

Reviving the Relic: An Investigation of the Form and Function of the Reliquary of St. Servatius, Quedlinburg

Evan A. Gatti

The medieval function of the reliquary casket has been subsumed by its modern function as a relic. While this new status affords the reliquary a place in state museums and church treasuries, it leaves only a palimpsest of the casket's original, often practical function. A reconsideration of this precious object, which aims at a better understanding of its medieval purpose, should evaluate the significance of its function in conjunction with its form and iconography. This essay offers a reinvestigation of one such medieval reliquary in an effort to move beyond its status as a *modern* relic.

The ninth-century reliquary casket of St. Servatius, now located in the treasury of the cathedral of Quedlinburg, is a key example of Carolingian ivory carving (Figures 1-5).¹ Kurt Weitzmann posited a date of c. 870 for the casket and assigned it to the workshop at Fulda.² Despite its artistic importance, a thorough study of the casket's iconographic program has not been attempted, and questions concerning its possible function have never been addressed fully. At the center of this discussion is the additional identification of the reliquary as a portable altar.³ The designation of this function demands a closer look at the casket's form and iconography.

The decoration of the Quedlinburg casket includes Christ and eleven apostles, paired with the twelve signs of the zodiac. The two-tiered decorative program reads as an integrated and theologically complex narrative that is primarily concerned with the eschatological nature of Christ's Ascension and the promise of everlasting life in the heavenly Jerusalem to God's

people. When one considers the two registers of decoration as not only integrated, but also dependent upon one another, the symbolic narrative implied by the program becomes clear. Contemporary texts and visual comparanda will further formulate the context of the atelier in which the altar was created and in which it must have functioned as an integral part of liturgical practice.

The Quedlinburg casket is composed of five ivory panels: four constitute the walls and the fifth is the lid. The casket's silver foot is a twelfth-century addition and it is unknown what it may have replaced. A majority of the metal decoration, the gold filigree, and the enamels are all part of the twelfth-century restoration executed during the reign of Abbess Agnes (1184-1203) of Quedlinburg.⁴ The carved purple stone in the middle of the casket's front side is a Roman cameo and probably depicts Dionysios. Arne Effenberger suggests that the cameo came to the West as part of Princess Theophano's dowry and was subsequently given to Quedlinburg during the reign of Otto I, to whom the casket had fictitiously been ascribed.⁵

The Quedlinburg casket should be considered as one of a pair. Its companion casket, generally called the Bamberg casket, exists in fragments, three of which are in the Bavarian National Museum (Figure 6). A fourth fragment, formerly in Berlin, in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, was destroyed in a fire during World War II. Neither the Quedlinburg nor the Bamberg casket is assigned regularly with a function other than that of a reliquary. It is my intention to illustrate here

This paper is derived from my Masters thesis, "*Reading the Heavens: An Eschatological Interpretation of the Signs of the Zodiac and the Ascension of Christ on the Quedlinburg Portable Altar*," written under the direction of Dr. Dorothy Verkerk in 1998.

¹ For bibliography see: A. Goldschmidt, *Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der Zeit der karolingischen und sächsischen Kaiser* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1969) cat. no. 58-62; P. Lasko, *Ars Sacra: 800-1200* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1994) 77-80; *Der Quedlinburger Schatz-Weider Vereint*, ed. D. Kötzsche (Berlin: Ars Nicolai, 1992) cat. no. 5.

² K. Weitzmann, "Eine Fuldaer Elfenbeingruppe," *Adolph Goldschmidt zu seinem 70. Geburtstag* (Berlin: Würfel Verlag, 1935) 14-18. See also "The Herakles Plaques of the Cathedra Petri," *Art Bulletin* LV (1973): 1-37, esp. 22. Weitzmann follows Goldschmidt's assignment of the casket to the Liuthard group and suggests further that the whole group of ivories should be dated to the late ninth century on account of stylistic associations with the Cathedra Petri. Weitzmann ties the casket to the workshop at Fulda on the basis of stylistic similarities to the manuscripts created at Fulda during the ninth and tenth centuries. Lasko (77-78 n.19) has noted that the dating of the ivory casket is problematic and posits a tentative tenth-century date

of c. 930 (?), although he states that ninth-century manuscripts provide equally valid stylistic comparanda. For the purposes of this paper, it seems reasonable to accept Weitzmann's dates as a *terminus post quem* for the casket.

