

LINKING THE LIVING WITH THE OTHERWORLD: THE IMPERIAL FRONTISPIECES OF SPEYER CODEX AUREUS AND GERTRUDE'S ST. PETER IN EGBERT'S PSALTER

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ABSTRACT

Bonding is recognized as a peculiar property of the arts aging in Medieval societies, this is also true in a more spiritualized sense. This paper investigates the intervention of Greek-Byzantine painters in two eleventh-century Western manuscripts: the mid-eleventh century Speyer *Codex Aureus* and Egbert's Psalter, specifically the *folia gertrudiana*. The former is hinting to the glorified appearance of the ones to whom the earthly Kingdom/Empire and the sovereigns' eternal life was bounded. As for the latter, St. Peter catalyses the pleas and expectations of Gertrude, working as a powerful link between the living and the dead.

KEYWORDS: Manuscript Illumination, Byzantine Art, Echternach Scriptorium, Kyivan Rus', Papal Primacy

Il legame tra i vivi e l'Aldilà: i frontespizi imperiali del *Codex Aureus* di Spira
e il san Pietro di Gertrude nel Salterio di Egberto

ABSTRACT

Il legame è riconosciuto come una proprietà peculiare delle arti nelle società medievali, questo è vero anche in un senso più spirituale. Il presente lavoro indaga l'intervento dei pittori greco-bizantini in due manoscritti occidentali dell'XI secolo: il *Codex Aureus* di Spira, della metà dell'XI secolo, e il Salterio di Egberto, in particolare i *folia gertrudiana*. Il primo allude alla glorificazione di coloro ai quali era legato il Regno/Impero terreno e la vita eterna dei sovrani. Nel secondo caso, san Pietro catalizza le suppliche e le aspettative di Gertrude, operando come un potente collegamento tra i vivi e i morti.

PAROLE CHIAVE: miniatura, arte bizantina, scriptorium di Echternach, Rus' di Kiev, primato papale

Roughly at the time when Joachim Wollasch published his first comprehensive studies on the *Cluniac memoriale fratrum* and the "Societies of the living and the dead through Medieval testimonies"¹, scholars such as Kurt Weitzmann and Otto Demus were deeply engaged in their enquiry on the Byzantine influence upon the Latin West². Instead of embracing the idea of communication and exchange between societies, they were rather pointing at individuals and selectivity, influence and dependence, even at single images as means of transmission, especially concerning the centuries at the turn of the millennium: "When discussing influences [...] the most limited case is that of a contact between individual artists"; "it must be realized that the Byzantine influence in German and English manuscripts is confined to individual pictures within larger cycles"³. It is therefore a challenge, in the face of so prominent a scholar (and so sharp a judgment!),

¹ K.S. Wollasch, "Die Gemeinschaft der Lebenden und Verstorbenen in Zeugnissen des Mittelalters", *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 1 (1967): pp. 365-405; K.S. Wollasch, "Ein cluniacensisches Totenbuch aus der Zeit Abt Hugos von Cluny", *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 1 (1967): pp. 406-43.

² O. Demus, *Romanische Wandmalerei* (München: Hirmer Verlag, 1968); O. Demus, *Byzantine Art and the West* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1970). See also the following note.

³ K. Weitzmann, "Various Aspects of Byzantine Influence on the Latin Countries from the Sixth to the Twelfth Century", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 20 (1966): pp. 1-24, esp. 4, 19.

to dare speaking of communities and bonding images relating to same artistic evidence, though the question on the relationship between Byzantine and Ottonian art is multifaceted and has long been debated⁴.

This paper will focus on two tenth–eleventh–century cases of Western books featuring the insertion of Byzantine miniature painting, both in selected areas of the illuminated page and in single leaves inserted in the codex binding. In particular, the discussion will focus on the double frontispiece of Henry III's luxury evangeliary for Speyer Cathedral, thence known as *Codex Aureus Spirensis*, though currently kept at the Escorial Monastery, and the Psalter of Archbishop Egbert of Trier, which is preserved in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale of Cividale del Friuli, and which is also labelled as Gertrude's Psalter because of its later owner, as well as patron (and subject) of the illustration that lay at the core of this article. On the one hand, both manuscripts exemplify an early and peculiar phase of the Byzantine question (*Byzantinische Frage*, as it is called in the scholarly milieu since Karl Schnaase's *Geschichte der bildenden Künste bei den Alten*), featuring individuals or small groups engaged in artistic endeavours in the Latin West. On the other hand, the aim is that of shedding light on how the individual – that is to say, the contribution of a single artifex to art objects – is found to be entangled in the broader network of patrons, subjects and the transcendental worldly order, the tenets of which were believed to be found in the Otherworld.

Imperial Couples and the Glorified Human Bodies in the Codex Aureus Spirensis

Following on a tradition inaugurated by Henry II in his 1002 coronation in Aachen, Conrad II, the first Salian emperor, was anointed and crowned on September 8th, the day in which the Nativity of the Virgin is celebrated. The Marian devotion was peculiar to the Salian dynasty, and especially marked the reign of his son's heir, Henry IV. The latter often recalled that such a special feeling toward the Virgin Mary was shared with his parents, namely Agnes of Poitou and Henry III⁵. Indeed, it was under the latter that the Speyer Cathedral was consecrated in 1061, the main altar being already dedicated in 1046 to the Virgin, resuming the early-medieval and Carolingian church name⁶. Underneath the altar area, Conrad and his wife Gisela had been laid to rest in 1039 and 1043 respectively, so the vast crypt around the imperial cemetery had been the subject of the earliest consecration, at the time of the first imperial funeral in the Cathedral. Following on the steps of his father, Henry III fostered the church with largesse, resuming the building begun by Conrad (Speyer 1) and emphasizing its votive connotation, that of a gift to the Lord's Mother, as well as its dignity of *Kaiserdom*⁷.

⁴ W. Messerer, "Zur byzantinischen Frage in der ottonischen Kunst", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 52 (1959): pp. 32–60; W. Messerer, "Antike und Byzanz in der ottonischen Bildkunst", in *La cultura antica nell'Occidente latino dal VII all'XI secolo* (Spoleto: Fondazione Centro italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 1975), pp. 837–64; C.L. Striker, "The Byzantine question in Ottonian architecture reconsidered", in *Architectural studies in memory of Richard Krautheimer*, ed. C.L. Striker (Mainz: Zabern, 1996), pp. 157–61; H.A. Klein, "Aspekte der Byzanz-Rezeption im Abendland", in M. Brandt, A. Effenberger, eds., *Byzanz. Die Macht der Bilder*, exh. cat. (Berlin: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin-Preußischer Kulturbesitz, 1998), pp. 122–53.

⁵ I. Heidrich, "Bischöfe und Bischofskirche von Speyer", in *Die Salier und das Reich, II: Die Reichskirche in der Salierzeit*, hrsg. S. Weinfurter (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1992), pp. 187–224, esp. 222.

