

OUTSIDE THE PAGES:
THE MAKING AND MEANING OF EARLY MEDIEVAL BOOK COVERS

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Art History

Spring 2022

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am profoundly grateful to my advisor, Lawrence Nees, whose careful guidance led me through the years of working on this project. I am also grateful to my committee members who stood by the project throughout: Denva Gallant, Beatrice Kitzinger, and Benjamin Tilghman.

I would like to thank the librarians and museum staff who worked tirelessly to make their collections accessible to me and the scholars who kindly answered my questions and shared their knowledge and resources. In particular, I would like to thank David Bonner, Sue Brunning, Charlotte Denoël, Anna Dorofeeva, Jing Feng, David Ganz, John Gillis, Charles Little, Rosamond McKitterick, John Mitchell, Paul Mullarkey, Joshua O'Driscoll, and Frank Trujillo. Your assistance was invaluable before the pandemic. After the pandemic began, your assistance was what made it possible to carry on despite travel restrictions and limited access to collections.

I am truly appreciative for my friends who read countless drafts and discussed ideas for many long hours: Alba Campo Rosillo, Anne Cross, Tiarna Doherty, Caitlin Hutchinson, Sabena Kull, Kristen Nassif, Emily Shartrand, Rachael Vause, and Joseph Williams. Your constant reminders reminded me this was not a lone pursuit.

Finally, to James, for seeing me through the end, and to my family for providing the inspiration and support that made it possible for me to embark on this journey.

I dedicate this to my grandmothers.

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ABSTRACT

Looking outside the pages of early medieval manuscripts to the covers which encased them adds an extra dimension to our understanding of how those books were read, viewed, interpreted, and experienced by the people who made and used them. Through an exploration of eighth-century book covers, focusing on northwestern Europe, this study develops a novel framework for analyzing early medieval book covers based on three major functions they performed – encasement, embellishment, and enshrinement. Encasement refers to the multiple methods by which covers contain their pages to enhance their mobility and dissemination. Embellishment refers to the many ways covers enhance the visual interest of the book or represent the contents through decorative motifs or imagery. Enshrinement refers to the elevation of the sacred status of the book through the addition of a cover, usually of precious materials that reflect and enhance the religious value of the book. This framework is rooted in both the physicality of the book and in the dynamic interactions between books and their makers and users. This study also recontextualizes book covers from northwestern Europe within a highly interconnected early medieval world that encompasses the Mediterranean and Eurasia, a global view that reorients the covers as part of an ethos of experimentation that transcends their particular context. Through an innovative framework that is both holistic and global in its approach, this study uses early medieval book covers to come to a new understanding of the functioning of the physical book and the mechanisms of long-distance connections.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION: OUTSIDE THE PAGES

Looking outside the pages of early medieval manuscripts to the covers which encased them adds an extra dimension to our understanding of how books were read, viewed, and experienced by the people for whom those books were central to religious and intellectual life. Furthermore, the wide-ranging sources of forms and materials reflect the highly mobile and highly connected nature of people, objects, and ideas in the early middle ages. Through an exploration of eighth-century book covers focusing on northwestern Europe, the present study develops an innovative framework for analyzing early medieval book covers based on three major functions they performed: encasement, embellishment, and enshrinement. This framework is rooted in the physicality of the book and in the dynamic interactions between early medieval books and their makers and users. The study also re-contextualizes book covers from northwestern Europe within a highly interconnected early medieval world that encompasses the Mediterranean and Eurasia. Through a framework that is both holistic and global in its approach, this study uses early medieval book covers to come to a fuller understanding of the functioning of the physical book and the mechanisms of long-distance connections in the early middle ages.

The following chapters investigate the first surviving book covers from northwestern Europe, focusing on the period ca. 700 - 800 CE. This is the period from which the earliest evidence from northwestern Europe exists for the development of construction techniques, decorative practices, and religious meaning surrounding early medieval book covers that continued into later periods.¹ The eighth century is characterized by innovation and experimentation in book design and is therefore a fruitful period of inquiry for understanding the relationship between the form, decoration, and use of early medieval manuscripts.

The study centers on the eight surviving examples of decorated book covers securely associated with northwestern Europe in the eighth century. This group consists of the cover of the St. Cuthbert Gospel (London, British Library, Additional MS 89000) (Figs. 1 and 2), the cover of the Victor Codex (Fulda, Landesbibliothek,

¹ Surviving late antique book covers from the eastern Roman empire and the Italian peninsula are surveyed by John Lowden in "The Word Made Visible: The Exterior of the Early Christian Book as Visual Argument," in *The Early Christian Book*, ed. William E. Klingshirn and Linda Safran (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 13-47. Book covers dated before the eighth century from Coptic Egypt are surveyed by J.A. Szirmai in *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 1999), 7-31. These late antique covers display a similar multiplicity of functions as do the eighth-century covers that are the focus of this study. Ernst Kitzinger addresses the relationship between the decoration of late antique book covers and the interior of manuscripts in "A Pair of Silver Book Covers in the Sion Treasure," in *Gatherings in Honor of Dorothy E. Miner* (Baltimore: Walters Art Gallery, 1974), 3-17. For an iconographical interpretation of early medieval book covers, in particular the sixth-century book cover associated with Theodolinda, see Thomas Rainer, *Das Buch und die vier Ecken der Welt: Von der Hülle der Thorarolle zum Deckel des Evangelien-codex* (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2011).

Codex Bonifatianus 1) (Figs. 3 and 4), the cover of the Ragyndrudis Codex (Fulda, Landesbibliothek, Codex Bonifatianus 2) (Fig. 5), the cover of the Cadmug Gospels (Fulda, Landesbibliothek, Codex Bonifatianus 3) (Figs. 6 and 7), the cover of the Dagulf Psalter (manuscript: Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, cod. 1861; covers: Paris, Musée du Louvre) (Fig. 8), the present lower cover of the Lindau Gospels (New York, Morgan Library & Museum, MS M.1) (Fig. 9), the Lough Kinale Book Shrine (Dublin, National Museum of Ireland) (Fig. 10), and the cover of the Faddan More Psalter (Dublin, National Museum of Ireland) (Fig. 11). These covers form the core group of evidence for this study because they are the surviving examples that can be securely argued to be dated to the eighth century, associated with northwestern Europe, and created as decorated book covers. They represent profoundly different interpretations of how a book could be covered. Each uses a different combination of materials, employs different construction techniques, and exhibits different forms of decoration. They also illustrate how each cover responded to the unique conditions of its making, such as the resources available and the context in which it was intended to be used. Together they show that there was no standardized conception of how to gather, protect, and adorn the pages of a book in northwestern Europe in the eighth century.

The individuality of the core examples reflects a lack of standardization in practices of covering books in eighth-century northwestern Europe. However, they may attest to larger trends that are not immediately apparent because of the loss of original materials. To better determine the extent to which the surviving examples are

representative of larger trends, the core examples are considered alongside a variety of other evidence. This evidence includes surviving physical materials that are likely related to book covers, such as leather satchels that may have held books and metal and ivory plaques that may have been part of book covers.² It includes contemporaneous examples of structurally significant unadorned book covers, such as plain, limp covers used to loosely hold together the pages of miscellanies.³ The surviving examples are also assessed alongside contemporaneous depictions of book covers in other media and textual references to book covers. For example, there are numerous Evangelist portraits, such as those in the Cadmug Gospels, where the Evangelists are shown holding books with different types of covers and with a variety of decoration.⁴ Textual references from the period range from the colophon of the

² See chapter 2, pg. 49-58.

³ See, for example, the covers described in Berthe van Regemorter, “La reliure souple des manuscrits carolingiens de Fulda,” *Scriptorium*, 11, no. 2 (1957), 249-257, and Christ von Karl, “Karolingische Bibliothekseinbände,” *Festschrift Georg Leyh, Aufsätze zum Bibliothekswesen und zur Forschungsgeschichte dargebracht zum 60 Geburtstag am 6 Juni 1937*, ed. Ernst Leippbrand (Leipzig: O Harrassowitz, 1937), 84-86.

⁴ On depictions of book covers in early medieval art, see Appendix A. See also John Mitchell and Nicholas Pickwoad, “‘Blessed Are the Eyes Which See Divine Spirit Through the Letter’s Veil’: The Book as Object and Idea,” in *The Notion of Liminality and the Medieval Sacred Space. Convivium Supplementum 2019*, ed. Klára Dolezalová and Ivan Foletti (Brno: Masaryk University, 2019), 135-158; Paul Mullarkey, “Irish Book Shrines: A Reassessment,” (PhD diss., Trinity College Dublin, 2000), 15-16; and Lawrence Nees, “Design, Default or Defect in Some Perplexing Represented

Lindisfarne Gospels, which names those who bound the manuscript and who added the gems and metalwork, to Cassiodorus's *Institutiones*, which refers to a book of designs for bindings.⁵ Analyzing this larger body of evidence allows for the development of a richer understanding of practices of covering books in eighth-century northwestern Europe and how the core examples fit into larger trends.

The group of eighth-century book covers from northwestern Europe analyzed in this dissertation is ripe for reassessment as a whole. This reassessment enhances our understanding of the physical book and long-distance connections and thus makes a significant contribution to our understanding of these themes at the forefront of art historical and medieval studies scholarship today. New physical evidence has added greatly to our knowledge of the practice of covering books in the early middle ages. Notable are the discovery of the cover of the Faddan More Psalter in 2006 and the publication of a major new study on the St. Cuthbert Gospel in 2015.⁶ This new

Books,” in *Imago Libri: Représentations Carolingiennes du Livre*, ed. Charlotte Denoël, Anne-Orange Poilpré, and Sumi Shimahara (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), 71-78.

⁵ For a critical assessment of the significance of the colophon of the Lindisfarne Gospels, see Lawrence Nees, “Reading Aldred’s Colophon for the Lindisfarne Gospels,” *Speculum*, Vol. 78, No. 2 (April 2003), 333-377. On Cassiodorus and binding designs, see Carl Nordenfalk, “Corbie and Cassiodorus: A Pattern Page Bearing on the Early History of Bookbinding,” *Pantheon*, 32 (1974), 225-231.

⁶ John Gillis, “The Faddan More Psalter – A study of the early medieval book-making techniques and codicology of a recently discovered eighth-century Irish Psalter and an examination of its features and materials which suggest influences both domestic and remote in its materiality and manufacture,” (PhD diss., Trinity College Dublin, 2019), and Claire Brey and Bernard Meehan, *The St Cuthbert Gospel: Studies on the Insular*

physical evidence suggests the forms of book covers were more varied than previously recognized. The recent expansion of our understanding of how social, economic, and artistic connections operated, as well as continued study of early medieval book covers from beyond northwestern Europe also offers an opportunity for re-evaluation.⁷ For example, a new look at early Islamic book covers and other eastern Mediterranean examples will help to present a more nuanced understanding of the interactions between northwestern Europe and these regions beyond Coptic Egypt. The study also incorporates recent scholarship on the codicology and religious materiality of Central and South Asian manuscripts, broadening the scope of comparison for material from northwestern Europe.⁸ Through this study of early medieval book covers, I bring new light to the physical object and long-distance connections, themes with utmost

Manuscript of the Gospel of John (BL, Additional MS 89000) (London: The British Library, 2015).

⁷ Significant publications which have greatly expanded knowledge of early medieval trade and exchange in recent years are Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce, A.D. 300-900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), and Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400-800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). The current state-of-the-field of the study of early medieval trade is also expertly summarized by Bonnie Effros in “The Enduring Attraction of the Pirenne Thesis,” *Speculum*, 92, No. 1 (January 2017), 184-208.

⁸ See, for example, Imre Galambos, *Dunhuang Manuscript Culture: End of the First Millennium* (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2020) and Jinah Kim, *Receptacle of the Sacred: Illustrated Manuscripts and the Buddhist Book Cult in South Asia* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2013).

relevance in a society where we are increasingly experiencing objects virtually and recognizing global interconnections.

These themes were present throughout the process of developing this dissertation. The environment affecting the connections and movements of early medieval objects and artists became concrete while I traveled in England, Ireland, France, and Italy. Walking along Hadrian's wall or peering at the mosaics in the Roman Villa at Dorchester were reminders of how present the Roman past and Roman designs are in England now, and would have been in the eighth century. Distances between Northumbria and the bogs of central Ireland or between Rome and the early medieval region of Austrasia in northeastern France became much more tangible as the landscape evolved through the windows of trains, buses, and planes.

The physical object is at the core of this study, and it was possible to experience the material qualities of the covers, such as the texture of the metal, leather, and wood, or the weight of the object when lifted, while visiting the museums and libraries where they are held. With the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, it was necessary to radically rethink the nature of the objects that were the subject of the study. Some of the objects became solely digital images accompanied by metadata. In the digital environment, there were a range of possibilities for understanding the objects distinct from working with the parchment codices. Although confined to my computer, I was not limited in studying the decoration of the manuscripts in my study that were fully digitized. It was possible to study the intricacies of the ornament with incredible intimacy because of the closeness with

which I could view details and the ease with which I could flip through the manuscripts. Working with the manuscripts online, they became more and more abstracted and intangible as time progressed, but they retained a profound hold on the imagination throughout. This experience of my own, in many ways, mirrored how books and their covers were often experienced in the early middle ages, when they were sometimes kept physically remote from all but a select few, but still had a profound and wide-reaching presence as meaningful sacred objects.

Book covers are utilitarian – they hold the pages together, allow the pages to be transported, and protect the pages from deterioration, due to both use and the environment. At the same time, book covers are carefully conceived aesthetic objects – their decoration ranges from simple interlace borders to complex narrative programs. They may add to the material experience of the book through the addition of metal, jewels, or decorated leather to the paint, ink, or parchment of the pages within. This study analyzes book covers according to three major functions that synthesize these utilitarian and aesthetic properties inherent in their physical nature. **Encasement** refers to the many ways covers contain their pages to enhance the mobility of those pages and dissemination of the content within. The cover of the Faddan More Psalter, for example, provides no indication that its leaves were bound into the cover with substantial sewing (Fig. 11). This would have allowed the leaves to be distributed more easily and used more flexibly. **Embellishment** refers to the many ways covers enhance the visual interest of the book or represent the contents through decorative

motifs or imagery. For example, each element of the decoration of the Ragyndrudis Codex – cover, *incipit* pages, decorative initials, and decorative quire marks – employs a consistent repertoire of motifs and colors to create a visually coherent system of embellishment (Fig. 5). **Enshrinement** refers to the elevation of the sacred status of the book through the addition of a cover, usually of precious materials that reflect and enhance the religious value of the book. For example, the materials, design, and iconography of the present lower cover of the Lindau Gospels placed it within the larger ensemble of church metalwork that surrounded it and integrated it within the multi-sensory religious experience of which it was part (Fig. 9). Encapsulated in each of these terms is a definition of function that foregrounds the active engagement of maker, user, and object.

1.1 Foundations: Historiography and Methodology

Through an investigation of eighth-century book covers associated with northwestern Europe, this study builds on previous scholarship to develop a holistic conception of the early medieval book. This conception encompasses the various components of the physical object, the multiple elements of the manuscript's decoration, and the many ways the book interacts with its environment. It expands on previous studies of early medieval book covers which have primarily focused on their technical and material aspects. In the nineteenth century and early years of the

twentieth, when book bindings emerged as a subject of inquiry in their own right, studies focused on the outward appearance for the purpose of dating and localization. This approach is exemplified by the work of early scholars such as G. D. Hobson, and continued into the twentieth century with many catalogs and exhibits.⁹

More recent scholarship on early medieval book covers has tended to focus on either their utilitarian or their aesthetic roles. Substantial work has been undertaken to study the structures of medieval book bindings and other forms of book covers. Significant in this area in recent years is the work of J. A. Szirmai, especially that published in 1999 in *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding*. Szirmai provided a thorough overview of the techniques and structures of medieval bindings that forms the basis for the current study of medieval bookbinding.¹⁰ On the other hand, the book covers have been analyzed as works of art and discussed in terms of their iconography and style. Building on earlier studies of luxury bindings, notably Frauke Steenbock's essential catalog of bindings made of precious materials published in 1965, David Ganz's 2015 study *Buch-Gewänder. Prachteinbände im Mittelalter* represents a major step forward in the discussion of the aesthetics of book covers, applying discourses on

⁹ See, for example, G. D. Hobson, "Some Early Bindings and Binders' Tools," *The Library*, Fourth Series, vol. 19 (1939), 202-249. A recent example of the catalog of decorative bindings is Paul Needham, *Twelve Centuries of Bookbinding, 400-1600* (New York: The Pierpont Morgan Library, 1979).

¹⁰ J.A. Szirmai, *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 1999).

materiality, and the materiality of textiles in particular, to the study of medieval luxury bindings and their liturgical roles and religious meanings.¹¹

However, the study of book covers remains peripheral within the larger field of the history of the book and in the study of early medieval manuscripts.¹² Major catalogs of early medieval manuscripts, such as Ernst Heinrich Zimmermann's *Vorkarolingische miniaturen* of 1916 and J.J.G. Alexander's *Insular Manuscripts 6th to the 9th century* of 1978, have not regularly included descriptions of the book covers.¹³ A few more recent examples, such as the 2007 catalogue *Trésors Carolingiens: Livres Manuscrits de Charlemagne à Charles le Chauve*, began to overturn this historic marginality and include the covers as part of a comprehensive description of each

¹¹ Frauke Steenbock *Der kirchliche Prachteinband im frühem Mittelalter, von den Anfängen bis zum Beginn der Gotik* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1965) and David Ganz, *Buch-Gewänder. Prachteinbände im Mittelalter* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag GmbH, 2015). Ganz's emphasis on the materiality of book covers and their relationship to textiles is also applied to medieval book covers from a wide range of contexts in the essays compiled in David Ganz and Barbara Schellewald, eds., *Clothing Sacred Scriptures: Book Art and Book Religion in Christian, Islamic, and Jewish Cultures* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019).

¹² David Pearson, "Bookbinding," in *The Book: A Global History*, ed. Michael F. Suarez and H.R. Woudhuysen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 256.

¹³ Ernst Heinrich Zimmermann, *Vorkarolingische miniaturen* (Berlin: Deutscher Verein für Kunstwissenschaft, 1916) and J.J.G. Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts 6th to the 9th century* (London: Harvey Miller, 1978).

manuscript.¹⁴ Re-centering book covers within the history of the book, Mirjam Foot assessed their role within the larger life of the book, examining a broad range of covers.¹⁵ My study follows Foot's social-historical approach, but investigates the period-specific intricacies of the eighth century. By presenting book covers as an integral part of how books were circulated, owned, and read in the early middle ages, they are established as a central element in the evolving process of the making and use of early medieval manuscripts.

This dissertation places early medieval book covers within the more holistic conception of the medieval object advanced in current scholarly discourse. By focusing on the physical object, including its structure and the craftsmanship of its making, I situate early medieval book covers within a growing discourse on practice, process, and theory in medieval art, represented in notable publications by Heidi Gearhart and Margaret Graves.¹⁶ By analyzing ornament as an element which integrates the different media of cover, page, and related objects through the motifs

¹⁴ Marie Pierre Lafitte, Charlotte Denoël and Marianne Besseyre, *Trésors Carolingiens: Livres Manuscrits de Charlemagne à Charles le Chauve* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 2007).

¹⁵ Mirjam Foot, *The History of Bookbinding as a Mirror of Society* (London: The British Library, 1998), 2.

¹⁶ Heidi Gearhart, *Theophilus and the Theory and Practice of Medieval Art* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017) and Margaret S. Graves, *Arts of Allusion: Object, Ornament, and Architecture in Medieval Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

and techniques used to create compositions, I respond to the novel approaches to early medieval ornament presented in the work of Jean-Claude Bonne, Robert Stevick, and Benjamin Tilghman, among others.¹⁷ By orienting book covers within a multi-sensory religious environment, I draw on the robust body of recent scholarship exploring the relationship between the material nature of objects and their spiritual function, including the work of David Ganz, Beatrice Kitzinger, Eric Palazzo, and Herbert Kessler.¹⁸ Building on this scholarship, I establish the book cover as part of a complete physical object, as part of a comprehensive decorative program, and as a part of a full aesthetic experience.

¹⁷ Jean-Claude Bonne, “De l’Ornemental dans l’Art Médiéval (VIIe-XIIe Siècle). Le Modèle Insulaire,” in *L’image: Fonctions et usages des images dans l’Occident médiéval*, ed. Jérôme Baschet and Jean-Claude Schmitt (Paris: Léopard d’Or, 1996), and “Intrications: À propos d’une composition d’entrelacs dans une évangile celto-saxon du VIIe siècle,” in *Histoires d’ornement: Acts du colloque de l’Académie de France à Rome, villa Medici, 27-28 juin 1996*, ed. Patrice Ceccarini, Jean-Loup Charvet, and Frédéric Cousinié (Paris: Klincksieck, 2001), 75-108. Robert D. Stevick, “The St. Cuthbert Gospel Binding and Insular Design,” *Artibus et Historiae*, 8, No. 15 (1987), 9-19, and *The Earliest English Bookarts: Visual and Poetic Forms before A.D. 1000* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994). Benjamin C. Tilghman, “Pattern, Process, and the Creation of Meaning in the Lindisfarne Gospels,” *West 86th*, 24, No. 1 (Spring-Summer 2017), 3-28.

¹⁸ Ganz, *Buch-Gewänder*. Beatrice Kitzinger, *The Cross, the Gospels, and the Work of Art in the Carolingian Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019). Herbert Kessler, *Experiencing Medieval Art* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019). *Experiencing Medieval Art* is a revised and expanded edition of *Seeing Medieval Art* (New York: Broadview Press, 2004). Eric Palazzo, “Art, Liturgy, and the Five Senses in the Early Middle Ages,” *Viator* 41, No. 1 (2010), 25-56.

In line with the recent global turn in medieval studies, I take a more geographically-expansive approach to the early middle ages.¹⁹ This opens new possibilities for understanding eighth-century book covers from northwestern Europe within networks of artistic and technical experimentation. It also allows the covers to transcend the particular context of their making and use and places them within a larger and more interconnected world. I re-evaluate comparisons between northwestern European examples and Coptic examples - comparisons entwined in twentieth-century scholarship with a persistent and problematic Orientalist narrative establishing tenuous connections between northwestern Europe and an exotic East.²⁰ I also consider evidence from Central and South Asia that has not previously been addressed in conjunction with the material from northwestern Europe, in large part due to linguistic and scholarly barriers. Recent scholarship on Central and South Asian

¹⁹ For summaries of the theoretical turn towards the global in medieval studies, see Alicia Walker, "Globalism," in *Studies in Iconography*, 33, Special Issue Medieval Art History Today – Critical Terms (2012), 185, and Matthew Canepa "Theorizing Cross-Cultural Interaction Among Ancient and Early Modern Visual Cultures," *Ars Orientalis*, 38 (2010), 7-29. Major projects reflecting the global turn in medieval art history include the work compiled on the website <http://globalmiddleages.org/>. For the global approach applied to medieval manuscripts, see Bryan C. Keene, ed., *Towards a Global Middle Ages: Encountering the World Through Illuminated Manuscripts* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum 2019).

²⁰ For a summary of the larger problem of the connection between Insular and Coptic art, see Joseph Raftery, "Ex Oriente...", *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 95, No. 1/2 (1965): pp. 193-204.

manuscripts makes this material more accessible.²¹ These regions offer important contemporaneous alternatives to northwestern Europe for examples of the experimental and dynamic nature of designs for book covers.

1.2 Structure: Chapter Outline

The dissertation is organized into four major chapters, along with an introduction and conclusion. The chapter following the introduction presents the main book covers examined and the body of evidence that will be used in the following chapters. The proceeding three chapters move into a thematic analysis of early medieval book covers, centered on the three functions of encasement, embellishment, and enshrinement. These three major functions are not mutually exclusive, but are often intertwined, and an individual cover may be analyzed according to a combination of these interpretive frameworks. Each of these three functions builds on the last in material and theoretical complexity. The conclusion looks ahead to consider the implications of eighth-century practices for understanding later material.

²¹ In addition to the sources cited in note 8 above, for an introduction to original materials, current research, and other resources available for the study of non-western European manuscripts, see Alessandro Baussi, ed., *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies: An Introduction* (Hamburg: COMSt, 2015).

1.2.1 Chapter 2 – Evidence: The Physical Pieces

The second chapter assesses the available physical evidence related to practices of covering books in eighth-century northwestern Europe and the limitations of that evidence. The chapter introduces the eight surviving decorated book covers associated with this temporal and geographical context, describing their materials, construction, and decoration. It also offers a brief history of study for each of these covers to the extent that it affects current perceptions of them. The chapter ends with a discussion of objects which are likely related, but which lack sufficient information to be securely identified as book covers. By analyzing the surviving covers in conjunction with each other, the variety of structure and decoration that book covers could take in the eighth century becomes apparent, and the repertoire of techniques and motifs available to those making covers in the period is established. Furthermore, by assessing the group as a whole, the individual covers can be understood outside some of the traditional art historical frameworks in which they have previously been analyzed, which have focused on questions of dating, localization, iconography and style. The technical, material, and structural considerations that arise from the physical evidence analyzed in this chapter are the foundations from which larger conclusions about the artistic, cultural, social, and religious roles of manuscripts in the early middle ages can be built in subsequent chapters, which are centered on conceptual issues of function.

1.2.2 Chapter 3 – Encasement: The Fluidity of Forms

The third chapter offers a wide-ranging examination of the structures available for encasing books in the eighth century and shows that there were a variety of forms available, each with their own meaning and effect on the reader's physical engagement with the book. The concept of encasement explored in this chapter encompasses the numerous methods by which pages were contained. By adding the method of containing the pages to the analysis of early medieval manuscripts and by not confining the idea of encasement to the sewn binding, I go beyond the previous scholarship on early medieval book covers, surveyed in the previous chapter. In this way, I offer a more expansive and dynamic framework through which to understand how books were designed and interacted with in the eighth century. The light, flexible, loose form of the cover of the Faddan More Psalter, for example, invites active learning and creativity. In addition to applying a more expansive definition of encasement to material from northwestern Europe, the chapter looks at the methods used to encase books beyond northwestern Europe, including the Mediterranean, Central Asia, and South Asia, where contemporaneous material has been uncovered. This geographically-expansive survey shows that in each context the form of encasement was a fluid concept responding to the particular requirements of a specific book.

1.2.3 Chapter 4 – Embellishment: The Ordering of Ornament

The fourth chapter analyzes how book covers operate within a system of embellishment which encompasses the entire object and connects the distinct components of the manuscript into a unified aesthetic whole. This system of embellishment connects the interior and exterior of the book and incorporates all components of the object. The chapter first looks more closely at the four cases of eighth-century manuscripts where both cover and decorated pages survive. Examining these few cases where the majority of the visual program of the manuscript is intact allows for a holistic assessment of the decoration of a single object and the role of the cover as part of that decoration. For example, in the Cadmug Gospels, the non-figural motif of the saltire cross and a visual program that integrates the non-figural design of the cover and the figural and non-figural decoration of the pages would have enhanced the experience of the person using the manuscript by providing a meaningful visual accompaniment to private prayer and contemplation of the gospels. Second, this chapter examines the intricate relationship between book covers and ornamental pages with designs consisting entirely of non-figural designs, often called carpet pages. These pages include, for example, those found in the Lindisfarne Gospels or in an eighth-century copy of St. Augustine's *On the Harmony of the Gospels* from Corbie, France (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS. Lat. 12190). Analyzing book covers in relation to these decorative pages offers an effective way to understand how the non-figural decoration of book covers situates the manuscripts with which they are

associated within wider temporal and geographical spheres, conveys the meaning of their texts, and emphasizes their design process. Through these two frameworks, the chapter presents ways of analyzing how the non-figural decoration of early medieval book covers functions as an essential part of the creation of the visual program of the book and the expression of the book's meaning.

1.2.4 Chapter 5 – Enshrinement: The Substance of the Sacred

The fifth chapter assesses the role of the cover in enhancing the religious significance of the book it encases. The chapter first examines the sources and physical characteristics of the materials used to construct early medieval book covers and how those materials contribute to the object's meaning. The glitter of metal, the luminescence of colored gemstones, the warmth of ivory, for example, were an integral part of the book's visual and liturgical role and the materials were often deliberately chosen for their aesthetic and haptic effects. Furthermore, some materials were attributed with specific Christian interpretation, articulated in texts such as Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*. These physical qualities and attributed meanings suffuse the cover, and by extension the book, with a material presence and meaning. Second, book covers could provide a multi-media and, along with their surrounding environment, multi-sensory experience also achieved by reliquaries and holy images as part of their intended effect. They were on display during liturgical services

alongside other objects such as processional crosses and chalices. Considering the connection between book covers and other liturgical objects and the liturgy more broadly situates book covers within an immersive religious experience.

The three frameworks of encasement, embellishment, and enshrinement each provide an approach to the early medieval book cover that integrates it into a more holistic conception of the early medieval book. As will be shown throughout, the cover is equally connected to its religious environment as to the pages it encases. It acts as a node between the public and the private, between the exterior and the interior, between the visible and the invisible. The early medieval cover makes the book whole as an object and whole with its environment.

Chapter 2

EVIDENCE: THE PHYSICAL PIECES

“...they then, but not without fear, removed the lid, and saw a book of the Gospels lying on a shelf by the head.”

- The anonymous account of the translation of St. Cuthbert, 29 August 1104.²²

2.1 Introduction

Because of the vicissitudes of survival, the physical evidence we have for the form and function of book covers in northwestern Europe in the eighth century is limited, fragmentary, and skewed. This chapter will assess what the available physical evidence adds to our understanding of how books were covered in the early middle ages and also the limitations that evidence presents. It will introduce the surviving book covers associated with the eighth century, describing their materials, construction, and decoration. It will also offer a brief history of study for each of these

²² C. F. Battiscombe, *The Relics of Saint Cuthbert: Studies by Various Authors Collected and Edited with an Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Printed for the Dean and Chapter of Durham Cathedral at the University Press, Oxford, 1956), 101. For the Latin text, see *Capitula de Miraculis et Translationibus Sancti Cuthberti*, cap. VI, *Symeonis Monachi Historiae Dunelmensis Ecclesiae Auctarium*, Roll Ser. Of the Works attributed to Symeon of Durham, ed. T. Arnold, Vol. 1 (London, 1885), 251.

covers to the extent that it affects current perceptions of them. The chapter will end with a discussion of objects which are clearly related, but which lack sufficient information to be securely identified as book covers, such as leather satchels that may have held books, and metal and ivory plaques that may have been part of book covers.

The chapter is specifically devoted to the physical evidence. This is the primary means by which the appearance and construction of the objects can be known. By analyzing the surviving covers in conjunction with each other, the variety of structure and decoration that book covers could take in the eighth century becomes apparent, and the repertoire of techniques and motifs available to those creating covers in the period is established. Furthermore, by assessing the group as a whole, the individual covers can be understood outside some of the traditional art historical frameworks in which they have previously been analyzed, which have focused on questions of dating, localization, iconography and style. While playing a central role, the technical, material, and structural considerations that arise from the physical evidence are not the ends, but rather the foundations from which larger conclusions about the artistic, cultural, social, and religious roles of manuscripts in the early middle ages can be built in subsequent chapters, which are centered on conceptual issues of function.

Early medieval book covers are at once utilitarian and aesthetic objects, designed to enhance the manipulation of the manuscript, as well as its visual impact. For this reason they do not easily fit into traditional art historical categories in which they have often been discussed. Categories of style, iconography, and schools of

production were developed primarily around works meant to be viewed and inspected, rather than handled, and are therefore imperfect for manipulable objects like book covers. Alternatively, purely technical analysis of elements such as sewing structures and methods of leather-cutting does not address the profound meaning and intricate visual effects conveyed by all aspects of the cover.

The study of each of the individual covers discussed below has emphasized the two intellectual threads of the utilitarian and the aesthetic to varying degrees depending on the nature of the particular cover and scholarly interests, often strongly affected by interest in the pages the cover encases. The utilitarian and the aesthetic, however, must be considered as part of a synthetic whole that makes up the book cover. This study endeavors to synthesize the varying strands of scholarship on early medieval book covers into a more holistic and dynamic understanding of these objects.

2.2 Surviving Examples

The surviving examples of decorated book covers associated with the eighth century and northwestern Europe include the cover of the St. Cuthbert Gospel (London, British Library, Additional MS 89000) (Figs. 1 and 2), the cover of the Victor Codex (Fulda, Landesbibliothek, Codex Bonifatianus 1) (Figs. 3 and 4), the cover of the Ragyndrudis Codex (Fulda, Landesbibliothek, Codex Bonifatianus 2) (Fig. 5), the cover of the Cadmug Gospels (Fulda, Landesbibliothek, Codex

Bonifatianus 3) (Figs. 6 and 7), the cover of the Dagulf Psalter (manuscript: Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, cod. 1861; covers: Paris, Musée du Louvre) (Fig. 8), the present lower cover of the Lindau Gospels (New York, Morgan Library & Museum, MS M.1) (Fig. 9), the Lough Kinale Book Shrine (Dublin, National Museum of Ireland) (Fig. 10), and the cover of the Faddan More Psalter (Dublin, National Museum of Ireland) (Fig. 11). Each of these covers represents an individualistic design, employing a distinct combination of materials, construction techniques, and forms of decoration which respond to the unique context of its making and use.

2.2.1 The St. Cuthbert Gospel

The cover of the St. Cuthbert Gospel is central to the study of early medieval bookbinding because it presents a uniquely well-preserved original sewing structure, and its decoration integrates the front cover, back cover and text through non-figural and non-narrative imagery. The cover of the St. Cuthbert Gospel consists of a fine, reddish-tinted goatskin leather stretched over thin boards of birch or lime. Both the front and back contain decoration, complete with pigmentation (Figs. 1 and 2). The central focus of the design on the front cover is a plant springing out of a vase and extending to form spiral tendrils. Wide rectangular panels containing yellow and blue interlace are situated above and below the plant. The whole design is enclosed in a frame formed from a single-strand interlace between raised lines. The back cover

contains a design of a double-armed cross formed from single yellow lines.²³ The double-armed cross is drawn within a grid. The lines of the grid are colored to create step patterns, which emphasize the outline of the cross. The rectangular grid is within a frame delineated with blue and yellow lines on both the outside and the inside edges. The interlace on the front cover and the cross-step pattern on the back are incised in the leather. The central plant design and the rectangular frame surrounding the interlace on the front have been crafted by making a raised form under the leather.²⁴

The cover of the St. Cuthbert Gospel was described in the groundbreaking 2015 study of the manuscript, edited by Claire Breay and Bernard Meehan, as “a landmark in the cultural history of western Europe, being the earliest intact European Book.”²⁵ This iconic status, in addition to its association with some of the most

²³ The double-armed cross on the back cover of the St. Cuthbert Gospel is closely comparable to the double-armed cross on fol. 1v of the Book of Durrow. Martin Werner argues this notable form in these two manuscripts represents the True Cross. See Martin Werner, “The Binding of the Stonyhurst Gospel of St. John and St. John,” in *Insular and Anglo-Saxon Art and Thought in the Early Medieval Period*, ed. Colum Hourihane (Princeton: Index of Christian Art, Dept. of Art & Archaeology, 2011), 295, and “The Cross-Carpet Page in the Book of Durrow: The Cult of the True Cross, Adomnan, and Iona,” *The Art Bulletin* 72, no. 2 (June 1990), pp. 174-223.

²⁴ CT scans taken in 2013 reveal a clay-like substance used under the leather to form the raised decoration, although it was earlier suggested that cords or gesso may have been used for this purpose. Nicholas Pickwoad, “Binding,” in *The St. Cuthbert Gospel: Studies on the Insular Manuscript of the Gospel of John (BL, Additional MS 89000)*, ed. Claire Breay and Bernard Meehan (London: The British Library, 2015), 52-55.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

significant people and places of early medieval England, including Saint Cuthbert, Lindisfarne, and Wearmouth-Jarrow, have assured the book and its cover a prominent place in the history of bookbinding and early medieval art. It was likely made in the early eighth century at the monastery of Wearmouth-Jarrow.²⁶ At some point in its early history it became associated with the relics of Cuthbert, the Bishop of Lindisfarne and highly-regarded saint who died in 687. The earliest reference to the book is in the medieval account of the translation of the relics of St. Cuthbert in 1104 to a shrine in Durham Cathedral. According to the accounts, it was discovered in the coffin, placed inside a red leather satchel located near Cuthbert's head.²⁷

²⁶ In accepting an early eighth-century date for the cover, I follow the dating established by Breay and Meehan in *The St. Cuthbert Gospel: Studies on the Insular Manuscript of the Gospel of John* (BL, Additional MS 89000). A date prior to the translation of St. Cuthbert's relics in 698 for the manuscript and cover is argued for in C. F. Battiscombe, ed., *The Relics of Saint Cuthbert*, and in T. Julian Brown, ed. *The Stonyhurst Gospel of Saint John* (Oxford: Printed for the Roxburghe Club, 1969).

²⁷ Two medieval accounts of the translation of the relics of St. Cuthbert are one by Symeon of Durham in the early twelfth century and another by Reginald of Durham in the mid-twelfth century. For the Latin text of the accounts, see *Capitula de Miraculis et Translationibus Sancti Cuthberti*, cap. VI, *Symeonis Monachi Historiae Dunelmensis Ecclesiae Auctarium*, Roll Ser. Of the Works attributed to Symeon of Durham, ed. T. Arnold, 2 vols. (London, 1882-1885), Vol. 1, 229-261, Vol. 2, 333-362; Reginald of Durham, *Reginaldi monachi Dunelmensis Libellus de Amirandis Beati Cuthberti Virtutibus*, ed. J. Raine (Surtees Society, 1835), 111-112. R.A.B. Mynors provides a revised translation in Battiscombe, *The Relics of St. Cuthbert*, 99-114.

The cover was first noted in the modern period in a lecture given by Reverend John Milner to the Royal Society of Antiquaries in 1806, and later published.²⁸ In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the cover appeared in various sources. It was included in exhibitions at the Victoria and Albert Museum (formerly the South Kensington Museum) in 1862, 1920 and 1930.²⁹ It also appeared in publications on the history of bookbinding by Sarah Prideaux, William Salt Brassington, W. H. J. Weale, Jean Loubier, G. D. Hobson, and Douglas Cockerell.³⁰ The appearance of the cover in the exhibitions and its inclusion in several publications established the St. Cuthbert Gospel as a significant and fine example of medieval bookbinding and provided early photographic documentation of the cover. However, the descriptions in these publications were confined to its decoration.

²⁸ John Milner, "Account of an Ancient Manuscript of St. John's Gospel, by the Rev. John Milner, F.A.S in a Letter to the Rev. John Brand, Read June 5, 1806," *Archaeologica*, 16 (January 1812), 17-21.

²⁹ In conjunction with the 1862 exhibition, the binding was photographed and published in John C. Robinson, *The Art Wealth of England* (London: P. & D. Colnaghi, Scott and Co., 1862).

³⁰ Sarah Prideaux, *An Historical Sketch of Bookbinding* (London: Lawrence & Bullen, 1893), 4-5; William Salt Brassington, *A History of the Art of Bookbinding, with some account of the books of the ancients* (London: Eliot Stock, 1894), 84-85; W. H. J. Weale, *Bookbindings and Rubbings of Bindings in the National Art Library, South Kensington Museum* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode for HMSO, 1898), xxii; Jean Loubier, *Der Bucheinband in Alter und neuer Zeit* (Berlin: H. Seemann, 1904), 59-60; G. D. Hobson, *English Binding before 1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge, at the University Press, 1929), 1-2; Douglas Cockerell, "The Development of Bookbinding Methods – Coptic Influence." *The Library*, Vol. s4-XIII, no. 1 (June 1932): pp. 1-19.

Technical analysis of the structure began with Berthe van Regemorter's description, including important observations of the sewing, published in her 1949 article on the St. Cuthbert Gospel and the bindings of the three Boniface manuscripts in Fulda (the Cadmug Gospels, the Victor Codex and the Ragyndrudis Codex).³¹ Roger Powell built on van Regemorter's research in his description of the binding commissioned by the British Museum for inclusion in *The Relics of St. Cuthbert*, published in 1956 and revised in 1969.³² Powell's thorough and precise description is still an essential reference for studying the structure of the binding. Nicholas Pickwoad published the most recent examination of the structure of the binding in the 2015 volume on the St. Cuthbert Gospel.³³ Pickwoad was able to add new observations with the assistance of up-to-date technical analysis. For example, he reexamined the traces of thread marks to support his argument that the quires were held together by quire tackets for a period of time before the book was bound, and CT scans and X-rays confirmed the use of cords to form the raised decoration. The long-term study of the

³¹ Berthe van Regemorter, "La Reliure des Manuscrits de St. Cuthbert et de St. Boniface," *Scriptorium*, III, 45-51.

³² Roger Powell, "The Binding of the Stonyhurst Gospel," in *The Relics of Saint Cuthbert*, ed. C. F. Battiscombe (Oxford: Printed for the Dean and Chapter of Durham Cathedral at the University Press, Oxford, 1956), 362-374. The revised version appears as Roger Powell and Peter Waters, "Technical Description of the Binding," in *The Stonyhurst Gospel of Saint John*, ed. T. Julian Brown, (Oxford: Printed for the Roxburghe Club, 1969) 45-62.

³³ Nicolas Pickwoad, "Binding," in *The St Cuthbert Gospel: Studies on the Insular Manuscript of the Gospel of John (BL, Additional MS 89000)*, ed. Claire Breay and Bernard Meehan (London: The British Library, 2015), 41-63.

cover of the St. Cuthbert Gospel and the unique survival of its original sewing structure provides a wealth of information about the technology of at least one example of bookbinding in the early eighth century. This information can inform the interpretation of how manuscripts with less surviving binding structure were bound and also provide material to make meaningful comparisons to other forms of encasements used for early medieval manuscripts.

Although study of the structure of the binding of the St. Cuthbert Gospel has provided the most significant contribution to study of the cover since the mid-twentieth century, continued analysis of the decoration and its iconography has added new depth to how the cover is interpreted. In a 2011 article, Martin Werner was the first to offer an in-depth interpretation of the iconography of the binding in relation to contemporary understandings of the Gospel of John, expressed through liturgical practices and Biblical exegesis, most importantly those by Bede.³⁴ Leslie Webster expanded on Werner's ideas in her contribution to the 2015 publication, emphasizing the ways the two covers convey distinct but complementary commentaries on the Gospel of John through their iconography and visual effects.³⁵ Since the pages contain only the text of the Gospel of John and no decoration, considering the various levels of interpretation contained in the embellishment of the binding in relation to the text, as

³⁴ Werner, "The Binding of the Stonyhurst Gospel of St. John and St. John," 287-314.

³⁵ Leslie Webster, "Decoration of the Binding," in *The St Cuthbert Gospel: Studies on the Insular Manuscript of the Gospel of John (BL, Additional MS 89000)*, ed. Claire Breay and Bernard Meehan (London: The British Library, 2015), 65-82.

suggested by Werner and Webster in relation to the binding of the St. Cuthbert Gospel, offers a way to understand the connection between text, back cover, front cover, and the representation of the text through different forms of non-narrative and non-figural imagery. This type of analysis can also be effectively applied to the other eighth-century covers and will be incorporated into the analysis presented in the following chapters.

2.2.2 The Boniface Manuscripts

The book covers adorning three manuscripts currently located in Fulda - the Victor Codex, the Ragyndrudis Codex, and the Cadmug Gospels - are closely linked through their association with St. Boniface, the eighth-century Anglo-Saxon missionary known for his monastic foundations in present-day Germany, including at Fulda. The manuscripts have been associated with each other and with St. Boniface from early in their history and were given together as relics to the newly-founded Fulda Cathedral Library in 1778. However, the three covers came to Fulda in the early middle ages through different routes representing direct connections between sites of book production in Italy, Ireland, France, and Germany.

Much of the early history of the three Boniface manuscripts can be extrapolated from paleographical evidence. The earliest moment in the history of the Victor Codex can be deduced from the primary script, an Italian uncial dated to the

sixth century, and uncial corrections possibly attributed to Victor, Bishop of Capua from 541-554. Glosses in an Anglo-Saxon cursive miniscule have been identified as written in the hand of St. Boniface himself, a testament to the eighth-century history of the manuscript. There are also glosses in Anglo-Saxon uncial and a minuscule script found at Fulda in the eighth and ninth century, showing the manuscript was later situated within the Fulda milieu.³⁶ The origin of the Ragyndrudis Codex within the orbit of Luxeuil is apparent from the use of Luxeuil miniscule for the primary text. Eighth and ninth-century glosses in Old English and Old High German attest to the multi-lingual environment within which the manuscript was studied. Tenth-century additions in Carolingian miniscule show the continued use of the manuscript.³⁷ The Irish connections of the Cadmug Gospels are visible from the Irish miniscule script. Reflecting the later prestige of the manuscript is an addition at the end of the manuscript written in Carolingian miniscule using gold ink and dated between 891 and 899.³⁸ A history of interconnections can be derived from the scripts in the three manuscripts, interconnections also visible from the distinct choices in their structure

³⁶ Regina Hausmann, *Die Theologischen Handschriften der Hessischen Landesbibliothek Fulda bis zum Jahr 1600: Codices Bonifatiani 1-3, Aa 1-145a* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1992), 3.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

³⁸ Hausmann, *Die Theologischen Handschriften der Hessischen Landesbibliothek Fulda*, 11.

and decoration that reflect the wide-reaching networks established by St. Boniface and his followers.

The eighth-century cover of the Victor Codex adorns a sixth-century manuscript likely made in the Italian peninsula containing Tatians's *Harmonia Evangeliorum* and various texts from the New Testament.³⁹ The design of the cover establishes a contrast in ornament between interlace and vegetal motifs which is mirrored by a contrast between the materials of metal and leather. The cover consists of metal mounts attached to leather-covered oak boards (Figs. 3, 4, and 12).⁴⁰ On both boards a mount is placed at each of the four corners, two triangular metal mounts are placed on each of the long sides of the boards, and a single triangular mount is placed in the center of the short sides of the boards. There are two additional silver loops attached to the top of the lower cover. The corner mounts consist of a silver binding strip which curves in at the end of each arm to form the shape of a bird's head. Within

³⁹ The manuscript is dated to the sixth century based on its Italian Uncial script and an inscription referencing Victor, Bishop of Capua from 541-554. See E. A. Lowe, *Codices Latini antiquiores: a palaeographical guide to Latin manuscripts prior to the ninth century*. Part 8: Germany. Altenburg – Leipzig (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), CLA 1196. The cover is dated to the eighth century based on the animal style ornament used on the metal mounts and on the use of blind stamped designs on the leather. See D. M. Wilson in "An Anglo-Saxon Bookbinding at Fulda," *The Antiquaries Journal*, 41 (1961), 215. For a full list of contents, see Hausmann, *Die Theologischen Handschriften der Hessischen Landesbibliothek*, 4-7.

