

3 Introduction to the Geneva Beatus

The Geneva Beatus Commentary on the Apocalypse came to light late in 2007, when the manuscript holdings of the Congrégation des Missionnaires de Saint François de Sales (Institut Florimont, Geneva) were given in deposit to the Bibliothèque de Genève.⁷⁴ At some point, probably in the fourteenth or fifteenth century,⁷⁵ the Commentary had been bound together in a single codex with Priscian's *Institutiones grammaticae* (fols. 1-148^v; the Beatus Commentary comprises folios 149-245^v).

Location in the Family Tree of Copies

What position within the family tree (see Fig. 4) did the model for the Geneva Beatus occupy? As discussed in the opening essay to this volume, there are two basic branches. Branch I, the closest to the original textually, is represented by manuscripts dated between the tenth and the late twelfth centuries. Those copies that preserve an earlier state of the text employ a simpler format in which the illustrations were inserted in the columns of text, unframed, and with backgrounds that have been left unpainted (see Figs. 91-92). Some of the Branch I manuscripts offer clues to the iconography and format of the original Beatus Commentary, while others have undergone changes over time. The text of the Geneva copy points in one direction, as demonstrated by Roger Gryson's study: it is closest to the Branch I Commentaries dependent on the revision of

the first edition, represented by the Beatus in the Escorial (No. 10) and the San Millán Commentary now in Madrid at the Real Academia de la Historia (No. 9).⁷⁶ Both of these are from the second half of the tenth century and both are likely to have been made at the monastery of San Millán de la Cogolla. One assumes that Geneva's model, a manuscript of the tenth or early part of the eleventh century, was also from there. It was an important center for the reproduction of the Commentary for two centuries, and the Geneva copy has the virtue of contributing, and calling further attention, to the importance of this Riojan scriptorium.⁷⁷

The virtually complete set of illustrations in the Geneva Beatus potentially promised to enhance our knowledge of the character of that part of Branch I. Unfortunately, as we shall see, that expectation is difficult to realize when a comparison is made with the other Branch I copies, as even in the most densely illustrated – the Escorial Beatus – there are many gaps in the series of illustrations. In fact, intact copies belonging to this branch of the stemma are rare, reducing the chances for comparisons between illustrations. While not part of the sub-branch to which the Escorial Beatus belongs, other Branch I examples help fill out our knowledge of the composition of the illustrations, as presented below.

Although it is not an illustration per se, one page integral to the Beatus tradition offers in its design and general structure a non-textual, diagrammatic measure of relationships between Geneva and the Branch I copies. It represents the Antichrist Tables, where numerical values were assigned to

74 Dubuis and Jeger 2009. The complete manuscript is now available online: <http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/bge/lat0357/149r/0/Sequence-137>

75 Shailor 2015.

76 Gryson 2012, LVIII-LXI.

77 Díaz y Díaz 1979, 111f.

Figure 86 Numbering of the Names of the Antichrist: Table I. Vitrina 14-1 Beatus, fol. 121^v. Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS Vitrina 14-1

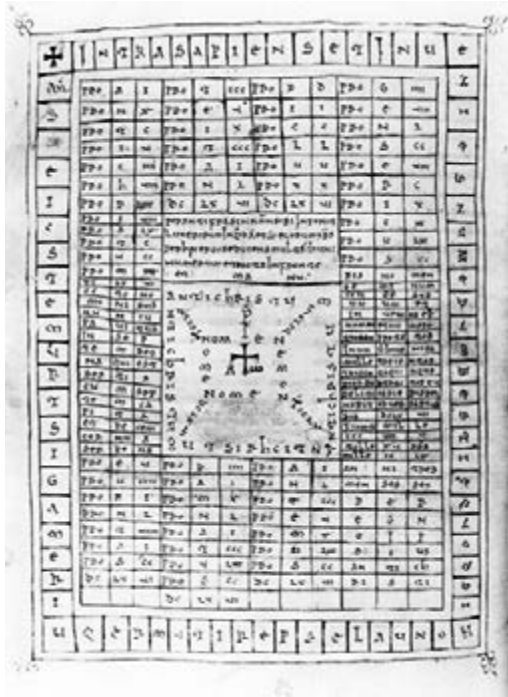


Photo: John Williams

the letters of the alphabet, Greek and Latin, in order to calculate the names of the Antichrist. Only the first of the two diagrams was included in the Geneva Beatus (see Fig. 141). A comparison of the six Branch I Commentaries that include Table I shows that the closest in design are the tables in Vitrina 14-1 (Fig. 86; No. 3) from the first half of the tenth century, and even more so those in the c. 1000 Escorial copy for omitting the small cross as well as the monogram of Christ poised above the cross (Fig. 87; No. 10). These features of the scheme in Vitrina 14-1 are details shared with the later

