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## THE BOOK WITHIN THE BOOK IN MEDIAEVAL ILLUMINATION

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From early Christian times up to the sixteenth century, books occur so often in mediaeval illumination that a study of the book as it appears within the book would involve a survey of the whole course of Western miniature painting. Despite its ubiquity, however, little has been written on the subject of the symbolism of the book in art. In *The Idea of the Book in the Middle Ages*, Jesse M. Gellrich takes a semiotic approach rather than the viewpoint of art history. Ernst Curtius has a chapter on "The Book as a Symbol" in his classic *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, but he does not concern himself with artistic representation. Even so, he admits, "The subject, so far as I am aware, has hitherto been touched upon by no one but Goethe" (302). The same is true of the presence of the book in art.

In this paper, I will offer examples from four areas of illumination in which books are featured: Christ in Majesty, the Four Evangelists (with particular attention to St John), St Jerome and others with books, and the Virgin Mary in the Annunciation and with the Writing Child. The book will be considered here not only as an object but also as a symbol, for it is a richly complex entity that retains a sacred meaning throughout its more than thousand-year history. We must, then, first turn to the meaning of the book before tracing its appearance in illumination.

In the Hellenistic period books represented culture and learning, and the Homeric poems were looked on as sacred texts. Late in the first century the codex was introduced (the roll was used previously), and both co-existed until the fourth century when the codex became predominant. Author portraits were common, some shown holding their works. In the Vienna *Dioscurides*, for example, two author portraits appear (fols. 4v, 5v). In the second, Dioscurides writes in a codex while a painter prepares an illustration for the page. The same text also contains a dedication page in which the princess Anicia Juliana, holding a small book and attended by Prudence with a larger volume, receives a copy of the present codex from a naked putto.<sup>1</sup> Already the book as a book is a mirror of itself.

For the Hebrew people, the Bible is the Holy Book, "the scripture of truth" (Dan. 10:21), which is inspired by God (Exod. 17:14, Isa. 8:1).<sup>2</sup> It contains the Book of Life in which all deeds are recorded: "In thy book all shall be written" (Ps. 138:16). The tradition continues with Christianity: "All scripture, inspired by God, is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice" (2 Tim. 3:16). Luke tells how the twelve-year-old Jesus instructed the doctors in the temple and, after his resurrection, "exposed the scriptures" to his disciples at Emmaus (2:46, 24:27).

Christ is first sculptured on sarcophagi with a scroll representing his new law which he hands over to St Peter. He is also shown as a philosopher with the book of his teachings. Jesus himself is identified with the book in early fifth-century mosaics in San Prisco in Santa Maria di Capua Vetere and Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, where he is symbolized as a scroll resting on the throne of God; a similar representation as an open codex appears a century later on the bronze doors of Sancta Sophia at Constantinople.<sup>3</sup> The symbol recalls the opening of St John's Gospel, "In the beginning was the Word." An early meaning of *logos* was, in fact, "roll" (Schapiro 310).

Since the scrolls in these mosaics have seven seals, reference also is made to the Apocalypse: "I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, a book written within and without, sealed with seven seals" (5:1). In his *Explanatio Apocalypsis*, Venerable Bede (d. 735) states that "this vision makes plain to us the mysteries of Sacred Scripture through the incarnation of our Lord, the harmonious unity containing the Old Testament as the outside and in the inside the New."<sup>4</sup> Berengaudus (ca. 859) and many later commentators reverse the two, making the Old Testament the inside, because it is the allegory in which the "history" of the New must be read.<sup>5</sup> Berengaudus writes: "The inside writing is according to allegory, the outside

according to history.”<sup>6</sup> The Apocalyptic verse (5:1) is important because it gave scriptural grounds for reading the book itself as a symbol.

Beatus of Liebana (d. 798) added further elaboration to the symbol through his influential commentary on the Apocalypse. In Book 3, chapter 4, he argues that, besides the scriptures, the two-sided book, “written inside and out,” represents all the creatures of the world whom the Lord foreknew inwardly and recognized outwardly.<sup>7</sup> Beatus and others go on to identify the book with that in Apocalypse 20:12: “And I saw the dead, great and small, standing in the presence of the throne, and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life.” This book is not just God’s foreknowledge (*praescientia*), it is the person of his Son who is the knowledge (*scientia*) in and through whom all were made. In Book 13, chapter 1, Beatus states: “The book of life is the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then it will be opened and to all his creatures will be shown; each he shall reward according to his deeds.”<sup>8</sup>

The book, then, represents the Lord of time, of the first and final days, the creator come to judge the world. In his *Expositio in Apocalypsim*, Haimo of Auxerre (fl. 840–70) observes: “This other book, the book of life, signifies our Lord Jesus Christ who gave life to his faithful. In him the books of the two Testaments are opened because in him all just actions will be considered.”<sup>9</sup> The *Elucidarium* by the twelfth-century author Honorius of Autun aptly sums up the mediaeval exegesis on Apocalypse 20:12: “The books are the prophets, the apostles, and the other holy persons. These books were open because their teaching and example lay open to all; in them all, as in books, see what they should do and avoid. The book is truly the life of Jesus, in which all, as in a book, read what, from his precepts, they have done or failed to do.”<sup>10</sup> In his *De Claustro Animae* (ch. 4, 33) Hugh of Fouilloy (d. 1173) with insight and imagination offers his own poetical comment on the book as a symbol of the incarnation: “The letters of this book are written in the cloister of Christ’s humanity and illuminated by the gold of his divinity.”<sup>11</sup>

Commentators — with some variations — also associate the seven seals with the whole story of Jesus in seven stages of his career: his birth, passion, resurrection, ascension, sending of the Spirit, commission of the apostles, and second coming. For example, following this listing in his *Expositio in Apocalypsim*, Rupert of Deutz (d. 1129) claims there are seven seals so that the book “might contain all the fullness of Christ’s mysteries in itself” (“ut omnem in se contineat mysteriorum Christi plenitudinem”). He insists that the book is one single volume: “It is one book, because written together

in one Spirit, and the treasure or sanctuary of the one Word of God."<sup>12</sup> The basis for interpreting the book as a rich inner treasure identified with Christ is found in the first chapter of Colossians, according to Pseudo-Thomas Aquinas in the *Expositio super Apocalypsim*: "Again, this book is Christ, 'in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge'."<sup>13</sup> Christ as the hidden unifying meaning in the book sheds light on Dante's celebrated image in *Paradiso* 33, lines 85–87:

Nel suo profondo vivi che s' interna,  
 Legato con amore in un volume,  
 Cio che per l' universo si squaderna.

[Within its depths I saw gathered together,  
 Bound by love into a single volume,  
 Leaves that lie scattered through the universe.]

The book *in quo totum continetur* is the Incarnate Word for Dante, as it is for the church fathers and commentators.

In his *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum* (ca. 1286), William Durand explains the significance of the closed and open book in Christ's hand: "The Divine Majesty is also portrayed with a closed book in the hands: 'which no man was found worthy to open but the Lion of the tribe of Juda.' And sometimes with an open book: that in it every one may read that 'He is the Light of the World': 'and the Way, the Truth, and the Life': and the Book of Life" (3.12) (qtd. Holt 1: 125).<sup>14</sup> The focus of the symbolism of the book on the person of Christ remains consistent throughout the centuries. His medium remains his message: Himself.