⁶ J.E. Gugumus, "Dedicatio Spirensis Ecclesie antiqua. Zur Weihe des frühsalischen Speyerer Domes im Jahre 1061", in *900 Jahre Speyerer Dom. Festschrift zum Jahrestag der Domweihe, 1061–1961*, ed. L. Stamer (Speyer: Verlag des bischöflichen Ordinariates Speyer, 1961), pp. 175–87, esp. 177–78.

⁷ For the ultimate overview which takes into account the most recent restoration works, see K.-M. Ritter, *Der Dom zu Speyer* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2021).

The luxury evangeliary now in the Imperial Monastery of St. Lawrence at the Escorial (ms. Vitr. 17) directly comes from Speyer Cathedral. It belonged to the Imperial Dome since the times of Henry III's and his spouse, Agnes von Poitou's bestowal⁸. Indeed, the dating of the manuscript is provided by the presence of the sovereign couple featuring a full-page miniature painting, with the Offering of the codex to the Virgin Mary [fig. 2]. Agnes had married Henry by the end of November 1043, right after being crowned as Queen of the Germans. On the one hand, since she bears the crown in this dedicatory image, the latter could not predate those events. On the other hand, since the titles inscribed at her and her husband's side are Regina and Rex, the codex cannot be later than 25th December 1046, when both were crowned emperors in Rome. For such reasons, it is highly probable that the manuscript was made in preparation to the 1046 consecration of Speyer Cathedral's main altar, that occurred on 4th October, in that year⁹. The contention has also been made, that the codex was commissioned as a votive offer in the Fall 1045, during Henry's severe illness, and completed after his recovery, around 15th of August, when the King and the Queen were, possibly together, in Speyer¹⁰. Certainly, the illuminated manuscript issued from the scriptorium of Echternach Abbey, the main center of book decoration under the Salians: it even represents the masterpiece among the eight de-luxe codices made there, as well as among the three Gospel books commissioned to the abbey by Henry III¹¹.

The codex is richly decorated with scenes from Christ's life, the Evangelists' portraits, and the Canon tables, as well as with prologue- and *incipit*-pages framed by papal or imperial *à-l'antique* portraits¹². At the very beginning, two full-page miniatures are found, face to face, picturing Christ and the Virgin in Majesty, receiving the Salian imperial couples. On fol. 2v, Christ sits on ethereal bows, encompassed in a golden mandorla standing between Heaven and earth [fig. 1]. He holds the unclosed book, while blessing and being adored by nine angels arranged in two facing rows and possibly representing the angelic choirs¹³. The late Conrad II (*Cuonradus imp[erator]*) and *Gisela imperat[rix]* lay in prostration, drawing their face near to the Savior, as to resemble the kissing of his

⁸ A. Bockler, *Das goldene Evangelienbuch Heinrichs III.* (Berlin: Jahresgabe des deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft, 1933); Ph. Schweinfurth, "Das goldene Evangelienbuch Heinrichs III. und Byzanz", *Zeitschrift für Kunstwissenschaft* 10, no. 1/3 (1941-1942): pp. 40-66; P.E. Schramm, F. Mutherich, *Denkmale der deutschen Könige und Kaiser, I: Ein Beitrag zur Herrschergeschichte von Karl dem Großen bis Friedrich II.: 768-1250* (München: Prestel-Verlag, 1962), p. 173; P.E. Schramm, *Die deutschen Kaiser und Könige in Bildern ihrer Zeit: 751-1190*, ed. F. Mutherich (München: Prestel-Verlag, 1983), pp. 42-66, pp. 232-33; *Das salische Kaiser-Evangeliar. Der Codex Aureus Escorialensis, Faksimile-Ausgabe, II: Kommentarband*, ed. J. Rathofer (Madrid-Münster: Bibliotheca Rara, 1995-1999).

⁹ J.E. Gugumus, "Dedicatio", cit., pp. 184-86.

¹⁰ S. Weinfurter, "Herrscherbild und salische Kaiserdynastie im Codex Aureus Escorialensis", in *Kommentarband*, cit., pp. 201-24, esp. 212-13.

¹¹ A. von Euw, "Die Prachthandschriften aus Echternach", in *Die Abtei Echternach, 698-1998*, eds. M.C. Ferrari, J. Schröder, H. Trauffer (Luxembourg: CLUDEM, 1999), pp. 123-64; see also M.J. Schubert, "Die Reform-Abtei Echternach und ihr Skriptorium unter dem Patronat der Salier", in *Kommentarband*, cit., pp. 543-58, esp. 553-54, and S. Weinfurter, *The Salian Century: Main Currents in an Age of Transition*, trans. B.M. Bowlus (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), p. 97.

¹² J. Rathofer, "Structura Codicis-Ordo Salutis. Zum Goldenen Evangelienbuch Heinrichs III.", in *Mensura, Maß, Zahl, Zahlensymbolik im Mittelalter*, ed. A. Zimmermann (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1984), pp. 333-55. As for Emperor Constantine's coin bust-portrait, see L. Körntgen, *Königsherrschaft und Gottes Gnade. Zu Kontext und Funktion sakraler Vorstellungen in Historiographie und Bildzeugnissen der ottonisch-frühsalischen Zeit* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag GmbH, 2001), pp. 257-65.

¹³ Y. Christe, R. Bonvain, "Les neuf choeurs angéliques: une creation tardive de l'iconographie chrétienne", *Cahiers de Saint-Michel-de-Cuxa* 10 (1984), pp. 67-99, esp. 70; B. Bruderer Eichberg, *Les neuf choeurs angéliques. Origine et évolution du theme dans l'art du Moyen Âge* (Poitiers: Centre d'études supérieures de Civilisation médiévale, 1998), pp. 20, 189 no. 44.

feet¹⁴. White Greek letters contrasting the mandorla's golden background spell out two Latin cola of Psalm 71, verse 19: "Blessed be the name of his majesty forever: and the whole earth shall be filled with his majesty"¹⁵. Aside from the reference to God's majesty, the core subject of the illumination, the psalm to which these verses belong refers to David and Salomon respectively, thus adumbrating the parental relationship of the Father with the Son and, in parallel, that between Conrad and Henry¹⁶. As a third terminus, the parental legacy of Konrad towards Henry III notably consists in the transmission of the imperial Majesty, secularly substituting the Divine Kingdom on earth, obtained by God's Grace and passed down for duty from generation to generation¹⁷.