³ G.J.C. Snoek suggests in *Medieval Piety from Relics to the Eucharist: A Process of Mutual Interaction* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995) 190 n. 93, that the top of the Quedlinburg casket resembles a portable altar. Snoek's statement follows the work of A. Frolow who notes that the Quedlinburg casket held both relics and the Eucharist. This suggestion, however, has not been adequately pursued. See also A. Frolow, *La Relique de la Vraie Croix: Recherches sur le développement d'un culte* (Paris: Institut français d'études byzantines, 1961) 345-346 n. 374.

⁴ Lasko 79 n. 20.

⁵ A. Effenberger, "Provenienzzgeschichtliche Probleme des Byzantinischen Kunstbesitzes in der DDR," *Byzantinischer Kunstexport: seine gesellschaftliche und künstlerische Bedeutung für die Länder Mittel- und Osteuropas* (Halle: Martin Luther Universität, 1978) 173.

that the Quedlinburg casket should also be identified as a portable altar. According to M. Labarte, portable altars were used principally by bishops and abbots for the celebration of the divine services when traveling and while on mission.⁶ What identifies these caskets as altars is the inclusion of an altar stone, which has been blessed by a bishop, in their composition.

A closer look at the lid of the Quedlinburg casket suggests that this box may have had such a function. On the top of the casket a carved meander pattern isolates a rectangular field of ivory. Today, the casket's gold skeleton and a large, green gem hide this section of the ivory lid. The green stone may not be original to the casket; but the area of ivory beneath the stone is discolored, which leads one to suspect that there was always a stone of some sort in this space. When the type, size, and shape of the Quedlinburg casket's lid is compared with other standard portable altar types, there are discernible similarities (Figure 7).⁷

The inclusion of relics in a portable altar was not codified by Canon law until the thirteenth century.⁸ Since the Early Middle Ages, however, their presence was common in the casket-type of portable altar, easily blurring the different functions of the reliquary box and the portable altar. A twelfth-century inscription on the foot of the Quedlinburg casket records that in the reliquary (*capsa*), "is hidden the divine body (a possible reference to the Eucharist) and the divine wood of the True Cross."⁹ Relics of the Virgin Mary, John the Baptist and various saints, who are depicted on the base-plate, were also included in the Quedlinburg casket. Thereby, the dual functions of the Quedlinburg casket not only appear to be duly noted in the inscription but also are not exclusive. In fact, they seem to depend upon one another. Like a high altar,

a portable altar would contain the relics with which the church or cleric is associated.

With this additional identification of function in mind, a closer look at the iconography of the casket is necessary with special regard to its intended use. The four walls of the casket are carved with a system of alternating pillars and columns surmounted by arches. The twelve signs of the zodiac are included under the arches, and beneath these can be found twelve standing figures, commonly identified as the apostles. These figures hold scrolls and gesture boldly towards one another in groups of either two or four. They appear to be standing on a naturalistic ground-line, while at the same time, there is the suggestion of a sanctuary in the curtained columns and piers. Some of the scrolls and nimbi, as well as the capitals and bases of the columns and pillars on the front panel of the casket are decorated with gold leaf.

The twelve standing figures beneath the signs of the zodiac have been identified as either the twelve apostles, or Christ and eleven apostles. The figure to the right of the large cameo should be identified as Christ because of his gold-leaf halo and shoulder-length hair. The other eleven figures have short hair and look relatively similar, although some effort to individualize them is apparent.¹⁰ The cross-nimbus is an aspect of the gold-leaf decoration and it is not included on the Bamberg panel, which is unadorned.¹¹ This discrepancy begs one to question whether the inclusion of the gold-leaf cross nimbus is original to the carving of the casket. If not, was this figure Christ or an apostle in its original form? The answer to this problem does not lie with the attributes or style of the Christ figure alone, as has traditionally been suggested.¹² The clues lie with this figure's accompanying zodiac sign and its position on the casket. In other words, the key to the identification

⁶ M. Labarte, *Handbook of the Arts of the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (London: John Murray, 1855) 381; J. Tavenor-Perry, *Dinanderie: A History and Description of Mediaeval Art and Work in Copper, Brass and Bronze* (London: George Allen and Sons, 1910) 102. See also, B. Boehm, "Portable Altar," *Dictionary of Art*, ed. J. Turner (New York: Grove Publishers, 1996) 697-698; L. Brubaker, *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. J. Strayer, v. 4 (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1982) 368; T.J. Welsh, *The Use of the Portable Altar: A Historical Synopsis and a Commentary* (Washington: Catholic UP, 1950) 3-11.

