin Gospels speak to the broad principle that thinking through interconnected systems of representation in Carolingian gospel books is as important to understanding their visual programme as is parsing individual motifs. Focusing on the coordination of graphic, verbal and figural registers in the imbrication of the *Maiestas* and the gospel book reveals the core of what the illuminated gospel book as a genre is made to represent: written, curated testimony both to the nature of an incarnate God and to the nature of the manuscript at hand.