The frontispiece of the Carolingian St Gauzelin Gospels of Nancy, in the Cathedral Treasury, displays a book or book-shrine with the words: "This is the book of life, this the fount and source of books: From it flows whatever anyone tastes in the world."<sup>15</sup> (This distich also appears at the beginning to the Trier Codex Aadae.) The Gospel book not only tells of Jesus, it is Jesus himself; he is the Good News announced in its pages. The book that appears in the *Majestas Domini* illuminations is this Book of Life, the Lord revealed in scripture, the source and end of being. According to Origen (d. 254?), Christ is "the beginning (*archē*) of real existence" in whom the letters of God are to be read from Alpha to Omega (Roberts 9: 308, 315). When the book that Christ carries in these miniatures lies open, the words always expound this identity: "I am the Light of Life," "I am the Way." "I am Alpha and Omega." In the Codex Vigilanus of the Escorial Library, completed in 976, the *Majestas* (fol. 16v) is bordered with

an inscription which declares: "The Lord . . . carries in his left hand the book of life, since all things in heaven and earth and under the earth are equally ruled by that same Lord." Around Christ is written: "Alpha et Omega," "Initium et Finis."<sup>16</sup> The first and last words of the Four Gospels are *Liber* and *libros*, from "Book" to "books," from the One to the many, bound in a single volume.

The earliest Gospels do not possess *Majestas* miniatures. The sixth-century Gospel fragment from Sinope (Bibl. Nat., Cod. suppl. gr. 1286) contains a scene from the life of Christ in which he holds a roll clutched firmly in his left hand as he delivers a curse upon the fig tree; to the sides, two prophets, displaying scrolls, point to him (fol. 30v). Christ frequently is pictured holding a book in later Gospel illustrations; in the Ottoman Codex Egberti (ca. 980), for example, Jesus clasps a book while walking on water and rescuing Peter from drowning—and on twenty other occasions—(Treves Civic Library, Codex 24, fol. 27v). The omnipresent volume reflects not only his person but also his presence in the liturgy where the Gospel lectionary, carried into the sanctuary, placed on the altar, and read with solemnity, actually embodied the living word as a theophany. Germanos, patriarch of Constantinople from 715 to 730, writes in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*: "The Gospel-lection is the coming of the Son of God in which he was shown to us, no longer speaking to us through clouds and riddles as once to Moses through voices and lightning . . . or to the prophets of old through dreams, but he appeared openly as a true man and was seen by us a gentle and quiet king" (qtd. Nelson 67).<sup>17</sup> The book within has become the book without; the book of the past is the book of the present moment.

In the Syriac Gospels in Florence's Laurentian Library, written by the monk Rabbula in 586, Jesus carries rolls or codices in a number of marginal scenes, and even holds a codex in the first full portrait of Mother and Child (fol. 1v). As the Word, he frequently clasps a book while receiving the Magi. The Rabbula Gospels features a portrait of Christ enthroned, holding a book, while four men, clad as monks, flank him (fol. 14r) (fig. 1). The two in the foreground carry codices with covers that identify them with the Gospels or scriptures.<sup>18</sup> An important miniature in this volume depicts the ascension (fol. 13v) with elements that echo the Apocalypse: the angels offering crowns, the tetramorphs, and the scroll (fig. 2). In the group below, St Paul (unhistorically present) clutches a codex with a finger inserted into its pages and gestures toward Christ. The text alluded to, as Weitzmann (101) suggests, may be Hebrews 2:7–8: "Thou hast made him a little less than the angels: thou hast crowned him with glory and honor, and hast set

him over the works of thy hands: Thou has subjected all things under his feet," a quotation in turn of Psalm 8:6–8.

The first extant *Majestas* is found in the Codex Amiatinus, also in Florence, which was produced at Jarrow-Wearmouth in Northumbria around 700; it is a copy of Cassiodorus's Codex Grandior. The Gospel frontispiece (fol. 786v) presents Christ seated in the circle of nine heavenly spheres, holding the book of life and attended by two adoring angels. The four creatures hover outside with the four Evangelists in each corner, reverently clasping their books in covered hands (except for St John, whose hand is bare and who stands with open sandals on a firm surface). Heaven is the Lord's throne and his naked feet are set upon the earth as his footstool (Isa. 66:1). The vision is already cosmic and universal: all things in heaven and earth are ruled and judged by this "gentle and quiet king."

The Godescalc *Majestas* (fol. 3v) in the Carolingian Evangelistary (ca. 782), now in the Paris Bibliothèque Nationale (Nouv. acq., lat. 1203), presents its portrait of a youthful and benign Christ after several pages of Evangelist portraits with their symbols (fols. 1r–2v) (fig. 3). The beardless Lord holds a large codex firmly and blesses; he is seated on a high-cushioned throne against an architectural backdrop with vestiges of plants: images of the heavenly city and of paradise. In bold lettering across the carpet-like page, the name *Jesus Christus* is spelled out, itself an icon of identification. The Lothair Gospels from Tours (849–51), also in the Paris Bibliothèque Nationale (lat. 266), offers a creature-encircled image of Christ within a mandorla (fol. 2v); he is separated from the Evangelists who introduce each of their Gospels. In contrast, the frontispiece of the Vivian Bible (the First Bible of Charles the Bald), executed a few years before the Lothair Gospels (Paris, Bibl. Nat., lat. 1), portrays a new and complex model of the *Majestas* (fig. 4). Within a figure-eight circle, Christ holds his book while the four creatures clutch their codices in an exterior lozenge that, in turn, ends in four medallions where the four major prophets carry scrolls. In the corners, each Evangelist writes in a codex while gazing toward the central figure of the Lord; next to them is a box of codices, and two of them have an additional box of scrolls nearby. The scrolls symbolize the Old Testament and the codices the New. In all, thirty-seven books appear on the page, set out in a circular fashion that recalls the "wheel within the wheel" (*rota in rota*) that is mentioned in Ezekiel's vision of the four beings (1:15). Clouds, sprays of plants, and the river of life flowing across the bottom of the miniature create an image of the book of the afterlife coming into the present with witnesses of the past.<sup>19</sup>

Evangelist portraits and their symbols were fully integrated into the *Majestas* miniatures, but they also maintained a place of their own and, after the disappearance of the Majesty theme in the late twelfth century, they continued to be featured in Books of Hours into the age of printing. The tetraform, which occurs in Apocalypse 4:6–8 and derives from Ezekiel 1:5–11, also survived, although the beasts sometimes resemble household pets. Irenaeus (d. 202?) first associated them with the Evangelists, and Jerome (d. 420) established the order of identification in which they are presented in the West: the winged man with Matthew, the calf with Luke, the lion with Mark, and the eagle with John. The focus from its origin was Christological, as Irenaeus explains in *Adversus Haereses* 3.11.8: The lion symbolizes the Son of God's royal power, the calf his sacrificial and priestly order, the man his coming as a human being, and the eagle his gift of the Spirit to the Church (Roberts 1: 428). Later commentators, elaborating on Irenaeus, go on to find these four elements, or similar facets of Christ's life and nature, in particular Gospels, justifying the choice of a peculiar symbol for each author. Generally, all four point to some stage in the redemption story: the birth, passion, resurrection, and ascension. Emile Mâle traces this popular notion of seeing the four Beings as extensions of Christ himself to Rabanus Maurus's commentary *In Ezechielem 1* (PL 110.515; Mâle 39–40).

The sixth-century author, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, in his *Celestial Hierarchy* (2.1–3) explains that scripture employs two kinds of imagery, affirmative and negative, simple and incongruous, through direct likeness as that of *logos* and light or through dissimilar unlikeness such as strange beasts and weird forms.<sup>20</sup> On the *Majestas* frontispiece and the Evangelist pages we find combinations of the two, the figures of Christ and the Gospel authors, direct and simple, together with the strange otherworldly creatures; we are thus drawn by beauty and mystery to the one source of truth.

