JOLCEL

CURRENT CONTRIBUTION

*

NOTE

This contribution is part of a larger dialogue of four articles and one response
piece that form the current issue of JOLCEL. The other contributions are "Be-
tween Reading and Viewing: Mapping and Experiencing Rome and Other Spaces"
by Klazina Staat (pp. 7–42), "Language on Display: Latin in the Material Culture
of Fascist Italy" by Han Lamers (pp. 69–101), and "Looking at Latin 1911–1965–
2019: An Ancient Language in Modern Art" by Simon Smets
(pp. 103–37). The response piece is "Towards a Codico-Ecology of Latin" by Vin-
cent Debiais (pp. 139–47).

*

The *Incipit* Miniature of the Morgan Gospel of John[*]

BARBARA BAERT

Catholic University of Leuven

ABSTRACT

In this paper, I explore the iconographical relationship between the letters and the support on fol. 157r of the Morgan Gospels, written and illuminated in Westphalia, Germany during the mid-tenth century. On the basis of its formal properties and the iconographic meaning it takes, I will give particular attention to the materiality of the Latin text and its cultural and symbolic significance. The folio under study develops a form of 'agency'. With this perspective, I hope not only to contribute to the important line of argument Joshua O'Driscoll develops in his iconic article, but also to explore the meaning of Latin as an iconological statement and hence to contribute with new methodological developments in the field of art history.

***

Erst wenn die Dinge in die Welt kommen, wenn die Welt Bild geworden IST [sic], kann sie auch abgebildet werden.[1]

This paper discusses a remarkable ninth-century Ottonian full-page miniature (fol. 157r) in the so-called Morgan Gospels. It intended to introduce John's Gospel.[2] The Latin Morgan Gospel Book was written and illuminated in Westphalia, Germany, probably at the Abbey of Corvey, during the mid-tenth century.[3] The manuscript counts 201 parchment leaves, among which five decorated title pages,

---

[1] Kruse, *Wozu Menschen malen*, 155.
[2] *Incipit* page of the Gospel of John, MS M. 755, fol. 157r; O'Driscoll, "Visual Vortex."
[3] Boeckler, *Abendländische Miniaturen bis zum Ausgang der romanischen Zeit*, 51; Swarzenski, "Die deutschen Miniaturen des frühen Mittelalters in amerikanischem Besitz."
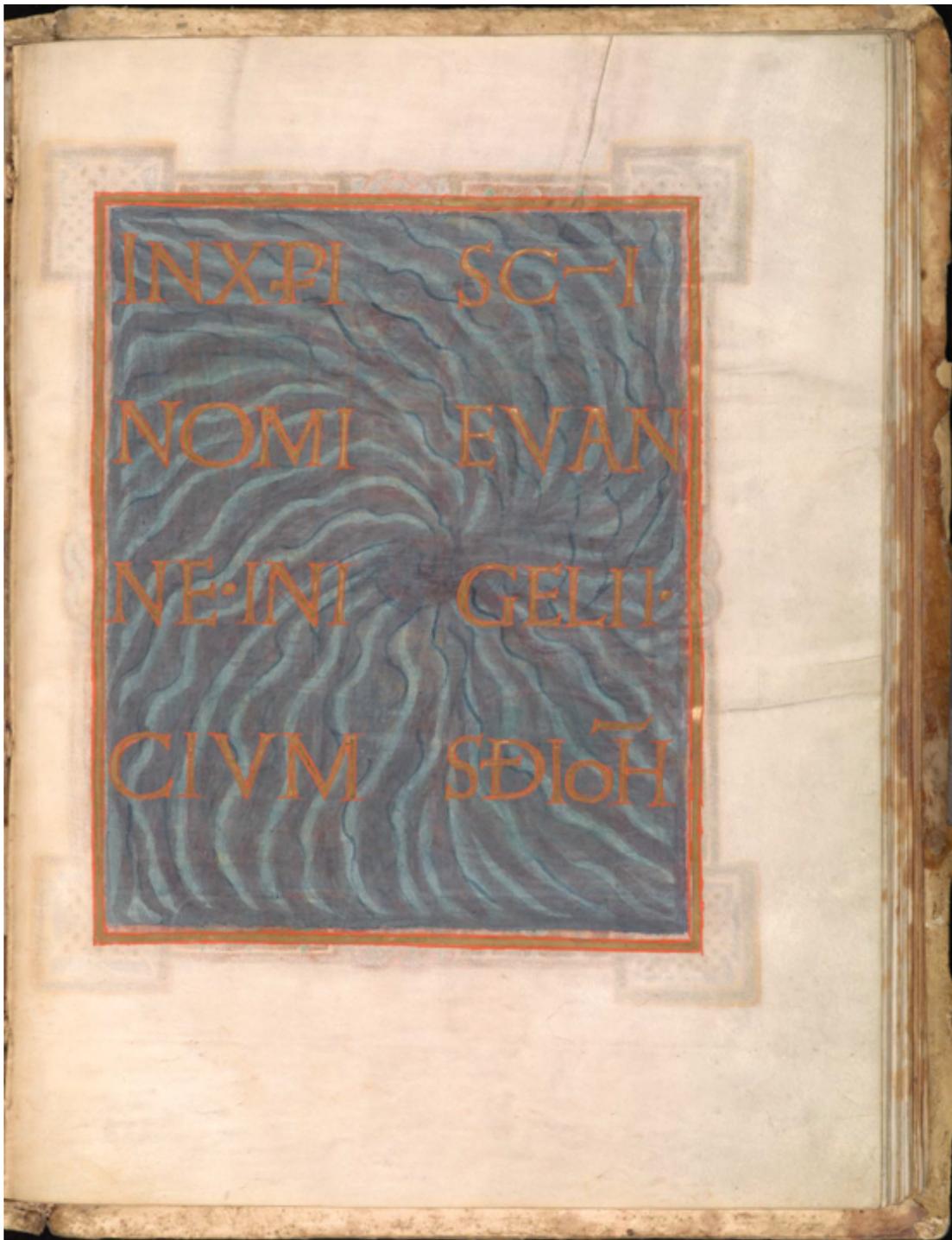
Figure 1: *Incipit* page of the Gospel of John, Morgan Gospels, tenth century, New York, The Morgan Library, MS M. 755, fol. 157r.

Figure 2: Inscription from the Carolingian exterior of the church in Corvey, west façade. Taken from O'Driscoll, "Visual Vortex," 315, fig. 6.

four decorated *incipit* pages, eight decorated text pages and sixteen canon tables.[4] The gospel book was purchased in 1929 from the German bookdealer Jacques Rosenthal (1854–1937), and has since then been kept at The Morgan Library in New York.[5]

The fol. 157r that is of our interest here, is adorned with a framed, abstract image of purple pigment with light blue shivering veins that pulsate from a central point—a vortex—just outside the compositional centre of the miniature. Upon this peculiar background, golden squared capitals are shimmering. The epigraph reads: *In christi nomine inicium sancti evangelii secundum Johannem* ('In the name of Christ. The Beginning of the Sacred Gospel according to John') (fig. 1). The script has been shaped, dimensioned, and coloured to create the effects of a text on marble.

In this specific miniature of the Morgan Gospels, an interesting tension arises between its actual parchment support, the miniature featuring the marble vortex, and the golden Latin text added in the final phase in the illumination of the page. The reader looks at the visual evocation of a material, of an object—marble—, but at the same time steps into the scope of marble as an iconographic motif. The *incipit* refers both to ancient epigraphy from the monastic environment outside the manuscript, and to the richly decorated title pages in gold, typical of the workshops of the time.

In his article "Visual Vortex," Joshua O'Driscoll develops the hypothesis that the miniaturist may have wished to copy the epigraphs carved into stone and

marble *spolia* on the exteriors of churches, as can still be seen, for example, on the abbey church of Corvey (fig. 2).[6] Within the manuscript, a transitive dynamic between exterior (*incipit*) and interior (the actual text of the gospel) arises, between material and spiritual, between temporal and eternal, between chaos and order, between the diffuse abstract vibrations and the delineated figurative iconography of the initial, between the Roman exogenous capital in marble and the contemporary insular scripts.

