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### **Establishing a Connection to Illuminated Manuscripts made at Echternach in the Eighth and Eleventh Centuries and Issues of Patronage, Monastic Reform and Splendor**

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## Establishing a Connection to Illuminated Manuscripts made at Echternach in the Eighth and Eleventh Centuries and Issues of Patronage, Monastic Reform and Splendor

By Stephen Wagner, Savannah College of Art and Design

### Introduction

The monastery of Echternach made great contributions to the art of luxury manuscript production at two distinctive points in its long history.<sup>1</sup> The first works appeared shortly after St. Willibrord established the foundation at the end of the seventh century, while the second wave of illustrated books, some of which were written in gold, occurred in the eleventh century.<sup>2</sup> Scholarship on these manuscripts from both periods has contributed greatly to our understanding of this important art form in the Early Middle Ages, but it has treated the early examples separately from the later ones. In this article, I will establish that a relationship exists between both groups. Books from both eras contain painted pages without figural representations or decorated text, a rare occurrence in the history of European manuscript production. For these books, especially those dating to the eleventh century, the fully ornamented pages communicated

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to express my gratitude to Evan Gatti for her generous guidance in helping me prepare this article. This paper was developed from a double session, “Ottonian Art and History,” at the Forty-second International Congress on Medieval Studies held at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo May 10-13, 2007. For their valuable assistance, I would like to thank Adam Cohen, Lawrence Nees, Eliza Garrison, Rebecca Turner, and Janet Wagner. Much of the information conveyed in this article comes from my dissertation, “Silken Parchments: Design, Context, Patronage and Function of Textile-inspired Pages in Ottonian and Salian Manuscripts” (Ph.D. Diss. University of Delaware, 2004).

<sup>2</sup> Information on the early manuscripts can be found in Jonathan J.G. Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts 6<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> Century: A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles*, v. 1 (London: H. Miller, 1978). Three complete Gospels books and a fragmentary example and one Lectionary made during the eleventh century have survived. They are London: BL Harley MS 2821 (The *Harley Gospels*), Paris: BNF Nouv acq. Lat. 2196 (fragment – the *Luxeuil Gospels*), El Escorial: Cod. Vitrinas 17 (The *Codex Aureus of Speyer*), Nuremberg: Germanisches Nationalmuseum, HS 15146 (The *Codex Aureus of Echternach*), Uppsala: Universitetsbibliothek, C 93 (The *Goslar Gospels*) and Bremen: University Library, Ms. B. 121 (The *Evangelistary of Henry III*). The full discussion is below.

important ideas concerning the past and present in an age of monastic and ecclesiastical reform in which monasteries witnessed increased imperial involvement.

The motivation behind these extraordinary works is a combination of four factors. First, artists of the eleventh century were able to examine codices made during the eighth century, at least one of which included an ornament page analogous to the great insular productions in such books as the *Book of Durrow*, the *Lindisfarne Gospels*, and the *Book of Kells*. Second, the monasteries of Trier and Echternach produced important manuscripts as a result of imperially supported reforms that originated at the monastery of Gorze and later at St. Maximin in Trier. Third, imperial and episcopal support of the reforms required changes in liturgical practices that increased the demand for luxury books as the pageantry of the rituals in churches became more elaborate. In the reformers' efforts to return to the asceticism developed by Benedict of Nursia and to align the monastery with imperial ideology, an argument can be made that artists considered the ornament pages of the venerable eighth-century manuscripts to be signifiers of reform that they would incorporate into their eleventh-century works. The fourth factor involved the spectacle of liturgy. In the Ottonian and Salian periods, priests and bishops employed silken vestments, altar cloths, and other luxurious trappings at unprecedented levels. Furthermore, all of the manuscripts from Echternach under consideration in this article were produced during the reign of Henry III, a zealous reformer and avid patron of art.

### **Echternach in the eighth century and the Augsburg Gospels**

In order to establish the connection between manuscripts made at Echternach in the eighth century and in the eleventh century it is necessary to discuss the monastery's early years. Willibrord is known to have taken at least one if not more manuscripts with him when he

departed England on his mission for the continent at the end of the seventh century. The most famous example is an illustrated manuscript often referred to as the *Willibrord Gospels*.<sup>3</sup> At least one manuscript made in the eighth century at Echternach that contains a full ornament page, the *Augsburg Gospels*, similar to the so-called carpet pages of the *Book of Durrow*, the *Lindisfarne Gospels*, and the *Book of Kells*. According to Jonathan Alexander, it was still in the monastery's library in the eleventh century.<sup>4</sup>

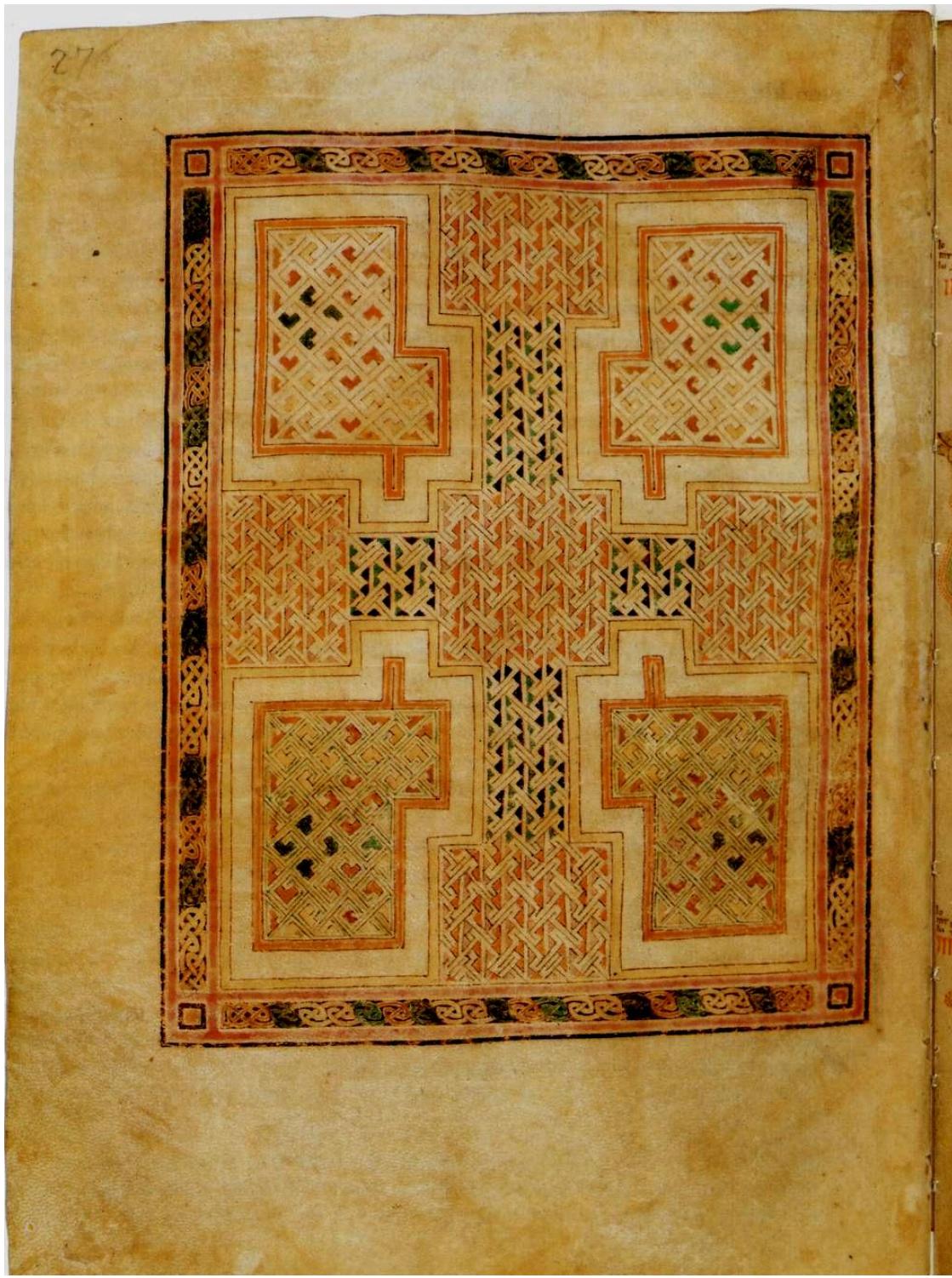
The *Augsburg Gospels* dates to the beginning of the eighth century as firmly established by Dáibhí Ó'Cróinín and Nancy Netzer.<sup>5</sup> While these discussions and others have shed light on the production and localization of the manuscript, the inclusion of a single carpet page has not been explained.<sup>6</sup> Folio 167v is a framed cross-ornament page (**fig. 1**). The frame consists of interlace designs on a black background placed between two simple orange bands. The artist arranged clusters of interlace in a rhythmic pattern with alternating colors of dark green, pale orange and pale yellow. The cross is laid out inside the rectangular frame. The artist used a straight edge to articulate the cross with a base and the arms with wide ends, decorating it with delicate vertical lines on an alternating white and black ground. Additional ornamentation of

<sup>3</sup> Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. Lat. 9389. See Jonathan J.G. Alexander, *A Survey of MSS Illuminated in the British Isles*, Vol 1: *Insular MSS 6<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> century* (London: Harvey Miller, 1978), and Carl Nordenfalk, *Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts* (New York: Braziller, 1978).