The Latin script enclosing the whole of Christ's Majesty, over the golden frame of the page, unveils the prayer of the late Emperor: "Before your face I amply bemoan my crimes. May I deserve you, for the gift of whom I am Caesar, to bestow forgiveness upon me". The lower sector, instead, reads with the Empress's plea: "With cleansed heart, I the Queen, let my prayer effuse, of eternal peace and for the bliss of light"¹⁸. Aside from the difference in content between both inscriptions, the framing structure literally overturns the hierarchy between repentance and the hope for eternal glory, so as to stress the hierarchy between the Emperor (verses in the upper page) and his Consort (lower verses). But the inscriptions develop from the very core of the subject, that is the Beatific Vision, notably depending on the revelation of the Lord's face: while Conrad's face actually shows humiliated at Christ's feet, he speaks around the latter's bust, and says of his crying "ante tui vultum", thus establishing a topological relationship with God's facial presence, as well as with the angelic choir's privilege of contemplating him face to face. And here we come to the art-historical argument.

As already noticed in scholarship, Christ's face, right hand and feet, as well as Matthew's face framing the page from below, Mary's hands and face show the work of a Byzantine painter. Contentions have been made that these parts result from a fourteenth-century repainting, either by a Byzantine or an Italian late-medieval painter¹⁹. It was Kurt Weitzmann who assessed an intervention coeval to the making of the manuscript, inferring that some mid-eleventh-century Byzantine painter must be operating close to the illuminators in the Echternach scriptorium²⁰. His assumption has

¹⁴ The origin of this motif, namely the Emperors laying in proskynesis at Christ's feet, is to be found in the Ottonian period, as displayed in the Basel antependium and the Trivulzio ivory plaque in Milan, where Otho imperator (most probably Otto II) is shown while grasping Christ's right foot and drawing his lips near, as to kiss the instep. See H. Fillitz, "Maiestas Domini mit huldigender kaiserlichen Familie", in M. Puhle, ed., *Otto der Grosse. Magdeburg und Europa*, exh. cat. (Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 2001), pp. 125-26 no. III.15. For the attitude in the Christian East, see M. McCormick, "Proskynesis", in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, III: *Nike-Zygo*, ed. A.P. Kazhdan, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 1738-39.

¹⁵ "Benedictum nomen maiestatis eius in aeternum et replebitur maiestate eius omnis terra". Eta is always transliterating the Latin vowel 'e', regardless its length. In my opinion, this is hinting to the arbitrariness of the transliteration process, together with the lack of paleographical consistence with coeval Greek majuscule, both epigraphic and in book writing. See also Klein, "Aspekte der Byzanz-Rezeption", cit., p. 140.

¹⁶ J. Gaus, "Kongruenz und Imagination von Maiestas und Maria", in *Kommentarband*, cit., pp. 251-72, esp. 255-58.

¹⁷ S. Weinfurter, "Herrschen durch Gnade. Die Autorität des König im frühen 11. Jahrhundert", specifically p. 5: "Ein derart ausgeprägtes dynastisches Programm ist im Mittelalter bis dahin einmalig", therefore stressing the exceptional value of the iconographic program here at play. At fol. 3r, Gisela is caressed by the Virgin, in sign of special protection. In fact, she was pregnant of her second child, the proles adumbrated in the frame-inscribed verses, who did not turn out to be the male heir that had been hoped in the months when the manuscript was accomplished: J. Fried, "Tugend und Heiligkeit. Beobachtungen und Überlegungen zu den Herrscherbildern Heinrichs III. in Echternacher Handschriften", in *Mittelalter. Annäherung an die fremde Zeit*, ed. W. Hartmann (Regensburg: Universität Regensburg, 1993), pp. 41-85.

¹⁸ "Ante tui vultum mea defleo crimina multum. Da veniam merear cuius sum munera Caesar", "Pectora cum mundo Regina precamina fundo aeterna pacis et propter gaudia lucis".

¹⁹ A. Bockler, *Das goldene Evangelienbuch*, cit., and Ph. Schweinfurth, "Das goldene Evangelienbuch", cit., respectively.

²⁰ K. Weitzmann, "Ein kaiserliches Lektionar einer byzantinischen Hofschule", in *Festschrift Karl M. Swoboda zum 28.*

been widely accepted²¹. Indeed, a repainting seems to be less likely, especially considering some telling details, such as Christ's left hand, grasping the book's edge with the bare fingertips, which seems to be damaged (deterioration affects all these parts) or to be left unfinished, either for misunderstanding or a lapse of attention, or even because of a sudden disruption of the artist's work. Incidentally, this provides a clue for the succession of painters on the page: the main illuminator has spared blanks corresponding to the uncovered bodily parts of Christ, the Virgin and the Living Creature standing for St. Matthew.

What is the ratio that informs such a selected intervention in the illuminated page? Why is it confined exclusively to those parts? Two alternative options can be sorted: either it depends on the esthetic preference for the Byzantine, therefore used in the main parts of the main figures, or a more profound meaning deploys within, and it deserves a closer analysis. The Byzantine painter is involved in order to single out the flesh of celestial figures provided with bodily appearance. In other words, he gave flesh neither to human beings as such, dead or alive, nor to heavenly spirits or allegories, such as the Cardinal Virtues encircling the Virgin's scene. Instead, he fleshed out glorified human bodies: Christ, the Virgin and Matthew's angel, who is spiritual but, according to Ezekiel 1:10 (recalled by Revelation 4:7), "had the face of a man"²². Moreover, his human appearance represents the bodily substance of Jesus, according to the well-established exegesis explained, for instance, in some of the main pieces of Ottonian illumination: "with this image, Matthew shows that Christ is a man"²³.

The complexity and visual ambition in the iconographies of the Speyer Gospels is well known. Thence comes the possibility that so refined an exegesis could be applied to the binomial heavenly-terrestrial, bodily-spiritual, and the cross-over between them. The possibility that the visual argument here at play concerns the pictorial (or even meta-pictorial) theme of Christ's corporeal manifestation has been raised in the modern scholarship on the codex²⁴. During the tenth century, two figural relics have joined the treasury of the Pharos Chapel, within the precincts of the Great Palace, reaching Constantinople from Edessa: in 944 the *Mandyllion*, that is the cloth showing the face of Christ miraculously impressed by him at King Abgar's request, and in 968 the *Keramion*, which was a tile impressed with the *Mandyllion's* reversed image²⁵. Tenth-century Greek written sources also record the not-manufactured (Christ's) image of Kamoulia, as well as three self-made images of the Virgin²⁶. Curious enough, the triumph of iconophile faith found its most impressive visual translation in Byzantium more than a century later the struggle on sacred images, and through such an

Januar 1959, eds. O. Benesch *et al.* (Wien-Wiesbaden: Rohrer, 1959), pp. 309-20.

²¹ See, in particular, F. Crivello, "... grecus constantinopoleos orfanos et peregrinos...". *Artisti bizantini in ambito librario a nord delle Alpi nell'alto Medioevo*, in *L'artista a Bisanzio e nel mondo cristiano-orientale*, ed. M. Bacci (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2007), pp. 255-68, esp. 267.