⁷ The type, exemplified by the Portable Altar of Gertrude (c. 1030), notably post-dates the Quedlinburg example. Despite this, it is clear that what remains constant for a portable altar is the inclusion of a blessed stone, or space, on the lid of the box and it is this addition that allows one to posit a specific function for the casket. Lasko 135. Beyond the form of the lid, there are certain consistencies in the decoration of the body of the portable altar. For bibliography concerning the Gertrud Altar see Lasko 135 n. 8 and fig. 188.

⁸ Boehm 697.

⁹ Parenthetical comment is mine. *In hac capsula as honore(m) beati Servatii facta e[st] reconditu(m) corp(us) et lign(um) D(om)inicu(m) et (...);*" Snoek 190 n. 93.

¹⁰ Dáibhí Cróinín notes that a number of manuscripts record the proper Roman "look" of the apostles; the earliest extant version was written prior to

800 by an Irishman on the continent. D. Cróinín, "Cummianus Longus and the Iconography of Christ and the Apostles in Early Irish Literature," *Sages, Saints and Storytellers: Celtic Studies in Honour of Professor James Carney* (Maynooth, Co. Kildare: An Sagart, 1989) 268-279 esp. 270. See also Bernard Bischoff, "Wendepunkte in der Geschichte der lateinischen Exegese im Frühmittelalter," *Sacris Erudiri* VI (1954): 63-160.

¹¹ M. Vasselot, "Un Coffret Reliquaire du Tresor de Quedlinburg," *Monuments et Memoires* VI (1899): 175-190, esp. 179.

¹² Kötzsche 52-53.

¹³ For example, in the twelfth-century *Liturgical Psalter and Hours of the Virgin* in the Pierpont Morgan Library, M 94, fol. 1v, the apostle Paul is paired with Pisces (see J. Seznec, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods* [Princeton: Princeton UP, 1972] 130, fig. 36). In a chart from Hrabanus Maurus' *De Computo*, Basel, Öffentliche Universitätsbibliothek Basel, Ms F. III, 15a, Pisces is paired with Matthew (see M. Rissel, "Hrabanus 'Liber de Computo' als Quelle der Fuldaer Unterrichtspraxis in den Artes Arithmetik und Astronomie," *Hrabanus Maurus und Seine Schule: Festschrift der Rabanus-Maurus-Schule 1980* [Fulda: Rabanus Maurus Schule, 1980] 138-155, esp. 153, abb. 11). And yet, in another example, amanu script dated to 1122, London, British Library, *Codex Cotton Tiberius* C.1, Pisces is paired with Bartholomew (see W. Hübner, *Zodiacus Christianus: Jüdisch-christliche Adaptationen des Tierkreises von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart* [Königstein: Verlag Anton Hain, 1983] 44-45).

of the Christ figure is the Lion above him, the zodiacal sign for Leo. In the few extant medieval examples in which artists have grouped the apostles with the signs of the zodiac, there is little consistency in their systems of combination. The choice of which apostle, or biblical figure, is paired with which sign is dependent upon the individual program. The juxtaposition of a zodiac sign with a biblical figure isolates certain allegorical characteristics, and while they may be relatively consistent, they are not constant.¹³ Therefore, the combination of an animal of the zodiac with Christ can be interpreted as a multivalent sign; it carries with it a number of allegorical interpretations.

In medieval exegesis, both textual and visual, Christ is regularly compared with a lion. In apocalyptic imagery, based upon the book of Revelation, Christ is referred to as the Lion of Judah:

“Weep not; lo, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David has conquered so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.” (Revelation 5:5)¹⁴

A similar visual analogy is included on the Incipit page to the Gospel of Saint Matthew in the *Codex Aureus of St. Emmeram* (Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 12000 fol. 16v), a manuscript also dated to the ninth century (Figure 8).¹⁵ The carpet page includes five medallions [integrated into a pattern] of interlace and foliate decoration. The central medallion contains the Lion of Judah encircled by a gold clipeus.¹⁶ Robert Calkins has noted that the Latin verse in the clipeus lauds the “lion’s victory over death and his everlasting wakefulness.”¹⁷

The Lion (of Judah) is also included in the Carolingian copies of the *Physiologus*, a Christian allegorical text. Here the Lion is ascribed three characteristics:

First, when he perceives that the hunters are pursuing him, he erases his footprints with his tail, so that he cannot be traced into his lair. In like manner of our Saviour, the lion of the tribe of Judah, concealed all traces of his Godhead, when he descended to the earth and entered into the womb of the Virgin Mary. Secondly, the lion always sleeps with his eyes open; so our Lord slept with his body on the cross, but awoke at the right hand of the Father. Thirdly, the lioness brings forth her whelps dead and watches

over them until after three days, the lion comes and howls over them and vivifies them with his breath; so the Almighty Father recalled to life His only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who on the third day was raised from the dead, and will likewise raise us all up to eternal life.¹⁸

The earliest Latin edition of the *Physiologus* dates to the early ninth century, and was often associated with the Archbishop Ebo of Rheims, who is known to have contact with Fulda.¹⁹ Thus, this manuscript should be considered a part of the intellectual atmosphere in which the Quedlinburg casket was created. These examples demonstrate that the pairing of the lion of Leo with Christ on the Quedlinburg casket refers to an established tradition of depicting Christ, as he will be, and as he was after the Crucifixion, triumphant over his flesh.

The asymmetrical placement of Christ in the casket’s composition is odd indeed, if not unprecedented. In this case, however, it is the most appropriate place on the casket for Christ to be located. Four figures cannot have a single central figure; here the Christ figure is to the right of the center, the only other position that would be appropriate. The poses of the other figures emphasize the importance of this position to the program by looking or gesturing towards it. While this is true of the Quedlinburg casket, it is more obvious on the Bamberg fragment, wherein the Christ figure looks out towards the viewer. On the Bamberg panel there is little doubt that this figure is central to reading the front panel correctly. Further, on both caskets, the zodiac cycles, which run counterclockwise, are oriented according to the proper placement of Christ.²⁰ The two bands of decoration are independent in their specific meaning except in the case of the *central* figure, Christ. Because Christ is the figure on which the entire composition turns, he should be considered an original element of the carving.

Having established that the iconography of the original carved panels included Christ and eleven apostles, and that a dependent relationship exists between the two registers of decoration, what does the iconography represent? The Quedlinburg casket sits within an established tradition of using a formal group of standing apostles and Christ to suggest a symbolic narrative. An assembly of apostles and Christ appear frequently on Early Christian sarcophagi and in apse decoration; but, while most Early Christian representations include Christ and

¹⁴ Holy Bible, Douay Rheims translation.

¹⁵ R. Calkins, *Illuminated Books of the Middle Ages* (New York: Cornell UP, 1983) 134.

¹⁶ Calkins 134. The Lion of Judah is considered a separate type from the lion that is associated with the Evangelist Matthew. Most notably, the lion of Judah does not have wings and is shown in profile raising its right forepaw. The Lion of Judah is the type found on the Quedlinburg casket. See: E. Okasha and J. O’Reilly, “An Anglo-Saxon Portable Altar: Inscription and Iconography,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* XLVII: (1984) 35-52, esp. 42.

¹⁷ F. Mütterich, *Carolingian Painting* (New York: George Braziller, 1976) 105.

¹⁸ E.P. Evans, *Animal Symbolism in Ecclesiastical Architecture* (London: W. Heinemann, 1969) 81.

¹⁹ Brubaker 368.

²⁰ If one thinks of the zodiac as following or delineating the calendar year, one would expect the sign for Aries to be on the ‘front’ of the casket. Here the sign for Aries appears on one of the small side flanks. It appears that the cycle was manipulated so that the Christ figure would be aligned with the sign for Leo.

the twelve apostles, the Quedlinburg casket includes only eleven, thus alluding to a particular moment in the life of Christ. To best understand the iconographic program of the Quedlinburg altar, it is necessary to ask what particular 'historical' moment would be evoked by the inclusion of eleven and not twelve apostles in the decoration.

The answer must be the Ascension, an event which occurs after the suicide of Judas, but before the election of Matthias. This event actually depends on the mention and representation of eleven apostles. The anomaly of the Eleven is prominently referenced in the text of the Gospels. In fact, both Matthew and Mark state specifically that eleven apostles were present at the Ascension:²¹

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father, the son and the Holy Spirit...(Matthew 28:16-20).

After he appeared to the Eleven themselves as they sat at table...and he said to them, "Go, into all the world and preach the gospels to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned..." (Mark 16:14-15).