The number four plus four makes up a harmony of one, like the four elements, winds, corners of the earth, zones, seasons, and rivers of Eden. In his *Paschale Carmen*, the fifth-century poet Sedulius writes: "These four princes, singing of thee with a single voice, of the same number as the seasons, are scattered throughout the wide world" (qtd. Underwood 123). The Ada Gospels of the Treves Civic Library (Cod. 22), executed at the end of the eighth century, explains the four creatures with the text: "This is the book of paradisaal life, and these four streams are the clear fountain spreading the miracles of the salvation-bringing Christ."<sup>21</sup> The four rivers

of paradise in *Majestas* and Evangelist miniatures symbolize the Incarnate Word running through many landscapes, as in the famous portrait of the four authors in the Aachen Gospels in the Cathedral Treasury (Evangelist, fol. 14v) (fig. 5). Each writer works independently in his own zone, inspired by his symbol, but all speak with a single voice from the one source, Christ.

Sometimes the Evangelists listen to the inspiring Word with serenity and at other times in ecstasy, intent to record every word.<sup>22</sup> This is the impression given by the portraits of the Ebo Gospels from Reims, between 816 and 835 (fols. 18v, 60v, 90v, 125v), now in the Epernay Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms. 1 (fig. 6). St Matthew's symbol is barely visible, but its scroll points directly to the large codex in which he writes, his ink horn propped like a hearing-tube to catch the sound. What is the significance of the other roll or book carried by the symbol in these miniatures? In Byzantine Evangelist portraits a lectern often appears standing with an open book; the author writes in another book open in his lap. Where the two texts are legible, as in the the Pierpont Morgan Library Lectionary (Ms. 647, fol. 118v) from an eleventh-century workshop dependent on Constantinople, the words turn out to be identical, the first line of the writer's own Gospel. The point is summed up in the expression of St Bonavenure, "Christ alone is teacher and author."<sup>23</sup> The Evangelists are really copyists taking dictation from the Word and his Holy Spirit; St Gregory the Great calls them "the pens of God" (*calami Spiritus Sancti*) since they are but the instruments of Christ. Faithful scribes, their task is to copy out the one true book.

The honour of scribe belonged especially to St John. He gives his testimony to the truth of the Gospels on Calvary (19:25). In the Weingarten Gospels (1050-65) in the Pierpont Morgan Library (Ms. 709, fol. 4), John is pictured with Mary, who holds a book herself, in the act of writing an account of the crucifixion at the foot of the cross. This John is the same author who also writes his apocalyptic Revelations at God's command: "What thou seest, write in a book" (1:11). In illuminated Apocalypses, John the witness often carries a book in each scene, sometimes faithfully transcribing the wondrous events happening before him. In the course of his account, he is told by an angel to eat a book: "Take the book, and eat it up: and it shall make thy belly bitter, but in thy mouth it shall be as sweet as honey" (10:9). John does so, and now "must prophesy again to many nations, and peoples, and tongues, and kings" (10:11).

Again, the book as the sacramental body of Christ is a communion with the Lord who speaks his message through the beloved apostle. The liturgy of the Mass made the fusion of scripture and the Eucharist possible.

St Jerome speaks of the Bible as the body of Christ, *verus cibus et potus*, communicated not only in the mystery of the sacrament but in the reading of scripture (PL 23.1039). Rupert of Deutz, commenting on Apocalypse 10:9–10, cites John 6:5–4: “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you” (PL 169.1007). Finally, Hugh of St Cher (d. 1263) identifies the book of life with the “sacrament of the altar” in his biblical commentary: “The body of Christ which we consume daily in the sacrament of the altar, can be called a book.”<sup>24</sup> John’s eating of the book has become an archetypal act that all Christians share.

To sum up what we have seen so far, a brief look at one manuscript should prove helpful: The Codex Aureus Epternacensis from Trier, the Golden Gospels of Echternach, probably made between 1035 and 1040 and now in the Germanisches National Museum at Nuremberg.<sup>25</sup> The *Majestas* page (fol. 3v) presents a beardless Christ in a mandorla, ringed by four small medallions containing the four creatures with books and four larger circles with the major prophets, Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, and Isaiah (fig. 7). Christ bears a book in which one reads, “Rejoice, because your names are written in the book of life” (“GAVDETE QO NOMINA VRA SCRIPTA ST IN LIBRO VITE”). The line echoes St Luke’s Gospel, “Rejoice in this, that your names are written in heaven” (10:20). The change of wording to “book of life” is important, however, when one reads on the facing page (fig. 8) an inscription written on a tablet or page held by two angels, which begins, “The ruler of Olympus is enthroned on the first page of this book” (“PRIMA FRONTE LIBRI / RESIDET REGNATOR OLYMPI”) (fol. 4r). The inscription goes on to pun on “LIBER” as “book” and as the adjective “free.” Here the book has become its own vehicle, calling attention to itself: the medium has become its message, text completely conveys image and image text. The same masterstroke is repeated on the author page of St Matthew and what follows it. Beneath his symbol holding a scroll and resting on an arch that states that Matthew writes about the Lord in the flesh, Matthew transcribes the first words of his Gospel, “Liber generationis,” “The book of the generation” (fol. 21v). On the facing page (fol. 22r), his symbol again appears holding an open codex which reads, “You men, believe the word of the man Matthew, so that he of whom he speaks, the Man Jesus, may reward you” (“VOS HOMINES HOMINIS MATHEI CREDITE SCRIPTUS VT DE QUO NARRAT HOMO IHS PREMIA REDDAT”). The page thus mirrors the opposite illumination but places the reader in the position of seeing himself / herself reading the book, an echo here of St James: “For if a man be a hearer of the word and not a doer, he shall be compared to a man beholding his own

countenance in a glass" (1:23). The INCIPIT page that follows then carries new insight: "Here begins the book of the Gospel according to Matthew" so that the facing page (23r) holds only the word LIBER, with an elaborately decorated initial L (fig. 9). The Gospels open with the very word bearing the message of Jesus's "generation" through humanity that links his story or book with all other lives. To Hugh of Saint-Cher, Christ is the "Liber humani generis."

The inspiring Word illuminates his own meaning in the text, from its original inspiration to its fresh re-expression in the hands of other scribes and miniaturists. The opening "Liber generationis" held great significance to the church fathers. John Chrysostom in his *Second Homily on Matthew* says that it is called the "book of the generation of Jesus Christ" because "this is the sum of the whole dispensation, and is made the origin and root of all our blessings." Moses called his "the book of heaven and earth" (Genesis 2:4), "so also this man has named his book from that which is the sum of all the great things done. For that which teems with astonishment, and is beyond hope and all expectation, is that God should become man" (Schaff 10: 10). Again, we see the symbolism of the book made flesh and one with humanity as the thrust of the biblical commentators.

The multiplication of the bread of life in the book is graphically shown by the frontispiece to the Preface of St Jerome in the Vivian Bible (fig. 10).<sup>26</sup> In three bands, Jerome first is shown leaving Rome for the Holy Land after paying his Hebrew teacher for language lessons. In the middle band, Jerome in Palestine teaches the scriptures to Paula, her daughter, and two other ladies who had followed him from Rome. A cleric takes down Jerome's words, while two others, off to the side, copy from scrolls—most likely they are transcribing the text of the Old Testament. In the bottom register, Jerome distributes bibles that are carried to buildings, which resemble basilicas, on the left and right sides. Books proliferate increasingly down through each panel. The Hebrew teacher holds a book while another lies open between him and the saint. Each person has or reads a book in the central band and again a volume lies open between Jerome and Paula. Finally, Jerome passes a book with each hand, has a third in his lap, and is seated between two bins of codices. In all, twenty-five volumes fill this elaborate author-translator portrait. Jerome returns to the source of the original Word of God by moving to Bethlehem and studying Hebrew. Like the first Evangelists, he becomes an instrument of the Word's propagation and proclamation, for the Bible here is not simply a text to be read and

heard, but a call to action. Jerome is not just a hearer of the word, but a doer. What he does is multiply the book of life.