The next section explores how the relationship between the letters and the support on fol. 157r of the Morgan Gospels unfolds for a reader or beholder of the gospel book. In other words, the miniature under study develops a form of 'agency': on the basis of its formal properties and the iconographic position it takes, the miniature has the capacity to convey a specific message.[7] Particular attention goes to the suggested materiality of the Latin text and its cultural and symbolical significance in the context of the Morgan Gospels. With this additional perspective, this paper not only contributes to the important line of argument Joshua O'Driscoll develops in his article, but also to further explore the meaning of Latin as an iconological statement, relating an important contribution to new methodological developments in the field of art history.

Recently, medievalists have started to pay more attention to the interpretation of non-figurative colour and line surfaces in painting and miniature art, whereas these features of the image have for a very long time been regarded as purely decorative.[8] Form languages that lack depictions of nature and show far-reaching abstraction, as well as proto-Christian ornamentation, such as wickerwork, are currently explored against the backdrop of alternative systems of meaning. This paper partakes in an emergent field of study that embraces the effects of colours and lines on the viewer, as well as their symbolic functions, as valuable objects of study. Specifically, it will offer a reinterpretation of the relationship between abstract design and Latin script from an iconographical perspective, which shows that these features should not be regarded as empty formalism, nor thoughtless compliance with artistic conventions.

1 *Incipit*

The *incipit* ('it begins') or *initium* ('beginning') denotes the first few words of the text and, before the development of formal titles, sometimes served as a text's title. Some of the Psalms, for instance, are known by their incipits. The phenomenon of *incipit* is not restricted to the Latin Middle Ages and is in evidence earlier in Sumerian, Hebrew, and Ancient Greek literary practice as well. Incipits are usually given special artistic attention in the manuscripts of the texts they denote. While they are sometimes just written in red or larger letters, they may also be

---

6   O'Driscoll, "Visual Vortex," 315.
7   Gell, *Art and Agency*, 83–90.
8   Debiais, "Colour as Subject."

Figure 3: *Pericope for Christmas*, Mass Lectionary, Reichenau or Schaffhausen, late tenth century, Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, Ms. 1492, fol. 5v.

elaborately decorated and fill a full page in a manuscript. Their marked prominence suggests their special role in readers' experience of the book as a visual and material object.

Some Ottonian manuscripts distinguish between the folio with the *incipit* announcing the start of a new volume, book or chapter, and a second folio (often verso) recording the initials or first words of the text. "The incipit being a short introductory statement, and the initials being the opening words of the gospel text."[9] As we shall see, the creator of the Morgan Gospel of John also opted for this de-duplication of recto and verso. The manuscript thus unfolds a dynamic

---

9   O'Driscoll, "Visual Vortex," 313, note 17. Selected literature from the same note: Elbern,"Zierseiten in Handschriften des frühen Mittelalters"; Farr, "The Incipit Pages of the Macregol Gospels"; Jakobi-Mirwald, *Text-Buchstabe-Bild,* 96–98; see also: Bonne, "De l'ornemental dans l'art médiéval," 234.

between two essential forms of 'beginning' in John's Gospel. The difference in meaning is explored through iconography and the layout of the folios, whereby the Latin script itself, too, will be shown to be an essential carrier of meaning.

In Carolingian and Ottonian art, *incipit* miniatures were often exceptionally richly decorated, with abstract decorative shapes being combined with the opening sentence of the gospel in question.[10] These highly complex decorative forms with knot and braid works were influenced and adapted from the so called insular art, this is the Hiberno-Saxon art, produced in the post-Roman era. From the ninth century onwards, the *incipit* of a gospel acquired the status of a full-fledged min-iature, usually between the author's portrait and the initial. Incipits, such as the one in the *Pericope for Christmas* of the tenth century (Reichenau or Schaffhausen) were often inspired by the copious motifs of Byzantine silk (fig. 3).[11] This rela-tionship with textiles is particularly relevant, as they are natural carriers of the metaphor of the veil.[12] By simulating textile, the *incipit* becomes a visual prelude appropriate to the theological rhetoric of the unveiling of the word.[13]

The *incipit* of the Morgan Gospel of John, however, diverges from these car-pet pages—because of its monochrome vibration—and from the *incipit* miniatures elsewhere in the evangeliary. The 'prelude' of John's *incipit* does not simulate silk, but marble. "As if making a conscious effort to minimize the presence of any decorative elements whatsoever, the artist has allowed no room for distraction and thus makes a strong claim for the image's own centrality."[14]

The marble appears as a support for the Latin text, which as it were 'floats' on the marble surface due to the letters with raised gold leaf. At the same time, the capital letterform of the Latin evokes inscriptions chiselled into stone, which were also recovered as *spolia* in the Ottonian period, and to which we will return. There is, in short, an ambiguity between the miniature of the *incipit*, in which the text and the marble are united in a unique, iconic formulation, and the mimetic illusion of an *incipit* chiselled in marble. In other words, on the one hand, the miniature is a splendidly depicted title folio with its purple and gold accents, and on the other hand, it suggests a depiction of a material situation, namely Latin text immortalised in stone.

This paper attempts to explore and explain the layered iconography in the manuscript in more detail than has been done before. The following section sheds light on sources that suggest a particular symbolic experience of marble which feeds into the interpretation of the *incipit* miniature proposed here. More specif-ically, folio 157r—with its *paragone* between matter and pigment, between image and text, between abstraction and letters—is charged with associations of marble as a cosmogonic principle.

---

[10] Further elaborations on *incipit* pages in the Ottonian manuscript tradition, O'Driscoll, "Visual Vortex," 313.

[11] Hamburger, *Script as Image*, 25, fig. 14; Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, Ms. 1492, fol. 5v.

[12] Wagner, "Silken Parchments," 12–37.

[13] Ganz, "Clothing Sacred Scriptures," 12; Gellrich, *The Idea of the Book in the Middle Ages*, 116; O'Driscoll, "Visual Vortex," 314.

[14] Ibid., 312.

2 Marble

The *incipit* miniature of the Morgan Gospel of John explores the symbolic place that marble occupies within the sacredness of Scripture and, more specifically, as an access point to the Latin text of the Gospel of John.

The medieval fascination with marble in the East and West is richly documented. The precarious material was regarded as a primeval stone, and its spotty motifs as a phantasmatic idiom that takes the viewer to elements of creation. Marble, it was felt, made the ritual space pregnant with creation and with the sensory experience of it through its visual and acoustic effects.

The exceptional associative affordances of marble have been described with praise since ancient times and in the early Church Fathers. Pliny the Elder (23/34–79), in his *Natural History*, included descriptions of marble due to its fancied qualities. Marbles are veined; they are spotted; they have *maculae*.[15] Augustine (354–430) sees in marble the vortices and the waves of water. Isidore of Seville (560–636), in the entry *De marmoribus* in his *Etymologiae*, speaks of an exceptional stone with colours that have no equal:[16]

> Nam marmora dicuntur eximii lapides, qui maculis et coloribus commendantur. (...) Marmorum colores et genera innumerabilia sunt. (...) Augusteum et Tiberium in Aegypto Augusti ac Tiberii primum principatu reperta sunt. (...) Nam Augusteum undatim est crispum in vertices; Tiberium sparsa, non convoluta, canitie.[17]

The fascination with marble and its symbolical potential goes back to Antiquity. In the first century, for example, Statius (40–96) wrote that the green marble of Laconia imitated the fields.[18] In the fifth century, Sidonius Apollinaris (431–489) wrote in his letters that the marble from Thessaly represents not only the fields but also forests with immobile trees.[19] Around 550, Choricius of Gaza described the church of Saint Stephen in Gaza, comparing the marbles to paintings:

> ζῶναι γὰρ οὕτω μαρμάρων καλύπτουσιν εὐαρμόστως τὸν τοῖχον οὕτω μὲν ἔχουσαι τῆς ἁρμονίας ὡς ἔργον νομίζεσθαι φύσεως, οὕτω δὲ πεποικιλμέναι χρόαις ἐμφύτοις ὡς μηδὲν ἀπᾴδειν χειροποιήτου γραφῆς.[20]

---

[15] Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* XXXVII.