⁴⁰ The arrangement of the twelve surviving metal mounts suggests there were originally twenty-two metal mounts on the cover. These numbers follow the reconstruction presented by Wilson in "An Anglo-Saxon Bookbinding at Fulda," 202.

the curve of the silver piece is a sheet of bronze impressed with an interlace pattern. The triangular mounts are constructed similarly, with a silver border surrounding a bronze sheet impressed with interlace. The leather is dyed red and is blind-stamped with rosettes, palmettes and circles arranged in a quadripartite design (Fig. 13). In the cover of the Victor Codex, the contrasting elements of Northumbrian-style metalwork and leather stamping techniques with Coptic precedents are brought together to form a singular object that is visually dynamic and reflective of the interconnected world of which the manuscript was part.⁴¹

The Ragyndrudis Codex was likely made at the monastery of Luxeuil in France in the eighth century and contains a range of theological texts, including various tracts against the Arians, *De Bono Mortis* by St. Ambrose, and the *Synonyma* by Isidore of Seville.⁴² The front cover contains a quadripartite design cut into reddish leather and laid over gold-tinted parchment. Individual motifs of rosettes, tear drops, lozenges, and circles are arranged into a unified cruciform pattern (Figs. 5 and 14).

⁴¹ These comparisons are identified by Wilson in “An Anglo-Saxon Bookbinding in Fulda.”

⁴² The Ragyndrudis Codex is dated to the first half of the eighth century based on its Luxeuil minuscule script. See Lowe, *Codices Latini antiquiores*. Part 8, CLA 1197. Based largely on her assessment of the decoration, Babette Tewes dates the manuscript more specifically to between 720 and 730. Babette Tewes, *Die Handschriften der Schule von Luxeuil: Kunst und Ikonographie eines frühmittelalterlichen Skriptoriums* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011), 141-145. For a full list of contents, see Hausmann, *Die Theologischen Handschriften der Hessischen Landesbibliothek Fulda*, 9-10. On the *Synonyma* and its reception in the early middle ages, see Claudia di Sciacca, *Finding the Right Words: Isidore's Synonyma in Anglo-Saxon England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

The arms of the cross meld into the border that runs around the perimeter of the cover. Following the lines of the cross and the border is a row of four-petaled rosettes interrupted at the corners by small dots. In the quadrants formed between the arms of the cross and the border are larger six-petaled rosettes surrounded by a circle formed from the same lozenge shapes used for the petals. Outside this circle is another circle of small dots. Filling the space around the large rosettes are scattered tear drops and circles. Completing the designs in each quadrant is another four-petaled rosette positioned above the large rosette. The design creates a visual tension between the details of the individual motifs and the syncretic form of the cross.

The Cadmug Gospels is a small (12.5 x 10 cm) copy of the four Gospels likely made in Ireland in the eighth century.⁴³ It falls into a category of small, portable gospel books made for personal use found in early medieval Irish contexts, termed “pocket Gospels” by Patrick McGurk in 1956.⁴⁴ The cover is akin to that of the St. Cuthbert Gospel (Figs. 6 and 7). It is similarly made of reddish leather stretched over thin boards. Incised on the lower and upper cover is a prominent X surrounded by a frame following the edges of the boards. In each of the four triangular spaces created

⁴³ The dating is based on the Irish minuscule script and comparison to similar portable gospel books from early medieval Ireland. See Lowe, *Codices Latini antiquiores*. Part 8, CLA 1198, and Patrick McGurk in “The Irish Pocket Gospel Book,” *Sacris Erudiri* 8, No. 2 (1956), 251. For a full list of contents, see Regina Hausmann, *Die Theologischen Handschriften der Hessischen Landesbibliothek Fulda*, 11-13.

⁴⁴ The “pocket Gospels” as a group were defined by McGurk in “The Irish Pocket Gospel Book,” 249-269.

by the arms of the X are triquetra knots. The incised lines are filled with a golden-yellow pigment. In the context of a gospel book, the X design of the cover represents a saltire cross indicating the function of the manuscript as an intimate book used for prayer and private contemplation of the gospels.⁴⁵

Despite their clear differences of design and origin, the Ragyndrudis Codex, the Victor Codex, and the Cadmug Gospels are inextricably linked through much of their history and in modern scholarship because of their association with St. Boniface. Reflecting the depth and persistence of this perceived connection, Christophorus Browerus outlined in his 1614 discussion the most significant questions surrounding these manuscripts as the following: “Did Boniface own the Victor Codex and are the glosses in the Epistle of James in his hand? Is the Ragyndrudis Codex the book which Boniface held at the hour of his death? Is the gospel book written by Boniface himself?”⁴⁶ The centrality of these questions was re-emphasized in Carl Scherer’s foundational 1905 publication on the three manuscripts, and they have persisted throughout the twentieth century. In the most recent printed catalogues of manuscripts housed at Fulda, Regina Hausmann and Christine Jakobi-Mirwald devoted parts of their descriptions to addressing the questions of whether Boniface wrote, owned, or

⁴⁵ See chapter 4, 132-135.

⁴⁶ Translation by the author. “Hat Bonifatius den Victor-Codex besessen und sind die Glossen zum Jakobusbrief darin von seiner Hand? Ist der Ragyndrudis-Codex das Buch, welches Bonifatius in der Todesstunde bei sich trug? Ist das Evangeliar von Bonifatius selbst geschrieben?” Quoted in Carl Scherer, *Die Codices Bonifatiani in der Landesbibliothek zu Fulda* (Fulda: Festgabe zum Bonifatianusjubiläum, 1905), 5.

used the manuscripts.⁴⁷ Lutz E. von Padberg and Hans-Walter Stork spent much of their 1994 monograph on the Ragyndrudis Codex discussing St. Boniface and what is known about his involvement in the book culture of the eighth century.⁴⁸

In addition to their significance in relation to St. Boniface and, consequently, the role of manuscripts in the Anglo-Saxon missions on the continent, the three covers have also been studied as exemplars of early medieval bookbinding. In the same article that is the first significant study of the structure of the St. Cuthbert Gospel, Berthe van Regemorter presented equally insightful observations on the three Boniface manuscripts.⁴⁹ Van Regemorter placed an emphasis on the Coptic parallels of the sewing techniques, materials, and decorative techniques seen in all four covers discussed. David Wilson provided an even more in-depth analysis of the cover of the Victor codex, reconstructing the original arrangement of the metal mounts and appearance of the blind-stamped decoration.⁵⁰ Lutz E. von Padberg and Hans-Walter Stork gave a similarly thorough treatment to the cover of the Ragyndrudis Codex in their 1994 monograph on the manuscript. They described in detail the overlay

⁴⁷ Regina Hausmann, *Die Theologischen Handschriften der Hessischen Landesbibliothek Fulda*, 3-13; Christine Jakobi-Mirwald, *Die Illuminierten Handschriften der Hessischen Landesbibliothek Fulda* (Suttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1993), 15-23.

⁴⁸ Padberg and Stork, *Der Ragyndrudis Codex des Hl. Bonifatius*, 7-53.

⁴⁹ van Regemorter, "La Reliure des Manuscrits de St. Cuthbert et de St. Boniface," 45-51.

⁵⁰ Wilson, "An Anglo-Saxon Bookbinding at Fulda," 199-217.

technique used in the cover and its Coptic precedents and provided a reconstruction of the cover, which is currently heavily damaged and missing significant portions of the decoration.⁵¹ Because of their striking parallels, the binding of the Cadmug Gospels has also received coverage in relation to the binding of the St. Cuthbert Gospel, appearing in Nicholas Pickwoad's study of the structure of the binding of the St. Cuthbert Gospel and earlier in the 1969 volume by T. J. Brown devoted to the St. Cuthbert Gospel.⁵² The technical information assessed by these scholars should be considered in conjunction with the historical knowledge, not only of the individual figure of St. Boniface, but also the networks established by him and his followers. As material and artistic reflections of these networks, the three covers are significant evidence for the movement of artistic motifs, decorative techniques, and texts and they can be brought into the fold of an increasing body of scholarship emphasizing the incredible mobility of the early middle ages.

2.2.3 The Dagulf Psalter

⁵¹ Padberg and Stork. *Der Ragyndrudis Codex*, 90-91.

⁵² Pickwoad, "Binding," 44, and T. Julian Brown, ed., *The Stonyhurst Gospel of Saint John*, 13-14, 48.

The Dagulf Psalter is a copy of the Psalms commissioned as a gift from Charlemagne to Pope Hadrian I between 793 and 795.⁵³ The name of the scribe (Dagulf) and the intended purpose of the gift is known from dedication poems included in the manuscript.⁵⁴ The two ivory plaques that originally adorned the covers of the Psalter are carved with narrative scenes (Fig. 8). Together, the scenes on the two plaques represent the varied forms of transmission of the psalms, including putting them into written form, expressing them as a sung performance, and translating them into a new language. One plaque shows scenes of David, the Old Testament king and composer of the Psalms. In the upper scene David stands and gestures with both hands towards a group of four scribes or scholars, indicated by the tablets and stylus held by

⁵³ Kurt Holter notes the codicological distinction between the Psalter and Canticles and the prefaces and dedication poem and uses this distinction to argue the manuscript was made in two distinct phases, the first in the 780s and the second ca. 795 when it was decided to send the manuscript as a gift to Pope Hadrian I. See *Der Goldene Psalter, 'Dagulf-Psalter': Vollständige Faksimile-Ausgabe im Originalformat von Codex 1861 der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, ed. Kurt Holter (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1980), 58-65. Lawrence Nees counters Holter's view and suggests the manuscript was made within a shorter timeframe closer to 795, the dating I follow. For Nees's critique of Holter's dating see Lawrence Nees's review of Holter's facsimile, *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 67, No. 4 (Dec. 1985), 684.

⁵⁴ Especially relevant to the plaques are the following lines in the dedication poem, noted in descriptions of the plaques including in the most recent print catalog of medieval ivories in the Musée du Louvre, Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, *Ivoires Médiévaux Ve-XVe Siècle* (Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 2003), 135-140: "Haec [aurea verba] merito tabulis cultim decorantur eburnis, / Quas mire exculpit ingeniosa manus. / Illic psalterii prima ostentatur origo, / Et rex doctiloquax ipse canere choro, / Utque decus rediit sublatis sentibus olim, / Quod fuerat studo perviglante viri."

the figure closest to David and a table holding an object, possibly an inkwell, placed between the king and the scribes. Two more standing figures flank David. One holds a spear and shield. In the lower register David is shown seated and playing the harp. He is surrounded by a group of seven guards and musicians, some holding instruments and others holding spears and shields. The second plaque shows scenes of Jerome, the early Christian saint and translator of the Bible into the Latin Vulgate. The upper register shows Boniface, acting as the envoy of Pope Damasus I, relaying the Pope's request for Jerome to improve the Latin translation of the Psalms. Three other figures surround Boniface and Jerome. The figures are framed with squared arches atop columns, and all wear voluminous drapery. The lower register shows Jerome dictating the new version of the Psalms, standing over the scribe seated at a desk. They are accompanied by a group of five figures, presumably other scribes or clerics. The scenes on both plaques are surrounded by frames decorated with rows of leaves. In roundels in the corners of the frame of the David plaque are the symbols of the four Evangelists, with the Agnus Dei at the center of the horizontal strip dividing the two scenes. In the corners of the frame of the Jerome plaque are roundels with the figures of Peter, Paul and two other figures, likely John and Jacob, with the Hand of God at the center of the horizontal strip.

The major studies on the Dagulf Psalter since the early twentieth century have placed both manuscript and ivories firmly among the works of art associated with the Court of Charlemagne. At the turn of the twentieth century, Adolf Goldschmidt wrote early descriptions of the plaques explaining their iconography and contextualizing

them with other ivories he associated with the court school of Charlemagne.⁵⁵ Rudolf Beer incorporated Goldschmidt's observations into his detailed description of the manuscript published shortly after.⁵⁶ The enduring interest in defining a distinct group of ivories made within the circle of Charlemagne's court, a group that includes the Dagulf Psalter plaques, is apparent in Rainer Kashnitz's 2011 publication. Kashnitz critiqued Goldschmidt's emphasis on the use of Late Antique models for the Carolingian ivories, but perpetuated Goldschmidt's concept of a court style.⁵⁷ In his commentary volume of the facsimile produced in 1980, Kurt Holter devoted a chapter to the plaques, describing their iconography and how they add to the non-figural decoration of the pages through narrative scenes.⁵⁸ He also emphasized their relationship to the politics of Charlemagne's court, especially reforms related to the standardization of the liturgy and Biblical text, including the Psalms, and the construction of Charlemagne's political image through association with the Biblical

⁵⁵ Adolf Goldschmidt, "Elfenbeinreliefs aus der Zeit Karls des Grossen," *Jahrbuch der Königlich Preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, 26 Bd. (1905), 47-52.

⁵⁶ Rudolf Beer, *Monumenta Palaeographica Vindobonensia*, I (Leipzig: Hiersmann, 1910), 29-68.

⁵⁷ Rainer Kashnitz, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen der Adagruppe: Hundert Jahre nach Adolph Goldschmidt* (Berlin: Deutsche Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 2011), 10-24 and 34-40.

⁵⁸ Holter, ed, *Der Goldene Psalter, 'Dagulf-Psalter'*, 58-65. See also Lawrence Nees's review of Holter's facsimile, 681-690.

king David, depicted on the plaques.⁵⁹ The two dedication poems in the manuscript, one describing how Dagulf made the book for Charlemagne and the other describing how Charlemagne intended it as a gift to Pope Hadrian, as well as stylistic similarities to other works associated with the court of Charlemagne, notably the Godesscalc Gospel Lectionary, affirm the association. However, Lawrence Nees, Jean-Pierre Caillet, and others have brought the problematic aspects of the modern scholarly construction of the ‘schools’ of Carolingian artistic production, based in large part on Wilhelm Koehler’s monumental catalogue *Die Karolingische Miniaturen*, to the forefront in recent years.⁶⁰ Analyzing the ivory plaques of the Dagulf Psalter in terms of their decorative function, their performative role as gift and prayer book, and their place within wider practices of covering books in the eighth century offer alternatives to Charlemagne’s court school as a framework in which to understand how the cover

⁵⁹ Holter, ed., *Der Goldene Psalter*, 60-61.

⁶⁰ Recent scholarship addressing the question of Carolingian schools of manuscript production includes Fabrizio Crivello, “‘Scuola’ e ‘scuole’: sull’arte del libro tra corte e Chiesa nell’Occidente latino (fine VII-inizio XIII secolo),” in *Medioevo: la Chiesa e il Palazzo: Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi Parma, 20-24 settembre 2005*, ed. Arturo Carlo Quintavalle (Milano: Università di Parma e Mondadori Electa, 2007), 476-483, Rosamond McKitterick, *Charlemagne: The Formation of a European Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 350-363, Jean-Pierre Caillet, “La classification des manuscrits carolingiens. Le problème des ‘écoles’,” *Cahiers archéologiques*, 53 (2009-10), 33-47, and Lawrence Nees, “Networks or Schools? Production of Illuminated Manuscripts and Ivories During the Reign of Charlemagne,” in *Charlemagne: Les Temps, Les Espaces, Les Hommes. Construction et Déconstruction d’un Règne*. ed. Rolf Grosse and Michel Scot (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), 385-407.

embellishes the text and operates within the Carolingian intellectual and religious environment.

2.2.4 The Lower Cover of the Lindau Gospels

The present lower cover of the Lindau Gospels, probably made on the continent in the second half of the eighth century, represents a skillful combination of early medieval metalworking techniques and styles. The cover is dominated by a representation of a cross (Fig. 9). Four enamel busts of Christ in the arms of the cross surround a central square. Enamel birds and animals adorn the arms of the cross as well as the original parts of the frame now on the left and the top of the binding. In the vertical arms of the cross are two silver-gilt medallions with interlaced gripping beasts and figures. Between the arms of the cross are silver-gilt panels with intricate designs of animal interlace. Garnet inlay borders surround the central square of the cross, the enamel busts of Christ, and the silver medallions. Visible today are also additions made during a sixteenth-century rebinding, including the four Evangelist figures in the corners of the central panel and the frames on the right and the bottom of the cover.

It is currently paired with an ornate cover formed of gold and gemstones and depicting the crucifixion, dating approximately to the 840s, and closely related to

works associated with the court of Charles the Bald.⁶¹ The two covers are now attached to a copy of the gospels made within the last two decades of the ninth century at the monastery of St. Gall.⁶² It is unknown when the three parts were brought together and any discussion of whether the later parts were created with the knowledge of the earlier ones is necessarily speculative.⁶³ The three parts are first mentioned together in 1691, when the manuscript was housed at Lindau Abbey. They remained together as the manuscript passed through several hands in the nineteenth century after the secularization of the abbey until being purchased by J. P. Morgan in 1901.⁶⁴

⁶¹ This attribution is supported by the similarities between the upper cover of the Lindau Gospels and two other pieces associated with the court of Charles the Bald, the Arnulf Ciborium and the cover of the Codex Aureus of St. Emmeram (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, clm 14000). On the upper cover of the Lindau Gospels within the intellectual culture of the court of Charles the Bald, see Jeanne-Marie Musto, "John Scottus Eriugena and the Upper Cover of the Lindau Gospels," *Gesta*, 40, No. 1 (2001), 1-18.

⁶² For current descriptions of the manuscript and both covers, see Morgan Library and Museum, "Lindau Gospels," accessed August 20, 2019, <http://www.themorgan.org/collection/lindau-gospels/> and Anton von Euw, *Die St. Galler Buchkunst vom 8 bis zum Ende des 11 Jahrhunderts* (St. Gallen: Verlag am Klosterhof, 2008), 134-139.

⁶³ David Ganz argues that the upper and lower cover were combined to present two different versions of the cross. Ganz, *Buch-Gewänder*, 135-141. Ganz also presents this argument in "Wie aus zwei Einbandhälften ein Buch entstand: Die Geschichte des Lindauer Evangeliars," *Imprimatur* 25 (2017), 21-24.

⁶⁴ The provenance is outlined at Morgan Library and Museum, "Lindau Gospels," accessed August 20, 2019, <http://www.themorgan.org/collection/lindau-gospels/>

Different parts of the lower cover have been compared to metalwork from a variety of contexts since the earliest modern description of the cover by Alexander Nesbitt in 1885.⁶⁵ This mode of analysis has continued in more recent scholarship by scholars such as Jacques Guilmain, Egon Wamers, Victor Elbern, and Ulrike Sander.⁶⁶ They relate the enamels to Frankish enamels of the eighth century, including the Enger Reliquary (Fig. 15). The panels between the arms of the cross are likened to Insular metalwork of the seventh and early eighth centuries, such as the Ormside Bowl, and even to the animal interlace seen in manuscripts of that period (Fig. 16). The medallions, on the other hand, display a gripping-beast style usually seen in Scandinavian art of the ninth century, including the finds at Oseberg (Fig. 17). While a comparative, categorical approach to analyzing the metalwork can place the cover within larger trends of metalwork styles, it glosses over the widespread and complex interactions between artistic motifs and techniques as well as artists. The mobility and

⁶⁵ Alexander Nesbitt and Edward Maunde Thompson, "Two Memoirs on the 'Evangelia Quatuor' once belonging to the Abbey of Lindau, and now to the Earl of Ashburnham, F.S.A.," *Vetusta Monumenta*, 6 (1885), 1-18.

⁶⁶ Victor Elbern, "The 'Earlier' Lindau Book Cover: An Integrated Analysis," in *From Attila to Charlemagne: Arts of the Early Medieval Period in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, ed. Katharine Reynolds Brow, Dafydd Kidd and Charles T. Little (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 22-31; Jacques Guilmain, "The Enigmatic Beasts of the Lindau Gospels Lower Cover," *Gesta*, 10, No. 1 (1971), 3-18; Egon Wamers, "Insular Art in Carolingian Europe: the Reception of Old Ideas in a New Empire," in *The Age of Migrating Ideas*, ed. R. Michael Spearman and John Higgitt (Edinburgh: National Museums of Scotland; Dover, NH: Alan Sutton, 1993), 35-44; Ulrike Sander, "Der ältere Lindauer Buchdeckel in seinen originalen Bestandteilen," (PhD diss., Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, 2007).

connectivity of people, ideas, and objects in the eighth century can help to explain the variety seen on the lower cover of the Lindau Gospels and make it seem less anomalous.

The combination of different styles is also tied to the questions of localization and dating for the cover. One of the most significant comparisons for the lower cover of the Lindau Gospels has been the Tassilo Chalice, made for Tassilo, Duke of Bavaria, most likely between 777 and 788 (Fig. 18).⁶⁷ The chalice is often considered a prime example of what is referred to as the Anglo-Carolingian style.⁶⁸ The comparison to the Tassilo Chalice has led many, including the Morgan Library & Museum's online information, to attribute the lower cover of the Lindau Gospels to a workshop near Tassilo's monastery at Kremsmünster, Austria, or perhaps at Salzburg.⁶⁹ On the other hand, Van Euw, Szirmai and others argue that the lower cover was made at St. Gall.⁷⁰ This argument is supported by the fact that St. Gall was

⁶⁷ Sander, "Der ältere Lindauer Buchdeckel," 62-65.

⁶⁸ Leslie Webster and Janet Backhouse, eds., *The Making of England: Anglo Saxon Art and Culture AD 600-900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 168.

⁶⁹ Morgan Library and Museum, "Lindau Gospels," accessed March 16, 2017, <http://www.themorgan.org/collection/lindau-gospels/>; for a brief discussion of the historiography surrounding the localization of the Lindau Cover, including in relation to the Tassilo Chalice, see Elbern, "The 'Earlier' Lindau Book Cover," 331-334.

⁷⁰ van Euw, *Sankt Galler Buchkunst*, 136-137 and J. A. Szirmai "Carolingian Bindings in the Abbey Library of St. Gall," in *Making the Medieval Book: Techniques of Production*, ed. Linda L. Brownrigg (Los Altos Hills, Calif.: Anderson-Lovelace, 1995), 17.

a vibrant monastery known to have Insular manuscripts in its library and the manuscript itself may have been made there ca. 880. Furthermore a “*liber evangelii quem librum auro et argento ac lapidis pretiosis ornavit [gospel book which is ornamented with gold and silver and precious stones]*” is described in the ninth-century abbots’ lists detailing books written to the order of Abbot Hartmuot (872-83) and may refer to the current MS M.1.⁷¹ Although there is not enough evidence to confirm the localization of the cover at this time, the fact that the numerous styles apparent on the cover could have come together at Salzburg, St. Gall, or elsewhere suggests that the mixture of styles is not unique to one place, but is rather a more widespread phenomenon in the region north of the Alps in modern Bavaria, Austria, and Switzerland. There is also variation in the dates associated with the styles seen on the cover. If the cover was made in the 780s, then it shows that older styles maintained their appeal after their initial flourishing and that other styles, specifically the gripping-beast style, appeared earlier than generally expected. The difficulty of localization and dating for the cover highlights how focusing on one style can be deceptive. By considering the object as a whole and in relation to its function, the seemingly anomalous combination of metalwork becomes illustrative of the truly heterogeneous world in which it was made and viewed.

⁷¹ Passage quoted in Szirmai, “Carolingian Bindings in the Abbey Library of St. Gall,” 172.

2.2.5 The Lough Kinale Book Shrine

The design of the Lough Kinale book shrine illustrates significant connections between designs and production in different media and the key role of book covers in creating the material experience of the early medieval book. It was found in 1986 near a small crannog in Lough Kinale, Co. Longford, Ireland. The pieces found in the lake were once part of an object constructed from metal plates nailed to an oak base (Fig. 10).⁷² The shrine was dismantled before being thrown into the lake. The front of the Lough Kinale book shrine features a cross contained within a frame. The arms of the cross are formed of openwork panels of animal interlace. The ends of each of the four arms of the cross as well as the center, are decorated with raised circular bosses, each with a setting for a gemstone. The frame surrounding the cross is formed of oblong studs at each corner and a pattern of spirals along each edge.⁷³ The object is interpreted as a book shrine, designed to hold a manuscript of great value, and is comparable to the Soicéal Molaise or the shrines of the Book of Dimma or the Book of Mulling (Fig. 19).⁷⁴ The evidence of the Lough Kinale book shrine and the other

⁷² For a detailed description of the shrine and its metalwork, see Eamonn P. Kelly, “The Lough Kinale Book-Shrine,” in *The Age of Migrating Ideas*, ed. Michael Spearman and John Higgitt (Edinburgh: National Museums of Scotland, 1993), 168-174.

⁷³ Ibid., 172.

⁷⁴ For an introduction to Irish book shrines see Paul Mullarkey, “Book-Shrines” in *Art and Architecture of Ireland Volume I: Medieval c. 400-1600*, ed. Rachel Moss

seven extant medieval Irish book shrines suggests that most were designed not to open once the manuscript was placed inside.⁷⁵ In these cases, once the manuscript was placed inside, the shrine became the permanent, visible representation of its religious power and value.

Since its discovery in 1986, there have been two published articles devoted to the shrine by Eamonn Kelly, describing the materials and techniques used for the metalwork and proposing a credible theory for the type of manuscript it held. Kelly argued that based on the size of the shrine, as well as the iconography of the cross, comparable to the ornamental cross pages found in the Book of Durrow and other Insular gospel books, the manuscript encased in the Lough Kinale book shrine was most likely a luxury gospel book of the type exemplified by the Echternach Gospels.⁷⁶ In addition to these studies of its material and structure, Robert Stevick presented a brief analysis of the geometry underlying the design of the cross on the front of the shrine.⁷⁷ The Lough Kinale book shrine has also been included in discussions of the

(Dublin; New Haven; London: Published for the Royal Irish Academy and the Paul Mellon Centre by Yale University Press, 2014), 297-303.

⁷⁵ Mullarkey, "Book-Shrines," 298-299.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 280-289.

⁷⁷ Robert D. Stevick, "Morphogenesis of the Lough Kinale Book Shrine, front face," in *Islands in a Global Context: Proceedings of the seventh international conference on Insular art, held at the National University of Ireland, Galway, 16-20 July 2014* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2017), 198-206.

larger phenomenon of Irish book shrines, notably in the substantial work on the subject by Paul Mullarkey.⁷⁸ However, among the known Irish book shrines, the Lough Kinale book shrine is an outlier, dating approximately two centuries earlier than the other surviving examples and being also significantly larger. For this reason, analyzing it in relation to other eighth-century book covers offers an alternative to the later Irish book shrines as a framework in which to understand the object. Considering the Lough Kinale book shrine in relation to other eighth-century book covers places it in relation to practices outside of Ireland and also in relation to other forms of book covers which use different structures, materials, and decoration to perform functions which are similar to, but distinct from those of book shrines.

2.2.6 The Faddan More Psalter

The cover of the Faddan More Psalter is a highly significant new addition to our knowledge of early medieval book covers in terms of its material, structure, and indications of use (Fig. 11). It was discovered in 2006, having been deposited with a pigskin bag and an animal pelt in a bog in central Ireland, perhaps at some point in the

⁷⁸ See especially Paul Mullarkey, “Irish Book Shrines: A Reassessment,” (PhD diss., Trinity College Dublin, 2000).

ninth century.⁷⁹ Study of the 60 surviving parchment leaves, in varying states of preservation, show that it originally contained the text of the 150 Psalms and was embellished in a manner consistent with the decoration of Insular manuscripts of the eighth century.⁸⁰ The dating of the manuscript to the late eighth century is further supported by paleographical analysis and carbon-14 dating of the parchment.⁸¹

One of the most exciting aspects of the discovery is the survival of the leather cover into which the leaves were inserted. It is made of calf leather that has been stiffened using papyrus. The leather of the back cover has been extended to create a flap which wraps around to connect with the right edge of the front of the cover. Three buttons are attached to the flap with thin leather thongs, though they do not appear to have been used with buttonholes or straps to secure the cover closed. The leather is tinted with black pigment derived from lamp black. Traces of gold leaf have been

⁷⁹ The initial description and preliminary findings of this discovery are published in Anthony Read, *The Faddan More Psalter: Discovery, Conservation and Investigation* (Dublin: National Museum of Ireland, 2011). For a detailed examination of the find see John Gillis, “The Faddan More Psalter – A study of the early medieval book-making techniques and codicology of a recently discovered eighth-century Irish Psalter and an examination of its features and materials which suggest influences both domestic and remote in its materiality and manufacture” (PhD diss., Trinity College Dublin, 2019). The dating and nature of the deposition is discussed by Gillis on pg. 193-199.

⁸⁰ Gillis, “The Faddan More Psalter,” 84-115.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 110-112.

found in the black pigmentation.⁸² Dating the cover has proven difficult in part because of the lack of datable comparisons.⁸³ Carbon-14 testing of the papyrus gave a date of the late ninth century, but the test may not be reliable because of potential contamination from glycerol used during the conservation process, and the cover may be dated much earlier.⁸⁴ There is no evidence that the leaves were bound securely into the cover and it is slightly larger than the parchment.⁸⁵ Adding even more to the interest of the cover are around thirty ornamental motifs inscribed onto it, which consist of an assortment of key patterns and interlace. They can be described as working drawings, used here to describe a broad category of drawings used in the transmission of artistic ideas, including drawings used for learning motifs, model-books, or preliminary sketches for a larger work.

Since the discovery of the Faddan More Psalter in 2006, there have been several brief articles and booklets describing the find.⁸⁶ The first full-scale study of the

⁸² Gillis, "The Faddan More Psalter," 115-152.

⁸³ The closest comparisons to the cover of the Faddan More Psalter in terms of structure are the Nag Hammadi Codices, a group of books found in Egypt and generally dated to the 4th century. For a description of the Nag Hammadi codices, see J. A. Szirmai, *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 1999), 7-10. For an extended discussion of this comparison see chapter 2.

⁸⁴ Read, *The Faddan More Psalter*, 75-76.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 52-54.

⁸⁶ In addition to Read, *The Faddan More Psalter*, these include Eamonn P. Kelly *The Faddan More Psalter: A Medieval Manuscript Discovered in County Tipperary, Ireland, 20 July 2006* (Bray, Co. Wicklow, Ireland: Published by Archaeology Ireland

psalter, both pages and cover, is the dissertation of John Gillis, completed in 2019.

Gillis's research is the foundation for the discussion of the Faddan More Psalter in this study and will provide the basis for future scholarship on the manuscript.⁸⁷ The cover of the Faddan More Psalter presents compelling new evidence for book production and artistic transmission in the early middle ages. Its form is unique among early medieval book covers found in Western Europe, the presence of papyrus provides new evidence for the mobility of materials in the early middle ages, and the sketches significantly add to our understanding of the role of working drawings in artistic practice.

2.3 Other Surviving Physical Evidence

The objects discussed above can be classified as book covers with reasonable certainty because they are either associated with a manuscript, such as the St. Cuthbert Gospel or the Ragyndrudis Codex, or because they are preserved fully enough that

for the National Museum of Ireland, 2006); Eamonn P. Kelly and Maeve Sikora, *Reading the Faddan More Psalter: An Introduction* (Dublin: National Museum of Ireland, 2011); and John Gillis, "Treasure from the bog: the Faddan More Psalter," in *Treasures of Irish Christianity. People and places, images and text* (Dublin: Veritas, 2012), 257-261.

⁸⁷ A publication based on Gillis's dissertation is forthcoming. The dissertation, cited earlier, is currently under embargo, and I am grateful to John Gillis for allowing me access to the text.

their size and structure make their use as a book cover highly likely, such as the Lough Kinale book shrine. However, there are numerous other objects which are generally described as “book mounts” or “book plaques.” These attributions are given based on the size of the objects, comparisons to depictions of book covers with similar decoration, and sometimes the iconography of a scene appearing on the object. While convincing, the interpretation of the objects as belonging to book covers remains inconclusive. Regardless, the objects must be taken into account to develop a fuller picture of the techniques and forms of early medieval book covers since they represent forms of encasement and embellishment not shown by the surviving covers discussed above. The following section outlines the ivory plaques, metal mounts, and leather satchels which may have been used for the protection and adornment of books in eighth-century northwestern Europe.

2.3.1 Ivory and Bone Carvings

In Goldschmidt’s catalogue of Carolingian ivories, he lists nine ivories, in addition to those from the Dagulf Psalter, that he dates to the eighth century or to ca. 800 and which he describes as likely originally belonging to book covers.⁸⁸ These

⁸⁸ Adolph Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der Zeit der Karolingischen und Sächsischen Kaiser, VIII-XI Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1969). These covers are Brussels, Musées Royaux d’Art et d’Histoire, (Goldschmidt #1), London, Victoria and Albert Museum nos. 253-1867

have continued to be described as book covers in descriptions and catalogue entries to the present day. The Genoels-Elderen Ivories also likely date to the end of the eighth century and are argued to have been made as part of a book cover by Carol Neuman De Vegvar and Frauke Steenbock (Figs. 20 and 21).⁸⁹ Of these eighth-century ivory plaques, only those from the Dagulf Psalter have evidence, namely the dedication poem, securely identifying them as having been made originally as part of a book cover. There are also examples of ivories used in book covers of the early ninth century, notably the ivories used in the cover of the Lorsch Gospels (Fig. 22).⁹⁰

Two plaques listed by Goldschmidt and held at the Victoria and Albert Museum (Nos. 253-1867 and 254-1867) are described as once belonging to book covers in the current online collections database and in the 2010 catalogue of medieval ivory carvings in the museum by Paul Williamson (Figs. 23-26). In both cases, earlier carvings dating to ca. 800 on one side of the plaque have been cut down before being carved with new scenes on the other side and placed in a pair of doors in the mid-ninth

(Goldschmidt # 178), 254-1867 (Goldschmidt #179), and 257-1867 (Goldschmidt #186); Paris, Musée de Cluny, Cat. 1041 and 1042 (Goldschmidt # 183 and 184); Munich, Bayerisches Nationalmuseum Kat. V, Nr. 158 (Goldschmidt # 185); Lyon, Musée des Antiques (Goldschmidt # 189); Trier, Domschatz (Goldschmidt # 190); Antwerp, Mayer van den Bergh Collection (Goldschmidt # 187).

⁸⁹ Carol L. Neuman De Vegvar, "The Origin of the Genoels-Elderen Ivories," *Gesta*, 29, No. 1 (1990), 9, and Steenbock, *Die Kirchliche Prachteinbände*, 80-81.

⁹⁰ The ivories of the Lorsch Gospels are now London, Victoria and Albert Museum, 138:1 to 6-1866 and Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal.lat.50. On the ivories, see Paul Williamson, *Medieval Ivory Carvings. Early Christian to Romanesque* (London: V&A Publishing, 2010), 168-175.

century. Before being re-carved and placed in the doors, the descriptions state the plaques likely were part of a book cover, possibly for a copy of the apocalypse, and both may have been used on the same book with the plaque carved with a Last Judgement scene used on the front of the book and the other plaque carved with vine scrolls and interlace and animals used on the back. There are several assumptions inherent in this interpretation which should be questioned. The two plaques may have been associated with each other not when they were made, but at a later date. Furthermore, the carving with the animals, vine scrolls, and interlace may have been used for the front cover of a book, especially since many of the surviving book covers, notably those from the Insular world, use a range of non-figural designs as decoration rather than narrative scenes. Finally, the ivories may have formed part of a different type of object rather than a book cover, such as a box or a chair. This particular case highlights the many challenges of interpreting ivory plaques as being made originally for book covers.⁹¹

While the majority of carvings in ivory or bone believed to have been made as book covers are in the form of rectangular plaques, the early eighth-century Franks Casket can be included as a possible alternative form of book container made from these materials. The Franks Casket is constructed of carved whale-bone plaques fitted

⁹¹ Lawrence Nees outlines the challenges of identifying early Carolingian ivories as designed for book covers in “Early Carolingian Manuscripts and Ivories,” in *Les manuscrits carolingiens: actes du colloque de Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, le 4 mai 2007* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 159-184.

together to form a box with dimensions 10.9 cm x 22.9 cm. The learned inscription and collection of scenes drawn from Christian, Classical, and Germanic literary traditions have led scholars, notably Leslie Webster, to posit the casket as a container for a book, most likely a small prayer book or copy of the gospels.⁹² The Franks Casket may have served this function, and this interpretation supports the argument developed in chapter 3 that the book box must be included as a form of book cover in the eighth century. However, the function of the Franks Casket may have been designed to hold any number of precious objects, including jewelry or a secular text.⁹³ Like the Victoria and Albert Museum plaques discussed above, its intended function remains ambiguous.

2.3.2 Metal Mounts

Similar questions surround metalwork finds that may have been attached to book covers. The Victor Codex illustrates the use of metalwork on book covers as both decoration and as protection from wear and tear. In the 1964 catalogue of Anglo-Saxon Metalwork in the British Museum, David Wilson describes four mounts, three

⁹² Leslie Webster, *The Franks Casket* (London: British Museum Press, 2012), 53.

⁹³ Richard Abels, "What Has Weland to Do with Christ? The Franks Casket and the Acculturation of Christianity in Early Anglo-Saxon England," *Speculum*, 84, no. 3 (Oct. 2009), 561.

triangular and one round, as presumably from book covers based on their similarity to the mounts on the Victor Codex.⁹⁴ Three of these have since been reinterpreted as stirrup mounts (London, British Museum, 1862,0321.6; 1867,0320.20 and 1883,1213.579).⁹⁵ The interpretation of the fourth has been left more open and is now designated as simply a “mount” (London, British Museum, 1862.0321.7). A fifth mount not listed by Wilson (London, British Museum, 1978.0703.1) is designated as a book mount in the current British Museum online record but fits more securely with the stirrup mount group.⁹⁶ Also in Wilson’s catalogue are three plaques excavated at Whitby, formed of interlocking circles filled with interlace (Fig. 27). Although listed as book mounts, Wilson expresses the uncertainty of his identification of their original function, emphasizing the limitations of understanding these fragmentary artifacts.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ David M. Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Ornamental Metalwork 700-1100 in the British Museum* (London: The Trustees of the British Museum, 1964), 58.

⁹⁵ These were reidentified based on the research published in David Williams, *Late Saxon Stirrup-strap Mounts: A Classification and Catalogue: A Contribution to the Study of Late Saxon Ornamental Metalwork*, CBA Research Report 111 (York: Council for British Archaeology, 1997). I am grateful to Dr. Sue Brunning, Curator, European Early Medieval & Sutton Hoo Collections, British Museum, for pointing me to this research.

⁹⁶ https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H_1978-0703-1. I am grateful to Dr. Brunning for confirming the similarity of this piece with the other stirrup mounts formerly identified as book mounts.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 59. On the mounts from Whitby, see also Charles Peers and C. A. Ralegh Radford, “The Saxon Monastery of Whitby,” *Archaeologia*, 89 (1943), 50-52.

In addition to the pieces described by Wilson, Egil Bakka describes two metal plaques as possible book mounts in his publication on English metalwork found in Viking graves in Norway. One was found in a woman's grave in Bjørke, Norway and the other in a woman's grave in Alstad, Norway (Figs. 28 and 29). Both are decorated in a style indicating they were likely made in England before being appropriated into the Viking context in which they were found. Bakka bases his hypothesis that they are from book covers based on similarities to depictions of book covers in the Codex Amiatinus and the Book of Kells and the use of similar crosses on the covers of the sixth-century Theodolinda Gospels and the Lindau Gospels.⁹⁸ Two other mounts uncovered in Dublin made of gilt copper and decorated with stylized animals and interlace (London, British Museum, 1854,0307.3 and Dublin, National Museum of Ireland, P. 782a) are also listed as potentially from book covers based on their shape and possibly iconography (Fig. 30).⁹⁹

There are also mounts in precious metals which may have been part of book covers. There is a gold plaque with an eagle used as the symbol of the Evangelist John, recovered in Suffolk and displaying striking similarities to the Book of Cerne

⁹⁸ Egil Bakka, *Some English Decorated Metal Objects Found in Norwegian Viking Graves: Contributions to the Art History of the Eighth Century A. D.* (Bergen, Oslo: Norwegian Universities Press, 1963), 12-15 and 37-40.

⁹⁹ Sonja Marzinzik, *Masterpieces: Early Medieval Art* (London: The British Museum Press, 2013), 308, and Susan Youngs, ed. *'The Work of Angels': Masterpieces of Celtic Metalwork, 6th-9th centuries AD* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989), 150. https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H_1854-0307-3.

(Fig. 31).¹⁰⁰ There is a silver mount from Hexham incised with a framed figure holding a rectangular object (Fig. 32).¹⁰¹ Most recently, several gold and garnet pieces from the seventh-century Staffordshire Hoard are noted as possibly from a book cover (Fig. 33).¹⁰²

These examples are representative of classes of objects surviving from various contexts and whose precise function must remain unknown. Despite this, there is a significant possibility that these objects did adorn book covers, and therefore they must be considered in discussions of the form and decoration of book covers. None of the surviving book covers have plaques precisely comparable to those from Alstad, Bjørke, or Whitby. However, their size and comparisons to depictions of book covers, such as the book held by the angel on pg. 20 of the Stockholm Codex Aureus listed in Appendix A, suggest plaques such as these may have been another type of decoration applied to book covers in the eighth century. The ivory and metal plaques, if they were originally part of book covers, would have likely been attached to a larger element

¹⁰⁰ Marzinik, *Masterpieces: Early Medieval Art*, 140, and Webster and Backhouse, eds., *The Making of England*, 82.

¹⁰¹ Webster and Backhouse, eds., *The Making of England*, 138.
https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H_1858-0814-1.

¹⁰² Chris Fern, Tania Dickinson, and Leslie Webster, eds. *The Staffordshire Hoard: An Anglo-Saxon Treasure*. Research Report of the Society of Antiquaries of London No. 80 (London: Society of Antiquaries of London, 2019), 85-98. According to the analysis published in this report, the edge mounts 562-4 would indicate a cover of a size similar to the St. Cuthbert Gospel. See pg. 95.

forming the structure of the cover, as illustrated by the arrangement of the metal mounts on the boards of the Victor Codex or the more complete assemblage of different metalwork components that form the lower cover of the Lindau Gospels.

2.3.3 Satchels

Book satchels have the same roles in terms of function and decoration as other forms of book covers, such as bindings, book boxes, or book shrines. Like other forms of covers, book satchels would have contained the pages of a book and would have protected those pages and allowed them to be transported. The satchels and their decoration would have also been an outward presentation of the manuscript contained within, visible to those without access to the manuscript. There is evidence which supports the notion that book satchels were known and used in early medieval Scotland and Ireland.¹⁰³ An object identified by Colleen Batey and confirmed by Bernhard Meehan as a book satchel was found at Loch Glashan in western Scotland

¹⁰³ For an introduction to surviving book satchels, see John W. Waterer, "Irish Book-Satchels or Budgets," *Medieval Archaeology*, Vol. 12 (1968), 70-82 and Bernard Meehan, "Book Satchels in Medieval Scotland and Ireland," in *A Crannog of the First Millennium AD: Excavations by Jack Scott at Loch Glashan, Argyll, 1960*, ed. Anne Crone and Ewan Campbell (Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 2005), 85-92. Ibid., 88-89. They are mentioned earlier in Hobson, *English Binding to 1500*, 26-27 and J. J. Buckley, "Some Early Ornamented Leatherwork," *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, Sixth Series, Vol. 5, No. 4 (Dec. 31, 1915), 300-302, 306-309.

(Fig. 34).¹⁰⁴ It likely dates to the ninth century or earlier, making it the earliest surviving satchel of similar form.¹⁰⁵ In addition, the images in the Book of Deer, likely made in Scotland in the late ninth or tenth century, are interpreted by scholars, notably in the work of Meghan Constantinou, as showing a specific form of book cover - book satchels (Fig. 35).¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, book satchels have been identified in carvings on five Pictish stone sculptures (Fig. 36). While some book satchels were likely decorated, the Loch Glashan satchel and those seen on the sculptures are unadorned.

The challenge with interpreting the satchels is that ultimately they are simply bags that could have potentially been used to hold any number of items. However, textual sources confirm that satchels were used to hold books. The Life of St. Columbanus, for example, makes the following reference: “One day, in the same parts, the man of God was walking through the dark woods far from anywhere and, with a book slung from his shoulder, was thinking to himself about some point of

¹⁰⁴ Meehan, “Book Satchels in Medieval Scotland and Ireland,” 88-89.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 92. Meehan lists three other book satchels, all of later date: the satchel of the Book of Armagh, (Dublin, Trinity College, MS 52), the satchel for a 12th-century Irish missal (Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 282), and the Breac Moedóc (Dublin, National Museum of Ireland, P 1022).

¹⁰⁶ Meghan Read Constantinou, “Books, Book Satchels, and Shrines in the Book of Deer,” (MA diss., University of Delaware, 2010), 32-38.

Sacred Scripture.”¹⁰⁷ The examples labeled as book satchels are the correct size and shape to hold a book, and two of the satchels believed to be book satchels are associated with manuscripts. For these reasons, satchels must be considered as another possible form of book cover, perhaps acting as an outer layer of several layers of protection for the manuscript pages that may also include a metal box or leather binding.

2.4 Conclusion

Book covers are complexly constructed objects. To create a cover, one may draw on skills for working in metal, leather, wood, ivory, or cloth. Attaching the cover to the pages may involve intricate sewing techniques. The technical challenges presented to the creator of the cover and their response to those challenges are essential to the object. Yet, the creation of a book cover was not simply a technical process. The creator of the cover was also given the task of making something aesthetically pleasing and representative of the meaning of the text it contained and the book’s role within a larger material context in which it was viewed and used. These two components of the process of making are in constant dialogue with each other.

¹⁰⁷ Jonas of Bobbio, *Life of Columbanus, Life of John Réomé, and Life of Vedast*, translated with introduction and commentary by Alexander O’Hara and Ian Wood (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017), I 8.

The following chapters examine three functions of early medieval book covers – encasement, embellishment, and enshrinement. All three functions are tied both to technical processes and to the meaning conveyed by the object. For this reason, the function-centered approach used in this study is offered as a method which effectively combines the utilitarian and aesthetic elements of early medieval book covers into a more holistic understanding of the early medieval book that emphasizes the art of craftsmanship and the craftsmanship of art.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, the study is more wide-ranging than previous scholarship in the material it includes. It considers both the most lavish bindings of gold and gems, as well as humble, worn, leather ones. It is also not confined to traditional geographical boundaries such as the British Isles or early medieval Francia, but instead considers materials as part of a highly interconnected society.

