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Eucharistic Adoration in the Carolingian Era? Exposition of Christ in the Host¹

**By Roger E. Reynolds, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval
 Studies**

Eucharistic adoration has become a contentious topic in the past few decades. The controversy has occasionally hit the front pages of Catholic newspapers and journals, and even the pages of the venerable *Boston Globe*. Perhaps it should also have been reported on the entertainment or even the medical pages. The fuss is about whether Eucharistic adoration should be encouraged or not. In one corner of the controversy or battle are the “heavyweights” who argue forcefully for the maintenance, development, and promotion of Eucharistic adoration. In the other corner are the pesky tsetse-flyweights who argue that the practice should be reduced or even retired.

¹ For their observations and valuable suggestions I am grateful to Peter Klein, John Williams, Lawrence Nees, Éric Palazzo, Aden Kumler, and Paul Dutton. I am especially indebted to Herbert Kessler, who has kindly confirmed with close inspection many of my observations on the illustrations of hosts in the Carolingian manuscripts and has generously given me additional examples not previously known to me to support my ideas. He has also kindly shared with me the draft of his forthcoming article, “Dynamic Signs and Spiritual Designs,” with its wealth of material.

Among the heavyweights in one corner are popes -- Pope Francis I, Pope Benedict XVI, the soon-to-become Pope St. John Paul II, and the list goes on back to Pope Urban IV, who in 1264 instituted the Feast of Corpus Christi and also had St. Thomas Aquinas compose the awe-inspiring Office of Corpus Christi. (**fig. 1**)



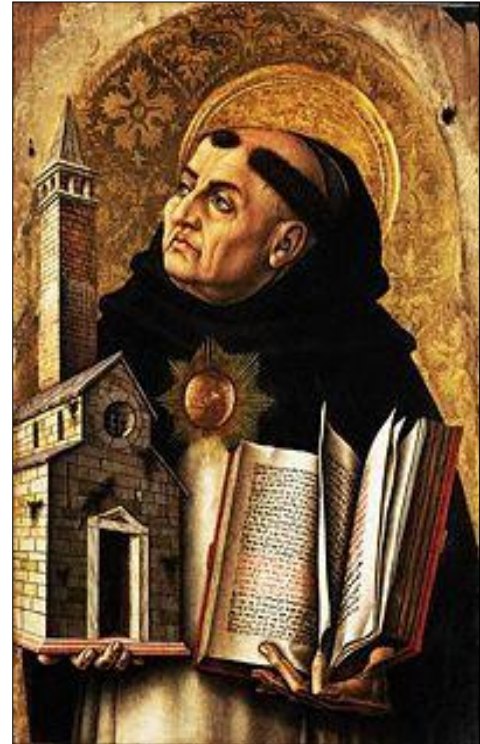
Figure 1 Popes Francis I, Benedict XVI, John Paul II, and Urban IV. Photo: author

The heavyweight theologians supporting and promoting Eucharistic adoration are too numerous to mention, but one must certainly number St. Thomas himself, one of the greatest minds and theologians of all time and the author of the Office of Corpus Christi. (**fig. 2**)

In the same corner of the ring supporting Eucharistic adoration are many assistants. Chief among these are the many musical composers who have put St. Thomas's *Tantum ergo sacramentum* and *O salutaris hostia* to music, and then the countless choirs that have sung these.

Figure 2 Carlo Crivelli, St. Thomas Aquinas, 15th century, Italy, National Gallery, London. Photo: Creative Commons.

There are also those who have added verses to the *O salutaris hostia* invoking the host's help for, among other things, peace to the lily of France. Also in the heavyweights' corner are the thousands of artisans who have created host monstrances and tabernacles, some humble and others magnificent and enormous, gracing churches throughout Christendom. (fig. 3, 4)



Also in this corner of the ring are the “promoters” of the great Corpus Christi processions each year that draw hundreds of thousands of onlookers, who perhaps have not entered a church for years, but who humbly and reverently bow or kneel as the Eucharistic host passes. (fig. 5) Then there are the thousands of actual participants in these



Figure 3 Choir singing *O salutaris hostia*. Photo: author.



Figure 4 (left) Host Tabernacle, S. Lorenz, Nurnberg by Adam Kraft, 15th century, 61 feet tall; (right) Corpus Christi Monstrance (The Great Monstrance of Arfe) by Enrique de Arfe, 1517-1524, Toledo, Spain. Photos: Creative Commons.



Figure 5 Corpus Christi processions at Toledo Cathedral, Spain. Photos: Creative Commons

processions, the clerics, politicians, military, bands, confraternities, and individuals, the author included.

These processions can be simple ones in small villages, or such magnificent ones such as those in Toledo Spain, or even in Corpus Christi procession of ships on the Rhine, the “Mülheimer Gottestracht.” (fig. 6)

Figure 6 Corpus Christi Exposition of ships on the Rhine, the “Mülheimer Gottestracht.” Photo: Creative Commons.





Figure 7 Corpus Christi Mass. Photo: Creative Commons.

And who can forget the spectacular displays of colored flower petals lovingly and patiently placed on the streets of Italian villages and towns over which the

Corpus domini processes – the l’infiorata decorations that draw tour buses by the hundreds and thousands of tourists to the processions. Finally, Eucharistic adoration in its many forms can be a private devotion but it can also draw tens of thousands of the faithful to mass meetings. (**fig. 7**)

Moreover, one must not forget that the feast of Corpus domini is a holiday in many countries. To put it in direct terms, if one suppresses Eucharistic adoration in the feast of Corpus Christi, some people will lose a lovely spring holiday from work. So much for the heavyweights who favor Eucharistic adoration.

Now, in the other corner of our ring (the “squared circle”) are those who contend that Eucharistic adoration is misdirected and that the Eucharistic celebration should be focused not on a small wafer but on the celebration of the life of community, leading then to communal action, social activism and programs, and the like. Among the pesky tsetse-flyweights in the United States opposing Eucharistic adoration are, as one might expect, theological members of the Fightin’ Irish of Notre Dame. (**fig. 8**)

Figure 8 University of Notre Dame Theologians. Photo: author.
The noted theologian, Fr.



Richard McBrien, condescendingly acknowledges that some Catholics find adoration “spiritually enriching,” but many liturgists, he says, see it as a “step back into the Middle Ages.” (To which, of course, one responds “What’s wrong with the Middle Ages? Notre Dame has one of the finest Medieval Institutes in the world.”) According to McBrien, adoration distorts the meaning of the Eucharist: “It erodes the communal aspect, and it erodes the fact that the Eucharist is a meal. Holy Communion is something to be eaten, not to be adored.” For that reason, McBrien says, the practice should be “tolerated, but not encouraged”² One wonders if Christ is present in the sacramental celebration only when he pops in at the “Hoc est corpus meum” and pops out after the “Ite missa est.” McBrien’s colleague at Notre Dame, Liturgist Nathan Mitchell wants Eucharistic piety to be “socially conscious.” Mitchell’s chief worry is that “...one sometimes gets the impression that enthusiasm for practices like perpetual adoration ... embody a flight from the world’s woes rather than pro-active engagement in solving them.” Perhaps he means that time spent in adoration of the Eucharist is time wasted, that it should be spent in social action.³

If holy communion is something to be eaten, not adored, as McBrien argues, then what exactly is to be eaten? This has led to another contemporary controversy, a cause as it were, as to

² As reported in the *National Catholic Reporter*, June 16, 2011. In the article McBrien sniffs at the Eucharistic adoration of the simple, cloistered nuns at the Shrine of St. Clement's in Back Bay Boston, saying “Now that most Catholics are literate and even well-educated ... there is little or no need for extraneous eucharistic devotions.” He did not mention that in Boston’s nearby Church of the Advent on Brimmer Street, Beacon Hill – the parish of my (and my two brothers’) friends, the “illiterate,” “uneducated” Harvard professors, Admiral Samuel Eliot Morison, Naval Commander Walter Muir Whitehill, and earlier “Mrs. Jack” Isabella Stewart Gardiner (who once celebrated Mass with the pope in his private Vatican chapel) – Eucharistic adoration and outdoor Corpus Christi processions have been and still are a tradition. On Morison and Whitehill at the Advent see the memorial for the latter in *The New England Quarterly*, 51/2 (1978), p. 253; on “Mrs. Jack” at the Advent see Louise Hall Tharp, *Mrs. Jack: A Biography of Isabella Stewart Gardiner* (repr. Graphics, 2010); and on Corpus Christi and processions there see the photo page on www.theadventboston.org. It was there, the air heavy with incense that my late wife fainted into the arms of Samuel Eliot Morison, and where my first-born was christened in the gothic font as Michele (for St.-Michel en Normandie).

³ As reported by James Hitchcock of St. Louis University in the *Adoremus Bulletin* 15/7 (October, 2009), n.p.

what should be eaten. This is a major issue addressed by my former student and professor of theology at Marquette University, Wanda Zemler-Cizewski, who is gluten intolerant. The Vatican has ruled that the host must be of wheat, something the gluten-free person cannot tolerate. But to compensate the Vatican has pointed out that partaking of the wine alone does qualify as fully communing since Christ is in every crumb of the host and every drop of the consecrated wine – as medieval theologians asserted. The response is, of course, what about the person who is both gluten intolerant and alcohol-abstinent who can neither eat the host nor drink the wine? The response, naturally, is that such a person should commune spiritually in Eucharistic adoration. But to counter this it is argued that Christ said “Take, eat” and “Take drink” not “Sit and stare.” And what about the gluten-free priest, who by canon law, must partake of both the body and blood? The solution is to bar such persons from the priesthood?

Whatever the solutions to these modern theological and liturgical issues, most scholars trace them back to medieval theology and liturgical practice. They all agree and repeatedly say that the practice of Eucharistic adoration goes back at least to the early thirteenth century certainly in the Lowlands and then somewhat later in the century in Rome and throughout western Christendom, where in 1264 the Feast of Corpus Christi was the first officially mandated feast for the universal church by Urban IV in his bull *Transiturus*.⁴ Also it was in that century that the doctrine or theology of transubstantiation was mandated in the Fourth Lateran Council to explain how the real presence came about.⁵ It was also in this century that St. Thomas Aquinas

⁴ On this see my “Sacraments, Liturgy, and ‘Institutions,’” *Pensiero e sperimentazioni istituzionali nella ‘Societas Christiana’ (1046-1250)*, *Atti della sedicesima Settimana internazionale di studio Mendola*, 26-31 agosto 2004, ed. G. Andenna (Milan, 2007), pp. 139-165.

⁵ On the meaning and motives behind the decision of IV Lateran see Gary Macy, *The Theologies of the Eucharist in the early Scholastic Period : a Study of the Salvific Function of the Sacrament according to the Theologians, c. 1080-c. 1220* (Oxford, 1984).

composed his magnificent Eucharistic hymns, the *Tantum ergo sacramentum* with its suggestive words “Therefore we, before him bending, this great Sacrament we revere,” and his *O salutaris hostia* with its equally suggestive words, “O saving Victim, opening wide the gate of heaven to man below.”⁶

Some scholars then push the issue of Eucharistic adoration back to the eleventh century with the controversy over the meaning of the Eucharist by Berengar of Tours, who argued against the “real presence” and was condemned and forced to retract his idea with a profession repeated not long ago by Pope Paul VI (as the successor to “our predecessor,” Gregory VII) in his Encyclical *Mysterium fidei*.⁷ The case of Berengar, who took his support in the writings of Ratramnus of Corbie (whom he called Bertramnus), then leads scholars to push the issue back to Carolingian times with the debates between Paschasius Radbertus and Ratramnus of Corbie over the meaning of the Eucharist, which even involved the intervention of the king, Charles the Bald, who after examining the positions of Radbertus and Ratramnus gave his “official” royal approval to Radbertus’s theory of the “real presence.”

⁶ It has at times been argued that St. Thomas, O.P., may not have composed the office, on which see the discussion in the study of my late colleague, James Weisheipl, O.P., *Friar Thomas D'Aquino: his Life, Thoughts, and Works* (Oxford, 1975). It has been all but conclusively proven that he did. See the doctoral thesis done under my direction by Ronald John Zawilla, O.P., “The Biblical Sources of the *Historie Corporis Christi* attributed to Thomas Aquinas: A Theological Study to Determine their Authenticity” (Ph.D. diss. Toronto, 1985). His argument was fully persuasive to his examining committee made up of such Thomistic and Corpus Christi specialists as Fr. Pierre-Marie Gy, O.P. (Institut superieur de liturgie, Paris) Fr. Leonard Boyle, O.P. (Prefect of the Vatican Library), and Fr. Walter Principe, C.S.B. (of the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies). For the impetus of that study, see my “Corpus Christi in Agnone,” *Miscellanea Beneventana, Mediaeval Studies* 60 (1998), pp. 307-313. There have been since then, of course, many excellent studies of the office of Corpus Christi, including Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., *Saint Thomas Aquinas. The Person and his Work* (Washington, D. C., 2005); and Barbara R. Walters, Vincent Corrigan, Peter T. Ricketts, *The Feast of Corpus Christi* (College Park PA, 2006).

⁷ See his Encyclical of 1965, *Mysterium fidei*, 52, citing the profession of Berengar imposed by “our predecessor” Pope Gregory VII. The literature on the Berengarian controversy is immense. On Berengar and his work and influence see the chapters in *Auctoritas und Ratio: Studien zu Berengar von Tours*, eds. Peter Ganz, R. B. C. Huygens, and Friedrich Niewöhner (Wiesbaden, 1990); and more recently Charles M. Radding and Francis Newton, *Theology, Rhetoric, and Politics in the Eucharistic controversy, 1078-1079: Alberic of Monte Cassino against Berengar of Tours* (New York, 2003). On early canonistic manuscripts with the profession see my “The Turin Collection in Seven Books: A Poitevin Canonical Collection,” *Traditio* 25 (1969), p. 510.

In the thirteenth century the doctrine of the “real presence” found in transubstantiation was reinforced visually in Eucharistic adoration. Could there have been something similar in the ninth century, in the Carolingian Age? It can be suggested that there likely was. Naturally, there was no doctrine of transubstantiation, and one immediately objects to the idea of Eucharistic adoration in the age of Charlemagne by pointing out that the term “adoratio” was condemned during the Iconoclastic controversy by Charlemagne through Theodulf of Orléans in the *Libri Carolini* (*Opus Caroli regis contra synodum*) and by numerous other court theologians. Through a mistranslation of the Greek word “proskunesis” the Carolingians believed that the Easterners favored worship of images and condemned them. On their side they said that “Istae [images] ad ornamentum vel ad res gestas monstrandas fiant,” often interpreted as approval of images for ornamentation and for what they represent, but not for veneration of the reality behind them. How then could the Carolingians have had a Eucharistic “adoratio”? Despite the stance of the Westerners, they continued to use the term “adoratio” and its derivatives in terms of appreciation of images in artistic media. There is a text attributed to Alcuin, who favored words over images,⁸ who speaks condescendingly of an “amator vel potius adorator imaginum” using words found in the *Libri Carolini*.⁹ One wonders if he secretly had Charlemagne in mind, who could not read but was clearly an “amator vel potius adorator imaginum,” as can be seen in his sponsorship or at least appreciation of such glorious books as the Godescalc Gospels made for him. Then there is Theodulf of Orléans, the “author” of the *Libri Carolini*, who nonetheless created the striking

⁸ On the Carolingian hierarchy of words over images see Ildar H. Garipzanov, *The Symbolic Language of Royal Authority in the Carolingian World (c.751-877)* (Leiden, 2008) , p. 224 n. 73 and literature therein. For other Carolingian ideas on the value of hearing, sight, and images see David F. Appleby, “Sight and Church Reform in the thought of Jonas of Orléans,” *Viator* 27 (1996), esp. pp. 13, 24, and 30.

⁹ See Éric Palazzo, “Arte et Liturgie: Nouvelles approches anthropologique et épistémologique,” *Anales de Historia au moyen âge del arte*, vol. extraord. (2010), p. 55 n. 90.

mosaic image in his oratory at Germigny-des-Prés of the Ark of the Covenant with its four cherubim significantly hovering over and suggesting the altar below.¹⁰ In short, the Carolingians, at least at the highest level, seem to have had an appreciation of images somewhat beyond that of simple ornamentation or didacticism.¹¹

In a recent stimulating article on “Art, Liturgy, and the Five Senses in the Early Middle Ages,” Éric Palazzo demonstrates how Carolingians located sacred space and the divine in liturgical objects and rites.¹² The consecrated church with its candles, wall decorations, and chants was not simply a building but the Apocalyptic heavenly Jerusalem inhabited by the Lamb of God to be interiorized in the hearts of the faithful. A portable altar was not simply a highly decorated slab of stone, but a sacred space, an extension of the sacred space of a church, the *Mensa domini* of the Last Supper on which the body of Christ is consecrated to be consumed by the faithful. A paschal candle (pictured in the ninth-century Raganaldus Sacramentary) after its blessing, insertion of grains of incense representing the wounds of Christ and the Alpha and Omega was no longer a tall decorated beeswax candle, but the *Lux mundi*, the *Lumen Christi* to be revered by the faithful. The Gospel book read at Mass by the deacon, in the *imago Christi*,¹³ after it had been blessed, censed, and revered with bows, was no longer a highly

¹⁰ On this see Ann Freeman, “Further Studies in the Libri Carolini: I. Palaeographical Problems in Vaticanus latinus 7207, II Patristic Exegesis, Mozarabic Antiphons, and the Vetus Latina,” *Speculum* 40 (1965), p. 281.

¹¹ It could, of course, be argued that the artists who created these images had not “gotten” the official message from “above,” but this is unlikely given their continuous output of such images seemingly approved by their royal patrons.

¹² “Art, Liturgy, and the Five Senses in the Early Middle Ages,” *Viator* 41 (2010), pp. 25-56.