[16] O'Driscoll, "Visual Vortex," 315.

[17] Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* XVI, 5; English translation, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, 321: "Exceptional stones that are prized for their markings and colors are called 'marble' (...) the colors and kinds of marble are beyond counting. (...) Augustean and Tiberian marble were first found in Egypt during the reigns of August and Tiberius (...) Augustean markings are undulating and curled into whorls [*vertices*], while Tiberian are of grey that is spotty and not swirled."

[18] Statius, *Silvae* II, 90–91, 128.

[19] Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epistulae* II, X, 14, 20–21; English translation from *Poems. Letters. Books 1–2*, 466.

[20] "(...) bands of well-fitting marble cover the wall. They are so joined together as to appear to be a work of nature, and so variegated with their natural colours as to resemble altogether a hand-painted picture," Choricius of Gaza, *Laudatio Marciani* II, 40 (*Opera*, 38); Fobelli, "Descrizione e percezione delle immagini acheropite sui marmi bizantini," 29; English translation from Onians, "Abstraction and Imagination in Late Antiquity," 8.

The marbles of the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople were particularly famous. In her book chapter "Descrizione e percezione delle immagini acheropite sui marmi bizantini," Maria Luigia Fobelli opens with a discussion of literary sources describing the magnificence of the marble plates in the Hagia Sophia in Byzantium (fig. 4).[21] These sources partially belong to the genre of *ekphrasis* writings, and partially to the 'touristic' appreciations of the time. In 563, for instance, Paul the Silentiary famously described the marble stones of the Hagia Sophia:[22]

λαοτόρον δ'ἀνὰ τοῖχον εὔγραφα δαίδαλα τέχνης
πάντοθεν ἀστράπτουσιν. ἁλιστεφέος Προκονήσου
ταῦτα φάραγξ ἐλόχευσε. πολυτμήτων δὲ μετάλλων
ἁρμονίη γραφίδεσσιν ἰσάζεται· ἐν γὰρ ἐκείνῃ
τετρατόμοις λάεσσι καὶ ὀκτατόμοισι νοήσεις
ζευγνυμένας κατὰ κόσμον ὁμοῦ φλέβας· ἀγλαΐην δὲ
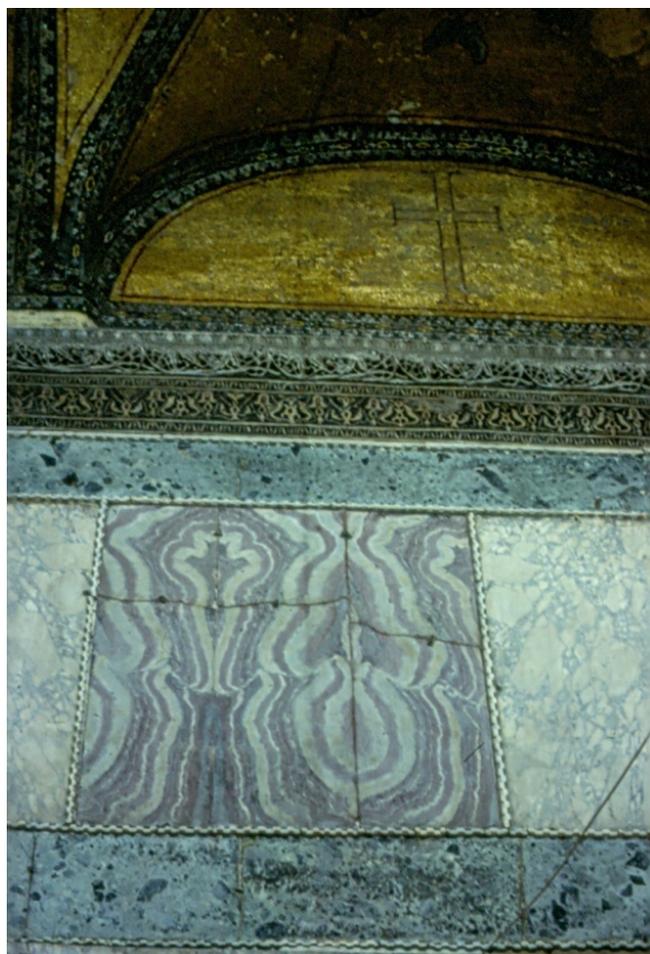ζωοτύπων λάϊγγες ἐμιμήσαντο δεθεῖσαι.[23]

Figure 4: Details from the marble decorations in the Hagia Sophia, sixth century, Proconnesian marble, Istanbul, Hagia Sophia.

21 Fobelli, "Descrizione e percezione delle immagini acheropite sui marmi bizantini."
22 Onians, "Abstraction and Imagination in Late Antiquity"; Vandenbroeck, "Matrix Marmorea" (2010), 60.
23 "Upon the carved stone wall curious designs glitter everywhere. These have been produced by the quarries of seagirt Proconnesus. The joining of the cut marbles resembles the art of painting, for you may see the [natural] veins of the square and octagonal stones meeting so as to form devices: connected in this way,

Recognising images, animals, landscapes, and even people became a *Leitmotiv* in accounts of travels to Constantinople, Ravenna, and Venice. Fobelli explains the success of this 'visual rhetoric' from Byzantine definitions of the image.[24] For the Byzantines at that time, the difference between a representation and the suggestion of an image was less fixed than it is for modern beholders. For them the materiality of the marble was itself an *acheiropoietos*. Marble was a visual marvel, it contained 'living images'.[25]

Where does the idea that marble is a (coagulated) liquid come from? The science of stones, as developed by Avicenna (980–1037) in his treatise on the congelation and conglutination of stones dating to 1021–1023, shows the conviction that conglutination and congelation (such as stalactites) had a petrifying effect on water; in brief that water 'rigidifies,' 'freezes' and petrifies on the basis of a mineral power.[26] The etymology of 'marble,' namely *mar/marmor/marmora* illuminates this phenomenon. The Greek μαρμαίρειν means to glisten, to shine like the surface of the water, as Homer sings in *Iliad* XIV, 273: ἅλα μαρμαρέην, the shining sea. Virgil associates *marmor* with *mare*,[27] and suggests that marble is the hard surface of the sea. Deeper in the etymology we find in Sanskrit the root *mar* for movement (of waves) and *mar-mar* for the less tranquil movements of the sea, still to be heard in our own speech as the 'murmuring' sea.[28] The sixth-century marble used in the Hagia Sophia is Proconnesian marble, which replaced the earlier marble from Carystus because of its greater affinity to the symbolism of water.

In his article "Walking on Water," Fabio Barry reinterprets the phenomenon of marble floors in early medieval churches from the perspective of the primal substance, water.[29] He shows that in sources from that time the marble blocks in the Hagia Sophia were not only admired as living natural paintings and landscapes (at its dedication in 537, Emperor Justinian compared the Hagia Sophia to the glittering of the Temple of Solomon), but also because of their effects as a 'frozen sea'. A ninth-century source, the *Diegesis* or *Narratio*, comments on the marble of the Hagia Sophia as a "sea, or the swelling water of a river."[30] The *ekphrasis* of Michael, the deacon of Hagia Sophia (ca. 1140–1150), sees the church as a sea with the ambo as an island.[31] The *Narratio* says that Thessaly marble is the closest

---

the stones imitate the glories of painting" (Paul the Silentiary, *Descriptio S. Sophiae et ambonis*, ll. 605–11). Note that the recent edition of the Greek text by Claudio De Stefani (Teubner, 2011) reads χαλκότορον ("bronze-pierced") instead of the more traditional λαοτόρον ("stone-carved"), which is preferred here and reflected in the translation.