<sup>4</sup> This manuscript was originally in the library at Schloss Harburg, Cod. I.2.4.2. It is now in the university library at Augsburg and uses the same shelf mark. See Alexander, no. 54. Alexander suggests that this cross-ornament page was copied from a lost ornament page in the Echternach Gospels (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. Lat. 9389).

<sup>5</sup> Dáibhí Ó'Cróinín, *Evangeliarum Epternacense Evangelistarum* (Microform Facsimile) (Munich, 1988); “Is the Augsburg Gospel Codex a Northumbrian Manuscript?” in *St. Cuthbert, his Cult and his Community to AD 1200*, eds. Gerald Bonner, David Rollason and Clare Stancliffe (Woodbridge, England: the Boydell Press, 1989), 189–202; Nancy Netzer, *Cultural Interplay in the Eighth Century: The Trier Gospels and the making of a scriptorium at Echternach* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994).

<sup>6</sup> Carl Nordenfalk, “An Illustrated Diatesseron,” *Art Bulletin*, vol. 50 (June, 1968), 119–140. Nordenfalk does not specifically discuss the *Augsburg Gospels* in this article, but the layout of the cross-ornament page and its relationship to the Diatesseron can be established.



**Figure 1.** *Augsburg Gospels*, Cross-ornament page, Universitätsbibliothek Augsburg, Cod. I.2.4.2, 167v. Photo courtesy of the Universitätsbibliothek Augsburg

cross hatches fills the cross. Flanking the cross are four framed multi-sided fields filled with fretwork painted in colors consistent with the rest of the composition. The layout of the page is analogous to the Evangelist symbol pages in the *Echternach Gospels* and the first cross-ornament page of the *Lindisfarne Gospels*. Robert Stevick's conclusion that the framed cross in the *Augsburg Gospels* as well as those in the *Lindisfarne Gospels*, the *Book of Kells*, and the *Lichfield Gospels* symbolizes the presence of Christianity reaching the ends of the earth. The geometric emphasis of the composition points to rationality inherent in following the principles surrounding the cross.<sup>7</sup>

### **Silk as a signifier of authority and its impact of manuscript decoration**

In the Early Middle Ages silk was such a valuable fabric that everything it touched enhanced the significance of any object or person it draped. Silk was present in Western Europe in limited quantities before that in the Anglo-Saxon realm as well as the Carolingian period. In fact, the body of St. Cuthbert was re-clothed in fresh vestments in 698 when the so-called *Nature Goddess Silk* was placed in the tomb.<sup>8</sup> During the Ottonian and Salian periods, its significance soared. Spurred by the magnitude of silk in the Byzantine Empire, the quantity of silk increased dramatically in Western Europe in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

The Byzantine imperial court engaged in silken diplomacy, a term introduced by Anna Muthesius. Every envoy who visited Byzantium received diplomatic gifts to take back to their

<sup>7</sup> Robert Stevick, "The Harmonic Plan of the Harburg Gospels' Cross-Page," *Artibus et Historiae*, vol. 12, no. 33 (1991), 39. This article analyzes the cross-page on the bases of technique with a strong emphasis on geometry and proportions.

<sup>8</sup> *The Relics of Saint Cuthbert*, ed. C.F. Battiscombe (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1956); cited in Clare Higgins, "Some New Thoughts on the Nature Goddess Silk," in *St. Cuthbert, His Cult and his Community to AD 1200*, as in note 5 above, 339-342. In the same collection of essay, see Hero Granger-Taylor, "The Weft-patterned Silks and the Braid: The Remains of an Anglo-Saxon Dalmatic of c. 800?" 303-328, and Anna Muthesius, "Silk and Saints: The Rider and Peacock Silks from the Relics of St. Cuthbert," 343-366.

homelands.<sup>9</sup> Gifts of silk were highly prized, and rulers who received the precious fabric distributed it to other nobles and to the ecclesiastical elite. The presentation of silk signified two salient facts: the Byzantines' acknowledgment that the recipients of silk were worthy, and, from the recipient rulers' perspectives, recognition of their imperial status.

The majority of silk in the early medieval west was fashioned into ecclesiastical and ceremonial vestments. In this period theologians began to consider the role of vestments and they gradually became important components of the liturgy.<sup>10</sup> As the early medieval bishops adopted the priestly and royal nature of Christ, they wore symbolic garments and regalia to broadcast their role. In the Ottonian and Salian periods, bishops were the key players in supporting the ruler, who rewarded their loyalty with gifts of land and luxury objects. On the secular side, royal robes, crowns, and other regalia followed the same patterns. Vestments at this time therefore represented a melding of powers of the priest, bishop, and king.<sup>11</sup> This power derived authority from such Old Testament figures as David and Samuel, who demonstrated that early power was divinely sanctioned.<sup>12</sup> The Carolingians and Ottomans supported these claims by enrobing both ecclesiastics and royalty with costly and luxurious trappings. The use of luxury vestments continued with each Ottonian ruler, and reached the height of lavishness with the ceremonial

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<sup>9</sup> Anna Muthesius, "Silken Diplomacy," in *Byzantine Diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-fourth Spring Symposium on Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990*, eds. Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin (Aldershot: Variorum Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 1992), 237-248.

<sup>10</sup> *Les Ordines romanu du haut moyen age*, 5 vols. (Louvain: Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense Administration, 1971). See also Cyrille Vogel, *Le Pontifical romano-germanique du dixième siècle*, 3 vols. (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1963). The first and eighth *ordines* contain explicit instructions on specific vestments a cleric should wear at a particular ceremony.

<sup>11</sup> Michael Moore, "The King's New Clothes: Royal and Episcopal Regalia in the Frankish Empire," in *Robes and Honor: The Medieval World of Investiture*, ed. Stewart Gordon (London: Palgrave, 2001), 97.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 110.

vestments worn by Henry II and Kunigunde (**fig. 2**).<sup>13</sup> The Salians likely continued this tradition in the eleventh century, but with the exception of the burial garb of the German Pope Clement II, very little has survived (**fig 3**).

The beauty of silk and ceremonial aspects of its use captivated the minds of patrons and artists who were interested in luxury and splendor. Whether to embellish the divine word or enhance the drama of the liturgy, the Ottonians and Salians found creative and innovative methods to express their veneration of this resplendent fabric. One such way was to imitate it in the most precious medieval means of communication, the illuminated manuscript. By enriching the backgrounds of figural miniatures and decorated initials with ornament inspired by silk patterns, as was the convention in Corvey and Hildesheim in the tenth and early eleventh centuries, the artist augmented the significance of the image. Later in the eleventh century, as part of God's work, the artists of Echternach utilized silk design to divide Gospel text, which recalled the decoration of manuscripts of the eighth century when monasteries also did the work of God as prescribed by St. Benedict. Their artistry also symbolically protected the divine word, much the way that silk was used to protect relics in the Early Middle Ages.

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<sup>13</sup> Jacques Paul, “Le manteau couvert d’étoiles de l’empereur Henri II,” in *Soleil: la lune et les étoiles au Moyen Age* (Aix-en-Provence, CUERMA Université de Provence, 1983), 264-268. See also Warren Woodfin, “Presents Given and Presence Subverted: The Cunegunda Chormantel in Bamberg and the Ideology of Byzantine Textiles,” *Gesta* 47/1 (2008), 33-50.