¹³ In the Ordinals of Christ the *imago Christi* in the deacon is usually seen in Christ’s pedilavium, but at times he is associated with reading the Gospel, as in the Ste-Geneviève Ordinal, “Unde dicitur dyaconus de ablucione pedum discipulorum suorum dominus. Unde idem dominus levita dicitur. Consuetudo antiquiorum de tribu Levi levita facere erat, est proprium levitarum evangelium legere”; or in the Ordinal of Milan Ambrosiana T 62 sup. “Hoc officium Christus tunc inplevit quando pedes discipulorum lavit et ut alter alterius pedes lavet docuit. Idem in eodem. Ideo diaconus evangelium legere quia sicut dominus donec evangelium predicavit minister fuit ut ipse ait, Non veni ministrari sed ministrare.” On this see my *The Ordinals of Christ from their Origins to the Twelfth Century*

ornamented and decorated book both inside and out, but the *Verbum domini*, the Word made flesh. And finally, the host after consecration by the priest, in the *imago Christi*,¹⁴ with the words “*Hoc est corpus meum*” was no longer a morsel of bread or even a symbol, but the true body of Christ *in presentia*. It is in this intersection of art, theology, and liturgical practice that Eucharistic adoration in the Carolingian age can be discerned. It can be found in the Eucharistic illustrations in liturgical manuscripts, in the theology of the “real presence” developed by Paschasius Radbertus and approved by Charles the Bald, and in the use of azyme hosts popularized in the ninth century. The theological component of this mix, the real presence, has been adequately explored by theologians for centuries, so the focus here will be on the other two components, Eucharistic illustrations in the manuscripts and the use of azyme hosts during the Carolingian age.

(*Beiträge zur Geschichte und Quellenkunde des Mittelalters* 7, ed. Horst Fuhrmann, Berlin-New York, 1978; repr. Walter de Gruyter, 2013) *passim*.

¹⁴ See *The Ordinals of Christ*, *passim*.



Figure 9 Corpus Christi College Cambridge 286, fol. 125 r. Photo: author

Before turning directly to the Carolingian age itself, a look back to earlier Eucharistic illustrations in ancient western manuscripts is appropriate, with special attention as to the hosts on the altars or tables. What is styled as the earliest depiction of the Last Supper in western art is found in the Corpus Christi Gospels or the St. Augustine Gospels, dating to the sixth century. In one of the small square illustrations of the passion of Christ there is depicted the *Cena domini*: Christ is shown blessing a golden round object as he and his disciples are gathered around a semi-circular table (altar?) on which are arranged a chalice and six golden round objects with dots in the center. In the low center is a large round object, perhaps a rimmed paten, with an indistinct object in it, perhaps a fish or lamb. Are the six round objects with dots hosts or

loaves?¹⁵ Their rather large size likely means that they are loaves.¹⁶ (**fig. 9**) Also, it is interesting that they bear no Christian symbols, although one would not expect this for a scene at the Last Supper.¹⁷ But what of the small round disks held by Christ and the two figures to his left, Christ's in gold and the others in white? Are the white disks pieces of the broken bread or possibly smaller azyme hosts? Also, it is unclear if these disks have small dots around them – to which we shall return.

While a Eucharistic illustration in a Gospel book such as the *Corpus Christi Gospels* is not totally unexpected, it can perhaps be found in an ancient manuscript with the Old Testament, the *Ashburnham Pentateuch* or *Pentateuch of Tours*, made in the late sixth or early seventh century in an area disputed by art historians – Spain, Rome, Syria, or North Africa. Several scenes have been carefully examined by Dorothy Verkerk in an older article and more recently in her book on the *Ashburnham Pentateuch* for Christian scenes with Eucharistic references.¹⁸

In the Noah's ark scene on fol. 10v Noah is shown before an altar blessing three vessels (ciboria or chalices?) in which small round objects are placed. They are likely not loaves but possibly hosts, although their violet color likely indicates grapes or other objects. (**fig. 10**)

¹⁵ In the fresco of the Last Supper in San Angelo in Formis (11th century) there are twelve hosts laid out before the disciples, but that for Judas is separated from the others in the semi-circle.

¹⁶ One must, of course, be cautious about using the size of an object to judge whether it is a loaf or host, since even into the eleventh and twelfth centuries there could be large hosts, on which see Jules Corblet, *Essai historique et liturgique sur les ciboires et la réserve de l'eucharistie* (Paris, 1858), p. 19, 22. Even in the later Middle Ages there are depicted priests elevating a very large host with both hands; see the Tiptoft Missal, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library M 107, fol. 142r (14th century); or Christ at the Last Supper in M 200, fol. 177v (14th century).

¹⁷ There is a possibility, of course, that the six round circles with dots represent neither hosts nor loaves, but platters or dishes with the dots as remnants of compass prickmarks.

¹⁸ Dorothy Verkerk, "Exodus and Easter Vigil in the *Ashburnham Pentateuch*," *Art Bulletin* 77 (1995) 94-105; and *Early Medieval Bible Illumination and the Ashburnham Pentateuch* (Cambridge, 2004).

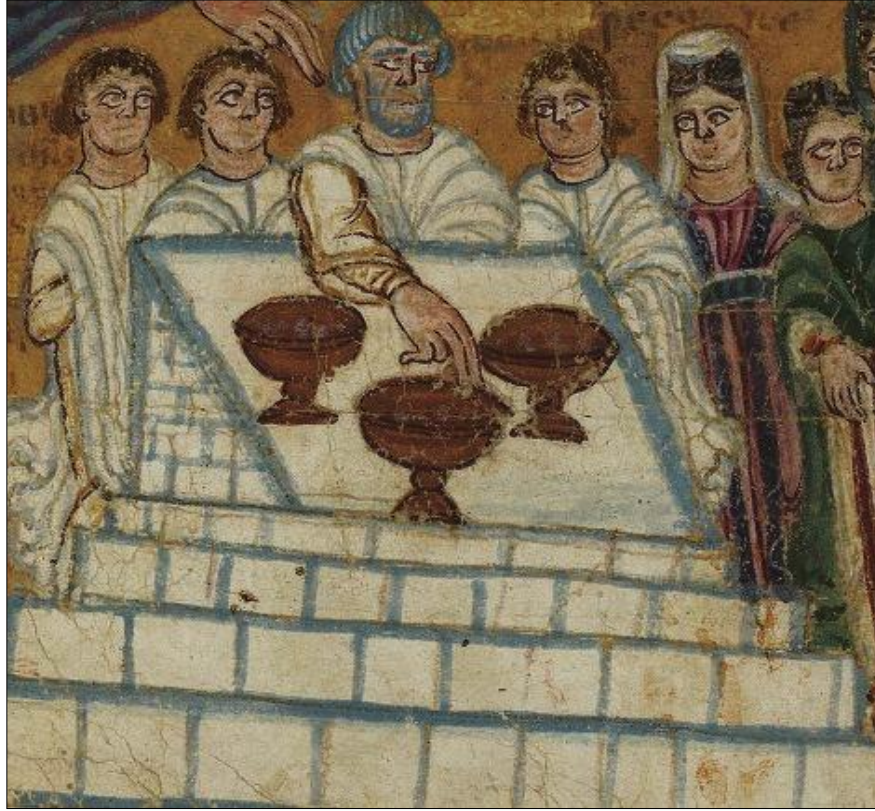


Figure 10 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France nal. 2334, fol. 10v. Photo: Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France

There are other altars that may be seen as Eucharistic altars in the Ashburnham Pentateuch. One of these is in the Moses scene on fol. 76r where three tents are pictured,¹⁹ the largest being the tabernacle with a large block-shaped altar with a cavity in the front, which Verkerk interprets as a reliquary cavity. **(fig. 11)** On this altar is a round golden object, perhaps representing the Old Testament shewbread on the table of shewbread. Seen in Eucharistic terms, this might represent the host, its size probably indicating that it is a loaf, not an azyme host.

¹⁹ On the tents and tabernacle here and a similar scene in the tenth-century Mozarabic canonistic manuscripts, Codex Vigilanus and Codex Aemilianensis, see my "Rites and Signs of Conciliar Decisions in the Early Middle Ages," *Segni e Riti nella Chiesa Altomedievale occidentale*, XXXIII Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, Spoleto, 11-17 Aprile 1985 (Spoleto, 1987), pp. 207-249.

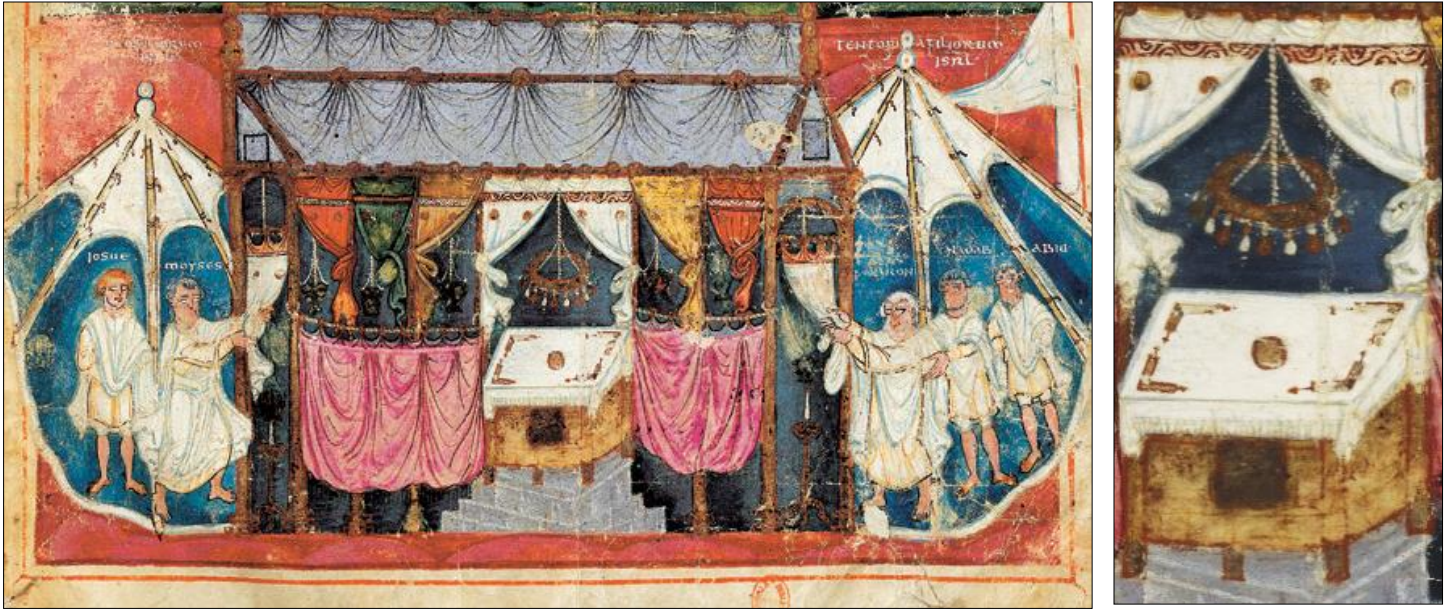
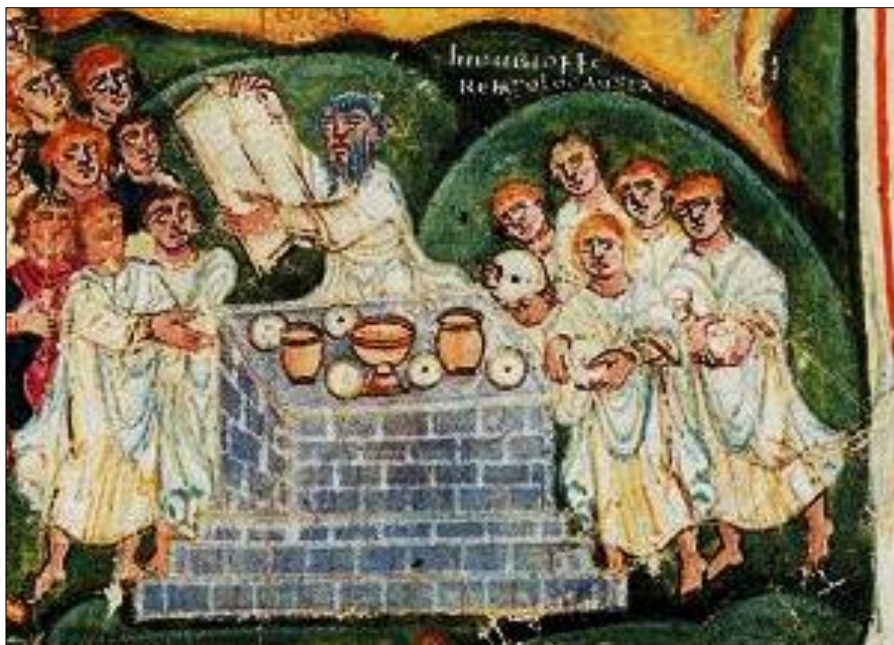


Figure 11 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France nal. 2334, fol. 76r. Photo: Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France

The other altar with more clear Eucharistic reference is on the same folio. (**fig. 12**)

Figure 12 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France nal. 2334, fol. 76r. Photo: Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France



Here there is a block-shaped altar with a chalice, two vessels (cruets?), and five round white objects with dots inside them. To the sides of the altar are seven white-robed individuals, who

Verkerk suggests are seven deacons. Moses holds the book of the Covenant which can be understood as the Mass diptychs (or does this represent the celebrant with some type of Mass book?). Whether or not the seven are deacons in the Roman rite, as Verkerk suggests,²⁰ several do carry round white objects with black dots inside. Are all of these objects loaves or azyme hosts? Again, one cannot be certain, but their relative size in relation to the vessels and the fact that the individuals hold them in two hands suggests the former, and of course they do not bear Christian symbols because the scene is from the Old Testament.

That an illustrated Bible like the Ashburnham Pentateuch with Christian scenes was actually used in Christian liturgical services is clear in one of the annotations next to a lection on fol. 125r read in the ordination of a deacon: *Lectio ordinationis diaconorum*. (**fig. 13**)

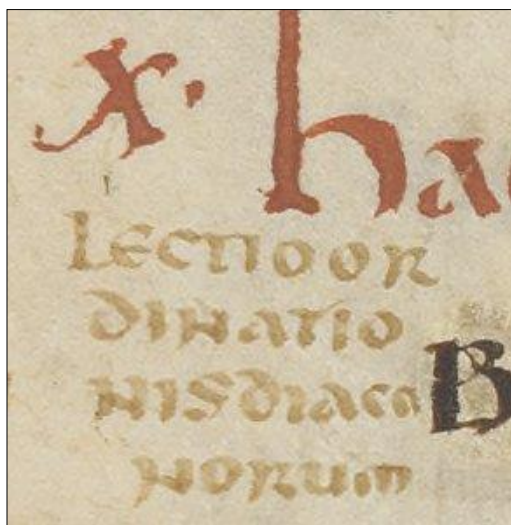


Figure 13 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France nal. 2334, fol.125r. Photo: Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France

There are a number of other scenes in the Ashburnham Pentateuch with tables that, although depicting Old Testament events, might have suggested Eucharistic connections. Such is the scene on fol. 21r (**fig. 14**) with round white disks on the table or on fol. 22r with a table with five round

²⁰ See the review of this book by Lawrence Nees in *The Catholic Historical Review* 91 (2005), pp. 135-138.

disks with dots within (**fig. 15**) and a table and chalice with violet disks and white circles (**fig. 16**)



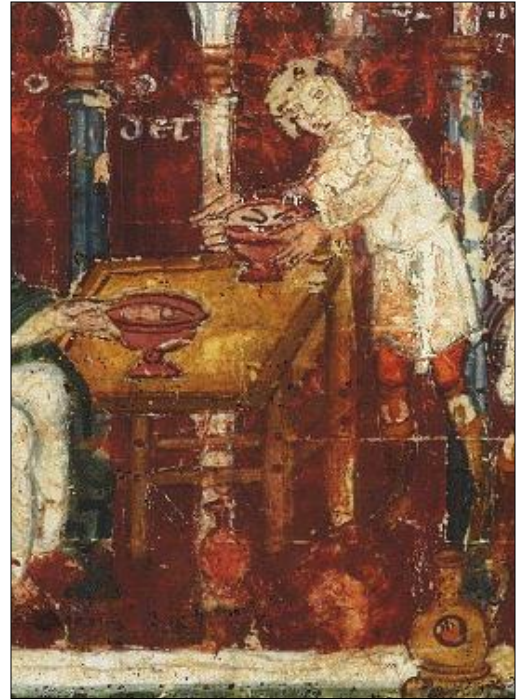
Figure 14 (left) Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France nal. 2334, fol. 21r. Photo: Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France; **Figure 15** (right) Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France nal. 2334, fol. 22r. Photo: Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France



Figure 16 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France nal. 2334, fol. 22r. Photo: Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France

Then on fol. 25r there is a table with a vessel-like object suggesting a chalice (**fig. 17**):

Figure 17 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France nal. 2334, fol. 25r. Photo: Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France
Later it will be shown that



Eucharistic hosts were equated with coins. Related to coins in the form of hosts is a depiction on fol. 30r of Joseph's brothers eating or celebrating their payment for delivering Joseph, some of which white or silver coins (about thirty, the price of a slave [Exod. 21:32] or the price of Christ betrayed)²¹ look suspiciously as if they have a design resembling scoring or division marks on a loaf, (**fig. 18**) although this same star-shaped design surrounded by circles of dots can be found in the famous ancient Jewish Miriam ossuary. (**fig. 19**)

²¹ Honorius Augustodensis in the twelfth century compared the Eucharistic host to a coin because Christ the living coin was betrayed for coins. See his *Eucharistion*, PL 172: 1256.



Figure 18 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France nal. 2334, fol. 30r. Photo: Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France

Figure 19 Miriam Ossuary. s. I; Jerusalem: Photo IAA.



