ILLUMINATING THE WORD IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

This richly illustrated study addresses the essential first steps in the development of the new phenomenon of the illuminated book, which innovatively introduced colourful large letters and ornamental frames as guides for the reader's access to the text. Tracing their surprising origins within late Roman reading practices, Lawrence Nees shows how these decorative features stand as ancestors to features of printed and electronic books we take for granted today, including font choice, word spacing, punctuation, and sentence capitalization. Two hundred photographs, nearly all in color, illustrate and document the decisive change in design from ancient to medieval books. Featuring an extended discussion of the importance of race and ethnicity in twentieth-century historiography, this book argues that the first steps in the development of this new style of book were taken on the European continent within classical practices of reading and writing, and not, as is usually presented, among the non-Roman "barbarians."

Lawrence Nees is Professor of Medieval Art and H. Fletcher Brown Chair of the Humanities at the University of Delaware. He is the author of *The Gundohinus Gospels*; *From Justinian to Charlemagne: European Art A.D. 565–787*; *A Tainted Mantle: Hercules and the Classical Tradition at the Carolingian Court*; *Early Medieval Art 300–1000*; *Perspectives on Early Islamic Art in Jerusalem*; and *Frankish Manuscripts: The Seventh to the Tenth Century*; and edited *Approaches to Early-Medieval Art*. Professor Nees has received research fellowships from the Mellon Foundation, the American Council of Learned Societies, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts (National Gallery of Art, Washington), the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, the Guggenheim Foundation, the American Academy in Berlin, the National Humanities Center, and the J. Paul Getty Museum.

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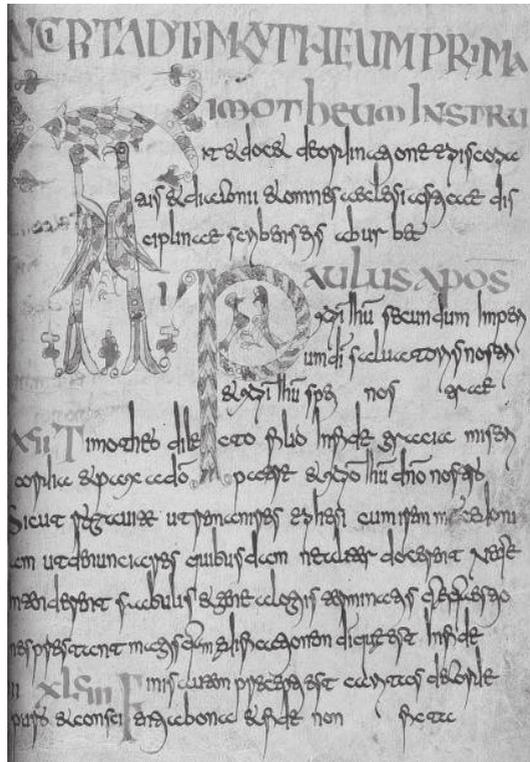
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Acknowledgments

The idea for this book began to grow when I first held in my hands the fascinating manuscript of Gregory's Homilies on Ezekiel, in the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg. I had gone there to examine several manuscripts that I was considering for inclusion in a planned volume on Frankish manuscripts from the seventh to the tenth century, eventually published in 2022. I am deeply grateful to the staff of the National Library of Russia, who made it possible to study the manuscript, the extraordinarily rich decoration of which surprised and moved me as few others have done. Many other curators at other libraries also permitted me to examine their precious early manuscripts, the most important being at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, where François Avril, Marie-Pierre Laffitte, and Charlotte Denoël were extraordinarily generous and helpful. I am also deeply grateful to the many other librarians across Europe and North America.

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Acknowledgments

Abbreviations

Bischoff, *Katalog* I–III	Bischoff, Bernhard, *Katalog der festländischen Handschriften des neunten Jahrhunderts (mit Ausnahme der wisigotischen)*, ed. Birgit Ebersperger, I: Aachen-Lambach (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998), II: Laon-Paderborn (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2004), III: Padua-Zwickau (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2014)
CCCM	Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
CLA	Elias A. Lowe, *Codices latini antiquiores*, 11 vols. and Supplement (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934–71)
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
Migne, *PL*	Migne, *Patrologia Latina*

Figure 0.1 Sites associated with manuscript production. Joe LeMonnier, https://mapartist.com/