**Figure 2.** So-called *Star Mantle of Henry II*, pearls and gold thread embroidery on silk, ca. 1018-1024. Photo courtesy of the Diocesan Museum of Bamberg



**Figure 3.** Boots and Chasuble from the grave of Pope Clement II, silk, ca. 1047  
Photo courtesy of The Diocesan Museum of Bamberg

The fully ornamented textile-inspired pages made at Echternach in the eleventh century represent a climactic conclusion to a trend in manuscript decoration that began nearly hundred years earlier. First, artists at the monastery of Corvey began the custom in several liturgical books in the mid-tenth century. The most splendid examples were the results of imperial patronage, which extended to siblings who were abbots and abbesses of the royally endowed monasteries in the region. The textile-inspired decoration in Corvey manuscripts consists of patterned backgrounds painted behind text pages located at the beginnings of Gospels or behind special readings.<sup>14</sup>

The production of luxury manuscripts at Corvey did not last long. The monks there resisted the Gorze reform movement fiercely, and consequently, alienated themselves from Henry II, a strong supporter of reforms. In 1015 he dealt harshly with the rebellious monks by replacing their abbot with one of his choosing, Druthmar of Lorsch. He also imprisoned several monks, which would explain the decline in book production.<sup>15</sup>

A second important production center of textile-inspired manuscripts was Hildesheim and the city's illustrious Bishop, Bernward, one of the greatest patrons of art in the Middle Ages, is associated with three of them.<sup>16</sup> Two of the books, the so-called *Precious Gospels of Bernward* and the *Guntbald Lectionary*, were made for liturgical use.<sup>17</sup> Bernward had a dual role during the Ottonian period. Not only was he a bishop, but he was well-connected with the imperial realm.

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<sup>14</sup> Wilhelm Stüver, "Die Geschichte der Abtei Corvey," in *Kunst und Kultur im Weserraum 800-1600: Ausstellung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen* (Corvey and Münster, 1966), 10.

<sup>15</sup> See discussion below.

<sup>16</sup> Thangmarus, *Vita Bernwardi: das Leben des Bischofs Bernward von Hildesheim* (Hildesheim, 1993).

<sup>17</sup> Both manuscripts date to c. 1015 and are located in Hildesheim, Cathedral Treasury, Ms. 18 and Ms. 19. One page of the Guntbald manuscript bears a striking resemblance to the so-called marriage document of Otto II and Theophanu discussed in the next footnote.

He was likely savvy enough to realize the connection among textiles, diplomacy, and liturgy. Bernward was a close ally of Empress Theophanu, having traveled with her, and perhaps because of his loyalty, he became tutor of Otto III.<sup>18</sup> He traveled with Otto III to Rome where he saw ancient Roman and early Christian art that would influence his famous bronze doors and column.<sup>19</sup> Unlike manuscripts made at Corvey and Echternach, books from Hildesheim were not imperial commissions, but they did share stylistic affinities. Like the Corvey works, the Hildesheim works were liturgical books that employ patterned designs derived from textiles in the backgrounds, but they go further. Bishop Bernward took every opportunity to express himself, his devotion to Church and the importance of his See in these works. In addition to placing the pattern behind text, the Hildesheim artists also adorned the backgrounds of figural miniatures with a variety of repeating patterns, which enhanced the complexity of the image's theological message.<sup>20</sup>

The most complex of the manuscripts associated with Bernward is known as the “*Precious Gospels*.<sup>21</sup> The book contains twenty-one fully painted pages, all of which are decorated with distinctive patterned backgrounds. With the exception of the dedication opening,

<sup>18</sup> A magnificent example of textile-inspired painting can be seen in the so-called marriage document of Otto II and Theophanu dated to April 14, 972. Most likely painted by the unknown artist known as the Gregory Master, the document, detailing the gifts given to Theophanu in honor of her marriage to the German emperor, is the only work of this group that actually imitates contemporary textiles. It is not a liturgical, but rather a political and ceremonial work. It is now in Wolfenbüttel at Niedersächsischen Landesarchiv under the designation 6 Urk. 11. For more information, see my dissertation, mentioned in note 1.

<sup>19</sup> Francis J. Tschan, *Saint Bernward of Hildesheim*, 3 vols. (South Bend, IN: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1993).

<sup>20</sup> For a comprehensive study of Bishop Bernward see the exhibition catalog, *Bernward von Hildesheim und das Zeitalter der Ottonen*, eds. Michael Brandt and Arne Eggebrecht, 2 vols. (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1993).

<sup>21</sup> See *Das Kostbare Evangeliar des Heiligen Bernward*, ed. Michael Brandt (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 1993). See also Christina Nielsen, “Hoc Opus Eximium: Artistic Patronage in the Ottonian Empire” (Ph.D. Diss. Univ. of Chicago, 2002), and Jennifer Kingsley’s excellent essay in the present volume.

the artist divided all of the pages containing figures into two registers and painted the backgrounds of each register with different patterns.

The openings of folios 16v and 17r contains the dedication image in which Bernward presents the manuscript to the Virgin Mary and Christ child, who are flanked by the archangels Michael and Gabriel (Kingsley, fig. 1).<sup>22</sup> The manuscript was presented to the monastery church of St. Michael in honor of the dedication of an altar to Mary in the crypt of the church. Bernward is vested in his finest and most opulent garb, and colorful textiles cover every surface of the church, representing a symbolic climactic moment in Bernward's life. Five inscriptions occupy the frames of the composition and arches representing the architectural space into which the Virgin and Child are placed. The inscription occupying the entire frame of 16v discloses Bernward's awareness of the importance of liturgical vestments as symbols of his office.

This Gospel book is offered to you, holy Maria, from your humble servant Bernward who is unworthy of the name bishop and its episcopal vestments.<sup>23</sup>

This opening is replete with the richness of textiles. On the right, the crowned Virgin, child, and angels sit in front of purple drapes casting Mary in the role of Queen of Heaven. Mary and the Christ child are resplendent in golden mantles draped over silver tunics. Bernward, on the other hand, is a little subtler. He stands in a golden architectural setting, but the background is not painted to represent curtains. It is a flat, green and black ornamented surface that resembles the design on the chasuble he is wearing. Furthermore, purple and green textiles cover the altar in front of him. The liturgical implements resting on the altar serve as an analogy for Christ sitting on the Virgin's lap. Through his prominent depiction in the manuscripts and clad in the finest

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<sup>22</sup> For an illustration, see Jennifer Kingsley's article in the present volume.

<sup>23</sup> *Hoc Evangelicv(m) devote m(en)te Libellvm virginitatis amor P(rae)stat Tibi S(an)c(t)a Maria prae*s*yl Bernward(v)s vix solo nomine dignvs ornatvs tanti vestiv pontificali.* See Rainer Kahsnitz, "Inhalt und Aufbau der Handschrift" in *Das Kostbare Evangeliar*, as in note 19, 27.

vestments, Bernward elevated himself into the realm of the holy, and he created an everlasting memorial to himself.

### **Eleventh-Century Echternach manuscripts**

Returning to Echternach, we find that silk had become a visual source for artists. Following its establishment in the early eighth century, Echternach quickly came to be regarded as one of the most important outposts of insular culture on the continent. We do not hear much from Echternach during the ninth century in the sources, but the Carolingians continued to endow it. Echternach was important to the Ottonians in the tenth century, but their successors, the Salians, became much more interested in its scriptorium in the eleventh century. The library of Echternach must have grown significantly in the centuries between its founding and the Salian era because it had a strong reputation as a center of learning. The diverse forms of liturgy that had developed all over Europe co-mingled at Echternach where Insular, Gallican, and Roman liturgical traditions mixed with elements from the Gelasian and Gregorian sacramentaries.<sup>24</sup>

The monastery's proximity to the imperially endowed city of Trier secured its influence during the Ottonian period. The Gorze Reform that began in Lotharingia in 973 reached Echternach shortly thereafter, and enabled its inhabitants to enjoy the benefits of good relations with Ottonian emperors.<sup>25</sup> Otto I and Henry II granted *diplomata* to Gorze, and the latter was especially supportive of reforms. Henry II played a more decisive role in the elevation of abbots and bishops than his predecessors, which was a practice that Conrad II and Henry III continued

<sup>24</sup> Yithak Hen, "The Early Liturgy of Echternach," in *Die Abtei Echternach 698-1998*, eds. Michele Camilio Ferrari, Jean Schroeder and Henri Trauffler (Luxembourg: CLUDEM, 1999), 47-51.