On fol. 44r there are two depictions of tables. (**fig. 20**)



Figure 20 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France nal. 2334, fol. 44r. Photo: Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France

The first shows Joseph's brothers gathered around a semi-circular table resembling a depiction of the Last Supper; the second with individuals, both white and dark faced, at a table with white round disks on it. (**fig. 21**)



Figure 21 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France nal. 2334, fol. 44r. Photo: Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France

Later in the manuscript on fol. 127v there is a depiction of the Old Testament tabernacle or "Temtorium [sic] domini," over which are

hanging lamps, before which is a hanging lamp, and within which is a table with five golden disks on the mensa – suggesting the traditional five altar crosses -- being adored by two cherubim with fanning wings (flabella). (**fig. 22**)



Figure 22 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France nal. 2334, fol. 127v. Photo: Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France

Let us now go to the first visual portrayals of the Eucharistic bread or hosts in the ninth century, portrayals rarely mentioned by liturgical historians. The first is seen in the Gospels from Augsburg of the first quarter of the ninth century, where on a square-shaped chest or block altar with fabric frontal decorated with an X (possibly a chrismon) and dots, there is a golden chalice next to a large circular object. This may be a paten²² with host within, but it may also be a large a

²² Cf. a similar round object on the altar in the well-known fresco of the Mass of St. Clement in the lower church of San Clemente in Rome (c. 1100).

golden loaf marked with division or scoring marks, not Christian symbols as an imprinted host might have. **(fig. 23)**

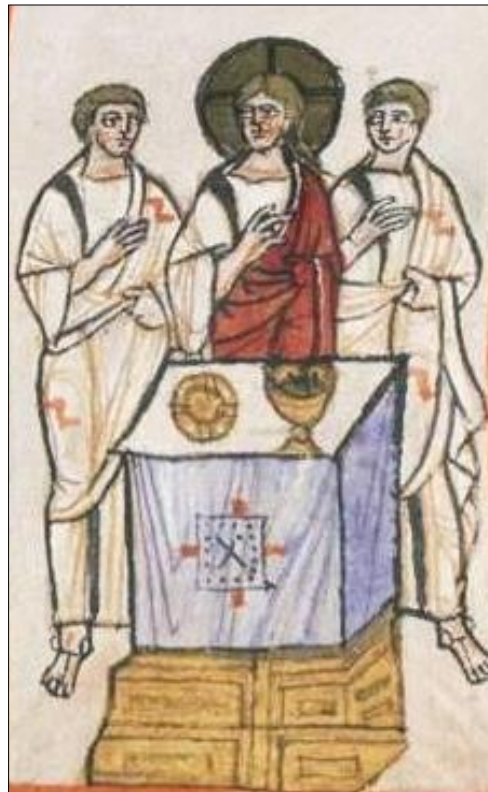


Figure 23 Augsburg Gospels, Munich, Staatsbibliothek, Clm 23631, fol. 197^v. Photo: author

Then there is the famous ninth-century ivory back cover of the Drogo Sacramentary with scenes of the Eucharistic liturgy in Metz under Drogo himself.²³ Palazzo characterizes this as “sacred space” in a liturgical book “for it displays the liturgy and at the same time the sacred space of ritual performance.”²⁴ Drogo stands under a baldacchino or ciborium with hanging light or reliquary with a large round loaf on the altar. **(fig. 24)**

²³ On the Drogo Sacramentary cover and the round loaf see my “Image and Text: A Carolingian Illustration of Modifications in the Early Roman Eucharistic Ordines,” *Viator* 14 (1983), pp. 59-82.

²⁴ Palazzo, “Five Senses,” p. 46.



Figure 24 Drogo Sacramentary Ivory Cover with Round Loaf Photo: Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France



There are, as one might expect in a sacramentary, other Eucharistic images. One of these is in the great *Te igitur* page, fol. 15v, where two figures with lambs face a bearded celebrant at an altar with a hanging lamp above and a handled chalice and two round hosts next to it. One wonders, is the ancient bearded celebrant Melchizedek associated with leavened bread or Aaron associated with azymes? (**fig. 25**)

Figure 25 Celebrant at altar, Drogo Sacramentary, fol. 15v. Photo: Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France

Then there is the crucifixion scene on fol. 43v with the chalice receiving the blood of Christ (**fig. 26**):



Figure 26 Crucifixion Scene, Drogo Sacramentary, fol. 43v. Photo: Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France

The Last Supper is depicted in another scene on fol. 44v with a chalice and what appear to be two loaves with division or scoring marks on the circular table. There are only nine disciples gathered around the table, the one on the right, perhaps Judas, seems to be reaching toward the chalice with Christ reaching or pointing in that direction. (**fig. 27**)

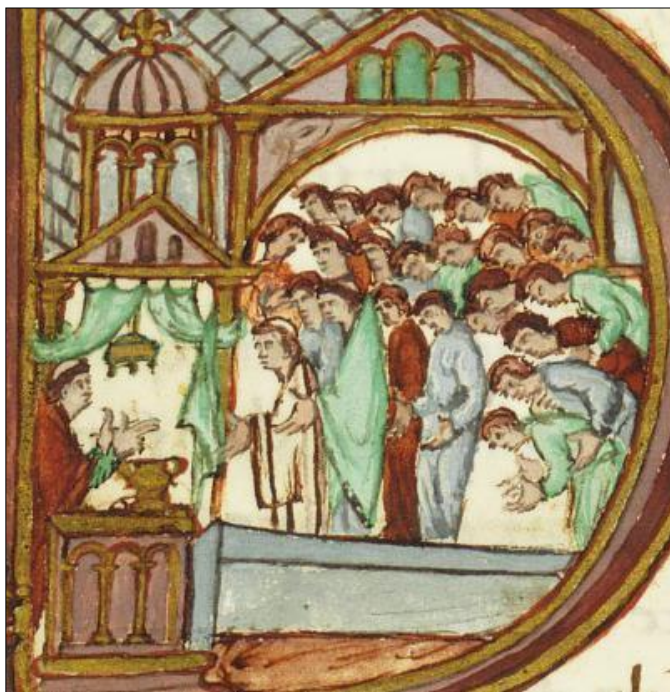
Figure 27 Last Supper, Drogo Sacramentary, fol. 44v. Photo: Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France



On a Vere dignum page, fol. 46v, there is an altar shown under a ciborium with a figure holding an open book for the celebrant, mirroring the lowest central panel of the ivory cover (**fig. 28**):



Figure 28 (left) Vere dignum, Drogo Sacramentary, fol. 46v. Photo: Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France; (right) Drogo Sacramentary Ivory Cover detail. Photo: Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France



For the Vigil of the Nativity of Saint Paul on fol. 87v (**fig. 29**) a celebrant stands under a ciborium with hanging lamp behind an altar on which stand a handled chalice and what appears to be a partially shown white circular host or loaf. Figures facing him are bowed in reverence or adoration.

Figure 29 Vigil of the Nativity of St. Paul, Drogo Sacramentary, fol. 87v. Photo: Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France

And finally for the feast of St. Arnulf on fol. 91r (**fig. 30**) the saint is shown approaching an altar with lamp hanging under a ciborium.



Figure 30 Feast of St. Arnulf, Drogo Sacramentary, fol. 91.
Photo: Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France

Then there is the well-known ninth-century Raganaldus Sacramentary, produced by the Tours school, perhaps working at St. Martin of Marmoutiers for Raganaldus, Abbot of Marmoutiers (843-846).²⁵ On fol. 8r there is a scene of the Cena Domini within a circle with dots around it labelled “Cum propriis Christus caenum sacrauit alumnis.” There appears here a footed table around which the twelve disciples sit with Christ, with a golden chalice, a golden knife, two golden spoons, a golden vessel with white round objects inside, and a larger white round object with division or scoring marks. Christ is pictured above with a similar golden round object and a golden chalice. (**fig. 31**)

²⁵ On this manuscript see my “The Portrait of the Ecclesiastical Officers in the Raganaldus Sacramentary and its Liturgico-Canonical Significance,” *Speculum* 46 (1971), pp. 432-442 (repr. with addendum regarding the theory of Décréaux on the ordination depiction in my *Clerics in the Early Middle Ages: Hierarchy and Image* (Aldershot, 1999). On the origin and date (845) of the manuscript see Joseph Décréaux, “Le Sacramentaire de Marmoutier conservé à la Bibliothèque Municipale d’Autun,” *Extrait des Mémoires de la Société Eduenne* 51/4 (1970), p. 243; and his two-volume study and edition of the manuscript, *Le sacramentaire de Marmoutier (Autun 19 bis) dans l’histoire des sacramentaires carolingiens du IX^e siècle* (Rome, 1985).



Figure 31 Autun Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 19bis, fol. 8r. Photo: Enluminures

First, the golden objects on the table, which are liturgical since they are of precious metal. The chalice is obvious. The knife is there apparently to divide the loaf, as was (and remains) the eastern practice with lance and the *prósphoron*.

Figure 32a Liturgical Fistula/Straw, *ca.* 1230–50, silver, partly gilt; niello, jewels, Germany. Metropolitan Museum of Art. Photo: Metropolitan Museum of Art



Figure 32b Silver spoons from Sutton Hoo, Suffolk, England, Byzantine, 7th century. Photo: British Museum



Figure 32c Derrynaflan Strainer, Tipperary, Ireland, 8th-9th century. Photo: Creative Commons.



Figure 32d (left) Derrynaflan Chalice, Tipperary, Ireland, 8th-9th century. Photo: Creative Commons; (right) Armagh Chalice, Limerick, Ireland 8th century. Photo: Creative Commons.

Then, there are two golden spoons. What is the function of these? In the Eastern church they were (and are) used to communicate the bread and wine together. But in the West a liturgical straw/fistula or spoon (**fig. 32a**) could be used to communicate the wine from such wide-mouthed chalices as the Armagh²⁶ or Derrynaflan chalices (**fig. 32d**) that would have dangerously spilled if poured directly into the communicant's mouth.²⁷ The other spoon (**fig. 32b**) may be for testing the potability of the wine or measuring the amount of wine to be poured into the chalice, or it may represent a pierced spoon or even a liturgical strainer, like the ancient



Irish Derrynaflan strainer,²⁸ (**fig. 32c**) used to remove impurities or insects from the wine that evaded the fanning Eucharistic flabella, such as the great Carolingian flabellum of Tournus recently described by Herbert Kessler.²⁹ (**fig. 33**)

Figure 33 Flabellum for Charles the Bald, Florence Museum, Bargello. Photo: Florence Museum, Bargello

²⁶ There is a faithful replica of this chalice at the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, given by a donor who obtained it after the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition (1893), on which Nicola Gordon Bowe "Imagining an Irish past: The Celtic Revival 1840-1940," *Irish Arts Review Yearbook* 10 (1994), p. 106 f.

²⁷ In his article on the Derrynaflan hoard Michael Ryan suggests that both the Ardagh and Derrynaflan chalices were "ministerial" chalices to be given to the faithful, perhaps not realizing the possibility of spilling. See his valuable "The Derrynaflan Hoard and Early Irish Art," *Speculum* 72 (1997), p. 1003 ff. It has been argued that the spoons in the Sutton Hoo hoard could not be liturgical spoons since they bear the names of Saul and Paul, but these names, for whatever reason, would not have prevented their use as liturgical spoons.

²⁸ On this see Ryan, "The Derrynaflan Hoard and Early Irish Art," p. 1003.

²⁹ "Images Borne on the Breeze: The Function of the Flabellum of Tournus as Meaning" in *Charlemagne et les objets. Des thésaurisations carolingiennes aux constructions mémorielles*, ed. Philippe Cordex (Berne, 2012), pp. 57-85.

Or it could be a spoon to sprinkle incense, as found in the objects for the table of shewbread in the Old Testament. Is the white round object on the table a leavened loaf or an azyme host? It is likely the former since it bears division or scoring marks and not distinctive Christian symbols such as a chrismon. Thus it likely represents an unleavened loaf, not an azyme host that Christ would have used in the *Cena Domini*, the Feast of Unleavened Bread (as Mabillon might have argued). Moreover, one would not need a knife to divide azyme hosts.

Figure 34 Detail of Autun Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 19bis, fol. 8r. Photo: Enluminures



But what of the golden vessel on the left and what is in it? (**fig. 34**) At first sight it looks like a vessel with a fish or perhaps a lamb of the same color as the vessel such as one finds in some medieval illustrations of the Last Supper.³⁰ But on closer inspection it appears that there are round or semi-round white disks arranged around the rim of the vessel encircling what at first looked like a fish of the same color as the vessel. Could this object be a ciborium with hosts or perhaps a footed lobed paten in which the small objects have been placed in a circle? It might be thought that these small white objects are the pieces of the divided loaf, but their circular shape makes hosts more likely. Thus, there may be a double meaning in the image as a whole, that is, both leavened bread and azymes are on the table of the *Cena Domini*, such as was suggested in the *Corpus Christi* Gospels. And what of the number of pieces or hosts within the vessel? It is

³⁰ For fish see, e.g., the Codex Vsegradensis, Národní knihovna České republiky XIV.A.13, fol. 38v (11th century); New York, Pierpont Morgan Library M 780, fol. 27v (11th century); the Albani Psalter, Hildesheim Dombibliothek St. God. 1, p. 41 (12th century); Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Codex Bruchsal 1, fol. 28r (ca.1220), New York, Pierpont Morgan Library M 283, fol. 15r (13th century); M 729, fol. 319v (13th century); M 739, fol. 22v (13th century); M 76, fol. 176v (15th century); M 868, fol. 27v (15th century); or the early mosaic at Sant'Apollinare nuovo in Ravenna (6th century); and for a lamb see the famous fresco of the Last Supper in San Angelo in formis (11th century); and New York, Pierpont Morgan Library M 766, fol. 37v (15th century).

now unclear exactly how many there are, but it appears that there may be as many as eight or more, that is, one for each of the disciples around the table. But there is another possibility that there are only eleven in the vessel, one for each of the disciples, excluding Judas.³¹ This possibility is suggested by the tradition depicting an unnimbed Judas³² and eleven pieces in the vessel, such as is found in a modern icon copy of the Last Supper above the iconostasis of the tenth- or eleventh-century church of Saint Iliya in Solnechnaya Dolina (Crimea), based on an earlier model there.³³ (**fig. 35**)

Figure 35 Last Supper Icon, Church at Solnechnaya Dolina. Photo: author



³¹ In the ninth-century Stowe Missal, Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, MS. D.ii. 3, (No. 1238) it is noted that the division of the Eucharistic fraction is “eleven for the Apostles” (the incomplete number due to the sin of Judas); on which see my “Christ’s Money: Eucharistic Azyme Hosts in the Ninth Century According to Bishop Eldefonsus of Spain: Observations on the Origin, Meaning, and Context of a Mysterious Revelation,” *Peregrinations: Journal of Medieval Art & Architecture*, Vol. IV, No. 2, p. 35.

³² In the so-called Last Supper illustration of the Albani Psalter, p. 41, Judas has no nimbus. Also see the Codex Vsehradensis, Národní knihovna České republiky XIV.A.13, fol. 38v (11th century); New York, Pierpont Morgan Library G 44, fol. 80r (11th century); M 43, fol. 22v (13th century); M 440, fol. 11v (13th century); M 729, fol. 319v (13th century); M 739, fol. 22v (13th century); M 643, fol. 8v (14th century); M 485, fol. 40v (15th century); M 76, fol. 176v (15th century); M 385, fol. 18r (15th century); M 868, fol. 27v (15th century); or M 1078, fol. 88v (15th century). Elsewhere, however, he can be portrayed with a nimbus: New York, Pierpont Morgan Library M 780, fol. 27v (11th century); M 44, fol. 6v (12th century); M 283, fol. 15r (13th century); G 16, fol. 88v (14th century); M 387, fol. 300v (15th century); or even a black nimbus, M 653.4 (14th century).

³³ For this information I am indebted to the parish priest of the church (Feast of St. Iliya, 2013). There may be some confusion here since a nimbed figure on the right appears to be reaching for an object that may represent a bag of coins or a sop. Clearly, however, the figure on the far left has no nimbus as do other disciples in the portrait.

As one pages through the Raganaldus Sacramentary one finds multiple images of Eucharistic apparatus and symbols, some suggesting that hosts were known and used. On fol. 8r there is a chalice and footed paten not unlike that in the Cena domini scene (**fig. 36**):



Figure 36 Raganaldus Sacramentary, fol. 8r., 9th century, Bibliothèque Municipale d'Autun. Photo: author.

On fol. 11v there is a circle with the Lamb of God with cross and a chalice beneath it (**fig. 37**):



Figure 37 Raganaldus Sacramentary, fol. 11v., 9th century, Bibliothèque Municipale d'Autun. Photo: author.

Then, there are many instances of circles with floral patterns in them suggesting lobed patens, e.g., fol. 98r, here with the Exultet candle (**fig. 38**):



Figure 38 Raganaldus Sacramentary, fol. 98r, 9th century, Bibliothèque Municipale d'Autun. Photo: author

In the Sacramentary there are numerous coins with portraits on them,³⁴ but there are instances of golden “coins” in circles or what may be golden hosts, e.g., fol. 92r (**fig. 39**)



Figure 39 Raganaldus Sacramentary, fol. 92r., 9th century, Bibliothèque Municipale d’Autun. Photo: author

Among the golden altar apparatus hanging from baldacchinos are lights or reliquaries and handled flagons, e.g. fol. 96r (**fig. 40**):



Figure 40 Raganaldus Sacramentary, fol. 96r., 9th century, Bibliothèque Municipale d’Autun. Photo: author

Hanging lamps from baldacchinos are also pictured, e.g., fol. 94v (**fig. 41**):



Figure 41 Raganaldus Sacramentary, fol. 94vr., 9th century, Bibliothèque Municipale d’Autun. Photo: author

³⁴ On this see Henry Maguire “Magic and Money in the Early Middle Ages,” *Speculum* 72 (1997), p. 1052.

And finally on fol. 2r there is a cross with pendant Alpha and Omega above a circular golden disk with a (blessing?) right hand.

(fig. 42):



Figure 42 Raganaldus Sacramentary, fol. 2r., 9th century, Bibliothèque Municipale d'Autun.
Photo: author

Suddenly, at almost the same time as the Raganaldus Sacramentary was being copied and in the midst of the Eucharistic controversy between Paschasius Radbertus and Ratramnus of Corbie over the real presence of Christ in the Eucharistic host there appeared a little tract, a “Revelatio” given to a mysterious bishop Eldefonsus of Spain, on azyme hosts, with diagrams of the hosts, what should be stamped on them, how they are to be distributed on the altar, and of what they should be made. This tract has attracted the attention of liturgical scholars and numismatists since the days of Jean Mabillon, who printed it in the seventeenth century in his *Analecta vetera*, on the basis of an unknown Vatican manuscript, as firm proof of the use of azymes by the ninth century. I have recently dealt at length with this little tract, but a number of issues in it should be emphasized in preparation for almost contemporary scenes of the exposition of the host.