This chapter has focused on the physical evidence for practices of covering books in northwestern Europe in the eighth century. This will form the core evidence for the analysis presented in the following chapters. However, the following chapters will also go beyond the evidence presented in this chapter to present a fuller picture of how books were covered in the period. The physical evidence from eighth-century

¹⁰⁸ This emphasis on craftsmanship builds on the approaches outlined in Heidi Gearhart, *Theophilus and the Theory and Practice of Medieval Art* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017) and Margaret S. Graves, *Arts of Allusion: Object, Ornament, and Architecture in Medieval Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

northwestern Europe will be juxtaposed with physical evidence drawn from beyond northwestern Europe and beyond the eighth century. This will show how artists in eighth-century northwestern Europe interact with practices from Egypt, the eastern Mediterranean, and beyond. Furthermore, this will show how they reinterpret earlier practices and anticipate better-documented trends in succeeding centuries. The material from eighth-century northwestern Europe will also be juxtaposed with other forms of evidence, specifically depictions of book covers in other media and textual references to book covers. This contextual evidence illuminates the ways book covers were conceived as decorative and religious objects in the eighth century. Through this multi-faceted analysis of their functions, book covers are brought to the forefront as a central element in the evolving process of the making and use of early medieval manuscripts.

Chapter 3

ENCASEMENT: THE FLUIDITY OF FORMS

Shield-boards clothe me and stretched hide,
A skin laced with gold. The bright song
Of smiths glistens on me in filigree tones.
Now decorative gold and crimson dye,
A clasp of wire and a coat of glory,
Proclaim the world's protector far and wide –
Let no fool fault these treasured claims.

- Excerpt from Exeter Book Riddle 24¹⁰⁹

3.1 Introduction

The Faddan More Psalter, uncovered in 2006 from a bog in in Co. Tipperary, Ireland where it had lain since its deposition in the ninth century, is the most significant addition in recent years to the corpus of early medieval manuscripts from the British Isles. One of the most exciting aspects of the discovery is the survival of the leather cover into which the leaves were inserted (Fig. 11). Inherent in the cover of the Faddan More Psalter is the mobility that characterized the eighth century. The concept of mobility developed in this chapter includes the physical mobility of the

¹⁰⁹ Craig Williamson, ed. and trans., *The Complete Old English Poems* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 300.

different parts of the book as well as the networks of exchange along which people, ideas, materials, and objects moved.

The cover of the Faddan More Psalter provides evidence for both. Illustrating the first type of mobility are the details of the cover indicating its suitability for a flexible use of the pages and its wide-ranging sources of forms and materials. First, there is no evidence that the leaves were sewn securely into the cover. Small holes in the spine of the cover may indicate the presence of light quire tackets to loosely attach the pages to the cover, but there was no substantial sewing binding the pages to the cover.¹¹⁰ The weak, or absent, attachment would have allowed the pages to be easily removed from the cover and moved to a different encasement or distributed among a group to study or copy. Moreover, the cover is also slightly larger than the parchment, suggesting the cover was not designed for the leaves it held when it was deposited in the bog and it was used as a convenient method to transport the leaves and to protect them. In addition, wear patterns suggest heavy and continual use, possibly for the purposes of carrying and circulating the pages.¹¹¹ Illustrating the second type of

¹¹⁰ This is briefly alluded to in Read, *The Faddan More Psalter*, 57-59. John Gillis, Chief Manuscript Conservator at Trinity College, Dublin, kindly drew my attention again to this detail and explained the evidence for the quire tackets.

¹¹¹ The average size of a bifolium of the Faddan More Psalter is 30 x 26 cm. The size of the cover indicates it is able to hold a folio of approximately 22.5 x 33 cm. The size differential is greater than expected if the cover were designed for the pages. Furthermore, the thickness of the spine (4cm) and fore edge (2.5 cm) is greater than expected for the 60 folios of the Psalter. Read, *The Faddan More Psalter*, 35 and 52-54.

mobility is a small piece of papyrus, a material originating in Egypt, was found on the inside of the cover during conservation. The fragment indicates the material originally used for the lining. In addition to the Egyptian papyrus, the closest surviving parallel for the leather, envelope-like structure of the cover of the Faddan More Psalter are the Nag Hammadi codices, a group of books found in Egypt dating to the fourth century.¹¹² The form of the cover makes the pages more mobile by allowing for easier transportation and exchange. The form and materials also reflect the mobile world that led to visible connections between Insular book makers and the eastern Mediterranean. In these ways, the Faddan More Psalter provides evidence for how the structures of book covers reflect and enhance the mobility of books and the technologies of book production in the early middle ages.

The purpose of a book cover is to hold the pages together, to protect the pages, and to add decoration. To achieve the first two, a cover could take many forms depending on the nature of the text, the purpose for which the book was made, and the characteristics of the pages, including their material and size. The issue of decoration will be addressed fully in the next chapter. The concept of encasement explored in this chapter encompasses the numerous methods by which pages were contained. This definition of encasement adds the method of containing the pages to the analysis of

¹¹² Read, *The Faddan More Psalter*, 57-59. For an overview of the structure of the Nag Hammadi codices, see J. A. Szirmai, *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 1999), 7-10.

early medieval manuscripts and does not confine the idea of encasement to the sewn binding. In this way, I go beyond the previous scholarship on early medieval book covers, surveyed in the previous chapter. I also offer a more expansive and dynamic framework through which to understand how books were designed and interacted with in the eighth century.

A dominant form of book encasement prevailed in northwestern Europe after the ninth century: wooden boards covered in tooled leather and attached to parchment gatherings using a supported sewing structure. This structure, however, was not a given and emerged from a period of experimentation in the prior century.¹¹³ Each of the eight examples I have identified as securely associated with eighth-century northwestern Europe represents a distinct solution to the challenge of encasing the pages of a book.¹¹⁴ Although the number of surviving covers is small, the multiplicity of structures represented suggests that there was not a significant standardization of forms used for covering books in the eighth century. Instead, the variety suggests that book makers were experimenting with creating encasements that were best adapted to

¹¹³ On the development of western European bookbinding structures in the ninth century see Szirmai, *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding*, 95-139.

¹¹⁴ John Lowden argues for a similar period of experimentation and innovation for Biblical illustration in “The Beginnings of Biblical Illustration,” in *Imaging the Early Medieval Bible*, ed. John Williams (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 9-59. This is in contrast to Kurt Weitzmann, who emphasizes the use of earlier models, rather than innovation, in early medieval manuscript illumination. See especially Kurt Weitzmann, *Illustrations in Roll and Codex: A Study of the Origin and Method of Text Illustration* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970).

the individual use for which the manuscript was designed. This attests to the creativity and originality of early medieval book makers. These characteristics are argued to be a central feature of manuscript images in recent scholarship, and they are equally apparent in the structures and technologies of the book.¹¹⁵ Overall, the period can be defined as one of experimentation and innovation.¹¹⁶

Each cover uses a unique combination of techniques to hold the pages together and to convey meaning. The St. Cuthbert Gospel and Cadmug Gospels use sewing techniques also seen in Coptic bindings to bind the pages together and connect them to a cover of very thin boards of birch wood covered in red-stained goatskin.¹¹⁷ The red-stained leather and overlay decoration of the Ragyndrudis Codex also draw on techniques used in Coptic Egypt, but the heavy oak boards point towards a form of

¹¹⁵ In addition to those sources cited in the previous note, see also Lawrence Nees, “The Originality of Early Medieval Artists,” in *Literacy, Politics, and Artistic Innovation in the Early Medieval West: Papers Delivered at a Symposium on Early Medieval Culture, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA*, ed. Celia Chazelle (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1992), 77-110.

¹¹⁶ In addition to artistic experimentation, the idea of experimentation in the early middle ages has also been explored in relation to Carolingian imperial politics, in particular the governing of provinces. Jennifer Davis developed the idea of experimentation in Carolingian government in *Charlemagne’s Practice of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 239-292. Cullen Chandler applied the idea of experimentation to Carolingian Catalonia in *Carolingian Catalonia: Politics, Culture, and the Creation of an Imperial Province, 778-987* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 1-23.

¹¹⁷ Nicholas Pickwoad, “Binding,” in *The St. Cuthbert Gospel: Studies on the Insular Manuscript of the Gospel of John (BL, Additional MS 89000)*, ed. Claire Breay and Bernard Meehan (London: The British Library, 2015), 49 and 52.

encasement distinct from Coptic precedents.¹¹⁸ The Lough Kinale shrine was designed as a sealed structure of wood and metal into which the book was placed but to which it was never attached, a jeweled fortress for the book employing metalworking and construction techniques also used for making other liturgical objects, such as crosses and reliquaries.¹¹⁹ The type of structure the lower cover of the Lindau Gospels originally belonged to is an open question due to the tangled history of the object, but the possibility that it formed part of a box rather than a binding cannot be eliminated.¹²⁰ The ivories of the Dagulf Psalter evoke ancient tablets, a type of encasement in their own right, while adapting that form into a distinctly early

¹¹⁸ Lutz E. von Padberg and Hans-Walter Stork, *Der Ragyndrudis Codex des Hl. Bonifatius* (Paderborn: Bonifatius; Fulda: Parzeller, 1994), 90-91.

¹¹⁹ On the structure of the Lough Kinale Shrine, see Eamonn P. Kelly, “The Lough Kinale Book-Shrine,” in *The Age of Migrating Ideas*, ed. Michael Spearman and John Higgitt (Edinburgh: National Museums of Scotland, 1993), 168-174. The metal binding strips of the Lough Kinale Shrine would have sealed its contents.

¹²⁰ The lower cover of the Lindau Gospels may have formed a book box comparable to the four 10th- and 11th-century book boxes noted by Steenbock in *Der kirchliche Prachteinband im frühem Mittelalter, von den Anfängen bis zum Beginn der Gotik* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1965). The four book boxes are cat. 39, 44, 56, and 59. Steenbock does not consider the possibility that the upper cover of the Lindau Gospels may have originally been made as anything except a book cover. Anton von Euw similarly does not consider this possibility, stating that “Eigentlich kann es nur der Deckel eines Vierevangelienbuches gewesen sein.” Anton von Euw, *Die St. Galler Buchkunst vom 8. bis zum Ende des 11. Jahrhunderts* (St. Gallen: Verlag am Klosterhof, 2008), 136. David Ganz focuses on the imagery of the covers and the composite nature of the current object, but also does not postulate different possibilities for the original structure of the object of which the lower cover was part. David Ganz, *Buch-Gewänder. Prachteinbände im Mittelalter* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag GmbH, 2015), 131-148.

medieval object to complement the pages of a psalter.¹²¹ Together, the variety of encasements represented by these examples present the eighth century as a period of creativity and experimentation.

This chapter offers a wide-ranging examination of the structures available for encasing books in the eighth century and shows that there were a variety of forms available. Each form had its own meaning and effect on the reader's physical engagement with the book. The chapter looks at the methods used to encase books beyond northwestern Europe, including the Mediterranean, Central Asia, and South Asia, where potentially contemporaneous material has been uncovered. This geographically-expansive survey shows that in each context the form of encasement was a fluid concept responding to the particular requirements of a specific book or specific moment. Examining book covers in this way opens new possibilities for understanding the eighth-century book covers from northwestern Europe as part of an ethos of experimentation and variation that transcends their particular context and that places them within a larger and more interconnected early medieval world.

By assessing the forms of book covers as part of a highly connected and highly mobile early medieval world, I add an important new dimension to the discussion of

¹²¹ I argue here for a more general affinity between the Dagulf Psalter ivories and ancient tablets. Adolph Goldschmidt argued that many Carolingian ivories were copied from Late Antique models, although this argument has been questioned, notably by Rainer Kashnitz. See Rainer Kashnitz, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen der Adagruppe: Hundert Jahre nach Adolph Goldschmidt* (Berlin: Deutsche Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 2011), 10-24 and 34-40.

books as portable objects which are uniquely suited to the dissemination of artistic and intellectual ideas. This approach draws on the developing body of scholarship on the interconnectedness of the early medieval world and the role of manuscripts in the different networks of trade, exchange, and communication. This chapter is rooted in the longer history of scholarship on early medieval trade, culminating most recently in the substantial investigations of Michael McCormick and Chris Wickham in 2001 and 2005 respectively.¹²² Both compiled a vast amount of material and textual evidence to analyze the early medieval European economy and its place within a wide-ranging trade network centering on the Mediterranean. Together, they provided important context for situating early medieval book covers within larger economic and social trends. This chapter also looks to another strand of scholarship that recognizes the unique agency of medieval objects in disseminating ideas, artistic motifs, and materials, encapsulated in Eva Hoffman's seminal article "Pathways of Portability."¹²³

¹²² Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce, A.D. 300-900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) and Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400-800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

¹²³ Eva R. Hoffman, "Pathways of Portability: Islamic and Christian Interchange from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century," *Art History*, 24, No. 1 (February 2001), 17-50. Matthew Canepa also advocates for the unique agency of art in cross-cultural exchange in "Theorizing Cross-Cultural Interaction Among Ancient and Early Modern Visual Cultures," *Ars Orientalis*, 38 (2010), 7-29.

Like other categories of portable objects, book covers play an active role in the processes of movement, exchange, and transmission.

This chapter analyzes the evidence from northwestern Europe within a geographically-expansive framework. In this way, it shares the goal of the recent global turn in medieval art history, a goal eloquently defined by Alicia Walker as “to shift scholarly approaches away from a focus on origins and localities as the defining factors of history and toward the consideration of movement across boundaries traditionally defined by language, religion, ethnicity, and geography.”¹²⁴ The chapter achieves this goal in three ways. First, it reevaluates evidence from the Mediterranean, especially how it relates to that from northwestern Europe. For example, while important similarities between Insular and Coptic book covers have been frequently discussed throughout the twentieth century, this discussion has been entwined with a persistent and problematic Orientalist narrative establishing tenuous connections between northwestern Europe and an exotic East.¹²⁵ A new look at the Coptic material

¹²⁴ Alicia Walker, “Globalism,” in *Studies in Iconography*, Vol. 33, Special Issue Medieval Art History Today – Critical Terms (2012), 185. Major projects reflecting the global turn in medieval art history include the work compiled on the website <http://globalmiddleages.org/>. For the global approach applied to medieval manuscripts, see Bryan C. Keene, ed., *Towards a Global Middle Ages: Encountering the World Through Illuminated Manuscripts* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum 2019).

¹²⁵ For a summary of the larger problem of the connection between Insular and Coptic art, see Joseph Raftery, “Ex Oriente...,” *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 95, No. 1/2 (1965), 193-204. Berthe van Regemorter, for one, focuses on how this connection relates to book covers in “The binding of the

and examples from other parts of the Mediterranean, both Christian and Islamic, will help to develop a more nuanced understanding of the connections. Second, the chapter considers evidence from Central Asia and South Asia that has not previously been addressed in conjunction with the material from northwestern Europe, in large part due to the many scholarly and linguistic barriers. However, these regions offer important contemporaneous alternatives to northwestern Europe and the Mediterranean for examples of experimentation in book design. Finally, the chapter examines the evidence for the networks that would have allowed the exchange of objects, materials, people, and ideas between centers of book production.

I take this geographically-expansive approach because Europe, Asia, and Africa were not isolated from each other and interactions, though limited, did occur. Scribes from Britain and Ireland were actively writing manuscripts at St. Catherine's Monastery at Mt. Sinai in Egypt.¹²⁶ Chinese paper-making technology and

manuscripts of Saints Cuthbert and Boniface,” in *Binding Structures in the Middle Ages: A Selection of Studies by Berthe van Regemorter*, trans. and ed. Jane Greenfield (Brussels: Bibliotheca Wittockiana; London: Maggs Bros. Ltd., 1992. Originally published as “La reliure des manuscrits du S. Cuthbert et de S. Boniface,” *Scriptorium*, 3, No. 1 (1949), 45-51. More recently the issue has been examined in Vanessa Marshall, “The Development of Bookbinding Structures in the Early Middle Ages: During the Period s. iii – s. ix/x, as Evidenced by Extant Binding Structures from Egypt and Western Europe,” (PhD diss., King's College London, 1993) and Georgios Boudalis, “The Bindings of the Early Christian Codex: Clarifying the Coptic Contribution to Bookbinding Structures,” in *Bookbindings: Theoretical Approaches and Practical Solutions*, ed. Nataša Golob and Jedert Vodopivec Tomažic (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), 67-80.

¹²⁶ Michelle P. Brown, “Imagining, imaging, and experiencing the east in Insular and Anglo-Saxon cultures: new evidence for contact,” in *Anglo-Saxon England and the*

knowledgeable Chinese artists significantly impacted book production in the Abbasid empire after conquests brought vast territories in Western and Central Asia under Abbasid rule in the second half of the eighth century.¹²⁷ Hebrew, Zoroastrian, and Sanskrit texts appear among the manuscripts uncovered in cave 17 at Dunhuang in north-central China.¹²⁸ Such evidence of direct connections means indirect connections were also present and demands a conceptual broadening where distant material is considered as within the potential worldview of an early medieval book maker in northwestern Europe. This more global approach provides an important perspective for assessing fundamental understandings of books and their encasements in eighth-century northwestern Europe.

While expanding further afield than previous scholarship in the geographical context within which the book covers from northwestern Europe are assessed, this study also analyzes the covers as embedded within shorter-range networks. These include such connections as those between Lindisfarne and Monkwearmouth-Jarrow, just sixty miles distant along the northeastern coast of England, or between Luxeuil

Visual Imagination, ed. John D. Niles, Stacy S. Klein and Jonathan Wilcox (Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2016), 79-80.

¹²⁷ Jonathan Bloom, *Paper Before Print: The History and Impact of Paper in the Islamic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 47-48. Bloom notes that according to the thirteenth-century encyclopedist Yaqut the first paper-mill was established in the Abbasid capital of Baghdad in 794-795.

¹²⁸ Valerie Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 181.

and Fulda, less than 300 miles apart across the modern border between France and Germany. These shorter-range networks played a much more prominent role in the movement of objects, materials, people, and ideas in northwestern Europe in the eighth century than did the long-distance routes.¹²⁹ They also had a greater impact on the production of book covers, greatly affecting both the mechanisms of exchange, as well as the ideology expressed and the artistic precedents referenced. The Victor Codex shows Northumbrian-style metalwork used on the cover of a manuscript with pages written on the Italian peninsula and later brought to a monastery in modern Germany, reflecting movements between Italy, Germany, and Northumbria.¹³⁰ The ivory plaques of the Dagulf Psalter echo the form, material, and style of ivory tablets from late antique Rome, a connection which contributed to the Carolingian court ideology conveyed through the manuscript.

Although both longer-range and shorter-range connections are present, I do not maintain a strict dichotomy between the global and the local. Instead, each cover acts as a nexus for numerous connections. In this way, each cover does what Bruno Latour

¹²⁹ McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy*, 573-613.

¹³⁰ Regina Hausmann, *Die Theologischen Handschriften der Hessischen Landesbibliothek Fulda bis zum Jahr 1600: Codices Bonifatiani 1-3, Aa 1-145a* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1992), 4-7, and D.M Wilson, "An Anglo-Saxon Bookbinding at Fulda," *The Antiquaries Journal*, Vol. 41 (1961), 199-217.

terms in his seminal work on Actor-Network Theory as “localizing the global” and “distributing the local.”¹³¹ Every cover acts as a locus, and following Latour’s theory:

Whenever a locus wishes to act on another locus, it has to go through some medium, transporting something all the way; to go on acting, it has to maintain some sort of more or less durable connection. Conversely, every locus is now the target of many such activities, the crossroads of many such tracks, the provisional repository of many such vehicles.¹³²

It is this dichotomy of acting outward and drawing inward, rather than between the local and the global, that characterizes the role of book covers within the networks of the early middle ages.

These networks consist of people, objects, and ideas. Each have essential roles that are interconnected and dependent on each other. This chapter examines book encasements as objects with their own form of agency. Through their design, book encasements compel specific types of interactions between books and their users. A large book with a stiffly sewn binding and heavy boards invites the user to place the book on a support because of the weight and to turn the pages in the set order into which they have been sewn. Conversely, a small book with a thin binding invites the user to hold the book, carry it, and closely interact with it. In foregrounding the active role of the object in these interactions, I draw on the foundational theories of Alfred Gell and Bruno Latour, who argue that objects have agency as things acting for

¹³¹ Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005). See especially 173-218.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 220.

humans.¹³³ However, while book covers have active roles as objects - roles given to them by humans - they are also made by people, they are used by people, they convey ideas, and they relate to other objects. This web of interactions and dependencies is reflected in the concept of entanglement developed by archaeologist Ian Hodder as a response to Latour, Gell, and others following their ideas. They see the agency of the object as a way to express nuanced relationships between humans and things and the development of those relationships over time.¹³⁴ With books, these networks of relationships become manifest in their form of encasement.

3.2 Encasement

The following section examines the various forms of book encasement which may have been relevant to a book maker in eighth-century northwestern Europe. First, ancient Roman and early Coptic forms of encasement are considered as possible historical precedents or direct ancestors. Next are considered contemporaneous, but geographically diverse, forms of encasement. I take an expansive view of the early middle ages and survey the available evidence for how books were encased in the

¹³³ See especially Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 63-86, and Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 17-19.

¹³⁴ Ian Hodder, *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things* (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012). See especially 215-216 for Hodder's response to Latour and Gell.

Mediterranean, Central Asia, and South Asia. The juxtaposition of this evidence shows that the form by which a book was encased was a fluid concept and that encasement allowed for the pages to be manipulated in multiple, dynamic ways.

3.2.1 Ancient Roman Encasements

In the ancient Roman world, papyrus scrolls were the primary form of book. For protection and transport, scrolls were often kept in boxes, referred to as *capsa*, *cista*, *scrinium*, or some variation of those terms. From textual references and visual depictions, it can be deduced that these boxes could be either rectangular or cylindrical. Scrolls were stored vertically, with their labels (*syllaba*) visible at the end of the scroll facing outward (Figs. 37 and 38).¹³⁵ Importantly, the scrolls were not attached to the boxes and several scrolls were often placed in the same box. In this way, the boxes performed the major functions of a book encasement, holding the scrolls together and protecting those scrolls. Therefore, they fit into the more expansive definition of encasement that goes beyond the narrower definition of binding.

¹³⁵ For discussion of how scrolls were stored in Ancient Rome, see George W. Houston, *Inside Roman Libraries: Book Collections and Their Management in Antiquity* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 181-183; and Elizabeth Meyer, "Writing Paraphernalia, Tablets, and Muses in Campanian Wall Painting," *American Journal of Archaeology*, 113, No. 4 (Oct. 2009), 569-597.

In considering the importance of Roman precedents for the early medieval book cover, the Roman book box needs to be considered more fully. The idea that the scrolls were kept loosely and then placed in a protective case for transport or storage was essential to the form of book encasement used in the ancient Roman world. These same ideas were also central to the idea of encasement for the early medieval book, as will be discussed more fully later in this chapter. In addition to the many practical advantages of unbound pages, the practice of placing loose gatherings in an encasement in the early middle ages can be seen as a subtle continuation of an ancient Roman mindset towards the functioning of books. The parallel between Roman book boxes and early medieval forms of book encasement can be further extended to the relationship between textual and physical unit. The Roman Virgil (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat.lat.3867) and the Vatican Virgil (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat.lat.3225) are two examples of single codices containing the works of Virgil – the *Georgics*, the *Eclogues*, and the *Aeneid*. A book box could have held a comparable amount of text as a similarly singular physical unit. For example, two rectangular book boxes were discovered at the Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum, one measuring 28.6 x 17.6 x 22 cm, the second measuring 52.8 x 26.4 x 26.4. Together, these two boxes are recorded as holding sixty scrolls.¹³⁶ This means it would be reasonable for one box to hold the approximately 12 scrolls needed for the

¹³⁶ Houston, *Inside Roman Libraries*, 181.

Aeneid and even the extra scrolls for the *Georgics* and the *Eclogues*. Conceived of in this way, the early medieval book encasement holding quires can be compared to an ancient book box holding a group of scrolls that together constitute a single textual unit and a single physical unit.

In addition to the scroll, the other major form of book in ancient Rome was the writing tablet, most often made of wood but sometimes made of more valuable materials. The tablets might be used singly, but could also be strung together to create a stack of several tablets. Elizabeth Meyer identified fifty-nine examples of writing tables from first and second-century Egypt consisting of school texts, accounts, and legal documents.¹³⁷ The importance of writing tablets for the development of the codex in the first four centuries of the common era has been recognized and extensively discussed in the literature on the early codex. In their seminal work on the development of the early codex, Roberts and Skeat asserted, “There has never been any doubt about the physical origin of the codex, namely that it was developed from the wooden writing tablet.”¹³⁸ Through a comparative analysis of the proportions and other physical characteristics of Roman tablets and early codices, Elizabeth Meyer argued more specifically that the early codex adopted the form of Roman legal

¹³⁷ See Elizabeth Meyer, “Roman Tabulae, Egyptian Christians, and the Adoption of the Codex,” *Chiron*, 37 (2007), 304.

¹³⁸ Colin H. Roberts and T.C. Skeat, *The Birth of the Codex* (London: Published for the British Academy by Oxford University Press, 1987), 1.

tablets.¹³⁹ J. A. Szirmai, on the other hand, was critical of the connection made between the early codex and Roman writing tablets, so ardently defended by Roberts and Skeat, stating that “The derivation of the codex from the writing tablet is a surmise *a silentio*: for too long its validity has been taken for granted without scrutiny of the exact nature of the relationship.”¹⁴⁰ In the most recent comprehensive overview of the late antique book, Georgios Boudalis took a more moderate approach and argued that the writing tablet was an important precedent for the early codex, but, critiquing Meyer, believed account tablets provide a better model for the arrangement of sewing holes for early codices than legal tablets.¹⁴¹

The use of tablets continued into the late middle ages.¹⁴² The early seventh-century tablets found in Springmount Bog (Dublin, National Museum of Ireland, inv. no. 5.A.1914.2) show that they were being used in Ireland in the early medieval period

¹³⁹ Meyer, “Roman Tabulae,” 295-347.

¹⁴⁰ J. A. Szirmai, *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding* (Aldershot, Hants.; Brookfield, Vt: Ashgate, 1999), 3-4.

¹⁴¹ Georgios Boudalis, *The Codex and Crafts in Late Antiquity* (New York: Bard Graduate Center, 2018), 46.

¹⁴² For background on the use of wax tablets in the middle ages, see Richard H. and Mary A. Rouse, “The Vocabulary of Wax Tablets,” in *Vocabulaire du Livre et de l’Écriture au Moyen Âge* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1989), 220-230; and Michelle P. Brown “The Role of Wax Tablets in Medieval Literacy: A Reconsideration in Light of a Recent Find from York,” *The British Library Journal*, 20, No. 1 (Spring 1994), 1-16.

(Fig. 39).¹⁴³ Another tablet, found in England and dated to the eighth century (London, British Museum, M&LA 1902, 3-15), is made of bone and carved with an interlace design on the side without the recess for the wax (Fig. 40).¹⁴⁴ There are also references to writing tablets in early medieval Irish texts, further confirming their use. In the account of St. Patrick's churches by Tírechán, dated to ca. 670, there is a description of St. Patrick and his followers, "cum tabulis in manibus scriptis [with written tablets in their hands]."¹⁴⁵ In Adomnán's *De Locis Sanctis*, there is another reference to tablets, describing how "primo in tabulis describenti fideli et indubitabili narratione dictavit; quae nunc in membranis brevi textus scribuntur [I first wrote it

¹⁴³ The Springmount Bog Tablets are CLA Suppl. 1684. On the tablets, see David H. Wright, "The Tablets from Springmount Bog: A Key to Early Irish Paleography" *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 67, No. 2 (April 1963), 219; Leslie Webster and Janet Backhouse, *The Making of England: Anglo-Saxon Art and Culture AD 600-900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 80-81; Jane Stevenson, "Literacy in Ireland: The Evidence of the Patrick Dossier in the Book of Armagh," in *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 20.

¹⁴⁴ Webster and Backhouse, *The Making of England*, 81. Carol Neuman de Vegvar, "The Blythburgh Tablet: Envisioning the Wounds of Christ," in *Envisioning Christ on the Cross: Ireland and the Early Medieval West*, ed. Juliet Mullins, Jenifer Ní Ghrádaigh and Richard Hawtree (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2013), 83-93.

¹⁴⁵ Latin text and English translation quoted from Stevenson, "Literacy in Ireland," 20. On Tírechán's text, see Michael Lapidge and Richard Sharpe, *A Bibliography of Celtic-Latin Literature, 400-1200* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1985), no. 301, 83-84.

down on tablets; it will now be written succinctly on parchment].”¹⁴⁶ This passage also suggests something of the relationship between tablets and parchment codices, describing a process where a text was first written down on tablets and then transferred onto parchment.

In addition to their function as a writing surface, tablets act as a form of book encasement. By defining them as a form of encasement, I not only assert a connection between tablets and early medieval manuscripts in their sewing and structure, as established by previous scholars, but also in the ways they protect the texts they contained and allow people to interact with those texts. The wood or other material used for the tablet acts to protect the wax containing the writing. It can also act as a mechanism to connect several “pages” of text together. The role of tablets as a form of encasement is also apparent in the eighth-century English writing tablet mentioned above. Parallel to the attention given to other forms of book encasement, it uses bone rather than wood to create a luxury object rather than a purely practical one for informal notes. Furthermore, the inclusion of decoration suggests the side of the tablet that did not contain the writing surface was seen as a space on the object worthy of special attention and meaning.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ Latin text and English translation from Adomnán, *De Locis Sanctis*, ed. and trans. Denis Meehan (Dublin: National Museum of Ireland, 1985), 34-35.

¹⁴⁷ Carol Neuman de Vegvar argued that the decoration of the tablet has specific meaning as representing the wounds of Christ. See Neuman de Vegvar, “The Blythburgh Tablet,” 97-102.

Ancient Roman forms of book encasements, both book boxes and tablets, provide important precedents for early medieval understandings of book encasements as objects which allowed for the flexible use of pages and as protective structures. Ancient Roman and early medieval encasements collect scrolls or quires into a recognizable physical unit. They also allow for the variability of their contents as the quires or scrolls could be switched out or, in the case of wax tablets, the contents erased and rewritten. The designs of ancient Roman and early medieval encasements are characterized by flexibility of structure and use.

3.2.2 Coptic Encasements

The majority of book covers surviving from the third through the ninth centuries come from Coptic Egypt. These covers contain a wealth of information about structures developed for encasing books. As discussed earlier, this group also provides some of the most important parallels for the forms of encasement seen in early medieval northwestern Europe.¹⁴⁸ Although the parallels between the Coptic material and the material from northwestern Europe are significant, inferring direct connections based on these parallels must be done with caution. The dry conditions of the Egyptian desert are favorable to preservation, so forms and techniques seen in the

¹⁴⁸ See note 117 for extended historiographical discussion of this issue.

Coptic material were likely more widespread, especially in the eastern Mediterranean, and physical evidence has simply not survived elsewhere. Furthermore, knowledge of the structures may not have passed directly from, say, an Egyptian book maker to one from Ireland. Instead, the knowledge may have passed through a number of intermediaries on its route between the eastern Mediterranean and northwestern Europe. Examining the precise nature of the book covers from Coptic Egypt helps to highlight the limitations of this evidence and the possibilities it presents for illuminating how practices developed in northwestern Europe.

The Nag Hammadi codices are the main group of book covers from late antiquity (Fig. 41). They were discovered in 1945, buried in a jar in the region of Nag Hammadi, on the right bank of the Nile at the foot of the Gebel-et-Tarif mountain. The find consists of thirteen papyrus codices with their covers.¹⁴⁹ They are dated to the second half of the fourth century CE based on the script found on the recycled papyrus leaves used for the lining of the cover.¹⁵⁰ The covers are formed from leather lined

¹⁴⁹ The find was initially published by Jean Doresse and Togo Mina in “Nouveaux Textes Gnostiques Coptes Decouverts en Haute-Egypte: La Bibliotheque de Chonoboskion,” *Vigiliae Christianae*, 3 (1949), 129-141. This was followed by a description of the bindings by Berthe van Regemorter in “La Reliure des Manuscrits Gnostiques Decouverts a Nag Hammadi,” *Scriptorium*, 14 (1960), 225-234. Jean Doresse then responded to van Regemorter’s problematic description in “Les Reliures Gnostiques Coptes Decouverts a Khenoboskion,” *Revue d’Egyptologie*, 13 (1961), 27-49. A detailed description of the bindings by James Robinson is included in the *Facsimile Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972-1977).

¹⁵⁰ Szirmai, *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding*, 9.

with papyrus (Fig. 42). The leather of the upper cover has usually been extended to form a flap that encloses the fore edge. Several of the covers are secured with leather straps that wrap around the book. Leather ties have also been added at the head and tail of the cover to close the book more securely. The pages of the books generally consist of a single quire attached with tackets passing through the centerfold of the gatherings to the cover.¹⁵¹

In addition to the Nag Hammadi codices, several other early Coptic codices dating between the third and seventh centuries have been identified. Szirmai listed eleven multi-quire codices in addition to the Nag Hammadi codices.¹⁵² These, and other possible book covers dating to the period, show distinctly different forms than displayed by the Nag Hammadi codices. At the Chester Beatty Library are three pairs of wooden boards decorated with deep carving. Berthe van Regemorter comments that the one she numbered 11 is “the oldest binding I have ever come across,” and dates it to the first century CE.¹⁵³ There are two sets of holes with remnants of leather thongs

¹⁵¹ For a detailed description and diagrams outlining the structure of the covers of the Nag Hammadi codices see Szirmai, *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding*, 7-11.

¹⁵² Ibid., 16. The codices listed by Szirmai are Dublin, Chester Beatty Library MS 813, 814, and 815; Michigan University Library MS 166 and 167; Washington, Freer Gallery Inv. 06.274; New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, Glazier 67 and M 910; Princeton University Library Scheide 144; Barcelona University Library PPal.Rib.181-3; Cairo, Coptic Museum, Mudil Codex.

¹⁵³ Berthe van Regemorter, *Some Early Bindings from Egypt in the Chester Beatty Library. Chester Beatty Monographs No. 7* (Dublin: Hodges Figgis & Co. Ltd., 1958), 13-15.

used to strengthen the binding. Van Regemorter's binding no. 9 is similarly formed of two wooden boards with carved decoration. Three holes with fragments of leather thongs are positioned on the side of the boards near the spine.¹⁵⁴ Also in the collections of the Chester Beatty Library are two other wooden boards inlaid with ivory strips. Another early pair of boards is decorated with cut leatherwork and gold, a decorative technique used for later Coptic bindings as well as the Ragyndrudis Codex now in Fulda.¹⁵⁵ These wooden boards function differently than the papyrus-stiffened leather covers of the Nag Hammadi codices. The holes and remnants of leather thongs indicating the method by which the boards were attached to the pages suggest a more substantial attachment structure than used to attach the pages to the covers of the Nag Hammadi Codices.

While the group of early Coptic codices provide examples of late antique precedents for early medieval practices, the much larger group of Coptic covers dated to the ninth through eleventh centuries provide some close parallels to the eighth-century covers from northwestern Europe.¹⁵⁶ The majority of these later Coptic covers

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 15-16.

¹⁵⁵ Van Regemorter, *Some Early Bindings from Egypt in the Chester Beatty Library*, 16-18.

¹⁵⁶ The St. Michael collection is dated according to colophons in the manuscripts. Of these, Petersen argues in his unpublished notes on the collection that MS M.569 may have been salvaged from an earlier binding (see Boudalis, *Codex and Craft in Late Antiquity*, pg. 108, n.21 for reference). Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek P.Vindob. G 30501 may also be dated to the eighth century. It has been dated significantly earlier to the fifth or sixth century, but much more closely compares to

are from the St. Michael collection (often referred to as the Hamuli collection and now mostly held at the Morgan Library & Museum) and the Edfu collection (now mostly held at the British Library).¹⁵⁷ There are also other scattered examples listed by Szirmai, including examples held in Vienna, Berlin, Cairo, and Dublin.¹⁵⁸ Almost all are formed of papyrus, rather than wooden, boards covered in goatskin. The papyrus boards are made of sheets of papyrus, mostly reused, glued and then pressed together. Sometimes the papyrus is mixed with bits of straw, linen, or parchment, making what is often termed cartonnage (Fig. 43). Many of the later Coptic codices use double boards. The goatskin covering the boards was most often reddish-brown. The leather was decorated using several techniques, including stamps, cutting out designs and underlying them with colored or gilded material, threading parchment or leather

the ninth and tenth century covers, making a later dating more likely. On this cover, see Thomas W. Arnold and Adolf Grohmann, *The Islamic Book: A Contribution to Its Art and History from the VII-XVIII Century* (London: Pegasus, 1929), 34-35.

¹⁵⁷ The manuscripts from the St. Michael collection held at the Morgan Library & Museum are described in detail in a series of unpublished notes written by Theodore Petersen while studying the bindings. The bindings are also described in Leo Depuydt, *Catalogue of Coptic Manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library* (Leuven: Peeters, 1993) and “Coptic Bindings,” Morgan Library & Museum, accessed March 16, 2020, <https://www.themorgan.org/collection/coptic-bindings>. The St. Michael collection and the evidence it provides for monastic book production in ninth and tenth-century Egypt is analyzed by Andrea Achi in “Illuminating the Scriptorium: The *St. Michael Collection* and Monastic Book Production in the Fayyum Oasis, Egypt during the Ninth and Tenth Centuries,” (PhD diss., Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 2018). The Edfu collection is described by J. Lindsay in “The Edfu Collection of Coptic Codices,” *The New Bookbinder*, 21 (2001) 21-31.

¹⁵⁸ Szirmai, *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding*, 32.

lacing, and intricate tracery. The cover of Morgan Library MS M.569 exhibits several of these techniques, including lacing and overlay (Fig. 44). The quires of these codices are sewn together using a link-stitch technique and then attached to the boards.

Petersen hypothesized that the boards were attached to the sewn gatherings using hinging loops formed from the same thread as was used for the sewing of the quires.¹⁵⁹ Overall, compared to the groups of manuscripts to be examined in the following sections, the later Coptic covers show a remarkably consistent use of secure binding structures with quires sewn together.

Comparison to these Coptic covers has played a central role in the study of early medieval European book covers, diverting attention from the variety of other structures available and demonstrably used in northwestern Europe. In particular, the sewing technique of the St. Cuthbert Gospel and its red-stained leather is also seen in Coptic bindings. Long considered the earliest western European binding and the first extensively studied of the eighth-century book covers from northwestern Europe, the parallels between the St. Cuthbert Gospel and Coptic bindings established the primacy of the connection in the scholarly literature on the history of European binding.¹⁶⁰

Direct contact between northwestern Europe and Egypt are present and important to

¹⁵⁹ Theodore Petersen, unpublished notes. Morgan Library and Museum MS M.608A shows evidence of these loops. I am grateful to Frank Trujillo for his explanation of Petersen's theory.

¹⁶⁰ See chapter 2 for an extended discussion of the Coptic comparisons for the St. Cuthbert Gospel and the history of its study.

acknowledge, but this is not confined to Coptic communities. Michelle Brown's present investigation of Latin manuscripts at St. Catherine's Monastery, Mt. Sinai reveals a diverse book making community at Mt. Sinai and one where Insular scribes writing in Latin were active. St. Catherine's was one of the most significant Greek Orthodox monasteries of the period, but its library contains manuscripts in Arabic, Syriac, Georgian and Glagolitic in addition to Greek and Latin.¹⁶¹ This suggests that examination of connections between the Insular world and the eastern Mediterranean must be expanded beyond Coptic Egypt to include a wider and more diverse set of comparisons.

3.2.3 Early Islamic Encasements

The surviving examples of early Islamic book covers consist of the finds from the Great Mosque of Kairouan (Tunisia), the Great Mosque of Sana'a (Yemen), those from Damascus (Syria), and a few other scattered examples. The Karouan finds, discovered in the 1940s and published by Georges Marçais and Louis Poinssot in 1948, consist of some 175 covers, approximately 56 of which were dated to the ninth

¹⁶¹ Michelle P. Brown, "Imagining, imaging, and experiencing the east in Insular and Anglo-Saxon cultures: new evidence for contact," in *Anglo-Saxon England and the Visual Imagination*, ed. John D. Niles, Stacy S. Klein and Jonathan Wilcox (Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2016), 74-80.

century by Marçais and Poinssot.¹⁶² The finds from Sana'a, discovered in 1972, consist of approximately 95 fragments, with preliminary observations published by Ursula Dreibholz.¹⁶³ Dreibholz tentatively suggested that some of the covers from Sana'a may be dated to the ninth or tenth centuries based on comparison to the Kairouan examples, but called for more investigation on the question of dating.¹⁶⁴ There are also a number of covers similar to those from Kairouan and Sana'a, which were found at the Great Mosque of Damascus.¹⁶⁵ Though fragmentary, the evidence from these finds shows that the favored form of book encasement in the ninth and tenth centuries in the Islamic world was the book box. Szirmai succinctly described this form as one where "the lower cover resembled the tray, while the upper cover

¹⁶² Georges Marçais and Louis Poinssot, *Objets Kairouanais. IXe au XIII siècle. Reliures, verreries, cuivres et bronzes, bijoux*, Notes and documents XI – Fasc. 1 (Tunis; Paris: Direction des Antiquités et Arts, Tournier/Vuibert, 1948). Marçais and Poinssot acknowledge the ambiguity of the dating of these covers, stating "Bien entendu, la date indiquée pour chaque série est quelque peu approximative Il n'est pas impossible par exemple que dans la première série attribuée par nous au IXe siècle soient comprises quelques reliures des dernières années du VIIIe." (pg. 44, note 1).

¹⁶³ Ursula Dreibholz, "Some Aspects of Early Islamic Bookbinding from the Great Mosque of Sana'a, Yemen," in *Scribes et Manuscrits du Moyen-Orient*, ed. François Déroche and Francis Richard (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, 1997), 15-34.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁶⁵ Several of the Damascus covers were published in François Déroche, "Quelques reliures médiévales de provenance Damasaine," *Revue des Études Islamiques*, 54 (1986), 85-99.

formed the flat lid.”¹⁶⁶ Dreibholz included a legible diagram based on her observations of the Sana’a examples, which provide more intact evidence for the box form than the examples from Kairouan (Fig. 45). A well-preserved ninth-century example from the Great Mosque of Damascus has a base of wood and tall sides constructed of layers of paper covered in leather (Fig 46).¹⁶⁷

Expanding beyond these examples of leather-covered wooden boards, another form of book box can be added. These are large boxes of inlaid wood, suitable for holding several volumes (Fig. 47). Five similar panels from these types of boxes survive.¹⁶⁸ In his 1923 catalog of decorative Islamic bindings, Friedrich Sarre included the panel held in Berlin. There have been competing theories on what type of object these panels come from. However, the 2011 catalog entry for the Metropolitan Museum of Art panel again took up Sarre’s theory that they formed part of a book box. This hypothesis is well-founded, since the dimensions of the panel would have formed a box consistent with the height of surviving manuscript leaves and one which

¹⁶⁶ Szirmai, *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding*, 53.

¹⁶⁷ Massumeh Farhad and Simon Rettig, eds., *The Art of the Qur’an: Treasures from the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts* (Washington, DC: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, 2016), 146.

¹⁶⁸ The panels are Berlin, Museum für Islamische Kunst, no. I. 5684 a-b; Cairo Museum of Islamic Art, nos. 9518, 11636; Cairo, Museum of Archaeology of Cairo University, no. 58; New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, no. 37.103; and Paris, Musée du Louvre, Paris, no. AA 201.

would have comfortably fit several volumes stacked neatly together.¹⁶⁹ The volumes held in the box could have perhaps been a copy of the Qur'an, which was sometimes divided into thirty parts during the period from which the panels date. In the way it collects its contents into a single recognizable physical unit, this form of encasement can be compared to the ancient Roman book boxes discussed earlier.

There is one other form found among the surviving examples of early Islamic book covers. There are, to my knowledge, two examples of early Islamic book covers made of wooden boards covered in leather. One was found at Damascus and is now at the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul (SE 80) (Fig. 48).¹⁷⁰ The second is among the materials recovered from the Great Mosque of Sana'a. The pages of the example in Istanbul contain two sections of the Qur'an. The script and decoration of these pages are comparable to other early Qur'ans and suggest a date of ca. 700-725 CE.¹⁷¹ The cover is decorated with a six-pointed star within a circle. The star and circle are contained in a frame formed of double lines following the edge of the cover.

¹⁶⁹ Maryam Ekhtiar, Sheila R. Canby, Navina Haidar, and Priscilla P. Soucek, eds., *Masterpieces from the Department of Islamic Art in The Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011), 43–44.

¹⁷⁰ Farhad and Rettig, eds., *The Art of the Qur'an*, 144–145.

¹⁷¹ For the most comprehensive overview of the script and decoration of the earliest Islamic manuscripts, see François Déroche, *Qur'ans of the Umayyads: A First Overview* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2014). Déroche argues that these manuscripts, datable based only on paleographical and art historical evidence, date specifically to the Umayyad period (661–750 CE).

Metal studs have also been added to this cover. Four iron pegs are located at the edges of the cover and may have been used to secure ties meant to secure the book closed. The format of this manuscript, like some other early Qur'ans, is nearly square in format, measuring 25 x 28.5 cm. The presence of this form of cover alongside others among the finds from Damascus and Sana'a indicates the variety of early Islamic forms of encasement.

In addition to the structure, the early Islamic covers show consistency in practices of attaching the pages of books to each other and to the encasement. On the attachment of the pages to the cover, Dreibholz stated the following:

There is no direct evidence of the bookblock having been connected to the binding – no remnants of sewing threads or headbands, and no visible holes for either. Maybe the textblock was just sewn together separately and lying in the box without any means of attachment. Or maybe the pastedowns were originally larger and folded around the first and last gatherings, then sewn together with them and glued onto the insides of the covers. In this way there would have been at least some bond, even if very weak, between bookblock and binding.¹⁷²

The lack of attachment or weak attachment between the pages and the cover described by Dreibholz is parallel to the evidence found with the Faddan More Psalter where there are only indications of the pages being attached to the cover with light quire tackets, if attached at all.