²² Ez 1, 5-6, 10: "Similitudo quattuor animalium et hic aspectus eorum similitudo hominis in eis et quattuor facies uni [...]. Similitudo autem vultus eorum facies hominis et facies leonis [...] facies autem bovis [...] et facies aquilae". Rev 4, 6-7: "In circuito sedis quattuor animalia [...] et animal primum simile leoni et secundum animal simile vitulo et tertium animal habens faciem quasi hominis et quartum animal simile aquilae volanti".

²³ Prague, *Knihovna pražské metropolitní kapituly*, Cim. 2, fol. 24r; see U. Kuder, "Ottonische Buchmalerei und bernwardinische Handschriftenproduktion", in M. Brandt, A. Eggebrecht, eds., *Bernward von Hildesheim und das Zeitalter der Ottonen*, exh. cat., (Hildesheim-Mainz am Rhein: Bernward Verlag-Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1993), I, pp. 191-200, p. 197 fig. 85.

²⁴ Ph. Schweinfurth, "Das goldene Evangelienbuch", cit.; F. Crivello, "Artisti bizantini in ambito librario", cit.

²⁵ A. Cameron, "The Mandyllion and Byzantine Iconoclasm", in *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation*, eds. H.L. Kessler, G. Wolf (Bologna: Nuova Alfa Editoriale, 1998), pp. 33-54.

²⁶ A. Alexakis, *Codex Parisinus Graecus 1115 and Its Archetype* (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1996), pp. 348-49.

apocryphal tradition²⁷. The spreading of these subjects in the Byzantine ecumene may have fostered the meta-artistic self-consciousness of the painters, who were up to replicate the prototype of Christ's appearance on earth through their artistic means. In this sense, the more Hellenistic, contrasted and even more realistic flesh painted by an unknown Byzantine master in Echternach could consciously hint at the most spiritual cases of body substance: Christ, the Son of Man, as well as the Lady who gave him flesh. In other words, Byzantine painting, though performed by individuals, could become a shared theoretical locus, bonding Heaven and earth. Moreover, the manifestation of both characters through the glorified substance of their bodies makes sure that the bond between the living (Henry and Agnes) and the dead (Conrad and Gisela) is revived. The donation of the codex to Speyer Cathedral, possibly occurring on the Feast of the Virgin's Assumption, could provide a special link to the belief of her sharing glorified body substance with Christ himself, as it can be seen in the visual connection between both pages and their painting manners.

A Greek painter for a 'papal' St. Peter: Gertrude's supplication in Egbert's Psalter

The late-tenth-century psalter labelled after Archbishop Egbert of Trier (ca. 950–993, on the city's archiepiscopal see from 977 on), which is kept in Cividale, Museo Archeologico Nazionale (ms. CXXXVI), stands out as a renowned piece of the Reichenau scriptorium²⁸. Most certainly, it was made during Egbert's passage of the Alps on his way to Verona, where he, who was Otto II's chancellor, would have attended the 983 Hofstag. The book itself is a piece of evidence that the Archbishop had been in contact with the Reichenau, whence he received the psalter as a gift by Monk Ruprecht, as shown in the first dedicatory diptych²⁹. A century later or slightly more, the codex was modified with the insertion of a few leaves bearing a liturgical calendar, additional prayers and texts (fols. 2r–4v, 5r–14v, 414r–v), and some of the pages from Egbert's original book were also filled with an illustration (fol. 79r) and further orations, all composed by a later owner, Gertrude Piast (ca. 1025–1108), who was grand-granddaughter to Otto II and, from 1045 on, spouse to Izjaslav

²⁷ For example, the icon shutters at Mount Sinai from a former triptych (the Mandylion was possibly the central piece), with stories from the Abgar's legend, or the John Climacus' Heavenly Ladder in Rome (Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Rossianus 251, fol. 12v.), with the Mandylion and the Keramion replacing Moses' Tables as the New Covenants' "spiritual tablets".

²⁸ A. Weiner, "Katalog der Kunstwerke um Erzbischof Egbert von Trier", in *Egbert Erzbischof von Trier 977–993. Gedenkschrift der Diözese Trier zum 1000. Todestag*, I: *Katalog- und Tafelband*, ed. F. Ronig (Trier: Selbstverlag des Rheinischen Landesmuseum Trier, 1993), pp. 17–48, esp. 20; C. Scalon, L. Pani, *I Codici della Biblioteca Capitolare di Cividale* (Tavarnuzze: Sismel/Edizioni del Galluzzo, 1998), pp. 337–49, esp. 345–49, for a comprehensive and up-to-date bibliography; F. Crivello, "Salterio di Egberto (Codex Gertrudianus)", in *I Libri dei Patriarchi. Un percorso nella cultura scritta del Friuli medievale*, ed. C. Scalon (Udine: Deputazione di Storia Patria per il Friuli-Istituto Pio Paschini per la Storia della Chiesa in Friuli, 2014), pp. 82–85; *Psalterium Egberti. Facsimile del ms. CXXXVI del Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Cividale del Friuli*, ed. C. Barberi, II: *Commentario* (Trieste: Ministero per i Beni e le attività culturali, Soprintendenza per i Beni ambientali, architettonici, archeologici, artistici e storici del Friuli-Venezia Giulia, 2003). Further bibliography in the notes below.

²⁹ Cividale, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, ms. CXXXVI, fols. 16v–17r. For the role of Ruprecht neither as illuminator nor as scribe, but as potential donor, see R. Bauerreiβ, "Über die angeblichen Reichenauer Malermönche Eburnant und Ruodprecht um das Jahr 1000", *Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Benediktinerordens* 76 (1965): pp. 36–40, and H. Hoffmann, *Buchkunst und Königtum im ottonischen und frühsalischen Reich* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1986), I, p. 315. Notwithstanding this, the manuscripts which have been judged, over the course of the past decades, as being close to Egbert's Psalter are traditionally named after same Ruprecht: T. Labusiak, *Die Ruodprechtgruppe der ottonischen Reichenauer Buchmalerei. Bildquellen-Ornamentik-stilgeschichtliche Voraussetzungen* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 2009).

Prince of Kyiv³⁰. After her, the later inserts in the manuscript's binding are commonly known as *Folia gertrudiana*, and the whole manuscript is sometimes called *Codex gertrudianus*³¹. Through further passages, the manuscript reached Zwiefalten Abbey. Finally, through the Counts of Andechs-Meranien, the psalter was donated to the Cathedral Chapter of Cividale del Friuli, that still owns it, though the codex is kept in the local museum³².