<sup>25</sup> K. Hallinger, *Gorze-Kluny: Studien den monastischen Lebensnormen und Gegensätzen im Hochmittelalter* (Graz: Akademische Druck und Verlangst., 1971). See also Michel Parisse and Otto G. Oexle, eds. *L'abbaye de Gorze au Xe siècle* (Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 1993) and Anne Wagner, *Gorze au XI siècle* (Paris: Artem-Brepols, 1996).

in the Salian era.<sup>26</sup> A second reform movement originating at the monastery of St. Maximin in Trier brought prominence to Abbot Humbert (1028-1051), a staunch reformer with a close relationship to Empress Gisela, wife of Conrad II. Humbert rebuilt the abbey church that had burned in 1016. Under his leadership, the scriptorium overtook Reichenau as the center of manuscript production.<sup>27</sup>

A common characteristic of monastic reform movements of the Middle Ages was a return to living by the Rule of St. Benedict. The sources are not as specific as one would like in describing exactly what took place during a reform. In spite of this obstacle, it is safe to say that the reformers in the eleventh century considered monks of the past to be superior to those in their own era because they presumably adhered to the Rule more closely. It stands to reason that a decorated manuscript from the eighth century would be associated with the ideals of time past.

Manuscript painting under Humbert witnessed a return of the fully painted ornament page. The artists did not simply copy cross-ornament pages, but rather expanded on a practice of painting textile-inspired ornament established in the tenth century at the monasteries of Corvey and Hildesheim. While artists at these monasteries utilized textile-inspired designs as backgrounds in their miniatures, artists at Echternach devoted full pages to textile-inspired ornament.

The books created at Echternach were large and elaborately illustrated. Five Gospel books and one Lectionary containing textile-inspired painting have survived. They are Bremen: Universitätsbibliothek, Ms. B. 121 (*Evangelistary of Henry III*), El Escorial: Cod. Vitrinas 17

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<sup>26</sup> Stefan Weinfurter, *The Salian Century: Main Currents in an Age of Transition*, trans. Barbara M. Bowlus (Philadelphia: Univ. of PA Press, 1999), 97.

<sup>27</sup> Rainer Kahsnitz, “Echternacher und Trier zur Entstehungszeit des Goldenen Evangelienbuchs,” in *Das Goldene Evangelienbuch von Echternach: Eine Prunkhandschrift des 11. Jahrhunderts*, eds. Rainer Kahsnitz, Ursula Mende and Elisabeth Rücker (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1982), 29-37.

(*Codex Aureus of Speyer*), London: Harley Ms. 2821, Nuremberg: Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Hs 15146 (*Codex Aureus of Echternach*), Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, nouv. Acq. Lat. 2196 (fragment known as the *Luxeuil Gospels*), and Uppsala, Sweden: Universitetsbibliothek, C. 93 (The *Goslar Gospels*). Taken as a group, the Gospel books have several common characteristics. All of them measure at least twenty-five centimeters in height, and the arrangement of text, ornament and illuminations is similar. Modern rebinding has altered the placement of the ornament pages.<sup>28</sup>

Unfortunately, we have no exact dates for the production of four of the six manuscripts. Furthermore, no clear development of expertise of execution is evident. For example, the most simplistically decorated manuscript was not necessarily the first one. A frustrating aspect is that only two of the Gospel books are completely intact with all pages remaining in their order. Some include portraits of rulers and donors, and others do not. What is certain is that they were all most likely produced during the reign of Henry III. His model of rulership was Henry II, an avid reformer and generous patron of the arts.<sup>29</sup>

Two of the Echternach manuscripts provide evidence of the strong link between the imperial realm and the scriptorium. The *Codex Aureus of Speyer* is the largest of all the Echternach commissions measuring 50 cm x 35 cm. The Salians adopted Speyer as their family's burial site, and built a cathedral there. The size of these manuscripts strongly suggests that they were liturgical books meant to be placed on an altar and displayed during the church service. Beginning in the Carolingian period, a miniature of Christ in Majesty often occupied the first page of a Gospel codex, but in this case, the format is different. The anonymous artists painted

<sup>28</sup> The ornament pages in the *Harley Gospels* are highly problematic as they have been clustered together in the book. One page was inserted upside down. Furthermore, in its fragmentary state, the original location of the ornament pages in the *Luxeuil Gospels* is lost.

<sup>29</sup> Weinfurter, 85.

crimson two flyleaves. Folio 1r is adorned with a golden repetitious pattern of symmetrically arranged lions that flank coin-like medallions. The end flyleaf, also crimson, features alternating rows of lions and acanthus-like ornament.<sup>30</sup> Pages like these most closely resemble textile patterns where two lions face each other filling repeating medallions across a fabric.

Folios 2v and 3r of the *Codex Aureus of Speyer* depict the late Conrad II and his wife Gisela kneeling at the foot of Christ in Majesty and the Virgin Mary crowning Henry III and his second wife, Agnes of Poitou (**fig. 4**). At the same time Henry presents the book to Mary. In these grand images, Henry makes his presence known as the patron of this sumptuous work and, at the same time asserts his authority as the second emperor of the new dynasty. These images evoke the power and piety of the emperor. They also reflect ceremony, an important aspect of itinerant rule, a practice that the Salians continued from the Ottonians. Wherever the rulers traveled, they presented gifts with great pomp and circumstance, including books to churches and monasteries.<sup>31</sup> To add to the formality of the presentation, a dedicatory poem written for Henry III follows his portrait (**fig. 5**).

This is the book of life/because it contains life in itself/the celestial dew/ of Christ pours out from his mouth/to all peoples/ to us and our parents/ so that we might avoid evil/ the good things having been established in mind. Amen/ May he who makes these words obtain the celestial kingdom.

Emperor Henry (III) / who is not equaled in virtue / than whom no one wiser has been king/ To the king of all he offers this crown of books / because he wrote in gold what wisdom said / All these things / will pass away before my words will perish.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> It should be noted that not all of the painted pages appear to be complete, especially toward the back of the manuscript.

<sup>31</sup> John W. Bernhardt, *Itinerant Kingship and Royal Monasteries in Early Medieval Germany c. 936-1075* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 196-200.

<sup>32</sup> Hic Liber est vitae/qvia vitam continentse/caelesti rore/Chr(ist)I diffvsvs ab ore/mones ad gentes/adnos n(ost)ros qve parentes/vt mala vitemvs/bona condita mentis amen. /Qvi facit haec verba/capiet caelestia regna. Heinricvs Caesar/qvi non virtvbvs est par/qvi res sit fvnctv/s qvo non sapientior ullvs. /Regi cvnctorvm fert/hoc diadema librorvm. Avro qvod scriptsit/q(ua)m sapientia dixit/omnia transibvnt/nv(m) qva (m) mea verba (p(er)ibvnt.



**Figure 4.** Emperor Conrad II and Empress Gisela kneel at the foot of Christ and Henry II crowned by the Virgin Mary, *Codex Aureus of Speyer*, Real Biblioteca del Escorial, cod. Vitrinas 17, fol. 2v-3r. Photo courtesy of Patrimonio Nacional de Spain

The text is written in gold against a light green patterned background made up of lozenges articulated with small squares, meanders and other geometric designs, all of which were drawn free-hand with a light-colored ink. The all-over design of the dedication page and the flyleaves evokes two weaving techniques: the medallion style that is created with contrasting colors and the incised or engraved style, which is monochromatic and common in liturgical vestments.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Anna Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving: A.D. 400 – 1200* (Vienna: Verlag Fassbaender, 1997); see also Regula Schorta. *Monochrome Seidengewebe des hohen Mittelalters: Untersuchungen zu Webtechnik und Musterung* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 2001).

The opening therefore establishes a relationship between the ceremonial vestments, liturgy and the manuscript. The verse speaks to the importance of ancestry, the sanctity of the text and emphasizes Henry's significance as a patron.