The early Islamic material, like the ancient Roman material, shows a widespread understanding of book encasements as something which did not

¹⁷² Dreibholz, "Some Aspects of Early Islamic Bookbinding," 22.

necessarily impose a rigid mechanism to turn the pages of the book. They also did not organize the pages in a set order, suggesting either that other aids, such as quire marks, were used to designate the order of the pages or that the order was considered of minor importance. The encasement was meant to hold and protect the pages, but was often designed so the pages could easily be taken out and used for copying or study, arranged in different orders, or placed in a new encasement. Encasements are again defined by fluidity of structure and use.

3.2.4 The Dunhuang Finds and Bookbinding in Central and East Asia

In 1900 a Taoist monk noticed a concealed doorway in the cave that served as the burial site of the ninth-century monk Hong Bian. When the door was opened, it revealed a magnificent collection of manuscripts dating between ca. 400 – 1000 CE, unparalleled in the number of languages and range of texts represented.¹⁷³ Since their discovery in 1900, the manuscripts from Dunhuang have been studied primarily for their rich linguistic and textual contents. However, the collection is also valuable for the amount of information it contains on early book making in central and east Asia. A few studies, notably those by Jean-Pierre Drège and, more recently, Imre Galambos,

¹⁷³ For an introduction to the finds at Dunhuang and current interpretation, see Valerie Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 167-197.

have focused on the codicology of the Dunhuang manuscripts rather than their texts, including their structures and materials.¹⁷⁴ Part of the codicological information that can be gleaned is information on early binding structures from the regions represented by the manuscripts.

In his overview of the binding structures found at Dunhuang, Colin Chinnery noted examples dating roughly to the seventh to tenth centuries of four types of binding techniques: the butterfly binding, the Chinese Pothi, the whirlwind binding, and the concertina binding.¹⁷⁵ These techniques do not refer to a protective exterior, but rather to methods of attaching the pages together. A butterfly binding was formed by folding sheets of paper in half. An adhesive would then be applied to the folded edge of the sheets. This would attach them together and, when they were stacked, form the spine of the book (Fig. 49). Although this technique was especially popular during the Song dynasty (960-1279 CE), there are several examples of the technique from

¹⁷⁴ These studies include Jean-Pierre Drège and Costantino Moretti, eds., *La fabrique du lisible: La mise en texte des manuscrits de la chine ancienne et médiévale* (Paris: Collège de France, Institut des hautes études chinoises, 2014), and Imre Galambos, *Dunhuang Manuscript Culture: End of the First Millenium* (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2020). Galambos's study focuses primarily on the Guiyijun period (851-ca. mid-11th century), but also discusses how practices of the eighth century continued or changed in this later period. I am grateful to Jing Feng for providing me with references on the codicology of Dunhuang manuscripts.

¹⁷⁵ Colin Chinnery, "Bookbinding," International Dunhuang Project, accessed January 20, 2020, <http://idp.bl.uk/education/bookbinding/bookbinding.a4d>.

Dunhuang that are dated earlier, to the Tang Dynasty (618-907 CE).¹⁷⁶ Significantly, most of these earlier examples of the form were produced locally in Dunhuang.¹⁷⁷ The Chinese pothi was based on the Indian format constructed of stacks of dried palm leaves (Fig. 50). The leaves are held together by a string passing through holes in the middle of the pages. The pages are protected by wooden boards placed on either end. Due to the resources available, Chinese versions of the form were usually made of wood or bamboo. The thickness of these materials meant that the leaves could not be stacked, but were arranged in strips connected with string.¹⁷⁸ The majority of the Dunhuang examples of this form likely date from the ninth century or later, but in his recent analysis of the material Jean-Pierre Drège argues the form was introduced to Dunhuang in the mid-eighth century.¹⁷⁹ To form a whirlwind binding, pages of varying lengths are stacked, with the shortest page on top and the longest page on bottom. The edges are then pasted together and the attachment reinforced with a wooden rod split in half and placed around the pages. The pages are then strung

¹⁷⁶ One example that has been carbon dated to between 662 and 781 CE, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France MS CP 2547, is described in Pascale Richardin, et. al. "AMS Radiocarbon Dating and Scientific Examination of High Historical Value Manuscripts: Application to Two Chinese Manuscripts from Dunhuang," *Journal of Cultural Heritage*, 11 (2010), 398-403.

¹⁷⁷ Chinnery, "Bookbinding."

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Galambos, *Dunhuang Manuscript Culture*, 26.

together using holes pierced through the rod and paper (Fig. 51). This form of binding was developed during the middle of the Tang dynasty.¹⁸⁰ The concertina format was made by folding sections of a scroll back and forth to form individual pages (Fig. 52). The earliest examples of this format were found at Dunhuang. The surviving examples that are securely dated come from the second half of the tenth century.¹⁸¹ The concertina was most likely introduced earlier, but it is uncertain whether the format was introduced as early as the Tang period or only in the latter part of the ninth century.

Several conclusions can be made from this material regarding book format, the interaction between books and their users, and the relationship between form and content during the eighth century. First, there were a variety of forms a book could take and methods for connecting the pages. A book maker would be able to choose between these different formats depending on the requirements of the contents of the text and how the book was intended to be used. Second, there is a significant correlation between the text contained in the pages and the way the pages are held

¹⁸⁰ Chinnery, "Bookbinding." Chinnery notes that one example of a whirlwind binding in the Gugong Museum contains a colophon dating it to 749 CE.

¹⁸¹ Chinnery states that the concertina format was widely adopted by Buddhists in China by the late Tang period in "Bookbinding." Galambos, on the other hand, argues that the late date of the securely dated examples makes it unlikely the format was used before the Tibetan period in Dunhuang (beginning 781) and more likely was not used before the Guiyijun period (851-ca. mid-eleventh century). See Galambos, *Dunhuang Manuscript Culture*, 28-29.

together. Whirlwind bindings are used exclusively for reference works, a choice that allowed for easy scanning to access desired pieces of information. On the other hand, the pothi form was used primarily for Buddhist texts, reflecting the origin of the form with Indian Buddhist texts transmitted to China and conveying the religious nature of the text.¹⁸² A similar correspondence between textual contents, intended use, and form of encasement can be seen in the examples from northwestern Europe, as discussed in more detail in the following section. Finally, the format was essential to how the user interacted with the book, turning the pages and transporting the object. The structure and the method used to connect the pages were, in these ways, essential characteristics of the book. The availability of a variety of forms in the early middle ages allowed the book maker to use form as a way to differentiate between types of texts or respond to the needs of a particular user. The format of a book was, fundamentally, a deliberate choice. The manuscripts from Dunhuang also show the eighth century to be a crucial period of innovation in book design in the region.

3.2.5 South Asia and the Himalayas

¹⁸² Chinnery, “Bookbinding.”

Due to unfavorable environmental conditions, few manuscripts survive from the Indian subcontinent from before the twelfth century.¹⁸³ However, discoveries at a stupa in Gilgit, in northern Pakistan, in 1938 brought to light not only manuscripts dating between the fourth and ninth centuries, but also the three earliest decorated book covers from South Asia, one of which has been argued by Deborah Klimburg-Salter to be dated to the eighth century based on stylistic comparison to painting from the Central Asian region of Khotan (Figs. 53 and 54).¹⁸⁴ Importantly, the Gilgit covers show important distinctions in format from the subsequent Pala-period covers from northeast India.

According to the initial report of the find, the manuscripts “were all found under two wooden covers each having the papier-mâché work on the outer side of the covers. The leaves were held together by a record lace or string passing through a hole

¹⁸³ Pratapaditya Pal and Julia Meech-Pekarik, *Buddhist Book Illuminations* (New York: Ravi Kumar Publishers; Hacker Art Books, Inc., 1988), 41-44.

¹⁸⁴ Deborah Klimburg-Salter, “The Gilgit Manuscript Covers and the Cult of the Book,” *South Asian Archaeology, 1987: Proceedings of the Ninth International Conference of the Association of South Asian Archaeologists in Western Europe, held in the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Island of San Giorgio Maggiore, Venice* (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1990), 815-830. In an earlier publication P. Bannerjee argues for a later dating of the three covers, suggesting a date of the ninth century or later. See P. Bannerjee, “Painted Wooden Covers of Two Gilgit Manuscripts,” *Oriental Art*, 14, no. 2 (1968), 114-118. On the dating of Khotanese painting in relation to the Gilgit covers, see also Joanna Williams, “The Iconography of Khotanese Painting,” *East and West*, 23, No. ½ (March-June 1973), 109-110.

punched in the middle of each and wound round the whole set.”¹⁸⁵ The holes through which the string would have passed are visible, suggesting the covers were attached to the pages. There are examples of South Asian manuscripts where there are no holes through the leaves and the pages are held together only by wrapping a string around the exterior of the pages, possibly with wooden boards on either end for protection. Significantly, the decoration of two of the Gilgit covers is vertical in format. This is important first because it distinguishes the Gilgit covers from those of the subsequent Pala-period from northeast India, which consistently have a long narrow format mirroring the format of the text leaves containing horizontal writing. Second, the vertical format is remarkable because the text leaves were most likely oriented horizontally, based on the orientation of the text on leaves from other surviving manuscripts of the period. Therefore, the reader would have been led to first hold the manuscript in one direction to view the images on the cover and then turn the manuscript to read the writing. Inherent in the relationship between the cover and the pages of the Gilgit manuscripts is the movement and manipulation of the book by its user. The Gilgit covers show that the orientation of text should not be assumed to be the same as the orientation of the cover, although I have not yet found an example from northwestern Europe where the orientations do not correspond between the cover

¹⁸⁵ M. S. Shastri, “Report on the Gilgit Excavations in 1938,” *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*, 30/1 (1938), 5.

and the text. Furthermore, it is again apparent that the manipulability of the object is characteristic of book covers in the eighth century.

In addition to the Gilgit covers, early material from the region includes three Tibetan book covers dating from ca. 800 and further into the ninth century.¹⁸⁶ Two are wooden with carved decoration. These do not have holes through which a string was passed which would have connected the covers to the pages (Figs. 55 and 56).¹⁸⁷ There are holes visible on the third example, also made of wood and decorated with painted figures (Fig. 57). These covers also use different proportions. The cover in the Carlo Cristi Collection and the cover in the Pritzker Collection are now of essentially the same size (66 x 19.5 cm and 68.5 x 19.5 cm respectively), but the uneven spacing of the figures painted on the Pritzker cover suggests it was originally longer.¹⁸⁸ The cover in the Newark Museum of Art is significantly smaller (42.55 x 9.53 cm),

¹⁸⁶ The cover in the Carlo Cristi Collection is dated to the mid-ninth century by radio-carbon dating. See Amy Heller, *Tibetan Art: Tracing the Development of Spiritual Ideals and Art in Tibet 600-2000 A.D.* (Milan: Editoriale Jaca Book, 1999), 36. The cover in the Newark Museum is dated to the ninth or tenth century based on its iconography and carving. See Heller, *Tibetan Art*, 54. The cover in the Pritzker collection is dated to ca. 800 based on scientific tests and comparison to examples of Tibetan wall painting. See Pratapaditya Pal, *Himalayas: An Aesthetic Adventure* (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 2003), 107.

¹⁸⁷ I am grateful to David Bonner, Collections Manager at the Newark Museum of Art, for confirming the lack of holes and for providing further information about the cover since I was unable to examine it in person.

¹⁸⁸ Heller, *Tibetan Art*, 36 and Pal, *Himalayas: An Aesthetic Adventure*, 107.

following the format for books developed in Tibet during the eighth century.¹⁸⁹ These three covers, like the other covers examined in this chapter, reveal a variety of solutions for keeping the pages of books secure and for handling those pages. It is especially notable that some covers from the Himalayas and South Asia, including the cover in the Newark Museum, do not have holes through which a string which ran through the pages could then be run through the cover and in this way securely attaching the cover to the pages. Instead, this shows that some books were meant to be held together only temporarily by the mechanics of the cover and the pages could be easily manipulated.

3.3 Encasement and the Unbound Book in Northwestern Europe

This Eurasian tour of early medieval forms of encasements enlightens our understanding of the eighth-century book covers from northwestern Europe. It shows that the structures of book encasements in the eighth century were not simply early experiments leading towards a standard form of leather-covered boards to which the pages would be securely sewn. Instead, it supports the argument that forms of encasement were fluid and book makers in the eighth century were investigating an array of methods for manipulating and securing the pages of books. The variety and

¹⁸⁹ Heller, *Tibetan Art*, 54.

ingenuity seen in the eighth-century book covers surviving from northwestern Europe is not an anomaly but is rather consistent with the varied and expanding evidence for the fluidity of forms of book encasement seen across Eurasia.

Expanding the scope of inquiry beyond northwestern Europe reveals even more examples of unique solutions to the task of encasing a book. In each context, there is evidence of book makers trying different forms and techniques. Although occurring in an earlier period, the early Coptic covers show a range of structures, from carved wooden boards to papyrus-lined leather covers. Signs of experimentation abound at Dunhuang as well, including the eighth-century book using a hybrid version of butterfly and whirlwind binding techniques. The earliest decorated book covers from South Asia and the Himalayas show the designers testing different notions of orientation.

The picture that emerges from the eighth-century material contrasts with that from the ninth. In the ninth century, for the first time in northwestern Europe, significant number of bindings survive from single library collections, notably those of the monasteries of St. Gall and Freising.¹⁹⁰ Szirmai's in-depth study of the St. Gall

¹⁹⁰ On the Carolingian bindings from St. Gall, see J. A. Szirmai, "Carolingian Bindings in the Abbey Library of St. Gall," in *Making the Medieval Book: Techniques of Production*, ed. Linda L. Brownrigg (Los Altos Hills, CA: Anderson Lovelace, 1995), 157-179. Hobson identifies 38 ninth and tenth century bindings from the monastery of Freising. He assigns one to the "first bindery" and the remainder to the "second bindery." For the list, see G. D. Hobson "Some Early Bindings and Binders' Tools," *The Library*, Fourth Series, 19 (1939), 215. To my knowledge, there has been no full-scale study of these.

bindings and my own examination of digital images of the early Freising covers identified by Hobson show a level of standardization in the structures not seen earlier. The Coptic material from the St. Michael collection and the Kairouan bindings present a similar picture. Both collections again contain a larger body of material and smaller variations in the types of structures used. The standardization of book covers reflects the significant increase in book production in the ninth century and the development of substantial monastic libraries.¹⁹¹ Furthermore, it appears that by the ninth century book makers had determined which types of book encasements were most effective for their purposes and the knowledge was established such that those forms were being used consistently.

The flexible nature of books in northwestern Europe in the eighth century is not only indicated by comparison between surviving book covers to examples from other regions and periods, but also by the more local evidence for books being unbound. The new find of the Faddan More Psalter and re-evaluation of the St. Cuthbert Gospel and the Book of Mulling (Dublin, Trinity College, MS 60) show that the gatherings of early medieval books from northwestern Europe were kept loosely, at least for a period of time, and then placed unattached or loosely attached into a cover for storage or transportation.¹⁹² Some of the reasons for choosing to not bind the

¹⁹¹ The fundamental book on this topic is Rosamond McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

¹⁹² Read, *The Faddan More Psalter*, 57-59; Pickwood, "Binding," 45-46; Bernard Meehan "The Book of Mulling (Trinity College Dublin MS 60): Bindings and

pages of manuscripts were, undoubtedly, practical. Keeping the pages as loose gatherings allowed them to be distributed among a group of artists or scribes for copying. It was also less costly and time-consuming to eliminate the step of sewing the pages into a binding. In addition to these practical considerations, keeping pages unbound would have also allowed for a more flexible use of the pages. Pages could be rearranged, set side by side, or circulated among several students for a more dynamic reading experience.

The use of highly decorative quire marks - numbers, letters, or other marks to designate the end of a gathering and its order in relation to the other gatherings of the book - is another possible indication books were kept unbound in the eighth century. The elaborate decoration of quire marks in manuscripts associated with the monastery of Luxeuil is a strong indication that, at least in these cases, the marks were not meant to be used once as a subtle reminder to a binder and then irrelevant to subsequent readers because the order of the pages was maintained by the binding.¹⁹³ Instead, the

‘Blurrings’,” in *Islands in a Global Context: Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference on Insular Art, held at the National University of Ireland, Galway, 16-20 July 2014* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2017), 159-166.

¹⁹³ I am grateful to Lawrence Nees for sharing his knowledge on the subject of quire marks. To my knowledge, there has been no full-scale study of early medieval quire marks. Lawrence Nees offers initial observations on the quire marks in the manuscripts associated with Luxeuil in “Graphic Quire Marks and Qur’anic Verse Markers in Frankish and Islamic Manuscripts from the Seventh and Eighth Centuries,” in *Graphic Devices and the Early Decorated Book*, Michelle P. Brown, Ildar H. Garipazanov and Benjamin C. Tilghman (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2017), 80-99. Babette Tewes, in *Die Handschriften von Luxeuil: Kunst und Ikonographie eines frühmittelalterlichen Skriptoriums* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz

quire marks are emphasized, perhaps with the purpose of being used repeatedly as the quires were consulted and then returned, unbound, to a box or portfolio.

The Ragyndrudis Codex is an especially significant example of a Luxeuil manuscript with highly decorative quire marks because its marks do not contain quire numbers, but at the same time retains a cover contemporaneous with the pages (Figs. 58-60). The purpose of the quire marks is recognizable because they follow the quire structure of the manuscript, and they are the only decoration in the manuscript located in the lower margins of the pages, the expected location for quire marks in the period.¹⁹⁴ The lack of quire numbers in the Ragyndrudis Codex contrasts with other manuscripts with decorative quire marks made at Luxeuil or associated with Luxeuil. These include Bibliothèque nationale de France MS Lat 9427 and Biblioteca Vallicelliana cod. B 62. This may be due to the fact that these other manuscripts were not intended to be bound, so they required numbers to maintain the order of the quires. The quire marks of the Ragyndrudis Codex may not include numbers because the decorative marks were added after the manuscript was bound and the numbers obscured within the decoration or lost to trimming of the pages. However, a more plausible explanation is that the Ragyndrudis Codex was intended to be bound at the

Verlag, 2011), identifies the decorative quire marks as such in her listings of decoration in her catalog of Luxeuil manuscripts, but does not elaborate on their significance as quire marks.

¹⁹⁴ I follow the collation of the Ragyndrudis Codex given by Regina Hausmann. See Hausmann, *Die Theologischen Handschriften der Hessischen Landesbibliothek*, 7.

point when the quire marks were added, so the numbers were not necessary. The decorative marks at each quire were instead included because of conventional practices and expectations.

Adding to the evidence that manuscripts were possibly unbound or placed in new covers after the pages were initially written are later inscriptions. In Vatican Library MS Urb.lat.1154, a fifth-century Italian copy of Probus' *Instituta artium Legatura*, there is an inscription on fol. 289r in a Luxeuil script meticulously recording the number of quires present.¹⁹⁵ Noting the number of quires would only be necessary if the quires were kept loosely or if they were being taken apart as part of the process of being put into a new cover. Similarly, a late sixth-early seventh-century Italian manuscript of canons (Oxford, Bodleian Library MS e Mus. 100-2) has notes in a ninth-century hand indicating the manuscript was held at the monastery of Fleury. Significantly, the notes appear specifically at the end of each quire, which would again be most useful if the quires were unbound when the notes were written.¹⁹⁶ These two cases are notable because they indicate a likelihood that manuscripts were unbound in the period under consideration. They also reflect the networks connecting pages to cover. In these examples, pages written in Italy were later transported to the spheres of

¹⁹⁵ E. A. Lowe, "The 'Script of Luxeuil': A Title Vindicated," *Revue Bénédictine*, 63 (1953), 141.

¹⁹⁶ C. H. Turner, "Chapters in the History of Latin MSS of Canons: V. The Version called *Prisca* : (a)the Justel MS (J) now Bodl. e Mus. 100—102, and the editio princeps (Paris, 1661)," *The Journal of Theological Studies*, 30, No. 120 (July, 1929), 343.

Luxeuil and Fleury, where they may have received a cover, possibly for the first time. This not only reflects the movement of manuscripts and people between the different monasteries, but also the relationship of the cover to those movements.

In addition to the physical evidence for unbound and loosely bound manuscripts is a passage in Adomnán's life of St. Columba, written ca. 700 about the sixth-century saint who founded the monastery at Iona and was central to the establishment of Christianity in Great Britain and Ireland. St. Columba was highly regarded as a scribe and the life contains numerous passages referring to manuscripts. One of these passages might be read as a description of loose quires rather than a bound manuscript. It describes an incident where a priest, Iogenan, drops a satchel containing a book into a river. Adomnán continues the account:

De supra memorati vero Eugenani libro a virís quibusdam veracibus | et perfectís bonique testimonii sine ulla ambiguitate relationem accipimus, qui eundem libellum post tot supradictos submersionis dies candidissimum et lucidissimum considerarunt.

[But in the case of the above-named Iogenan's book, we have received an account of the facts, without any possible doubt, from certain truthful and blameless men of good testimony, who found the same book to be, after so many days of immersion, extraordinarily white and clear.]¹⁹⁷

The fact that the miraculously recovered book is described as "candidissimum et lucidissimum [white and clear]" could suggest that the "libellum [book]" refers primarily to parchment pages. There is a strong likelihood the terms "candidissimum

¹⁹⁷ *Adomnan's Life of Columba*, ed. and trans. Anderson, Alan Orr and Marjorie Ogilvie Anderson (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1961), 344-45.

et lucidissimum” are used symbolically here to refer to a pure and holy object or to the sacredness of the text. They may also refer to a light-toned cover, although the majority of surviving early medieval book covers and colored depictions show covers that are dark in tone or made of opaque materials.¹⁹⁸ On the other hand, parchment, especially well-prepared, new parchment, can be gleaming white and the skin often has a certain transparency, fitting the description of “white and clear” well. If the description does refer only to parchment pages, then the passage tells of a book consisting of loose parchment pages carried in a satchel for transportation and protection rather than a book bound in leather-covered boards.

There is also evidence that, even when bound, encasements were sometimes not especially substantial or permanent. Christ von Karl and Berthe van Regemorter identified several early medieval book covers which do not use boards and which are constructed of a sheet of parchment or a flexible piece of leather.¹⁹⁹ While many of these limp bindings are dated to the ninth and tenth centuries, at least one may date as early as the eighth century. This is Basel, Universitätsbibliothek MS F III 15d, a

¹⁹⁸ White has had a long history as a symbol of purity, as outlined by Heather Pulliam in her overview of color in the middle ages in her article “Color,” *Studies in Iconography*, Vol. 33, Special Issue Medieval Art History Today – Critical Terms (2012), 5-6. See Appendix A for notes on the colors of book covers in early medieval manuscript images.

¹⁹⁹ Berthe van Regemorter, “La reliure souple des manuscrits carolingiens de Fulda,” *Scriptorium*, 11, no. 2 (1957), 249-257; Christ von Karl, “Karolingische Bibliothekseinbände,” *Festschrift Georg Leyh, Aufsätze zum Bibliothekswesen und zur Forschungsgeschichte dargebracht zum 60. Geburtstage am 6. Juni 1937*, ed. Ernst Leippand (Leipzig: O Harrassowitz, 1937), 84-86.

collection of texts by Isidore of Seville consisting of sixteen folios in two quires and one of the Isidore codices held at the monastery of Fulda.²⁰⁰ There is an inscription on the cover in the eighth-century Irish minuscule script used for the rest of the text, indicating the cover also dates to this period.²⁰¹ The cover consists of a sheet of thick parchment and the pages are sewn through the center of each quire to attach them to the cover. The examples of limp bindings often contain miscellanies – collections of varied texts combined into a single codex.²⁰² The looser structure can be seen as a way

²⁰⁰ The Fulda provenance is indicated by the fifteenth-century shelf mark written on the inside front cover.

²⁰¹ CLA Vol. 7, 847. Herrad Spilling sees the similarity between the script on the cover and the script on the pages as similar enough to argue they were written by the same scribe. See Herrad Spilling, “Irische Handschriftenüberlieferung in Fulda, Mainz und Würzburg,” in *Die Iren und Europa im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. Heinz Löwe (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1982), 893-899.

²⁰² Several categories of miscellanies are identifiable based on codicological structure. These are defined by J. Gumbert in “Codicological Units: Towards a Terminology for the Stratigraphy of the Non-Homogenous Codex,” *Segno e Testo*, 2 (2004), 17-42. There is substantial bibliography on miscellanies in Carolingian manuscripts. On miscellanies used as bibliographical handbooks, see Rosamond McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 206-209. On Carolingian miscellanies of glossaries, another category of educational miscellany, see Anna Dorofeeva, “Strategies of Knowledge Organization in Early Medieval Latin Glossary Miscellanies: The Example of Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 14388,” in *Writing the Early Medieval West: Studies in Honour of Rosamond McKitterick*, ed. Elina Screen and Charles West (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 146-148. In addition to miscellanies of educational texts, other categories of miscellanies also became popular under the Carolingians, including miscellanies of historical texts, theological texts, and liturgical texts. On these miscellanies and their significance, see Rosamond McKitterick, “Werden 8-9 Jht. im Spiegel seiner Handschriften,” in *Geschichtsvorstellungen Bilder, Texte und Begriffe aus dem Mittelalter. Festschrift für Hans-Werner Goetz zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Steffen Patzold, Anja Rathman-Lutz, and Volker Scior (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2012),

to easily bring together a group of texts seen as having significance in relation to each other which could then be easily taken apart to rearrange as pedagogical and intellectual interests shifted. It can also be seen as a more practical solution to encasing books intended to be used in less formal settings, such as in classrooms or for personal study.

Structural fluidity also characterizes covers made for manuscripts used in more formal display settings. The colophon of the Lindisfarne Gospels, for example, describes a luxurious binding made to cover the book designed for display. The colophon tells how, “Billfrith, the anchorite, forged the ornaments which are on it on the outside and adorned it with gold and with gilded-over silver.”²⁰³ This description not only distinguishes between the making of the cover and the making of the manuscript, but can also be read as indicating there was a period where the leaves of the manuscript were unbound before the cover was made. In many ways, the Lough Kinale Shrine is the most permanent and most display-oriented form of encasement among the surviving eighth-century examples. However, despite its permanence, it is unknown whether the manuscript placed into the shrine was bound or unbound before

326-353, Rosamond McKitterick, “Ancient History at Carolingian Tours.” In *Neue Wege der Frühmittelalterforschung: Bilanz und Perspektiven*, ed. Walter Pohl, Maximilian Diesenberger and Bernhard Zeller (Wien: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press), 217-224, and Rosamond McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 50-58.

²⁰³ Lawrence Nees, “Reading Aldred’s Colophon for the Lindisfarne Gospels,” *Speculum*, 78, No. 2 (April 2003), 341.

being encased. Furthermore, while the Lough Kinale Shrine was likely sealed, it is important to note that some of the later surviving Irish book shrines may not have been sealed. This provided for a more flexible form of encasement and the manuscript inside remained accessible.²⁰⁴

The cover of the Faddan More Psalter is comparable to these other early medieval examples in the fluidity of its structure and in the dynamic experience of reading and studying the contents of the book that the structure allows and even invites. The light, flexible, loose form of the cover of the Faddan More Psalter invites active learning and creativity, types of interactions between object and user also reflected by the working drawings sketched on the cover. The complexity of the relationship between object and user is further demonstrated in the case of the Faddan More Psalter because the cover was not designed for the pages it contained when uncovered in 2006. This means someone chose to adopt this particular cover because its form was uniquely suited to the uses for which the user intended it.

3.4 Conclusion

²⁰⁴ On this question, see Paul Mullarkey, “Book-Shrines” in *Art and Architecture of Ireland Volume I: Medieval c. 400-1600*, ed. Rachel Moss (Dublin; New Haven; London: Published for the Royal Irish Academy and the Paul Mellon Centre by Yale University Press, 2014), 298-299.

Acknowledging and embracing the fluid and experimental nature of book covers in northwestern Europe in the eighth century is a critical piece of reasserting the creativity of the early medieval artist and of establishing the dynamic relationship between the object and its maker. The individuals who were creating these covers were actively working to find solutions to the challenge of holding the pages of a book together, protecting them, and transporting them. The artist who created the cover of the *Ragyndrudis Codex*, for example, drew on earlier techniques, such as overlay for the decoration and the use of quire marks to designate the proper ordering of the pages. However, the artist also adapted these for a new form by such choices as eliminating the numbers in the quire marks and using heavier oak boards. The uniqueness of each cover is attributable to inventiveness of the individuals responsible for their creation.

In addition to the relationship between the cover and its maker, the concept of encasement established in this chapter develops a more dynamic role for book encasements in the interactions between books and their users. If the forms of encasement themselves were as varied and fluid in the eighth century as the evidence examined in this chapter suggests, then so were the ways users could interact with the cover, the pages, and the book as a whole. Some forms of encasement, such as the book box and portfolio, allowed for an adaptable use of the pages and easy reordering of the pages, while a binding guided the reader through the text in a set sequence and maintained the order of the pages for easy reference. The intricate relationships between maker, user, and object is central to the form of encasement chosen for a

particular book. These relationships are also central to the ornamentation of book covers and the way ornament operates to create a system of embellishment working across the cover and the pages contained within, to be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 4

EMBELLISHMENT: THE ORDERING OF ORNAMENT

And there are almost innumerable other drawings. If you look at them carelessly and casually and not too closely, you may judge them to be mere daubs rather than careful compositions. You will see nothing subtle where everything is subtle. But if you take the trouble to look very closely, and penetrate with your eyes to the secrets of the artistry, you will notice such intricacies, so delicate and subtle, so close together and well-knitted, so involved and bound together, and so fresh still in their colourings that you will not hesitate to declare that all these things must have been the result of the work, not of men, but of angels.

- Gerald of Wales, *The History and Topography of Ireland*²⁰⁵

4.1 Introduction

Book covers act as a surface for embellishment - designed for visual effect, though often containing associative meanings. Through the use of repeated motifs and the juxtaposition of those motifs in a carefully-conceived composition, the cover of the Ragyndrudis Codex, for example, acts as a surface for ornamentation and visually complex design (Fig. 5). The front cover contains a cruciform pattern that divides the surface into four quadrants. Filling the border, the arms of the central cross, and the

²⁰⁵ Gerald of Wales, *The History and Topography of Ireland*, trans. John J. O'Meara (London: Penguin Books, 1982), 84. For the Latin text, see John J. O'Meara, "Giraldus Cambrensis in Topographia Hibernie. 'Text of the First Recension,'" *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy: Archaeology, Culture, History, Literature*, Vol. 52 (1948-1950), 151-152.

quadrants formed between the arms of the cross are patterns formed from six-petaled rosettes, lozenge shapes, small dots, and tear drops. Upon opening the book, the design of the cover is mirrored in the pages, including the frontispiece on fol. 1v where another six-petaled rosette fills the space under the arched frame (Fig. 61). With the Ragyndrudis Codex, as with other eighth-century examples where a substantial portion of the decorative program survive along with a cover, pages and cover together form a coherent scheme. By including the cover as a central part of the visual programs of early medieval manuscripts, this chapter shows how book covers operate within what I term a system of embellishment – a system which encompasses the entire object, both interior and exterior, and which connects the distinct components of the manuscript into a unified aesthetic whole.

Ornament in early medieval manuscripts transcends the frame and works across the pages, connecting Evangelist portraits, ornamental letters, and ornamental pages. Recently, Chiara Valle and Tina Bawden have explored the interconnection between different ornamental elements in depth through their studies of the pages of the Lindisfarne Gospels (London, British Library, Cotton MS Nero D IV) and the St. Gall Gospels (St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, cod.sang.51) respectively.²⁰⁶ The cover of the manuscript is an essential element in this system of embellishment and one which adds

²⁰⁶ Tina Bawden, “The Relationship between Letter and Frame in Insular and Carolingian Manuscripts,” in *Graphic Devices and the Early Decorated Book*, ed. Michelle P. Brown, Ildar H. Garipzanov and Benjamin C. Tilghman (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell, 2017); Chiara Valle, “Woven Words in the Lindisfarne Gospels,” (PhD diss., Johns Hopkins University, 2015).

extra dimensions to that system. The cover is something which is added separately to the manuscript, and in that way may reflect the stylistic choices of a different time or place than the pages. The cover can also allude to the wider historical and geographical context of the manuscript through its design. The cover is also generally made of different materials than the pages. Working in leather or metal offers different possibilities than working in paint or ink, even if the same motifs are represented. In these ways, the cover expands the manuscript's system of embellishment, from the inside of the pages to the outside, from paint or ink to metal or leather, from one context of making to another. In this way the cover becomes part of the visual commentary on the process of making the manuscript.²⁰⁷ The concept of embellishment developed in this chapter encompasses the meanings of visual enhancement and visual harmony, but also the active role of the artist in conceiving, crafting, and combining those elements.²⁰⁸

This chapter uses two frameworks to analyze the system of embellishment of early medieval manuscripts and the role of book covers within that system. It first looks at the four cases of eighth-century manuscripts where the entire decorative

²⁰⁷ Benjamin Tilghman argues ornament is an essential element in the divine significance of carpet pages specifically and Insular manuscripts more generally. See Benjamin C. Tilghman, "Pattern, Process, and the Creation of Meaning in the Lindisfarne Gospels," *West 86th*, 24, No. 1 (Spring-Summer 2017): pp. 3-28.

²⁰⁸ Ananda Coomaraswamy also acknowledged the role the artist's labor in the definition of ornament. See "Ornament," *The Art Bulletin*, 21, no. 4 (Dec., 1939), 376.

program of the manuscript is intact. Examining these few cases allows for a holistic assessment of the decoration of a single object and the role of the cover as part of that decoration. For example, each element of the decoration of the Ragyndrudis Codex – cover, *incipit* pages, decorative initials, and decorative quire marks – employs a consistent repertoire of motifs and colors to create a visually coherent system of embellishment. Second, the chapter examines the intricate relationship between book covers and ornamental pages with designs consisting entirely of non-figural motifs, often called carpet pages. These pages include, for example, those found in the Lindisfarne Gospels or in an eighth-century copy of St. Augustine's *De consensu evangelistarum* (*On the Harmony of the Gospels*) from Corbie, France (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS. Lat. 12190). Analyzing book covers in relation to these ornamental pages offers an effective way to understand how the non-figural compositions of book covers situate the manuscripts with which they are associated within wider temporal and geographical spheres, convey the meaning of their texts, and emphasize their design process. Through these two frameworks, I show how the non-figural compositions of early medieval book covers can function as an essential part of the book's system of embellishment and expression of the book's meaning.

Decor and *ornamentum*, the Latin terms corresponding to decoration and ornament, were used in ancient and medieval contexts and carried specific meanings in those periods. *Ornamentum* connoted beautification and visual enhancement while

decor connoted suitability and visual harmony.²⁰⁹ These ideas were developed in Vitruvius's *De Architectura*, written in the 20s-30s BCE. The terms continued to be used in the early medieval period. In the *Etymologiae*, Isidore of Seville associated *ornamentum* with "diversitatem elementorum et pulchritudinem siderum [the diversity of elements and the beauty of the heavenly bodies]." ²¹⁰ Significantly, the dedication poem of the Dagulf Psalter includes both terms as part of a description of the splendor of the manuscript. *Ornari* is used to refer to the adornment of the words, while the verb *decorantur* is used to describe the enhancement of the book by the addition of the ivory plaques.²¹¹ It is with these early medieval connotation of beautification and

²⁰⁹ On the definition of these terms in the ancient Roman context, see Ellen Swift, *Style and Function in Roman Decoration: Living with Objects and Interiors* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 16-17. For a discussion of the meanings of these Latin terms more generally, see Coomaraswamy, "Ornament," 380.

²¹⁰ Isidore of Seville, *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive originum libri XX*, ed. W. M. Lindsay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911), Lib. XIII.i.1. English translation from Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, ed. and trans. Stephen A. Barney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 271.

²¹¹ The full Latin text of the dedication poem from Dagulf to Charlemagne on fol. 4v is reproduced below. Transcription from *Der Goldene Psalter, 'Dagulf-Psalter': Vollständige Faksimile-Ausgabe im Originalformat von Codex 1861 der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, ed. Kurt Holter (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1980). "Aurea Daviticos en pingit littera cantus / Ornari decuit tam bene tale melos. / Aurea verba sonant, promittant aurea regna, / Mansurumque canunt et sine fine bonum. / Haec merito tabulis cultim decorantur eburnis / Quas mire exculpsit ingeniosa manus. / Illic psalterii prima ostentatur origo, / Et rex doctiloquax ipse canere choro, / Utque decus rediit sublatis sentibus olim / Quod fuerat studio pervigilante viri. / Aurea progenies, fulvo lucidior auro, / Carle, iubar nostrum, plebis et altus amor, / Rex pie, dux sapiens, virtute insignis et armis, / Quem decet omne decus quicquid in orbe placet, / Exigui famuli Dagulfi sume laborem / Dignanter, docto mitis et ore lege, / Si tua per multos decorentur scepra triumphos, / Davitico et

vibrancy that I use the term ornament to describe the enhancement of objects with compositions formed of a visually dynamic variety of motifs.²¹² I also use the term decoration and its derivatives according to the early medieval meaning to refer to the elements that work together to create a visually harmonious and unified object.

While firmly rooted in early medieval thinking, the definitions used in this study also draw on modern theoretical conceptions of ornament to describe the aesthetic effects of book covers and how those covers enhance and interact with the decorative program of the rest of the manuscript. Discussion of the form and function of ornament has been a constant within the history of art. Beginning in the nineteenth century, the study of ornament was tied to larger trends in industrial design and often took the form of catalogs of motifs taken from a variety of artistic sources. The most

demum consociere choro.” Further illustrating the significance of ornament in the early middle ages, the dedication poem and painted decoration of the Dagulf Psalter reflect a love of ornament which Peter Seller identified as acting as a counterpoint to the critique of religious images articulated in the *Libri Carolini*. See Peter Seller, “Die Legitimität (Bild-)Künstlerischer Ornamenta in den *Libri Carolini*,” in *Die Handschriften der Hofschule Kaiser Karls des Großen: Individuelle Gestalt und europäisches Kulturerbe Ergebnisse der Trierer Tagung vom 10.-12. Oktober 2018*, ed. Michael Embach, Claudine Moulin, and Harald Wolter-von dem Knesebeck (Trier: Verlag für Geschichte und Kultur, 2019), 187-211.

²¹² In her discussion of the meaning of ornament in early medieval intellectual tradition, Mary Carruthers outlined the features of ornament as surprise and strangeness, exaggeration, orderliness and pattern, brevity, copiousness, similarity, opposition, and contrast. For Carruthers, these characteristics all contribute to ornament activating mnemonic associations. She further defines ornament in the middle ages as “causing varieties of movements.” See *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 116-117.

famous example is Owen Jones's *The Grammar of Ornament* of 1856. At the turn of the century, Alois Riegl broke from this tradition by applying formalist methodologies to the study of ornament with the publication of *Stilfragen (Problems of Style)* in 1893.²¹³ Offering a further alternative to the categorical and formalist approaches of the preceding century and a half, Ernst Gombrich presented a new theory of ornament in *The Sense of Order* that integrated psychology into a theory that accounts not only for how ornament looks, but how it affects the viewer.²¹⁴ In *The Mediation of Ornament*, Oleg Grabar took a similar approach, arguing that ornament is an essential mediator between the viewer and the work of art.²¹⁵ All of these scholars sought to assert ornament as a significant element of works of art and to define its unique visual and iconographic roles. The significance given to non-figural motifs by these scholars and their emphasis on the crucial role of ornament in the relationship between object, viewer, and action form the basis of my approach to analyzing the embellishment of early medieval book covers.

²¹³ For the most recent English edition, see Alois Riegl, *Problems of Style: Foundations for a History of Ornament*, trans. Evelyn Kain, ed. David Castriota (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

²¹⁴ E.H. Gombrich, *The Sense of Order: A Study in the Psychology of Decorative Art* (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1979).

²¹⁵ Oleg Grabar, *The Mediation of Ornament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

While some scholars have accorded ornament a central place in the history of art, it has historically been minimized as trivial because of its perceived superficiality and connotation of pleasure in the modern period.²¹⁶ In an essential current definition, James Trilling defined ornament as “the elaboration of functionally complete objects for the sake of visual pleasure.” Trilling brings a nuanced, twenty-first century perspective to understanding ornament in his work, but retained the element of pleasure in this definition.²¹⁷ By returning to early medieval definitions of ornament I endeavor to further challenge these previous marginalizing associations.

The conception of ornament developed in this chapter also responds to recent studies of ornament by medieval art historians, including Jean-Claude Bonne, Robert Stevick, and Benjamin Tilghman, among others.²¹⁸ Bonne argued for the centrality of

²¹⁶ After an embrace of ornament in the nineteenth century, a strong modernist critique of ornament developed, particularly in relation to architecture. This critique is most famously encapsulated in Adolf Loos’s lecture “Ornament and Crime,” likely written around 1908 and delivered at the Akademischer Verband für Literatur und Musik in 1910. For a discussion of the modernist critique of ornament, see James Trilling, *Ornament: A Modern Perspective* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003).

²¹⁷ James Trilling, *The Language of Ornament* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2001), 6.

²¹⁸ In addition to the work of Bonne, Stevick, and Tilghman cited below, see also Emmanuelle Pirotte, “Hidden Order, Order Revealed: New Light on Carpet Pages,” in *Pattern and Purpose in Insular Art: Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Insular Art Held at the National Museum & Gallery, Cardiff 3-6 September 1998*, ed. Mark Redknap (Oxford: Oxbow, 2001), 203-207, and Lawrence Nees and Tina Bawden’s essays in *Graphic Devices and the Early Decorated Book*,

ornament in medieval art and for its significance as a mode of representation that occupies a unique space between representation and abstraction.²¹⁹ Stevick related the divine significance of artistic creation to the measurements and proportions used to construct the layout of the designs on the cover of the St. Cuthbert Gospel and other decorative pages of Insular manuscripts.²²⁰ Tilghman argued that Insular artists deliberately emphasize the production process in the construction of ornamental designs as a representation of the divine significance of artistic creation.²²¹ The work of Bonne, Stevick, Tilghman, and others who build on their ideas represent a plethora

ed. Michelle P. Brown, Ildar H. Garipzanov and Benjamin C. Tilghman (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2017), 80-99.

²¹⁹ Jean-Claude Bonne, “De l’Ornemental dans l’Art Médiéval (VIIe-XIIe Siècle). Le Modèle Insulaire,” in *L’image: Fonctions et usages des images dans l’Occident médiéval*, ed. Jérôme Baschet and Jean-Claude Schmitt (Paris: Léopard d’Or, 1996), and “Intrications: À propos d’une composition d’entrelacs dans une évangile celto-saxon du VIIe siècle,” in *Histoires d’ornement: Acts du colloque de l’Académie de France à Rome, villa Medici, 27-28 juin 1996*, ed. Patrice Ceccarini, Jean-Loup Charvet, and Frédéric Cousinié (Paris: Klincksieck, 2001), 75-108.

²²⁰ See Robert D. Stevick, “The St. Cuthbert Gospel Binding and Insular Design,” *Artibus et Historiae*, 8, No. 15 (1987), 9-19, and *The Earliest English Bookarts: Visual and Poetic Forms before A.D. 1000* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994). Explaining the connection between mathematical constructions and divine meaning, Stevick states “Construction of a plan according to elementary mathematical principles established an integrated set of proportional measures which, both for its beauty in sense perception and for its replication of spiritual truths, could thus hold sanction of the highest kind,” (*The Earliest English Bookarts*, 13).

²²¹ Tilghman, “Pattern, Process, and the Creation of Meaning in the Lindisfarne Gospels,” 3-28, and “Ornament and Incarnation in Insular Art,” *Gesta*, 55, No. 2 (Fall 2016), 158-163.

of innovative approaches to the subject of ornament, including using motifs to trace cultural exchange, and analyzing ornament as a compositional device. My study uses Bonne's theories, and the work of Emmanuelle Pirotte, Chiara Valle, and others that draw on his approach, as a basis for analyzing the ornament of early medieval book covers as essential to the aesthetic and cognitive experience of the book. Furthermore, by following Tilghman's innovative integration of making and meaning, my own approach to book covers as ornament goes beyond stylistic and iconographic analysis of ornamental motifs and theoretical frameworks that focus on how ornament affects viewers' perceptions of the object.

Although there are examples of early medieval book covers with sophisticated iconographic programs, including the current lower cover of the Lindau Gospels, and series of narrative scenes, including the Dagulf Psalter ivories, this chapter instead focuses on the majority of embellished covers of the period, like the Ragyndrudis Codex, which use non-figural motifs to create compositions that draw the eye with their variation and reflect the contents of the book through their interpretation. In recent years, these covers have generally received less attention by art historians than the covers made of precious materials and those with complex iconographic programs. Studies by G. D. Hobson and Karl von Christ in the early twentieth century, and an essential article by Jean Vézin in 1970 examined the stamps of early medieval tooled leather bindings and used the stamps primarily to draw conclusions about localization

and dating of the covers.²²² In the introduction to her essential catalog of bindings made of precious materials, published in 1965, Frauke Steenbock argued for the importance of her research by noting that bindings of precious materials received little attention by historians of early medieval bindings and their study was regarded as a specialized area of research.²²³ Since the publication of Steenbock's catalog, an expanded interest in the materiality of objects and the liturgical function of books has given book covers made of precious materials a central position in art historical studies, exemplified by such notable publications as Susannah Fisher's 2012 dissertation, "Materializing the Word: Ottonian Treasury Bindings and Viewer Reception," David Ganz's *Buch-Gewänder. Prachteinbände im Mittelalter* of 2015, and the 2019 anthology *Clothing Sacred Scripture*.²²⁴ The religious materiality of

²²² G. D. Hobson, "Some Early Bindings and Binders' Tools." *The Library*, Fourth Series, 19 (1939): pp. 224-228; Karl von Christ, "Karolingische Bibliothekseinbände" in *Festschrift Georg Leyh: Aufsätze zum Bibliothekswesen u. zur Forschungsgeschichte dargebracht zum 60 Geburtstag*, ed. E. Leippbrand (Leipzig, 1937), 95-98; Jean Vezin, "Les Reiores Carolingiennes de Cuir a Décor Estampé de la Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris," *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes*, 128 (Janvier-Juin 1970), 81-113.

²²³ Frauke Steenbock, *Der kirchliche Prachteinband im frühem Mittelalter, von den Anfängen bis zum Beginn der Gotik* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1965), 9-10.