The common opinion holds that the leaves and textual inserts were created in Chernigov or at least in what is now Western Ukraine, though some scholars place them likely in St James' and Gertrude's monastery in Regensburg, which had been founded by Irish monks, former missionaries to Kyiv, with the money of same Gertrude Piast³³. The miniature paintings are ascribed to artists close to the Kyivan royal circle, in particular: the Virgin enthroned with the Child to a Kyivan artist, the facing frontispiece-like compositions, with the Nativity and the Crucifixion, to a painter displaying a hybrid manner (some suggest a Western painter accustomed to Byzantine models), and the last one – which is instead the first Gertrudian insert in the current binding – to a Byzantine painter³⁴.

The latter, at folio 5v, displays Gertrude prostrating to St Peter [fig. 3]. Her son, Yaropolk, is standing with raised arms, in gesture of prayer, while a female figure in imperial garments is following with raised arms, too, placed at his back. The latter is the only figure in the compositions lacking the caption which would otherwise allow for a straightforward identification. The male prince is labelled: “Yaropolk the Righteous”. His name is always rendered in Slavonic, whereas appellations are in Greek. Gertrude is not called by her name, instead she is indicated as “Yaropolk's mother”, and the parental label is rendered as a Greek monogram. As regards the standing woman, traditionally, she has been identified with Yaropolk's wife Kunigunde. But unlike Gertrude, who wears a luxurious cloak, and Yaropolk, who shows in princely attire, the mysterious woman reveals as an Empress through her garments: the *loros* and the *torakion*, which are exclusive imperial items³⁵.

³⁰ G. Labuda, in *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, ed. R.-H. Bautier *et al.*, (München: Artemis Verlag, 1998), IX, pp. 571-72; T.J. Michałowska, *Ego Gertruda. Studium historycznoliterackie* (Warszawa: Wydaw. Naukowe PWN, 2001). For her prayers, see M.-H. Malewicz, “Un livre de prières d'une princesse polonaise au XIe siècle”, *Scriptorium* 21, no. 2 (1977): pp. 248-54; B. Kürbis, “Die Gertrudianische Gebete im Psalterium Egberti. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Frömmigkeit im 11. Jahrhundert”, in *Europa Slavica-Europa Orientalis. Festschrift für Herbert Ludat zum 70. Geburtstag*, eds. K.-D. Grothusen, K. Zernak (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1980), pp. 249-61. The texts are published by W. Meysztowicz, “Manuscriptum Gertrudae filiae Mesconis II regis Poloniae”, *Antemurale* 2 (1955): pp. 103-57.

³¹ H.V. Sauerland, A. Haseloff, *Der Psalter Ezbischof Egberts von Trier, Codex Gertrudianus*, in *Cividale* (Trier: Selbstverlag der Gesellschaft für nützliche Forschungen, 1901).

³² For the property passages, see U. Kuder, “Egbert-Psalter”, in *Bernward von Hildesheim* (Hildesheim-Mainz am Rhein: Bernward Verlag-Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1993), II, pp. 181-84 no. IV-29. The role of women in the possession of the codex, after the ‘male’ beginning, has been particularly emphasized: E. Garrison, “Movement and time in the Egbert Psalter”, in *Imago libri: representations carolingiennes du livre*, eds. Ch. Denoël, A.-O. Poilpré, S. Shimahara (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021), pp. 163-71, esp. 168 note 22.

³³ E. Gertsman, “All roads lead to Rus: Western influences on the eleventh-to twelfth century manuscript illumination of Kievan Rus”, *Comitatus* 31 (2000): pp. 39-55, esp. 42.

³⁴ For further stylistic aspects, see E. Smirnova, “Miniatures in the Prayer Book of Princess Gertrude. Program, Dates, Painters”, *Russia Mediaevalis* 10, no. 2 (2001), pp. 5-21; O. Popova, “Miniatury kodeksa Gertrudy v krugu vizantijskogo iskusstva vtoroj poloviny XI v.”, *Vizantijskij Vremennik* 67/92 (2008), pp. 176-214.

³⁵ See F. Zago, *La Rus' e l'Occidente. Cultura figurative medievale tra XI e XII secolo. Il Codex Gertrudianus tra testo e immagine*, PhD dissertation (University of Udine, 2017), pp. 116-18.

file:///Users/antoninotranchina/Downloads/10990_846_TESI+DOTTORATO+ZAGO-1.pdf [accessed 10 July 2024]. Nevertheless, the hypothesis, proposed by Zago, that the female figure could be St. Olga-Elena does not appear consistent either with the hints provided by Gertrude's prayer, where Olga is never mentioned, or by the other illuminations in the folia. In this respect, one may recall the more consistent attempt for identification with St. Irene (the Athenians), who features the Coronation page (fol. 18v), as proposed by I. Spatharakis, *The portrait in Byzantine*

Yaropolk's label- "the Righteous" (in Greek, *δίκαιος*)- has been ingeniously reappraised as a reference to his legitim inheritance of his father Izjaslav's kingdom, thus interpreting righteous as "he who owns the right", whereby this right would be that of reigning over Kiev Principality, incidentally the one confirmed by Pope Gregory VII to same Yaropolk in Rome, in April 1075. Therefore, the illumination on fol. 5v would be dated, according to the general assumption, between 1075 and 1087, when Yaropolk was murdered. In fact, he is never mentioned in the two orations to St. Peter, which are found at both side of the image, whereas Gertrude's prayer to the saint in favor of his son is found at fol. 30r. The texts on fol. 5v are focused on personal repentance, the solving of Gertrude's sinful laces and the gaining of Christian virtues. One may wonder how comes the central image, where the commitment of Yaropolk- both by Gertrude and the Empress-figure- is prominent, such as the link with St. Peter, after whom he had received his Baptismal name³⁶. In my opinion, it could also be that the prayers are earlier than the page setting, then copied to join the other folia, and complemented with the depiction of Yaropolk's commitment after his death. Indeed, how could he be labelled as 'righteous' when her mother prayed for him to be forgiven of his multiple and terrible sins, while he was still alive³⁷? I would argue that "*ὁ δίκαιος*" paired with Yaropolk's name resounds with the memory of Abel the Righteous, to which he is paralleled because of his betrayal and murder in 1087, after which the insertion of this page in the manuscript can be therefore placed³⁸. If Yaropolk was alive, he might have been represented in prostration, too, so that he could fit the content of the prayer that his mother, Gertrude, had written. Instead, he stands bearing witness to his righteousness, endorsed by an imperial (and perhaps saintly) figure, while Gertrude prostrates as mother, and the prayers around stay generic. They had to. In the lack of a specific prayer for Yaropolk's eternal fate after death, the illumination itself becomes one further prayer by Gertrude, another plea for her son, Yaropolk-Peter.