Figure 87 Numbering of the Names of the Antichrist: Table I. Escorial Beatus, fol. 115. Escorial, Biblioteca del Monasterio, & II.5

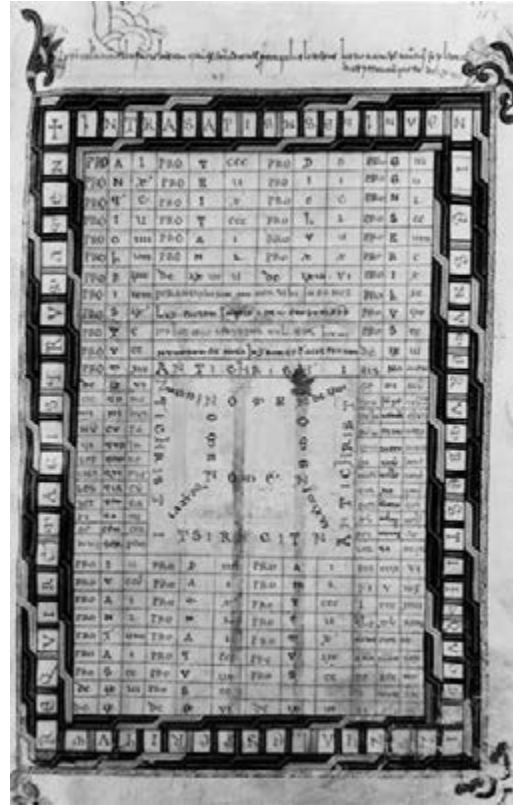


Photo: John Williams

copy of Branch I now in Paris (No. 23, fol. 114^v).⁷⁸ However, because Vitrina 14-1 has lost most of its illustrations, it is of little help in establishing a pictorial relationship to the Geneva Beatus. Its text, moreover, differs from that shared by the copies closest to Geneva. Since the San Millán Commentary (No. 9) was illustrated in the Branch I tradition only up to Apocalypse IV, 6-V, 14, it, too, is of limited help. Its illustrations chiefly consist of the Messages to the Churches,

⁷⁸ For the correlation of the Antichrist Tables, see Klein 1976, I: 323-25.

in which the relative positions of John and the Angel coincide with Geneva more often than not. However, San Millán's depiction of the Vision of God and the Four Living Creatures (see Fig. 48) bears very little resemblance to that in Geneva (see Fig. 118).

In sum, in the case of the non-pictorial components, namely the text and the Antichrist Table, there is a concrete signal that the model belonged to the part of the family tree that produced copies associated with the monastery of San Millán de la Cogolla. However, the loss of illustrations in the manuscripts connected to this scriptorium, and more importantly, the independent approach to the model on the part of the illustrator of the Geneva Beatus, make it impossible to affirm absolutely that San Millán produced the model eventually copied in southern Italy.

To determine the relationship of the pictures in the Geneva copy to its branch of the family tree, we must take into account the instances among the illustrations of the Geneva Beatus that differ significantly from the Escorial Commentary (No. 10), the best preserved but still incomplete copy with the textual recension closest to Geneva. This is certainly the case with the illustrations of the Seventh Angel Emptying His Bowl (see Fig. 152; Apoc. XVI, 17-21), Satan Released (see Fig. 163; Apoc. XX, 7-8), and others. At the same time, there are as many parallels – actually more, since it is almost intact – between Geneva and the copy executed at Sahagún, now in Burgo de Osma (No. 14), as there are with the Escorial Commentary (No. 10). The idiosyncratic character of the Geneva Beatus may be seen in the illustration of the Devil Chained in the Abyss (see Fig. 162; Apoc. XX, 1-3) when compared to the same scene in the Osma Beatus (Fig. 88) and the Escorial copy (Fig. 89). The last two agree in depicting the nude devil prostrate in debased human form, locked by two bars within a

rectangular space at the bottom of the picture. One must conclude that the archetypal conception resembled this one and was passed down through the two distinct families of Branch I. In the Geneva illustration the devil is in the usual symbolic form resembling a bird as he emerges from a vertical abyss crisscrossed with wavy lines. The fact that the writing has been adjusted to the abyss and not vice versa shows the originality of the decision concerning the representation of the natures of the Devil and of the abyss, since a composition similar to that in the Osma and Escorial Commentaries would have been possible. Geneva's illustration of the Victory of the Lamb (see Fig. 155; Apoc. XVII, 14-18) also encourages the conclusion that the model being copied belonged to the same branch of the family tree as the Escorial Beatus (No. 10).⁷⁹ Not only is it comparable in content and arrangement to the illustration in the Escorial copy on folio 145 (Fig. 90), but the inscription (*Agnus uincet pseudo prophetas / et draconem et diabolum et bestia*) is similar as well (*agnus vincet draconem et diabolum et bestia et pseudopphetam*).