The Vivian Bible also provides an excellent example of a presentation page (fol. 423) at the end of the volume. The Holy Roman Emperor Charles the Bald is enthroned as a Christ-like figure. The hand of the heavenly Father blesses him, and curtains part to reveal his regal presence. Three monks approach carrying this very Bible in their covered hands while Count Vivian, abbot of St Martin's from 845 to 851, directs them in the foreground. The ceremony is a liturgical one, with incense burning and personified Virtues offering crowns, which makes the actual occasion of the emperor's visit around 846 a timelessly symbolic one.

The book itself renders the occasion sacred, for the gift of the Bible is what is celebrated. The event will be repeated often in the West. Six hundred years later, even in an apparently purely secular presentation, when Philip the Good, the Duke of Burgundy, received the *Chroniques de Hainaut*, as pictured in the famous miniatures from the Royal Library at Brussels (Ms. 9242, fol. 1r), the scene retains a strongly religious atmosphere. Simon Nockart kneels while he lifts the huge tome to give to the dignified and aloof duke. On Philip's right, Chancellor Rolin bears an otherworldly look and Jean Chevrot, bishop of Tournai, bends forward with reverent concern. The duke's sons and noblemen stand to his left, some with downcast eyes, all quite solemn. Of course, a skeptic might interpret both presentations to Charles and Philip as exercises in flattery, but that is not what the artist or his audience intended. It is the book that is the centre of attention, a mirror of itself.

In another manuscript in the Royal Library (Ms. 9092, fol. 9r), Philip the Good is shown at prayer in a miniature decorating the first page of the Commentary on the Lord's Prayer (*Traité sur L'Oraison Dominicale*). The scene takes place at Mass: there is a Missal from which the priest reads at the altar, a Gradual upon a lectern from which the choir is singing, and a prayerbook (the *Traité*?) at the prie-dieu at which the black-gowned duke kneels. A servant holds the curtain back to allow the duke to follow the service. The words *Pater Noster* are stitched on the curtain before the duke, and beneath them a small diptych hangs that shows the Madonna and Child in one panel and a black figure, Philip himself, in the other. Although he remains in the background, Philip is exactly in the centre of the picture. It too mirrors him, his private prayer joining in the public communal worship.<sup>27</sup>

Books were not only written and read, they were also used for the taking of oaths and swearing homage. Such a scene appears in the Grand Chronique de France (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, fr. 6465, fol. 301r), made around 1460, in which King Edward of England is shown doing homage to Philip the Fair for Aquitaine. The king kneels, placing his hand upon the book, certainly a Bible, which lies open in Philip's lap. The presence of both clergy and courtiers as witnesses in the audience emphasizes the sacred nature of the act.

Saints in illustrations often appear with books in their hands, whether they have written such works or not. Usually, in Books of Hours, their presence is explained by references to the piety of reading such hours or prayerbooks. Certainly the books mirror the pious activity of those who use these books for their own prayers. We may also find here as well a mimetic remnant of the older Christian tradition, still found in biblical commentaries of the Renaissance, which interpreted books as individual lives partaking in the one Book of Life to be opened and revealed on the Judgment Day, according to Apocalypse 10:12. The seventeenth-century Jesuit Cornelius à Lape in his *Commentaria in Scripturam Sacram* continued to define the book of life as "the life of Jesus, which ought to be the norm of living for all, through which and according to which all are to be judged" (21:11). Lape here quotes the *Elucidarium* of Honorius of Autun, which he wrongly attributes to St Anselm. He also cites St Hilary's "Preface to the Psalms": "This book is Christ, because Christ is the matter and meaning ("materia et argumentum") of this book." The many books that are held in the hands of the saints remain the one, same book.

This persistence of the idea of Christ as the cosmic Book of Life does not belie the change toward the personal book of life as the record kept by an account-conscious God, a concept as ancient as the Old Testament. The new emphasis on a personal sense of sin is well exemplified by the miniature in the Hours of Catherine of Cleves (fig. 11), depicting an angel and devil struggling over such a book above the out-stretched corpse (Pierpont Morgan, Ms. 945, 205r) (Plummer 102). Of course, the two books, the cosmic and the individual, never exclude one another, since they are one and the same; only human emphasis in the religious experience changes.

Nowhere is the shift in the symbolism of the book clearer than in the iconography developed for the Virgin Mary. Until the twelfth century she is not usually shown with a book in infancy scenes, although she is sometimes seen with a book at the ascension, at pentecost, and at her coronation. She often holds her Son who carries a book in his hand. In one instance,

a stone-relief from 1120 at Michael's Chapel of the Hohenzollern castle at Hechingen, Mary has a book in her lap as the Magi approach her, but no Child. The identification of Jesus-the-Book has been taken for granted.

After the twelfth century, Mary frequently reads or holds a book at the annunciation. So popular did this theme become that sometimes her room resembles a private library. The Apocryphal Gospels called attention to Mary's reading of the Old Testament as a preparation for her part in the New. Pseudo-Matthew (ch. 6) claims, for example, that "no one was more versed in the law and no one more skilled at singing the psalms than she." In his *Meditations*, no. 15, St Anselm (d. 1109) invites the reader to enter Mary's room and to "pore over the books there in which the Virgin birth and Christ's coming are prophesized."<sup>28</sup> The belief that Mary was reading the specific prophecy of Isaiah, "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son" (7:14), was widely accepted. It is mentioned by the Carolingian poet Otfried in his *Krist* and by the English abbot Aelred of Rievaulx (d. 1167) in a sermon in which he describes Mary "holding Isaiah firmly in her hand and coming to her reading on the capitulum: "Ecce virgo concipiet et pariet filium" ("Forte in manibus tenebat Ysaïam et ordine legendi in illud inciderat capitulum. . . ") (Aelred 85). When the book lies open in miniatures so that it can be read, *Ecce Virgo* is the inevitable text. It associates Mary with her Son and the whole plan of redemption in which she plays so intimate a part. Her life is literally bound up with his.

The theme of Mary's reading the prophecy about herself at the moment of the Annunciation is not simply "a pietistic motif," as Denny (88-89) claims, but a dynamic symbol, as Ludolph of Saxony observes in his popular *Vita Domini Nostri Jesu Christi*: "In this act of intimate contemplation, in which she was totally united to God, the angel came to her."<sup>29</sup> Mary's inward meditation meets the outward divine action of the Word becoming flesh in her; she even repeats the word *Ecce* from Isaiah. The book acts as a mirror in which Mary, reading about herself, becomes the person she is destined to be as Virgin and Mother.

Popular from the late fourteenth and through the fifteenth centuries, the motif of the Madonna with the Writing Child offers a final variation of the book as a symbol.<sup>30</sup> Usually the Mother and Child are approached by a petitioner or owner of the Book of Hours. This is the case with the celebrated double-page painting of Jean Duke de Berry's being presented to the Madonna in the *Très Belles Heures* of Brussels (Ms. 11060-61, fols. 10v-11r) (Delaissé 90-95, pls. 19-20). The pages form a diptych with Jean on the left, kneeling before an open book and assisted by his two patron saints,

Andrew with a cross and John the Baptist with a lamb. On the facing page, Mary is seated on a throne and suckles Jesus at her breast. In her left arm she carries him, and in her right hand she holds the scroll in which he is writing. On closer examination, we see that she holds the other end of the scroll also in her left hand, and in doing so makes the traditional teaching gesture with her fingers to signify the two natures of Christ and the Trinity. The scroll appears blank in contrast with the open book on the opposite page. Here the scroll represents the book of life in which the duke's good deeds are being recorded; it can only be read on the Last Day. Meantime, Christ and his Mother are mirrored in the Book of Hours that is the book Jean reads in order to meditate on the mystery of the Incarnate Word. Thus book and scroll reflect the one reality.