In other words, text and image are analogically related by means of St. Peter. But the depiction of the Prince of the Apostles, who is addressed like an icon, by the other figures in the miniature painting, adds further pieces of information, also because of Gertrude's peculiar attitude. Her posture

Illuminated Manuscripts (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976), p. 43. But St. Helena would be likelier, as she is the addressee of several prayers written by Gertrude: W. Meysztowicz, "Manuscriptum Gertrudae", cit., pp. 128-29. Moreover, Gertrude parallels herself with Helena, who asked the Lord "quod angelum suum mitteret filio (...) Constantino", as she begs for an angel to be sent as Yaropolk's guardian and defender: "mitte Domine sanctum angelum tuum cum eo, qui custodiat et defendat" (*Ibid.*, p. 126), apparently quoting St. Peter: "misit Dominus angelum suum et eripuit me de manu Herodis" (Actus 12,11 – recalled in the introitus for the saint's Feast, on 29th June). However, as in the case of Spatarakis' proposal, the lack of aureole does not directly allow the identification with a saint.

³⁶ A.V. Nazarenko, *Drevnjaja Rus'na mezhdunarodnykh putjach. Mezdisciplinarnye ocerki kul'turnych, torgovyh, političeskich svjazej IX-XII vekov* (Moscow: Rossijskaja Akademija nauk. Institut vseobščej istorii, 2001), pp. 567-70, cited by I.H. Garipzanov, "The Journey of St. Clement's Cult from the Black Sea to the Baltic Region", in *From Goths to Varangians. Communication and Cultural Exchange Between the Baltic and the Black Sea*, ed. L. M. Højberg Bjerg, S.M. Sindbæk, J. Lind (Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2013), pp. 369-80, esp. 374; see also N. Zajac, "Regina Binomia: Re-Examining the Evidence for Re-Baptism and Renaming of Latin Christian Brides in Pre-Mongol Rus'", *Byzantino-Slavica* 77, no. 1/2 (2019): pp. 264-90, esp. 283. After returning from Rome, Yaropolk also had a church built in honor of the Prince of the Apostles in Kiev, where he was finally laid to rest, after his murder on the way from Vladimir to Zvenigorod-Galitsk: A.V. Nazarenko, *Drevnjaja Rus'na*, cit., pp. 535-36, 569-70.

³⁷ W. Meysztowicz, "Manuscriptum Gertrudae", cit., p. 145: "Tibi confitetur Petrus omnia peccata sua, (...) preterea multa capitalia comisit criminal, acide suadente hoste antique; voraginibus gule atque luxurie, per superbiam et iactantiam, per detractionem et avariciam atque cenodaciam, per inpatientiam et mendacium ac homicidium et falsum testimonium, per furta et periuria, et per alias culpas plurimas".

³⁸ See also M. Andrusiak, A. Mykytiak, "Kings of Kiev and Galicia (On the Occasion of the 700th Anniversary of the Coronation of Danilo Romanovich)", *The Slavonic and East European Review* 33/81 (1955): pp. 342-49, esp. 345, where the contention is made, that the illuminated scene represents tout-court the bestowing of the martyrs' crown to Yaropolk, assuming that he was already dead at the time of the painting's completion.

at the saint's foot has been paralleled in scholarship with the pilgrims' act performed once they reach the bronze statue of the Apostle in St Peter's in Rome, as the sculpture was previously held as an eighth-century piece³⁹. Despite the misjudgement, it is true that the gesture of the Princess, grabbing with both hands the sole and the instep of Peter's foot respectively, closely resembles the *osculatio pedum* rather than a *proskynesis*, even though she is just craving for, not properly, kissing.

The kissing of the feet was a special kingly honor. It can also shift from royals to prominent religious figures, as it happens in the ms. Arundel 155 of the British Library in London, from Christ's Church in Canterbury, where St. Benedict receives the monk's kiss, sitting in a kingly attire: *Benedictus monarcha*, as it has been contended in scholarship⁴⁰. The kiss to the Pope's feet is a rather different story. Recorded in the textual sources from the sixth century onwards, it is never displayed in the official iconography of early medieval Papacy. To my knowledge, the tomb slab of Pope Lucius III (1181-1185) in Verona is the first example, and it could not surprise that much, given the circumstances of the Pope's presence (and eventual death) in that city, together with Emperor Frederick Barbarossa. The Papal claim for the kissing of the feet as a special honor to be tributed to him in the first place – if not exclusively –, in competition with the kings and lords of the *saeculum*, anticipates the visual rendering of the slab. In fact, in the *Dictatus papae*, Pope Gregory VII lists at point 9: “Quod solius pape pedes omnes principes deosculentur”. It was March 1075, roughly one month before Yaropolk's embassy to Rome. Gertrude was aware of the Papal claim, and she might have strongly supported it through her mediating and soft-powered action, since in her prayer for the living Yaropolk-Peter she concludes: “Have mercy upon him, Supreme Pontiff, and bestow forgiveness to his sins, so that he shows worthy of gaining indulgence, through you” – as noticed by the prayers' editor, “*nexum factum esse inter B. Petrum et suis Romanis successoribus*”, and it could not be said any better⁴¹.

In addition to the philosopher attire and distinctive facial features, Peter holds in his left hand a bunch of keys, which looks to be added on purpose to the more usual Byzantine iconographic motif of the scroll-grabbing hand. The loop over the thumb, as well as the chain rings hanging down the knuckles without any hint of juxtaposition suggest Peter's hold, which is not entirely typical⁴². Certainly, the illumination may be related to the beginning of Gertrude's own prayer written nearby: “Oh Saint Peter, Prince of the Apostles, you who hold the keys of the Heavenly Kingdom”⁴³.

Notably, the Delivery of the Keys to St. Peter is attested since Late Antiquity: regardless to mosaics, which are sometimes problematic because of later works of restauration, there is a seventh-century fresco at Commodilla's catacomb which attests to the early occurrence of this subject⁴⁴. But what about the keys hanging down from Peter's hands? The key is a powerful symbol relating to his role as key-holder of Heaven, as proclaimed in Matthew 16:19, but the key as a symbol of power endowment and as a tenet of legitimacy is also recalled in Isaiah 22:22 (“And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and

³⁹ N.P. Kondakov, *Izobraženija russkoj knjažeskoj sem'i v' miniatjurach' XI veka* (Sanktpeterburg': Imperatorska Akademija nauk', 1906), pp. 9–10.

⁴⁰ R. Deshmann, “Benedictus Monarcha et Monachus. Early Medieval Ruler Theology and the Anglo-Saxon Reform”, *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 22 (1988): pp. 204–40.

⁴¹ W. Meysztowicz, “Manuscriptum Gertrudae”, cit., p. 145: “Miserere sui, Summe Pontifex, et da veniam peccatis suis, ut mereatur per te habere indulgentiam”, and *ivi*, note 4.

⁴² N.P. Kondakov, *Izobraženija russkoj knjažeskoj sem'i*, cit., p. 10.

⁴³ W. Meysztowicz, “Manuscriptum Gertrudae”, cit., p. 124: “Sancte Petre princeps apostolorum qui tenes claves regni coelorum”.