As we saw in the introduction to this volume, at least three Commentaries besides the Escorial copy have some claim to an origin at the monastery of San Millán de la Cogolla: the San Millán Beatus of the Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid (No. 9),⁸⁰ Vitrina 14-1 in the Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid (No. 3),⁸¹ and a copy that survives only as seven pages from a seventeenth-century replica of folios from a Beatus made for the Aragonese monastery of Fanlo (No. 12).⁸² The first three were made in the tenth century; the Fanlo Beatus was commissioned in the middle of the eleventh. The

79 Williams 1998, 29-31.

80 Williams 1998, 21-28; 2005b, 85-134.

81 Williams 1994b, 34-37; Klein 2011b, 33-102.

82 Williams 1994a, no. 12, 41f.; Galtier Martí 2005a.

Figure 88 Devil Chained in the Abyss (Apoc. XX, 1-3). *Osma Beatus*, fol. 153^v. Burgo de Osma, Cabildo de la Catedral



Figure 89 Devil Chained in the Abyss (Apoc. XX, 1-3). Escorial Beatus, fol. 151. Escorial, Biblioteca del Monasterio, &.II.5



Figure 90 Victory of the Lamb over the Kings (Apoc. XVII, 14-18). Escorial Beatus, fol. 145. Escorial, Biblioteca del Monasterio, &.II.5



Figure 91 Letter to the Church of Thyatira (Apoc. II, 18-29). Escorial Beatus, fol. 40^v. Escorial, Biblioteca del Monasterio, &.II.5



Photo: John Williams

pictorial content of these manuscripts differs to an extreme degree, but they share a disciplined regularity that conforms to the peninsular Beatus tradition. Can the model for the Geneva Beatus be associated with San Millán as well? This possibility is explored below.

When measured against the rest of the tradition, the approach taken to the illustrations in the Geneva Beatus differs in style and technique, as should be expected from a product of a different culture – Italian rather than Iberian. This we see in looking at the Messages to the Seven Churches of Asia. There is a more ambitious pictorial approach in the Spanish versions, a tendency to embellish the simple iconography of John receiving the book from an angel, as seen in the Geneva versions of Thyatira (see Fig. 112) when paired with Escorial (Fig. 91;

Figure 92 Letter to the Church of Sardis (Apoc. III, 1-6), San Millán Beatus, fol. 72^v. Madrid, Real Academia de la Historia, Cod. 33



Photo: John Williams

No. 10), and of Sardis (see Fig. 113) compared with the San Millán copy (Fig. 92, No. 9). One might be tempted to attribute this difference to the provincial nature of artistic culture in the tenth and eleventh centuries in the Italian peninsula, or to the highly sophisticated level of ornament in the artistic culture coming from al-Andalus. However, the interlace we see in the San Millán Beatus (as in Fig. 92) is not Islamic but European in origin – Hiberno-Saxon and Carolingian – and influences of that kind were the wellspring that revolutionized the appearance of the Beatus Commentary, as we saw previously.

The Geneva copy differs from the Iberian approach also in its disregard for a regular integration of text and picture. In most cases, the illustration preceded and determined the

layout of the text. This is apparent even in the least challenging examples, such as the Letters to the Churches (see Figs. 109-115), but it is even more striking in the ambitious illustrations, such as the Four Wind Angels on folio 189 (see Fig. 122) or God with the Four Living Creatures on folio 174 (see Fig. 118). These pages – and most of the rest – would have been bare when taken up by the illustrator, after which the writer was left to fill the remaining space. This sequence – picture or ornate initial followed by text – is unusual within the history of illustrated medieval manuscripts, but not highly so. Here the writing and illustrating are so integrally united that one imagines two possibilities: either scribe and illustrator were the same person, or, seeing as the two types of lettering indicate there was more than a single scribe, that the illustrator was senior and unbound by the rules or expectations of his or her colleagues. Or could the priority given to the illustrations have been due to a lack of experience? After all, we cannot assume that every scriptorium was prepared to produce books with multiple, detailed illustrations. The Geneva procedure was clearly not the one evident in an unfinished Beatus copy made at about the same time in the scriptorium at Sahagún in Spain, where the text was laid out first, leaving spaces for illustrations that were never filled in.⁸³ Had the images been inserted, this manuscript would have been a twin of the model being copied, the Beatus of Burgo de Osma (No. 14).