The hosts pictured appear in the tract as it was edited by Jean Mabillon in 1685 and is reprinted in Migne’s *Patrologia Latina* 106.881-890. It begins boldly by stating that it is a “Revelatio” to a bishop Eldefonsus of Spain, given early in the morning of seventh day of the tenth month of the year 845, on the bread of azymes or unleavened bread. The beholder sees a



pair of circles, which are illustrated in the text, inscribed with a series of words and abbreviations (**fig. 43**):

Figure 43 Mabillon's Illustration of azymes. Photo: author

On the first side within two circles are the words Veritas/Truth, Mathew, John, Rex/ King, God, Jesus, Christ, Lux, Pax, Gea [sic], Vita, Mark, Luke and Vita again. Then he turns to the other side of the coin with the words Altissimus Deus/Highest God, Peter, Sion, and Paul, two lines enclosing between the lines the three persons of the Trinity represented by three points, Pater, Eilius [sic], Spiritus Sanctus, and below them Andrew, Jerusalem, IACR [sic], and Omnipotent Lord all giving tributes.

(**fig. 44**)

Figure 44 Mabillon's Illustration of azymes. Photo:author



Eldefonsus then goes on to say that these circles represent a host, the money of the celestial King, which excel in dignity the forms of money of earthly kings. Looking to the five points in the first circle (four around the fifth of the cross) it is said that in their unending circular form they are like God who has neither beginning nor end. Jumping briefly to another “revelatio,” the prophecy of Ezechiel, Eldefonsus cites the five wheels and four animals.

The Revelatio continues on with the azymes and breastplate of Aaron, presumably because azymes belong to the Aaronic priesthood, while simple bread is associated with the

priest Melchizedek.³⁵ He returns to his illustrations by saying that just as the apostles Andrew and James [IACR] beneath the lower line were colleagues on earth, so Peter and Paul above the upper line were joined with the most high God and the other saints, as were the four evangelists (being represented by Ezechiel's four beasts) on the other side of the host.

Actually, the manuscript on which Mabillon based this text and its diagrams is now Vatican Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 1341, written in Corbie in the ninth century, where the controversy between Radbertus and Ratramnus was taking place. The illustrations in the manuscript differ from those published by Mabillon. In the first pair of circles on fol. 187v there are five dots in the center, four surrounding the cross in the center with its dot in the center. Surrounding the whole are fifty-one small dots or circles, something Mabillon omitted. The fifty-one circles, corresponding to the fifty-one hosts at the three masses of Christmas described later in the tract, were not carefully planned to encompass the circle entirely, there being a line between two of them at the base as a space filler. (fig. 45)

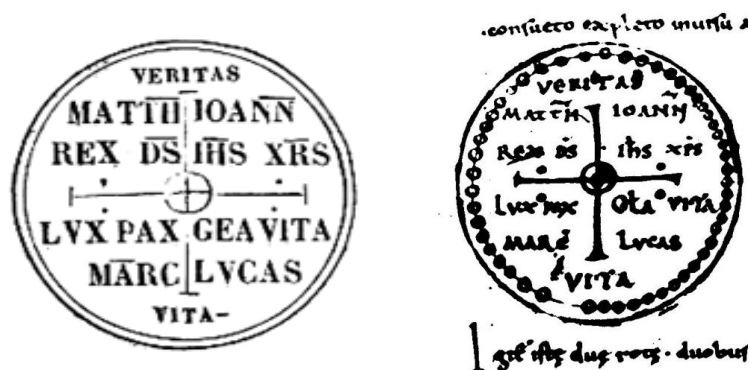


Figure 45 (left) Mabillon's illustration; (right) Vatican BAV Vat. lat. 1341. Photo: author

³⁵ It is interesting that the Orthodox in their controversy with the West over azymes have always insisted that Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek [Ps. 109:4; Heb. 5:6, 10, 20], not Aaron [Heb. 7:6]. Azymes belong the Aaronic priesthood, while Melchizedek is said to have offered bread (artos), not azymes (azuma) [Gen. 14:18].

Regarding the circles on the edge, lines, and dots, it is interesting to compare examples of Carolingian coins with their dotted edges, lines, dots, and simple names of the earthly king.³⁶

(fig. 46)

Figure 46 Carolingian Coins of Charlemagne from the Mint at Melle. Photo: CGB



The rim with dots within and the cross in the manuscript illustration, not seen in Mabillon's diagram, are very important to note. Numismatists give several reasons for the dots or "pellets" around the borders of coins. It is said that the dotted border of coins, ancient and medieval, was the outer edge of value-- in other words, the dots on Carolingian coins fix the value. If compromised (since the metal value of the silver coin was the real worth of the coin), the coin still had some metal value but no representational or exact exchange value. By this standard, Charlemagne's denarius from Melle displayed here has lost its representational value since its dotted border has been compromised.³⁷ Another reason for the dots is that the pellets around the perimeter were to prevent people from trimming the outer edges off and reducing the value of the coin. That the dots on the coin in the Eldefonsus tract are not simply an artist's creation but

³⁶ For examples of many coins of the time of Charles the Bald, see D. M. Metcalf, "A Sketch of the currency in the time of Charles the Bald" in *Charles the Bald: Court and Kingdom* (rev. edit) eds. Margaret T. Gibson and Janet L. Nelson (Aldershot, 1990), p. 95. Especially important and interesting in relation to the origins of our tract is the coinage minted from the Aquitainian mines at Melle.

³⁷ I owe this valuable observation to Paul Dutton, who has kindly written me "The rim (often raised as on our coins today) or outer edge of a coin is always subject to degrading over time. It delimits the coin as an object but does not define its worth, which is determined by the beaded or dotted border which lies inside it. In the ancient and medieval worlds, it is my understanding, that it was common practice to test the metallic worth of a coin by testing its rim, often with a knife or teeth. It was also common practice to shave off that material beyond the border, since it was excess or superfluous to the coin's nominal value. But to shave, cut, or infringe upon the beaded border inside the rim was to destroy the nominal value of the coin--it became useless as a representational object (i.e. was no longer a denarius for purposes of exchange)."

representative of actual hosts can be seen in an existing host press from the eleventh century now in the Museu Episcopal of Vic that not only has the same imprint as one of Eldefonsus's hosts with the Alpha and Omega with bumps over it but also a ring of dots around the perimeter of the host on the press. (fig. 47)

Figure 47a Host Press. 11th century, Vic, Museu Episcopal. Photo: author

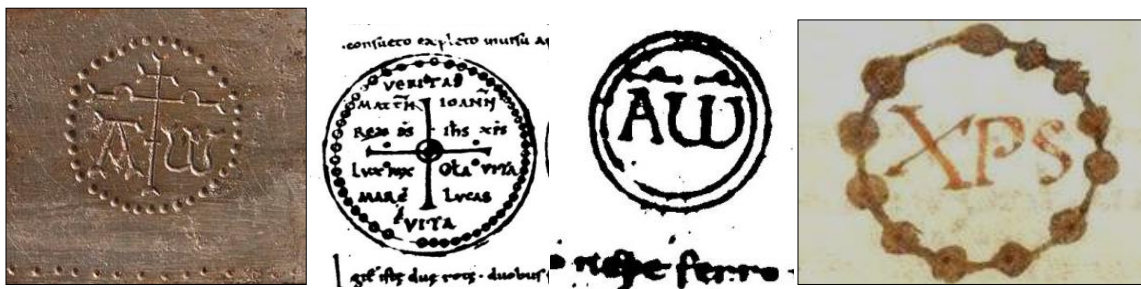


Figure 47b (left) Host Press. 11th century, Vic, Museu Episcopal. Photo flip: author; (center) Vatican BAV Vat. lat. 1341. Photo: Author; (right) Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France lat. 2855. Photo: Author

It is interesting also that Ezekiel's wheels were full of eyes, perhaps represented in the circles or dots of our illustration. It is significant, moreover, that one side of Christ's money in the Eldefonsus revelation has a "long cross," a device common in later medieval English coins to prevent the coin from being clipped, thus reducing the weight and value of the silver content of the coin. The idea was that an extended "long cross" on the coin would make it much clearer to



Figure 48 (left) Mabillon's illustration. Photo: author; (right) Vatican BAV Vat. Lat. 1341. Photo: author

the user if coin had been tampered with, and thus one should refuse it if the ends of all four limbs were not visible. In short, the dotted border and “long cross” on our money of the heavenly king emphasize its real worth and value. On the obverse side of our coin there are clearly three dots, and the fourth line of names has the abbreviations ANDR, NERL, ICAB. (**fig. 48**)

Turning to the hosts themselves Eldefonsus says that just as the thumb of a man can cover a coin, with three fingers especially three representing the Trinity, one host can encompass three coins touching one another, and he presents an illustration of this with three hosts inside a larger circle. One wonders if this diagram could be related to the three or Trinity of circles/hosts/patens in the contemporary Raganaldus Sacramentary (845) in the same form representing three events in Christ's life, his nativity, baptism/epiphany, and passion in the Last Supper. (**fig. 49**)

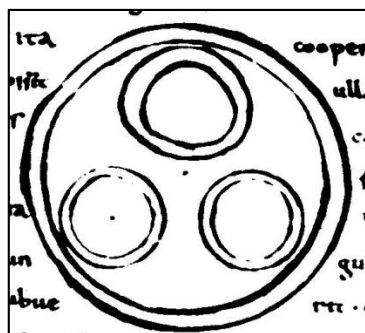


Figure 49 (left) Vatican BAV Vat. Lat. 1341.

Photo: author; (center)

Paris Bibliothèque

nationale de France .lat. 2855, fol. 64v. Photo: Paris

Bibliothèque nationale de France; (right) Autun

Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 19bis, fol. 8r. Photo: author



A discussion then follows as to what is to be inscribed on the hosts: XPC, IHC, or DS, but not DNS, REX, PAX, OMNIPOTENS, VITA, or PANIS. There then follow two diagrams of hosts, one with XPC and the other with a cross surmounting the letters A and ω . (**fig. 50**) Again, the original Vatican used by Mabillon depicting what should be stamped on the hosts has a different version. (**fig. 51**) Mabillon reversed these and placed a cross above the Alpha and Omega rather than the bumped lines above these two letters in the manuscript. (**fig. 51**)

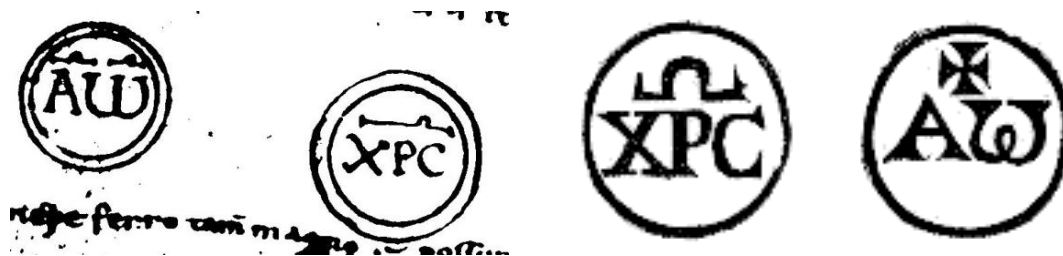


Figure 50 (left) Vatican BAV Vat. Lat. 1341. Photo: author

Figure 51 (right) Mabillon's Illustration. Photo: author

Turning to the making of the hosts, Eldefonsus says that the iron in which the hosts are made should be constructed so that in the center is a large host with four smaller hosts surrounding it. The four hosts can be inscribed with the letters XPC at the top, IHC below, REX to the left and DS to the right.

The quality and measurements of the hosts is then described. “Blue wheat” or the finest wheat is to be used. Why should it be wheat rather than another grain? That wheat rather than other grains should be used is because in Carolingian times a modius of wheat was worth three or four denarii as opposed to one for oats and two for barley.³⁸ The “blue wheat” in our text is specifically said to have come from Aquitaine in the two other Paris manuscripts in which it is found and is called “centum quinquaginta tria grana cerulei *Aquitaniae tritici nostri*.” Whether or not this was in the original text or was added by a scribe proud of Aquitanian wheat is not certain. Indeed, this reference to our Aquitanian wheat led Jean Lebeuf centuries ago to state on the basis of manuscript Colbert 3682, Reg. 4357⁵ (now corresponding to Paris Bibliothèque nationale de France lat. 2855) that the author of the tract was Aquitanian.³⁹

But when did the use of these azyme hosts come into use in the Western church? There may have been clues in the earlier manuscripts. But there is a more positive clue in a manuscript written about the same time as our little tract. It is found in a rarely studied illustration from a Psalter manuscript now in Stuttgart. From the first half of the ninth century this psalter, made in St-Germain-des-Prés, depicts a square-shaped chest altar with a golden chalice and four round white objects on the mensa next to it. Significantly these are the only two objects on the altar and

³⁸ See Garipzanov, *The Symbolic Language of Royal Authority*, p. 34 and literature therein.

³⁹ Jean Lebeuf, *Recueil de divers écrits pour servir d'éclaircissements à l'histoire de France et de supplément à la notice des Gaules* (Paris, 1738) 2, p. 81, n. a. In his footnote Lebeuf was dealing with the question of weights and measures in our tract.

that the cross has been attached to the rear of the altar and the candlestick is placed in front of the altar, as was the usual practice and regulation in the West until the tenth century, when candles and crucifixes began to appear on altars.⁴⁰ Whether the four round objects are small loaves of bread or azyme hosts is difficult to tell. It could be that they are four pieces that have been divided from a larger loaf, but their round form and small size suggests they are azyme hosts.

(fig. 52)



Figure 52 Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek Cod. bibl. fol. 23, fol. 130v. Photo: author

⁴⁰ It should be remembered that until the tenth century it was the general rule (clearly not followed in the Frankfurt Mass cover pictured below) that the only objects on the altar should be the Gospels (the Verbum domini) and the host and wine in their vessels. Even into the tenth century the *Admonitio synodalis* of pseudo- Leo IV did not allow candles on the altar. “Super altare nihil ponatur nisi capsae, et reliquiae, et quatuor Evangelia et pixis.” For the most recent treatment of this tenth-century text see Herbert Schneider, “New Wine in Old Skins: remarks on the Collectio Burdegalensis,” *Canon Law, Religion, and Politics: Liber Amicorum Robert Somerville*, eds. U-R. Blumenthal, A. Winroth, and P. Landau (Washington, D.C., 2012), p. 49 f., nn. 34-35. It was in the tenth century that other objects such as candles and crucifixes came to be placed on the altar, such as those of Bernward of Hildesheim. Also see my “Altar -- Altar Apparatus,” *Dictionary of the Middle Ages* 1, ed. J. R. Strayer (New York, 1982), pp. 221-225.



Figure 53 (left) Frankfurt Sacramentary Ivory Mass Cover. Photo: art. cit. p. 830; (center) detail, Photo: Herbert Kessler.

Figure 54 (right) Gourdon Chalice, 6th century Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France Cabinet des Médailles. Photo: author

Slightly after the 840s a clear example of the use of azymes is found in a famous ivory book cover, the celebrated Frankfurt ivory cover, studied recently by Éric Palazzo, said to have been

made at the time of Charles the Bald.⁴¹ (**fig. 53**) One of the ivory covers depicts the episcopal celebrant surrounded by clerics behind him and choristers with open mouths below likely singing the Sanctus.⁴² On the altar are a chalice with handles (shaped not unlike the ancient Gourdon chalice), (**fig. 54**) the book of the Gospels, and what is likely not a sacramentary (with all of its texts like a Sacramentary or Missal, which other clerics might read or chant) but a “Canon Libellus” that a celebrant would use.⁴³ Next to the chalice is a rimmed paten with objects sometimes called a “pretzel-like” host or loaf.⁴⁴ Clearly, however, there are three round objects with points placed one upon the other, not a single object. Why they are not perfectly round is puzzling, but the objects appear to have rims – something we have found in some of the hosts in Vat. Lat. 1341. It has been suggested that the three reflect Trinitarian symbolism in the work of Amalarius of Metz,⁴⁵ but in any event, they appear likely to be three hosts in a paten laid out in a pattern.

Among the Gospel manuscripts of the late Carolingian period with Eucharistic symbolism resembling the hosts of Eldefonsus is the Gospel of Gauzelin, bishop of Toul, now in Nancy, Trésor de la Cathédrale (**fig. 55**):

⁴¹ Éric Palazzo, “Le Visible, l’Invisible et les cinq sens dans le haut Moyen Âge. À propos de l’iconographie de l’ivoire de Francfort” in *Matérialité et immatérialité dans l’église au moyen âge. Actes du Colloque organisé par le Centre d’Études Médiévales de l’Université de Bucarest* (Bucharest, 2012), p. 15.

⁴² This cover is in the Liebieghaus Museum, Frankfurt am Main (the other being in the Cambridge Fitzwilliam Museum); on which see *Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit. Karl der Grosse und Papst Leo III in Paderborn* (Paderborn, 1999) , p. 830.

⁴³ In my “Sacramentary,” *Dictionary of the Middle Ages* 10, ed. J. R. Strayer (New York, 1988), pp. 605-606, it was suggested that there were libelli with the Mass canon separate from the prayers of the sacramentary. The “Coronation Canon Libellus” for Charles the Bald, to treated later, clearly confirms this.

⁴⁴ For a pretzel-like objects resembling a host see New York, Pierpont Morgan Library M 780, fol. 27v (11th century); or G 44, fol. 80r (12th century).

⁴⁵ See Palazzo, op. cit. pp. 18-19.