Both of these verses refer to the moment when Jesus reappeared to the apostles after his resurrection, proving that the scriptures have been fulfilled. In the next few verses, Christ passed his ministry to the apostles, making them the first clerics. To further this point, there are monumental programs that utilize eleven apostles to reference the Ascension, as well as connect this event to the mission of the apostles. One of the most important early examples is the apse decoration in the *Aula Leonina* of the Lateran palace built by Leo III in 799.²² J. Grimaldi, a seventeenth-century Roman antiquarian and papal librarian, provides a detailed account of the mosaics in the main apse:

In the frieze of the apse...is written, GOING THEREFORE, TEACH YE ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND THE SON AND THE HOLY GHOST. AND BEHOLD I AM WITH YOU ALL DAYS, EVEN TO THE CONSUMMATION OF THE WORLD. In the vault of the apse, are the ten apostles, and the eleventh, the prince of the apostles, is in the triangle of the apse wall. This is actually the number of apostles present when Christ uttered those words, according to Matthew, Chapter 28.²³

The Ascension completes and fulfills the Resurrection; Jesus has ascended so that he can begin his "*heavenly ministry as High Priest*" and can act as an intercessor for his people.²⁴ The twelve figures on the Quedlinburg portable altar, Christ and the eleven apostles, refer to the moment of the Ascension as it follows the Sacrifice on the cross and prefigures the Mission to the first clerics.

The study and inclusion of the signs of the zodiac in the Quedlinburg program has an appropriately parallel emphasis on Christ's Second Coming. Their appearance on the casket seems justified by their prevalence in the work of one of Fulda's most famous monks, Hrabanus Maurus. Before becoming abbot of Fulda in the ninth century, Hrabanus Maurus directed the monastic school. During his tenure, he penned numerous texts in which he discussed both astronomy and astrology and under him the school developed into a center of research famous for studying and copying both Christian and antique manuscripts. Hrabanus Maurus's writings on astronomy explored both the scientific and religious application of the zodiac. Several of Hrabanus Maurus's treatises, including, *De Computo*, and *De Laudibus Sanctae Crucis*, contain illustrations of the signs and cycle of the zodiac, allegorical charts, and instructions on how to calculate the Christian year. A Carolingian copy of Maurus's *De Computo* includes a chart that illustrates the signs of the zodiac, as well as incorporates the names of the apostles and the sons of Jacob in the outer band of the chart.²⁵ *De Laudibus Sanctae Crucis* includes a collection of religious poetry written by Maurus in praise of the true cross. One of the anagrams forms a cross, which is comprised of the names of the twelve months, the twelve signs

²¹ Neither John, Luke nor Acts mentions the number of apostles present at the moment of the Ascension, however, Luke includes references to 'the Eleven' several times before and after the moment of the Ascension. In Acts, 'the Eleven' are not mentioned, but eleven apostles are listed in the verses that follow the Ascension; before the election of the new twelfth. John does not mention the moment of Christ's Ascension. It has been brought to my attention that the use of only eleven apostles to represent the Ascension is not a standard motif and that there are Ascension programs that divert from the text of the Gospels. There are scenes that are clearly identified as Ascension scenes that include ten or twelve apostles, as well as others that include eleven apostles and Mary, who is also not included in the Biblical text. To rephrase the argument, I would like to suggest that although the Ascension can be represented by ten, eleven or twelve apostles, a program including only eleven *should* necessarily be seen as such.

²² C. Davis-Weyer, *Early Medieval Art, 300-1150: Sources and Documents* (Englewood Cliff, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1971) 88.

²³ Davis-Weyer 92 n. 60. See also J. Grimaldi, "*De aula Lateranensi*," *Le Palais Lateran* ed. P. Lauer (Paris: E. Leroux, 1911) 581-82.

²⁴ P. Toon, *The Ascension of our Lord* (New York: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984) 17, 18.

²⁵ Zodiacal Chart, Folio 19 verso, *De Computo*, Basel, Öffentliche Universitätsbibliothek, Ms. F III, 15a, end of the 9th c. (see n. 13 Rissel).