Evidence provided by other Commentaries from the same early branch of the family tree as the Geneva Beatus indicate that, in the model before the eyes of the Italian copyist, the illustrations would have been located in the columns of text without frames or painted backgrounds.⁸⁴ None of the other known copies, however, so

routinely transgresses the format of fitting an illustration within the column of text as Geneva. Such irregularity might be forced if a scribe left insufficient space for the illustrator, but here the images clearly had precedence, making such eccentric compositions difficult to explain.

Did Geneva have more than one illustrator? At times, for example in the Letters to the Churches of Philadelphia and Laodicea on folios 165^v and 169 (see Figs. 114-115), the final state of figures with color applied seems to vary enough to make more than one artistic hand plausible, but I think that the drawing of these two examples can be attributed to the same individual. The application of color to the drawings, however, need not have been the responsibility of the same illustrator or of only one hand. I hope that future studies of this manuscript will test my conclusion that a single illustrator, but more than one painter, contributed to the Geneva illustrations.

The Model

Although we do not have the model on which the Commentary now in Geneva is based, its text, as noted, finds its closest match in the Escorial Beatus (No. 10).⁸⁵ Further, the figural style of Escorial has been shown to resemble that in manuscripts executed at San Millán de la Cogolla, the scriptorium that played such a key role in the history of the primitive branch of Beatus Commentaries. It is thus a good possibility that the model for the Geneva Beatus also originated at San Millán. As for the motive behind its arrival at a monastery in southern Italy, we are completely ignorant. It was not the only Spanish Commentary to make the journey: the Beatus now in Berlin (No. 19) was copied in the twelfth century in the south of Italy from a different Spanish model.⁸⁶ Still

⁸³ Shailor 1992, 45-49; Williams 1992, 21-22; Suárez González 2009, 55f.

⁸⁴ Williams 1994b, 53-54.

⁸⁵ Williams 1994b, 29f.

⁸⁶ Klein 2010; Gryson 2015.

Figure 93 Vision of God Enthroned with the Elders. Escorial Beatus, fol. 57^r. Escorial, Biblioteca del Monasterio, &.II.5



Photo: Hamid Shams

another brilliantly illuminated Spanish manuscript, the ninth-century Bible in the library of the monastery of La Cava dei Tirreni, near Salerno,⁸⁷ has glosses in Beneventan script of the twelfth century.⁸⁸ It may have arrived there earlier; how it arrived is unknown.⁸⁹ The possible

conduits for such transfers have scarcely been assessed; they merit future research.⁹⁰

What does the Geneva Commentary add to our knowledge about the illustrated model from which it was copied? We know rather less about the original iconography than the text

⁸⁷ Cherubini et al. 2010.

⁸⁸ Lowe 1972.

⁸⁹ According to Lowe 1972, 339, Abbot Amelli of La Cava suggested that it was a gift from Mauritius Bordinho, later known as the antipope Gregory VIII,

who was bishop of Coimbra and archbishop of Braga as well as a welcome visitor at the abbey of La Cava in the twelfth century.

⁹⁰ For connections in southern Italy through other texts, see Reynolds 2009.

Figure 94 Vision of God Enthroned with the Elders, *Osma Beatus*, fol. 70^v. Burgo de Osma, Cabildo de la Catedral



Photo: John Williams

because of the circumstances of survival. One of the copies with the first recension of the text, made in the Gascon monastery of Saint-Sever (No. 13), displays a set of illustrations matching the most advanced phase of the iconography. Although it shares this text, the oldest Branch I copy, Vitrina 14-1 (No. 3), is severely mutilated. The second oldest copy, San Millán (No. 9), is only partially illustrated. Later copies, like that of Burgo de Osma (No. 14), tend to be less faithful to the archetype.

The *Beatus* illustrations were essentially visual reprises of the written *storiae*, as is evident in Geneva's version of the Vision of God Enthroned (see Fig. 118). The fourth chapter of the Apocalypse had inspired the classic image

of Christ in Majesty for Western medieval art, combining both the enthroned Elders and the animal symbols of the Evangelists. However, *Beatus* divided this chapter so that the *storia* included the Twenty-four Elders, but the symbols of the Evangelists were relegated to the following *storia*. The Geneva miniature is quite literal and its design is unusually disciplined in its regular alignment with the text. The number of Elders, twenty-four, corresponds to the number in the *storia*, where they are said to be wearing crowns of gold. Beneath the heavenly court a narrow zone with undulating green lines represents the transparent sea, a "sea of glass like to crystal." In the lowest register John receives the vision from the angel, with a literal take on the "voice like a trumpet."