The relevance of the Madonna and the Writing Child to the Apocalypse is made clear in the frontispiece to the Hours of Catherine of Cleves, made about 1440 (fig. 12) (Pierpont Morgan Library, Ms. 945, G.fol. 1v) (Plummer 1). Here Mary is revealed as the woman of the Apocalypse, "clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet," holding her son "who was to rule all nations" (12:1, 5). She supports the child in her left hand and holds an ink bottle in her right, blessing with that hand at the same time. Jesus dips his pen into the vessel and clasps a scroll—illegible—in his lap. Behind the gold mandorla the interior of a chapel is outlined and outside it, in the border of the miniature, kneels Catherine, a prayerbook in her hands. Above it a banderole curves into the chapel area; on it is inscribed *O mater dei memento mei*. The prayer *now* in time is recorded *then* in eternity, and *here* anticipates the *there* of heaven. The book below from which issues the banderole is repeated in the roll in which Christ writes Catherine's request. Her prayer echoes that of the good thief on the cross, "Lord, remember me when thou shalt come into thy kingdom" (Luke 23:42). The vision of the Apocalypse, "And her son was taken up to God, and to his throne" (12:15), has been fulfilled, as it one day will be for Catherine. She too has been promised paradise and already glimpses it in her own Book of Hours.

One of the most astonishing conceptions of the book as a vision of the other world is found in the Hours of Mary of Burgundy at the National Library in Vienna (Co. 1857), executed between 1477 and 1489 (fig. 13).<sup>31</sup> The owner is pictured (fol. 14v) reading in the border, which has now become elaborated with realistic detail; a dog lies in her lap. A veil, jewelry, carnations, and a vase of irises rest on a window ledge, which opens to a sanctuary. Within this frame, the Madonna sits with her Child, and a woman, much like the one in the border, kneels with several attendants. A

nobleman kneels on the opposite side, and beyond the group the tall, windowed interior of a cathedral rises. By projection, we are looking into the book from which the lady is praying. There, in the centre of the picture, we see the infant Jesus naked on a white cloth spread on his mother's lap. He is the Book of Life exposed like the Sacrament of the Eucharist for adoration.

The same centre of attention appears again in the miniature by the same Master of the Hours of Mary of Burgundy depicting the nailing of Christ to the cross (fol. 43v) (fig. 14). On the ground, Jesus's body is stretched out, naked except for a white cloth, surrounded by a circle of onlookers. Only his mother breaks into the inner core in her grief; she is restrained by St John. In the border we find ourselves in another interior, with carved figures of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac, and Moses lifting the serpent. The columns that frame the opening are architectural devices, but they also symbolize the flagellation, just as the irises were symbolic of Mary's sorrow. The box at the left corner of the border has previously appeared in the scene of the annunciation (fol. 19v) on the floor of the Virgin's room. The jewellery has been replaced by a pearl-and-gold rosary, apparently Mary of Burgundy's own. In the lower right frame lies an unattended open Book of Hours turned to the beginning of the Hours of the Passion with a scene of the crucifixion; in the miniature Mary and John, wearing the same colours as in the inner scene, stand next to the cross. The reader has left her book: she stands with us outside the book looking in the book within.

"The book is like a mirror," writes Nicholas of Lyra in the preface to his commentary on the Bible (1331), "because as sensible forms appear in a mirror, so intelligible truths shine in a book."<sup>32</sup> The Word illuminated has become transparent through the book and diaphanous, in Teilhard de Chardin's expression, to his divine milieu. The Book of Life is the book of life.

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See the discussion of these pages and the Vienna *Dioscurides* in Weitzmann 61-71 and pls. 15-20. A facsimile, with commentary volume by H. Gerstinger, appears in the Codices Selecti series.

<sup>2</sup> All citations of the Bible are to the Douay Version. Translations, unless otherwise indicated, are by the present author.

<sup>3</sup> The codex reads: "The Lord says, 'I am the Door of the sheep.'" See Conant 127. Descriptions of the mosaics and door may be found in Schiller 1: 194–97, pls. 555, 557, 560.

<sup>4</sup> "Haec visio mysteria nobis sanctae scripturae per Incarnationem Domini patefacta demonstrat. Cujus unitas concors Vetus Testamentum quasi exterius, et Novum continet interius" (PL 93.145).

<sup>5</sup> Scholars do not agree on whether this Berengaudus lived in the ninth or twelfth centuries. See Vigouroux 1: pt. 2, cols. 1610–11.

<sup>6</sup> "Intus scriptus est secundum allegoriam, foris secundum historiam" (PL 17.807).

<sup>7</sup> "Liber hic qui interius exteriusque scriptus: praesentis mundi omnis est creatura, cuius interiora praescit Dominus et exteriora cognoscit" (Beatus 305).

<sup>8</sup> "Liber vitae et vita Dominus Jesus Christus est. Tunc aperietur et ostendetur universae creaturae suae, cum reddiderit unicuique secundum opera sua" (Beatus 615).

<sup>9</sup> "Alius autem liber, *qui est vitae*, Dominum Jesum Christum significat, qui vitam suis fidelibus tribuit. In illo enim libri, hoc est duo Testamenta, aperientur, quia in illo omnes actiones justi considerabunt" (PL 117.1190).

<sup>10</sup> "Libri sunt prophetae, sunt apostoli, sunt alii perfecti. Qui libri aperti erunt, quia doctrina et exempla eorum omnibus patebunt; in quibus omnes, quasi in libris, videbunt quid facere vel quid vitare debuerunt. Liber vero est vita Jesu, in qua omnes quasi in libro legent quid de praeceptis ejus, vel fecerunt, vel neglexerunt" (PL 172.1167–68).

<sup>11</sup> "Hujus libri litterae in claustra humanitatis Christi sunt scriptae, sed auro divinitatis illuminatae" (PL 176.1172). Hugh employs "claustra" here as "bodily enclosure or cloister."

<sup>12</sup> "Unus liber, quia uno spiritu est conscripta, et unius Verbi Dei thesaurus sive sacrarium est" (PL 169.924–25).

<sup>13</sup> "Item, liber iste est Christus, *in quo sunt omnes thesauri sapientiae et scientiae absconditi*, ut dicitur Col. 1" (Aquinas 31: col. 527).

<sup>14</sup> The original translators John Mason Neale and Benjamin Webb, who translated Durand's work, reprinted in Holt, under the title *Symbolism of Churches and Church Ornaments* (Leeds, 1843), have incorrectly added (in square brackets) the phrase "is also portrayed" after "the Book of life" that is obviously parallel with the other titles of Christ. In this paper, "Life" is capitalized as part of the title.

<sup>15</sup> "Hic liber est vitae, hic fons et origo librorum, / Unde fluit quicquid [quisqu]is in orbe sapit" (qtd. Underwood 128, and fig. 67).

<sup>16</sup> For an illustration of this page, see Schiller 3: pl. 669 and de Champeaux and Sterckx 305, pl. 109. On the *Majestas* theme itself, see van der Meer's essential *Majestas*; Nordenfalk, *Codex* 103–12; Kessler 36–42; and Nelson 55–73.

<sup>17</sup> The Sinope Gospels discussed in this paragraph and the Rabbula Gospels treated in the next are well explained and illustrated in Weitzmann 17, 97–105, pls. XIV, 34–38.

<sup>18</sup> These figures (Rabbula, fol. 14r) have not been definitely identified. The two in back (saints?) are older and are presenting the two in front to Christ (fig. 1). The book on the right has a cross, the one on the left has five diamond-shapes, exactly like the codex that Christ carries in the illumination for the *Sermon on the Mount* (fol. 11r) and that Mark and Luke hold in folio 10r. There is good reason to believe that folio 14r was originally the frontispiece. See the discussion in the Rabbula facsimile, Cecchelli et al. 27, 72. The format resembles a presentation page.

<sup>19</sup> The Godescalc Evangelistary and Vivian Bible *Majestas* pages are examined and illustrated in Mütterich and Gaehde 32–37, 80–81.