²²⁴ David Ganz, *Buch-Gewänder. Prachteinbände im Mittelalter* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag GmbH, 2015); Susannah D. Fisher, "Materializing the Word: Ottonian Treasury Bindings and Viewer Reception," (Phd diss., Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 2012); David Ganz and Barbara Schellewald, eds. *Clothing Sacred Scriptures: Book Art and Book Religion in Christian, Islamic, and Jewish Cultures* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019).

book covers developed in these studies will be explored more fully in the following chapter. This chapter, however, places covers with non-figural designs at the center of a discussion of ornament and decorative programs in early medieval art.

This chapter further analyzes ornament as an element which integrates the different media of cover and page through the motifs and techniques used to create the compositions. Book covers provide essential evidence for this as works in metal, leather, or other materials that are intimately tied to manuscript painting. Because of the use of the same motifs in different media on the cover and on the inside of the book, these motifs are crucial for understanding how designs and the techniques for creating them were transferred between different media and different artists.²²⁵ By extending the analysis of the manuscript's system of embellishment from the pages to the cover, this chapter reveals more fully the methods by which the artists connected the cover and the page not only physically, the focus of the previous chapter, but also visually.

²²⁵ On the question of transfer between different media in early medieval northwestern Europe, see Lawrence Nees "Weaving Garnets: Thoughts about two 'excessively rare' belt mounts from Sutton Hoo," in *Making and Meaning in Insular Art: Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Insular Art held at Trinity College Dublin 25-28 August 2005*, ed. Rachel Moss (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007) and Paul Mullarkey, "Faint Steps: A Note on the Transmission of Materials and Techniques among Goldsmith, Illuminator and Scribe," in *An Insular Odyssey: Manuscript Culture in Early Christian Ireland and Beyond*, ed. Rachel Moss, Felicity O'Mahony & Jane Maxwell (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2017), 128-137.

4.2 The Integrated Decorative Programs

Four of the eight manuscripts in the group of eighth-century book covers from northwestern Europe that form the focus of this study retain not only their decorated covers, but also substantial decorative programs within their pages. The Cadmug Gospels, the Dagulf Psalter, the Faddan More Psalter, and the Ragyndrudis Codex all display a decorative program that visually and conceptually integrates the many components of the manuscript into a unified whole. Each achieves this using a repertoire of non-figural imagery. Figural images are a central part of the decorative programs of the Cadmug Gospels, the Dagulf Psalter, and the Faddan More Psalter. However, it is the non-figural imagery which is present through all elements of the decoration, including the covers, and for this reason it plays a central role in visually integrating the object.

Not every eighth-century manuscript from northwestern Europe identified in this study where the cover and pages survive employs this type of integrated decorative program. The pages of the St. Cuthbert Gospel are unadorned – the precisely written uncial script and finely prepared parchment provide their own aesthetic effect without color or ornamentation. The cover is a visual interpretation and commentary on the text rather than part of a system of embellishment.²²⁶ The pages of the Victor Codex contain text and unassuming canon tables. The canon tables

²²⁶ See chapter 1, pg. 8-9.

act primarily as a graphic structure for the text. It is the cover that adds embellishment to the manuscript, with the interlace on the metal mounts and the blind-stamped rosettes, palmettes and circles. These examples highlight the distinctiveness of the four manuscripts which contain ornamentation across the different parts of the book. The following section examines the decorative programs of the Cadmug Gospels, the Dagulf Psalter, the Faddan More Psalter, and the Ragyndrudis Codex in detail, showing how specific motifs, the use of color, and other visual devices establish an integrated system of embellishment encompassing the entire object.

4.2.1 The Faddan More Psalter

Considering the cover of the Faddan More Psalter together with its pages provides a fuller representation of the process of how non-figural motifs were learned, practiced, transmitted, and arranged into finished compositions. The cover of the Faddan More Psalter is incised with thirty-one working drawings of ornamental motifs that consist of an assortment of key patterns and interlace (Figs. 62 and 63). The term working drawings is used here to describe a broad category of drawings used in the transmission of artistic ideas. These drawings may be a form of practice as someone is learning how to draw a particular motif. They may fit into the category of what have also been called model-books, sets of drawings kept on hand in a workshop to copy from when putting together more complex designs. They may also be preliminary

sketches for a larger work.²²⁷ Working drawings is a general term which encompasses all of these different categories, unified by their role as part of the early stages of artistic production. Of the working drawings on the cover of Faddan More Psalter, the majority are square-format, although there are some round and some rectangular designs. The designs are in varying states of completion. The cruciform key pattern and large round interlace panel on the front cover are fully rendered, while some of the designs on the back, such as a half rectangle at the top of the cover, are suggested by just a few lines indicating a square form and a few cross marks. In at least one case, the group of three squares clustered near the flap on the back of the cover, there seem to be different iterations of the same design, as though someone was practicing how to draw it. The repetition of designs and the incomplete nature of many of the motifs suggest that they were not meant to be complete, finished compositions.²²⁸

²²⁷ For an introduction to the evidence for these preliminary stages of artistic production in the Middle Ages, see Robert W. Scheller, *Exemplum: Model-Book Drawings and the Practice of Artistic Transmission in the Middle Ages*, trans. Michael Hoyle (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1995), 1-7. My definition of working drawings is also based on Uaininn O'Meadhra's 13 different categories of motif pieces that are based on specific functions she identifies for that form of working drawing. See O'Meadhra, *Early Christian, Viking and Romanesque Art: Motif-Pieces from Ireland. 2. A discussion on Aspects of Find-Context and Function* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1987), 91.

²²⁸ John Gillis describes and categorizes the designs on the cover of the Faddan More Psalter based on the type of motif used. Based on his analysis, Gillis suggests dividers may not have been available to the artist to design the majority of the motifs, but detected a compass point in one, identified by Gillis as A4. John Gillis "The Faddan More Psalter – A study of the early medieval book-making techniques and codicology of a recently discovered eighth-century Irish Psalter and an examination of its features

The closest parallel to this aspect of what is seen on the cover are the approximately 300 motif pieces found in Ireland (Fig. 64).²²⁹ The majority of the Irish motif pieces catalogued by Uaininn O'Meadhra in 1987 are ornamental designs carved onto stone or bone, although some are on other materials.²³⁰ In both the motif pieces and the Faddan More cover, the designs are not part of a large, unified composition, nor are they carefully rendered, or colored. Another key similarity is that the designs are non-figural. There are no human figures, and the only animals are of the highly stylized type found in Insular metalwork and manuscript painting.²³¹ Furthermore, O'Meadhra sees motif pieces as having two distinct aspects: the *pattern* and the *piece*. According to O'Meadhra's definition of motif piece, the patterns are primary, and the piece is used as a support for their representation rather than as a surface for embellishment.²³² The primacy of the motifs and the role of the piece in O'Meadhra's

and materials which suggest influences both domestic and remote in its materiality and manufacture" (PhD diss., Trinity College Dublin, 2019), 156-158.

²²⁹ O'Meadhra, *Early Christian, Viking and Romanesque Art: Motif-Pieces from Ireland*. 2, 83. Some motif pieces have also been found in England, Scotland, and Scandinavia, though not in the large numbers found in Ireland.

²³⁰ Ibid., 16.

²³¹ See, for example, cat. 158 in Uaininn O'Meadhra, *Early Christian, Viking and Romanesque Art: Motif-Pieces from Ireland. An Illustrated and Descriptive Catalogue of the So-Called Artists' 'Trial-Pieces' from c. 5th-12th cents. AD, Found in Ireland c. 1830-1973* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1979), 106-107.

²³² Ibid., 13.

definition can be applied to the cover of the Faddan More Psalter. These similarities between the motif pieces and the cover of the Faddan More Psalter may indicate parallels in the design process across different media. Underlining this cross-media application of motifs, O'Meadhra suggested a significant association between motif pieces and sites used for the production of fine metalwork.²³³

If the drawings on the cover of the Faddan More Psalter are part of the initial stages of artistic production, then it is important to consider how they relate to the decoration found on the surviving pages of the Psalter. The surviving pages include decorated *incipits* for Psalms 1, 51, and 101 and smaller decorated initials at the beginning of each of the other Psalms.²³⁴ The opening to Psalm 1 is the most elaborate and includes large display lettering (Fig. 65). An eagle head appears above the top line of display lettering and all is enclosed in a frame comprised of panels filled with geometric designs. The opening to Psalm 51 comprises the same type of display lettering (Fig. 66). The bowl of the Q of the opening line of the Psalm is ornamented with a checkered design and a central stepped cross. The tail of the Q is shaped into a bird's head. The decoration of the beginning of Psalm 101 is the most fragmentary of the three major decorations (Fig. 67). The surviving panel of interlace and colored

²³³ O'Meadhra, *Early Christian, Viking and Romanesque Art: Motif-Pieces from Ireland*. 2, 171-174.

²³⁴ For further description of the decoration of the pages of the Faddan More Psalter, see Gillis "The Faddan More Psalter," 87-108.

border identified as coming from this page perhaps formed the initial D for the first word of the Psalm, *domine*. Traces of yellow, red, pink, black, and white pigments survive on the pages. The pigments used are consistent with those used in other Irish manuscripts of the period.²³⁵ The Faddan More Psalter also likely contained green, blue, and purple pigments found in the other Irish manuscripts studied, but those more easily disintegrated pigments have been lost.

Examination of the decoration reveals that there are not only similar types of motifs, predominately interlace, but also that the majority of ornamented initials at the

²³⁵ For the results of recent micro-Raman Spectroscopy analysis of pigments used in the early medieval Irish manuscripts held at Trinity College, Dublin, see Susan Bioletti and Allyson Smith, "Shining a Light on the Pigments of Early Irish Manuscripts," in *An Insular Odyssey: Manuscript Culture in Early Christian Ireland and Beyond*, ed. Rachel Moss, Felicity O'Mahony, and Jane Maxwell (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2017), 114-127, Susan Bioletti, et. al. "The Examination of the Book of Kells using micro-Raman Spectroscopy," *Journal of Raman Spectroscopy*, 40 (2009), 1043-1049, and Lucia Borgio, et. al., "Non-destructive, in situ analysis of three medieval manuscripts from Trinity College Library Dublin (*Codex Usserianus Primus*, Book of Durrow, Book of Armagh)," in *Making Histories: Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference on Insular Art, York 2011*, ed. Jane Hawkes (Donington, 2013), 42-49. Similar studies have been conducted on the pigments of Insular manuscripts held at the British Library, London and at Corpus Christi College Cambridge. See Katherine Brown, et. al., "Analysis of the Pigments used in the Lindisfarne Gospels," in *The Lindisfarne Gospels: Society, Spirituality and the Scribe* (London: British Library, 2003), 430-451, Katherine L. Brown and Robin J. H. Clark, "The Lindisfarne Gospels and two other 8th century Anglo-Saxon/Insular manuscripts: pigment identification by Raman microscopy," *Journal of Raman Spectroscopy*, 35 (2004), 4-12, and Katherine L. Brown, and Robin J. H. Clark, "Analysis of key Anglo-Saxon manuscripts (8-11th centuries) in the British Library: pigment identification by Raman microscopy," *Journal of Raman Spectroscopy*, 35 (2004), 181-189. For further discussion of the pigments used in Insular manuscripts, see Andrew Beeby, et. al., "Pigments of the Earliest Northumbrian Manuscripts," *Scriptorium*, 69 (2015), 33-59, and Mark Clarke, "Anglo-Saxon Manuscript Pigments," *Studies in Conservation*, 49 (2004), 1-14.

beginning of each Psalm have a less refined character, such as the design sketched in the bowl of the main initial U on fol. 29 (Fig. 68).²³⁶ These similarities show that the artists decorating the manuscript and sketching the motifs on the cover were working with a similar ornamental vocabulary and sensibility. The motifs on the cover could even be directly related to the decoration in the manuscript, either as sketches made from looking at the pages, or, less likely, as sketches made while conceptualizing the decoration. The motifs on the cover appear to be informal sketches and the majority do not display the use of techniques such as grids and pricking marks used to create more refined interlace.²³⁷ Although the sketches are informal and I have not yet found any examples where the exact motif is found on the cover and on the psalter pages, it is difficult to make definitive conclusions based on the surviving evidence since much of the ornamentation of the pages has been lost or severely damaged.

Because the surviving decoration from the Faddan More Psalter itself is limited, it is useful to compare the working drawings on the cover to better-preserved

²³⁶ Gillis “The Faddan More Psalter,” 87-94.

²³⁷ John Gillis concludes from examining the motifs on the cover of the Faddan More Psalter that “Two, maybe three, of the thirty-one pieces could be described as competent and display an understanding of the intended end-product. The contrast between these pieces and the remainder is considerable in their level of competency and is unlikely to be the work of the same individual.” Gillis, “The Faddan More Psalter,” 165. On the design of early medieval motifs such as those seen on the cover of the Faddan More Psalter, see the construction marks described by Michelle Brown on the reverse sides of the carpet pages of the Lindisfarne Gospels in *The Lindisfarne Gospels*, 213-226. On the construction of interlace, see Michael Brennan, “The Structure of Interlace in Insular Art c. AD 400-1200,” (PhD diss., Bangor University, 2011), 32-66.

decoration from contemporaneous manuscripts. This comparison helps to highlight the relationship between the drawings and finished manuscript decoration. The opening of the Gospel of John in the St. Gall Gospels, also likely dating from the second half of the eighth century, suggests how the motifs on the Faddan More cover may relate to finished decorated pages on the interior of manuscripts (Figs. 69 and 70). Similar key patterns and interlace are seen in both.²³⁸ In the finished design, however, the motifs have been combined with colored frames and the interlace has been extended to create variation in the lengths of the panels making up the initials. The relationship between the motifs on the Faddan More cover and the opening of John in the St. Gall Gospels suggests something of how decoration was conceived. An artist might have a variety of ornamental motifs in his or her repertoire which could then be combined, manipulated, and added to in various ways to create a finished design. The pages of the Faddan More Psalter together with its cover illustrate the role of non-figural imagery in different parts of the artistic process, from cursory sketch to carefully rendered composition.

4.2.2 The Cadmug Gospels

²³⁸ Read, *The Faddan More Psalter*, 50; Gillis, “The Faddan More Psalter,” 160-161.

While the Faddan More Psalter emphasizes the role of ornament in the artistic process, the decoration of the Cadmug Gospels shows how a non-figural motif can be used to enhance the meaning of the text. The main decoration of the pages of the Cadmug Gospels consists of an Evangelist portrait placed at the beginning of each gospel, complemented by a decorated *incipit* page (Fig. 71). The four portraits are nearly identical. In each a yellow-haired figure wears a red robe enhanced by flowing vertical yellow lines and a lozenge-shaped opening near the figure's feet. The figure holds a short staff in his right hand and a book in his left. Around the figure is a frame. The top and bottom panels are red with flowing linear patterns, and the side panels are green with angular step patterns. The frames have golden squares in each corner. All is outlined with a yellow border. There is a slight variation in the frame of the portrait of St. Mark where the side panels are red and the top and bottom panels are green. The bare feet of each figure appear outside the frame, extending into the bottom margin. The beginning of the text of each gospel is similarly framed on the four incipit pages, with the green and red panels switched to complement the portrait pages, including the variation in the Gospel of Mark. The first line of text is written in large letters using *diminuendo*, the gradual decrease of letter size as a decorative device. The spaces of the letters are filled with color and the text is outlined with red dots.

In addition to the prominent, colored images of the opening pages for each gospel, there are subtle additions in black ink on pages of text which have not been considered in relation to the larger decorative program of the manuscript. Larger initials marking the beginnings of passages are outlined with dots. In several instances,

a line of black dots is drawn to the right or left of a column of text to visually connect different passages. On fols. 16v and 17r some of these dots are then formed into shapes. On fol. 16v, the dots to the left of the central text block are formed into an x shape. On fol. 17v, the dots to the right of the second text block form an x shape. The dots to the right of the fourth text block form a wedge; to the right of the text block below, the dots are formed into a stack of irregular quadrilaterals. In the Gospel of Matthew, there are three whimsical bird figures, one each in the lower margins of fols. 12v and 13v and one formed into a decorative initial q on fol. 10v (Fig. 72).²³⁹ These marginalia are near Matthew 18:12, Matthew 21:24, and Matthew 22:29. The passages do not initially appear to have a strong significance in relation to each other or to the marginalia. However, they show an intimate, personal engagement with the text - a reflection of the use of the manuscript as a small, portable book for personal prayer, contemplation, and study.²⁴⁰

The motif of the saltire cross, in the context of a gospel book evoking the more specific symbol of the *Chi* of the Christogram, pervades the entire object.²⁴¹ The xs

²³⁹ The birds in the margins of the Cadmug Gospels are similar to the marginalia found in the Book of Deer, discussed by Heather Pulliam in “Beasts of the Desert: Marginalia in the Book of Deer,” *Medieval Archaeology*, 57 (2013), 83-110.

²⁴⁰ Heather Pulliam makes this observation in relation to the Book of Deer, which is comparable to the Cadmug Gospels in its form and function. See Pulliam, “Beasts of the Desert,” 106.

²⁴¹ On the interpretation of the saltire cross in early medieval personal prayer books, see Pulliam, “Beasts of the Desert,” 103-105.

fill both the front and back cover, made to stand out more prominently by the addition of light-colored pigmentation to outline the shape (Figs. 6 and 7). The robes in the portrait pages are drawn open at the front to create an x shape across the center of the figures. The lines of dots connecting sections of text have been formed into xs on fols. 16v and 17r. On the rectos of the portrait pages before the Gospels of Mark and Luke, rows of xs have been drawn in the outlines of the panels of the frame visible from the verso of the page (Fig. 73). The xs are drawn within the confines of the borders of the frame, but do not correspond with the painted designs of the panels on the verso. Finally, on fol. 18v, the final page of the Gospel of Matthew and opposite the verso of the portrait before the beginning of the Gospel of Mark, the text has been formed into the shape of a saltire cross. The deep ruling marks used to create the shape, although not outlined in ink, emphasize the form and the technical similarity to the incised design on the cover. The small flourishes on the text pages, the figured texts, the sketches evoking working drawings on the rectos of the portrait pages, the portrait pages themselves, and the cover of the book all contribute to a decorative program designed to regularly present the viewer of the manuscript with the visual reminder of the cross in multiple forms. The non-figural motif of the saltire cross and the visual program that integrates the non-figural design of the cover and the figural and non-figural decoration of the pages would have enhanced the experience of the person using the manuscript by providing a meaningful visual accompaniment to private prayer and contemplation of the gospels.

4.2.3 The Dagulf Psalter

While the Cadmug Gospels display a decorative program that uses a non-figural design on the cover and figural designs in the interior of the manuscript, the Dagulf Psalter displays decoration that integrates narrative imagery on the cover and non-figural imagery in the interior. The decoration visually connects the different parts of the manuscript, enhances the experience of engaging with the text, and situates the manuscript as one displaying the type of decoration that defines the works of art produced in the circle of Charlemagne's court. The Dagulf Psalter includes decorated pages at the beginning of Psalms 1 (fols. 24v-25r), 51 (fol. 67v), and 101 (fol. 108v), one of the systems for marking the major divisions of the Book of Psalms in the early middle ages (Figs. 74-76). These pages all contain a field of framed text. The background of the framed field is tinted purple. The first lines of the text of the psalms are rendered in silver and gold. The lavish use of purple, silver, and gold on these pages marks the Dagulf Psalter as a luxury manuscript comparable to the contemporary manuscripts also connected with the circle of Charlemagne's court, including the Godesscalc Gospel Lectionary (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS NAL 1203), the Gospels of St.-Médard de Soissons (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Lat. 8850), and the Gospels of St. Riquier (Abbeville, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 4).²⁴² The frames of the three initial pages as well as the *incipit* page

²⁴² On the pigments used in luxury Carolingian manuscripts such as those listed, see Charlotte Denoël, et. al., "Illuminating the Carolingian Era: New Discoveries as a

opposite the opening of Psalm 1 (fol. 24v) are formed of panels filled with a range of patterns including vine scrolls, interlace, and meander patterns (Fig. 77).²⁴³ The spaces of the bowls of the B, Q, and D that begin the text on the three main decorated pages are filled with intricate webs of interlace. In addition to the three main decorated pages, there are decorative letters on fols. 120v, 125r, and 146r to mark the beginnings of texts included in the manuscript after the psalms. These are colored with reddish-orange, blue, gold, and silver.

The ivories that once formed part of the cover stand apart from the decoration of the pages with their narrative scenes and prominent display of warm, creamy ivory (Fig. 8).²⁴⁴ This contrast between the figural scenes and the non-figural ornamentation in the Dagulf Psalter represent visually the critique of religious images and the significance of ornament as a counterpoint to figural imagery at the time the

Result of Scientific Analysis,” *Heritage Science* (December 2018), 6:28, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40494-018-0194-1>.

²⁴³ For a description and categorization of the full range of decorative motifs found in the Dagulf Psalter, see Götz Denzinger, *Die Handschriften der Hofschule Karls des Großen: Studien zu ihrer Ornamentik* (Langwaden: Bernardus-Verlag, 2001), 188-195.

²⁴⁴ Currently, to my knowledge, no traces of early medieval gilding or polychromy have been found on the ivories. Danielle Gaborit-Chopin notes some traces of red pigment she identifies as modern. Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, *Ivoires Médiévaux Ve-XVe Siècle* (Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 2003), 135. I am grateful to Charles Little for confirming the lack of known gilding or polychromy.

manuscript and ivories were made.²⁴⁵ The figures do not reappear in the pages of the manuscript. However, the geometric forms and abstracted vegetal motifs do. The plant motifs in the frames of the ivories, with frontally oriented leaves scrolling off a central stem, are echoed by the semi-circular fans on fol. 24v. The rectangular openings of the buildings framing the figures on the cover, ornamented with patterns running across the lintels, echo the forms of the rectangular frames of the major decorated pages composed of rectangular panels filled with patterns.²⁴⁶ By echoing the forms of the architecture on the cover, the frames of the pages opening the three sections of Psalms are visually connected to the architecture, becoming symbolic portals leading into the text. The non-figural motifs work across the interior and exterior of the manuscript and across the materials of paint, parchment, and ivory. They also connect cover to page and non-figural imagery to narrative scenes. In these ways they contribute to the creation of the manuscript's system of embellishment.

²⁴⁵ Seller, "Die Legitimität (Bild-)Künstlerischer *Ornamenta* in den *Libri Carolini*," 206.

²⁴⁶ There are examples of other late antique and Carolingian ivory plaques with similar rectangular architectural forms that echo decorative frames of manuscripts. These include cats. 38, 111, 221, and 225 in Wolfgang Fritz Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters* (Mainz am Rhein: Von Zabern, 1976). Cat. 221 provides the closest parallel with the Dagulf Psalter ivories, dating to ca. 800 and likely forming part of a book cover.

4.2.4 The Ragyndrudis Codex

Of the examples of eighth-century manuscripts where both cover and decorative program survive, the Ragyndrudis Codex contains the most substantial decorative program - one where the decoration performs a variety of functions in relation to the text and one which consistently employs a broad repertoire of motifs and colors to create a visually coherent system of embellishment. The decorative program consists of 74 decorative initials, 15 decorative quire marks, and decorative framed title pages at fols. 2v, 98v, and 143v. The decoration is rendered using a palette of orange, yellow, dark brown, and green. The motifs include stylized fish, rosettes, crosses, leafy plants, and a variety of geometric designs.²⁴⁷ The tear-drop shapes, circular forms, and rosettes used repeatedly in the decorative initials, quire marks, and framed pages are also found on the cover. The yellow pigment used in the painted decoration reflects the gilded parchment showing through the cut leather of the cover (Fig. 5).

²⁴⁷ For a description of the decorative program of the Ragyndrudis codex, see Babette Tewes, *Die Handschriften der Schule von Luxeuil: Kunst und Ikonographie eines frühmittelalterlichen Skriptoriums* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011), 141-145. Tewes does not record the following initials in her list of decorated folios, although they are included in her count of 74 decorated initials: Fol. 15r (initial N), fol. 15v (initials C and R), fol. 18r (initial A), fol. 19r (initial S), fol. 20v (initial N), fol. 22r (initial P), fol. 26r (initial S), fol. 28r (initial Q), fol. 29v (initials D and P), fol. 30r (initial C), fol. 31r (initial C), fol. 31v (initial P and five initial Is), fol. 32v (four initial Is), fol. 33r (three initial Is), fol. 33v (initials I, P, and S), fol. 34r (initial D), fol. 45r (initial N), 47v (initial D), fol. 54r (initial C), fol. 56r (initial C), fol. 56r (initial C), fol. 58r (initials E and T), fol. 100r (initial H), and fol. 114r (initial Q).

The decoration plays different roles throughout the manuscript, roles which are interwoven with the role of the cover. The framed title pages, like the cover, mark entries into the text. The first of the frames within the pages of the manuscript takes on the architectural form of a rounded arch supported by columns, echoing a physical doorway (Fig. 61). The surviving portions of the front and back cover show that those designs also contained frames that appear to follow the perimeter of the cover. The current fragmentary nature of the covers makes it difficult, if not impossible, to determine the exact shape of the frames on the covers.

Quire marks, as discussed in the previous chapter, are an indication of the structure of the book and of how the pages are to be ordered when bound or unbound. The quire marks in the Ragyndrudis Codex, however, perform more than this functional role and are also an integral part of the decorative program. The motifs include circular rosettes (fol. 54v), quadripartite designs of leaves and triangles (fol. 46v), and even a lattice filled with leaves (fol. 22v) (Figs. 58-60). Their importance is highlighted by the similar visual significance and attention to detail given to the quire marks and decorated initials. On the pages on which they appear, the quire marks occupy as substantial a portion of the page as the larger decorated initials. The designs of the quire marks are also equal in complexity to the decorated initials and are rendered using the same variety of pigments (Fig. 78). The use of decorative quire marks is not typical in the period, but some other early medieval Frankish manuscripts have similar marks as part of their decorative programs. The collection of motifs used for the quire marks in these other examples are distinct from those used in the

Ragyndrudis Codex. The artist of the Luxeuil Lectionary (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Lat. 9427), for example, employs an array of animal motifs for the quire marks, including a lion, a serpent, and several species of birds (Fig. 79). The artist of Biblioteca Vallicelliana cod. B 62., on the other hand, uses a mixture of stylized fish, architectural forms, and geometric motifs (Fig. 80). For each of these manuscripts, the artist chose a unique repertoire of motifs. The Ragyndrudis Codex, for example, does not use the animal motifs found in the Luxeuil Lectionary or the architectural motifs found in Biblioteca Vallicelliana cod. B 62. In each of these examples, the decorative quire marks complement the other decoration of the manuscript, which consists primarily of decorative letters. With the Ragyndrudis Codex, each part of the decoration –*incipit* pages, decorative initials, and decorative quire marks – similarly complement each other and each use the same motifs of tear-drops, circles, and rosettes. Unlike with the other examples of manuscripts with decorative quire marks, however, with the Ragyndrudis Codex it is possible to see the cover as another essential component of that system of embellishment.

Examining these four manuscripts where the cover and a substantial decorative program survive together - the Faddan More Psalter, the Cadmug Gospels, the Dagulf Psalter, and the Ragyndrudis Codex - shows the ways that each component of the decoration is part of a system of embellishment that links the entire manuscript. The Faddan More Psalter reflects the role of ornament in the artistic process, the Cadmug Gospels illustrates the unifying effect of a single motif, the Dagulf Psalter integrates narrative imagery on the cover and non-figural designs in the interior, and the

Ragyndruidus Codex displays a multi-faceted, yet cohesive decorative program. With these examples it is possible to analyze the system of embellishment as developed within a single manuscript. As a counterpoint, the following section looks at the relationship between early medieval book covers and ornamental pages, often called carpet pages. As full-page designs formed entirely of non-figural motifs, these pages are the fullest expression of the complexity of early medieval ornament in manuscript painting. Exploring the relationship between book covers and ornamental pages shows how book covers fit within early medieval conceptions of ornament and convey meaning through non-figural designs.

4.3 Ornamentation and Design from Cover to Page

A defining feature of Insular gospel books are full-page designs of non-figural imagery, commonly called carpet pages. I use “ornamental page” rather than the more commonly used “carpet page” because of the problematic, Orientalist history of the term related to the perceived parallels between these pages and woven carpets.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁸ The term “carpet page” was adopted in the modern study of these manuscripts because of erroneously perceived similarities between these pages and woven carpets. While there are important connections between the pages and textile designs, there are equally, if not more significant, connections to designs in other media such as mosaic and metalwork as well as elements unique to manuscript painting. Rather than continue the problematic use of the term carpet page, I adopt the term “ornamental page.” On the Orientalist associations of the term, see Lawrence Nees, “Ethnic and Primitive Paradigms in the Study of Early Medieval Art,” in *Paradigms and Methods*

These pages are often placed at the beginning or end of a text, or are used to mark divisions within a text.²⁴⁹ In the discourse on the great Insular ornamental pages of the Book of Durrow, the Lindisfarne Gospels, the Book of Kells, the Lichfield Gospels, and others, a theme that is consistently raised is the correspondence between those pages and the possible appearance of the now lost covers that may have encased those same manuscripts. The unique presentation of non-figural imagery in these pages has been explored frequently in recent scholarship, notably by Michelle Brown, Emmanuelle Pirotte, Benjamin Tilghman and Chiara Valle.²⁵⁰ However, the sophisticated analysis of ornament by these scholars has not been broadened to fully incorporate the often-noted similarities between early medieval ornamental pages and book covers. To explore this connection, this section will analyze specific motifs found in book covers and ornamental pages through three case studies – the layout and ornamentation of the Lough Kinale Book Shrine (Dublin, National Museum of Ireland), the ornamental page added at the beginning of an eighth-century manuscript from Corbie (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS. Lat. 12190), and the

in *Early Medieval Studies*, ed. Celia Chazelle and Felice Lifshitz (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 51-53.

²⁴⁹ This definition follows that of Michelle Brown, who defines carpet pages as “pages of pure decoration serving to divide or introduce texts.” Brown, *The Lindisfarne Gospels*, 312.

²⁵⁰ Brown, *The Lindisfarne Gospels*, 312-331; Valle, “Woven Words,”; Pirotte, “Hidden Order, Order Revealed”; Tilghman, “Pattern, Process, and the Creation of Meaning in the Lindisfarne Gospels,” 3-28.

ornamental pages of an early Qur'an from Sana'a (Inv. 20-33.1, Dar al-Makhtutat, Sana'a, Yemen). I offer these case studies as innovative perspectives from which to examine the role that the motifs and compositions of ornamental pages play not only in creating visual and functional parallels to book covers, but also in similarly establishing the system of embellishment for the manuscript. Furthermore, these examples show how book covers and ornamental pages convey meaning through their designs, representing concepts of history, geography, textual contents, and artistic production contained within the manuscript. Being most often comprised entirely of non-figural designs, book covers and ornamental pages are the two places where the ornamental system developed throughout the manuscript and the meaning that system conveys becomes fully manifest.

4.3.1 The Lough Kinale Book-shrine

The Lough Kinale book-shrine brings the elements of material and the history of the manuscript to the forefront of the interplay between book covers and ornamental pages. The cross design and the non-figural motifs of the Lough Kinale book-shrine illustrate significant connections between designs and production in different media (Fig. 10). It has been compared by Eamonn Kelly to the ornamental page on fol. 1v of

the Book of Durrow (fig. 81).²⁵¹ It is also effectively compared to the single ornamental page now found in the Book of Kells, which precedes the chi-rho page (Fig. 82). All use a cross form where the extremities and the nodes of the arms are emphasized with a circular or square boss. Moreover, Robert Stevick hypothesizes a process for designing the shrine that is parallel to the process used to design ornamental pages, including those in the Lindisfarne Gospels.²⁵² The comparison between the shrine and ornamental pages can be pushed further to include the materiality of the shrine and the ornamental pages. The Lough Kinale book-shrine is, in many ways, a three-dimensional manifestation in metal of the designs created by the Durrow and Kells artists in paint on parchment. The bright yellow border surrounding the cross in the Kells page becomes a weighty metal border on the shrine, prominent through its substantial width and depth compared to the openwork patterns. The intricate array of spirals filling the circles on the Kells page spill over the edge of the raised bosses of the shrine (Fig. 83). The shrine literally and figuratively adds another dimension to the cross form and the ornament that fills it. The parallels

²⁵¹ Eamonn P. Kelly, “The Lough Kinale book shrine: the implications for the manuscripts,” in *The Book of Kells: Proceedings of a conference at Trinity College Dublin 6-9 September 1992*, ed. Felicity O’Mahony (Dublin: Scholar Press, 1994), 280-289.

²⁵² Robert D. Stevick, “Morphogenesis of the Lough Kinale Book Shrine, front face,” in *Islands in a Global Context: Proceedings of the seventh international conference on Insular art, held at the National University of Ireland, Galway, 16-20 July 2014* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2017), 198-206.

between the Lough Kinale shrine and the Kells and Durrow pages also suggests a visual connection between ornamental pages and book covers which creates a sense of continuity between different points in the life of the manuscript and between the manuscript and the material surroundings of its religious environment.

Kelly used the comparison between the book-shrine and ornamental pages to support an argument that, based on the iconography of the cross, as well as the size of the shrine, the manuscript encased in the Lough Kinale book-shrine was most likely a luxury gospel book of the type exemplified by the Echternach Gospels and one which was several decades earlier than the shrine.²⁵³ Kelly showed that the size of the manuscript the Lough Kinale book-shrine was designed to hold fits with a group of Northumbrian gospel books of the late seventh and early eighth centuries. Due to the limited number of surviving manuscripts as well as strong connections between different parts of Great Britain and Ireland, it is possible that the manuscript placed in the shrine was not made in Northumbria, as Kelly concluded, but elsewhere along the networks that included Northumbria and Lough Kinale. Kelly then suggested that the possible difference in age between the Lough Kinale book shrine and the manuscript it once held could explain the existence of stylistic elements he identified as early and late eighth-century.²⁵⁴ This could instead be explained by the artist's originality in

²⁵³ Ibid., 280-289.

²⁵⁴ Kelly, "The Lough Kinale book shrine", 281.

choosing which motifs to use, rather than direct reference to an earlier manuscript held in the shrine.

There is substantial evidence that book shrines and other forms of book covers were added to manuscripts at later, critical moments in the life of the manuscript, distinct from the original writing of the text or painting of the decoration. This is exemplified by the placing of Irish gospel books, such as the Book of Dimma, the Book of Mulling and the Book of Durrow, in shrines several generations after they were written.²⁵⁵ If the manuscript contained within the Lough Kinale shrine was significantly earlier than the shrine itself and contained an ornamental page, as Kelly suggested and which is a reasonable possibility, then the shrine may make the longer history of the invisible manuscript visible and contextualize the shrine within this larger history.²⁵⁶ Although this is an attractive interpretation, the examples of Irish

²⁵⁵ Paul Mullarkey, “Irish Book Shrines: A Reassessment,” (PhD diss., Trinity College Dublin, 2000), 297-304. A similar visualization of the history of the object is argued by Karen Overbey in relation to the Domnach Airgid. The Domnach Airgid, in contrast to the other examples listed, was originally made as reliquary in the sixth or seventh century, a later manuscript was added to the older shrine, and then the shrine was remade in the ninth century and at subsequent points in its history. Karen Overbey, *Sacral Geographies: Saints, Shrines, and Territory in Medieval Ireland* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 94-114.

²⁵⁶ Paul Mullarkey also makes the argument that the design of the Soiscéal Molaise may reference a page in the manuscript it contained, based on close comparison to the four Evangelist symbols page in the Madurnan Gospels (London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 1370). See “The Figural Iconography of the Soiscéal Molaise and Stowe Missal Book Shrines,” in *Making and meaning in insular art: proceedings of the fifth*

book shrines where both shrine and manuscript survive, namely the Cathach of St. Columba, the Book of Mulling, the Book of Dimma, and the Stowe Missal, do not show a significant relationship between the decoration of the manuscript and the decoration of the shrine. This suggests a direct correlation between the decoration of the shrine and the decoration of the manuscript it contained, while possible, should not be assumed. Nevertheless, the decoration of the Lough Kinale book-shrine references recognizable forms from the decoration of sacred manuscripts of the period. In this way, it situates itself and its manuscript within the early medieval religious environment.

4.3.2 The Corbie Ornamental Page

A copy of St. Augustine's *On the Harmony of the Gospels* attributed to the monastery of Corbie in northeastern France and dated to the eighth century (now Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 12190) contains an exceptional ornamental page composed of five panels of varied interlace patterns (Fig. 84). Through its composition of non-figural motifs and employing techniques and designs also seen in book covers, the ornamental page situates the manuscript within wider temporal and geographical spheres and conveys the meaning of its text. The page (which I will call the Corbie ornamental

International Conference on Insular Art held at Trinity College Dublin, 25-28 August 2005, ed. Rachel Moss (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), 50-59.

page moving forward) is located opposite the beginning of the text. Its design comprises five rectangular panels formed of non-figural motifs. Four of the panels are used as four sides of a frame surrounding the fifth, central, panel. Each of the panels is formed from a different pattern of interlace. The bottom panel is a double-strand interlace twisted in a pretzel-like pattern. The left-hand panel has two strands arranged in opposing directions to create an angular, cross-hatch pattern. More strands form circles and rectangles at the intersections of the angular strands. The right-hand panel contains a doubled version of the crossed interlace of the left-hand panel. The ends of each angular projection along the vertical edges of the panel are rounded into partial circles. The top panel contains a pattern of two rows of interlocking circles. The central panel is formed of a square grid. Each square of the grid is filled with a circle connected to the frame of the grid by twists of the strand forming the edge of each circle. The whole page is colored with a palette of grayish-blue, pale green, muted orange, and purplish-red.

The 258 folios of text containing Augustine's text are attributed to the monastery of Corbie in northeastern France and are dated to the eighth century based on the script and the single decorative initial on the first page of text. While there has not been significant questioning of the Corbie attribution of the manuscript, many more questions surround the ornamental page. In his 1974 article on this page, Carl Nordenfalk argued that the page is not consistent with the style of the rest of the manuscript, but rather dates to the sixth century and may have been taken from a book

of designs for book covers.²⁵⁷ Nordenfalk's suggestion is based on the following passage in Cassiodorus's *Institutiones*:

His etiam adidimus in codicibus cooperiendis doctos artifices, ut litterarum sacrarum pulchritudinem facies desuper decora vestiret, exemplum illud Dominicae figurationis ex aliqua parte forsitan imitantes, qui eos quos ad cenam aestimat invitandos in Gloria caelestis convivii stolis nuptialibus operuit. Quibus multiplices species facturarum in uno codice depictas, ni fallor, decenter expressimus ut qualem maluerit studiosus tegumenti formam ipse sibi possit elegere.

[We have supplied artisans, well trained in bookbinding, so that the beauty of the sacred writings should have a comely outward appearance – imitating, perhaps, the parable of Christ [Matthew 22:11] in which those worthy of invitation to the heavenly feast were clothed in fine garments. For these artisans we have adequately pictured in a book many varieties of bindings, so that each may choose from it whatever style of covering pleases him.]²⁵⁸

This passage suggests that a book of designs for book covers did exist during the time of Cassiodorus. However, it does not provide direct evidence that the Corbie ornamental page comes from that book or even from the same period. Throwing further doubt on Nordenfalk's theory and making a sixth-century date for the page unlikely are the strongly rectangular format of the page, rather than the almost square format of late antique books, the lack of scenes comparable to late antique covers composed of five panels, and construction marks similar to later drawing techniques.

²⁵⁷ Carl Nordenfalk, "Corbie and Cassiodorus: A Pattern Page Bearing on the Early History of Bookbinding," *Pantheon*, 32 (1974): pg. 229-230.

²⁵⁸ Latin text and English translation from *Cassiodori Senatori Institutiones*, ed. and trans. R.A.B Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937), pg. 77.

The evidence is inconclusive, but Lawrence Nees put forward a convincing argument that the ornamental page was made as an integral part of the eighth-century manuscript, further countering Nordenfalk's earlier theory.²⁵⁹ This argument is based on the arrangement of the ornamental page and the first quire. The similarity of the colors used for the ornamental page and the decorative initial further supports the argument.²⁶⁰ Whether or not the ornamental page was made together with the Augustine text, and I believe most likely they were, the question remains: what was the purpose of including this page, and why was this specific design chosen? First, the significance of the page lies in how it establishes the temporal and geographic sphere within which Corbie would like to insert itself. The interlace on this page does not have the complexity of much of the interlace of eighth-century and later Insular art, and is more comparable to interlace with late antique precedents. One might, for example, draw general comparisons to the carved capitals at San Vitale, Ravenna and

²⁵⁹ In the first quire of the manuscript, fol. 7 is currently an independent leaf glued to the front of fol. 8. The frontispiece, fol. A, is also a single leaf bound with its stub adjacent to the cover. Nees argues that a simple codicological explanation is that fol. A was originally connected to fol. 7. This would make the first quire into a quaternion, following the regular quire structure of the rest of the manuscript. I am grateful to Lawrence Nees for sharing these observations on the quire structure; the issue will be discussed at length in Lawrence Nees, *Frankish Manuscripts* (Forthcoming). Nordenfalk argued against this codicological explanation, noting a difference in height of 5mm between fol. A and fol. 7. He also noted that when the manuscript was disbound under the direction of M. Marcel Thomas, Director of the Cabinet des Manuscrits, it was found that fol. A had been glued to the first leaf of text. Nordenfalk, "Corbie and Cassiodorus," 229.

²⁶⁰ See Lawrence Nees, *Frankish Manuscripts* (Forthcoming).

to Justinianic-era mosaics at Hagia Sophia.²⁶¹ The capitals from San Vitale include a motif of a circle with twisted points in each of the four directions found in the central panel of the frontispiece (Fig. 85). The mosaics at Hagia Sophia have an angular square interlace pattern with circles entwined around the points where the strands cross found in the righthand panel (Fig. 86). The less elaborate interlace designs echo late antique precedents, and in this way connect the Corbie manuscript to earlier artistic and intellectual traditions. Although the page was most likely not actually made at the time of Cassiodorus, as argued by Nordenfalk, it evokes the art of that period and represents visually the late antique intellectual traditions, in which Cassiodorus was a central figure, and which the monks of Corbie saw themselves as continuing.²⁶²

In addition to late antique precedents, there are significant parallels between the interlace designs seen on the Corbie ornamental page and those found on several book covers found at Kairouan (Tunisia), likely dating to the ninth century (Figs. 87 and 88).²⁶³ Nordenfalk rightfully noted these comparisons, but they merit further

²⁶¹ These comparisons are noted in Nordenfalk, “Corbie and Cassiodorus,” 226 and Brennan, “The Structure of Interlace in Insular Art c. AD 400-1200,” 3.

²⁶² At the Carolingian library at Corbie were texts by Cassiodorus and other late antique authors, showing an interest in this material in Carolingian Corbie. On the inclusion of these texts in the Corbie library, see David Ganz, *Corbie in the Carolingian Renaissance* (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1990), 42-53.

²⁶³ Nordenfalk, “Corbie and Cassiodorus,” 229-230 and Jacques Guilmain, “An Analysis of Some Ornamental Patterns in Hiberno-Saxon Manuscript Illumination in

investigation. The interlace of both use few strands and incorporate various angular and circular forms.²⁶⁴ The connection between Frankish and early Islamic book covers and ornamental pages is further illustrated by the similarity of the knotwork frames used in the Corbie Ornamental Page, the Kairouan covers, and the ornamental frontispiece and finispiece of a Qur'an now held at the al-Haram al-Sharif Museum, Jerusalem and probably from Iraq or Syria and dating to the ninth century (Fig. 89).²⁶⁵ While there are significant parallels between the Kairouan covers and the Corbie Ornamental Page, there are also important differences in the overall compositions. The designs of the Kairouan covers generally consist of a central panel surrounded by a frame, often composed of several rows of different motifs.²⁶⁶ This contrasts with the Corbie ornamental page which is formed of five panels, each of distinct design, arranged together. These differences reflect the independent artistic developments in

Relation to their Mediterranean Origins,” in *The Age of Migrating Ideas*, ed. Michael Spearman and John Higgitt (Edinburgh: National Museum of Scotland, 1993), 92-103.

²⁶⁴ Georges Marçais outlines the different motifs in *Objets Kairouanais IXe au XIIIe Siècle, Reliures, Verreries, Bronzes, Bijoux* (Paris: Klincksieck; Tunis: Tournier, 1952), 24-43.

²⁶⁵ M. F. Abu Khalaf, *Islamic Art through the Ages: Masterpieces of the Islamic Museum of al-Haram al-Sharif (al-Aqsa Mosque) Jerusalem* (Jerusalem, 1998), 15-19, and Lawrence Nees “Merovingian Illuminated Manuscripts and Their Links with the Eastern Mediterranean World,” in *East and West in the Early Middle Ages: The Merovingian Kingdoms in Mediterranean Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 300.

²⁶⁶ On the dating of the Kairouan covers, see chapter 3, pg. 87.

Corbie and Kairouan. Nevertheless, the close comparison to the Kariouan book covers suggests that perhaps the page should be understood within a Mediterranean context that includes north Africa and all the regions surrounding the sea and one which is closely contemporary with the production of the text.²⁶⁷ This Mediterranean context is distinct from the one discussed earlier that is Italian and late antique, the one given priority by Nordenfalk. The comparison also emphasizes the close connection between ornamental pages and the designs of book covers in the period.

Second, the Corbie ornamental page has significance as a commentary on the text contained within the manuscript. The page is comparable to Insular ornamental pages, such as the one placed before the Gospel of John in the Book of Durrow (Fig. 90). Insular ornamental pages appear in gospel books and, in that context, can be interpreted as representing the intricate harmony of the four gospels. This interpretation has been developed by Chiara Valle and Michelle Brown, among others.²⁶⁸ The motif of the cross, the use of four-part designs, and the interplay of similarities and variations between the motifs and designs of the pages all contribute to

²⁶⁷ On the interplay between Frankish and early Islamic manuscripts in the eighth century, see Lawrence Nees, "Graphic Quire Marks and Qur'anic Verse Markers in Frankish and Islamic Manuscripts from the Seventh and Eighth Centuries," in *Graphic Devices and the Early Decorated Book*, ed. Michelle P. Brown, Ildar H. Garipzanov and Benjamin C. Tilghman (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell, 2017) and Nees "Merovingian Illuminated Manuscripts and Their Links with the Eastern Mediterranean World," 297-317.