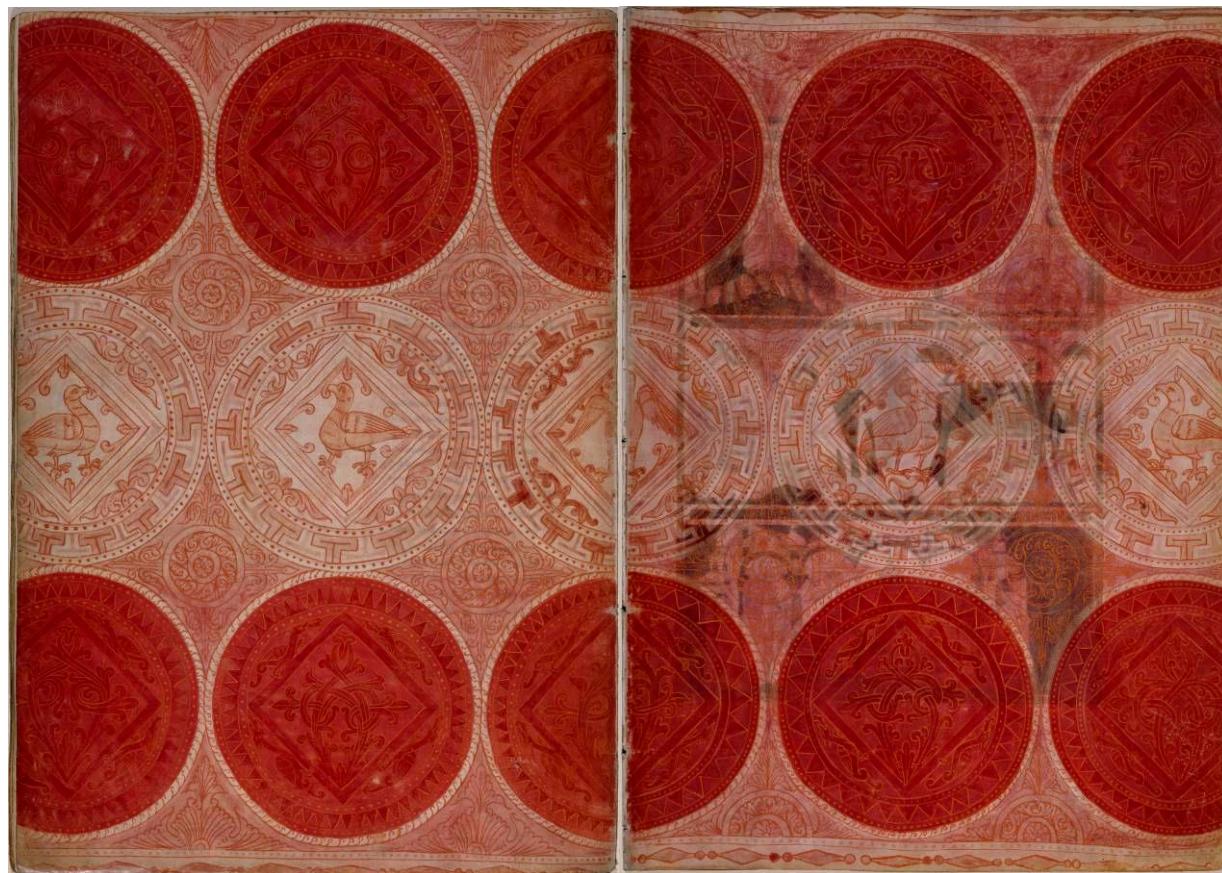


**Figure 5.** Dedicatory Poem, *Codex Aureus of Speyer*, Real Biblioteca del Escorial, cod. Vitrinas 17, fol. 3v-4r. Photo courtesy of Patrimonio Nacional of Spain

The second is perhaps the best known of all of the Salian works because a lavish facsimile was published in 1982 with an accompanying commentary.<sup>34</sup> In terms of careful layout, completeness and lavishness, this codex is the best of the Echternach manuscripts. Measuring 45 cm x 31 cm, a metalwork cover dated to 985 adorned with enamel, gemstones and an ivory panel sets it apart as one of the most sumptuous books of the Early Middle Ages. Eight textile-inspired ornament pages in four groups of two serve as dividers between Gospels. Each of the four openings is unique in style, suggesting a range of inspiration. The remarkable feature of these four openings is that they also divide gatherings within the codex. For example, one side of the opening is the last verso of a gathering, and the other is the first recto of the next. Combined with twenty-three full-page miniatures, the canon tables, twelve pages of decorated text, and four elaborately painted *incipit* pages, and text written in gold, it is no wonder that historians point to this manuscript as the archetype of Salian art.

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<sup>34</sup> Rainer Kahsnitz and Elisabeth Rücker, *Das goldene Evangelienbuch von Echternach: Codex Aureus Epternacensis, Hs 156142 aus dem germanischen Nationalmuseum Nürnberg* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1982).



**Figure 6.** Textile-inspired ornament between the second and third quires in the *Codex Aureus of Echternach*, Nuremberg, Germanic National Museum, Hs. 15146, fols. 17v-18r

Photo courtesy of the Germanic National Museum of Nuremberg



**Figure 7.** Textile-inspired ornament between the sixth and seventh quires in the *Codex Aureus of Echternach*, Nuremberg, Germanic National Museum, Hs. 15146, fols. 51v-52r  
Photo courtesy of the Germanic National Museum of Nuremberg

The textile-inspired pages combine several motifs commonly seen in woven silk, and the variety reveals the artists' creativity. The first set of pages, which separates the prefatory text from the Gospel of Matthew and divides the third and fourth quires, captures the medallion style in a bold shade of orange against an off-white ground, while the second set between the Gospels of Matthew and Mark includes bands of small motifs such as birds, plants and vessels in a pastiche of textile weaving (figs. 6, 7). The artist painted the third set of pages between the Gospels of Mark and Luke a deep crimson color in the form of a grid. He filled the squares with golden lions, a heraldic motif popular in woven silk (fig. 8). The final set of textile-inspired pages between the Gospels of Luke and John divides the fourteenth and fifteenth quires. Even

though the composition is practically monochromatic, the subtlety of the shades of maroon suggests inspiration by a luxurious textile. No space is uncovered, and two darker maroon bands across the top of the opening are filled with starburst patterns and circles (**fig. 9**).

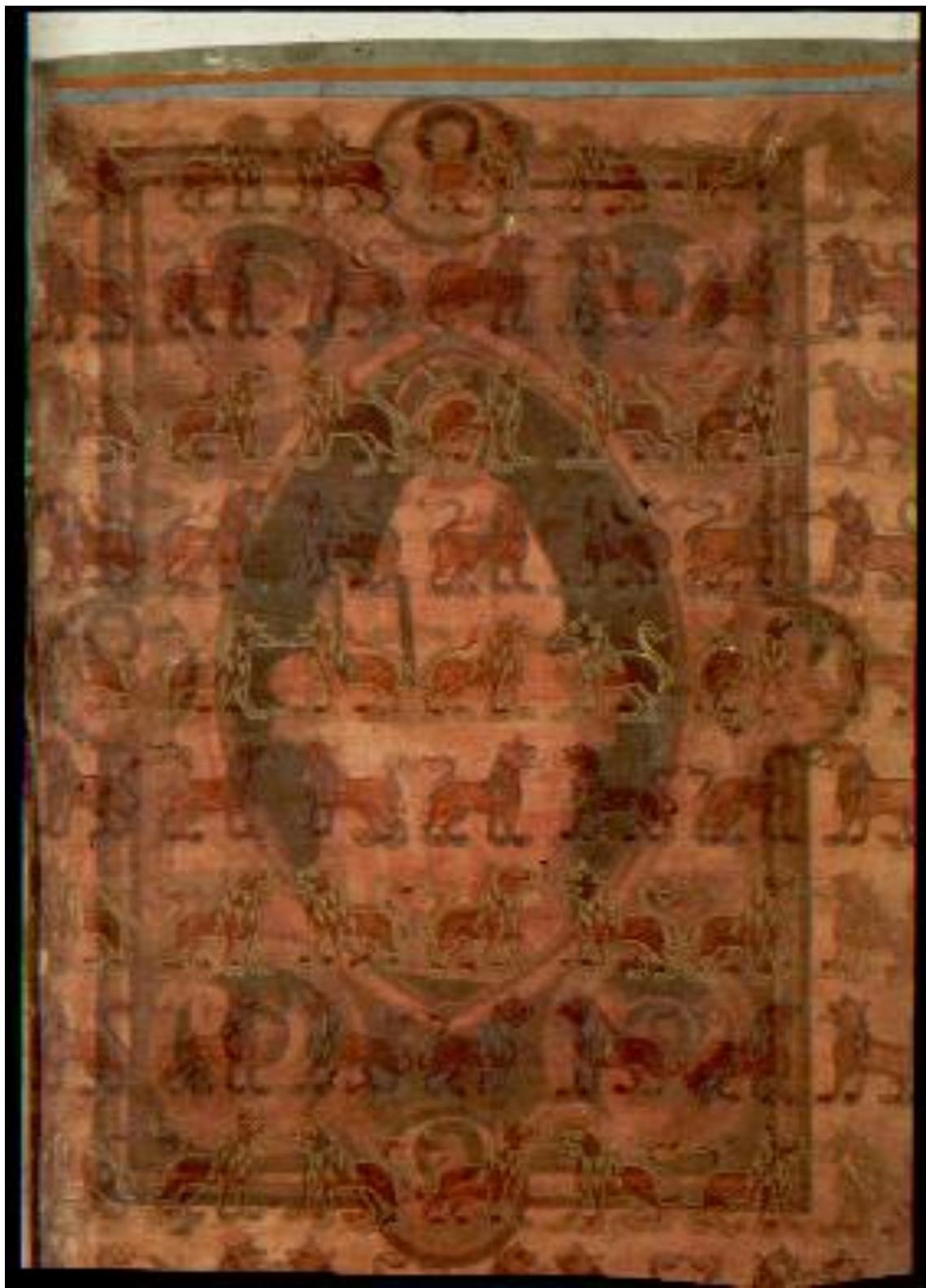


**Figure 8.** Textile-inspired ornament between the ninth and tenth quires in the *Codex Aureus of Echternach*, Nuremberg, Germanic National Museum, Hs. 15146, fols. 75v-76r  
Photo courtesy of the Germanic National Museum of Nuremberg