We are fortunate to have this same illustration in one of the Commentaries that is textually closest to Geneva, the *Escorial Beatus* (Fig. 93; No. 10). Style aside, the two versions essentially coincide in translating the text rather literally. The Spanish artist varied the headgear to account for the *explanatio*'s identification of the Elders as apostles as well as patriarchs. This same basic composition appears on folio 70^v of a more distant member of this branch of texts, the *Osma Beatus* from the great monastery of Sahagún (Fig. 94; No. 14). Looking at these illustrations, we can say with confidence that, like the text, Geneva's pictorial content belongs to the earlier of the two main branches of the family tree.

In the case of the Last Judgment from the Geneva Commentary (see Fig. 165), this illustration aids us in establishing the original composition for one of the major themes of medieval Christian art. Outside Iberia, the European version was slow to be formulated and was essentially based on the scene composed for Byzantine art, whereas the version in the *Beatus* Commentaries was older and different. In the Geneva *Beatus*, the inscriptions on the Last Judgment scene show a clear

Figure 95 Last Judgment, Osma Beatus, fol. 157^v. Burgo de Osma, Cabildo de la Catedral



Photo: John Williams

Figure 96 The Opening of the Sixth Seal: The Earthquake (Apoc. VI, 12-17). Osma Beatus, fol. 89. Burgo de Osma, Cabildo de la Catedral



Photo: John Williams

Figure 97 The Opening of the Sixth Seal: The Earthquake (Apoc. VI, 12-17). Morgan Beatus, fol. 112. New York, The Morgan Library & Museum, MS M.644



Photo: Joseph Zehavi

dependence on the illustration in the Spanish copy that served as its model, as the description of judgment is taken not from the *storia* or the *explanatio* flanking this picture, but from that of the First Trumpet Angel (fol. 199), a passage borrowed by Beatus from Gregory the Great's *Moralia in Iob*. These legends are standard in all branches of the Beatus family tree.

While the inscriptions show a clear dependence on a Beatus archetype, the Geneva composition does not resemble that in the Branch I Commentary of Burgo de Osma (Fig. 95; No. 14). It is possible that this Geneva image is closer to the archetype than is the one in the Osma copy. However, for most of the Geneva scenes, the traditional formulas utilized for the illustrations in Spain were

ignored. Let us take Geneva's image of the Opening of the Sixth Seal (Apoc. VI, 12-17; see Fig. 121). It is typical of the tradition in that there is no attempt to include allegorical meanings pictorially. Most surprising, however, is the decision to render "dens and rocks of the mountains" as an arcaded, man-made structure. This formula is absolutely unique within the Beatus tradition; in the Osma Beatus (Fig. 96) the scene took a more or less literal approach. A century earlier at Tábara, Maius had liberated himself from the restrictions imposed by the original pictorial format, and so he was able to do justice to the *storia* in the Morgan copy (Fig. 97; No. 2). And a century later, the southern Italian artist of the Berlin Commentary, copying a Beatus from Sahagún,

Figure 98 The Opening of the Sixth Seal: The Earthquake (Apoc. VI, 12-17). Berlin Beatus, fol. 50. Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, MS Theol. lat. Fol. 561



Photo: John Williams

responded to the same *storia* with a far more disciplined and accurate illustration (Fig. 98; No. 19).

With this Geneva illustration of The Opening of the Sixth Seal, we are faced with the enigma addressed earlier: why is there such a seemingly capricious alignment of text and picture? Clearly the word *stare* has been written so that it overlaps the blue arch, confirming the priority of the picture. This allows us to sequence the procedure followed by the illustrator here and on many other pages, beginning with the drawing of the various visual elements chosen to be present, then continuing with the writing of the text.

The Scriptorium

In the eleventh century, southern Italy had produced magnificent illuminated codices, such as the Exultet rolls.⁹¹ The infelicitous application of color and the lack of disciplined order in the relationship between text and picture, however, endow the Geneva Commentary with an improvisational character that might suggest it was produced by an eccentric scribe/painter and/or a scriptorium of limited experience with illuminated manuscripts. While elements of this conclusion may be true, it would be a mistake to conclude that only a minor scriptorium could have been responsible: the underdrawings are sophisticated, even if the application of paint is often not. The exceptionally lavish use of gold throughout also calls for caution in this regard.