²⁶ Allegory of the True Cross, Vatican Bibliotheca, Codex Reg. Lat. 124, folio 15 verso, c. 840. See H. Müller, *Hrabaus Maurus, De Laudibus Sanctae*

of the zodiac, the twelve winds and the twelve apostles.²⁶

The majority of Hrabanus Maurus's writings stem from a basic interest in numerology, relying on the number twelve to provide a metaphorical connection between the twelve apostles and the twelve signs of the zodiac. Marjorie Hall Panadero, however, has noted that most of Hrabanus Maurus's cosmic analogies are also made in combination with apocalyptic references to Christ as the redeemer. In *De Universo*, for example, Hrabanus equates the months with the apostles by citing a verse from Revelation.²⁷

In the midst of the street thereof, and on both sides of the river, was the tree of life, bearing twelve fruits, yielding its fruits every month, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations (Revelation 22:2).

The allegorical diagram from *De Laudibus Sanctae Crucis* is also justified by the Apocalypse where the twelve gates of the heavenly Jerusalem are mentioned.²⁸ "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them, the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the lamb (Revelation 21:12)."

On the Quedlinburg casket, the upper register of the casket's decoration refers to the textual and visual relationship that exists between the representation of the twelve signs of the zodiac and apocalyptic time. Here the reference is not necessarily to the Ascension, but to that which is promised to follow. In a similar manner, the lower register represents the end of Christ's life on earth, as a man of flesh and blood. The symbols for Christ, as a man and then above, as the Lion of Judah, represent the transition between the flesh and the spirit. The upper register refers to the physical end of the world, the Second Coming as is foretold in Revelation. When one considers that the ivory is dated to less than fifteen years after the death of this great abbot in 856, and that the casket has been attributed to his abbey's workshop, Hrabanus Maurus's ideas concerning the zodiac and the apostles are seen as excellent models for the iconography of the Quedlinburg altar.

Lastly, it is necessary to consider the implications of the altar as a practical liturgical object, and how its ritual use

could further an iconographic interpretation. As noted above, present at the Ascension are eleven apostles, the successors of Christ and the predecessors of the modern cleric. By commemorating the Ascension, the cleric is allowed to celebrate his own position, possibly even making himself the newly elected twelfth. The inclusion of elements that signify the events that occur both outside and within an architectural setting aid in reading the decorative program as alluding to the Ascension on Mount Olivet, as well as its re-creation during liturgical activities such as communion.²⁹ Thus, the Quedlinburg altar evokes a 'historical' moment, as well as the liturgical celebration of that moment through the Eucharist, and finally, the ecclesiastical setting that is lacking when a portable altar is needed.

Thus far, a number of aspects of the characteristics of both the signs of the zodiac and the apostles have been aligned, but it must be remembered that most often it is their number that solidifies their connection. Thus, it is not the twelve apostles and the signs of the zodiac that are being compared, but Christ and eleven apostles, or the Ascension of Christ and the twelve signs of the zodiac. The connection of the two registers at the sign of Leo helps to bolster an eschatological interpretation for the program. The Christ Logos, as he is shown beneath the arcade, is transformed in the upper register into the lion of Judah.³⁰ The interpretive relationship that exists between the two decorative registers pushes the reading of the iconography so that it makes a direct allusion to Christ as the redeemer of Christian souls. Armed with a new reading of the casket's function and iconography, it seems clear that the zodiac in the top register makes reference to Christ as he will be in the Heavenly Jerusalem, while the lower register relates to his corporeality, to the end of his life as a man of flesh. This interpretation seems even more poignant when one notes that the casket would have functioned as an *altare viaticum*, or the sacred space on which Christ's sacrifice would be reenacted and symbolically fulfilled.³¹

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Crucis: Studien zur Überlieferung und Geistesgeschichte mit dem Faksimilie-Textabdruck aus Codex Reg. Lat 124 der Vatikanischen Bibliothek (Düsseldorf: A. Henn Verlag Ratingen, 1973) folio 15 verso.

²⁷ M. Panadero, *The Labors of the Months and the Signs of the Zodiac in Twelfth Century Facades*, 2 vols., doctoral diss., (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1984) 234, fn. 78 (PL 111, 301).

²⁸ Panadero 200.

²⁹ I would like to thank Professor Carolyn Watson of Furman University for suggesting that the columns and curtains be considered an important aspect of the casket's iconography.