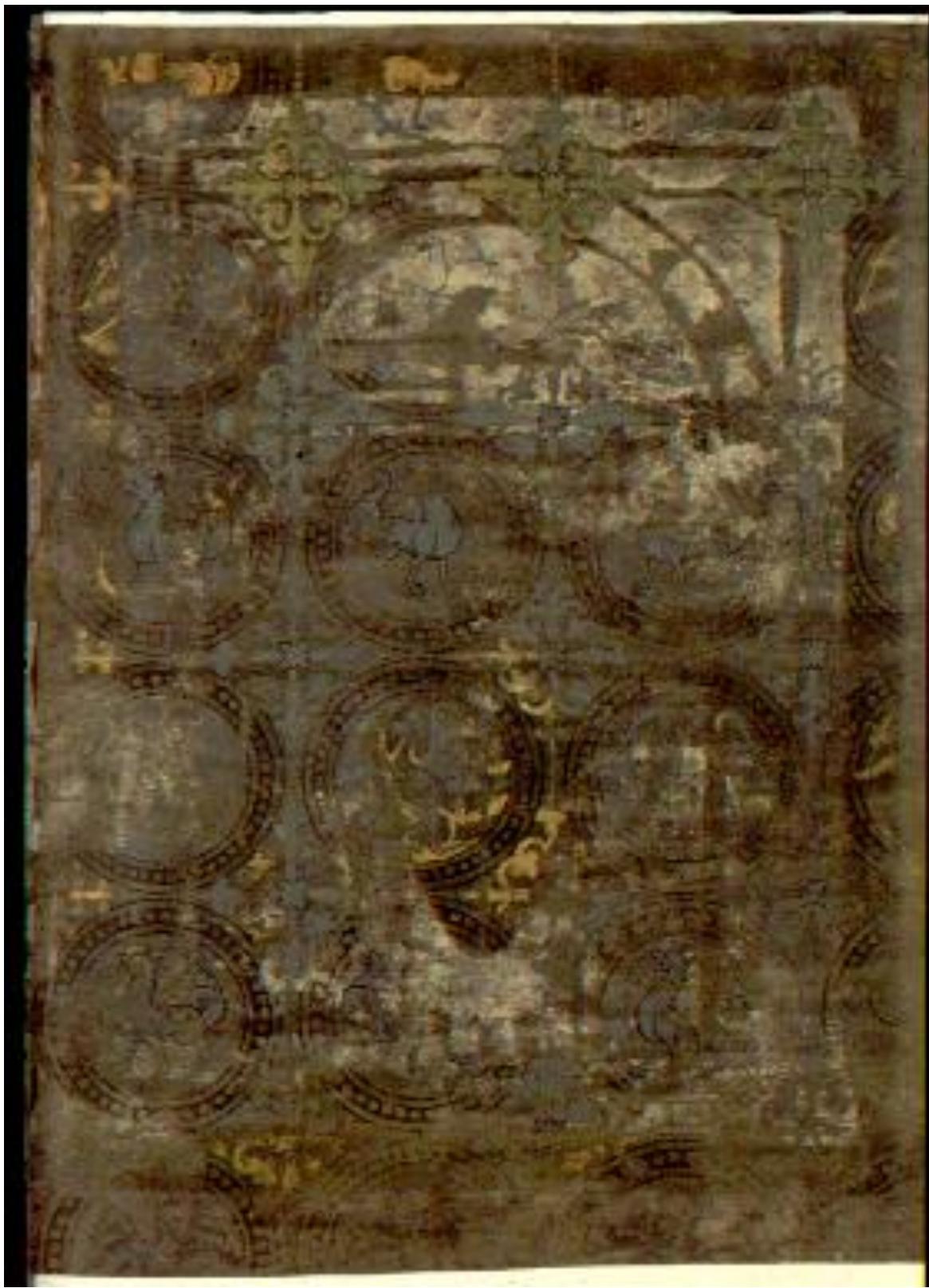


**Figure 9.** Textile-inspired ornament between the fourteenth and fifteenth quires in the *Codex Aureus of Echternach*, Nuremberg, Germanic National Museum, Hs. 15146, fols. 109v-110r  
Photo courtesy of the Germanic National Museum of Nuremberg

Two additional manuscripts, smaller in size than the two explained above, are part of the tradition of splendid works produced at Echternach. The *Luxeuil Gospel* is a fragment of what must have been a truly sumptuous manuscript. Fifty folios survive decorated with four full-page miniatures, eleven canon tables, five textile-inspired ornament pages, four ornamented initial pages and three decorated *incipit* pages. The book measures 29 cm x 22 cm, but at some point the pages were cut irregularly, leaving slightly different sizes in each opening. Because the manuscript is so incomplete, an accurate codicological analysis is impossible. The parchment is



**Figure 10.** Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Ms. nouv. acq. lat. 2196, flyleaf (folio 1r)  
Photo courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France



**Figure 11.** Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Ms. nouv. acq. lat. 2196, fol. 19r  
Photo courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France

not as thick as in other manuscripts and it is easy to see what is written or painted on the other side of almost every leaf.

According to Claudia Rabel and François Avril, the manuscript can be dated to the abbacy of Gerard of Luxeuil between 1040 and 1051.<sup>35</sup> Two inscriptions identify the patron of the book. The first, written on folio 2 is included in the donor portrait. It reads, “Gerard II of Luxeuil, lover of light, offers his book to St. Peter, patron of the abbey of Luxeuil, enthroned in the church.”<sup>36</sup> The second inscription about Gerard is found on folio 20 and reads, “by whose help, the pious author of this book, may abbot Gerard live in spirit and may he rise from the dead.”<sup>37</sup> The inscription indicates that Gerard was dead by the time the manuscript was complete.

The manuscript opens with a fully painted flyleaf whose design consists of a repetition pattern of animals clearly imitating textile weavings (**fig. 10**). At the top of the page the artists painted narrow bands of olive green, orange, and light blue. The background of the rest of the page is pale crimson. On the ground are ten rows of heraldic-looking lions facing each other symmetrically in profile. The maroon animals are outlined in gold and silver in alternate rows. Unlike the *Codex Aureus of Echternach* they do not occupy a grid.

Folio 19r, a textile-inspired single leaf most likely divided Gospels. The artist painted light blue ground, much of which has been rubbed away. On the ground are six ink-drawn rows of pearl-style medallions approximately seven centimeters in diameter, filled with alternating rows of fanciful animals and bird with spread wings (**fig. 11**). The animals have two front legs while the rear portion of their bodies diminishes into curly tails resembling stylized hippocamps

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<sup>35</sup> Claudia Rabel and François Avril, *Manuscrits enluminé d'origine germanique*, vol. 1 (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, 1995), 1-56.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 24, *Luxovii pastor Gerardus, lucis amator, dando Petro librum lumen michi posco supernum.*

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 26, *Auxilio cuiuspius auctor codicis huius abba Gerart vivat anime et de more resurgat.*

or senmurvs. The birds are more naturalistic, but the artist left out details such as the eyes and feathers.

The final textile-inspired page follows the Incipit page at the beginning of the Gospel of John (**fig. 12**). This one is completely maroon. The artist divided the page into a grid of thirty squares and decorated them alternately with vine scroll and medallions. This decorative layout appears in three other Echternach works, the *Codex Aureus of Echternach*, the *Codex Aureus of Speyer*, and the *Evangelistary of Henry III*.