24 Fobelli, "Descrizione e percezione delle immagini acheropite sui marmi bizantini," 31.

25 Ibid., 30; Onians, "Abstraction and Imagination in Late Antiquity," 12–13; Trilling, "Medieval Art without Style?," 60.

26 Avicenna, *De congelatione et conglutinatione lapidum*, 46.

27 Virgil, *Aeneid* VII, 27: *In lento luctantor marmore tonsae*. Virgil often uses the expression *marmoreum aequor*; Barry, "Walking on Water," 631 and 650–51, notes 43 and 44.

28 Schwarzenberg, "Colour, Light and Transparency in the Greek World," 22.

29 Barry, "Walking on Water."

30 See Scheja, "Hagia Sophia und Templum Salomonis," 51; Constantine Porphyrogenitos calls the altar a "little sea." See Barry, "Walking on Water," 637 and 653, note 79.

31 Mango and Parker, "A Twelfth-Century Description of St. Sophia," 234; Mjeska, "Notes on the Archaeology of St. Sophia at Constantinople," 299.

to the rivers of Paradise.[32] In brief, the relationship between the qualities of marble and the association with the sea appears to be a *topos* in the early Byzantine period. This *topos* also resonates in medieval responses to marble from the Latin West. When, for example, the German pilgrim William of Oldenburg visited Beirut in 1211, he described the marble he saw in the churches of the city as follows:

> Pauimentum habet subtile marmoreum, simulans aquam leui uento agitatam, ita ut, qui super illud incesserit, uadare putetur, cum tamen arene illic depicte summa uestigia non impresserit.[33]

With these associations in mind, we are able to understand that the suggestion of marble in the *incipit* folio of the Morgan Gospel of John was a clear artistic choice. The *incipit*, associated with the artistic suggestion of marble, should be seen against this long tradition of appreciating marble symbolically in artistic contexts. We have seen how the geological materiality of marble was associated with a frozen sea, and how marble houses of worship, because of their splendour, were traced to the biblical house of prayer: the temple of Solomon. The aesthetic experience of marble relates to the not-yet-unveiled image, an image that lives in potentiality and thus is contained in the suggestive, formative beauty of the marble material itself. The condition of images that have yet to manifest themselves figuratively is close to the phenomenon of the *acheiropoietos* or the image as *non-manufactum*.[34] Images not made by human hands are the 'images' by and in God's creation. These can be hidden images in rocks or in organic materials. This type of sculpture, *non-manufactum*, requires an additional effort from the viewer to search for, and recognise, form and figuration in abstraction. In this active contemplation, the viewer touches upon the secret of the 'visual in process'. The viewer activates, as it were, the images that have traditionally been solidified in matter. In his book *Spiritual Seeing* (2000), Herbert Kessler has shown how this principle of perception was particularly strongly upheld at the time of the Morgan Gospels.[35] In the fourth section the paper returns to this image-theoretic principle of the Ottonian period.

3 *In principio*

The aesthetics of the marbles on the walls and the floors of Byzantine and Ottonian churches connect the liturgical space to cosmogonic meanings, and hence to the primordial waters in the Book of Genesis.[36]

In the Vulgate version, which was the primary point of reference for artists in the Latin West, Genesis 1:1–5 reads as follows:

> in principio creavit Deus caelum et terram.

---

[32] Barry, "Walking on Water," 628.
[33] *Peregrinatores medii aevi quator*, 167; English translation by Barry, "Walking on Water," 630: "A fine marble pavement that so well feigns water stirred by a light wind that, whoever steps over it, seems to be wading, since they leave no footprints above the sand depicted here."
[34] Trilling, "The Image not Made by Hands and the Byzantine Way of Seeing."
[35] Kessler, *Spiritual Seeing*, 153.
[36] Barry, "Walking on Water," 634.

terra autem erat inanis et vacua et tenebrae super faciem abyssi et spiritus Dei ferebatur
super aquas
dixitque Deus fiat lux et facta est lux
et vidit Deus lucem quod esset bona et divisit lucem ac tenebras
appellavitque lucem diem et tenebras noctem factumque est vespere et mane dies
unus.[37]

"The spirit [*spiritus*, after the Hebrew *ruach*] of God moved over the waters." Even before creation, in a cosmogonic state, the earth was covered with a 'primal flood' and there was chaos and darkness. The primal flood is here negative: it is a threatening force that stands in opposition to the power—the *ruach*—of God.[38] And God sweeps over the waters. He is the principle of air that must obtain power over the principle of water. The Hebrew story of creation is thus not one of creation *ex nihilo*. There is a cosmic pre-existence, albeit a chaotic one, and God is shown as the sovereign power that drives out the chaos of the waters.

The primeval ocean was, in the Semitic tradition, a chaotic principle that had to be combated by God's *ruach*.[39] It was the first principle of creation, already present, and hostile to *ruach*. The waters had to be 'tamed'. The marbles are similarly "ideogram[s] of the mythical Ocean encircling the inhabitable world (*oikoumene*). (...) the nave floor (representing the *oikoumene*) is often bounded by a decorative border. (...) a watery floor in the image of an entire sea, as presented by Proconnesian marble, promised to be alpha and omega of such premonitory materiality."[40]

The action of ordering/creation is carried out not only by God as wind but also through his voice. It is through his speech that what is to happen is brought about. Some exegetes see the *ruach* principle as a foreign element redacted into Genesis.[41] The concept is too specific and is at odds with all the further creative action being through speech. Nevertheless, the relationship between *ruach* and speech is no anomaly, for wind and voice have the same root meaning in Hebrew.[42]

In his book *The Spell of the Sensuous*, David Abram analyses the complex of air, breath, wind and *ruach* in terms of the transition from oral culture to literacy.

---

[37]   "In the beginning (*in principio*) when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day." Here and in what follows the neo-vulgata was used: Katholieke Bijbelstichting, "Willibordvertaling (1975)," accessed January 16, 2023, `https://rkbijbel`
`.nl/kbs/bijbel/willibrord1975/neovulgaat`; and for English the NRSV version on Bible Study Tools, "Home Page," accessed January 16, 2023, `www.biblestudytools.com`. With special thanks to Prof. dr. Reimund Bieringer, KU Leuven – Department of Exegesis.

[38]   This negative power may seem curious, given that in the West we spontaneously associate water with fertility and regeneration. Nevertheless, in the Babylonian mythography that influenced the Book of Genesis, the pre-cosmogonic state was a watery chaos, a primordial ocean. Only after this state, in the creation and order brought about by God, could water be considered a positive and regenerative principle. Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, 191.

[39]   Eissfeldt, "Gott und das Meer in der Bibel."

[40]   Barry, "Walking on Water," 634.

[41]   Sevrin, "Spiritus dans les versions latines de la bible."

[42]   Luyster, "Wind and Water," 8.

In principle air is invisible and for an oral cultural system air/wind is the archetype of the secret, of what is unknown but nonetheless 'there'.[43] Abram writes:

> Is it possible that a volatile power once propitiated as a local storm god came to be generalized, by one tribe of nomadic herders, into the capricious power of the encompassing atmosphere itself? That it was experienced not as an abstract power entirely outside of sensuous nature, but as the unseen medium, the *ruach*, the ubiquitous wind or spirit that enlivens the visible world.[44]

Abram shows that the word enunciated is conceived as 'structured breath,' giving air and wind a linguistic-semantic potential. The principle of air/wind communicates and breath structures this in speech in the communication between humans, between humanity and nature, and between humanity and God.[45]

This brings us back to the Morgan Gospels. The effect of the vortex on fol. 157r on the viewer is diffuse, vibrant, kinetic, and engulfing, in contrast to the epigraph with its symmetrical order, squared capitals, and solemn golden script.[46] The abstraction of a world in formation is the soil, the material of what is here formed as the epigraph. Thus, this particular iconography, which 'includes' the Latin words, resonates with a primordial state of potentiality, when from the dark waters matter was formed by God's voice.