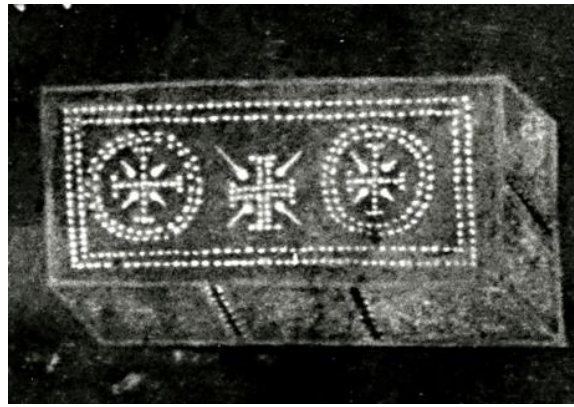


Figure 55 Gospels of Gauzelin with altar, Nancy, Trésor de la Cathédrale. Photo: Herbert Kessler. Flip by author

At first sight it appears that the object in the center is a rectangular chest altar with decorated frontal or antependium with crosses and dots, something resembling the Augsburg frontal seen already. But if one flips this, it appears as the mensa of an altar with large hosts consisting of dotted circles with crosses.⁴⁶

We now turn to the famous Carolingian *Majestas domini* pages with Christ blessing with Eucharistic symbolism. There is, first, the celebrated *Evangélaire de Sainte-Croix de Poitiers* (Poitiers Médiathèque François-Mitterrand, MS 17 [65]), fol. 31r, where Christ sits with a closed or sealed book in his left hand and blesses with his right. Above him in cross form are the Greek words *Phos* and *Zoe* and outside are the Latin *Lux* and *Vita*, not unlike the words found on the *Eldefonsus* coin. Further, the evangelists, pictured in almost the same order as they are on our *Eldefonsus* coin, are within circles of dots, again not unlike those around the *Eldefonsus* coin in Vat. Lat. 1341. (**fig. 56**)

⁴⁶ This item was kindly brought to my attention by Herbert Kessler.

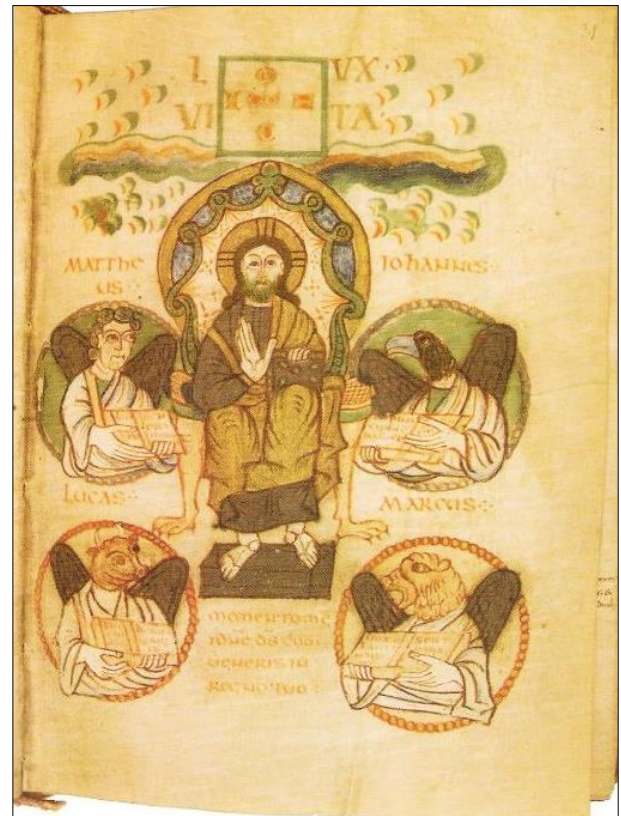


Figure 56 Eldefonsus coin in Vat. Lat. 1341. Photo: author; (right) Evangélaire de Sainte-Croix de Poitiers, Poitiers Médiathèque François-Mitterrand, MS 17 [65], fol. 31r. Photo: author

But more important there is a variety of grand Carolingian manuscripts likely begun in the 840s with a variant of the Majestas pages with Christ, not blessing, but holding a circular object in his right or blessing hand. In these one can see what one might be called Eucharistic adoration in the Carolingian era. The first of these is in a grand Gospel Book made in 849-851 not long after our Eldefonsus text in 845 while the Eucharistic controversy between Radbertus

and Ratramnus raged. It is in the Lothar Gospels, which Lothar personally directed its decoration and the monastic artist, Sigilaus, cared for the details.⁴⁷ (fig. 57)



Figure 57 Majestas domini, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France lat. 266, fol. 2v. Photo: Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France

Here Christ is seated on the orb of the earth and holds in his right hand between his thumb and fourth or ring finger a small golden disk with a rim around it. The small round object in Christ's right hand has at times been interpreted as the orb of the earth or the cosmos, but this is somewhat curious in that the book in Christ's left hand is larger than the orb of the earth in his

⁴⁷ On this see Garipzanov, *The Symbolic Language of Royal Authority*, p. 236 n. 19.

right hand.⁴⁸ There is thus another possibility, however, that the small round object represents the Eucharistic host as a coin-like azyme, something coming into use at the time of Charles the Bald and the Eucharistic controversy. In an older article, this is precisely what the art-historian Meyer Schapiro suggested, something more recently confirmed by Éric Palazzo in his study of another manuscript, to be seen in a moment, the so-called Coronation “Sacramentary” of Charles the Bald.

What makes this manuscript of the Lothar Gospels extraordinary in terms of its Eucharist imagery are the multiple objects, many with white dots, in the decorative pages of the manuscript. These are wholly unexpected as this is a Gospel book with the text of the Gospels and not a specifically Eucharistic book such as a sacramentary or missal. Some of these are also found in the Gospels of Le Mans, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France lat. 261, and the Gospels of Du Fay, Paris Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France lat. 9385 (843-51). To the casual viewer these are simply random decorations, but on close inspection they are almost a catalogue of Eucharistic vessels and altar apparatus, many like those in the Raganaldus Sacramentary. One finds multiple examples of disks/coins/hosts some surrounded by dots, other not, some in gold, others in royal purple, some with chrismon signs, some with chrismon signs with pendant alpha and omega. Beyond these are Eucharistic vessels, chalices, ciboria, cruets, and flagons.⁴⁹ Then there are chest altars, both rectangular and square. Then there are hanging lamps or pyxes hanging from arches reminiscent of the baldacchino in the Drogo

⁴⁸ On the book in Christ’s left hand in many manuscripts see James Finn Cotter, “The Book within the Book in Medieval Illustrations,” *Florilegium* 12 (1993), pp. 107-126.

⁴⁹ There are other Turonian manuscripts with hanging lamps: in the Rorigo Bible, Paris Bibliothèque nationale de France lat. 359, fols. 359v and 360r; and the Sacramentary of Tours, Bibliothèque municipale 184, fol. 2v. It was common to hang such vessels, especially chalices, in the arches or baldacchinos of a church, as we know from the descriptions of hanging chalices in the Roman churches reported in the *Liber pontificalis*, on which see Raymond Davis, *The Lives Of The Eighth-Century Popes (Liber Pontificalis). The Ancient Biographies Of Nine Popes From AD 715 To AD 817* (Liverpool, 1992), p. 209.

Sacramentary.⁵⁰ There is even a horn hanging from an arch or baldacchino, presumably a horn reliquary such as one finds today in various museums. This last might have been used to hold the relics of some saint associated with horns, such as St. Hubert or St. Blandina (martyred in the Amphithéâtre des Trois-Gaules, in Lyon by a wild steer).⁵¹ Hence, this Gospel book, containing the Verbum domini with its “Et Verbum caro factum est et habitavit in nobis” (fol. 172v) and placed on the altar next to the chalice with wine and paten with hosts, is a veritable treasure-trove of Eucharistic symbolism, reminding the celebrant of the centrality of the Gospels in the Eucharistic rite in the same way as Eucharistic symbols in a sacramentary, pontifical, or other liturgical book did. (figs. 58-73)



Figure 58a Lothar Gospels fol. 12v royal purple host with rims, dots and cross with four dots (also on 13r and 13v). Photo: author

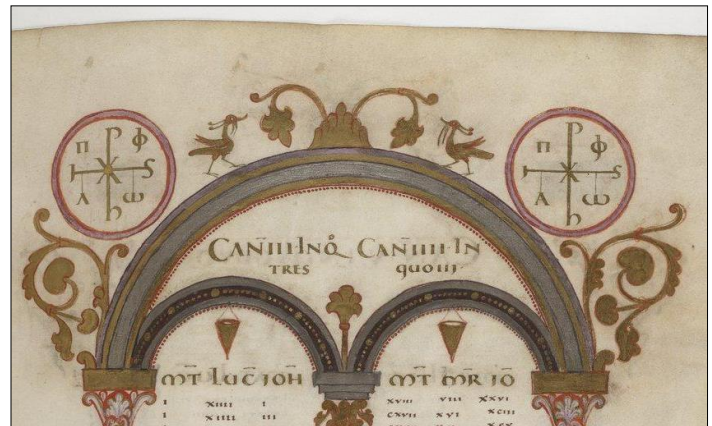


Figure 58b Lothar Gospels fol. 14v round hosts with chrismon and pendant A and ω and Π and Φ; lamps or reliquaries hanging from a baldacchino/altar canopy (cf. Drogo) (also on fol. 15r). Photo: author

⁵⁰ On vessels containing the Eucharist hanging from ciboria or baldacchinos, see Jules Corblet, *Essai historique et liturgique sur les ciboires et la réserve de l'eucharistie*, p. 36.

⁵¹ These would not, of course, be used as a Eucharistic vessel since it was thought repugnant to keep the Corpus Christi in vessels in which had been the blood of animals.

Figure 59 Lothar Gospels fol. 15v rectangular chest altars; golden host with point (cf. Frankfurt Ivory). Photo: author



Figure 60 Lothar Gospels fol. 17v lobed golden paten; golden coin/host. Photo: author



Figure 61 Lothar Gospels fol. 19r royal purple host with rims and dots. Photo: author

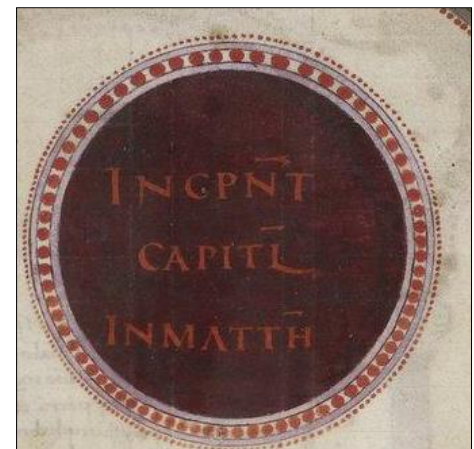


Figure 62 Lothar Gospels fol. 20r flagon for wine or water for manutergium. Photo: author



Figure 63 Lothar Gospels fol. 71r
chest altars rectangular and square (cf. Drogo) semi-circle dots around altar (cf. lobed semi-circular altars) and chrismons on corners. Photo: author

Figure 64 Lothar Gospels fol. 73r
royal purple host and flabella; lamp or pyx hanging from altar canopy or baldacchino (cf. Drogo baldacchino with hanging lamp or pyx). Photo: author

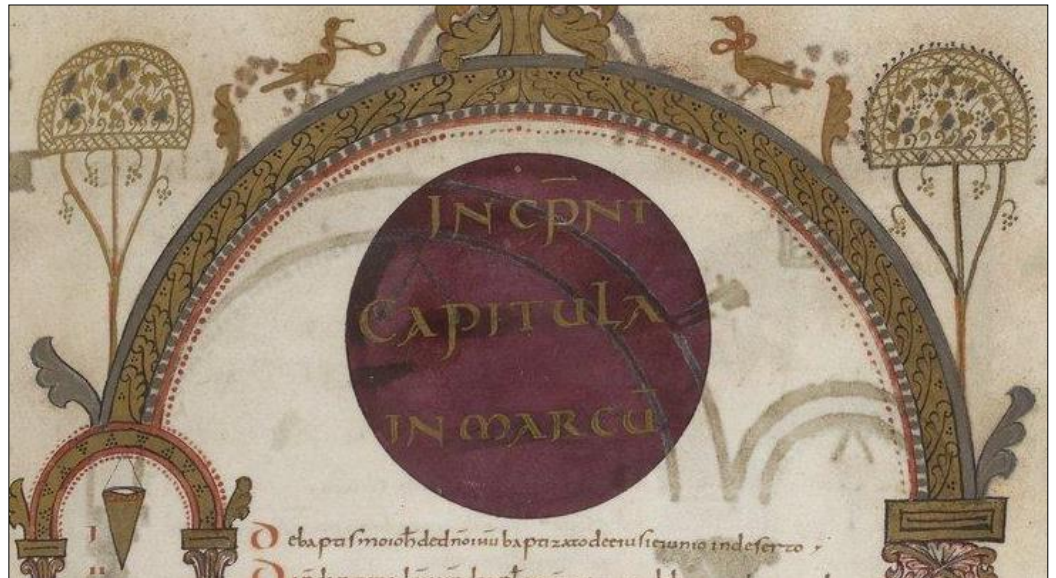




Figure 65
Lothar Gospels
fol. 74r chalice
with handles,
lamp/ciborium/
reliquary
hanging from
baldacchino.
Photo: author

Figure 66 Lothar Gospels fol. 106 v. chest altars
rectangular and square. Photo: author

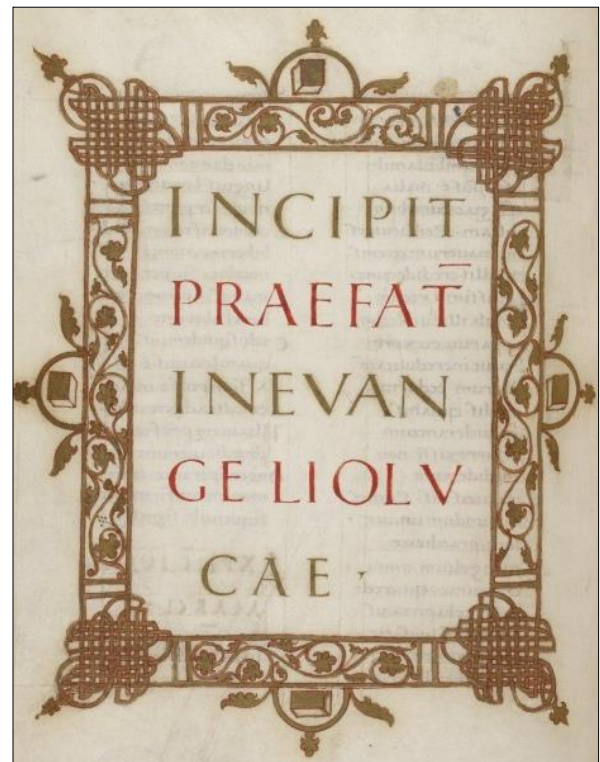


Figure 67 (above) Lothar Gospels fol. 108v flat
paten with decorated rim; (right) cf. Derry-naflan
paten. Photo: author





Figure 68 Lothar Gospels fol. 109r pair of golden cruets for wine and water. Photo: author



Figure 69 Lothar Gospels fol. 133r oval-shaped paten with handles or feet and plate with geometric decorations and rim (cf. round host with point in Frankfurt ivory). Photo: author

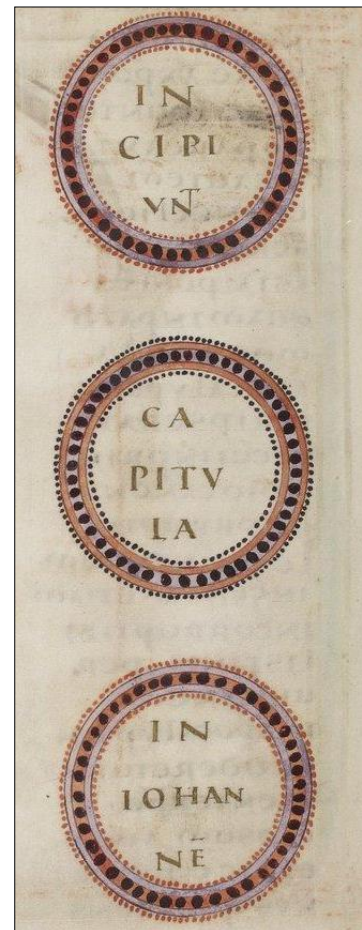


Figure 70 Lothar Gospels fol. 168v triple hosts with dots and rims. Photo: author



Figure 71 (left) Lothar Gospels fol. 169r hanging reliquary horn. Photo: author; (right) (cf.) Ivory Horn Reliquary, 12th century. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gallery 304. Photo: Metropolitan Museum of Art



Figure 72 Lothar Gospels fol. 169v chalice with handles/vessel/lamp hanging from a baldacchino/ciborium. Photo: author



Figure 73 (left) Lothar Gospels fol. 172r. golden hosts/coins with chrismos and pi-psi; silver round-lobed paten; rectangular decorated altar mensa (upper) portable altar, or gold rectangular paten such as the (right) ancient Gourdon paten in the Cabinet des Médailles, Paris Bibliothèque nationale de France. Photo: author



But what do these images mean—patens, chalices, hanging lamps, flagons, golden circles and the like? Are they simply decorative, as a cursory viewing might suggest, or is there a deeper reason for them? Éric Palazzo explains: “The presence of these ornamental motifs *in* the manuscript, that is within the sacred space of the liturgical text, and with relation to the prayers for the consecration, would increase the sacred character of the reading of these texts in addition to their sacramental value. And it would also contribute to the creation of a ‘locus’ within manuscript itself, which would then become symbolically associated with other sacred places and spheres.”