²⁶⁸ Valle, "Woven Words," 62 and 124.

the interpretation of the ornamental pages in relation to the accompanying text and the correspondences between the four gospels. Many of these features and their interpretation in relation to the four gospels can be applied to the Corbie ornamental page.

The harmony of the gospels had been a concern since the early centuries of Christianity. The canon tables developed by Eusebius in the early fourth century are one of the most prolific and prominent manifestations of this concern and appear consistently in early medieval gospel books, including the Insular examples listed with ornamental pages. The Corbie ornamental page is unusual in that it does not appear in a gospel book. However, Augustine's text does not only address the subject of the harmony of the gospels, it also, as discussed recently by Matthew Crawford, is the result of Augustine's close study of Eusebius's concordance.²⁶⁹ With this clear association between ornamental pages, the harmony of the gospels, and *De consensu evangelistarum*, an ornamental page would seem an appropriate visual introduction to Augustine's text for an eighth-century audience.

The Corbie ornamental page reflects the highly connected Mediterranean world within which the manuscript is situated, and it acts as a visual commentary on its accompanying text addressing the harmony of the gospels. Moreover, examining the relationship between the ornamental page and the designs of book covers from the

²⁶⁹ Matthew R. Crawford, *The Eusebian Canon Tables: Ordering Textual Knowledge in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 125-155.

period adds to our understanding of the role of the page as part of a holistic system of embellishment. Functioning in these ways, the page contributes to the construction of the meaning of the manuscript through its ornament.

4.3.3 The Sana'a Qur'an Frontispieces

A final case study illustrates that the significant connection between book covers and ornamental pages established with the previous two case studies extended beyond northwestern Europe in the eighth century. As demonstrated with the ornamental page from Corbie, the three ornamental pages of Inv. 20-33.1 at the Dar al-Makhtutat in Sana'a, Yemen show direct parallels to contemporary book covers and positions the manuscript within a wider Mediterranean context. Among the thousands of Qur'an fragments found at the Great Mosque of Sana'a in 1971, one of the most remarkable finds were three ornamental pages associated with 23 other leaves containing fragments of Qur'anic text.²⁷⁰ The text is written on parchment and the pages are vertically oriented and large (the largest currently measuring 44 x 36.5

²⁷⁰ There was a conference held soon after the discoveries at the Great Mosque of Sana' a. The conference publication includes an article on Sana'a Inv. 20-33.1: Marilyn Jenkins, "A Vocabulary of Umayyad Ornament: New Foundations for the Study of Early Qur'an Manuscripts," in *Masahif San'a*, ed. Mathaf al-Kuwayt al-Watani (Kuwait: Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah, Kuwait National Museum, 1985), 19-23.

cm).²⁷¹ Not only do the fragments appear to be of an earlier date than other known Qur'an ornamental pages, but also two of the designs contain unique architectural imagery (Figs. 91 and 92).²⁷² Furthermore, Sana'a Inv. 20-33.1 contains a third ornamental page on the recto side of fol. 1 with a design of an eight-pointed star (Fig. 93).

The entrance to the building on what is now labeled fol. 1v starts at the bottom of the page with stairs leading to three doorways. The doorway at the center of the page is the largest and displays geometric designs colored in blue, yellow, and red. The smaller doorway on the left side of the page also contains geometric designs and a shell-like lunette is visible above the main door. The interior of the building is delineated by a border containing a vine scroll, and in the surviving portion of the interior are four arcades of double arches. Hanging from each arch is a glowing lamp.²⁷³ The arches in the center of the page above the largest doorway are wider than those in the rest of the arcade, and are single arches, each as high as one of the double

²⁷¹ François Déroche, *Qur'ans of the Umayyads: A First Overview* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2014), 111-112.

²⁷² Hans-Caspar Graf von Bothmer, "Architekturbilder im Koran: Eine Prachthandschrift der Umayyadenzeit aus dem Yemen," *Bruckmanns Pantheon* XLV (1987), 4-20; and Alain George, *The Rise of Islamic Calligraphy*, 80-83.

²⁷³ The lamps in the frontispieces are detailed enough that they have been used as evidence for how real lamps were used in early Islamic mosques. See Robert Hillenbrand, "The Uses of Light in Islamic Architecture," in *God is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth: Light in Islamic Art and Culture*, ed. Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 106.

arches. In the central arch next to the top row of double arches are traces of a small staircase leading to some type of structure, possibly a minbar. Another arch juts out above the frame, perhaps indicating a mihrab. To the left of the mihrab is a row of trees. To the left of the trees is another structure rising toward the top of the page containing what appears to be a spiral staircase. The top of this structure has been lost due to the damage to the page.²⁷⁴ The right-hand side of the page has been lost. The building on what is now labeled fol. 2r is a variation on the theme established by the building on the preceding page. Here too, the building is framed by a border filled with vine scrolls. The interior of the building is filled with rows of single arcades each hung with a lamp, culminating at the top of the page with a large central arch surrounded on either side by a garden indicated by rows of trees and other plants. There is a square-shaped courtyard in the center of the building where a vase of flowers resting on top of a short column is placed.

In the earliest major publication on the manuscript, Hans-Caspar Graf von Bothmer identifies both buildings as representing mosques, an interpretation also taken up by later scholars.²⁷⁵ Bothmer, and later Alain George, go even further and

²⁷⁴ The identifications of these features as traditional parts of a mosque follows Bothmer, “Architekturbilder im Koran,” 5-11. Bothmer identifies the tower as a minaret, but Jonathan Bloom argues that the towers attached to the Great Mosque of Damascus are not the fully developed form of minaret associated with later mosques. See Jonathan Bloom, *The Minaret* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 7-22.

²⁷⁵ Bothmer, “Architekturbilder im Koran,” 5.

associate the building depicted on fol. 1v specifically with the Great Mosque of Damascus.²⁷⁶ The fineness of Sana'a Inv. 20-33.1 and references in medieval texts to manuscript production in the court of al-Walid I, particularly the 10th-century account of the calligrapher al-Nadim, led Bothmer to suggest it was made in the court of al-Walid I.²⁷⁷ Dèroche more cautiously suggested it represents a type of presentation manuscript produced following official court guidelines.²⁷⁸ Both Bothmer and George believe the building on fol. 1v represents al-Walid's Great Mosque of Damascus because it depicts a building with a central aisle and minarets, defining features of the Great Mosque of Damascus.²⁷⁹ The reference to the Great Mosque of Damascus is consistent with the possible connection between the manuscript and the court of al-Walid.²⁸⁰ Furthering the connection between the architectural frontispieces and the court of al-Walid I, the combination of buildings devoid of any humans or animals and

²⁷⁶ Bothmer, "Architekturbilder im Koran," 16, and George, *The Rise of Islamic Calligraphy*, 80-83.

²⁷⁷ Al-Nadim, *The Fihrist of Al-Nadim: A Tenth-Century Survey of Muslim Culture*, trans. Bayard Dodge (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 11. Bothmer, "Architekturbilder im Koran," 16-17.

²⁷⁸ Dèroche, *Qur'ans of the Umayyads*, 127.

²⁷⁹ Bothmer, "Architekturbilder im Koran," 16, and George, *The Rise of Islamic Calligraphy*, 80-83.

²⁸⁰ On the Great Mosque of Damascus as part of the building program of al-Walid and as representative of his political ideology, see Finbarr Barry Flood, *The Great Mosque of Damascus: Studies on the Makings of an Umayyad Visual Culture* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2001), 184-236.

lush gardens draws comparisons to the mosaics surviving at the Great Mosque of Damascus, which were completed in 715.²⁸¹ The mosaics, found in the main courtyard of the mosque, depict cities composed of a variety of buildings (Fig. 94). Towering over the buildings are large trees representing different species. Rivers flow through the cities and the whole program is set against a gold background. However, there is no certain evidence to connect the manuscript to the court of al-Walid I or to support the identification of the pages as representing specific buildings. Instead, as Oleg Grabar states in reference to these ornamental pages, “precision of depiction is needed for them to be buildings, but the specificity of that precision is secondary to their power of evocation.”²⁸² It is the structural forms of the buildings rather than any historical or political associations that construct the primary meaning of the pages.

The use of architectural motifs to open the text places the Sana’a Qur’an within a tradition of using architectural motifs, on both cover and page, as an entryway to texts. The most prominent example is the use of architectural forms to frame the text of the Eusebian canon tables.²⁸³ In addition to canon tables, a strikingly close

²⁸¹ Ibid., 11.

²⁸² Oleg Grabar, *The Mediation of Ornament* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1992), 191.

²⁸³ The foundational study on the decoration of canon tables in western European manuscripts is Carl Nordenfalk, *Die Spätantiken Kanontafeln: Kunstgeschichte Studien über die eusebianische Evangelien-Konkordanz in den vier ersten Jahrhunderten ihrer Geschichte* (Göteborg: O. Isacson boktryckeri a.-b, 1938). Recent studies on this topic include Heather Pulliam, “Painting by Numbers: The Art of the Canon Tables,” in *The Lindisfarne Gospels: New Perspectives*, ed. Richard

comparison to the Sana'a architectural frontispieces, in both its placement and in its design of registers of colonnades, is the frontispiece from an Arabic gospel book from Mt. Sinai dated to 859.²⁸⁴ Closer in context, it is also notable that architectural forms similar to those used for the frontispieces of the Sana'a Qur'an are used on the early Islamic wooden boxes possibly used to hold books, discussed in terms of form in the previous chapter. Through the architectural forms, the encasement and the frontispieces both act as symbolic structures to house the text and as an entryway to the contents of the manuscript.

The third ornamental page is painted with an eight-pointed star outlined with a wide band filled with interlace. The contents of the star within the bands are difficult to decipher because the paint is worn and faded, but it does contain a central circle. Along the outer edge of the star is a row of trees and other plants. It can be compared to another ornamental page Déroche reconstructed with an eight-pointed star surrounded by a border filled with vine scrolls found among the materials at the Great Mosque of Kairouan and dated to the early eighth century by Déroche (Kairouan, Musée des Arts Islamiques R 38, fol. 132v) (Fig. 95).²⁸⁵ The page with the star motif

Gameson (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 112-133; and contributions by Beatrice Kitzinger, Lynley Herbert, and Susanne Wittekind in *Canones: The Art of Harmony*, ed. Alessandro Bausi, Bruno Reudenbach, and Hanna Wimmer (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020), 133-172, 173-192, 209-250.

²⁸⁴ Grabar, *Mediation of Ornament*, 166.

²⁸⁵ Déroche, *Qur'ans of the Umayyads*, 121-126.

in the Sana'a Qur'an has not received as much attention from scholars as the pages with architectural designs. However, it is significant because of its clear parallels to book covers of the period and how it places the manuscript within wider Mediterranean artistic traditions.

One of the strongest parallels to the star frontispiece is one of the pages at the beginning of the Vienna Dioscorides (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. Med. gr. 1) containing the portrait of the manuscript's recipient, the powerful Constantinopolitan noblewoman Anicia Juliana (Fig. 96).²⁸⁶ This comparison is noted by Déroche and by Lawrence Nees, but merits more thorough consideration.²⁸⁷ In the page from the Vienna Dioscorides, the frame for the portrait of Anicia Juliana takes the form of an eight-pointed star formed from two squares placed on top of each other and offset at a 45° angle. The star is circumscribed by a circle intersecting at each point of the star. The interior of the shapes is colored blue except for the points of the star which are colored red. The lines outlining the star and circle look like a twisted rope. In the center is the seated figure of Anicia Juliana, flanked on either side by female allegorical figures representing Magnanimity and Prudence. The Vienna Dioscorides is a significantly different category of manuscript than Sana'a Inv. 20-

²⁸⁶ This portrait is fol. 6v of Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Codex medicus Graecus 1. For an introduction to this manuscript, see Otto Mazal, *Der Wiener Dioskurides*, vol. 1 (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1998), 1-32.

²⁸⁷ Déroche, *Qur'ans of the Umayyads*, 117, and Lawrence Nees, " 'Merovingian' Illuminated Manuscripts and Their Links with the Eastern Mediterranean World," 308.

33.1, being a medical text rather than a religious text. It is also distant enough in time and space, having been made in or near Constantinople around the year 512, that a direct connection between the two manuscripts is unlikely. What the Vienna Dioscorides does show is that there was a precedent in late antiquity for using the eight-pointed star shape for frontispieces and that it had imperial connotations which may have appealed to the owner of the Sana'a manuscript. The star-shaped ornamental page places the Sana'a manuscript within this larger context.

While the Vienna Dioscorides provides a Late Antique precedent for a frontispiece using the eight-pointed star, there are also parallels between the design of the Sana'a ornamental page and book covers possibly dated to the eighth century. The closest comparison is to the cover of leather covered boards found at Damascus and now at the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul (SE 80) introduced in chapter 2 (Fig. 97). The star on the cover is six-pointed and the design does not include the added interlace border or trees found on the page. However, the cover does use a star as the center of the composition, reflecting that this form was adopted as a recognizable, aesthetically pleasing, and religiously significant motif to open Qur'anic text, whether on the cover encasing that text or on the pages preceding it.

In addition to the close parallel between the Sana'a ornamental page and the cover of MS SE 80, Coptic book covers possibly dated to the eighth century also include the same motif of the eight-pointed star. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek P.Vindob. BD 37 (G 30501) has eight-pointed stars on both the upper and lower covers (Fig. 98). The stars surround rosettes enclosed in a circle. The

stars are then enclosed in another circle. There are bands of ornament with a cross and circle motif on either side of the central stars in order to adapt the design to the rectangular format of the book. The cover of New York, Morgan Library & Museum MS M.569, which, like the Vienna cover, may be dated as early as the eighth century, contains a similar composition (Fig. 99). The eight-pointed star has twisted points and is enclosed in a circle. The star surrounds a central equal-armed cross. The bottom band contains circular interlace. The top band contains a cross motif surrounded by two rosettes. The eight-pointed star continues to be used as a central motif in Coptic book covers in the ninth and tenth centuries and appears frequently in the collection of Hamuli bindings. The precise connections between early Islamic book covers, Coptic book covers, and book covers beyond these contexts will become clearer if further examples come to light. However, the use of the star motif on both covers and painted ornamental pages, as well as its use across the Mediterranean, illustrates the connection between book covers and ornamental pages in the eighth century as well as the wide-ranging application of practices of ornamenting book covers in the period.

4.4 Conclusion

Both book covers and manuscript decoration signify through their ornament. They represent ideas of chronology and geography contained within the manuscript. They represent the materials and production processes that form the manuscript. They

represent the contents of the text. By doing this, the cover and the page do not simply parallel each other through the use of similar motifs and compositions. Their similarities run deeper, and together they make the manuscript's history and meaning visible through designs entirely constructed of non-figural imagery. By considering the relationship between book covers and the decoration of manuscript pages, the significance of the cover can lead inward to the pages of the manuscript and be incorporated more fully into our understanding of the manuscript's system of embellishment. This system of embellishment visually integrates the different components of the manuscript. It may also contribute to the religious materiality of the object, the topic of the following chapter.

Chapter 5

ENSHRINEMENT: THE SUBSTANCE OF THE SACRED

A wondrous tree lifting up in in the air,
Wound with light, the brightest of beams.
That radiant sign was wrapped in gold;
Gems stood gleaming at its feet,
Five stones shining from its shoulder-beam.

- “The Dream of the Rood”²⁸⁸

5.1 Introduction

This chapter considers how book covers and the materials from which they were crafted operated within the liturgical and religious environment where manuscripts often performed a central role. In addition, it considers how the materiality of the cover contributed to the transformation of the book into an object of sacred meaning. The designer of the lower cover of the Lindau Gospels, for example, adopted designs in line with other liturgical metalwork and incorporated materials with Christian significance. The cover displays a varied assemblage of early medieval metalworking techniques, fitted together into the form of a framed cross, and with an

²⁸⁸ Craig Williamson, ed. and trans., *The Complete Old English Poems* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 254.

iconography expressing an early medieval cosmological vision (Fig. 9).²⁸⁹ The design of the cover is centered on a *crux ansata*. The cross is fashioned from enamel plaques with stylized busts of Christ and varied animals in bright blue, orange, and green glass set in metal plates. These are complemented by colorful enamels of birds and geometric patterns forming the original parts of the frame. The smooth enamels stand apart from the contrasting textures and tones of the silver-gilt animal interlace panels fitted between the arms of the cross and the two highly sculptural silver-gilt medallions with strikingly three-dimensional interlaced gripping beasts and figures set in the vertical arms of the cross. The whole design is highlighted by borders of deep red garnet inlay and is punctuated with settings for larger gemstones and colored glass. The techniques, form, and iconography of the present lower cover of the Lindau Gospels work together as distinct, but interrelated features which placed it within the larger ensemble of church metalwork that surrounded it, and integrated it within the religious experience of which it was part.

²⁸⁹ On the cosmological vision expressed in the lower cover of the Lindau Gospels, see Victor Elbern, "The 'Earlier' Lindau Book Cover: An Integrated Analysis," in *From Attila to Charlemagne: Arts of the Early Medieval Period in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, ed. Katharine Reynolds Brown, Dafydd Kidd and Charles T. Little (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 325-326. For another interpretation of the cosmological meaning of early medieval book covers, in particular the sixth-century book cover associated with Theodolinda, see Thomas Rainer, *Das Buch und die vier Ecken der Welt: Von der Hülle der Thorarolle zum Deckel des Evangeliencodex* (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2011).

Some, though not all, book covers were on display during liturgical services alongside other objects such as processional crosses and chalices. Covers could provide a multi-media and, along with their surrounding environment, multi-sensory experience also achieved by reliquaries and holy images as part of their intended effect. Some of the most compelling comparisons for the different components of the lower cover of the Lindau Gospels, for example, are religious objects, including the Tassilo Chalice for the main panels between the arms of the cross, the Enger Reliquary for the enamels, and the Ardennes Cross for the shape of the cross.²⁹⁰ Although scholars have made these comparisons primarily for the purposes of dating and localization, the similarities also suggest the cover must be seen as part of the larger ensemble of church metalwork that surrounded it and as something which similarly indicated the sacred status of the book. Some covers have complex narrative iconography elucidating or commenting upon the text and its performative role. For example, the covers of the Dagulf Psalter show scenes of the writing and translation of the text within as well as the singing of the psalms, emphasizing the importance of the

²⁹⁰ For recent discussion of the lower cover of the Lindau Gospels and these comparisons, see Elbern, “The ‘Earlier’ Lindau Book Cover: An Integrated Analysis,” 22 -35, and David Ganz, *Buch Gewänder: Prachteinbände im Mittelalter* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag GmbH, 2015), 131-148. Beatrice Kitzinger makes the comparison between the lower cover of the Lindau Gospels and the Ardennes Cross, focusing on the material interchange between related liturgical objects. See *The Cross, The Gospels, and the Work of Art in the Carolingian Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 136.

textual tradition and the oral performance of the text by a community.²⁹¹ Considering the connection between book covers and other sacred objects, and the performance of religion more broadly situates book covers within a holistic religious experience.

This chapter will assess how the materials chosen by the book maker for the cover enhanced the religious significance of the book it encases, and how meaning was extrapolated from those materials by the book's user. To achieve this, the chapter will first examine the sources and physical characteristics of the materials used to construct early medieval book covers and how those materials contribute to the object's meaning. The choice of what materials to use is based on practicality, material value, and symbolic meaning. Like the forms of book covers, the materials are intertwined with early medieval networks of trade and exchange. Although, as will be shown, most materials were acquired through shorter-range networks, long-distance networks made some materials available to artists located far from the sources of those materials. The people and places through which the materials traveled gave them a meaning beyond the original animal, plant, or mineral from which they were sourced. In addition, each material has a unique tactile quality and interaction with light. The glitter of metal, the luminescence of colored gemstones, the warmth of ivory, for

²⁹¹ On the relationship between the text in the Dagulf Psalter and practices of singing the Psalms at the time it was made, see Susan Rankin, "Singing the Psalter in the Early Middle Ages," in *Chant, Liturgy, and the Inheritance of Rome: Essays in Honor of Joseph Dyer*, ed. Daniel DiCenso and Rebecca Maloy (London: The Boydell Press, 2017), 279-287.

example, were an integral part of the book's visual, devotional, and liturgical roles and the materials were often deliberately chosen for their aesthetic and haptic effects. These characteristics allow each component to add to the multi-sensory experience of handling and displaying the book. Furthermore, some materials were attributed with specific Christian interpretation, articulated in texts such as Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*, Bede's Biblical exegesis, and descriptive poetry. These physical qualities and attributed meanings suffuse the cover, and by extension the book, with a material presence and meaning.

Second, the chapter will explore how the addition of a cover could indicate the elevation of the religious status of the book. This is exemplified by the placing of Irish gospel books, such as the Book of Dimma, the Book of Mulling, and the Book of Durrow, in shrines several generations after they were written. Such posterior additions demonstrate the heightened importance these particular books had achieved over the course of their existence.²⁹² This is apparent in the description in the Annals of Ulster of the theft of the Book of Kells and its shrine in 1007:

Soiscelae mor Coluim Cille do doubgait [isind aidhci asind airdom iarthatach i ndaim liac moir Chenannsa; primh-mind iarthair domain ar ai in comdaigh doendai]. In soscela sin do foghbail dia fichet adaig ar dib misaib iar ngait de a oir 7 fot tairis.

²⁹² Paul Mullarkey, "Irish Book Shrines: A Reassessment," (PhD diss., Trinity College Dublin, 2000), 53-77. For a recent overview of the Irish book shrines, see Paul Mullarkey, "Irish Book Shrines," in *Art and Architecture of Ireland*, Vol. 1: *Medieval c. 400-c. 1600*, ed. Rachel Moss (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2014), 297-304.

[The great Gospel of Colum-Cille was wickedly stolen by night from the western sacristy in the great stone church of Cennanas. It was the most precious object of the Western World on account of the human ornamentation. This Gospel was recovered after two months and twenty nights, with its gold having been taken off it and with a sod covering it.]²⁹³

The passage emphasizes the material splendor of the shrine and the reverence in which the book was held. In addition to the Irish book shrines, clear examples of covers used to elevate the sacred status of a book are the many treasure bindings that use the same precious materials and fine craftsmanship that were devoted to making reliquaries which held the remains and other objects associated with holy figures.²⁹⁴ Although physical books, as opposed to the sacred texts they contained, were not generally held to have the same religious significance as relics, the covers performed many of the same functions as reliquaries and employed much of the same material rhetoric. Importantly, book covers both reveal and conceal their contents by shrouding the pages, perhaps in elaborate metalwork and gems, while also alluding to the contents,

²⁹³ Passage and translation quoted from Mullarkey, “Irish Book Shrines: A Reassessment,” 66.

²⁹⁴ On treasure bindings see David Ganz, *Buch-Gewänder: Prachteinbände im Mittelalter* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag GmbH, 2015), and Frauke Steenbock, *Der kirchlichen Prachteinband im frühen Mittelalter, von den Anfängen bis zum Beginn der Gotik* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1965).

perhaps through the iconography of the decoration.²⁹⁵ Book covers also enhance the sensory, and ultimately religious, experience of beholding the book.²⁹⁶

This chapter develops an expansive definition of enshrinement that goes beyond the simple placement of a sacred object, usually a relic, into a shrine. Central to the definition of enshrinement presented in this chapter is the deliberate addition of materials to an object to enhance its religious significance and to reflect the sacredness of the object. Moreover, as with the definitions of encasement and embellishment developed in the previous chapters, enshrinement signifies the dynamic interaction between object, maker, and user, as well as the agency of the object. Enshrinement encompasses the active participation of an object in the performance of religion, both public liturgy and private prayer, by evoking movement, light, and sound. Book covers are key objects of enshrinement because they materially connected sacred scripture to the other objects that were part of the early medieval religious environment and they made the words they contained eminently visible.

By conceiving of book covers in this way, this study draws on the robust body of recent scholarship exploring the relationship between the material nature of objects

²⁹⁵ Providing a comprehensive overview of current thinking and methodology on reliquaries is Cynthia Hahn, *Strange Beauty: Issues in the Making and Meaning of Reliquaries, 400-circa 1204* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012).

²⁹⁶ Bissera Pentcheva, for example, has pioneered this approach in relation to Byzantine icons in *The Sensual Icon: Space, Ritual, and the Senses in Byzantium* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010).

and their spiritual function. The materiality of medieval art was outlined in general terms by Herbert Kessler in *Seeing Medieval Art* (2004) and then published in revised form in *Experiencing Medieval Art* (2019).²⁹⁷ In *Seeing Medieval Art*, Kessler related the materiality of medieval art to medieval notions of visuality and how art makes the invisible visible.²⁹⁸ When reevaluating that material, Kessler expanded this idea to acknowledge the element of time in experiencing medieval art.²⁹⁹ The work of Caroline Walker Bynum further established materiality as an essential approach to studying medieval art, although she argues for an essential distinction between the “insistent” centrality of matter to Christian devotional practices in the late middle ages compared to the early middle ages.³⁰⁰ Another notable articulation of the increased importance of materiality to the study of medieval art was a special 2012 issue of *Gesta* edited by Aden Kumler and Christopher Lakey.³⁰¹ Kumler and Lakey reflected

²⁹⁷ Herbert Kessler, *Experiencing Medieval Art* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019). *Experiencing Medieval Art* is a revised and expanded edition of *Seeing Medieval Art* (New York: Broadview Press, 2004).

²⁹⁸ Kessler, *Seeing Medieval Art*, 14.

²⁹⁹ Kessler, *Experiencing Medieval Art*, 225.

³⁰⁰ See especially Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (New York: Zone Books, 2011), 19-20.

³⁰¹ Aden Kumler and Christopher R. Lakey, eds. *Gesta*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (2012).

on the material turn they observed at the time.³⁰² They also focused on the impact of the work of mid-twentieth century scholar Frederick Ohly in establishing *Dingbedeutung* [thing-signification] as central to the medieval conception of objects.³⁰³

In addition to materiality, there has been a keen interest in the conception of the senses in the medieval world, ideas of sacred space, and the performance of religion in material form. These studies have enhanced understanding of the religious environment in the early middle ages and the role of books and their covers in that environment.³⁰⁴ Notable in this line of scholarship, Eric Palazzo has presented a more synthetic understanding of the early medieval liturgy and the role of books, though

³⁰² Kumler and Lakey, “*Res et signification: The Material Sense of Things in the Middle Ages*,” *Gesta*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (2012), 2.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 2-6.

³⁰⁴ On the senses, see, for example, Stephen G. Nichols, Andreas Kablitz, and Alison Calhoun, eds., *Rethinking the Medieval Senses: Heritage / Fascinations / Frames* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), and Martina Bagnoli, ed. *A Feast for the Senses: Art and Experience in Medieval Europe* (Baltimore: The Walters Art Museum, 2016). On sacred space, see, for example, Tobias Frese, Wilfried E. Keil, and Kristina Krüger, eds. *Sacred Scripture / Sacred Space: The Interlacing of Real Places and Conceptual Spaces on Medieval Art and Architecture* (Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2019), especially the contribution by Tina Bawden, “Describing Spaces: Topologies of Interlace in the Saint Gall Gospel,” 11-36. On the idea of the book as sacred space, see Michelle P. Brown, “The Book as Sacred Space,” in *Sacred Space: House of God, Gate of Heaven*, ed. Philip North and John North (London; New York: Continuum, 2007), 43-63.

focusing on the pages rather than the covers of liturgical books.³⁰⁵ David Ganz and Beatrice Kitzinger have explored the material interchange between books and other liturgical objects, with Ganz focusing on the material relationship between books and liturgical objects, especially textiles, and Kitzinger focusing on the materialized form of the cross.³⁰⁶

The expanded interest in the materiality of medieval objects and its relationship to the religious function of books has been applied to some of the most ornate treasure bindings in such notable publications as Susannah Fisher's 2012 dissertation, "Materializing the Word: Ottonian Treasury Bindings and Viewer Reception," David Ganz's *Buch-Gewänder. Prachteinbände im Mittelalter* of 2015, and the 2019 anthology *Clothing Sacred Scripture*.³⁰⁷ These studies develop the concept of religious materiality that will be explored in this chapter. Religious materiality is the expression of religious practices and beliefs through the materiality of objects. In defining religious materiality, anthropologist Webb Keane stated: "It is

³⁰⁵ Eric Palazzo, "Art, Liturgy, and the Five Senses in the Early Middle Ages," *Viator* 41, No. 1 (2010), 25-56.

³⁰⁶ Ganz, *Buch-Gewänder*, 32-63; Kitzinger, *The Cross, The Gospels, and the Work of Art in the Carolingian Age*, 3-17.

³⁰⁷ David Ganz, *Buch-Gewänder. Prachteinbände im Mittelalter* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag GmbH, 2015); Susannah D. Fisher, "Materializing the Word: Ottonian Treasury Bindings and Viewer Reception," (Phd diss., Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 2012); David Ganz and Barbara Schellewald, eds. *Clothing Sacred Scriptures: Book Art and Book Religion in Christian, Islamic, and Jewish Cultures* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019).

in that materiality that they [objects] are part of [religious] experience and provoke responses, that they have public lives and enter into ongoing chains of causes and consequences.”³⁰⁸ The book, and the book as expressed through its cover, is a primary manifestation of religion in material form in the early middle ages, with all of the affective responses attributed by Keane to the materiality of religious objects. In this chapter, I apply the concept of religious materiality to the surviving book covers of northwestern Europe from the eighth century. I also expand the scope of inquiry by considering how humble, simply adorned bindings can perform some of the same spiritual functions as ornate treasure bindings. More widely available and more widely used materials such as leather are often put to purely functional use. However, in certain contexts they can perform some of the same spiritual functions as the materials used in ornate treasure bindings, which have been the main focus of previous scholarship on religious materiality. Fundamental to this investigation of the religious materiality of early medieval book covers are the physical properties of the materials themselves.

5.2 Material

³⁰⁸ Webb Keane, “The Evidence of the Senses and the Materiality of Religion,” *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (2008), 124.

The materials used to create book covers were chosen for a variety of reasons. They could be chosen because they were readily available due to local sourcing or abundance. They could be chosen for their physical properties, such as their color or ease of carving. They could be chosen because they were rare and added value or a sense of exoticism. They could be chosen because they added symbolic meaning. This section examines the sources, qualities, and significance of the materials used in the book covers of eighth-century northwestern Europe in order to present a fuller picture of the choices made by their makers regarding what materials to use and how those materials may have been understood when encountered in their intended surroundings.³⁰⁹

In addition to considering the sources and properties of the materials used in book covers, this section will also examine how these materials are described in early medieval texts. Primary among these is Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*. Written in the early years of the seventh century, the *Etymologiae* was the most comprehensive and popular encyclopedia of the natural world in the early middle ages and a

³⁰⁹ A notable absence from the surviving material record for eighth-century book covers from northwestern Europe is textiles. Textiles are a significant material used in later book covers, both for structure and display, and their absence should not be interpreted as an indication that textiles were not used in the creation of book covers in the eighth century. There are traces of textiles used for the straps and endbands of the Carolingian bindings from St. Gall. See Szirmai, "Carolingian Bindings in the Abbey Library of St. Gall," 168 and 172. In the Lindau Gospels, rich silks are used to adorn the insides of the front and back covers and may have inspired the ornamental pages located at the beginning and end of the canon tables. See Ganz, *Buch-Gewänder*, 141-148.

fundamental codification of knowledge in early medieval monastic systems of learning. Furthermore, Isidore of Seville infuses the natural world with Christian and Classical meaning based on his readings of a diverse range of ancient and late antique texts.³¹⁰ The *Etymologiae* quickly spread across Europe after it was written, having particular impact in Britain, Ireland, and Gaul. The earliest copy is found at St. Gall, written in an Irish hand of the second half of the seventh century, and the centrality of Isidore's text is apparent in the writings of Bede and other intellectuals of the seventh and eighth centuries in northwestern Europe.³¹¹ The widespread impact, the comprehensiveness of the text, and variety of sources used offer valuable insight into the full significance of materials for those who worked with them, used them, or viewed them in the early middle ages.

In addition to the *Etymologiae*, early medieval interpretations of different materials are found in exegetical texts, foremost among these are Bede's *De Tabernaculo* and *De Templo*. Written in the 720s and read as the main exegesis on their subject for much of the middle ages, both texts expound on the material and

³¹⁰ For a discussion of Isidore of Seville's sources, see the introduction to Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, ed. and trans. Stephen A. Barney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 10- 17.

³¹¹ The earliest known surviving version of the *Etymologiae* is fragmentary text, now St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, cod.sang.1399.a.1. Also E. A. Lowe, *Codices Latini Antiquiores* 7 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), no. 995. Barney ed., *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, 24-26.

spatial imagery of the Biblical architecture.³¹² There is also relevant early medieval poetry with descriptions of books and their covers. These include dedication poems with detailed descriptions of the material splendor of the specific manuscripts they accompany, found, for example, in the Godesscalc Gospel Lectionary, the Dagulf Psalter, and the Theodulf Bible. Descriptions in several Old English poems include materials as a key component of their religious symbolism and offer insights into broader early medieval conceptions of the materiality of books. Through examination of these early medieval texts, such as the *Etymologiae*, alongside analysis of the sources and properties of the materials, this section develops a sense of the religious materiality of early medieval book covers.

5.2.1 Wood

Wood was one of the primary materials used in early medieval book covers. It most often provided the structural foundation of the cover – the boards to which other materials were attached. The wood of many types of trees are found in surviving examples. Locally-available varieties seem to have been preferred, perhaps since

³¹² For overviews of the history of these texts, see the introductions in *Bede: On the Tabernacle*, trans. Arthur G. Holder (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1994), xiii-xxvi and *Bede: On the Temple*, trans. Seán Connolly (Liverpool University Press, 1995), xvii-lv.

wood was used for structure rather than display. The use of costly materials from distant sources was instead reserved for the visible parts of the cover. Among the surviving examples identified from eighth-century northwestern Europe, wood was likely used as part of the structure of all but the Faddan More Psalter. The boards of the St. Cuthbert Gospel were identified as birch, or just possibly lime, in the most recent study by Nicholas Pickwoad.³¹³ The boards of the Cadmug Gospels, as well as the closely related boards of the Book of Armagh and the Book of Mulling, were identified as oak in the same study by Pickwoad.³¹⁴ David Wilson identified the boards of the Victor Codex as oak in his study of that cover.³¹⁵ Eamonn Kelly identified as oak the wood to which the metal fittings of the Lough Kinale Shrine are attached.³¹⁶ It should be noted that the metalwork of the lower cover of the Lindau Gospels, as well as the ivory plaques of the Dagulf Psalter, were also likely attached to

³¹³ Nicholas Pickwoad, "Binding," in *The St. Cuthbert Gospel: Studies on the Insular Manuscript of the Gospel of John (BL, Additional MS 89000)*, ed. Claire Breay and Bernard Meehan (London: The British Library, 2015), 49.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 50.

³¹⁵ David Wilson, "An Anglo-Saxon Bookbinding at Fulda," *The Antiquaries Journal*, Vol. 41 (1961), 207-208.

³¹⁶ Eamonn Kelly, "The Lough Kinale Book Shrine," in *The Age of Migrating Ideas*, ed. Michael Spearman and John Higgitt (Edinburgh: National Museums of Scotland, 1993), 172.

wooden boards based on comparison to similar objects of later date, although the eighth-century wooden pieces do not survive.³¹⁷

As a contrast to the material from northwestern Europe, Marçais and Poinssot examined the wood of the Kairouan bindings during their initial study. Marçais and Poinssot noted the use of wood from fig, laurel, poplar (both white and black), Aleppo pine, and French tamarisk. Fig and poplar are the most commonly identified among the earliest material, dated to the ninth century.³¹⁸ Although there are a variety of woods used in each context and the trees generally have a wide geographic range where they grow, the woods found in the covers from northwestern Europe are generally from trees found more commonly in more northern latitudes, while those used in the Kairouan covers are from trees that favor a Mediterranean climate. This suggests that availability was of greater consideration than exoticism in choosing the wood for the boards of the cover.

Although the choice of what wood was used for the boards of a book cover may have been largely based on its local availability, there were properties ascribed to

³¹⁷ One example of ivory plaques being set in wood to form a book cover is Würzburg, Dombibliothek, M.p.th.f.65, a gospel book dated to the mid-ninth century. The lower cover of the Lindau Gospels may have been part of an object similar to the box made for the Uta Codex (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 13601), which has metalwork attached to a wooden core.

³¹⁸ Georges Marçais, Louis Poinssot and Lucian Gaillard, *Objets Kairouanais IXe au XIIIe Siècle, Reliures, Verreries, Bronzes, Bijoux*, Vol.1 (Paris: Klincksieck; Tunis: Tournier, 1952), 69 note 4.

different trees and their wood. Notable in Isidore of Seville's descriptions of different varieties of trees in book XVII of the *Etymologiae* is the passage on the oak tree, the tree most frequently used in northwestern Europe for the boards of early medieval book covers. He describes the following:

Quercus sive quernus, quod ea soliti errant dii gentium quaerentibus responsa praecanere, arbor multum annosa; sicut legitur de quercu Mambre, sub qua habitavit Abraham, quae fertur usque ad Constantis regis imperium per multa saecula perdurasse. Huius fructus galla appellatur. Ex quibus una agrestis *ομφακιτης* dicta, parva forma, sed firmo corpore atque nodoso, quae medicaminibus et incaustis adhibetur; altera *βαλανος*, lenis ac levis et nimium perforate, lucernarum tantum usibus necessaria.

[The *quercus*, or *quernus* ("oak tree"), is so-called because the pagan gods would use it to make poetic predictions for those seeking (*quaerere*) their responses. It is a very long-lived tree – as one reads concerning the oak of Mambre, under which Abraham dwelt, which is said to have lasted for many centuries, up to the reign of the emperor Constans. Its fruit is called the gallnut (*galla*). A wild type of gallnut is called *ομφακιτης*; it is of small size, but with a firm and knotty body, which is used for medicines and purple inks. Another type is *βαλανος*; it is mild and smooth and very porous, used only for lamps.]³¹⁹

In the passage Isidore references the role of oaks in book production by mentioning the use of oak galls for making ink, but does not mention its use for the boards of book covers. Isidore also describes the oak as an "arbor multum annosa [a very long-lived tree]," a durability that would perhaps be seen as reason to use oak wood as part of a protective encasement. Finally, Isidore mentions the religious significance of the oak,

³¹⁹ Isidore of Seville, *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive originum libri XX*, ed. W. M. Lindsay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911), Lib. XVII.vii.38. English translation from Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, ed. and trans. Stephen A. Barney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 346.

both its prophetic function for pagans and its Biblical associations with the oak of Mambre. Other trees and their wood may have been seen as having a similarly multifaceted character in the early middle ages. Even though in most cases the wood was invisible and the type of tree from which it came unidentifiable, the perceived nature of different trees and their wood contributed to their significance when used as part of a book cover.

The material for the oak boards of the Ragyndrudis Codex was most likely chosen for the same practical reasons of availability and durability that made oak wood a perpetually popular choice for book covers. However, the oak added to the material significance of the manuscript as it gained meaning through the developing legend surrounding St. Boniface. For example, in a scene in Willibald's eighth-century life of St. Boniface, Boniface and his missionaries cut down an oak tree revered by the local pagans. Boniface then uses the wood to construct a small chapel, appropriating the tree for Christian use.³²⁰ The image of Boniface raising the oak boards of the Ragyndrudis Codex to defend himself against a pagan attack draws extra meaning from the widely acknowledged protective quality of the material and his own use of a sacred oak as a symbol of the triumph of Christianity.

³²⁰ *Vitae Sancti Bonifatii archiepiscopi moguntini*, ed. Wilhelm Levison, *Scriptores rerum germanicarum, in usum scholarum ex monumentis germaniae historicis separatim editi* (Hannover-Leipzig: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1905), 30-32.

In Christian thinking of the early middle ages, wood held unique meaning as the material of the cross. An emphasis on the materiality of the wood of the cross is apparent in the Old English dream vision poem, “The Dream of the Rood,” which recounts the crucifixion from the perspective of the cross.³²¹ Beginning at line 5, the poet describes:

A wondrous tree lifting up in in the air,
Wound with light, the brightest of beams.
That radiant sign was wrapped in gold;
Gems stood gleaming at its feet,
Five stones shining from its shoulder-beam.³²²

At line 17, the description of the cross continues with the same motifs:

I saw the tree of glory sheathed in gems,
Clothed in gold – jewels gleaming
On the Lord’s tree; ...³²³

In these passages, the poet references the tree (Old English *trēow*) from which the wood was taken, acknowledging the wood’s source in nature. The poem also emphasizes the adornment of the wood as a sign of its sacredness, which is significant

³²¹ On “The Dream of the Rood,” and its relationship to the Ruthwell Cross, the Bewcastle Cross, the metal reliquary cross preserved in the Cathedral of Saints Michael and Gudule in Brussels, and the liturgy in early medieval England, see Éamonn Ó Carragán, *Ritual and the Rood: Liturgical Images and the Dream of the Rood Tradition* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).

³²² Craig Williamson, ed. and trans., *The Complete Old English Poems* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 254. For an edited version of the Old English text from the Vercelli book, see Michael Swanton, ed. *The Dream of the Rood*, New ed. (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996), 93.

³²³ Williamson, *The Complete Old English Poems*, 254.

for the meaning of wood used in book covers. The image “sheathed in gems, clothed in gold” could be applied, for example, to the lower cover of the Lindau Gospels or to the Lough Kinale book shrine where wooden boards are covered with precious metal and gemstones formed into the image of the cross. These and similar covers represent in material form the *crux gemmata* which is described in “The Dream of the Rood” and which permeates early medieval imagery of the cross.³²⁴ The materials, and in particular the wood which forms the core of the cross, are central to the image and its meaning.

Beyond the symbolism of the *crux gemmata*, the technique of casting metal with wood creates a material and technical resonance between book covers, liturgical crosses, shrines, and other holy objects. One example is a house-shaped box, possibly a chrismatory used to hold items needed in the sacramental rites, with imagery

³²⁴ On the history and significance of the *Crux Gemmata* in early medieval England and its relationship to manuscript decoration, see Michelle P. Brown, *The Lindisfarne Gospels: Society Spirituality, and the Scribe* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 324. Frauke Steenbock designates a category of covers in her study as “Die Crux Gemmata-Gruppe.” Steenbock, *Die kirchliche Prachteinband im frühen Mittelalter*, 25-33. There may have been a jeweled cross erected on the rock of Golgotha in Jerusalem that may have contributed to the idea of the *crux gemmate*. See, for example, Martin Werner, “The Liudhard Medalet,” *Anglo-Saxon England*, 20 (1991), 36-38. Arguing that there is not a substantial connection between the *crux gemmate* and the cross on Golgotha is Christine Milner in “‘Lignum Vitae’ or ‘Crux Gemmata’? The Cross of Golgotha in the Early Byzantine Period,” *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 20 (1996), 77-99. Beatrice Kitzinger argues as “a unifying sign specifically for the Gospels, the Cross is, of course, especially well suited,” and is therefore a fitting symbol for the cover of a Gospel book. See *The Cross, The Gospels, and the Work of Art in the Carolingian Age*, 134.

suggesting it was made by an Insular craftsman of the late eighth century (Fig. 100). It is made of oak covered in gilded copper-alloy sheets - construction techniques and materials comparable to the Lough Kinale Shrine. The Rupertus Cross is formed of gilt bronze laid over maple wood and is set with gems, glass, and enamel – an assembly of materials and techniques seen with the lower cover of the Lindau Gospels as well as other liturgical crosses (Fig. 101). The wood gives all these objects their shape and provides a surface to which the metal and other materials can be securely attached. The material of wood is at the core of the reliquaries, shrines, crosses, books, and other objects that make up the material environment of early medieval religion.

5.2.2 Leather

While wood provided a structural foundation for many book covers of the early middle ages, leather was frequently used to cover the boards and provide a surface for decoration. Of the eighth-century book covers from northwestern Europe, the covers of the St. Cuthbert Gospel, the Cadmug Gospels, the Victor Codex, the Ragyndrudis Codex, and the Faddan More Psalter all employ leather as a primary material. The leather of the St. Cuthbert Gospel is made of fine red-stained, tanned goat skin, reminiscent of leather from sub-Saharan Africa. The quality and choice of animal led Nicholas Pickwoad to suggest the leather may have been imported to

Northumbria.³²⁵ The Cadmug Gospels uses a white alum-tawed leather which Pickwoad suggested is sheep or goat, distinct in quality from the leather used for the St. Cuthbert Gospel.³²⁶ The leather of the Ragyndrudis codex is made of an overlay of red-stained goat leather.³²⁷ The leather of the cover of the Faddan More Psalter, on the other hand, has been identified as vegetable-tanned calf skin.³²⁸ The leather was not of the finest quality and contains many blemishes and small holes, evidence of warts and warble flies that were common cattle diseases.³²⁹ The type of leather used for the cover of the Victor Codex has not been identified.

The leather of the cover and the parchment of the pages are materially related as both are products made from animal skin. Yet, closer examination reveals that the cover and the pages were sometimes made from the skins of different species. This provides further evidence that, as has been shown throughout this study, the cover and the pages of a book can be understood as being produced as part of separate processes.

³²⁵ Pickwoad, “The St. Cuthbert Gospel,” 52.

³²⁶ Ibid., 52.

³²⁷ Padberg and Stork, *Der Ragyndrudis-Codex des Hl. Bonifatius*, 91.

³²⁸ John Gillis “The Faddan More Psalter – A study of the early medieval book-making techniques and codicology of a recently discovered eighth-century Irish Psalter and an examination of its features and materials which suggest influences both domestic and remote in its materiality and manufacture” (PhD diss., Trinity College Dublin, 2019), 115-116.

³²⁹ Ibid., 121-122.

However, recent reevaluation suggests there may have also been common sources for the leather and the parchment in some cases. For example, while the leather of the St. Cuthbert Gospel is made of goat skin, a rare material for book production in northern England, it has often been assumed that the pages of that book and other books made in Northumbria were made from more easily accessible calf skin.³³⁰ However, a new study reveals strong evidence that the Codex Amiatinus, made at approximately the same time and in the same milieu as the St. Cuthbert Gospel, contains pages made of parchment of goat and sheep skin.³³¹ Jiří Vnouček, the author of the study, notes a “striking difference between the parchment of the Lindisfarne Gospels and fragments of other Northumbrian Gospels, and that of the Codex Amiatinus or St. Cuthbert’s

³³⁰ The excavation report from Monkwearmouth-Jarrow, for example, lists the minimum number of individual animals and percentage of finds for these species as: cattle 25/32%, sheep 16/21%, goats 3/4%. See Rosemary Cramp *Wearmouth and Jarrow Monastic Sites: Volume 2* (Swindon: English Heritage: 2006), 547. These numbers suggest the number of locally available goats was not large enough to produce the amount of parchment needed for a substantial manuscript.