The *Harley Gospels* completes our analysis of textile-inspired manuscript painting of the eleventh century. Its pages measure 25.5 cm x 18 cm, and the codex contains nine full-page painted miniatures, nine painted pages inspired by textiles, six pages containing decorated initials and four ornamented text pages. The textile-derived decoration takes the form of fully painted flyleaves at the front and back of the codex, fully painted pages between the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and intricately drawn borders around miniatures (**fig. 13**). In what must have been a labor-intensive exercise, the artist drew linear and geometric patterns in ink over the purple borders on six pages. The drawings are light, but can easily be distinguished as additional ornament. They evoke the engraved style seen in episcopal chasubles and other vestments and enrich the page, covering the entire surface with ornament.<sup>38</sup>

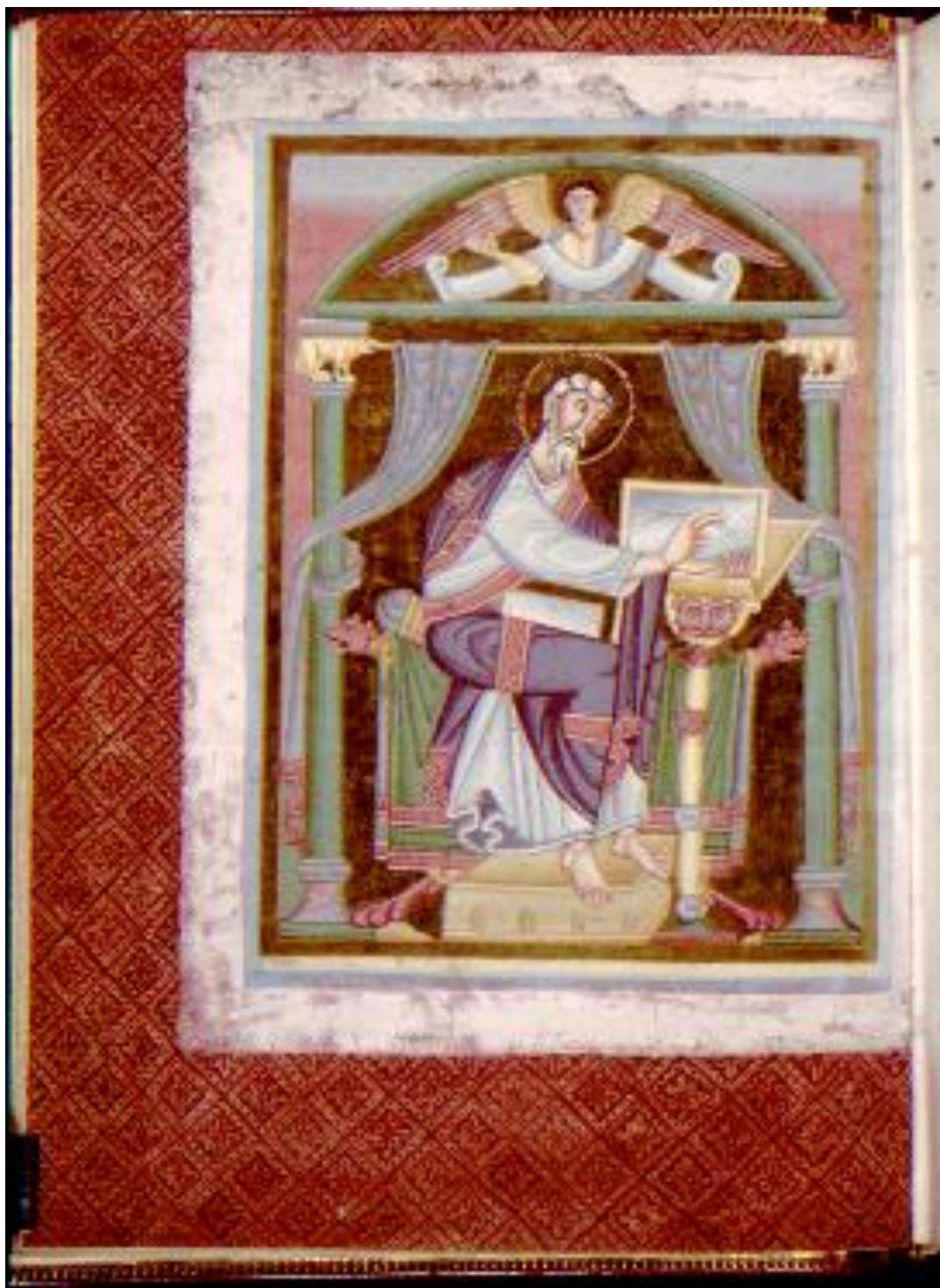
Three distinctive patterned pages adorn the manuscript, each in two different places.<sup>39</sup> The artist or artists responsible for this work exhibited creativity as the ornament pages are

<sup>38</sup> This ornament is present in the Goslar Gospels. Carl Nordenfalk mentions that the ornament is textile-inspired and compares closely to that in the Harley Gospels. See Nordenfalk, *Codex Caesareus Upsaliensis: An Echternach Gospel-Book of the Eleventh Century* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1971), 98.

<sup>39</sup> Folios 67r, 99r, 99v, 198r, 198v and 199r (incomplete) are full-page ornament pages. Folios 198r, 198v and 199r match folios 67r, 99r and 99v, respectively. The codicological problems with this manuscript are significant. The book was rebound in 1857 and the pages appear to have been cut and inserted as single leaves incorrectly into the manuscript. Folio 198r is actually upside-down.



**Figure 12.** Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Ms. nouv. acq. lat. 2196, fol. 50v  
Photo courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France



**Figure 13.** London, British Library, Ms Harley 2821, folio 21v  
Photo courtesy of the British Library Board.

completely different from one another. The first folio, 67r, which divides the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, is painted with a wide purple border and filled with a field of colorful repeating lozenges and medallions in two shades of green and pale crimson. The artist added additional line drawing, done freehand in the lozenges and florettes in the small pink and purple medallions (**fig. 14**). The overall design resembles ancient floor mosaic patterns with their repeating shapes, motifs and border decoration.<sup>40</sup>

Folio 99r which divides the end of the Gospel of Mark and the beginning of the Gospel of Luke is especially beautiful (**fig. 15**). Deep purple dominates the page and over that the artist painted five pink medallions. Another striking feature of this page is its schematic layout, which is similar to pages in the *Uta Codex* (Munich, Staatsbibliothek, Clm, 13601) where specific areas of the miniature are defined by different geometric shapes, such as circles, rectangles, and diamonds.<sup>41</sup> A majestic lion occupies the large pearl medallion in the center from which diagonal lines containing pearls extend to the corners of the page and partial pearl-style medallions. Four identical birds fill the adjacent medallions and connect to each other through a double banded inner frame filled with delicate line drawing. The artist drew the animals carefully in purple and included shading to give them volume, perhaps using a single-hair brush. The layout also recalls a number of miniatures depicting Christ in Majesty from the Carolingian and Ottonian periods.