There are other sumptuous manuscripts, most from or based on the Turonian school of illumination, that picture Christ with a host in his right hand. From the second half of the ninth-century, the Le Mans Gospels, bears a *Majestas domini* page with Christ holding a round disk in

his fingers (**fig. 74**):



Figure 74 *Majestas domini*,
Le Mans Gospels,

Paris Bibliothèque nationale de France lat. 261, fol.
18r. Photo: Paris Bibliothèque nationale de France

In this image Christ is said to be seated on the arch of the world in the surrounding border and he holds the small golden disk with no surrounding dots but with a rim in his right hand between his thumb and fourth or ringfinger. Again, it is a Gospel book with a veritable catalogue of Eucharistic symbols. (**figs. 75-79**)



Figure 75 Le Mans Gospels fols. 14v, 15r hanging lamp, pyx, or reliquary. Photo: author

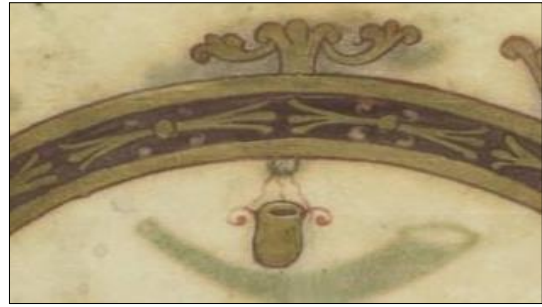


Figure 76 Le Mans Gospels fol. 15v hanging horn, lamp, pyx, or reliquary. Photo: author



Figure 77 Le Mans Gospels fol. 16r hanging flagon, hanging lamp, pyx, horned reliquary. Photo: author.





Figure 78a (left) Le Mans Gospels fol.16v hanging lamp, pyx, or reliquary. Photo: author



Figure 78b (right) Le Mans Gospels fol.17r hanging lamp, pyx, or reliquary. Photo: author



Figure 79 Le Mans Gospels fol. 76r Quoniam lobed paten. Photo: author

Much more ornate than the Le Mans Gospels is the *Majestas domini* page of the Munich Codex Aureus of Sankt Emmeram, Clm 14000. (**fig. 80**)

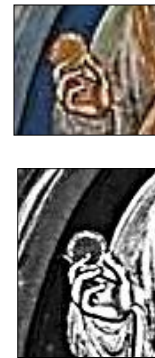


Figure 80 Majestas domini. Codex Aureus. Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Clm 14000, fol. 6v. Photo: Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek

Here again Christ is pictured seated on the globe of the earth holding the golden disk in his right hand between his thumb and first finger, this time with bright white dots or pellets surrounding the disk emphasizing its true, eternal value.

A Turonian Gospel book with a magnificent Majestas page was made under the patronage of Charles the Bald, and presented to Pope John VIII at the coronation of Charles as emperor, during Christmas night. It is now at the basilica San Paolo fuori le Mura in Rome.

(fig. 81)

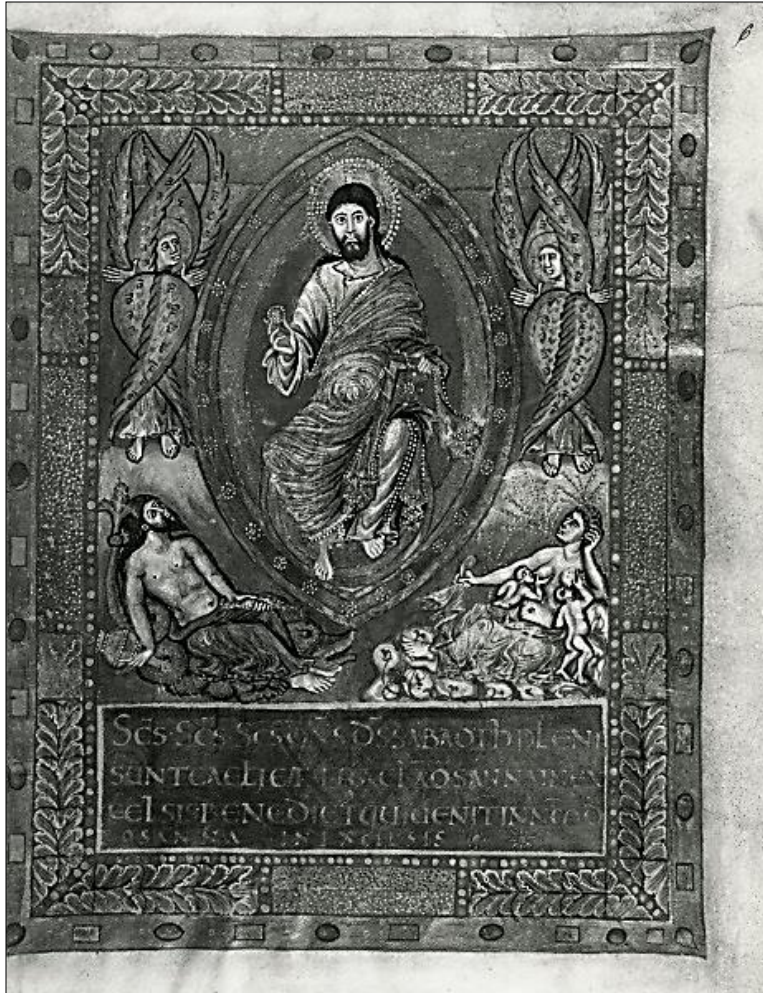


Figure 81 Majestas domini. Rome Basilica of San Paolo fuori le Mura, fol. 6r. Photo: Herbert Kessler

Again, Christ is enthroned on the globe of the earth and surrounded by a mandorla. He holds a disk surrounded by white dots in his right hand between his thumb and second finger.

So far we have seen hosts in the Majestas pages in the form of a simple circle or circle with dots. But we come to another manuscript in which the host has the imprint of Christ himself, the “First Bible of Charles the Bald” (Vivian Bible) made in 845-846, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France lat. 1. In the presentation folio (now bound late in the manuscript) Charles is seated under an arch with hanging chalices and lamps and, gesturing,

acknowledges or accepts the Bible presented to him by the untoured lay abbot of St. Martin of Tours, Vivian, on the right (**fig. 82**):⁵²



Figure 82 Vivian Bible, Paris Bibliothèque nationale de France lat.1, fol. 423r Photo: Paris Bibliothèque nationale de France

⁵² On the figures on the folio and their meaning see Paul Edward Dutton, *The Politics of Dreaming in the Carolingian Empire* (Lincoln NE, 1994), p. 147 f, citing particularly the observations of Herbert Kessler. Although Vivian may be introducing “his” monks in the procession, one wonders if among these might have been his brother Raganaldus from the nearby monastery of St. Martin of Marmoutiers eager for an audience with Charles. On Charles’s gesture of acceptance of the Bible, see Michael Patella, *Word and Image: Hermeneutics and Application of the Saint John’s Bible* (Collegeville MN, 2013), p. 63 f.

For our purposes the most important folio is the Majestas page (**fig. 83**):

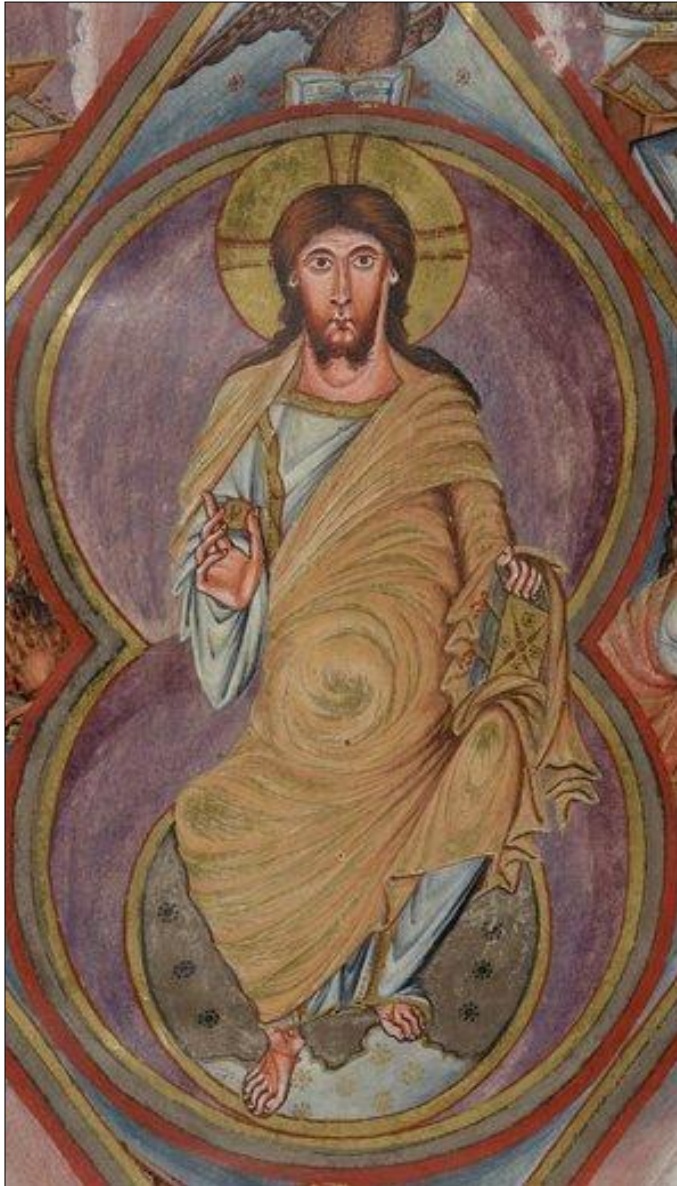


Figure 83 Vivian Bible, Paris Bibliothèque Nationale de France lat.1, fol. 329v. Photo Paris Bibliothèque Nationale de France

Christ in the Majestas Domini portrait holds a small golden disk in his right hand between his thumb and two middle fingers. Inscribed on the disk is the Chi-Rho symbol, that is, not the orb of the earth, but Christ himself in a golden coin-shaped host with a blood-red rim.

Perhaps the most glorious manuscript made for Charles the Bald is the so-called Coronation Sacramentary, or more accurately, the “Coronation Canon Libellus,”⁵³ Paris Bibliothèque Nationale de France lat. 1141, fols. 5r and 6r (figs. 84a-84b):

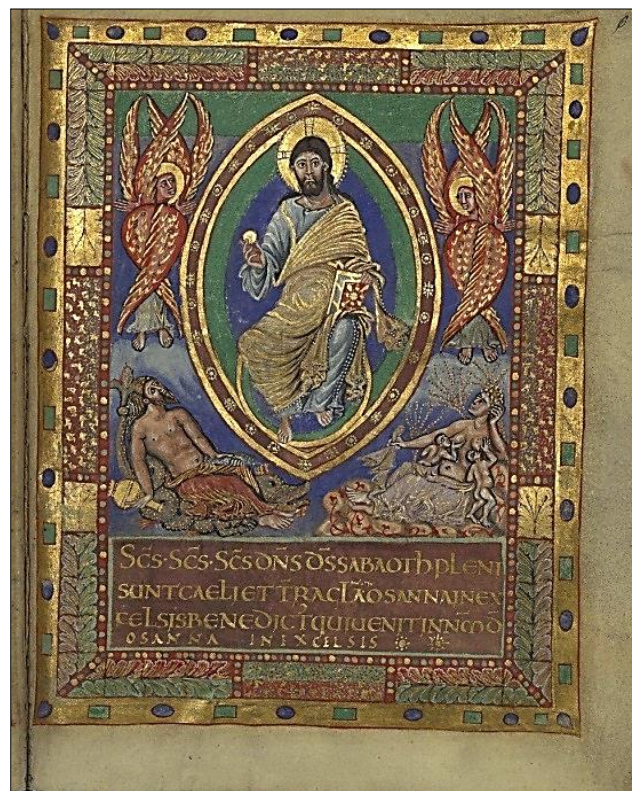
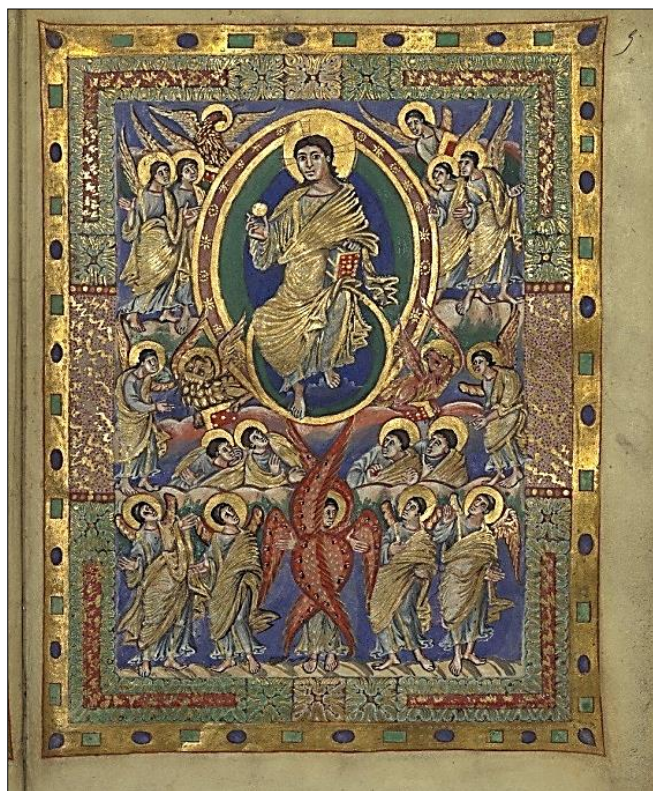


Figure 84a Paris Bibliothèque Nationale de France lat.1141, fol. 5r. Photo: Paris Bibliothèque Nationale de France; **Figure 84b** Paris Bibliothèque Nationale de France lat.1141, fol. 6r. Photo: Paris Bibliothèque Nationale de France



⁵³ On this see above n. 43, and Éric Palazzo, “‘Une copie moderne du sacramentaire’ de Charles le Chauve (Paris, BNF, lat. 9447 et lat. 1141) témoin du goût des collectionneurs du xvii^e siècle pour le moyen âge?” in *Amicrorum Societas: Mélanges offerts à François Dolbeau pour son 65^e anniversaire*, eds. J. Elfassi, C. Lanéry, and A-M Turcan-Verkerk, (Florence, 2013), pp. 501-514..

In both Christ is presented in a mandorla seated on the circle of the earth. In his left hand he holds a book and in his right hand a small round golden circle or disk-like coin with circles, dots or “pellets” around it – like Eldefonsus’s hosts -- between his thumb and middle finger.⁵⁴ In this “Sacramentary” Christ is holding the small round object with his fingers, as one might hold an azyne – as in the elevation⁵⁵ or exposition and adoration as later Eucharistic piety would have it. Regarding the “Coronation Sacramentary” or “Coronation Canon Libellus” it is significant that it is precisely in the Mass Canon that the celebrant repeats the letters in gold over the host, “Hoc est corpus meum.” (fig. 85)



Figure 85 Coronation ‘Sacramentary,’ Paris Bibliothèque Nationale de France lat.1141, fol 8r. Photo: Paris Bibliothèque Nationale de France

It has been noted elsewhere that when Christ is portrayed as holding the earthly orb it is often with his left hand, as is the case with the golden Basel altar frontal, although this is surely not

⁵⁴ In the seventeenth-century copy of the manuscript in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France lat. 9447, the two Majestas pages were not copied, on which see Palazzo, “Une copie moderne du ‘sacramentaire’ de Charles le Chauve,” p. 504.

⁵⁵ See, e.g., Aden Kumler, “The multiplication of the species,” p. 183, fig. 4.

always the case.⁵⁶ (**fig. 86**) As my friend, Lawrence Nees, has pointed out to me, “Those guys certainly knew how to portray an orb -- if they wanted to!”



Figure 86 Basel altar frontal (detail), *ca.* 1020, Fulda, Germany. Gold and copper over oak core, Cluny, Paris Musée national du Moyen Âge. Photo: author

⁵⁶ In the famous Byzantine Justinianic Angel Diptych in the British Museum the angel is pictured with the orb of imperial power in his right hand. For Christ with a large orb or disk in his right hand see the Ottonian Reichenau MS, Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Clm 4454, fol. 20v. For Christ with a large orb or disk in his left hand see Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Clm 10077, fol. 11v (Fulda?) s.X^{3/3}, the Pommersfelden Bible (Pommersfelden, Gräfllich-Schönbornsche Schlossbibliothek 333, fol. 2r), Zurich, Zentralbibliothek MS C 80, fol. 83r (St. Gall, 11th century), (Christ in Majesty with circle with cross with dots [resembling the Paris Mozarabic Psalter]), and the Libro de Jura de los Alcaldes de Pamplona, fol. 17r, on which see Soledad de Silva y Verástegui, *La miniatura medieval en Navarra* (Pamplona, 1988) pp. 65-67 and fig. 28.

The visual presentations of the hosts in the manuscripts of Charles the Bald, especially those from the Turonian school, came to Spain in the following century. From the tenth century there are a renowned manuscript of the *Commentary on the Apocalypse* by Beatus of Liébana and two of the famous illustrated manuscripts with the genuine *Collectio canonum hispana*. In the Beatus Apocalypse manuscript, Girona, Museo de Catedral Girona, Núm. Inv. 7 (11), there are two illustrations with an enthroned Christ holding a round disk. One of these is on the so-called Alpha page (**fig. 87**):



Figure 87 Girona, Museo de Catedral Girona, Núm. Inv. 7 (11), fol. 19r. Photo: author

Here Christ is shown seated within an Alpha and upside down Omega from the book of Revelation holding a book in his left hand and in his right a round disk held between his thumb and fourth or ring finger. Meyer Schapiro has suggested that the little disk originally meant a

Eucharistic host, but later became interchangeable with an orb. He also noted that it could acquire an imperial connotation, being compared by Honorius Augustodunensis to the coinage of the emperor.⁵⁷

In another scene in the Girona manuscript, fol. 2r, there is a Majestas portrait that may be directly related to earlier Turonian models (**fig. 88**):



Figure 88 Girona, Museo de Catedral Girona, Núm. Inv. 7 (11), fol. 2r. Photo: author

⁵⁷ "Two Romanesque Drawings in Auxerre," (1974) reprinted in his *Romanesque Art*, (New York, 1977), pp. 306-327, esp. 313 ff., a reference I owe to Peter Klein. As early as 1923 in his treatment of what he called "the ball of the earth" Walter W. S. Cook, "The Earliest Painted Panels of Catalonia (II)," *The Art Bulletin* 6 (1923) pp. 47-52, esp. p. 58., noted the possibility that the disk in Christ's hand might be a Eucharistic host, thanking the great Byzantinist Albert M. Friend for the suggestion and citing Leprieux who proposed the same explanation (André Michel, *Histoire de l'art*, I, p. 354).