³⁰ The Figure of Christ should be seen as Christ Logos for several reasons, the first being that the hand gesture of Christ should be seen as a speaking

gesture, and as a gesture of acclamation. L'Orange describes this gesture as "no longer a philosophical-discursive gesture, but the gesture of the divine authority of the Word, the Logos." H. P. L'Orange, *Studies in the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World* (New York: Caratzas Brothers, 1982) 195. He states that this corresponds to "...the conception of Christ as Cosmocrator. Christ is enthroned like an emperor on his heavenly throne, he is surrounded by the symbols of the world dominion, the scroll in his left hand becomes the law of omnipotence, by the speech gesture of his right hand it is proclaimed to Man and the Universe." 195-196. Also note that the scroll which the Christ figure holds on both the Quedlinburg and the Bamberg caskets is a bit unrolled, so it is the only example that could display what has been written. It is my opinion that this is similar to the broken seals of the word in Revelation.

³¹ *Altare viaticum* is one of several terms used to identify a portable altar in clerical contracts and charters. Welsh 22 and Labarte 381.



Figure 1. Casket, front panel, c. 870, ivory set with silver gilt mounts, gems and enamels, 13.6 cm x 24.9 cm. ©Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, 1992, Klaus G. Beyer, Quedlinburg, Stiftskirche.



Figure 2. Casket, side panel, c. 870, ivory set with silver gilt mounts, gems and enamels, 13.6 cm x 12.4 cm. ©Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, 1992, Klaus G. Beyer, Quedlinburg, Stiftskirche.



Figure 3. Casket, back panel, c. 870, ivory set with silver gilt mounts, gems and enamels, 13.6 cm x 24.9 cm. ©Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, 1992, Klaus G. Beyer, Quedlinburg, Stiftskirche.

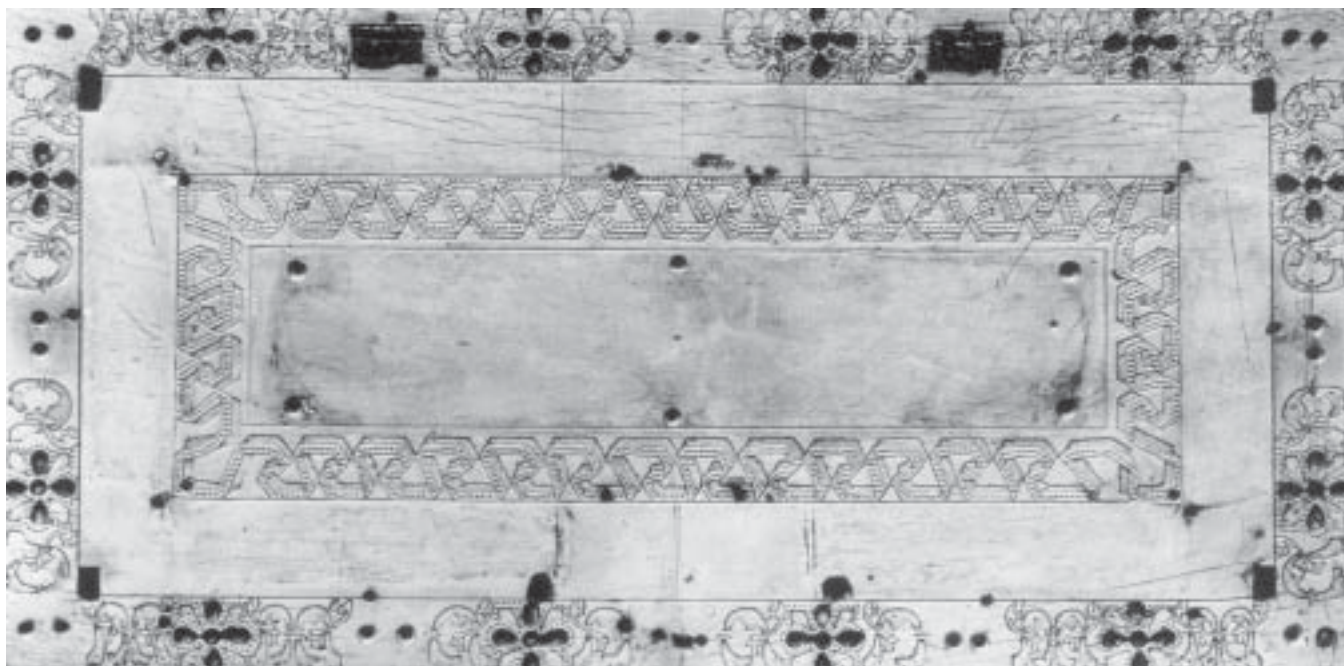


Figure 4. Casket, top panel, c. 870, ivory set with silver gilt mounts, gems and enamels, 24.9 cm x 12.4 cm. ©Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, 1992, Klaus G. Beyer, Quedlinburg, Stiftskirche.