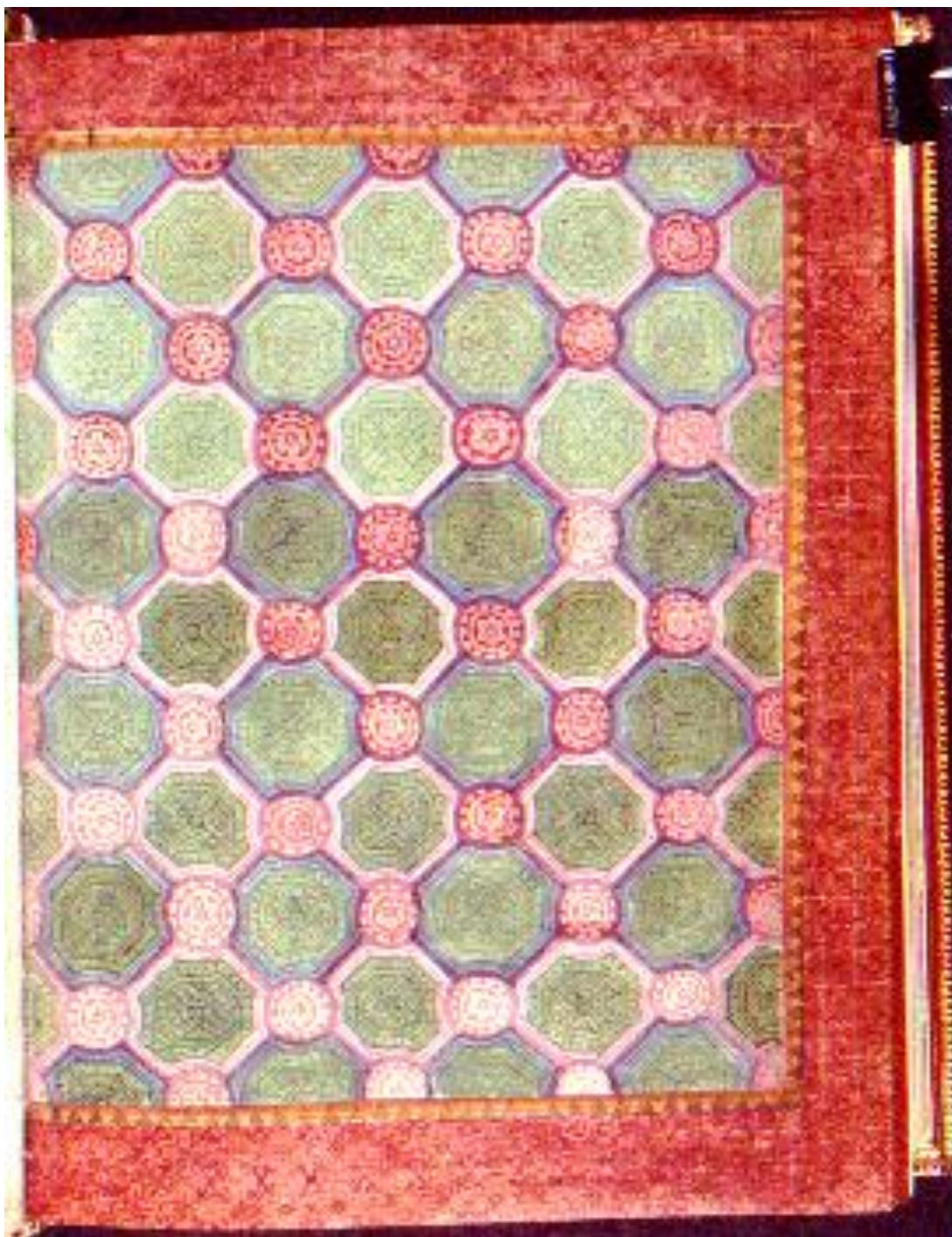
Finally, folio 99v is another brightly colored page painted with a three-sided green border enclosing continuous pattern of medallions drawn as concentric circles adjoining each other with small purple medallions (**fig. 16**). The artist included delicate line drawing of florette and linear

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<sup>40</sup> James Trilling, *The Medallion Style: A Study of the Origins of Byzantine Taste* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1985), 29-42.

<sup>41</sup> Adam Cohen, *The Uta Codex: Art, Philosophy, and Reform in Eleventh-Century Germany* (University Park, PA: Penn. State University Press, 2000).

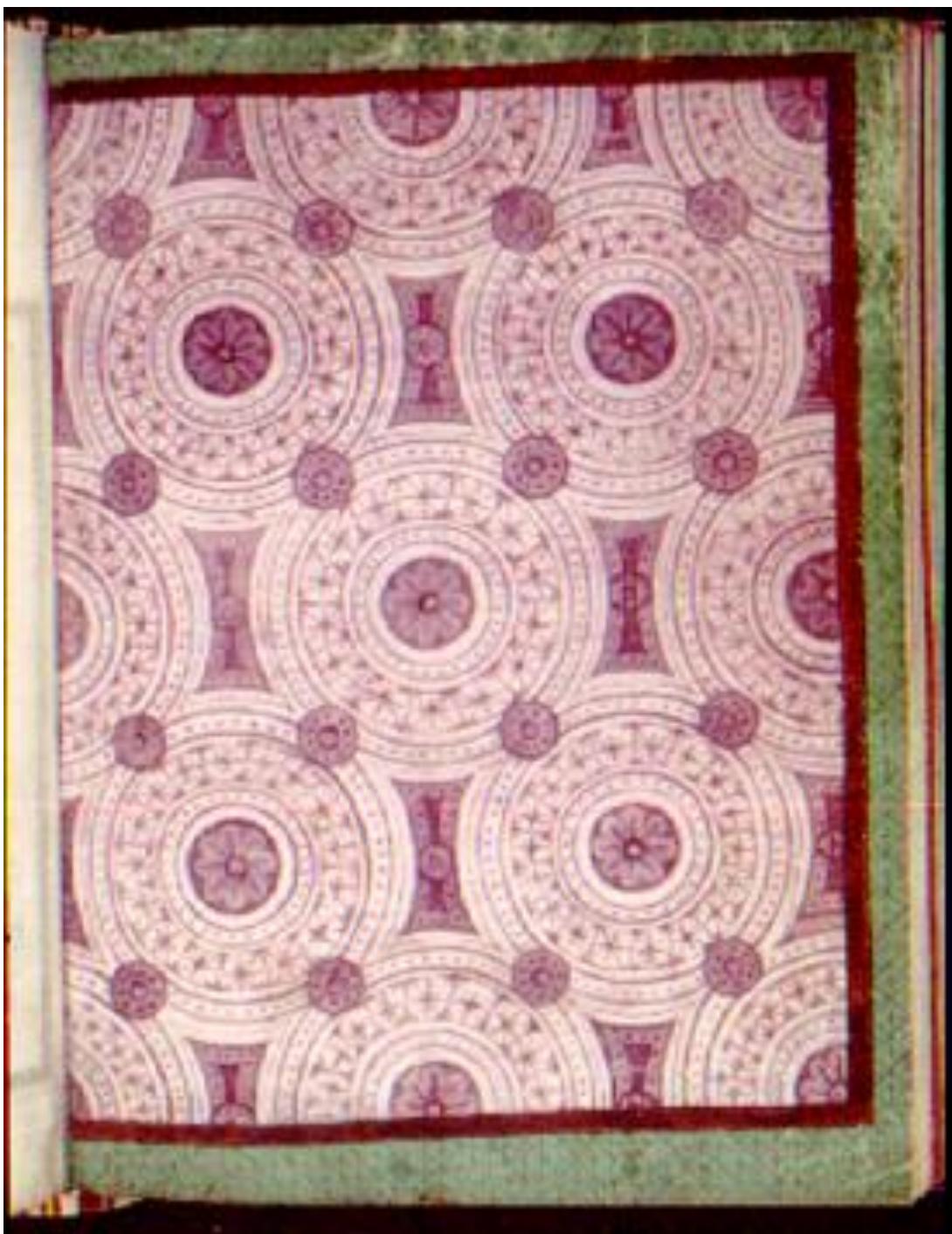
designs in all of the medallions. The spaces between the circles and medallions are dark purple, embellished with additional delicate line drawing.



**Figure 14.** London, British Library, Ms Harley 2821, folio 67r  
Photo courtesy of the British Library Board.



**Figure 15.** London, British Library, Ms Harley 2821, folio 99r  
Photo courtesy of The British Library Board



**Figure 16.** London, British Library, Ms Harley 2821, folio 99v  
Photo courtesy of the British Library Board

## Conclusion

The Echternach manuscripts were liturgical masterpieces. Like the early insular books with their extraordinary carpet pages, the artistry and lavishness of the altar works demanded that they be seen and admired by the close circle of ecclesiastical and secular figures around the ruler. The works from both eras were codicologically complex because the carpet page and the textile-inspired pages marked specific divisions in the books. Since the *Augsburg Gospels* has only one carpet page in the middle of the book we cannot argue for an extensively elaborate organization as might have been the case with the *Lindisfarne Gospels*. Still, the inclusion of even one carpet page is significant. Its placement in the book functions in a manner analogous to silk-covered relics and cloaked individuals. It reveals that something special lies beyond it.

The eleventh-century group symbolized Henry III's wealth and power as well as his interest in liturgy and monastic reforms. The textile-inspired pages derived from the eighth-century painted pages attests to the abbot's, the bishop's, and ultimately the emperor's desire to retain long-standing traditions of monasticism and enhance the spectacle of liturgy. By including these uniquely craft pages, eleventh-century users of these books looked back with respect to the past, yet remained fully entrenched in the eleventh-century political and ecclesiastical context.

The production of the textile-inspired manuscripts ended abruptly with the death of Henry III in 1056. The reign of Henry III was the last time that a German emperor had almost complete control of the papacy in Rome. The production of these lavish works stopped in the years leading up to the Investiture Controversy, one of the power struggles between German rulers and the papacy that further shaped the Gregorian Reform movement of the eleventh century. Manuscript production took new directions leaving the textile-inspired works to history.