Here a scribe has attempted to clear up the possible ambiguity surrounding the small round golden object by inserting the word “mundus” above it. Despite this description, the small object continues to appear not as the large globe of the earth but a small flat host. As Carlos Miranda García Tejedor has noted, such a symbolic presentation might have suggested a double meaning, Christ as ruler/creator/pantocrator of the earth as well as his presence in the Eucharistic host.⁵⁸ That is, the majestic heavenly king displays his earthly wealth in a Eucharistic golden coin.

With respect to the Beatus depictions, it might be remembered that art historians generally agree that Beatus himself likely illustrated his text. It is thought that the Najera fragment at Silos, although made long after Beatus’s time, may reflect this. One wonders if Beatus had made a Majestas or Alpha page he would have portrayed a host in Christ’s hand, that is, a host used in northern Spain as far back as the late eighth century.

The first of our canon law manuscripts of the *Collectio canonum hispana*⁵⁹ is the Codex Albeldense or Vigilanus, El Escorial, Real Biblioteca de San Lorenzo d.1.2, fol. 16v, copied in 976 in the monastery of San Martin de Albelda,⁶⁰ where the beautiful Visigothic text in Paris

⁵⁸ “An Iconographic and Stylistic Analysis of the Gerona Beatus” in *Beatus of Liébana: Codex of Gerona* (Barcelona, 2004), p. 28 f. It is interesting that the disk in Christ’s hand is flat like a host. For a more spherical disk in Christ’s hand Cook, art. cit. fig. 41, shows an eleventh-century ivory reliquary cover from Berlin, Kaiser Friedrich Museum.

⁵⁹ For a list of manuscripts with the *Hispana* or versions thereof in Visigothic script see my “*Canonistica Beneventana*,” *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Medieval Canon Law, Munich, 13-18 Juli 1992*, eds. P. Landau and J. Müller (Monumenta Iuris Canonici, Ser. C, Subsidia: Vatican, 1997) appendices 3 and 4; to which may be added the Visigothic fragment of the *Hispana* in the Archivio di Stato in Lucca, studied in my “Visigothic-Script Remains of a Pandect Bible and the *Collectio canonum hispana* in Lucca,” *Miscellanea Beneventana: Parerga Beneventana, Mediaeval Studies* 58 (1996), pp. 305-331 + 2 figs.; and Paris Archives Nationales AB XIX.1723, in my “A Visigothic-Script Folio of a Carolingian Collection of Canon Law,” *Miscellanea Beneventana: Parerga Beneventana, Mediaeval Studies* 58 (1996), pp. 321-325 (repr. in *Studies on Medieval Liturgical and Legal manuscripts from Spain and Southern Italy*).

⁶⁰ On this manuscript see my “The Civitas Regia Toletana before the Reconquista: A Mozarabic Vision in the Codices Vigilanus and Aemilianensis,” *Estudios sobre Alfonso VI y la Reconquista de Toledo: Actas del II. Congreso Internacional de Estudios Mozárabes: Instituto de Estudios Visigótico-Mozárabes*, 3, ed. R. González-Ruiz (Toledo, 1989), pp. 153-184.

Bibliothèque Nationale de France lat. 2855 of the *De virginitate beatae Mariae* of Ildefonsus of Toledo was written in 951 and presented to Bishop Godescalc of Le Puy.⁶¹ (fig. 89)

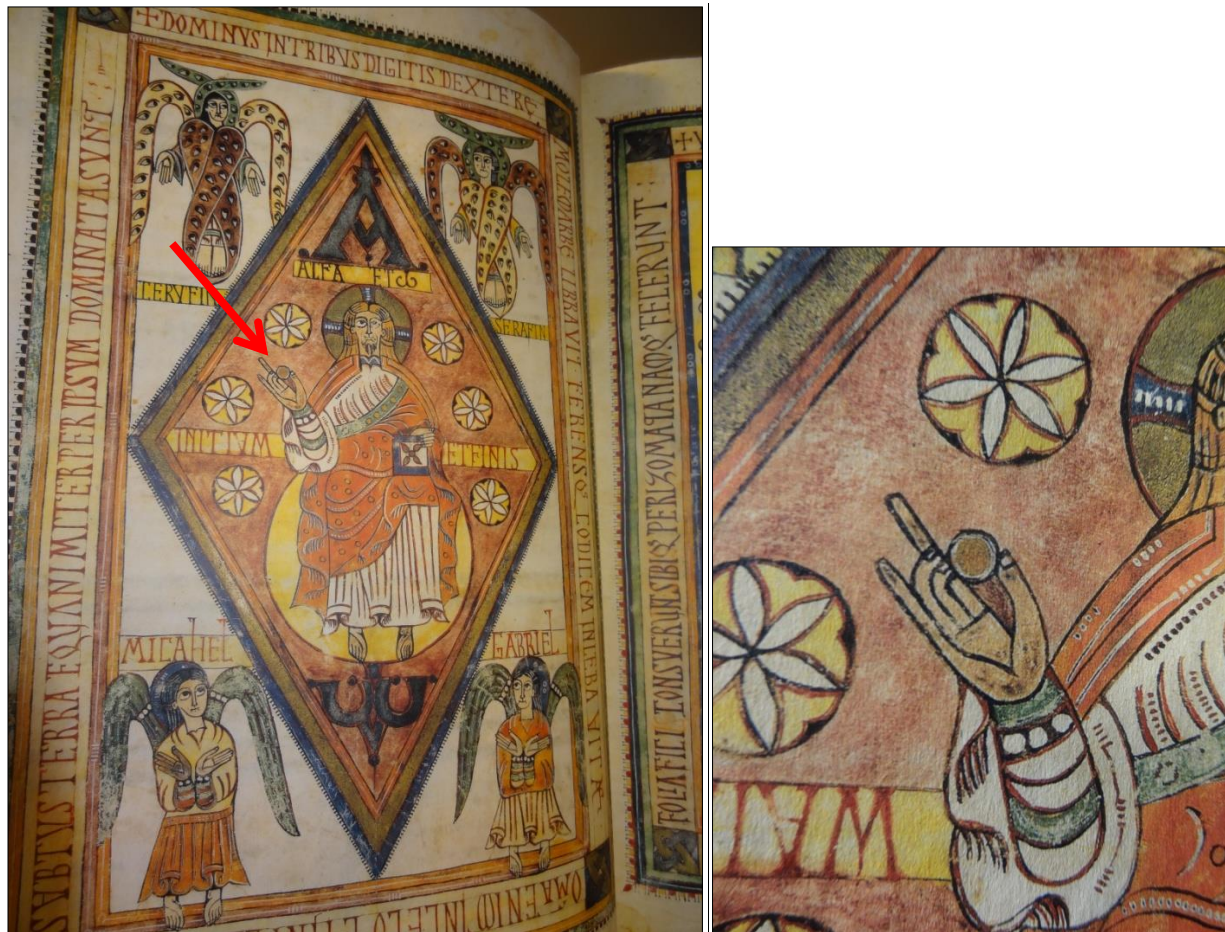


Figure 89 Codex Albeldense, El Escorial, Real Biblioteca de San Lorenzo d.1.2, fol. 16v. Photo author

In this case Christ is shown as the Alpha and Omega holding a book in his left hand and a small round golden disk with his thumb and two middle fingers of his right hand, not unlike Christ in the First Bible of Charles the Bald. To explain this the text in the border reads: Dominus in tribus

⁶¹ This manuscript has the Eldefonsus text (without Eldefonsus) inserted next to the Ildefonsus text.

digitis dextere molem a(o)rbe libravit.⁶² Does the orb signify the earth, or simply a round circle such as a host? In this connection it is interesting that three fingers or digits are specifically mentioned, perhaps reflecting the three digits covering the host in our Eldefonsus text. It might be that the thumb, forefinger, and little finger of Christ's right hand could be interpreted as raised in blessing, as they occasionally are presented elsewhere, but normally this blessing in the West comes with the thumb and two first fingers. That there is a rim around the circle may not be surprising either since we have seen rims in the illustrations of the hosts in the Eldefonsus text.

A scene similar to that in the Codex Albeldense appears in a slightly later manuscript of the *Collectio canonum hispana*, the Codex Aemilianensis, El Escorial Biblioteca de San Lorenzo d.1.1, fol. 13v, copied in 994 at the monastery of San Millán de la Cogolla. It is often said that this manuscript is a simple copy of the Codex Albeldense, but there are numerous differences showing that although it is probably related it is not a direct copy.⁶³

Such is the case with the Majestas scene. (**fig. 90**) Here Christ is enthroned holding the small golden disk with his thumb and middle fingers, like that in the Codex Albeldense. In the border, however, there is no mention of the orb. Hence, this scene may derive from an earlier model in which the disk was pictured simply as the Eucharistic host, and that in the

⁶² Cf. the "totum orbem" in Bede's *In Ezram et Neemiam*, Book I.3:5 ed. D. Hurst (CCSL 119A; Turnhout, 1969), pp. 271-272. For the traditional interpretation of the small circle in Christ's fingers being the mundus or earth, see Soledad de Silva y Verástegui, Francine Mora, "L'illustration des manuscrits de la Collection canonique hispana," *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale*, 127 (1989), p. 251, and Etelvina Fernández Gonzáles and Fernando Galván Freile, "Iconografía, Ornamentación y Valor Simbólico de la Imagen" in *Códice Albeldense*, 976: Original Conservado en la Biblioteca del Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial (d.I.2) (Colección Scriptorium 15; Madrid, 2002) p. 221.

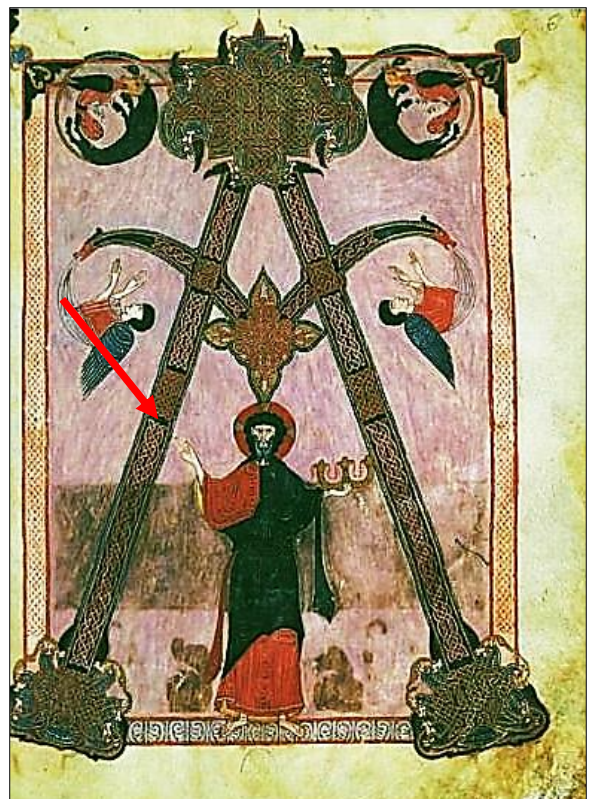
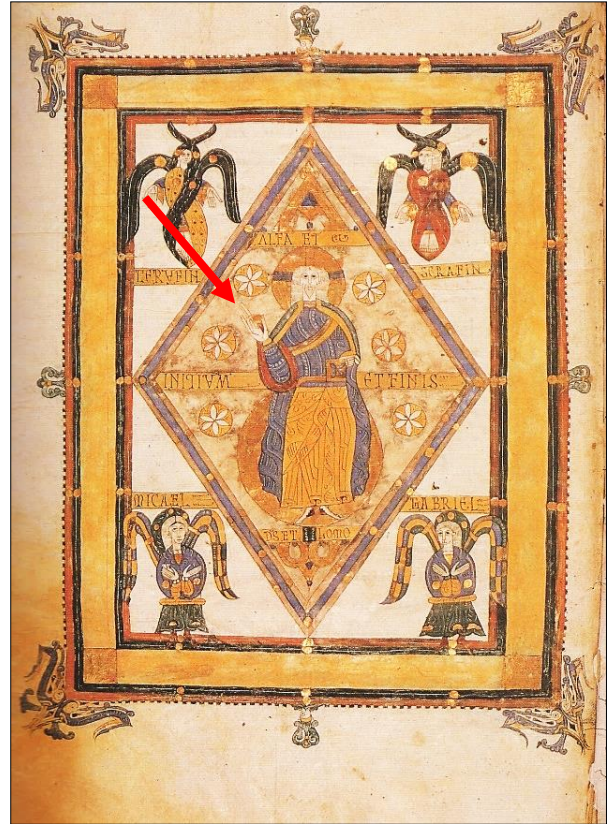
⁶³ On this manuscript see my "The 'Isidorian' *Epistula ad Leudefredum*: An Early Medieval Epitome of the Clerical Duties," *Mediaeval Studies* 41 (1979), pp. 252-330, which deals with the Isidorian letter not found in the Codex Albeldense. This letter in the same long form in the Aemilianensis is found in another manuscript – in Arabic --from El Escorial, Biblioteca de San Lorenzo 1623 (olim Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, 4879; G.g.132; DCXIII) (11th century: a. 1049). On the differences in the conciliar scenes in the Albeldense and Aemilianensis see my "The Civitas Regia Toletana before the Reconquista: A Mozarabic Vision in the Codices Vigilanus and Aemilianensis," pp. 153-184.

Figure 90 El Escorial, Real Biblioteca de San Lorenzo d.l.1, fol. 13v. Photo author

Codex Albeldense a double meaning was intended such as in the Girona Majestas scene. On the other hand, the border text in the Vigilanus may simply have been omitted in the later Aemilianensis.

Moving to Spain in the eleventh century – the century of Berengar and the azyme controversy -- there are two different manuscripts with Christ holding a round disk. The first is in another Beatus manuscript, the Facundus Beatus, made for King Fernando in 1047, Madrid Bib. Nac. Vitr 14-2, fol. 6r (Leon 1047) (**fig. 91**):

Figure 91 Facundus Beatus with Alpha and Omega, Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, MS Vit. 14-2, 360 x 268 mm, c. 1047. Photo: Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional.



In the Facundus Alpha folio Christ is standing under an Alpha with an Omega in his left hand and a disk in his right between his thumb and first two fingers.

Another Majestas portrait appears in an unlikely source, the eleventh-century Mozarabic Psalter from Silos, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France Smith-Lesouëf 2 [part II], fol. 77v.⁶⁴ (fig. 92)



Figure 92 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France Smith-Lesouëf 2 [part II], fol. 77v. Photo. Paris Bibliothèque nationale de France

⁶⁴ This manuscript was first described in detail by Walter Muir Whitehill, "A Mozarabic Psalter from Santo Domingo de Silos," *Speculum* 4 (1929), pp. 461-468, esp. 464, 466 f. and pl. III. More recently it has been pictured by François Avril et al, *Manuscripts enluminés de la péninsule ibérique* (Paris, 1982) no. 34, pl. A, a reference kindly given me by John Williams.

Here the enthroned Christ is pictured holding a round disk in his right hand between his thumb in one or two of his middle fingers. The disk seems clearly to be a host inscribed with a large X with dots between each arm, perhaps reflecting the chrismon or Chi Rho of the First Bible of Charles the Bald.

Also from Spain in the early twelfth century on the colorful painted Catalan altar frontal from Ix (Cerdanya) Christ in Majesty is pictured with a small round disk in his right hand, perhaps referring to the host to be consecrated on the altar mensa above. It is likely that this image was taken from a manuscript depiction. **(fig. 93)**



Figure 93 Painted Catalan altar frontal from Ix (Cerdanya), Barcelona Museu Nacional d'Arte de Catalunya MNAC/MAC 15802 (12th century) Photo: Creative Commons.

Moving from manuscripts to other media there is a *Majestas domini* portrayal with Christ holding what Meyer Schapiro called a host in the fingers of his right hand.⁶⁵ This appears on an altar frontal of Rodez cathedral dated to the middle of the eleventh century. Again, this host may refer to the host consecrated above on the altar mensa. **(fig. 94)**

⁶⁵ Meyer Schapiro, ed. And intro. by L. Seidel, *Romanesque Architectural Sculpture* (Chicago, 2006), p. 182 f., fig. 64.



Figure 94 Altar frontal from Rodez Cathedral. Photo Meyer Schapiro

Lest one think that the *Majestas domini* with a host in hand was restricted to France and Spain in the early Middle Ages, there is a striking German example of Christ holding a large host with a lamb inside in the glorious Gospel book of Bernward of Hildesheim. This manuscript was recently studied by Jennifer P. Kingsley in *Peregrinations* 3 (2010)138-173, with the suggestive title "To Touch the Image: Embodying Christ in the Bernward Gospels" emphasizing the Christological corporeal, touchable nature of the book itself and images therein. It is this type of host that lead William Durandus in his thirteenth-century *Rationale* to say of the host: "Some also represent a lamb there [in the host], first, because he who is sacrificed is a true lamb, but also for the sake of the text that reads [Exod. 29]: This is what you shall do upon the altar: you shall offer lambs continually and wine for the libation unto the lamb." (fig. 95)

Let us consider for a moment the involvement of Carolingian rulers in matters of theology and liturgical practice. First, Charlemagne himself. He is well known for his attempts to bring what he thought was Roman practice into his realm. In the area of canon law he did this by asking Pope Hadrian for a copy of the genuine canon law book of Rome. Hadrian sent him a copy of what he thought was the authentic *Collectio canonum Dionysiana*,⁶⁶ which was copied

⁶⁶ On this see my "Law, Canon, before Gratian," *Dictionary of the Middle Ages* 7, ed. J. R. Strayer (New York, 1986), pp. 395-413.