³³¹ Jiří Vnouček, “The Parchment of the Codex Amiatinus in the Context of Manuscript Production in Northumbria Around the End of the Seventh Century: Identification of the Animal Species and Methods of Manufacture of the Parchment as Clues to the Old Narrative?,” *Journal of Paper Conservation*, 20:1-4 (2019), 179-204. A revised diagram of all the quires of the Codex Amiatinus with proper identification of the different parchment sources has not been produced yet. However, Vnouček’s diagram of the first twelve quires (fig. 16) gives a sense of the distribution of goat and sheep parchment in the manuscript. There are four quires with all folios made from goat skin and two quires with all folios made from sheep skin. The other six quires contain parchment made from both sheep and goat skin. Goat skin parchment predominates in this section of the manuscript.

Gospel.”³³² Perhaps a scientific investigation of the parchment of the St. Cuthbert Gospel would lead to similar conclusions as the study of the Codex Amiatinus. In sum, it appears the monks of Monkwearmouth and Jarrow were likely using goat skin leather and goat and sheep skin parchment to add to the prestige and meaning of their most esteemed productions through materials strongly associated with book production in southern Europe and the Mediterranean.

Isidore of Seville includes a passage on skin as part of his section describing the different parts of the body in book XI of the *Etymologiae*:

Cutis est quae in corpore prima est, appellata quod ipsa corpori superposita incisionem prima patiatur: *κντις* enim Graece incisio dicitur. Idem et *pellis*, quod externas inurias corporis tegendo pellat, pluviasque et ventos solisque ardores perferat.

[The skin (*cutis*) is that which is uppermost in the body, so called, because in covering the body it is the first to suffer from an incision, for in Greek, *κντις* means “incision.” It is also called *pellis* (i.e. another word for “skin”), because it repels (*pellere*) external injuries from the body by covering it, and it endures rain, wind, and the fierce heat of the sun.]³³³

The passage emphasizes the protective nature of skin, an apt association for the use of leather for the protective encasements of books. Furthermore, Isidore’s comment that the skin “incisionem prima patiatur [it is the first to suffer from an incision]” evokes

³³² Ibid., 185.

³³³ Isidore of Seville, *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive originum libri XX*, ed. W. M. Lindsay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911), Lib. XI.i.78. English translation from Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, ed. and trans. Stephen A. Barney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 236.

the violent action of incising, cutting, or stamping leather to add decoration to the cover of a book or another leather object.

The cover of the St. Cuthbert Gospel emphasizes the material quality and meaning of the leather used in its construction. The plasticity of the raised pattern on the front cover reminds the viewer of the act of stretching the pliable flesh. The incised design on the back cover reminds the viewer of the act of cutting the skin with a sharp metal tool. In addition, the red-dyed leather, although made of goat rather than sheep skin, evokes the Biblical reference in the Book of Exodus to the material of “*pelles arietum rubricatus* [ram’s skin dyed red].”³³⁴ This reference is interpreted by Bede in *De Tabernaculo* as an offering “when as leaders of the Lord’s flock we see ourselves baptized in his blood.”³³⁵ Made in the same milieu as Bede’s text and associated with Cuthbert, Bishop of Lindisfarne and leader of his flock, the red leather may have recalled this image of a sacred Biblical offering.

The Christian significance of using skin to create books that contained scripture has been discussed in relation to the parchment on which the words were written. When looking at or touching parchment, there are constant physical reminders of its animal origin, such as the visible hair follicles, the velvety quality of the hair side of the skin, or the marks from the spine of the animal. With gospel books in

³³⁴ 25 Exodus: 5 (Douay-Reims Bible)

³³⁵ English translation from *Bede: On the Tabernacle*, trans. Arthur G. Holder, 8-9.

particular, close interaction with the parchment while writing or reading the text would have been a visceral reminder of the idea that the gospels represented, “the word made flesh.”³³⁶ The idea that the material of the book made this idea manifest in physical form can be applied to the leather used for the cover as well. Furthermore, the flesh stretched over the wood, especially when the flesh was inscribed with a cross, would have been a powerful material evocation of the crucifixion.

5.2.3 Metal

Metal is a key material used to adorn early medieval book covers. The Victor Codex displays fittings of silver and bronze.³³⁷ The decoration of the Lough Kinale Shrine is formed of bronze that has been cast and gilt.³³⁸ The lower cover of the Lindau Gospels contains panels of gilt silver as well as enamels set in silver and gilt

³³⁶ Claudius of Turin, Isidore of Seville, and Augustine, for example, all articulate the connection between the skin used to create the book and the holy scripture the book contained. See Herbert Kessler, *Spiritual Seeing*, 187-188. Bruce Holsinger has recently brought attention to the animal nature of medieval books and the resulting ethical dilemma in “Of Pigs and Parchment: Medieval Studies and the Coming of the Animal,” *PMLA*, 124, No. 2 (Mar. 2009): pp. 616-623. Sarah Kay sees the skin used for the parchment as a visceral connection between the reader’s body and the book in *Animal Skins and the Reading Self in Medieval Latin and French Bestiaries* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017).

³³⁷ Wilson, “An Anglo-Saxon Bookbinding at Fulda,” 201-205.

³³⁸ Kelly, “The Lough Kinale Book-Shrine,” 168.

silver.³³⁹ In addition to the Victor Codex, the Lough Kinale shrine, and the lower cover of the Lindau Gospels, several eighth-century descriptions of book covers make careful note of the splendor of the metalwork used. The colophon of the Lindisfarne Gospels describes how, “Billfrith, the anchorite, forged the ornaments which are on it on the outside and adorned it with gold and with gems and also with gilded-over silver - pure metal.”³⁴⁰ The life of St. Wilfrid describes how Wilfrid ordered a copy of the gospels and “necnon et bibliothecam librorum eorum, omnem de auro purissimo et gemmos pretiosissimis fabrefactam, compaginare inclusores gemmarum praecepit [he also ordered jewellers to construct for the books a case all made of purest gold and set with most precious gems].”³⁴¹ More abstractly, the Exeter Book Riddle 24 describes a book cover in the following lines, emphasizing the use of gold:³⁴²

A skin laced with gold. The bright song
Of smiths glistens on me in filigree tones.
Now decorative gold and crimson dye,

³³⁹ Ulrike Sander, “Der ältere Lindauer Buchdeckel in seinen originalen Bestandteilen,” (PhD diss., Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Bonn, 2007), 39-40.

³⁴⁰ Translation from Lawrence Nees, “Reading Aldred’s Colophon for the Lindisfarne Gospels,” *Speculum*, Vol. 78, No. 2 (April 2003), 341.

³⁴¹ Eddius Stephanus, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927), 36-37.

³⁴² The Exeter Book was copied ca. 965-975 and the poems and riddles included may have earlier origins. Craig Williamson, ed. and trans., *The Complete Old English Poems* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 300.

A clasp of wire and a coat of glory,³⁴³

The surviving examples and number of descriptions suggests precious metals were one of the most noted materials used in the construction of early medieval book covers. The use of precious metals added to the material value of the book, transforming it into a treasure comparable to items such as jewelry or even coins.³⁴⁴ Their use also added to the interpretive value of the book because of associations with heavenly splendor, spiritual purity, medicinal properties, and astrological meaning.³⁴⁵ The use of precious metals for the adornment of sacred texts and other religious objects directly confronted viewers with this tension between worldly and spiritual magnificence, a tension frequently recognized in the middle ages.³⁴⁶ Finally, precious metals also added to the luster of the object, the sheen of silver and gold glinting in the light in which the book was displayed.

Isidore of Seville foregrounded the interaction of metal with light in his description of gold:

³⁴³ Ibid., 537.

³⁴⁴ Rosamond McKitterick articulates the idea of the early medieval book as a form of wealth in *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 135-164.

³⁴⁵ Nancy Turner, "Surface Effect and Substance: Precious Metals in Illuminated Manuscripts," in *Illuminating Metalwork: Metal, Object, and Image in Medieval Manuscripts*, ed. Joseph Salvatore Ackley and Shannon L. Wearing (Berlin; Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2022), 53-56.

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 55.

Aurum ab aura dictum, id est ab splendore, eo quod repercusso aere plus fulgeat [...] hoc est splendor auri. Naturale enim est ut metallorum splendor plus fulgeat luce alia repercussus.

[Gold (*aurum*) is named from ‘gleam’(*aura*), that is, from its luster, because it gleams more when air reflects it [...] that is, the luster of gold, for it is natural for the luster of metal to gleam more when it is reflected with another light.]³⁴⁷

The repetition of the words “splendor [luster]” and “fulgeat [gleam]” emphasizes the radiant quality of the metal.

The imagery of precious metals enters into the poems describing the Dagulf Psalter, the Godesscalc Gospel Lectionary, and the Theodulf Bible, highly ornate manuscripts with gold and silver writing and precious metals added to the painted decoration. The word gold permeates the first lines of the poem describing the Dagulf Psalter:

Aurea Daviticos en pingit littera cantus: / Ornari decuit tam bene tale melos. /
Aurea verba sonant, promittant aurea regna, / Mansurumque canunt et sine fine bonum

[The song of David is painted in golden letters: / such a song is fit to be ornamented so well. / Golden words sound, they promise golden kingdoms, / and enduring they also sing of good without end]³⁴⁸

³⁴⁷ Isidore of Seville, *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive originum libri XX*, ed. W. M. Lindsay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911), Lib. XVI.xviii.1. English translation from Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, ed. and trans. Stephen A. Barney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 329.

³⁴⁸ Ernest Duemmler, ed. *Poetae Latini Aevi Carolini. Tomus I. Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (Leipzig: Karl W. Hiersemann, 1880-1881), 92. English translation by the author.

Similar imagery is used in the first part of the poem describing the closely related

Godesscalc Gospel Lectionary:

Aurea purpureis pinguntur grammata scedis / Regna poli roseo pate- sanguine-
facta tonantis / Fulgida stelligeri promunt et gaudia caeli / Eloquiumque Dei
digno fulgore choruscans / Splendida perpetuae promittit praemia vitae. / En,
praecepta Dei decorata colore rosarum / Munera martyrii demonstrant esse
capenda, / Candida virginitas caelorum cara colonis / Auri flauentis specie
hortatur habenda / Argentique figuratur splendore micantis / Vita maritorum
cunctis concessa iugalis. / Sic doctrina Dei pretiosis scripta metallis / Lucida
luciflui perducit ad atria regni / Lumen evangelii sectantes corde benigno /
Scandentesque poli super ardua sidera celsi / Collocat in thalamo caelorum
regis in aevum.

[Golden letters are painted on purple leaves: they show forth the kingdom of
heaven, opened through the rosy blood of the Thunderer, and the gleaming
joys of the starry heavens, and the word of God, sparkling in worthy splendor,
promises the glittering reward of eternal life. See—the teachings of God,
adorned with the color of roses, show how to take up the task of the martyrs.
Bright virginity, dear to the settlers of Heaven, is urged through the beauty of
yellow gold, and through the luster of flashing silver is figured the common
life of married pairs, which is entitled to all. So God’s doctrine, written in
precious metals, leads those who follow the light of the Gospels with kind
hearts to the bright halls of the light-streaming realm; and those ascending to
the towering stars of the lofty firmament, it settles in the chambers of the king
of heaven for all time.]³⁴⁹

The dedication poem on fol. 348v of the early ninth-century Theodulf Bible (Paris,
BnF, MS Lat. 9380) is framed in ornate arches and written in gold on purple-dyed
parchment. Beyond the decoration, the poem uses metallic imagery to emphasize the

³⁴⁹ Trans. Beatrice Kitzinger with reference to Fabrizio Crivello, Charlotte Denoël,
and Peter Orth. *Das Godesscalc-Evangelistar. Ein Prachthandschrift für Karl den
Großen* (Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 2011). Prepared for *Crafting Presence: Material
Evocations, 400–1500*, ed. Britta Dümpelmann. Studies in Art & Materiality (Leiden:
Brill, under review). I am grateful to Beatrice Kitzinger for sharing her translation and
commentary with me.

lowliness of the materials of the book, which are but iron compared to the glorious words of metaphorical silver and gold:

Non has, lector ovans, quasi quaedam vilia tempne, / Vilis rem pulchram capsula
tenere solet: / Ferrea nam clavis, de vili facta metallo / Argenti atque auri dat
penetrare locum.

[Do not disdain them, good reader, as trivial matters, / For a lowly box can
contain fair things. / An iron key fashioned from cheap metal / Opens the way
to the location of silver and gold.]³⁵⁰

In the poems, gold and silver are used to describe the magnificence of the words contained in the manuscripts, the rich decoration of the pages, and, moreover, a foretaste of the glory of the heavenly kingdom.

The poems use references to precious metals as part of evoking the multi-sensory environment of which these manuscripts were part. In the passage from the Dagulf poem quoted above, the words “cantus [song]”, “sonant [sound]”, and “canunt [sing]” conjure the aural character of the Psalms, described as “aurea verba [golden words].” In the Godesscalc poem, words evoking light-imagery such as “fulgida [gleaming],” “splendida [glittering],” and “lucida [bright],” are interwoven with descriptions of the materials, especially precious metals, that would have produced those effects when interacting with light. It is a reasonable possibility precious metals were used for the covers of these manuscripts, based on the designs of other pieces of

³⁵⁰ Duemmler, ed. *Poetae Latini Aevi Carolini. Tomus I*, 539. English translation from Theodore M. Anderson, trans., *Theodulf of Orléans: The Verse* (Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies: Tempe, AZ, 2014), 135.

metalwork associated with the court of Charlemagne and surviving book covers associated with the court of Charlemagne's successor Charles the Bald.³⁵¹ Using precious metals and other brilliant materials, the covers would have been yet another visual representation of the earthly and heavenly splendor expressed in the poems and in the metallic letters and gold and silver painted decoration.

In the early middle ages in northwestern Europe, and especially in England, the goldsmith was often revered as the most esteemed class of craftsmen.³⁵² Foremost among early medieval goldsmiths is the seventh-century St. Eloy of Noyon, described in his life as making shrines for several saints, including the tomb of St. Denis. Fragments of a cross formed of garnets set in gold attributed to St. Eloy survive (Fig. 102).³⁵³ The figure of the Germanic hero Weland the Smith, famed for his goldsmithing skills, was also popular. A scene featuring Weland appears opposite the

³⁵¹ For a discussion of the use of precious metals in the book covers of manuscripts associated with the court of Charlemagne, see Ilka Mestermacher "Images of Architecture and Materials: The Miniatures in the Soissons Gospels (Bibliothèque Nationale de France MS Lat. 8850)" in *Die Handschriften der Hofschule Kaiser Karls des Großen: Individuelle Gestalt und europäisches Kulturerbe Ergebnisse der Trierer Tagung vom 10.-12. Oktober 2018* (Trier: Verlag für Geschichte und Kultur, 2019), 53-59.

³⁵² On the preeminence of the goldsmith among craftsmen in early medieval England, see C. R. Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art: A New Perspective* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982), 44-83.

³⁵³ *Vita Eligii Episcopi Novomagiensis*, X, 32, ed. W. Krusch, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores*, IV (Hannover-Leipzig: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1902), p. 688-89.

scene of the adoration of the magi on the front of the Franks Casket (Fig. 103).³⁵⁴ In both of these examples, the skills of St. Eloy and Weland as goldsmiths contributed to their holiness. For Eloy, his skill was one of the most visible manifestations of his saintliness. On the Franks Casket, the image of Weland is paired with the image of the three magi, drawing comparison between the gifts given by the magi and Weland's productions in metal.³⁵⁵

Bronze, even more than silver and gold, had particular associations with craftsmanship and creation in the middle ages, rooted in Aristotle's image of a lump of bronze as the ultimate example of material becoming form.³⁵⁶ Cast in bronze, the Lough Kinale book shrine makes the process of creation tangible not through the visualization of the design process, as discussed in relation to the cover of the Faddan More Psalter, the cover of the St. Cuthbert Gospel, and other examples in the previous chapter, but rather through the choice of material. The bronze of the shrine is alloyed and cast to form delicate, verdant tendrils creeping around the edges of the box - animated forms emerging from the hand of the artist rather than the organic wood

³⁵⁴ For an introduction to the Franks Casket and a description of its imagery, see Leslie Webster, *The Franks Casket* (London: British Museum Press, 2012).

³⁵⁵ Abels, "What Has Weland to Do with Christ? The Franks Casket and the Acculturation of Christianity in Early Anglo-Saxon England," 549-581.

³⁵⁶ Ittai Weinryb, *The Bronze Object in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 56-73.

beneath.³⁵⁷ The destruction and deposition of the shrine takes on new meaning in this light, becoming a meaningful reversal of the act of artistic creation. Overall, the silver, gold, and bronze used on early medieval book covers added luminescence to the object and was a striking display of fine metalworking – a distinguished form of holy craftsmanship.

5.2.4 Gemstones

The metal fittings of book covers were often set with gemstones, cameos, colored glass, and enamel. The Lough Kinale Shrine has amber set into the central boss of the cross as well as in the lozenge-shaped pieces attached to the corners (Fig. 104). The bosses at the end of each arm of the cross no longer have stones, but there are spaces where they would have been set.³⁵⁸ The lower cover of the Lindau Gospels is set with pearls, garnets, and colored stones or colored glass of green, gray, yellow, and blue.³⁵⁹ The vibrant colors and translucence of these materials added visual interest to the design and enhanced the object's interaction with light.

³⁵⁷ Ibid., 56-73. Weinryb makes a specific association between bronze, creation, and *silva* (forest) applicable to the vegetal motifs seen on the Lough Kinale book shrine.

³⁵⁸ Kelly, "The Lough Kinale Book-Shrine," 168.

³⁵⁹ The extensive modifications to the cover, most notably in the sixteenth century, as well as the fragility of the settings and value of the stones means many of the stones

Although some gemstones gained extra significance because of their distant origin, recent scientific study shows a strong presence of gemstones of European origin used in early medieval metalwork from western Europe. This evidence reinforces the importance of shorter-range networks in the period. Scientific studies of garnets in Frankish jewelry of the fifth to seventh centuries show that garnets originating in both India and central Europe were used. The majority of the garnets were from the more distant source of India and the eastern European garnets were found in the latest pieces of jewelry, closer in date to the book covers examined in this study.³⁶⁰ Analysis of the Guarrazar Treasure of seventh-century Spain also reveals an emphasis on more local origins for the gemstones. Although the sapphires studied show characteristics consistent with a Sri Lankan origin, the garnets and emeralds show characteristics of stones sourced in central Europe.³⁶¹ With many gemstones

currently on the cover were not the ones originally added. However, the cover likely had a similar variety of gemstones in the eighth century.

³⁶⁰ P. Périn, et. al., “Provenancing Merovingian Garnets by PIXE and μ -Raman Spectrometry,” in *Post-Roman Towns, Trade and Settlement in Europe and Byzantium. Volume 1, The Heirs of the Roman West*, ed. Joachim Henning (Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2009), 111-119, and T. Calligaro, et. al., “Combined external-beam PIXE and μ -Raman characterization of garnets used in Merovingian jewellery,” *Nuclear Instruments and Methods in Physics Research, B*, 189 (2002), 320-327.

³⁶¹ M. F. Guerra, T. Calligaro, and A. Perea, “The Treasure of Guarrazar: Tracing the Gold Supplies in the Visigothic Iberian Peninsula,” *Archaeometry*, 49, 1 (2007): 53-74, and J. S. Cozar and C. Sapalski, “Estudio de los materiales gemológicos del Tesoro de Guarrazar” *Boletín del Instituto geológico de España*, 37 (1996), 5-18.

originating in Europe, they were perhaps more valued for other characteristics, such as their color or age, rather than their association with distant locations.

Gemstones were attributed with unique properties based on their color, clarity, and rarity. Isidore of Seville devotes a section of the *Etymologies* to gemstones, in which they are categorized according to their color.³⁶² Isidore begins the section by emphasizing the rarity and preciousness of gemstones, stating “Pretiosi lapides ideo dicti sunt quia care valent [...] Omne enim quod rarum est magnum et pretiosum vocatur [They are called precious stones because they are valued dearly [...] for everything that is rare is called great and precious].”³⁶³ The organization of the section emphasizes color as a defining quality of the gemstones. Furthermore, gemstones are directly associated with gold. In his initial definition of gemstones, Isidore states, “quae multum auri decorum tribuunt venustate colorum [they add great beauty to gold with their loveliness of color].”³⁶⁴ The centrality of color and the connection to gold is evident in the *Etymologiae*, in the texts noted in the previous section, and in the designs of the book covers. The covers, in particular, make use of the colors of gemstones and glass enamel to add visual variety to work in precious metal.

³⁶² The section of the *Etymologiae* devoted to gemstones is Lib. XVI.vi-xvi.

³⁶³ Isidore of Seville, *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive originum libri XX*, ed. W. M. Lindsay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911), Lib. XVI.vi.1. English translation from Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, ed. and trans. Stephen A. Barney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 322.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

Gemstones were valued for their material and aesthetic qualities but gained further significance through Biblical connotations. In the book of Exodus, gemstones adorn the breastplate of Aaron. The passage specifies the twelve gemstones on the breastplate:

And thou shalt set it in four rows of stones: in the first row shall be a sardius stone, and a topaz, and an emerald: In the second a carbuncle, a sapphire and a jasper. In the third a ligurius, an agate, and an amethyst: In the fourth a chrysolite, an onyx, and a beryl. They shall be set in gold by their rows.³⁶⁵

The inclusion of gemstones in a protective breastplate can be paralleled with the inclusion of gemstones in a protective encasement for a book. The second Biblical passage alluding to gemstones is in the book of Revelations as part of the description of the heavenly Jerusalem:

And the foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper: the second, sapphire: the third, a chalcedony: the fourth, an emerald: The fifth, sardonyx: the sixth, sardius: the seventh, chrysolite: the eighth, beryl: the ninth, a topaz: the tenth, a chrysoprasus: the eleventh, a jacinth: the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates are twelve pearls, one to each: and every several gate was of one several pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.³⁶⁶

³⁶⁵ 28 Exodus: 17-19 (Douay-Reims Bible). Ponesque in eo quatuor ordines lapidum : in primo versu erit lapis sardius, et topazius, et smaragdus : in secundo carbunculus, sapphirus, et jaspis : in tertio ligurius, achates, et amethystus : in quarto chrysolithus, onychinus, et beryllus. Inclusi auro erunt per ordines suos. 28 Exodus :17-19 (Latin Vulgate).

³⁶⁶ 21 Revelations: 19-21 (Douay-Reims Bible). Et fundamenta muri civitatis omni lapide pretioso ornata. Fundamentum primum, jaspis : secundum, sapphirus : tertium, calcedonius : quartum, smaragdus : quintum, sardonyx : sextum, sardius : septimum, chrysolithus : octavum, beryllus : nonum, topazius : decimum, chrysoprasus : undecimum, hyacinthus : duodecimum, amethystus. Et duodecim portae, duodecim margaritae sunt, per singulas : et singulae portae erant ex singulis margaritis : et platea

The relationship between the materials of the book cover and the heavenly Jerusalem complements the association with symbolic architectural forms discussed in the previous chapter. The structural forms of the book covers crafted of gemstones and precious metal, such as the lower cover of the Lindau Gospels and the Lough Kinale Shrine, might be viewed as miniature representations of the splendid built environment of the heavenly city.³⁶⁷

The value placed on the color, translucence, and religious associations of gemstones, rather than their exotic origin or treasure value, is emphasized by the placement of gemstones and related materials in manuscripts of the period.³⁶⁸ This is illustrated by the varied mixture of glass and enamel alongside gemstones on the lower cover of the Lindau Gospels. In this case, the glass and enamel do not have an exotic origin, but they add luminous color to the object. Colored glass may be used

civitatis aurum mundum, tamquam vitrum perlucidum. 21 Revelations: 19-21 (Latin Vulgate).

³⁶⁷ Jeanne-Marie Musto notes that the upper cover of the Lindau Gospels as well as the cover of the Codex Aureus of St. Emmeram have settings with gemstones in the shape of miniature arcades. Musto attributes the motif of the miniature arcade to the court of Charlemagne. Jeanne-Marie Musto, “John Scottus Eriugena and the Upper Cover of the Lindau Gospels,” *Gesta*, 40, No. 1 (2001), n. 18.

³⁶⁸ The religious, rather than treasure, value of gemstones is also apparent in the perceived affinity between stones and the remains of holy figures, explored in Brigitte Büttner, “From Bones to Stones – Reflections on Jeweled Reliquaries,” in *Reliquiare im Mittelalter*, ed. Bruno Reudenbach and Gia Toussaint (Berlin: Akademie, 2005), 43-59.

periodically as a substitute for genuine gemstones, although further study is necessary to distinguish between them. Enamel adds the value of the artist's craftsmanship. In the lower cover of the Lindau Gospels, the technique of enamel allows the artist to not only add color, but also to craft original imagery of geometric designs, animals, and busts of Christ. Juxtaposed with busts of Christ and the image of the cross, the deep red garnets outlining the enamels, gemstones, and silver-gilt medallions on the cover may have gained significance due to their blood-like color and resulting association with the blood of Christ and the martyrs.³⁶⁹ Together, the glass, enamel, and gemstones work as multi-faceted embellishments, adding color, luminescence, craftsmanship, and Christian meaning to the object.

Further supporting the importance of the aesthetic and spiritual value of gemstones are the numerous examples of painted representations of gemstones found in the pages of early medieval manuscripts, notably those associated with the court of Charlemagne. To use the Gospels of Saint-Médard of Soissons (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Lat. 8850) as one example, the arcades of the canon tables are set with painted representations of carved cameos. The border of fol. 31v is painted to mimic garnet cloisonnée.³⁷⁰ Finally, the borders of the pages with the evangelist

³⁶⁹ Francesca Dell'Acqua argued the association between garnets and Christ is more broadly applicable to Christian objects adorned with garnets in the early middle ages in "The Carbunculus (Red Garnet) and the Double Nature of Christ in the Early Medieval West," *Konsthistorisk tidskrift/ Journal of Art History*, 86.3 (2017) 158-172.

³⁷⁰ This comparison was noted by Joanna Story. See Chris Fern, Tania Dickinson, and Leslie Webster, eds. *The Staffordshire Hoard: An Anglo-Saxon Treasure*. Research

portraits imitate gold set with pearls and colored gemstones. Amanda Sciampacone argues, based on her examination of the Gospels of Saint-Médard de Soissons, that the preponderance of painted representations of gemstones confirms that the materiality of the precious stones is less important than their ability to aid spiritual transcendence in Carolingian manuscripts.³⁷¹ Ilka Mestemacher similarly sees the imitation of gold, gemstones, and marble in manuscript painting of the Carolingian court as a way for artists to visualize ideas beyond the literal text of the Gospels about their spiritual, intellectual, and artistic meaning.³⁷² The books covers set with glass, gemstones and fine metalwork acted as a radiant, multi-dimensional visualization of the interplay between the natural and the artificial, the material and the immaterial.

5.2.5 Ivory and Bone

Comparable to the gemstones and precious metals used in early medieval book covers in rarity and value is ivory. In the *Natural History*, the quintessential ancient

Report of the Society of Antiquaries of London No. 80 (London: Society of Antiquaries of London, 2019), 95.

³⁷¹ Amanda Sciampacone, “Material Value and Immaterial Vision: The Role of Real and Represented Gems in the Gospels of Saint-Médard of Soissons,” *Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 42 (2011), 26.

³⁷² Ilka Mestemacher, *Marmor, Gold und Edelsteine: Materialimitation in der karolingischen Buchmalerei* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), 309.

Roman encyclopedia, Pliny describes ivory's unique combination of luxury and appropriateness for religious images, stating, "Dentibus ingens pretium et deorum simulacris lautissima ex his materia [The tusks fetch a vast price, and supply a very elegant material for images of the gods]." ³⁷³ The ivory plaques used in the cover of the Dagulf Psalter are the one example which use this material among the surviving eighth-century book covers designated as the core examples in this study. However, there are several other examples of similar ivory plaques from the early middle ages which may have been attached to book covers, and which are outlined in chapter 2.

The ivory trade that developed in the Roman empire lingered into the late antique period, bringing elephant tusks to northwestern Europe from Africa and, less often, Asia. Trade in ivory diminished dramatically, essentially ceasing in northwestern Europe, beginning in the sixth century. For this reason, artists would often re-carve ancient ivories or use alternative materials, such as walrus ivory or bone. ³⁷⁴ Ivory regained a foothold in northwestern Europe in the court of

³⁷³ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History, Volume III: Books 8-11*, trans. H. Rackham. Loeb Classical Library 353. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1940), VIII, 24-25.

³⁷⁴ On the sources of ivory in late antiquity and in later periods in the eastern Roman empire, see Anthony Cutler, *The Craft of Ivory: Sources, Techniques, and Uses in the Mediterranean World: A.D. 200-1400* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1985), 20-37. For a current overview of the Carolingian ivory trade, see Lawrence Nees, "Charlemagne's Elephant," trans. "El Elefante de Carlomagno," *Quintana*, 5 (2006), 13-49. For essential discussion of how the ivory trade developed in northern Europe in the later middle ages, see Sarah M. Guérin, "Aporio d'ogni ragione: the supply of elephant ivory to northern Europe in the Gothic era," *Journal of Medieval History*, 36, 2 (2010), 156-174.

Charlemagne at the end of the eighth century. Lawrence Nees sees the gift of the elephant Abdul Abaz from the Abbasid Caliph Harun al-Rashid to Charlemagne as a pivotal moment in the history of Carolingian ivory production, although the Dagulf Psalter ivories, produced several years before the visit of the Abbasid embassy, indicate an interest in the material before the arrival of the live elephant.³⁷⁵ In the context of the Carolingian court, ivory signified not only wealth and luxury, but also intellectual and political authority in a material form recognizable from antiquity.

The choice to form the Dagulf ivories with more elongated proportions not only used the material more efficiently, it also created a visual link to ancient tablets, including writing tablets and consular diptychs.³⁷⁶ The shape of the elephant tusk is limiting, so a long, thin rectangle is a favored shape for tablets because it uses the material economically. Parchment is not limited in the same way, so cutting the pages of the manuscript according to the same proportions as the ivories may have been a more economical choice than carving the ivories according to the same proportions as the pages. Examples of early medieval manuscripts made with elongated proportions suggest book makers were interested in book designs that evoked tablets, including

³⁷⁵ Nees, "Charlemagne's Elephant," 44.

³⁷⁶ Gaborit-Chopin lists the measurements of the ivories as 168-169 mm x 82 mm. The ÖNB online catalog lists the measurements of the pages as 192 mm x 120 mm. This means the ivories have a height to width proportion of 1 : 0.487 and the pages have a height to width proportion of 1 : 0.625. On ancient writing tablets, see chapter 3, pg. 15-16.

ivory tablets.³⁷⁷ With the Dagulf Psalter, the more square format of the pages shows that other considerations were at the forefront with the pages. Instead, the form and material of the ivory plaques displayed on the cover generate the association between the manuscript and ancient tablets.

Consular diptychs made of ivory were a key symbol of political authority in late antiquity. Some forty survive and among these are examples of several made for the same individuals.³⁷⁸ Anthony Cutler notes it is possible that consuls in both east and west distributed some one hundred diptychs each year on January 1.³⁷⁹ The techniques and imagery used in secular ivory carving were also appropriated into a Christian context in late antiquity. For example, the monumental, elongated, enthroned figures of consuls on consular diptychs, such as the diptych of Rufus Probianus, are

³⁷⁷ The St. Gall *Evaneglium longum*, though dated to ca. 895, is an effective example since the cover adorned with ivory tablets survives, and the cover to which the tablets are attached and the pages of the manuscript directly follow the format of the tablets. On the artistic environment at St. Gall in which the *Evangelium longum* was made and which encompassed both ivory carving and manuscript painting, see Ittai Weinryb, “Material and Making: Artisanal Epistemology at St. Gall,” in *Tuotilo – Archäologie eines frühmittelalterlichen Künstlers*, ed. David Ganz and Cornel Dora (St. Gallen: Verlag am Klosterhof; Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 2017), 269-283. For an exploration of how the *Evangelium longum* and related ivory book covers from St. Gall are a visual and material representation of layered memory, see David Ganz, “Im Revier des Bären. Die Schreibtafeln Karls des Großen und die Buchhülle Tuotilos,” in *Charlemagne et les objets: Des thésaurisations carolingiennes aux constructions mémorielles*, ed. Philippe Cordez (Bern: Peter Lang, 2012).

³⁷⁸ Cutler, *The Craft of Ivory*, 27.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.

echoed in late antique images of Christ, apostles, bishops, and other holy figures enthroned (Fig. 105).³⁸⁰ This iconography is then adopted in Carolingian ivory tablets, including those used for book covers such as the ivories of the Lorsch Gospels (Fig. 106).³⁸¹ Ivory carving also entered a Christian context in late antiquity with the production of ivory reliquaries carved with narrative scenes. The narrative scenes on the Dagulf Psalter ivories operate in a similar way, using what Cynthia Hahn terms “sympathetic models of behavior” to demonstrate how the holy can be learned and practiced.³⁸² The use of ivory and its material presence, long embedded in the political structures linking church and state, made the cover of the Dagulf Psalter an essential symbol of the diplomatic maneuverings of which the manuscript was part.

The Carolingian present takes precedence over the Biblical or late antique past in the Dagulf Psalter. This is apparent in the language of the dedication poems. The

³⁸⁰ For a general discussion of this iconography, see Lawrence Nees, *Early Medieval Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 52-55. See also Thomas F. Mathews, *The Clash of Gods: A Reinterpretation of Early Christian Art*, rev. and exp. ed., (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 92-114. For more examples of ivories using this iconography, see Anthony Cutler, “Le *Consulardiptychen* de Richard Delbrück et l’Hégémonie de la *Klassische Archäologie*,” in *Late Antique and Byzantine Ivory Carving*, ed. Anthony Cutler (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 1998), 393-410.

³⁸¹ Anthony Cutler, for example, argues that an ivory diptych now held in Monza at the Biblioteca Capitolare was a Carolingian production rather than a re-worked late antique carving. See “Le *Consulardiptychen* de Richard Delbrück et l’Hégémonie de la *Klassische Archäologie*,” 399-410.

³⁸² Hahn, *Strange Beauty*, 46-61.

new craftsmanship of the ivories is emphasized in the lines “Haec merito tabulis cultim decorantur eburnis / Quas mire exculpit ingeniosa manus [These ivory tablets are honorably decorated, / Which ingenious hands have marvelously sculpted].”³⁸³

The second dedication poem foregrounds the exchange between Pope Hadrian I and Charlemagne, stating, “Hadriano summo papae patrique beato / Rex Carolus salve mando valeque, pater [Hadrian, most blessed Pope and father, / I, Charlemagne, send a greeting and farewell, father].”³⁸⁴ Additionally, the text of the Psalms found in the manuscript is the new ‘critical edition’ fashioned by Carolingian theologians.

Nevertheless, the presence of the ivory plaques and, furthermore, the depiction of one of the scholars surrounding King David in the upper panel of the David plaque holding writing tablets provide a visual and material representation of the intellectual and political lineage from King David, through Pope Damasus I, up to Charlemagne and Pope Hadrian I (Fig. 107).

5.2.6 Papyrus

³⁸³ Duemmler, ed. *Poetae Latini Aevi Carolini. Tomus I*, 92. English translation by the author.

³⁸⁴ Ibid.

Papyrus was the material characteristic of books of the ancient Mediterranean. As described in Pliny's *Natural History*, papyrus originated in Egypt.³⁸⁵ Pliny emphasizes the importance of Papyrus, stating "cum chartae usu maxime humanitas vitae constet, certe memoria [since our civilization or at all events our records depend very largely on the employment of paper]."³⁸⁶ In the Roman Empire, papyrus was shipped throughout the Mediterranean to be used as a writing support for every genre of text from personal notes to philosophical treatises. Parchment supplanted papyrus as the primary writing support used in northwestern Europe, in part due to changes in early medieval trade networks, which affected the accessibility of papyrus in the seventh and eighth centuries.³⁸⁷ The centrality of papyrus in ancient Mediterranean

³⁸⁵ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History, Volume IV: Books 12-16*, trans. H. Rackham. Loeb Classical Library 370. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1945), XIII, 68-89. Locally available materials were also frequently used as writing supports in areas of the Roman Empire distant from Egypt. A prime example is the Vindolanda Tablets, written on wood and uncovered in northern England. For an overview of the Vindolanda Tablets see "Vindolanda Tablets Online," accessed June 15, 2021, <http://vindolanda.csad.ox.ac.uk/>.

³⁸⁶ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History, Volume IV: Books 12-16*, trans. H. Rackham, XIII, 68-69.

³⁸⁷ On the transition from papyrus to parchment as the primary writing support in Europe and the relationship between the transition in writing support and the transition in form from scroll to codex, see Colin H. Roberts and T. C. Skeat, *The Birth of the Codex* (London: Published for the British Academy by the Oxford University Press, 1983), 5-10. Susan Kelly, "Anglo-Saxon Lay Society and the Written Word," in *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. Rosamund McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 41-42, and Jean Mabillon, *De re diplomatica libri VI* (Luteciae-Parisiourn: Robustel, 1709), 35-36. Two examples of Merovingian

trade and its effective disappearance in early medieval northern Europe led Henri Pirenne to use it as a product indicative of what he identifies as a decline in Mediterranean trade in the seventh century.³⁸⁸ More recently Michael McCormick revisited the changes in the papyrus trade in the period and argues that there was still a steady supply of papyrus reaching western Europe, but due to changes in transalpine communication routes the material was not regularly transported to northern Europe after the seventh century.³⁸⁹ Papyrus continued to be used for charters and manuscripts in the Merovingian kingdom into the eighth century and by the Papacy in Rome into the eleventh century (Fig. 108). There are also examples of papyrus being used for the production of codices in the early middle ages, particularly in the seventh century in southern and eastern France.³⁹⁰

One exceptional example is a codex that contains both parchment and papyrus leaves, containing a copy of letters and sermons by St. Augustine dated to the seventh

documents and one fragment from a codex are Isabelle Bardiès-Fronty, Charlotte Denoël, and Inès Villela-Petit, *Les Temps Mérovingiens*, cats. 15, 16, and 52.

³⁸⁸ Henri Pirenne, “Le Commerce du Papyrus dans la Gaule Mérovingienne,” *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 72^e année, N. 2 (1928), 178-191.

³⁸⁹ Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communication and Commerce, A.D. 300-900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 704-708.

³⁹⁰ Rosamond McKitterick, “The Scriptoria of Merovingian Gaul: A Survey of the Evidence,” in *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, ed. by Howard Clarke and Mary Brennan (Oxford: B.A.R., 1981), 174-176.

century and likely made at Luxeuil (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France Ms. Lat. 11641) (Fig. 109). By employing both papyrus and parchment, the manuscript breaks material, geographical, and temporal boundaries. There is a material interplay between the velvety parchment and the fibrous papyrus. There is a decorative interplay between the colorful, zoomorphic decorated initials on the parchment pages and the deep black, geometric decorated initials on the papyrus pages (Fig. 110).³⁹¹ Finally, there is a historical and geographical interplay between the writing support characteristic of the ancient Mediterranean and that characteristic of early medieval northwestern Europe. The papyrus in BnF Ms. Lat. 11641 contributes to the archaizing quality of the manuscript, heightened by the use of uncial script, the presence of classicizing square capitals, and the layout and spacing of the text.³⁹² These archaizing features appear alongside twist patterns and zoomorphic decorated initials distinctive to early medieval Luxeuil on the parchment pages.³⁹³ In BnF Ms. Lat. 1164, the materials are a crucial component of the adaptation of ancient practices of book production into uniquely early medieval forms.

³⁹¹ Babette Tewes, *Die Handschriften der Schule von Luxeuil: Kunst und Ikonographie eines frühmittelalterlichen Skriptoriums* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011), 168-170.

³⁹² Nees, *Frankish Manuscripts* (Forthcoming).

³⁹³ One striking comparison is St. Petersburg RNL, Lat. Q.v.I.14. Nees, *Frankish Manuscripts* (Forthcoming).

While papyrus is most frequently employed as a writing surface, it is sometimes used in the construction of the covers of books. Book covers made in Coptic Egypt, including the covers of the Nag Hammadi Codices and the St. Michael Collection discussed in chapter two, use papyrus, rather than wooden, boards to form a structural support for their leather coverings. A fragment of papyrus was discovered that would have formed part of the lining of the cover of the Faddan More Psalter. It is a crucial piece of evidence, leading those studying the cover to connect it to Egypt, both because that is where the plant is grown, and also because it is a material used there in the production of books. Some have even hypothesized the cover of the Faddan More Psalter may have been imported from Egypt.³⁹⁴ Importation directly from Egypt is possible, but not necessary to explain the papyrus. While tracing the exact routes that may have brought papyrus to Ireland is a complex task, the presence of papyrus in documents and codices in Francia and the Italian peninsula suggests that other possibilities besides direct importation from Egypt, including potential construction in Ireland, must be considered for the cover of the Faddan More Psalter. Whether the papyrus in the cover of the Faddan More Psalter was a precious import reserved for use in a valued object or a discarded scrap, the material connected the cover to the legal and diplomatic operations of the Papacy and the Frankish kingdoms, as well as to the Egyptian desert and to the Desert Fathers revered by Irish monks.

³⁹⁴ Anthony Read, *The Faddan More Psalter: Discovery, Conservation and Investigation* (Dublin: National Museum of Ireland, 2011), 57-59.

5.3 Sacred Objects

Religion in northwestern Europe in the early middle ages was expressed through material objects. Liturgical objects were central to the rituals of religious life, relics and reliquaries encapsulated the power of the saints, and books made scripture tangible. These material forms of religion were connected through the metal, gems, and other substances used to create them. The materiality of these objects crafted a religious environment that was colorful and splendid. Books were a central component of this environment and covers were essential to making books a harmonious part of their material and religious setting.

In her indispensable overview of relics in western Europe to ca. 1205, Cynthia Hahn defines a relic as, “a physical object understood to carry the *virtus* of a saint or Christ, literally ‘virtue,’ but more accurately the ‘power’ of a holy person.”³⁹⁵ Reliquaries are the encasements made for these relics, which may be body parts or other objects associated with Christ or a saint.³⁹⁶ Reliquaries are often made from precious materials to reflect the value of the contents and to dazzle the worshipper.

³⁹⁵ Hahn, *Strange Beauty*, 8-9.

³⁹⁶ In Ireland, in contrast to Gaul, Francia, and England, there was less emphasis on bodily relics and more emphasis on associative relics, such as staffs and bells. Some books, such as the Cathach that was central in the cult of St. Columba, fit into this category of holy objects. On the centrality of associative relics in medieval Ireland, see Karen Overbey, *Sacral Geographies: Saints, Shrines, and Territory in Medieval Ireland* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 5-6.

Many surviving reliquaries of the eighth century are in the shapes of small houses with peaked roofs. Complementing the architectural space in which these reliquaries were housed and the architectural associations present in nearby manuscripts and their encasements, this shape suggests a structure housing the relics, perhaps a chapel or a satchel that carried the object, rather than the physical nature of the relics themselves.³⁹⁷ Several Frankish examples survive from the eighth century, including the Enger Reliquary and the Altheus Reliquary, among others (Fig. 15).³⁹⁸ There are also several Irish examples of the same form from the same period.³⁹⁹

Like the encasements of books, reliquaries were designed to both conceal and reveal their contents. The cover and the reliquary both act as the most visible, and

³⁹⁷ Relics were also an integral part of the consecration of the sacred spaces where they were housed, adding further meaning to the use of architectural forms for reliquaries. On the use of relics in the consecration of sacred spaces in the early middle ages, see Susanne Wittekind, “Zur Bedeutung von Reliquiarien in der frühmittelalterlichen Liturgie,” in *Text, Bild und Ritual in der Mittelalterlichen Gesellschaft (8.-11. Jh.)*, ed. Patrizia Carmassi and Christoph Winterer (Florence: Sismel, Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2014), 233-262. On book satchels, see chapter 2, 56-58.

³⁹⁸ In addition to the Enger and Altheus reliquaries are two objects dated to the eighth century and possibly used as reliquaries listed in Isabelle Bardiès-Fronty, Charlotte Denoël, and Inès Villela-Petit, *Les Temps Mérovingiens*, cats. 190 and 209. The catalog also includes two similar items dated to the seventh century, the Teuderic Reliquary and the Ennabeuren Reliquary. See Isabelle Bardiès-Fronty, Charlotte Denoël, and Inès Villela-Petit, *Les Temps Mérovingiens*, figs. 23 and 33.

³⁹⁹ On the Irish house-shaped shrines, see Rachel Moss, ed., *Art and Architecture of Ireland Volume I: Medieval c. 400-1600*, (Dublin; New Haven; London: Published for the Royal Irish Academy and the Paul Mellon Centre by Yale University Press, 2014), 286-290.

sometimes the only visible, expression of their contents. The contents themselves - the words on the page or the humble fragment of a saint - remained entirely hidden or were only shown on select occasions or to select individuals. The Lough Kinale Shrine appears to have been fully sealed based on examination of the binding strips securing the sides of the shrine together.⁴⁰⁰ If this interpretation of the physical evidence is correct, the pages of the manuscript would have been inaccessible to those who were able to access the shrine when it was fully intact. Until the shrine was opened, evidently an arduous task based on the battered condition of the surviving fragments, the only individuals who would be able to access the pages were those who had been able to view it prior to its enshrinement and, therefore, were able to access a memory of it. The nature of the object and its cover creates a hierarchy of access, distinguishing those who could see the shrine from afar, those who could study it closely, and those who had seen the sacred manuscript inside. The interplay of the visible and the invisible and the creation of a hierarchy of access is a critical component of both book covers and reliquaries.⁴⁰¹

⁴⁰⁰ Kelly, "The Lough Kinale Shrine," 6.

⁴⁰¹ On vision and the visibility of relics, see Cynthia Hahn, "What Do Reliquaries Do for Relics?" *Numen*, 57, No. ¾ (2010), 303-309. Herbert Kessler, "Real Absence: Early Medieval Art and the Metamorphosis of Vision," in *Spiritual Seeing: Picturing God's Invisibility in Medieval Art* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 104-148.