<sup>20</sup> For a valuable analysis of Pseudo-Dionysius's thought, see Gombrich 150–52. The relevant passages may be found in Pseudo-Dionysius 147–50. For a survey of the four symbols of the Evangelists, see Nilgen, "Evangelistensymbole," and Nordenfalk, "Die Evangelistensymbole," as well as Nelson 15–53.

<sup>21</sup> "Hic liber est vitae paradisi et quatuor amnes / clara salutiferi pandens miracula Christi fons" (qtd. van der Meer 348).

<sup>22</sup> On Evangelist portraits, see Friend, "Portrait"; Bloch, "Evangelisten"; Bergman, "Portraits"; and Nelson 75–91. For the special role of St John, often treated differently from the other Evangelists, see Schapiro 307–10.

<sup>23</sup> "Solus Christus est doctor et auctor" (1: col. 15a). For other examples of Evangelists copying word for word, see Pelekanidus et al, *Treasures of Mount Athos*, pls. 144, 145, 286.

<sup>24</sup> "Item corpus Christi quod in sacramento altaris quotidie sumimus, liber potest dici" (7: 382, col. 4).

<sup>25</sup> See *The Golden Gospels of Echternach*, pls. II, III, VIII–XI, and the insightful introduction (especially for the idea of the Gospel book) by Metz 17–32. The translations that follow are from this text (except for the inscription of the book in the *Majestas* page, which is not transcribed). The original Latin text may be found in Verheyen 49, 51, whose numbering of the folios has been followed here. Because of an unnumbered first page, the pagination given by Metz is different.

<sup>26</sup> See the illustration and discussion of the Jerome page in Mütterich and Gaehde 75–77, pl. 21. The relationship of text to image in the Jerome prefaces *Plures fuisse* and *Novum Opus* in the light of the Vivian miniature and a similar one in the San Paolo fol. 1. m. Bible (fol. 3v) is thoroughly examined by Kessler 84–95; however, his interpretation of the events being pictured seems overly complicated.

<sup>27</sup> The presentation miniature of Philip the Good and his portrait at prayer are sensitively analyzed by Delaissé 120–23, pl. 27, and 172–75, pl. 40. This well-illustrated study contains several fine author portraits, among them one of Gregory the Great, who has a dove whispering in his ear (pl. 6), and another of the Dominican Brochard seated in the midst of fifteen books and pausing as he writes (pl. 32).

<sup>28</sup> "Primum cum beata Maria ingressa cubiculum libros, quibus Virginis partum et Christi prophetatur adventus, evolve" (PL 158.785).

<sup>29</sup> "In hoc igitur actu tam intimae contemplationis, quo erat Deo totaliter coadunata, ingressus est Angelus ad eam" (19–20). Although Robb 484–85 and Schiller 1: 42–43, among a number of other scholars, claim that a source for the belief that Mary was in the act of reading Isaiah is found in Pseudo-Bonaventure's *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, no reference to it is mentioned there. Ludolph seems a more likely source.

<sup>30</sup> On the Madonna and the Writing Child, see Parkhurst 292–306; Miner 10, 44–45, 60–64; and Verdier 247–56.

<sup>19</sup> On the Book of Hours of Mary of Burgundy, see Pächt 32–37, pls. 12, 13, 19; Alexander 6–29, pl. 1; and the facsimile edition in the *Codices Selecti* series with De Schryver's comments on the miniatures, especially 107–17. For a review of the subject of attributions and original ownership, see van Buren 286–309.

<sup>32</sup> "Liber habet similitudinem seculi, quia in specula apparent formae sensibiles, sive in libro relucent intelligibiles veritates" (1: 3).

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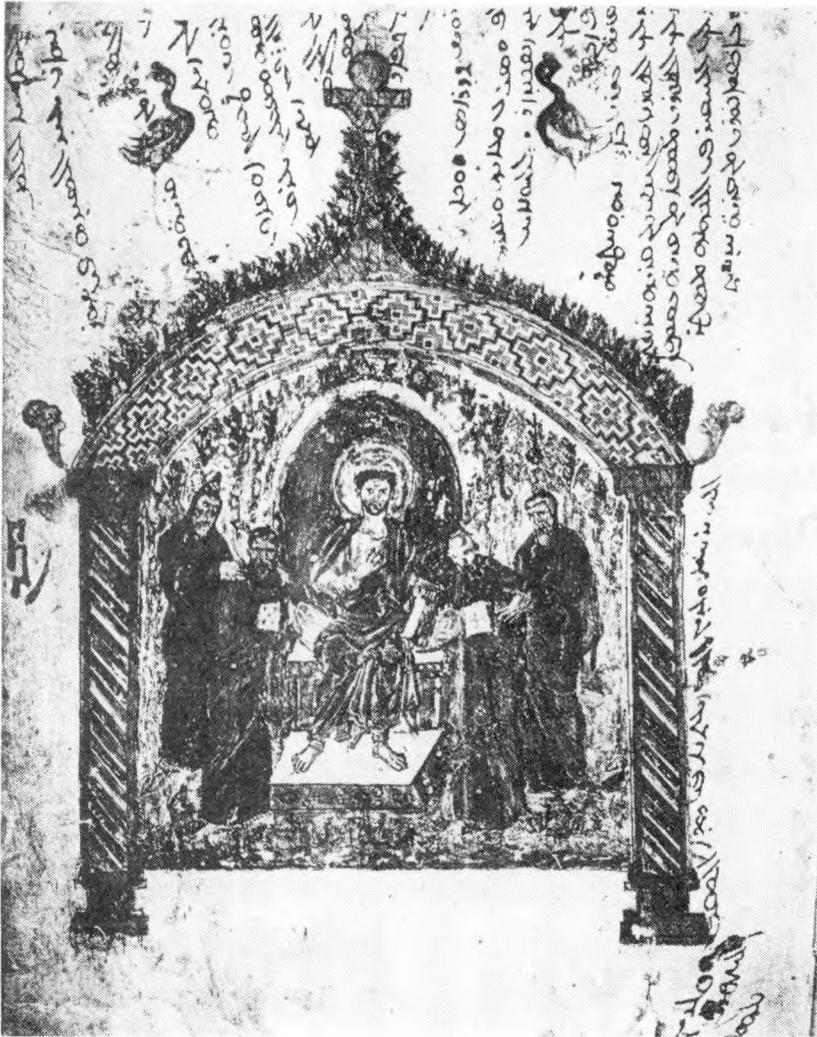


Figure 1: Rabbula Gospels. Florentine Laurentian Library, fol. 14r.



Figure 2: Rabbula Gospels. Florentine Laurentian Library, fol. 13v.



Figure 3: Godescalc Gospel. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, acq. lat. fol. 3r.



Figure 4: Vivian Bible. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 1, fol. 329v.



Figure 5: The Four Evangelists. Gospels of Aix-la Chapelle, fol. 14v.



Figure 6: Ebo Gospels. Epernay, Bibliothèque Municipale, fol. 19r.



Figure 7: Codex Aureus. Epternacensis, Nuremberg National Museum, fol. 3v.