⁴⁴ S. Piazza, *Pittura rupestre medievale, Lazio e Campania settentrionale (secoli VI–XIII)* (Roma: École française de Rome, 2006), p. 95.

none shall open”). St Servatius’ key in Maastricht, coming from Aachen Treasury, more specifically from the Carolingian core of the collection, therefore dating to the ninth-century, is regarded at by scholars precisely as a material reenactment of Isaiah’s messianic prophecy during the Early Middle Ages, as a new rendering of the metaphorical *Clavis davidica*⁴⁵. Instead, St Hubert’s key in the Cathedral Treasury of Liège, or better its ancient most part (i.e. the openwork handle) that dates to the mid-twelfth century, is connected at least from the 1250s on with the relic of the filings of St. Peter’s chain, and it was attached to the bit and the shaft around that time, thus becoming a special type of figural reliquary concerning the Prince of the Apostles⁴⁶.

In fact, the single key as Peter’s insignia is found to be particularly stressed in the Church Reform period, possibly relying on Paleochristian prototypes, such as those that are found in Rome. The earliest representation of Peter holding the Key is, to my knowledge, the mosaic in St. Theodore in Rome, from the late seventh century. Even though the apse has been repeatedly restored over the course of the centuries, the portion with the key lower ring and hanging lace has been recognized as being original, as documented in the earliest copies from the sixteenth century⁴⁷. Romanesque sculpture often represents Peter holding one single key in his right hand as a scepter, while standing next to portals, as unambiguous metaphor of his celestial and terrestrial duty. Conversely, St. Peter’s keys in the Gertrude’s leaf are quite realistic, their features being consistent to coeval production of rotary keys in the Byzantine area across many centuries, as the variety of motifs in the ‘bit’ (i.e. the panel at the lower extremity) and their parallels in archaeological findings from Eastern Mediterranean and Constantinople demonstrate. The keys in the Menil collection, for example, are still bounded with an original chain, so as to hold together pieces that worked in succession, door after door⁴⁸: something that can be imagined, for example, for the keys handed over by a kneeling official to Emperor Nicephorus Botaniates in the miniature of the Madrid Skylitzes (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, ms. *Vitr.* 26–2, fol. 154v), referencing the new palace inaugurated by the basileus, that one can see directly at the Emperor’s side, full of doors and windows [fig. 4]⁴⁹. Three keys are found in the mosaic panel purportedly coming from Otto II’s tomb in Old St Peter’s, later removed and still visible in the Grotte Vaticane. This mosaic has been widely restored in early modern times, but the option of three keys can be original, maybe linked to the same visual invention to which Gertrude’s codex is also resorting, in opposition to the two keys established in the Late Medieval tradition and canonized during the Catholic Reformation. The meaning of this number, if there is any, shall be further investigated and clarified⁵⁰.

In conclusion, the first illumination which is found in the Gertrude’s psalter in Cividale is a peculiar creation, where a skilled artist clearly shows features of the Byzantine miniature painting of

⁴⁵ A.M. Koldeweij, *Der gude sente Servas. De Servatiuslegende en de Servatiana: een onderzoek naar de beeldvorming rond een heilige in de middeleeuwen* (Assen/Maastricht: Van Gorcum, 1985), pp. 61–131.

⁴⁶ Ph. George, *Reliques & arts précieux en pays mosan. Du haut Moyen Age à l’époque contemporaine* (Liège: Céfal asbl, 2002), pp. 109–13.

⁴⁷ C. Bolgia, “Il mosaico absidale di S. Teodoro a Roma: problemi storici e restauri attraverso disegni e documenti inediti”, *Papers of the British School at Rome* 69 (2001): pp. 317–51; see also *Mosaici medievali a Roma attraverso il restauro dell’ICR 1991–2004*, eds. M. Andaloro, C. D’Angelo (Roma: Gangemi editore, 2017), pp. 313.

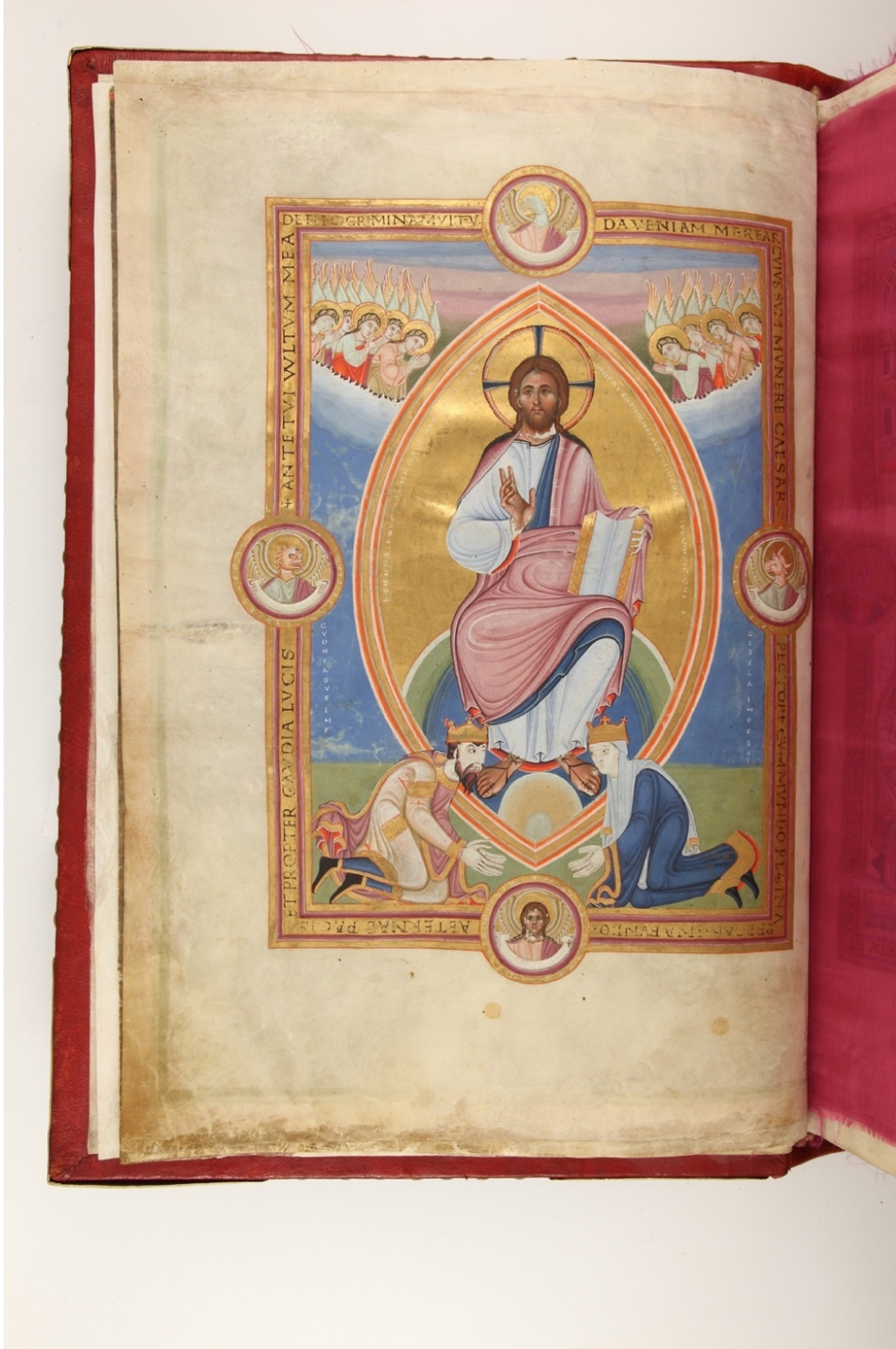
⁴⁸ <https://www.menil.org/collection/objects/6366-chain-with-stamp-and-four-keys> [accessed 10 July 2024].