In the miniature, God's voice is thus imagined to rise from the primordial mass. It speaks loud and clear of the imminent creation of form and language, and literally 'floats' over the veined vortex. The Latin epigraphy on the folio from the Morgan Gospel of John evokes the ordering principle from the primordial chaos of the frozen sea; God's voice expresses itself naturally through the noblest plastic means: purple pigment, gold leaf, and the classically chiselled capital. They are, so to speak, natural to His colour of voice. The miniaturist of the Morgan Gospel of John thus visualised the birth of form through divine speech in a highly original way, that is, by associating still wild matter to the ordering principle of letters and words. In this web of associations and meaning, the Latin capital possesses the aura, the script-charisma, of a primordial language.[47] Its marble-chiselled effect points to its durability, the word surviving the ravages of time. In combination with the gold, as the highest material and shining pigment, the epigraph additionally refers to the divine character of this eternal word that floats bodiless in the aural dimension of the *vox*. In this context, Latin is both the only capital script and the only language that can handle the status of divine speech. And the veined marble is both the only material and the only abstract iconography that expresses this ancient monotheistic status without figuration. Abstract pictoriality meets language, meets speech, meets epigraphy. This is a carefully designed visual

---

[43] Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, 225–60, esp. 226: "(...) the air, for oral peoples, is the archetype of all that is ineffable, unknowable, yet undeniably real and efficacious."

[44] Ibid., 249.

[45] Ibid., 227.

[46] In the Indo-European lexical field, the word for vortex is related to wind on the basis of turning, wobbling, confusing, disorder, tumbling, for example in *disturbare*, to make chaotic; Gambling History, "De geschiedenis van het gokken in Indo-Europese landen," accessed January 16, 2023, `http://www.indo-european.nl/Root /lemma Proto-IE`.

[47] Aytürk, "Script Charisma in Hebrew and Turkish."

statement about an act of creation that structures itself through the rhythm of classically aligned letters. That is why this folio is also the ultimate *ekphrasis*, namely the visual translation of what seems almost impossible: the 'something out of nothing,' with the divine word as its only mediation.

Thus, the *incipit* folio of the manuscript metamorphoses into something more and more significant than 'just' the beginning of a book. This *incipit* is the beginning of a coming of the Voice, a word so powerful that it could transform the chaos of the waters into linguistic order; so essential, that it needs the durability of epigraphy in stone. As a portal welcomes the visitor to the liturgical space, so this full-page miniature welcomes the fourth evangelical space of the manuscript.

<div align="center">

Now the actual text of John can come.

The voice is ready for the flesh.

</div>

At this stage of iconological analysis (the miniature as a plastic mirror of the creative voice, supported by simulated marble that is itself charged with cosmogonic symbolism), we reach the right moment to elaborate on the principle of 'spiritual seeing,' mentioned previously.

4 Spiritual seeing

What does the image do? What can it do? What does it lack? These questions were asked in the West at the time of a deep crisis that was mainly played out in Byzantium. When the legitimacy of figurative art underwent a profound crisis during the eighth-century iconoclastic struggle, the mystery of the Incarnation there emerged as a fully-fledged theory of images.[48] In this context, fits a remarkable *passus* from the iconophile John of Damascus (675–749):

Εἰ μὲν γὰρ τοῦ ἀοράτου Θεοῦ εἰκόνα ἐποιοῦμεν, ὄντως ἡμαρτάνομεν. Ἀδύνατον γὰρ τὸ ἀσώματον, καὶ ἀόρατον, καὶ ἀπερίγραπτον, καὶ ἀσχημάτιστον εἰκονισθῆναι. (...) Θεοῦ γὰρ σαρκωθέντος, καὶ ὀφθέντος ἐπὶ γῆς σαρκί, καὶ ἀνθρώποις συναναστραφέντος, δι' ἄφατον ἀγαθότητα καὶ φύσιν, καὶ πάχος, καὶ σχῆμα, καὶ χρῶμα σαρκὸς ἀναλαβόντος, τούτου τὴν εἰκόνα ποιοῦντες, οὐ σφαλλόμεθα.[49]

From the words of John of Damascus, it seems the Incarnation becomes the key argument in a theologically grounded defence of the representation of Christ. The Christian God humbled himself in flesh for the benefit of mankind and thus offered visibility as salvation. This principle is called the *oikonomia*. This key concept of *oikonomia* (that is, the image as service and salvation) was developed in the

---

[48] See still as the most important work: Grabar, *L'iconoclasme byzantin*.

[49] John of Damascus, *Pro sacris imaginibus orationes tres*, PG 94:1288. English translation cited from Kessler, *Spiritual Seeing*, 35: "If we attempt to make an image of the invisible God, that would be a sin indeed. It is impossible to portray what has no body: invisible, indescribable, and without form (...). But we are not erring when we make an image of the incarnated deity, who has been seen in flesh on earth, has been in contact with man, and in his ineffable goodness has taken on nature, feeling, form, colour and flesh."

iconographic manifesto of Patriarch Nicephorus (758–828).[50] If God has revealed Himself in physical materiality, then any image of anything—even of the order of physical materiality—is logically permissible *a fortiori*. This reasoning was intended to undermine the main argument of the iconoclasts, namely Exodus 20:5:

> Non adorabis ea neque coles, quia ego sum Dominus Deus tuus, Deus zelotes, visitans iniquitatem patrum in filiis in tertiam et quartam generationem eorum, qui oderunt me.[51]

After all, the Christian God was no longer the jealous God. He was the humbled God who did not shun the paint as He had not shunned the flesh.

The debate between iconophiles and iconoclasts also became an issue at Charlemagne's court in the Latin West. There, scriptoria flourished; in manuscripts they produced, images and words were interwoven. Under the influence of Byzantine iconoclasm, however, the figurative image became problematic in Western Europe as well (Second Council of Nicaea, 787). The question at that time was no longer the legitimacy of the figurative image—which it had found in the image-theoretic and salvation-historical *oikonomia*—but the power of the image. What can the image achieve? What can it not do? According to the *Libri Carolini* (ca. 790), the image cannot reveal the underlying meaning of salvation history.[52] The image, therefore, is not the medium of the *interpretatio*. Interpretation is reserved for the word. Looking is a physical act, a sensory activity, suitable for the pagan who is not yet able to contemplate God and the sacred in the mind, the author of the *Libri Carolini* adds.[53]

Under the influence of the iconophile position at the beginning of the ninth century, Pope Hadrian I (772–795) defended 'spiritual vision' (Council of Paris, 825).[54] On his view, the image transcends narrativity and can become the vehicle for a higher seeing. That higher seeing is accompanied by the artist's hand itself, which is able to weave levels of interpretation into the image.

The image was seen to appeal to a threefold 'seeing' and became the subject of debate on the spiritual seeing of Hadrian I, which influenced the Ottonian manuscripts and their iconography. This perspective joins three levels of interpretation already formulated by Augustine.[55] First, there is the reading of words without understanding them. This kind of reading is tantamount to physical seeing. Secondly, there is spiritual seeing, where the words can be interpreted by an intellectual mediator. Often this mediator is a scholar who explains the text. Thirdly, and finally, there is true intellectual seeing. This seeing occurs deeply in

---

[50] Nicephorus, *Antirrhetici tres adversus Constantinum Copronymum*. Translated into French as *Discours contre les iconoclastes* by Mondzain-Baudinet; see also Alloa and Falk, eds., *BildÖkonomie*.

[51] "You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me."

[52] *Opus Caroli Regis Contra Synodum (Libri Carolini)*. Mentioned in the *Libri Carolini* 3.23, and cited in: Davis-Weyer, *Early Medieval Art 300–1150*, 103. See also Freeman, "Scripture and Images in the Libri Carolini," 163.