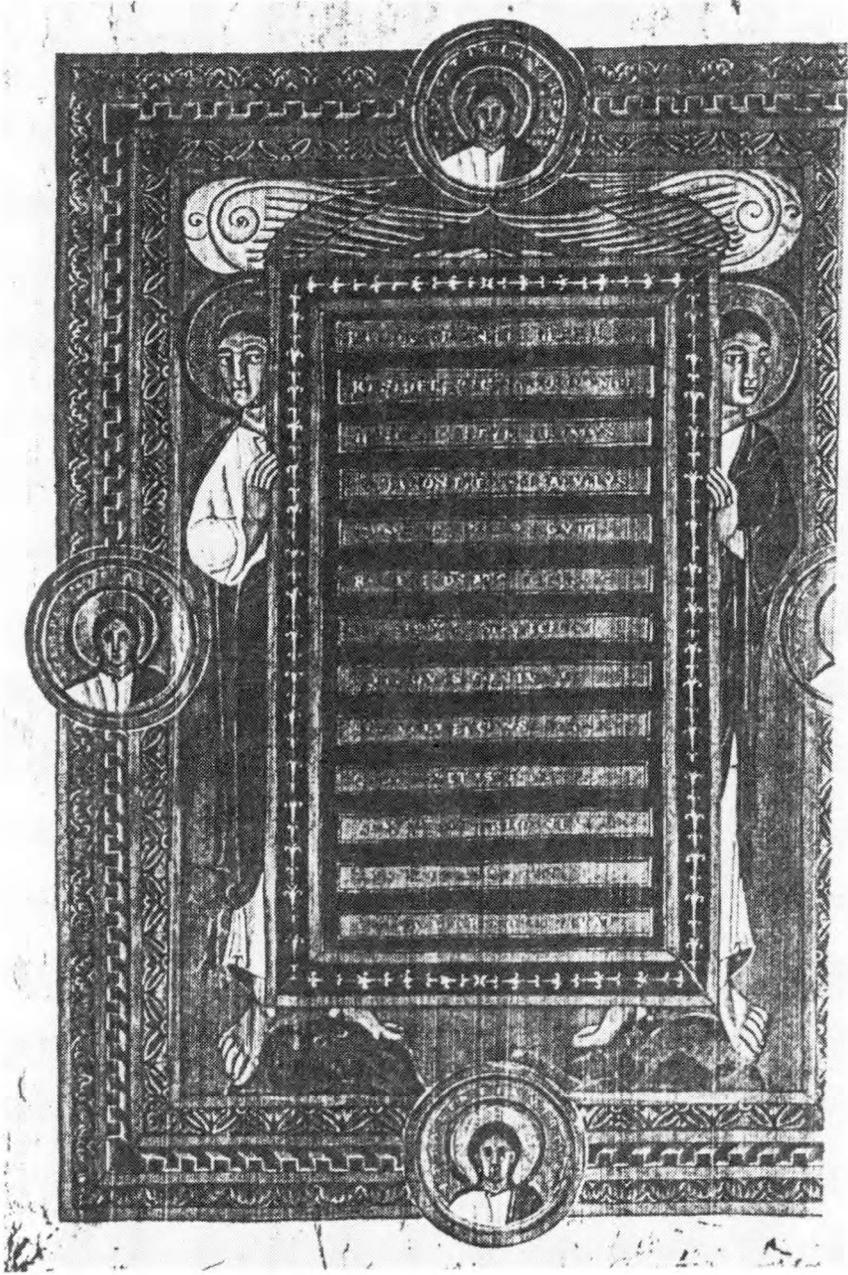


Figure 8: Codex Aureus. Epternacensis, Nuremberg National Museum, fol. 4r.

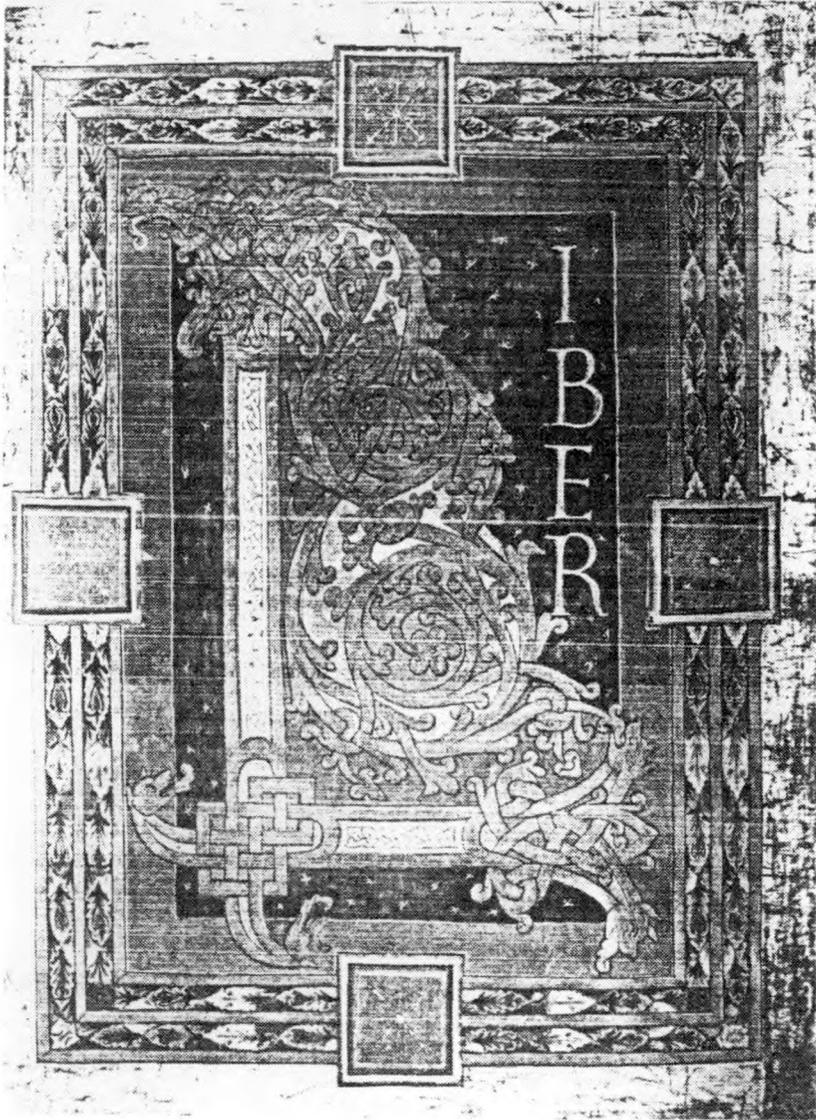


Figure 9: Codex Aureus Epternacensis, Nuremberg National Museum, fols. 23r.



Figure 10: Vivian Bible. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 1, fol. 3v.