⁴⁹ V. Tsamakda, *The illustrated chronicle of Ioannes Skylitzes* (Leiden: Alexandros Press, 2002), pp. 194–95. For new research on the manuscript, see also *La crónica ilustrada de Escilitzes (Madrid, BNE, Vitr. 26–2): nuevas perspectivas de estudio*, eds. M. Castiñeiras, I. Pérez Martín (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2025), forthcoming.

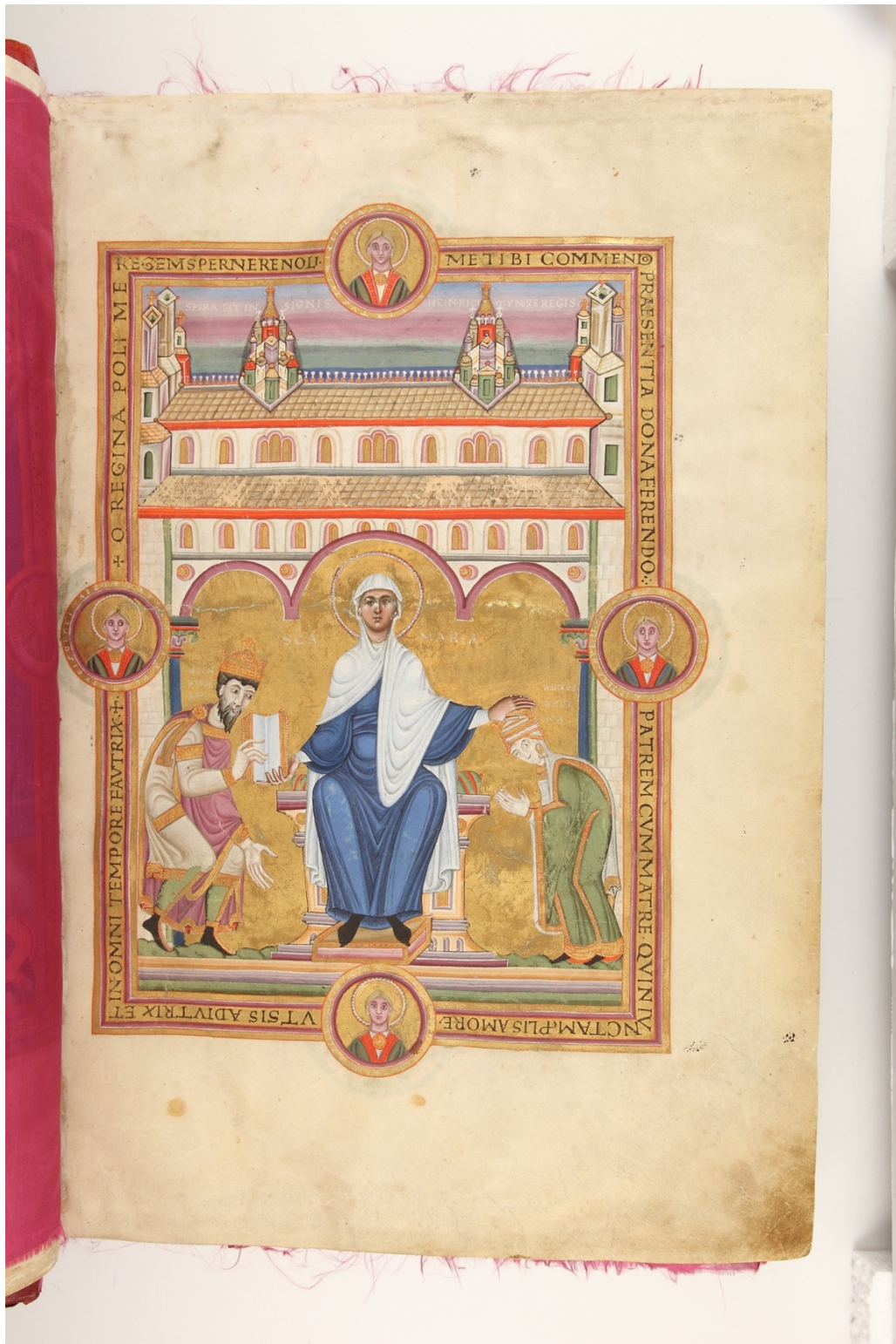
⁵⁰ For the Vatican mosaic, see C. Mancho, P. Pogliani, *Cristo fra Pietro e Paolo: il cosiddetto mosaico della tomba di Ottone II nelle Grotte Vaticane*, forthcoming.

the early Comnenian period, revealing himself as being trained in the Byzantine milieu⁵¹. As for the iconography, instead, the illumination diverts from what we know from coeval Byzantine parallels. It seems to be rather embracing specificities derived from her Latin owner, as well as meeting the circumstances in which the Western book circulated and was modified in Eastern Europe. Moreover, it was adapted to a function which is closer to the books of Prayer spread across Europe at the turn of the millennium, stretching from the ecclesiastical milieu to selected aristocrats shaping new forms of devotion, at the crossroads between private inspiration and official duty, personal dramas and the fate of their people.

⁵¹ See Zago, *La Rus' e l'Occidente*, cit., pp. 211-15.



1. *Codex Aureus Spirensis*, *The Majesty of Christ adored by Conrad II and Gisela*,
around 1046
El Escorial, Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo, ms.Vitr. 17, fol. 2v



2. *Codex Aureus Spirensis*, *The enthroned Virgin addressed by Henry III and Agnes as donors*, around 1046
El Escorial, Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo, ms. Vitr. 17, fol. 3r



3. Gertrude commits to St. Peter her son, Yaropolk-Peter, together with a saintly Empress
Cividale del Friuli, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, ms. CXXXVI, fol. 5v



4. *Skylitzes Matritensis*, Nicephorus Botaniates receives the keys of his new palace
Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, ms.Vitr. 26-2, fol. 154v