[53] Kessler, *Spiritual Seeing*, 153.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Augustine, *De civitate Dei* XXII, 29 (CCSL 48, 856). See also, classically, de Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale*, passim.

the mind and independently of elements only the senses would register, such as line, colour, sound, smell, or taste. It is there where God can be seen. According to Augustine, this seeing requires an intellectual power to detach things from their material nature into the virtue of the purely spiritual. This is the seeing that takes place immediately in the mind. In spiritual seeing, the visual medium is eschatological. In spiritual seeing, the image gets the last word.

With this digression on spiritual vision in the background, this paper returns to the role of the *incipit* in the Morgan Gospel of John, and we approach the conclusion of this iconological exploration.

5 *Et Verbum caro factum est*

The *incipit* chiselled in (simulated) stone makes a new beginning possible. Now that the inscription has been installed indestructibly in the manuscript as a potentiality, another time can begin, the time of the New Covenant and the road to figurative visibility. *In principio erat Verbum et Verbum erat apud Deum et Deus erat Verbum hoc erat in principio apud Deum* ("In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God") (John 1:1–2). *Et Verbum caro factum est et habitavit in nobis et vidimus gloriam eius gloriam quasi unigeniti a Patre plenum gratiae et veritatis* ("And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth") (John 1:14).

This 'marble' *incipit* may show pictorial strategies at work that put the Gospel according to John in a particular theological light and provide a reflection upon the relationship between the art of miniatures and the word as part of its visual and material field of signification. Augustine, among others, regarded John's Gospel as the most important gospel due to the reference to the Incarnation (the word becoming flesh) in the opening verses.[56] John Scotus Eriugena (ninth century) goes furthest in this valuation: the Apostle John has a visionary knowledge that surpasses the senses. Like his symbol, the eagle, he flies above things, in an unsurpassed flight of the spirit.[57] Eriugena sees John's visionary quality as a model for reading and interpretation that rises from darkness to light.[58]

Here the paradigm of the Incarnation, the transition from darkness to light, also touches on the essence of the artistic creative process. Thus, the material manipulation and pictorial integration of (marble) stains forces us to think about the relationship between prefiguration and figuration. Let loose between these two realms or 'visual fields' is an energy that constantly moves between them, as

---

[56] *Tituli* often read "In the manner of an eagle, John reaches the heavens through the word." *More volans aquilae verbo petit astra Johannes*, see Sedulius, *Carmen paschale* I, 358, PL 19:591.

[57] Eriugena, *Hom. XV*, 283b–283c: "Supervolat itaque beatus theologus Iohannes non solum quae intelligi ac dici possunt, verum etiam in ea quae superant omnem intellectum et significationem supervehitur, extraque omnia ineffabili mentis volatu," SC 151, 206.

[58] Referring to Romans 1:20, Eriugena contemplates whether the only way to divine knowledge is the Word or sensible things: "Learn the divine words and understand them with your spirit: there you will recognize the Word. Look with the bodily sense at the forms and beauty of sensible things: in them you will perceive the Word of God." From Dutton, ed., *Carolingian Civilization*, 458. See also O'Meara, *Eriugena*, 165–66.

if between the promise that a figure will appear out of nothing, and the consolidated figure/figuration itself. According to the Neoplatonist Pseudo-Dionysius (fifth-sixth century), this is in fact the primordial binomial relationship on which every visual creation is based. It is experienced in the realms of *plattomenos* (πλαττόμενος, being modelled) and *mimesis* (representing) respectively.[59] The energetic abstraction of the *plattomenos*—the dizzying sinuosities of polished marble slabs (a cosmogonic congelation of the murmuring sea)—testifies to a deeper anthropological split between a-figurative, prefigurative, abstract and symbolic, communicable, figurative, legible, mimetic.

The reader will now exchange the iconic gaze for a diachronic look. Slowly, he will notice how the letter 'I' attaches itself like an *axis mundi* to the letter 'N': *In principio erat Verbum*. And finally, the reader will understand that in this full-sheet miniature, letters grow and resonate into the symbol of the cross, which replaces the abstract trembling vortex. The text *In principio erat Verbum* opens a world in which God moves from word to flesh, from invisibility to visibility. The incarnate word has become real in the Son, and at the same time it conceals what cannot be seen without the mediation of the Son of Man. The abundant and complex interlacing or rotating motifs orchestrate the process of the unveiling of the sacred word made flesh in a "iconicity of script."[60] The Incarnation, which John the Evangelist upholds as the first principle of his book needs another visual grammar. The full-page miniature on folio verso celebrates the dynamics of simultaneous concealment and revelation of letters that playfully flow into each other, expressed in the medium of the book and its actual and true support: parchment.[61]

Paul clarifies this in his Second Letter to the Corinthians in Chapter 3:7, 11–14, 18:

> Quod si ministratio mortis, litteris deformata in lapidibus, fuit in gloria, ita ut non possent intendere filii Israel in faciem Moysis propter gloriam vultus eius, quae evacuatur. (...) Si enim, quod evacuatur, per gloriam est, multo magis, quod manet, in gloria est. Habentes igitur talem spem multa fiducia utimur, et non sicut Moyses: ponebat velamen super faciem suam, ut non intenderent filii Israel in finem illius quod evacuatur. Sed obtusi sunt sensus eorum. Usque in hodiernum enim diem idipsum velamen in lectione Veteris Testamenti manet non revelatum, quoniam in Christo evacuatur; (...) Nos vero omnes revelata facie gloriam Domini speculantes, in eandem imaginem transformamur a claritate in claritatem tamquam a Domini Spiritu.[62]

---

[59] See also Vandenbroeck, "Matrix Marmorea" (2012), 193.

[60] Hamburger, "The Iconicity of Script," 251: "this term encompasses more than signification, let alone symbolism, to include the presence and persuasiveness of lettering, at times independent of its meaning (hardly insignificant in light of widespread illiteracy)."

[61] Pirotte, "La Parole est aux images."

[62] "Now if the ministry of death, chiseled in letters on stone tablets, came in glory so that the people of Israel could not gaze at Moses' face because of the glory of his face, a glory now set aside. (...) for if what was set aside came through glory, much more has the permanent come in glory! Since, then, we have such a hope, we act with great boldness, not like Moses, who put a veil over his face to keep the people of Israel from gazing at the end of the glory that was being set aside. But their minds were hardened. Indeed, to this very day, when they hear the reading of the old covenant, that same veil is still there, since only in Christ is it set aside. (...) And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a

Figure 5: *In principio* page of the Gospel of John, Morgan Gospels, tenth century, New York, The Morgan Library, MS M. 755, fol. 157v.

Whereas the veil of Moses had to cover the divine reflection (Exodus 33:20: *Rursumque ait: Non poteris videre faciem meam; non enim videbit me homo et vivet*),[63] so Paul says, the imperfection of the Old Testament, like the temple curtain, will be lifted in the unveiled truth of Christ. The Church Fathers, like the aforementioned John of Damascus, recognised in the veil the bearer of the face as the revelation of the New Covenant. To conceal and to reveal, that is what the 'image veil' does. That is also what the *mandylion* does. The *mandylion*, the image of images, has caught the divine rays of light, made the face of God in the Son bearable, and transferred that glory to humanity.

mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit."

[63]   "'But', he said, 'you cannot see my face; for no one shall see me and live'."

Back to the Morgan Gospel of John. Both sides of the page thus represent a beginning based on their own type and function, but how do recto and verso relate to each other?

On the recto, the reader wanders over the pictorial, prefigurative abstraction of marble, and then clings to the shapely letters of the *incipit*. In the movement of a hand that turns recto to verso, the ultimate contrast appears: a scripture of lines and shapes, an endogenous letter miniature that weaves writing into image (fig. 5).[64] The *incipit* functions in the tightness of the chiselled Latin letters. Here, the Hebrew invisible God is still at work, ordering, while the word sounded loud and commanding, and while the form was still enclosed, waiting, in geological primordial matter, for His human form and a new voice: the voice of the Logos, the incarnate word.