Books and their covers are also connected to relics in being part of the material expression of sanctity. The St. Cuthbert Gospel is intertwined with the objects associated with St. Cuthbert and buried with him, including the gold and garnet cross, an ivory comb, and the carved coffin, all of which may have been buried with the saint during his translation in 698 or soon after. The later medieval accounts from the translation in 1104 make note of the gospel book as a prominently placed and singularly important object laid in the coffin above the head of the saint.⁴⁰² Later in the account, the other objects found when the coffin was opened are described with equal care.⁴⁰³ The objects and book together create the material environment of the sacred space of the burial. The Ragyndrudis Codex and its cover are a similar material representation of St. Boniface's sanctity. Beginning with a reference in the early ninth-century *Vita Altera Sancti Bonifatii*, the manuscript began to be revered as the manuscript held by the saint to protect himself against his assailants who would then martyr him.⁴⁰⁴ Regina Hausmann, following the tradition associated with the book,

⁴⁰² C. F. Battiscombe, *The Relics of Saint Cuthbert: Studies by Various Authors Collected and Edited with an Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Printed for the Dean and Chapter of Durham Cathedral at the University Press, Oxford, 1956), 101. For the Latin text, see *Capitula de Miraculis et Translationibus Sancti Cuthberti*, cap. VI, *Symeonis Monachi Historiae Dunelmensis Ecclesiae Auctarium*, Roll Ser. Of the Works attributed to Symeon of Durham, ed. T. Arnold, Vol. 1 (London, 1885), 251.

⁴⁰³ Battiscombe, *The Relics of Saint Cuthbert*, 103. For the Latin text, see *Capitula de Miraculis et Translationibus Sancti Cuthberti*, Vol. 1, 255.

⁴⁰⁴ Lutz E. Padberg and Hans-Walter Stork, *Der Ragyndrudis-Codex des Hl. Bonifatius* (Paderborn: Bonifatius; Fulda: Parzeller, 1994), 16.

extrapolated from this description to posit that the large gash in the cover is from the sword that killed Boniface.⁴⁰⁵ If true, the cover is a conspicuous reminder of the violence of the martyrdom. In both cases, not only the books, but also their covers are material signs of the sanctity of the individuals with whom they are associated.

Other liturgical objects are ornamented similarly to book covers and reliquaries. On one side of the late eighth-century chrismatory are symmetrically arranged vine scrolls springing from vases similar to the cover of the St. Cuthbert Gospel (Fig. 111).⁴⁰⁶ The Gandersheim Casket, also a house-shaped box possibly a chrismatory, is made of whale bone (a substitute for ivory) carved with interlace patterns, echoing patterns on the Lough Kinale Shrine, the cover of the Faddan More Psalter, and the St. Cuthbert Gospel, as well as the ivory carving of the Dagulf Psalter (Fig. 100).⁴⁰⁷ Similarities are also observable between book covers and chalices used in the liturgy. For examples, scholars have assigned the creatures in the arms of the lower cover of the Lindau Gospels to the same style as the Tassilo Chalice (Fig.

⁴⁰⁵ Regina Hausmann, *Die Theologischen Handschriften der Hessischen Landesbibliothek Fulda bis zum Jahr 1600: Codices Bonifatiani 1-3, Aa 1-145a* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1992), 8.

⁴⁰⁶ Leslie Webster, *Anglo-Saxon Art: A New Perspective* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), 165-166.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 108-109.

18).⁴⁰⁸ Both the Ardagh and Derrynaflan Chalices, like the Lough Kinale book shrine, display amber studs set in intricate metalwork (Fig. 112).⁴⁰⁹ Similar book covers also have important parallels with liturgical crosses. The Rupertus Cross uses a *crux ansata* form like the cross on the lower cover of the Lindau Gospels (Fig. 101). The Tully Lough Cross has bosses with spiral patterns, openwork plates, and amber akin to the Lough Kinale book shrine (Figs. 113 and 114).⁴¹⁰ Liturgical crosses such as these would have been another representation of the *crux gemmata*, alongside the books adorned with crosses of gold and gems.

Performativity and movement are inherent in the nature of relics, liturgical objects, and book covers. Relics were touched, crosses were processed, books were held aloft, all as part of an elaborate theatrical production involving choreographed movement, lighting, and sound.⁴¹¹ The straps of the Lough Kinale Shrine indicate that

⁴⁰⁸ These scholars include Katharina Bierbrauer, Jacques Guilman, and Egon Wamers. See Elbern, “The ‘Earlier’ Lindau Book Cover: An Integrated Analysis,” 327.

⁴⁰⁹ Moss, ed., *Art and Architecture of Ireland Volume I: Medieval c. 400-1600*, 261-264.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid., 268-269.

⁴¹¹ The relationship between Christian liturgical settings and ancient theater structures is elaborated on in Donalee Dox, “Roman Theatre and Roman Rite: Twelfth-Century Transformations in Allegory, Ritual, and the Idea of Theatre,” in *The Appearance of Medieval Rituals: The Play of Construction and Modification*, ed. Nils Holger Petersen (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 33-48. For a summary of the performativity of medieval art, see Herbert Kessler, *Experiencing Medieval Art*, 189-206. On the movement inherent in medieval Irish relics, see Overbey, *Sacral Geographies*, 9.

it was designed to be carried horizontally, processed to display the enshrined manuscript. The gemstones on the lower cover of the Lindau Gospels would have shone in brilliant color in the lighting of the church where it was exhibited. Even the sound of religious practice could be integrated into the designs of book covers. The ivory covers of the Dagulf Psalter show scenes of the singing of the psalms, emphasizing the importance of the oral performance of the text by a religious community.⁴¹² By involving the different senses and different forms of art, medieval liturgy specifically and medieval religion more generally constituted a true “synthesis of the arts” and a multi-sensory performance in which book covers were active participants.⁴¹³

Book covers of the eighth century were part of the public performance of religious doctrine and affirmation of faith. Through their materials and their role in religious life they can, in some contexts, be seen as more closely connected to the relics and liturgical objects surrounding them than to the pages they encased.⁴¹⁴

⁴¹² On the relationship between the text in the Dagulf Psalter and practices of singing the Psalms at the time it was made, see Rankin, “Singing the Psalter in the Early Middle Ages,” 279-287.

⁴¹³ For a summary of the idea of the medieval liturgy as a “synthesis of the arts,” see Palazzo, “Art, Liturgy, and the Five Senses in the Early Ages,” 25-28.

⁴¹⁴ John Lowden developed this idea of the cover as an expression of public performance in “The Word Made Visible: The Exterior of the Early Christian Book as Visual Argument,” in *The Early Christian Book*, ed. William E. Klingshirn and Linda Safran (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 47.

However, the cover is not only connected to its external surroundings and to the public ritual of the liturgy. It is equally connected to the internal contents of the book and to private, individual acts of reading and interacting with the manuscript. The cover provides the essential nexus between these different roles performed by the manuscript.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION: ADDING NEW DIMENSIONS TO THE EARLY MEDIEVAL BOOK

The cover is a key element of the physicality of the book and plays an active role in guiding the dynamic interaction between object, maker, and user. By inserting the cover into our understanding of the early medieval book, we see the manuscript beyond its two-dimensional script and two-dimensional painted decoration. Instead, we see it as a three-dimensional object constructed of gatherings of rough parchment and carefully crafted structures of leather, wood, or metal. It is an object with weight, texture, and volume knowable through handling. As has been shown throughout this dissertation, the eight book covers that form the core of this study are individualistic objects - the results of experimentation by book makers to create effective designs to serve the functions for which the cover and its manuscript were intended.

While rooted in the eighth century, the framework developed in this study can further illuminate our understanding of covers beyond eighth century northwestern Europe.⁴¹⁵ Importantly, characteristics of each of the eighth-century covers that

⁴¹⁵ Although the focus of this conclusion is later book covers from northwestern Europe, later book covers from different geographical contexts also exhibit designs promoting active engagement with the book. See, for example, Jinah Kim's study of the relationship between structure, illustration, and religious performance in twelfth-

successfully served these functions can be seen to have been adopted into covers of the latter part of the middle ages and into those of later periods and standardized forms developed to suit the specialized needs of different genres. Briefly applying the framework developed in this dissertation to book covers from northwestern Europe dated to the ninth through eleventh centuries illustrates the effectiveness of this holistic, function-based approach for analyzing book covers.

One key function of early medieval book covers was to operate as an encasement that allows for active engagement. This is exemplified in the eighth century, for example, by the Faddan More Psalter where the manuscript was kept as loose quires, and the cover was designed so the pages could be transported, distributed, and studied. Exhibiting this same fluidity of forms characteristic of the eighth century, the series of later encasements made for three personal prayer books - the Book of Mulling, the Book of Dimma, and the Stowe Missal - evolved as the ways the books were moved, manipulated, and read shifted through the centuries. The three

century and later South Asian manuscripts *Receptacle of the Sacred: Illustrated Manuscripts and the Buddhist Book Cult in South Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013). See also Imre Galambos's study of the relationship between paleographic and codicological features of groups of ninth and tenth century manuscripts found at Dunhuang and their social, cultural, and religious significance, *Dunhuang Manuscript Culture: End of the First Millennium* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020).

manuscripts all show evidence of periods of being unbound, bound, rebound, and placed in shrines.⁴¹⁶

The shrine of the Stowe Missal, originally constructed in the early eleventh century with late medieval additions, appears to have been designed to open for access to the manuscript placed inside, so the pages could be handled and read.⁴¹⁷ Furthermore, it depicts ecclesiastics holding a bell shrine and a crozier and angels holding objects that may be books, satchels, or relics (Fig. 115). These images reference the assembly of holy objects with which the shrine could have been associated and which were similarly designed to be held and carried.⁴¹⁸ The Book of Mulling, like the St. Cuthbert Gospel, shows wear on the outside of the gatherings, indicating it was kept as an assembly of loose quires before being placed in a metal

⁴¹⁶ Bernard Meehan, “The Book of Mulling (Trinity College Dublin MS 60): Bindings and ‘Blurrings’,” in *Islands in a Global Context: Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference on Insular Art, held at the National University of Ireland, Galway, 16-20 July 2014* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2017); John Gillis and Bernard Meehan, “Examining the Book of Dimma, the scribe Dianchríde and the Gospel of John,” in *An Insular Odyssey: Manuscript Culture in Early Christian Ireland and Beyond* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2017).

⁴¹⁷ Paul Mullarkey, “Book-Shrines.” In *Art and Architecture of Ireland Volume I: Medieval c. 400-1600*, ed. Rachel Moss (Dublin; New Haven; London: Published for the Royal Irish Academy and the Paul Mellon Centre by Yale University Press, 2014), 301.

⁴¹⁸ Paul Mullarkey, “The Figural Iconography of the *Soiscéal Molaise* and Stowe Missal Book Shrines,” in *Making and meaning in insular art: proceedings of the fifth International Conference on Insular Art held at Trinity College Dublin, 25-28 August 2005*, ed. Rachel Moss (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), 63-66.

shrine. The current shrine is dated to 1402, but portions may be early medieval, indicating alterations made to the shrine as it deteriorated or as the functionality changed.⁴¹⁹ The location of visible puncture marks and discoloration on the pages from the shrine suggest the pages were already disordered when placed in the shrine.⁴²⁰ The patterns of holes in the pages of the Book of Dimma examined recently by John Gillis and Bernard Meehan are evidence of a turbulent history of encasements, including possibly quire tackets, bindings, and shrines.⁴²¹ The encasements of these three manuscripts all exhibit forms used to enhance the portability and intimacy of the manuscripts.

A second key function of book covers in the eighth century was to add embellishment to make the object visually dynamic and aesthetically appealing. The use of non-figural designs worked in leather, seen in the eighth century on the covers of the Ragyndrudis Codex and the Victor Codex, was one successful mode of embellishment that was adopted to serve the needs of growing libraries in the following centuries. The ninth century experienced a blossoming of book production and monastic libraries, and a type of book cover that was durable, economical, and aesthetically pleasing was needed to encase the manuscripts made to fill the growing

⁴¹⁹ Mullarkey, “Book Shrines,” 303.

⁴²⁰ Meehan, “The Book of Mulling,” 160-162.

⁴²¹ Gillis and Meehan, “Examining the Book of Dimma,” 99-102.

libraries.⁴²² While the development of what I term library bindings is closely linked to the conditions of this later period, the designs of the bindings and their embellishment draw on practices of the eighth century.

Looking forward to the ninth and tenth centuries, the collections of book covers surviving from Freising, Corbie, and St. Gall represent this growing phenomenon of early medieval library bindings – bindings which fit the needs of books used for study and which provided a consistent and unified system of embellishment within a single collection.⁴²³ The covers from Freising and Corbie use quadripartite compositions forming a cross filled with motifs of rosettes, circles, and teardrops like those found on the cover of the Ragyndrudis Codex and the Victor Codex. A cover from Corbie and one from Freising exemplify these characteristic designs (Figs. 116 and 117). The book makers used a blind stamping technique to add the motifs to the leather, like the artists of the Victor Codex. The use of stamps was a

⁴²² Rosamond McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 165-211.

⁴²³ On the Carolingian bindings from St. Gall, see J. A. Szirmai, “Carolingian Bindings in the Abbey Library of St. Gall,” in *Making the Medieval Book: Techniques of Production*, ed. Linda L. Brownrigg (Los Altos Hills, CA: Anderson Lovelace, 1995), 157-179. Hobson identifies 38 ninth and tenth century bindings from the monastery of Freising. He assigns one to the “first bindery” and the remainder to the “second bindery.” For the list, see G. D. Hobson “Some Early Bindings and Binders’ Tools,” *The Library*, Fourth Series, vol. 19 (1939), 215. To my knowledge, there has been no full-scale study of these. On the early bindings from Corbie, see Jean Vezin, “Les Reliures Carolingiennes de Cuir: A Décor Estampée de la Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris,” *Bibliothèque de l’École de Chartes*, 128, No. 1 (Janvier-Juin 1970), 81-113.

practical choice because the stamps could be reused for multiple projects. Jean Vezin identified the same stamps being used for several covers from Corbie and similar conclusions may result from a full investigation of the Freising bindings.⁴²⁴ The library bindings are also made of the more durable and more economical materials of wood and leather rather than the luxury materials used for manuscripts intended for dazzling performance and display of wealth.⁴²⁵ It is notable that the two eighth-century decorated book covers with closest parallels to later library bindings, the Ragyndrudis Codex and the Victor Codex, are those that contain collections of patristic texts and scriptural commentaries – scholarly texts suited for a library rather than texts for private prayer or public liturgy.

Finally, book covers played a key role in the performance of religion in the eighth century and they continued to be a highly visible part of religious practice in later centuries. Two Ottonian manuscript illustrations from the eleventh century place highly decorated books in the center of depictions of altars. In the Bernward Gospels (Hildesheim, Dom- und Diözesanmuseum, Domschatz 18), the dedication page on fol. 16v shows a chalice, a paten, and a tray in gold set on an ornate altar (Fig. 118).

⁴²⁴ For a table showing the correspondence between the stamps used on early Corbie bindings, see Vezin, “Les Reliures Carolingiennes de Cuir,” 113.

⁴²⁵ Szirmai states that 93 of the 110 codices examined in his study of St. Gall bindings had boards made of oak and that two thirds of 109 bindings examined had unidentified ‘chamois’ leather. Szirmai, “Carolingian Bindings in the Abbey Library of St. Gall,” 158 and 170.

Bishop Bernward stands in front of the altar holding a book covered in gold and jewels. The placement of the book between the hands of the Bishop and the altar emphasizes its role as an intermediary between the celebrant and the liturgical objects.⁴²⁶

On fol. 10r of another gospel book (Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, W.7) there is an image of an abbot presenting the book to St. Peter (Fig. 119). Notable in this presentation image is another book cover on the altar behind St. Peter. The hand of God and a cross descend into the space above the altar, suggesting the role of the hand of God in the making of the more splendid book cover. Both covers are gold, but the one on the altar has larger jewels than found on the cover of the book held by the abbot. Perhaps, as suggested by Jennifer Kingsley, the image represents the addition of a new, more ornate cover.⁴²⁷ Moreover, the addition of the new cover depicted in the image may be part of the elevation of the religious status of the book - an act of enshrinement of the type discussed in chapter 5, but present in the eleventh century. Both Ottonian images emphasize the performative role of book covers and their position within a larger ensemble of objects that together create a multi-sensory religious environment through the materials from which they are crafted.

⁴²⁶ Jennifer Kingsley, *The Bernward Gospels: Art, Memory, and the Episcopate in Medieval Germany* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014), 15-18.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*, 16-18.

The enduring and multi-faceted relationship between book covers and the pages of the manuscripts with which they are associated is supremely illustrated by the copying of the ornamental page placed before the Gospel of Luke in the Lindisfarne Gospels in the Victorian cover made for the manuscript in 1853 (Figs. 120 and 121).⁴²⁸ For the project, Dr. Edward Maltby decided to commission a new cover which was both directly based on the decoration of the manuscript and also consistent with the 10th-century colophon, which describes the early medieval cover as, “adorned...with gold and with gems and with gilded-over silver.”⁴²⁹ The designers chose to base the composition not on one of the evangelist portraits or incipit pages, but on the ornamental page preceding the Gospel of Luke. In the ornamental page, they found a composition that was both balanced and centralized through its carefully constructed symmetry as well as visually dynamic because of the variety and intricacy of the ornamental designs.

Yet the designers did not simply copy the ornamental page. They responded to the possibilities of working in metal as opposed to paint, employing the contrasting sheen of gold and silver and the luminescence of colored stones. The multi-media ensemble that comprises the Victorian cover of the Lindisfarne Gospels echoes the

⁴²⁸ Michelle P. Brown, *The Lindisfarne Gospels: Society, Spirituality and the Scribe* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 207.

⁴²⁹ Lawrence Nees, “Reading Aldred’s Colophon for the Lindisfarne Gospels,” *Speculum*, Vol. 78, No. 2 (Apr. 2003), 341.

composite constructions of some early medieval covers, such as the lower cover of the Lindau Gospels. Furthermore, the cover proudly proclaims itself as part of the nineteenth-century moment in the history of the manuscript through the freshness of the materials compared to the pages and the gilt-stamped declaration of Maltby's contribution upon opening the front cover. The intricacies of the relationship between the modern cover and medieval pages of the Lindisfarne Gospels are similarly illustrated by the book covers of the early middle ages and the pages they encased.

Examining the decorated book covers from eighth-century northwestern Europe in light of new physical evidence and with a more geographically expansive perspective in this dissertation has shown that book covers were designed to invite active engagement between maker, user, and object. The cover added a fluidity of forms, an ordering of ornament, and a substance of the sacred to the manuscript. These extra dimensions make the cover a critical component for conceiving of the early medieval book as a whole object and as an object which is intertwined with its environment. The cover completes the book.

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Appendix A
FIGURES

ALL IMAGES REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT

Appendix B

DEPICTIONS OF BOOK COVERS IN EARLY MEDIEVAL MANUSCRIPTS

The following table lists depictions of book covers found in early medieval manuscripts. The manuscripts examined include all those listed in J.J.G. Alexander's *Insular Manuscripts 6th to the 9th century* of 1978, Ernst Heinrich Zimmermann's *Vorkarolingische miniaturen* of 1916, the "Hofschule Karls des Grossen" volume (Bd. 2) of Wilhelm Koehler's *Die Karolingische Miniaturen*, and Lawrence Nees's forthcoming *Frankish Manuscripts*. These catalogs were chosen to provide a thorough list of illustrated manuscripts produced in northwestern Europe in the period of greatest relevance to the present study. Manuscripts which did not have depictions of book covers are not listed.⁴³⁰ Due to limitations of visiting collections in person, manuscripts for which no digitized version was found are also not included. Cataloging of open books depicted in these manuscripts may reveal more about the structures of book covers. Cataloging of depictions of book covers in other media (i.e. stone sculpture, mosaic, metalwork, and ivory) would further complement the findings of this investigation.

⁴³⁰ The Utrecht Psalter (Utrecht, Utrecht University Library, Cod. 32), although present in Nees's catalog, has also not been included in this evaluation due to the difficulty of identification of books and the lack of detail included in the depictions of these objects.

Shelf Mark	Folio	Description
Amiens, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 18 (Corbie Psalter)	1v	Figure (David) in the top bowl of the B is holding a book in his left hand. The book has an unadorned green cover.
Amiens, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 18 (Corbie Psalter)	7r	Christ holds a book open with left hand, right hand blessing. Not possible to tell whether the book is shown with the cover or the pages shown outward. Below a book is shown closed on an altar with a plain cover.
Amiens, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 18 (Corbie Psalter)	136r	Christ holds a book open with left hand, right hand blessing. Book is decorated with a border of dots enclosed between two lines. All delineated in dark ink.
Angers, Bibliothèque Municipale, Cod. 24	? (élément 47)	Behind Mark is what seems to be a book. It is propped up on the table with the cover facing the viewer. The cover is unadorned and colored red.
Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, W.4 (Freising Gospels)	34r	Book open in a stand or box in front of Matthew. Dark-colored straps laid over edge of box.
Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, W.4 (Freising Gospels)	91r	Lion holds a book with an unadorned red cover.
Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, W.4 (Freising Gospels)	127r	Ox holds a book with an unadorned red cover.
Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek Msc.Bibl.1	339v	Each Evangelist symbol holds a closed book. Each cover has a tear-shaped decoration pointing towards each corner surrounding a central round

		shape. Aligned with the center of each side is a round shape. Each shape has a dot in its center. All the books have a uniform pinkish color, with the design on the cover as well as the outline of the book and its pages delineated in red ink.
Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek Msc.Class.5	2v	Boethius presents the book to Symmachus. The book is shown with an unadorned red cover. The cover has dark-colored straps on each side, one each on the top and bottom, two around the foreedge.
Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 264 (Bern Prudentius)	Pg. 67	Prudentius is shown writing. In a case behind are tubes possibly holding scrolls. The cases are colored red, white, and blue and have raised bands.
Cambridge, University Library MS Ii.6.32 (Book of Deer)	1v	Two figures on lower half of the page hold books. There are three straps from the figure's necks to the books. The books have a white border outlined in black.
Cambridge, University Library MS Ii.6.32 (Book of Deer)	16v	Book attached to figure's neck with three straps. Front of book decorated with a key pattern in black ink. Hands of figure not seen, maybe hidden behind the book.
Cambridge, University Library MS Ii.6.32 (Book of Deer)	29v	Book attached to figure's neck with three straps, central one is plain, other two are black. The front of the book is decorated with an X pattern. It is colored red and black between the arms of the X. The arms of the X are plain with black dots. The figure's arms are held out to the side and are not holding the book.
Cambridge, University Library MS Ii.6.32 (Book of Deer)	41v	Book attached to figure's neck with three straps. Central one colored red. A border and a cross and x pattern are outlined in dark ink on the front of the book. Figure's hands not seen. Behind book?
Cambridge, University Library MS Ii.6.32 (Book of Deer)	84v	Book attached to figure's necks with three straps. The books are delineated in black ink and have a border. The figure on the left has a double strap in the center and a thicker ink border.

Cambridge, University Library MS li.6.32 (Book of Deer)	86r	Two figures on lower half of the page hold books. There are three straps from the figure's necks to the books. The book held by the figure on the left is red with a plain border, the one held by the figure on the right is white.
Cambridge, University Library MS L1.I.10 (Book of Cerne)	2v	Both figure of Matthew and angel hold books with unadorned red covers. The book held by Matthew has indications of pages. Both figures hold the books with covered hands.
Cambridge, University Library MS L1.I.10 (Book of Cerne)	12v	Both figure of Mark and lion hold books with unadorned red covers. The book held by the lion may be tablets. Both figures hold the books with uncovered hands.
Cambridge, University Library MS L1.I.10 (Book of Cerne)	21v	Both figure of Luke and ox hold books with unadorned red covers. Luke holds his book open with the cover facing outward, a stylus in the other hand. Pages are indicated on both books.
Cambridge, University Library MS L1.I.10 (Book of Cerne)	31v	Both figure of John and the eagle hold books. The eagle's book has an orange cover, John's a red cover. Both books are held horizontally. John holds his book with one covered hand.
Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, MS D.II.3	11v	Figure holds book with plain cover horizontally with both hands uncovered.
Dublin, Trinity College MS A.I.6 (58) (Book of Kells)	1r	Three figures in side panels hold aloft tablets or books. The objects have a red ground with a black border around the edges and across the center of the rectangles.
Dublin, Trinity College MS A.I.6 (58) (Book of Kells)	1v	Angel above canon table holds aloft a tablet or book. The object has a purplish ground with a golden yellow border around the edges and across the center of the rectangle.

Dublin, Trinity College MS A.I.6 (58) (Book of Kells)	2v	Angel in lunette above the canon table holds aloft a tablet or book. The object has a gray ground with a red border around the edges. A strip dividing the object in half is demarcated in black pigment.
Dublin, Trinity College MS A.I.6 (58) (Book of Kells)	3r	Angel in lunette above the canon table holds aloft a book with an unadorned purplish cover.
Dublin, Trinity College MS A.I.6 (58) (Book of Kells)	3v	Figure in left-hand arch holds a book horizontally. The cover has a red ground and a golden yellow border with step patterns.
Dublin, Trinity College MS A.I.6 (58) (Book of Kells)	4r	Figure above canon table holds aloft a book or tablet in each hand. Both have a yellow ground with an X motif and a red border around the edges and across the center. Figure in left-hand arch holds aloft a book or tablet. The object has a red ground with a golden yellow border around the edges. A strip dividing the object in half is demarcated in black pigment.
Dublin, Trinity College MS A.I.6 (58) (Book of Kells)	5r	Eagle on the right-hand corner of the canon table holds a book or tablet vertically. The object has a red ground with a golden yellow border around the edges and across the center of the rectangle.
Dublin, Trinity College MS A.I.6 (58) (Book of Kells)	8r	Figure below major initial holds a tablet or book horizontally. The object has a purplish ground with a golden yellow border around the edges and across the center of the rectangle.
Dublin, Trinity College MS A.I.6 (58) (Book of Kells)	27v	Under the feet of the eagle is a book-like object with a red ground and golden yellow border. The corners each have an additional golden piece.
Dublin, Trinity College MS A.I.6 (58) (Book of Kells)	28v	Main figure holds a tablet or book vertically in his right hand. The object has an orangish red ground and a pinkish red border with leaf patterns around the edges and across the center of the rectangle.

Dublin, Trinity College MS A.I.6 (58) (Book of Kells)	29r	Figure on lower left holds aloft a book or tablet. The object has a golden ground and a red border around the edges and across the center of the rectangle. There are patterns of three dots on the object which mirror the pattern on the fabric of the figure's garment. Figure in the top center holds a book to his chest. The book is red with a purple border.
Dublin, Trinity College MS A.I.6 (58) (Book of Kells)	32v	Main figure holds a book vertically, supported by the figure's knee and two hands. The book has an unadorned red cover.
Dublin, Trinity College MS A.I.6 (58) (Book of Kells)	34r	Two angels located on the left side of the monogram each hold books or tablets aloft. The objects have a white ground with a golden yellow border. The object held by the upper angel has patterns running along the long edge of the rectangle.
Dublin, Trinity College MS A.I.6 (58) (Book of Kells)	183r	Angel holds aloft a book or tablet. The object has a golden ground and a red border around the edges and across the center of the rectangle.
Dublin, Trinity College MS A.I.6 (58) (Book of Kells)	187v	Angel holds aloft a book or tablet. The object has a golden ground and a red border around the edges and across the center of the rectangle.
Dublin, Trinity College MS A.I.6 (58) (Book of Kells)	202v	Angel in top left corner holds aloft a book or tablet. The object has a red ground and a plain border around the edges and across the center of the rectangle. Angel in top right corner holds aloft a book. The book has a red cover with a purple border.
Dublin, Trinity College MS A.I.6 (58) (Book of Kells)	285r	Two angels at the top of the page hold books aloft. The books have grey covers with red borders.

Dublin, Trinity College MS A.I.6 (58) (Book of Kells)	290v	Angel at the composition holds a book in each hand. Both books have purple covers with xs rendered in black pigment. The xs on the covers echo the crossed arms of the angel.
Dublin, Trinity College MS A.I.6 (58) (Book of Kells)	291v	Central figure holds aloft a book. The book has an orangish red border. The central panel has a golden ground with a central red lozenge and rounded red corners.
Dublin, Trinity College MS A.I.6 (58) (Book of Kells)	292r	Figure holds a book horizontally. The cover of the book is grey with a red border.
Dublin, Trinity College, MS 52 (Book of Armagh)	32v	Man (angel) holds book aloft diagonally. No color. Book delineated with black ink border. Parallel with fish held by eagle.
Dublin, Trinity College, MS 56 (Garland of Howth)	1r	Two figures below the arms of the cross holding books. Books are not colored and are delineated with a black border. Figure on the left holds the book aloft horizontally. The opposite arm is also raised. Figure on the right holds the book down at his waist. In the other hand he holds a sword.
Dublin, Trinity College, MS 56 (Garland of Howth)	22r	Figure holds book close to chest. Book is closed and entirely unadorned.
Dublin, Trinity College, MS 59 (Book of Dimma)	Pg. 2	Red with white border. Held horizontally by Matthew with both hands.
Dublin, Trinity College, MS 59 (Book of Dimma)	Pg. 30	Red with white border. Held horizontally by Mark with both hands.
Dublin, Trinity College, MS 59 (Book of Dimma)	Pg. 54	Red with white border. Held vertically by evangelist with one uncovered hand. The other hand is not visible.

Dublin, Trinity College, MS 59 (Book of Dimma)	Pg. 104	Plain parchment. Scalloped flap with three buttons showing. Held horizontally by eagle.
Dublin, Trinity College, MS 60 (Book of Mulling)	12v	Plain white with brown border. Rectangular. Held by Evangelist horizontally with covered hand. Evangelist is holding a stylus in the other hand.
Dublin, Trinity College, MS 59 (Book of Dimma)	35v	Dark color, indeterminate. Held by Evangelist horizontally with one covered and one uncovered hand.
Dublin, Trinity College, MS 60 (Book of Mulling)	81v	Plain white with brown border. Rectangular. Held by Evangelist horizontally with one covered hand and one uncovered hand.
Épernay, Médiathèque (Marne). MS 1	90v	Luke holds a closed book on his lap. The book has a brown cover with red edges. The book is held closed by dark-colored ties.
Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana MS Amiatinus I (Codex Amiatinus)	5r	Books in cabinet and one on floor in front of Ezra have red covers with geometric designs indicated in black. All have straps used to keep them closed by wrapping around the bottom and top edges of the books.
Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana MS Amiatinus I (Codex Amiatinus)	796v	Evangelists in corners each hold a book with a plain gold cover. All but John hold with covered hands. All but Mark hold vertically. Christ holds book with golden cover adorned with decoration. Deterioration of pigment makes the details of the decoration obscure. Christ holds the book with his covered left hand and points at it with his uncovered right.
Fulda, Landesbibliothek, Cod. Bon. 3 (Cadmug Gospels)	1v	Figure holds book horizontally with left hand. Holds a staff with the right hand. Book delineated with black outline. Has a border and a scalloped flap with three buttons.

Fulda, Landesbibliothek, Cod. Bon. 3 (Cadmug Gospels)	19v	Figure holds book horizontally with left hand. Holds a staff with the right hand. Book delineated with black outline. Has a border and a scalloped flap with three buttons.
Fulda, Landesbibliothek, Cod. Bon. 3 (Cadmug Gospels)	33v	Figure holds book horizontally with left hand. Holds a staff with the right hand. Book delineated with black outline. Has a border and a scalloped flap.
Fulda, Landesbibliothek, Cod. Bon. 3 (Cadmug Gospels)	51v	Figure holds book horizontally with left hand. Holds a staff with the right hand. Book delineated with black outline. Has a border and a scalloped flap with three buttons.
Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, cod. 76 F 1 (Egmond Gospels)	16v	Man of Matthew holds a book with both hands. Cloth of the robes is held under the right hand. The book is closed and has a blue cover with clasps or ties securing the sides and top
Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, cod. 76 F 1 (Egmond Gospels)	214v	Dedication page shows two donors holding the book. The book has stripes of different colors, perhaps indicating a textile cover, interior pages painted to look like textiles, or (unlikely) fabric lining of the cover.
Laon, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms. 137	1v	Evangelist symbols at the ends of the arms of the cross are all holding closed books. The covers of the books are colored with rounded pieces added at the corners in contrasting colors. The books held by the eagle and the ox have a black x going between the corners.
Lichfield, Cathedral Library (St. Chad Gospels)	Pg. 142	Both Evangelist and lion hold books with plain covers. The lion's has a thin border indicated with black ink.

Lichfield, Cathedral Library (St. Chad Gospels)	Pg. 218	Is Luke holding a scroll or codex?
London, British Library, MS Add 37768 (Lothar Psalter)	6r	Figure labeled Hieronimus holds a closed book in his left arm. The book has a light green cover with gold central square and radiating tear drops. The book is secured with red straps. The design of the cover matches the design of the figure's stole.
London, British Library Add. MS 40618	21v	Evangelist holds book horizontally with both hands. The book has a plain cover.
London, British Library, Cotton MS Tiberius C.II (Tiberius Bede)	60v	Eagle on perch or holding book.
London, British Library, Cotton MS Vitellius F.XI	3r	Figure holding a book that looks like many in the Insular manuscripts, plain with border indicated in dark ink.
London, British Library, Harley MS 2788 (Harley Golden Gospels)	7r	One closed book with unadorned red cover.
London, British Library, Harley MS 2788 (Harley Golden Gospels)	8r	Closed books held by ox and man red with quadripartite designs.
London, British Library, Harley MS 2788 (Harley Golden Gospels)	9r	Closed book held by ox, blue with four petals, gold edge. Eagle holds book with unmarked red cover.
London, British Library, Harley MS 2788 (Harley Golden Gospels)	11v	Eagle holds book. Tablet is white with red edges.

London, British Library, Royal MS I.E.VI	43r	Ox holds crimson rectangular object, possibly a book.
London, Lamberth Palace MS 1370 (Macdurnan Gospels)	4v	Matthew holds book horizontally with left hand. Right hand holding crozier. The book is plain with an earthy yellow border outlined in dark ink.
London, Lamberth Palace MS 1370 (Macdurnan Gospels)	70v	Mark holds book with left hand. Book is plain with border indicated with dark ink.
London, Lamberth Palace MS 1370 (Macdurnan Gospels)	115v	Luke holds book with left hand. Book cover has three round buttons and a border indicated with dark ink. Luke holds a crozier with the right hand.
London, Lamberth Palace MS 1370 (Macdurnan Gospels)	170v	John holds book and pen in left hand. Book is plain with an earthy yellow border outlined in dark ink.
Maeseyck, Church of St. Catherine, Trésor, s.n. ff. 1-5	2v	Figure in roundel holds book with a lighter red cover and darker red border. He holds it vertically and his other hand is shown raised and gesturing with two pointing fingers.
Maeseyck, Church of St. Catherine, Trésor, s.n. ff. 1-5	3r	Figure in roundel holds a book with a plain cover outlined in dark ink. The book is held with a covered hand, the other hand is held up with two fingers gesturing.
Maeseyck, Church of St. Catherine, Trésor, s.n. ff. 1-5	4v	Figure in roundel holds a book with a red cover and an 'x' design indicated in black.
Maeseyck, Church of St. Catherine, Trésor, s.n. ff. 6-132	1v	Figure in roundel holds book horizontally with a covered hand, the other hand is held up and gestures with two pointing fingers. The book cover is plain with a design of two rectangles, one inside

		the other, and a diamond indicated with four dots, all drawn in dark ink.
Maeseyck, Church of St. Catherine, Trésor, s.n. ff. 6-132	2v	Figure in roundel holds book horizontally with a covered hand, the other hand is held up and gestures with two pointing fingers. The cover is red with a border outlined in dark ink.
Maeseyck, Church of St. Catherine, Trésor, s.n. ff. 6-132	3r	Figure in roundel holds book horizontally with a covered hand, the other hand is held up and gestures with two pointing fingers. The cover is red with a border outlined in dark ink.
Maeseyck, Church of St. Catherine, Trésor, s.n. ff. 6-132	4r	Figure in roundel holds what appears to be a book with two covered hands. The cover has a brown edge with three divisions. The central panel is red with a row of five black dots.
Maeseyck, Church of St. Catherine, Trésor, s.n. ff. 6-132	5r	Figure (Matthew's man?) in roundel holds what appears to be a book with two covered hands. The cover has a brown edge with three divisions. The central panel is red with a row of five black dots.
Maeseyck, Church of St. Catherine, Trésor, s.n. ff. 6-132	5v	Lion holds a book horizontally with two hands. The book has a dark-colored border with two divisions. The central panel is colored red and has a border indicated in dark ink.
Maeseyck, Church of St. Catherine, Trésor, s.n. ff. 6-132	6r	Ox holds a book horizontally with two covered hands. The book has a greenish border with two divisions. The central panel is colored red and has a border indicated in dark ink.
Maeseyck, Church of St. Catherine, Trésor, s.n. ff. 6-132	6v	Eagle holds a book horizontally with two covered hands. The book has a light-colored border with two divisions. The central panel is colored red and has a border indicated in dark ink.
Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 23631	197r	Four evangelist symbols all hold books, each with different decoration. Man holds book with a white cover and a central red rectanglr. The lion holds a book with a red cover and a thin white border. Ox holds a book with a red cover with darker red

(Augsburg Gospels)		crossed line. Eagle holds a book with a white cover and central red rectangle. All the books have a box-like quality.
New York, New York Public Library (Landevennec Gospels)		Two evangelist figures hold tablet-like objects displaying writing.
Oxford, Bodleian, Ms. Auct. D.2.19 (Macregol Gospels)	36r	Drawing in black ink in lower margin of a robed figure holding up a closed book vertically. He points at the book with two exaggeratedly large fingers.
Oxford, Bodleian, Ms. Auct. D.2.19 (Macregol Gospels)	51r	Drawing in black ink. Winged lion figure holds a closed book. The book is square with a border that curves inward at each corner. Seated figure below holds an open book.
Oxford, Bodleian, Ms. Auct. D.2.19 (Macregol Gospels)	51v	Seated figure holds up a closed book. The book is square and there are straps on each side.
Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 269	36v	Matthew's symbol holds a book open, colored with gold and with a purple edge.
Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 269	37r	Christ holds a book with a gold cover on his left knee.
Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 269	104v	Both Mark and his symbol hold closed books with gold covers.
Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 269	150v	Both Luke and his symbol hold closed books with gold covers.
Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 4404	1v	Four figures hold closed books. Books have covers with a wide border around the edge and a central quadripartite design formed of tear drop shapes and circles. Original colors are difficult to

		decipher, but the book held by the large central figure has a yellow border and red central panel.
Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 4404	2r	Four figures hold closed books. Books have covers with a wide border around the edge and a central quadripartite design formed of tear drop shapes and circles. The books held by three of the figures have yellow borders and red central panels. The colors are reversed for the figure labeled 'Paulus'.
Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 4404	197v	Figure on upper right holds a closed book. The book has a cover with a wide border around the edge and a central quadripartite design formed of tear drop shapes and circles. It has a white border and yellow central panel.
Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 8850 (Gospels of Saint-Médard de Soissons)	124r	Enthroned Christ in initial Q holds a closed book with an unadorned gold cover.
Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 8850 (Gospels of Saint-Médard de Soissons)	181r	Top figure in initial I holding a closed book with a white cover.
Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 9386	14r	Figure holds a book with covered hands. Cover is white with red straps to secure the book closed visible on the top and side.
Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 9386	64v	Lion holds book with green cover, metal fittings and red straps to secure the book closed.
Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 9386	146r	Eagle holds book with red cover, metal fittings, and yellow straps.
Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 10910 (Fredegar Chronicles)	Ar	Figure holding a book with a border and a central four-petaled rosette. Possibly a later medieval drawing.

Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 10910 (Fredegar Chronicles)	74r	Figure holding a book delineated only with a border.
Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 12048 (Gellone Sacramentary)	42v	Figure with human body and eagle head holds a book open on its chest with cover facing outward. The cover is plain red. Two rows of stitching are visible.
Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 12048 (Gellone Sacramentary)	59v	Flying figure in initial O holding a book. Book is delineated with an outline and line through the middle of the rectangle. Not colored.
Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 12048 (Gellone Sacramentary)	90v	Figure in initial O holding a red book. Book has a black outline with a line indicated down the middle of the rectangle.
Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 12048 (Gellone Sacramentary)	115v	Figure with ox head and human body holding a book open. A green cover is visible extending beyond the page of the book. Three rows of stitching are visible.
St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, cod.sang.22	Pg. 14	Figure holds closed book in left arm. Book is decorated with a gold cross. The arms of the cross have flourished ends. The cross is set against a green background. Red straps (one visible on the top of the book, two visible on the foreedge) hold the book closed.
St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, cod.sang.22	Pg. 150	Figure on the right holds a closed book in his left arm. The book has an unadorned green cover.
St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, cod.sang.1395	Pg. 418	Main figure has a book (tablet?) with yellow field and plain border delineated with dark ink. The figure holds a stylus or penknife on the book. The figure on the side holds a book that looks the same.

St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, cod.sang.51	Pg. 2	Figure holds book horizontally with both hands close to chest. Book is uncolored, with border outlined in dark ink.
St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, cod.sang.51	Pg. 78	Figure holds book horizontally with left hand, supported in the crook of his right arm. Book is not colored and has a border delineated with dark ink.
St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, cod.sang.51	Pg. 128	Figure holds book horizontally with two uncovered hands. Book is plain with its shape delineated in black ink.
St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, cod.sang.51	Pg. 208	Figure holds book horizontally with two uncovered hands. Book has a plain cover with a red border.
St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, cod.sang.51	Pg. 266	Two figures in spaces above the arms of the cross hold books. Both hold the books horizontally with one covered and one uncovered hand. The book held by the figure on the left has a border.
St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, cod.sang.51	Pg. 267	Main figure and all figures in lower register hold books with plain covers with yellow borders. All hold the book horizontally with one covered and one uncovered hand.
St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, cod.sang.731	Pg. 234	Figure holds book. Cover plain parchment with two lines of decoration, a 'twisted rope' pattern with alternating orange and black.
St Gall, Stiftsarchiv, Fab. 1 (Liber Viventium)	Pg. 4	Figure holds book in left arm. The cover of the book is red with a decorative quadripartite design in black. The book is secured closed with two straps on the foreedge and one strap on the top.
St Gall, Stiftsarchiv, Fab. 1 (Liber Viventium)	Pg. 52	Lion holds book in both arms. The cover of the book is red with a decorative quadripartite design in black with white circles at center. The book is secured closed with two straps on the foreedge and one strap on the top.

St Gall, Stiftsarchiv, Fab. 1 (Liber Viventium)	Pg. 94	Ox holds book in both arms. The cover of the book is red with a decorative quadripartite design in black with white highlights. The book is secured closed with two straps on the foredge and one strap on the top.
St Gall, Stiftsarchiv, Fab. 1 (Liber Viventium)	Pg. 144	Eagle holds book in both arms. The cover of the book is red with a decorative quadripartite design in black. The book is secured closed with two straps on the foredge and one strap on the top.
Stockholm, Royal Library MS A.135 (Codex Aureus)	Pg. 13	Figures in left-hand roundels holding red books with covered hands. Figures in right-hand roundels hold a scroll (upper) and cross (lower).
Stockholm, Royal Library MS A.135 (Codex Aureus)	Pg. 14	Figures in left-hand roundels holding red books with dark borders with covered hands. Figures in right-hand roundels hold a cross (upper) and red book with yellow border (lower).
Stockholm, Royal Library MS A.135 (Codex Aureus)	Pg. 15	Figure in lower left-hand roundel holds a yellow book with a plain border with uncovered hand.
Stockholm, Royal Library MS A.135 (Codex Aureus)	Pg. 16	Figure in upper roundels holding books. Left-hand figure holds a red book with plain border with one covered hand, one uncovered. Right-hand figure holds a red book with a dark border with uncovered hands.
Stockholm, Royal Library MS A.135 (Codex Aureus)	Pg. 20	Angel in lunette holding book. Book cover is red with designs that may indicate metal plaques. The cover is secured with straps. Figure in right-hand roundel above column holds a book with a red cover. The cover is decorated with a dark X and gold. The four quadrants created by the X are outlined in gold and there are three gold dots in each triangle.
Stockholm, Royal Library MS A.135 (Codex Aureus)	Pg. 308	Eagle in lunette holding a book with a red cover decorated with a gold edge.

Valenciennes, Bibliothèque Municipale, 69	15v	Figure holds book in both arms. Book has an unadorned red cover with black straps to secure it closed. There are two straps on the foredge and one on the top.
Valenciennes, Bibliothèque Municipale, 69	50r	Lion holds book in both arms. Book has an unadorned red cover with red straps to secure it closed. There are two straps on the foredge and one on the top.
Valenciennes, Bibliothèque Municipale, 69	72v	Ox holds book in both arms. Book has an unadorned red cover with red straps to secure it closed. There are two straps on the foredge and one on the top.
Valenciennes, Bibliothèque Municipale, 69	138v	Four evangelist figures and lamb each hold a book with a red cover. The book held by the lamb has gold embellishments and straps to secure the book closed. There are two straps on the top and three on the foredge.
Vatican library, pal.lat.834	28v	Figure on the left holds a closed book. Cover is unadorned except for dots rendered in ink following the edge of the cover. Book is held closed with straps, two visible on the top edge and four visible on the foredge.
Vatican library, pal.lat.1564	3r	One figure in circle holds a closed book with an unadorned red cover.
Vatican library, reg.lat.124	2v	Standing figure on the left (Hrabanus Maurus?) holds a book with an unadorned red cover; enthroned figure on the right (St. Martin?) holds a book with a golden yellow cover decorated with a lozenge with a circle at each corner.
Vatican library, reg.lat.124	3v	Figure on right gives a book with a red cover closed with four straps on the foredge. Standing figure behind the central figure holds a book with a brownish color closed with four faint white straps on the foredge.

Vatican library, reg.lat.438	1v	Kneeling monk gives a book with an unadorned brown cover to the king.
Vienna, Nationalbibliothek Cod. 1224 (Cutbercht Gospels)	17v	Evangelist figures in the arches hold books. Each pair holds a book open with its unadorned red cover facing the viewer.
Vienna, Nationalbibliothek Cod. 1224 (Cutbercht Gospels)	71v	Mark's lion carries a book with an unadorned red cover.
Vienna, Nationalbibliothek Cod. 1224 (Cutbercht Gospels)	166r	John's eagle carries a book with an unadorned red cover.