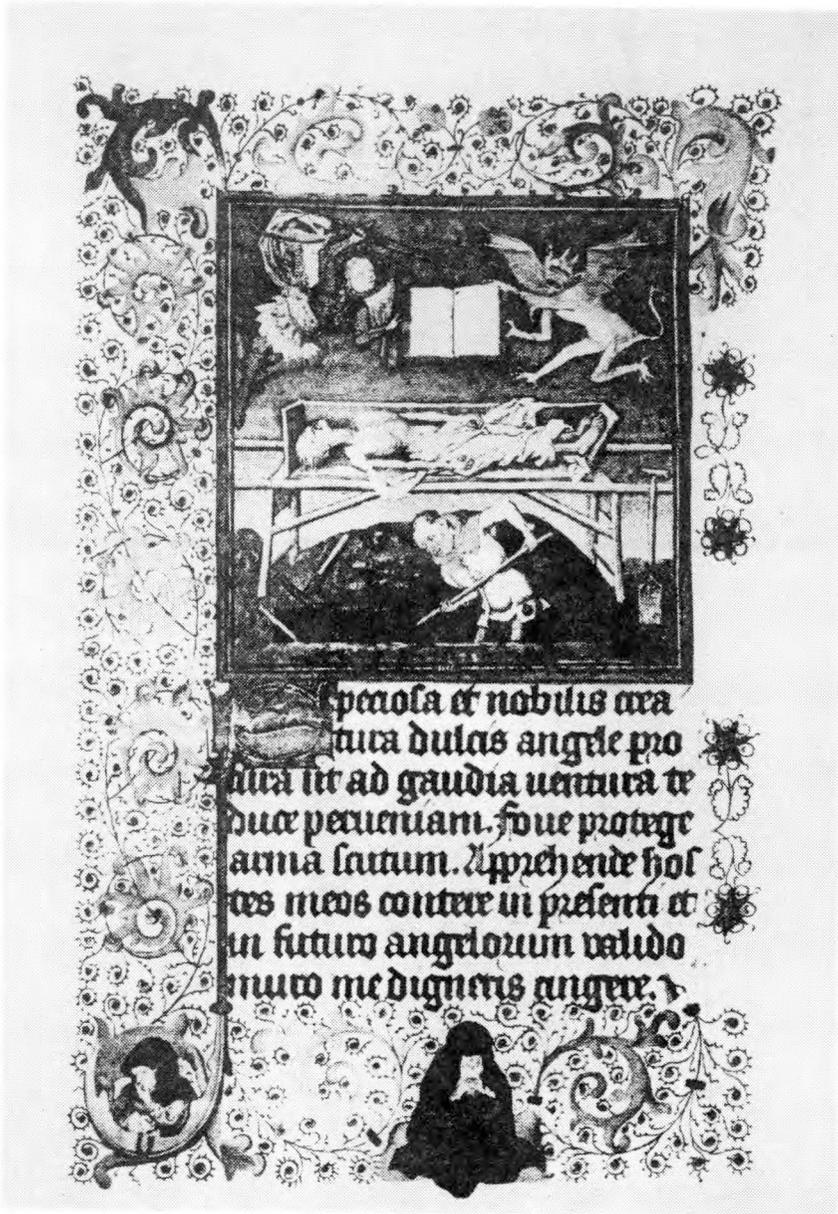
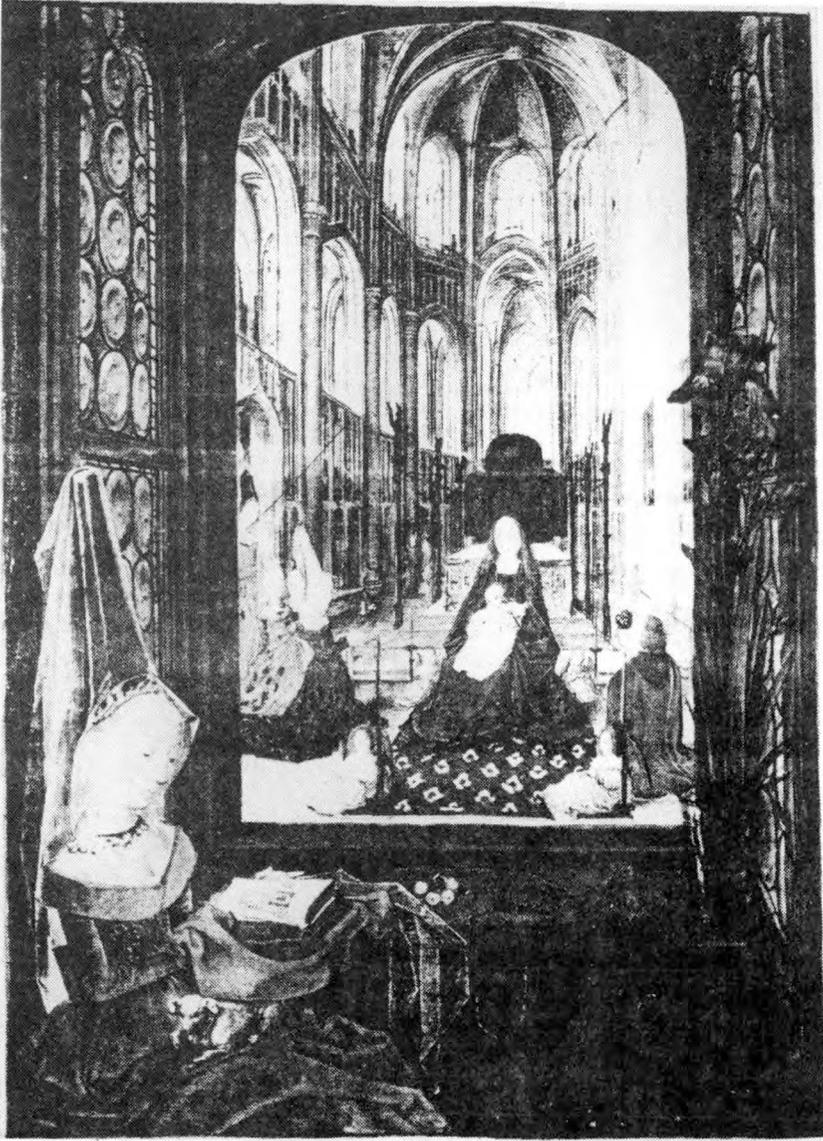


Figure 11: Hours of Catherine of Cleves. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, Ms. 945, fol. 6206r.



Figure 12: Hours of Catherine of Cleves. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, Ms. 945, fol. 1v.



**Figure 13:** Hours of Mary of Burgundy. Vienna, National Library, Col. 1857, fol. 14v.

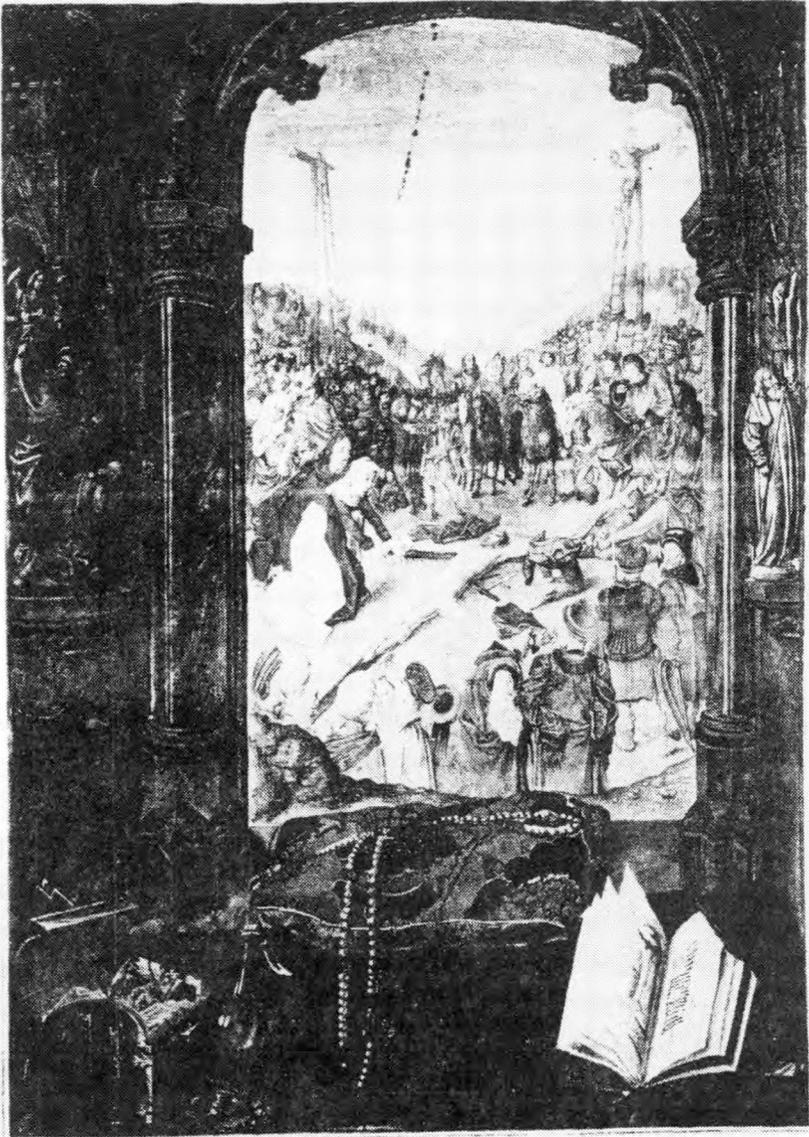


Figure 14: Hours of Mary of Burgundy. Vienna, National Library, Col. 1857, fol. 43v.