The *In principio*-miniature is active in the incarnate word, in the softness of a voice muffled by textiles. A voice that no longer shows itself in the iconoclastic purity of Roman letters, but forces its way towards awakening figuration, towards the imminent unveiling of the Son of Man. The New Covenant prefers the medium of the textile as its visual idiom: contemporary with the typical insular art decorations. The page with the abstract vortex is turned. The invisible God of the Old Covenant, who owed his greatness to the medium of the uncompromisingly chiselled Latin, and spoke with a golden tongue, must make way for the soft flesh.

6 Post-scriptum. A synthesis

This research was grafted upon the assumption that the vortex with script on fol. 157r was an iconographic 'subject'. The marble with the Roman lettering in gold leaf can be explained from its function of the folio. The *incipit* miniature expresses the essence of 'what begins,' or rather, of 'what is beginning'. To this end, the paper explored the meaning and aesthetic experience of marble in conjunction with the Latin text. This exploration demonstrated the sensorial symbolism behind the miniature: the image plays on the sense of touch, speech as well as sight.

Firstly, the letters refer to texts chiselled into stone. They give the folio the suggestion of ancient *spolia*, like the example from Corvey. *Spolia* were not only integrated into churches and façades for pragmatic reasons, but also conveyed the grandeur of the past. They articulate the glorious foundations on which Christianity continued to build. In the Morgan Gospel of John, the depiction of stone and script refers to classical antiquity, which the Ottonians took as their starting point to create their artistic cosmos. The Roman letters of the *incipit* speak the language of the Romans and of the Bible through Church and State, through Popes and the successors of Constantine the Great (ca. 273–337).

The Roman Catholic Church clothed itself with marble. The glittering stone which the earth pushes up from its deepest core was honoured as an image of creation itself because of its aesthetic qualities. But also the letters of the *incipit* glisten; they shine in the most valuable material of gold leaf. Ephemeral, sensitive

---

[64] Arnulf, *Versus ad Picturas*, 236.

and fragile, added as a last movement in the artistic process of a humble human hand, the text raises itself anagogically and eschatologically to the Creator Himself.

The Latin epigraphy is in and above the image. As mentioned, the form of the text may refer to stone fragments that can be found *in situ* outside the manuscript, but at the same time the Latin floats over the marble pigments, liberating itself from mimesis, from *realia*, from the human hand. The *incipit* of the Morgan Gospel of John expresses the initial ability to form something out of nothing within the manuscript by purely plastic means. The folio carries the miniature as *mise-en-abîme*, as self-reflection of the creative act, and in doing so touches again the cosmogonic principle which was so deeply associated with marble.

Thus, the meaning of Latin changes again. The language that this script represents—both durable and heavenly—is the language of the creating God; a God who uses His voice to 'call' form out of liquid primordial seas. A voice like *ruach*, like spirit, that rules over the plastic universe of form and colour with His golden breath. This God of the Old Covenant hides in the speech and solitude of the word. God knows no physical revelation. This Creator enters into His archetypal *incipit* covenant in the medium of stone and tablet: ancient, polished, and durable.

In the *incipit* folio, the Gospel of John has its primordial beginning. Before folio 157 recto nothing can exist. On the folio's verso, the book can pass to its first words: *In principio*. This new beginning, not of the verb *incipere*, but of the noun *principium*, does not constitute a cosmogonic act, but a principle unveiling to visibility. The voice becomes word, and the word becomes flesh. This basic progress towards the New Covenant, towards the 'now' of the manuscript, requires the contemporary language and form. The now continues in the symbol of the cross; the now is a graphic growth, overcoming the distinction between word and image. In the New Covenant word is image, image is text, text is script, script is image.

Both sides of the page use their appropriate decorum to guide the gaze. The user's gaze first hooks onto the elegant, Roman capital, a lifebelt of reason on this tumbling primordial sea, and then turns away from it in rampant proliferation. The *incipit* remaining archaic and classical in inorganic and indestructible matter. The *In principio* being new and exuberant in organic, fragile life itself. In one turn of a page, the path from past to present is revealed.

*

Such a reading, as valid as it might seem, does not exhaust the visual devices implemented in the manuscript, and it must be considered, at least as a hypothesis, that the display of colour works here as a subject in itself, as an iconographic motif, and that it does not constitute a temporary state of visuality. Colour would be the real subject of the image and would refer to nothing but to itself. The painter would have figured colour precisely because it is at the core of the copy and illumination of the manuscript and allows for the very possibility of the book. Such a use of colour would be a creative gesture showing a profound reflexivity about the material ways of producing visuality,

as deep as what can be seen in the calligraphic manipulation of letterforms, in the use of ornament, in the painting of portraits and narrative images.[65]

List of figures

References

Abram, David. *The Spell of the Sensuous. Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World*. New York: Vintage Books, 1997.

Alloa, Emmanuel, and Francesca Falk, eds. *BildÖkonomie. Haushalten mit Sichtbarkeiten*, Eikones. Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2013.

Arnulf, Arwed. *Versus ad Picturas. Studien zur Titulusdichtung als Quellengattung der Kunstgeschichte von der Antike bis zum Hochmittelalter*. Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1997.

Augustine. *De civitate Dei Libri XI–XIII*. Edited by Bernhard Dombart and Alphonsus Kalb. Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 48. Turnhout: Brepols, 1955.

Avicenna. *De congelatione et conglutinatione lapidum. Being Sections of the Kitâb al-Shifâ'. The Latin and Arabic Texts*. Edited with an English translation of the latter and with critical notes by Eric J. Holmyard and Desmond C. Mandeville. Paris: Geuthner, 1927.

Aytürk, İlker. "Script Charisma in Hebrew and Turkish. A Comparative Framework for Explaining Success and Failure of Romanization." *Journal of World History* 21, no. 1 (2010): 97–130.

Baert, Barbara. "Marble and the Sea or Echo Emerging (a Ricercar)." *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma, Serie VII, Historia del Arte* 5 (2017: Dossier: *Treasures of the Sea. Art*

---

[65] Debiais, "Colour as Subject," 46.

before Craft, edited by Avinoam Shalem): 35–54.

——. "New Iconological Perspectives on Marble as Divinus Spiritus. Hermeneutical Change and Iconogenesis." *Louvain Studies* 40, no. 1 (2017): 14–36.

——. *Pneuma and the Visual Arts in the Middle Ages and Early Modernity*, Art & Religion 5. Leuven/Paris/Walpole, MA: Peeters Publishers, 2016.

Barry, Fabio. "Walking on Water. Cosmic Floors in Antiquity and the Middle Ages." *Art Bulletin* 89, no. 4 (2007): 627–56.

Boeckler, Albert. *Abendländische Miniaturen bis zum Ausgang der romanischen Zeit*. Berlin/Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter, 1930.

Bonne, Jean-Claude. "De l'ornemental dans l'art médiéval (VIIᵉ-XIIᵉ siècle). Le modèle insulaire." In *L'image. Fonctions et usages des images dans l'Occident médiéval*, edited by Jérôme Baschet and Jean-Claude Schmitt, Cahiers du Léopard d'Or 5, 185–219. Paris: Cahiers du Léopard d'Or, 1996.

Choricius of Gaza. *Opera*. Edited by Richard Foester, Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana 1137a. Leipzig: Teubner, 1929.

Davis-Weyer, Caecilia. *Early Medieval Art 300–1150. Sources and Documents*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1971.

Debiais, Vincent. "Colour as Subject." In *Abstraction in Medieval Art. Beyond the Ornament*, edited by Elina Gertsman, 33–53. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021.

De Lubac, Henri. *Exégèse médiévale*. Paris: Aubier, 1959.

Dutton, Paul Edward, ed. *Carolingian Civilization. A Reader*. Peterborough: Broadview, 1996.