Few medieval Italian scriptoria were more important and experienced than Monte Cassino in the production of illustrated manuscripts. The *De rerum naturis* of Hrabanus Maurus (Cod. Casin. 132), which was produced at Monte Cassino under Abbot Teobaldo in the second quarter of the eleventh century, represents the scriptorium at its finest artistic level.⁹² Moreover, this manuscript offers analogies to the Geneva Beatus. Both include an extraordinarily lengthy sequence of illustrations with compositions and techniques that resemble each other's. That the *De rerum naturis* displays similar adjustment of text to picture rather than vice versa is apparent on many pages (Fig. 99).⁹³ Although not to the same extent, perhaps, the application of paint to drawing is comparably rough.⁹⁴ To be sure, the design of

⁹¹ Cavallo 1994.

⁹² Orofino 2000, 50-86, Tav. X-LXV.

⁹³ Orofino 2000, Tav. XV, XXIII, XXVIII, XXXI, XXXIV, XLII, XLIII, XLIV.

⁹⁴ Orofino 2000, Tav. XXXIV, XXXV, XXXIX

Figure 99 *De rerum naturis* by Hrabanus Maurus, Cod. Casin. 132, fol. 73, Archivio dell'Abbazia di Montecassino



figures differs from those in the Geneva Beatus. Geneva's formulaic faces with spotted cheeks and a strongly marked depression between nose and upper lip make no appearance in the Hrabanus Maurus.⁹⁵ They do appear, however, in other Cassinese manuscripts.⁹⁶ These parallels do not point to an origin at Monte Cassino for the Geneva Apocalypse, but they do reduce somewhat its initial impression of extreme eccentricity.

As for the professional experience of the individual responsible for the drawings, figures in the Geneva Commentary are convincingly articulated and well-proportioned, with drapery patterns consistent with established conventions of the time, that is, the middle of the eleventh century. One must assume that this was not the first time the draftsman undertook an artistic project. Color, however, was applied in a surprisingly undisciplined way, not only failing to follow closely the lines of the drawing, but even capricious on occasion, as seen, for example, in the application of colors to the sensitively drawn head of the Angel of the Seventh Trumpet on folio 207^v (see Fig. 136). Within this context, even the extravagant use of gold – unparalleled in other copies of the Beatus Commentary – merely compounds the impression of a provincial product, despite the indication of a well-endowed scriptorium or a patron of high rank.

The illustrations of another Italian Beatus, the Berlin Commentary (No. 19), display a set of untinted drawings produced in some southern Italian location a few decades after the Geneva copy (see Figs. 67-68).⁹⁷ Was Geneva originally conceived for uncolored drawings, with paint and gold only added in a second campaign? I

think not: there is no convincing support for such a conclusion, and the possibility of a later renewed interest involving the addition of color is hard to justify. Still, in terms of its technique, the pictorial part of the Geneva Beatus comes across as “unprofessional” in comparison to the highly sophisticated series of Exultet rolls produced contemporaneously in southern Italy. However, nothing in the Geneva Commentary sinks to the low technical level of the illustrations of Monte Cassino 442^{I-II}, which, like our manuscript, makes use of both Beneventan and Caroline script, and is dated to the eleventh century (Fig. 100).⁹⁸

A conclusion, however, that the Geneva copy was the typical result of a professional scriptorium would be remiss. Its geographical origin is a question matched in importance by the motivation for its creation. Unfortunately, neither can yet be answered categorically. As we saw previously, Beatus's original Commentary must have been motivated by the approach of the year 800 and the end of ordinary time according to traditional calculation. It is unlikely – and certainly undocumented – that such an expectation produced the Geneva Beatus in the eleventh century, where its writing fits best. As for the contributions of the images to the establishment of Geneva's date, the lack of Byzantinizing formulas in the figural drapery and the absence of initials with elaborate interlace, which would become common at the end of the eleventh century, indicate a chronology no later than the middle of that century. While the initials in Monte Cassino 5 (Fig. 101),⁹⁹ dated 1011-22 – a manuscript that, like Geneva, combines Beneventan and Caroline script – are

95 See also the angels in Cas. 132 (Orofino 2000, Tav. X) and on Geneva fol. 162^v.

96 Orofino 1996, Tav. LXXVII.

97 Klein, 2011.

98 Orofino 2000, 107-10, Tav. LXXVII, LXXXVIII.

99 Orofino 1996, 26-30, Tav. VIII-XIIC. It combines Beneventan and Caroline script of a type that has been assigned to the northeastern part of southern Italy, near Capitanata; see also Tristano 1979, 100-02.