Figure 95 Hildesheim, Dom u. Diözesan Museum Domschatz MS 18, fol. 174r, 11th century. Photo: Dom und Diözesanmuseum

repeatedly in the Carolingian's realm. For liturgy Charlemagne also requested a copy of the sacramentary he thought had been composed by Pope Gregory. Hadrian sent him what he thought was such a copy, and Charlemagne deposited this in his court scriptorium, to be copied repeatedly (often with later modifications by Benedict of Aniane) by scribes throughout Carolingian the

empire. Charlemagne used the liturgy of baptism (sometimes forced) to bring the pagans he had conquered into his realm, and he asked the bishops of his realm to report on the baptismal practices they were using – Roman, he hoped – and they responded with dozens of

explanations.⁶⁷ On the theological front Charlemagne was heavily involved in the iconoclastic, “Adoptianist,” and “double procession” controversies occasioned by the writings of Elipandus of Toledo. We know of his active participation in these issues from his so-called *Libri Carolini* (*Opus Caroli regis contra synodum*) and in his assembling the Synod of Frankfurt in 794. In practical, liturgical terms, his position on the double procession was bolstered by his insertion of the Credo into the Mass liturgy, and importantly, with the “filioque,” not the “et filio” as used in the Mass Credo (Credimus) used in the Visigothic liturgy. We know of Charlemagne’s involvement in this from the reports of two monks from the Holy Land who had heard the filioque used in Charlemagne’s court in 808-809 as they delivered gifts from the Caliph of Bagdad. And finally, in the production of illustrated manuscripts to be used in liturgical services, the court schools of Charlemagne are renowned for some of the most glorious manuscripts of the Middle Ages. Perhaps Charlemagne (through Theodulf of Orléans) disapproved in the *Libri Carolini* of adoration and veneration of artistic images,⁶⁸ but the large manuscripts with their images made for him speak volumes for a more nuanced appreciation of such images.

The grandson of Charlemagne, Charles the Bald, carried on the policy of his forbearer in his involvement in liturgical and theological issues. On the liturgical side, this is clear in the illustrations for his manuscripts used in the Mass. Beyond that, Charles was concerned about the liturgical rites used in his realm, when he invited two priests from Toledo, who practiced the Visigothic rite, for liturgical celebrations.⁶⁹ It is likely that Charles was as interested in the

⁶⁷ See Susan Ann Keefe, *Water and the Word -- Baptism and the Instruction of the Clergy in the Carolingian Empire: A Study of Texts and Manuscripts* 2 vols. (South Bend IN, 2002).

⁶⁸ On Theodulf’s ideas on the function of images see Ann Freeman, “Theodulf of Orléans and the Libri Carolini,” *Speculum* 32 (1957), pp. 697-699.

⁶⁹ See Ann Freeman, “Theodulf of Orléans and the Libri Carolini,” p. 677. For a general survey of the interest of Charles in the liturgy, see Yitzhak Hen, *The Royal Patronage of Liturgy in Frankish Gaul to the Death of Charles*

Roman liturgy promoted by Charlemagne in his empire as he was in the liturgies practiced by his ancestors – the Gallican and Mozarabic rites that he may have confused. It has generally been said that 1) Charles asked to have the Mozarabic Mass said, or that 2) he had confused the Mozarabic with the Gallican rite of his Frankish ancestors, or that 3) he knew that these rites were closely related, or that 4) he knew that the IV Council of Toledo, seventh century, had mandated the rite practiced in Hispania should also be that for Gallia, or that 5) he wanted to hear the chant used in the Old Spanish rite. We do not really know his ultimate motives. But it would seem strange that he would ask priests from Toledo to say Mass as it was practiced in that city, likely knowing that the rite practiced by Elipandus of Toledo had been attacked earlier in the Adoptionist controversy in which Charlemagne and his court theologians had been so closely involved. But if the priests from Toledo did say or chant the Mass as used in their city, Charles may have been interested or surprised with many aspects of that Mass, such as: the Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed repeated at the Communion and not after the Gospel as it was in the Roman Mass that had been spread in the Carolingian realms; or by the “et filio” in that creed in the Old Spanish rite rather than “filioque,”⁷⁰ which we know was said in the court of Charlemagne; or by the Greek word “homooousion” rather than the Latin word “consubstantialem” in the creed; or by the unusual distribution of the hosts in the Toledan rite, although he may have known of similar distributions in Aquitanian churches at that time such as those depicted in the Eldefonsus text.

the Bald (877) (London 2001) esp. pp. 121-147, pointing out the experimentation and diversity of liturgical practice in Charles’s realm.

⁷⁰ On this see my “Apocalypses New: The Recently Discovered Beneventan Illustrated Beatus in Geneva in its South Italian Context,” *Peregrinations: Journal of Medieval Art and Architecture* 3/4 (2012) 16 f. at http://peregrinations.kenyon.edu/vol3_4/ReynoldsPeregrinations34.pdf.

On the theological side, Charles was intimately involved in the Eucharistic controversy. Radbertus of Corbie had written a tract, *De corpore et sanguine*, in the 830s in which he propounded a “real presence” theology of the Eucharist based on the writings of many patristic fathers. Charles certainly read this and asked another monk of Corbie, Ratramnus, for his opinion. Ratramnus responded in his tract, also entitled *De corpore et sanguine*, in which he argued for a figurative or spiritual presence of Christ in the Eucharist. To this Radbertus replied with a revised version of his earlier tract, this time dedicated to Charles.⁷¹ Charles clearly pondered these positions and eventually agreed with Radbertus. As Patricia McCormick Zirkel has pointed out, this was no mere balancing the opinions of two quarreling theologians, but an official endorsement, like Charlemagne’s earlier theological endorsements, of a position that was to be accepted in Charles’s realm.⁷²

We return to the manuscripts of Charles the Bald with their Majestas pages and hosts. That Charles was one of the greatest patrons of art in the ninth century is well known. Multiple manuscripts were made on his command, many of these in the famous school of Tours before its destruction by the Vikings in 853. But the influence of the Turonian school lingered long in Europe, as we have seen its influence in numerous manuscripts with their Majestas pages. Many of his manuscripts must have been seen and treasured by Charles himself. They were not simply kept in sacristies for occasional use in liturgical services, but were treasured, viewed, and admired by their patrons and owners as do modern collectors of like manuscripts. They were even given as gifts to kings and popes. That Charles himself probably personally delighted in

⁷¹ Celia Chazelle, *The Crucified God in the Carolingian era: Theology and Art of Christ's Passion* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 210-215, suggests that the tracts were written later, 853-856.

⁷² “The Ninth Century Eucharistic Controversy: a Context for the Beginnings of the Eucharistic Doctrine in the West,” *Worship* 68 (1994), pp. 2-23.

them is suggested in the famous portrait seen earlier of the seated Charles receiving the “First Bible” from Count Vivian, or in the brilliant “Coronation Canon Libellus” where the crowned Charles is pictured between the originators of the Roman rite, Popes Gelasius and Gregory, whose name is mentioned on fol. 1r and his portrait on fol. 3r facing Charles on fol. 2v.⁷³ (fig. 96a, b)

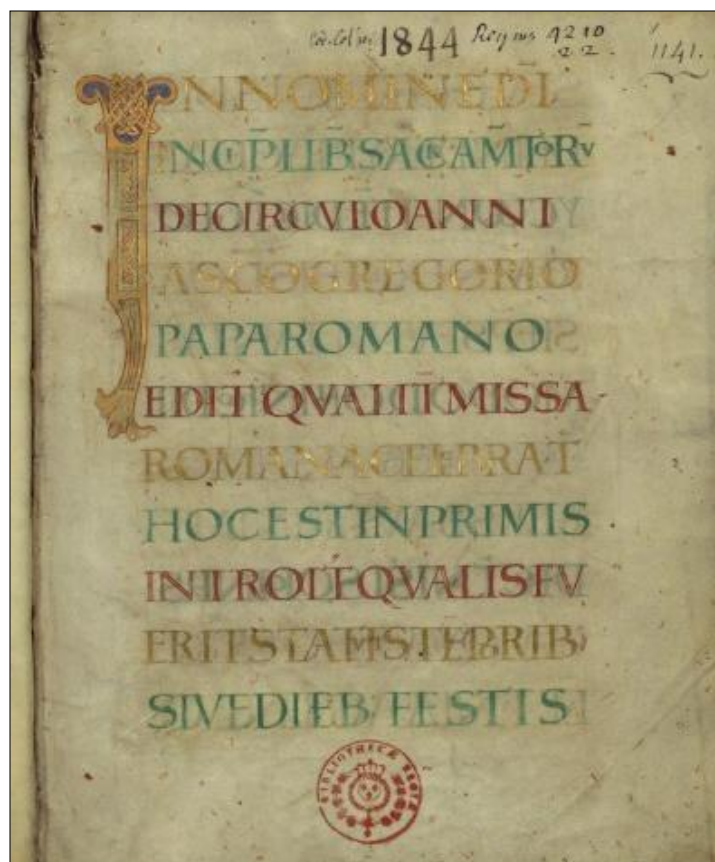


Figure 96a Coronation Sacramentary, Paris Bibliothèque nationale de France lat. 1141, fols. 1r, 2v, 3r Photo: Paris Bibliothèque nationale de France

Majestas pages in pre-Carolingian, Carolingian, and post-Carolingian times typically pictured Christ blessing the viewer, usually with thumb and two fingers. (fig. 97) Then we find

⁷³ There is, to be sure, debate whether or not this image does represent Charles the Bald between these two originators of the Roman sacramentary. See Garipzanov, *The Symbolic Language of Royal Authority*, p. 252f. n. 176, and literature therein on this. But even if it does not represent Charles himself, there is every reason to believe that he saw and admired the portrait of a regal figure like himself in “his” manuscript. Garipzanov, p. 254 n. 178 suggests that the folio with Charles was laid open amid shimmering bright candles in the cathedral of Metz for admiration. This may have been true for political reasons, but the combination of Charles on one folio opposite Pope Gregory is odd. Perhaps the two facing pages would have signified Charles’s approval of the Roman rite of Gregory, now widely used in the Carolingian realm. How much more fitting, however, it would have been to have had open the two facing- page diptych (shown below) of the angelic beings and saints on fol. 5v chanting the Tersanctus on fol. 6r in golden letters beneath the majestic Christ with host in hand. Perhaps the pages were turned hourly or daily as the Book of Kells formerly were in Trinity College Dublin? It is interesting that the Book of Kells, (Dublin, Trinity College Library, MS A. I. (58) (c. 800) has several illustrations that may represent circular azyme hosts. On the famous Chi Rho page, fol. 34r there are two cats/kittens/mice eating a circular object with a cross and dots in it; and on fol. 48r an animal has in its mouth a circular golden object with dots around it.



Figure 96b Sacramentary of Charles the Bald, 869-870, Paris Bibliothèque nationale BnF, Manuscripts, Latin 1141 fol. 2v-3r. Photo: Paris Bibliothèque nationale de France

in our pages Christ holding or perhaps blessing with the host. It should be remembered that objects used on the altar were blessed or consecrated – as we know from medieval benedictionals and pontificals– and hence books, including sacramentaries and gospels used on the altar, would have been blessed or consecrated in the same way. Did that consecration convey anything to the contents of the books, especially for their users? One wonders if a *Majestas Domini* page with **Figure 97** Christ In Majesty Blessing: Godescalc Gospels of Charlemagne (781-83) Paris Bibliothèque nationale de France Lat. Nal 1203, fol. 3r Photo: Paris Bibliothèque nationale de France

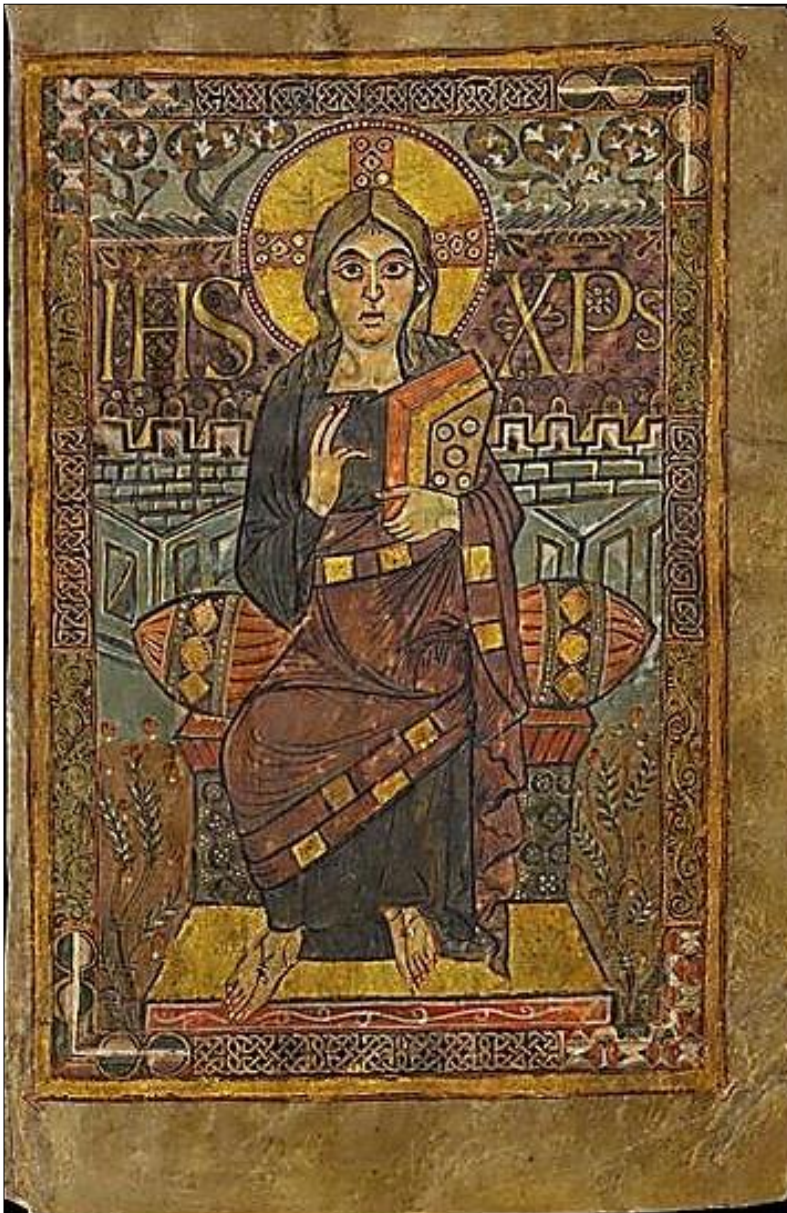


Figure 97 Christ In Majesty Blessing: Godescalc Gospels of Charlemagne (781-83) Paris Bibliothèque nationale de France Lat. Nal 1203, fol. 3r Photo: Paris Bibliothèque nationale de France

Christ blessing would have conveyed to the user – be he cleric, Charlemagne, or Charles the Bald to whom sumptuous manuscripts were given – a blessing in the illustration. (**fig. 98**)

It is this type of “activation” or “realization” that Éric Palazzo speaks about with Eucharistic liturgical objects. To put it in overly simplistic terms, while a modern person might look at a Majestas page and say, “Okay, yet another beautiful Majestas page with Christ’s blessing,” the

medieval individual would say of Christ blessing on a page that had been consecrated in a special ritual, “Yes, Christ is actually blessing me!” This would not be too dissimilar to the modern Russian Orthodox believer who beholds in a church or in a domestic *krasny ugol*, an icon of Christ blessing surrounded by angelic beings not simply a picture, but the reality behind of the image, the archetype as the Orthodox say. (**fig. 98**)



Figure 98 Author's Wife's Home Icon, Kaliningrad. Photo: Liubov Ivanitskaya

Regarding the images of the hosts in our manuscripts, did Charles direct his artists make them on a whim, or to substitute for the usual blessing hand of the normal *Majestas* pages, or were they made to indicate his official approval of the new usage of azymes coming exactly at

the time of the Eucharistic controversy in which both Radbertus and Ratramnus wrote their *De corpore et sanguine* for him?⁷⁴

But wonders if there could have been a deeper, almost iconic-like reason for their presence in the manuscripts. Could there possibly have been an inchoate “Eucharistic adoratio” in the back of Charles’ or his illustrators’ minds? Probably not in precisely those terms since in the Iconoclastic controversy during the time of Charlemagne the West had condemned the use of “adoratio,” and it would certainly not have approved of latria, worship given only to God. It is usually said that the western position on icons was that they could be venerated for what they represent, but not that they actually partook in some degree of the nature of the thing they represented. One wonders, however, as Charles paged through his glorious “Coronation Canon Libellus” manuscript, with its breathtaking double-page “diptych” of the saints and angels adoring the majestic Christ with the host prominently displayed, if, conscious of the arguments of Radbertus, he beheld or venerated an icon, as it were, of the historic Christ who had been born of the Virgin, had been crucified and resurrected, and had eventually ascended into heaven ruling in the majesty of the Apocalypse as the angelic beings and saints praise him with the triple Sanctus written in gold on the page. **(fig. 99)**

But just as important did he behold in the host in Christ’s hand the presence of Christ now on Earth; that is, did he “realize” in the host in Christ’s hand with its validating dots (or Chi Rho or chrismon in his First Bible) an icon, a “visual communion” or a “visual realization” in a way not unlike that which the later medieval faithful experienced the “real” Christ in gazing on the small white, wafer-like disk in Eucharistic adoration.

⁷⁴ On the role of the rulers’ direct involvement in the creation of the manuscripts, their decoration, and illustration see Garipzanov, *The Symbolic Language of Royal Authority*, p. 236.



Figure 99 Double-Page Diptych “Icon” of Christ showing the Host to the Angels and Saints. Paris Bibliothèque nationale 1141. fols. 5v-6r. Photo: Paris Bibliothèque nationale de France

Eucharist adoration of the host in the thirteenth century and beyond was clearly not like that suggested by the illustrations of the host held in Christ’s hand in our manuscripts. The idea of transubstantiation had not yet been developed, and hosts of azymes and bread were still used in the ninth century and beyond. But add the theology “real presence” developed by Radbertus of Corbie and approved by Charles – something not present in the late eighth century during the Iconoclastic controversy – to the striking presence of the host in the Majestas pages and one can sense the first steps toward Eucharistic adoration developed in the high and later Middle Ages.