Eissfeldt, Otto. "Gott und das Meer in der Bibel." In *Studia Orientalia Ioanni Pedersen*, edited by Hvidberg Flemming, 76–84. Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1953.

Elbern, Victor H. "Zierseiten in Handschriften des frühen Mittelalters als Zeichen sakraler Abgrenzung." In *Der Begriff der Representatio im Mittelalter. Stellvertretung, Symbol, Zeichen, Bild,* edited by Albert Zimmermann, Miscellanea 8, 340–56. Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1971.

Eliade, Mircea. *Patterns in Comparative Religion*. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1958.

Eriugena. *Homélie sur le Prologue de Jean*. Introduction, critical text, translation and notes by Édouard Jeauneau, Sources Chrétiennes 151. Paris: Cerf, 1969.

Farr, Carol. "The Incipit Pages of the Macregol Gospels." In *Making and Meaning in Insular Art. Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Insular Art Held at*

Trinity College Dublin, 25–28 August 2005, edited by Rachel Moss, 275–87. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007.

Fobelli, Maria Luigia. "Descrizione e percezione delle immagini acheropite sui marmi bizantini." In *Immagine e ideologia. Studi in onore di Arturo Carlo Quintavalle*, edited by Arturo Calzona, Roberto Campari, and Massimo Mussini, 27–32. Milan: Electa, 2007.

Freeman, Ann. "Scripture and Images in the Libri Carolini." In *Testo e immagine nell'alto medioevo*, Settimane di Studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo 41, 163–88. Spoleto: Presso la Sede del Centro, 1994.

Ganz, David. "Clothing Sacred Scriptures. Materiality and Aesthetics in Medieval Book Religions." In *Clothing Sacred Scriptures. Book Art and Book Religion in Christian, Islamic, and Jewish Cultures*, edited by David Ganz and Barbara Schellewald, 1–46. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019.

Gell, Alfred. *Art and Agency. An Anthropological Theory*. London/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Gellrich, Jesse M. *The Idea of the Book in the Middle Ages. Language, Theory, Mythology, and Fiction*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985.

Grabar, André. *L'iconoclasme byzantin. Dossier archéologique*. Paris: Collège de France, 1984.

Hamburger, Jeffrey F. "The Iconicity of Script." *Word & Image* 27, no. 3 (2011): 249–60.

——. *Script as Image*, Corpus of Illuminated Manuscripts 21. Louvain: Peeters, 2014.

Harrsen, Meta, ed. *Central European Manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library*. Mediaeval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library 2. New York: Pierpont Morgan Library, 1958.

Isidore of Seville. *Etymologiarum sive originum libri XX*. Edited by Wallace Martin Lindsay. Oxford: Clarendon, 1911.

——. *The Etymologies*. Edited and translated by Stephen A. Barney, W. J. Lewis, J. A. Beach, and Oliver Berghof. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Jakobi-Mirwald, Christine. *Text-Buchstabe-Bild. Studien zur historisierten Initiale im 8. und 9. Jahrhundert*. Berlin: Reimer, 1998.

John of Damascus. *Pro sacris imaginibus orationes tres*. Edited by Michel Lequien, Patrologia Graeca 94, cols. 1227–1420. Paris: Migne, 1864.

Kessler, Herbert L. *Spiritual Seeing. Picturing God's Invisibility in Medieval Art*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000.

Kruse, Christiane. *Wozu Menschen malen. Historische Begründungen eines Bildmediums*. Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2003.

Luyster, Robert. "Wind and Water. Cosmogonic Symbolism in the Old Testament." *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentische Wissenschaft* 93, no. 1 (1981): 1–10.

Mango, Cyril, and Parker, John. "A Twelfth-Century Description of St. Sophia." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 14 (1960): 233–45.

Mjeska, George P. "Notes on the Archaeology of St. Sophia at Constantinople. The Green Marble Bans on the Floor." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 32 (1978): 299–308.

Nicephorus. *Discours contre les iconoclastes*. Translation, presentation, and notes by Marie-José Mondzain-Baudinet. Paris: Klincksieck, 1989.

O'Driscoll, Joshua. "Visual Vortex. An Epigraphic Image from an Ottonian Gospel Book." *Word & Image* 27, no. 3 (2012): 309–21.

O'Meara, John. *Eriugena*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1988.

Onians, John. "Abstraction and Imagination in Late Antiquity." *Art History* 3, no. 1 (1980): 1–23.

Opus Caroli regis contra synodum (Libri Carolini). Edited by A. Freeman. Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1998.

Paul the Silentiary. *Descriptio S. Sophiae et ambonis*. Edited by Immanuel Bekkerl, Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae. Bonn: Weber, 1837.

Peregrinatores medii aevi quator. Edited by Johann C. M. Laurent. Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1864.

Pirotte, Emmanuelle. "La Parole est aux images. La lettre, l'espace et la voix dans les évangéliaires insulaires." *Bulletin de l'Institut historique belge de Rome* 69 (1999): 61–76.

Pliny the Elder. *Natural History, Volume X: Books 36–37*. Translated by D. E. Eichholz, Loeb Classical Library 419. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962.

Scheja, Georg. "Hagia Sophia und Templum Salomonis." *Istanbuler Mitteilungen* 12 (1962): 44–58.

Schwarzenberg, Erkinger. "Colour, Light and Transparency in the Greek World." In *Medieval Mosaics. Light, Color, Materials*, edited by Eve Borsook, Fiorella Gioffredi Superbi, and Giovanni Pagliarulo, 15–34. Milan: Silvana, 2000.

Sedulius (Coelius). *Carmen paschale*. Edited by J.-P. Migne, Patrologia Latina 19, cols. 533–753. Paris: Migne, 1844.

Sevrin, Jean-Marie. "Spiritus dans les versions latines de la bible." In *Spiritus. IVº Colloquio Internazionale*, edited by Marta Fattori and Massimo Bianchi, Lessico

intellettuale Europea 32, 77–91. Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1984.

Sidonius Apollinaris. *Poems. Letters. Books 1–2*. Edited and translated by W. B. Anderson, Loeb Classical Library 296. London/Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956.

Sporbeck, Gudrun, ed. *Vor dem Jahr 1000. Abendländische Buchkunst zur Zeit der Kaiserin Theophanu. Eine Ausstellung des Schnütgen-Museums zum Gedenken an den 1000. Todestag*. Cologne: Druckerei Locher, 1991.

Statius. *Silvae*. Edited and translated by D. R. Shackleton Bailey, Loeb Classical Library 206. London/Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003.

Swarzenski, Hanns. "Die deutschen Miniaturen des frühen Mittelalters in amerikanischem Besitz." *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst* 63 (1929/1930): 193–99.

Trilling, James. "Medieval Art without Style? Plato's Loophole and a Modern Detour." *Gesta* 34, no. 1 (1995): 57–62.

——. "The Image not Made by Hands and the Byzantine Way of Seeing." In *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation*, edited by Herbert L. Kessler and Gerhard Wolf, 110–27. Bologna: Nuova Alfa Editoriale, 1998.

Vandenbroeck, Paul. "Matrix Marmorea. De subsymbolische iconografie van de scheppende energieën in Europa en Noord-Afrika." In *Materie & Beeld*, edited by Lut Pil and Trees De Mits, 51–78. Ghent: Sint-Lucas, 2010.

——. "Matrix Marmorea. The Sub-Symbolic Iconography of the Creative Energies in Europe and North Africa." In *New Perspectives in Iconology. Visual Studies and Anthropology*, edited by Barbara Baert, Ann-Sophie Lehmann, and Jenke van den Akkerveken, 180–210. Brussels: Academic & Scientific Publishers, 2012.

Vergil. *The Aeneid*. Translated by Theodore C. Williams, Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1910.

Wagner, Stephen M. "Silken Parchments. Design, Context, Patronage and Function of Textile-inspired Pages in Ottonian and Salian Manuscripts." PhD diss., University of Delaware, 2004.