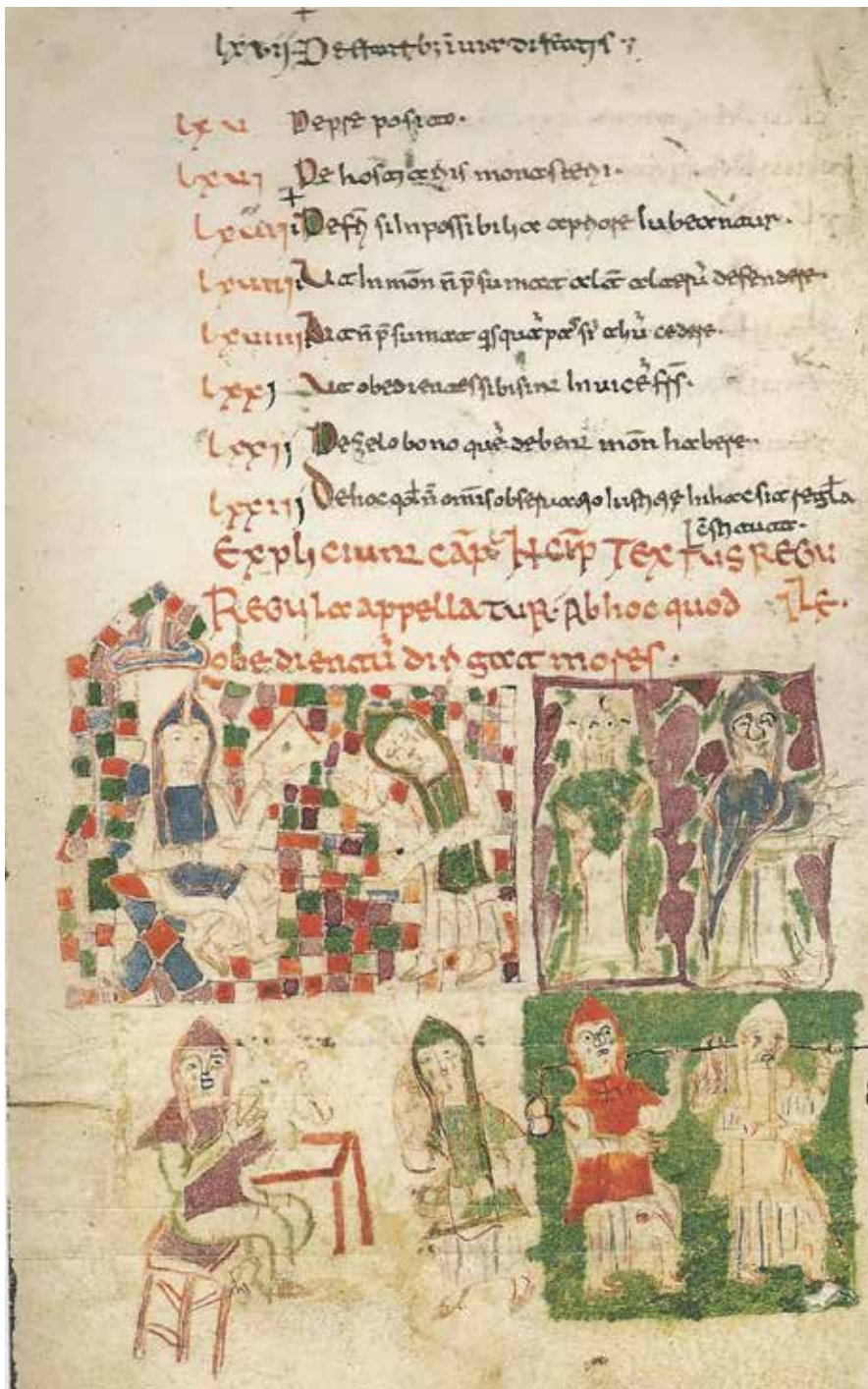
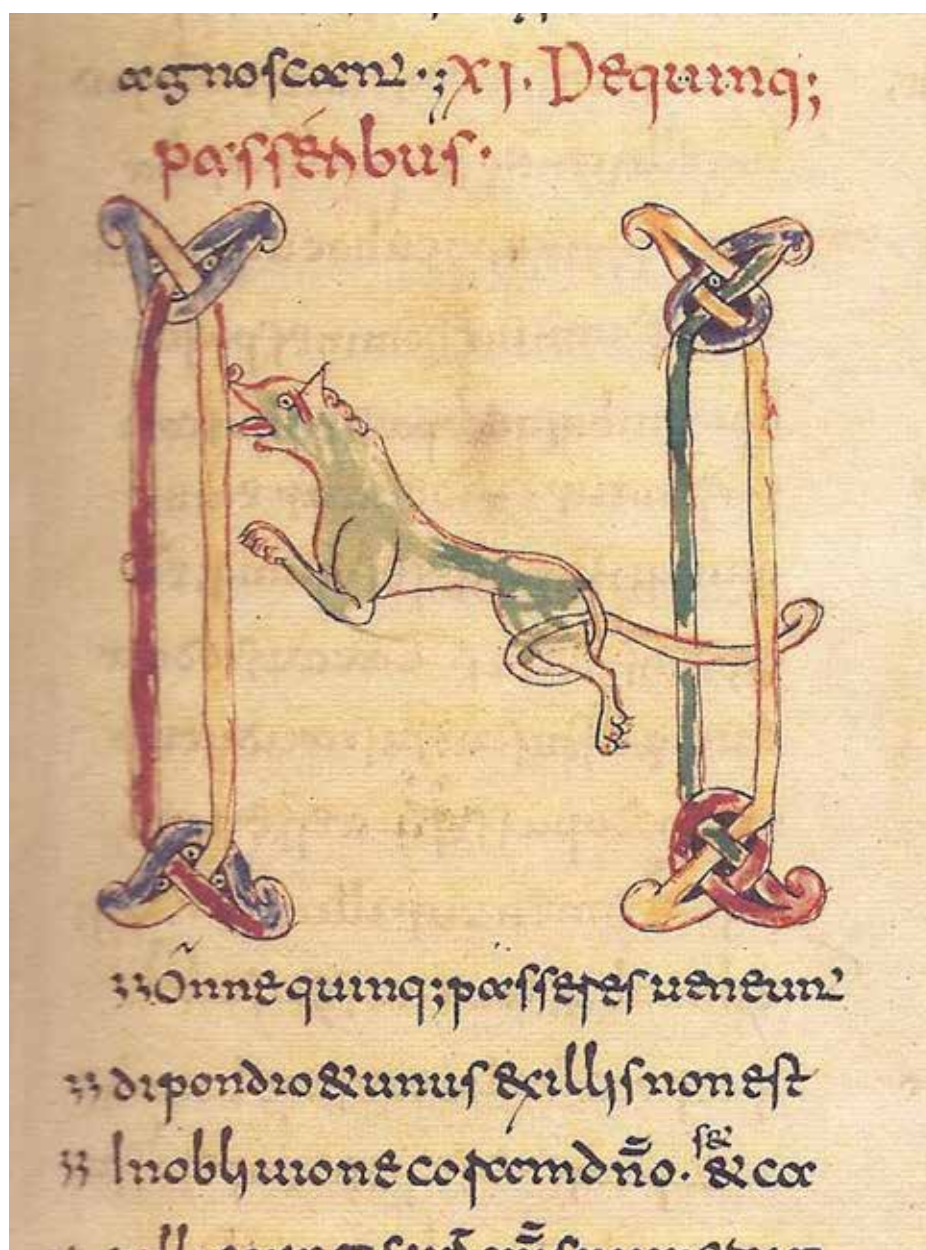
Figure 100 Cod. Casin. 442^{II}, fol. 12, Archivio dell'Abbazia di Montecassino

Figure 101 Cod. Casin. 5, fol. 349, Archivio dell'Abbazia di Montecassino



not based on the same formula, in simplicity and technique they are analogous to the single initial in the Geneva Beatus (see Fig. 116).

The Illustrator's Contributions

In the following section of this volume, in which each illustration in the Geneva copy is reproduced and analyzed, the word "unique" appears an extraordinary number of times for a discussion of a Beatus Commentary. I use this term advisedly, as these images appear nowhere else in the Beatus tradition. In these illustrations, we can see the original contributions of the Geneva draftsman, who took ancient formulas – such as a dove to represent

the soul – and gave them his or her own strikingly different interpretation: on folio 185^v, the doves emerge directly from the bleeding necks of decapitated martyrs (see Fig. 120). At times these drawings omit details seen commonly in other Beatus copies or add original figures; both characteristics can be found in the scene of the Angel of the Abyss and the Locusts on folio 202 (see Fig. 129), where the representation of locusts normally includes the victims stung by these creatures (Apoc. IX, 7-12). The Geneva Commentary, however, not only leaves the victims out of this illustration, but also uniquely includes a bestial, satanic figure to represent the angel. It is unlikely that this figure appeared in the Commentary used as a model by our unknown miniaturist.