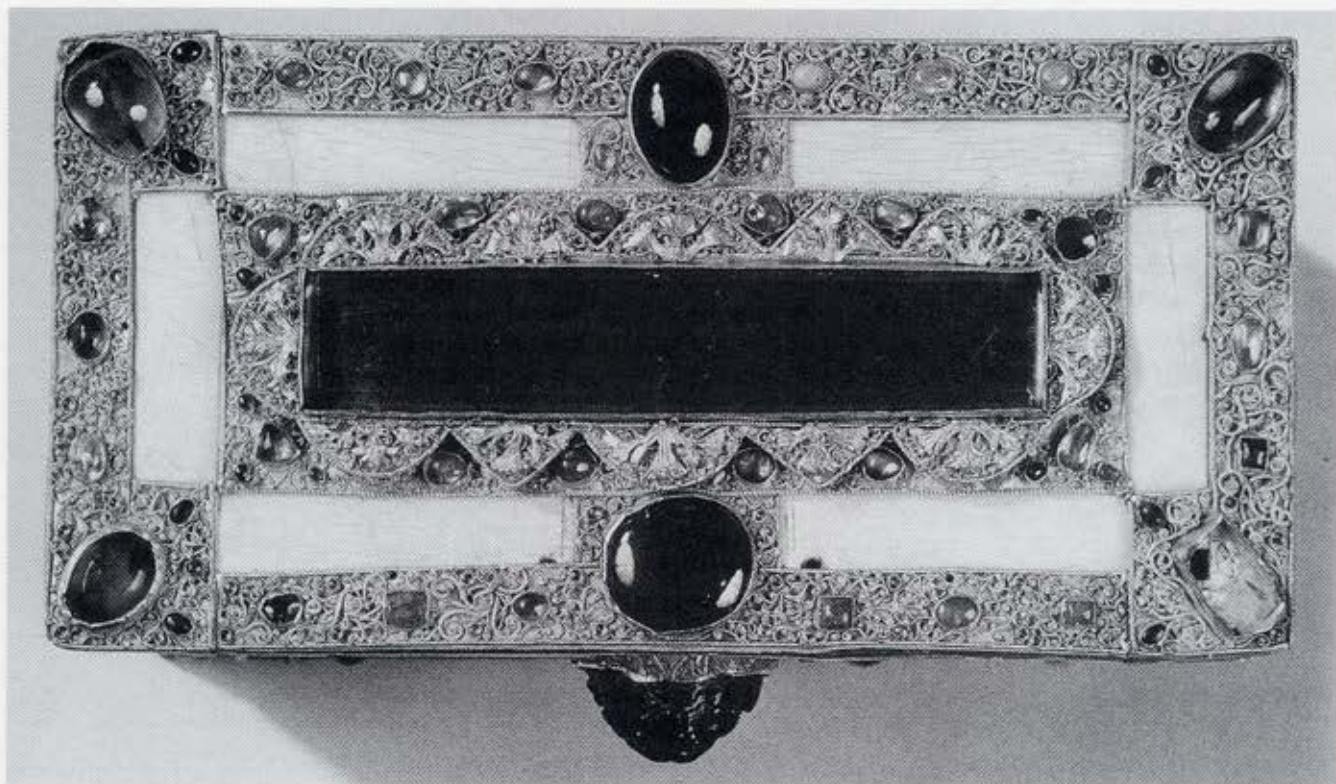


Figure 5. Casket, top panel, c. 870, ivory panel, 24.9 cm x 12.4 cm. ©Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, 1992, Klaus G. Beyer, Quedlinburg, Stiftskirche.



Figure 6. Casket, c. 870, ivory panel, 11.8 x 23.5 cm, photo courtesy of the Bayerische National Museum.



Figure 7. Portable Altar of Gertrud, c. 1030, gold, gems, pearls, and enamels, L. 26.6 cm. ©photo courtesy of the Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of the John Huntington Art and Polytechnic Trust, 1031.462.



Figure 8. "Lion of Christ," *Code Aureus of St. Emmeram*, c. 870, fol. 16 verso, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 14000. ©photo courtesy of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek.