/Abstract/ As depictions of the Holy Spirit appearing to Christ's followers and filling them with speech, images of Pentecost engage critical themes in medieval visual culture: the relationship between image and epigraph (*titulus*), and the visualization of *ruach* (*pneuma*, *spiritus*) and the senses. This article examines two miniatures of Pentecost in Ottonian manuscripts, the Codex Egberti (ca. 980) and the Benedictional of Archbishop Robert (late tenth century). These case studies show two differing visual interpretations of Pentecost in the context of the Ottonian debate concerning "spiritual seeing" and demonstrate the ways that artists invoked the senses other than sight in order to create images of mystical experience.

/Keywords/ Pentecost, Ottonian miniatures, sensorium, tituli, wind, synaesthesia

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Pentecost in the Codex Egberti (c. 980) and the Benedictional of Archbishop Robert (late 10th century)

The Visual Medium and the Senses*

Barbara Baert

This article focuses on two miniatures representing Pentecost, on folio 91 of the Codex Egberti (c. 980) and on folio 29 verso of the Benedictional of Archbishop Robert (late 10th century). The decision to treat the two miniatures together is due to the contrast in how they treat the iconographic theme. By examining the differing visual interpretations of these images of the Pentecost, this article will contribute to current research questions about medieval visual culture: the debate concerning "spiritual seeing" during the Ottonian period, the relationship between image and epigraph (*titulus*), and the visualization of *ruach* (*pneuma*, *spiritus*) and the senses. Because the theme of Pentecost is particularly receptive for these research questions, the case studies from the Codex Egberti and the Benedictional of Archbishop Robert are exemplary for the broader interdisciplinary issues of the visual medium and the senses.

The Pentecost iconography in the Codex Egberti (c. 980): *vita communis*

The Codex Egberti (c. 980) was commissioned by Egbert, who was archbishop of Trier from 977 until his death in 993 and was also chancellor to Emperors Otto I and Otto II. Its political and artistic influence was considerable¹. The manuscript is important in the history of Western art on account of its immense wealth of miniatures². Produced in the renowned Ottonian workshop of Reichenau, the codex contains

60 full-page miniatures showing the life of Christ in accordance with the Gospel accounts. The final miniature in the collection represents Pentecost. The codex is not only important for the quantity of images, but also very much for its formal and iconographical innovations. The miniaturists are exceptionally skilled at cutting through to the essentials: their compositions are always clearly readable, the background is kept abstract and the figures and motifs are reduced to the minimum needed to convey the narrative. Occasionally the artists also use epigraphs and *tituli*. They give the figures emotion in the play of hands and give them life in the subtle exchange of glances. These qualities form the basis for the formal and iconographical innovations of the Codex Egberti.

The Pentecost miniature on folio 103 illustrates the pericope for *Dominica Sancta Pentecostes* (John 14, 23–31) on folio 102 verso, but is iconographically

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1 Trier, Stadtbibliothek, ms. 24, fol. 91; Hubert Schiel, *Codex Egberti der Stadtbibliothek Trier*, Basel 1960; Franz J. Ronig, "Erläuterungen zu den Miniaturen des Egbert Codex", in *Der Egbert Codex: Das Leben Jesu: Ein Höhepunkt der Buchmalerei vor 1000 Jahren*, Günther Franz ed., Stuttgart 2005, pp. 78–188.

2 Liselotte E. Saurma-Jeltsch, "Nähe und Ferne: Zur Lesbarkeit von Raum in der ottonischen Buchmalerei", in *Europas Mitte um 1000: Beiträge zur Geschichte, Kunst und Archäologie*, Alfred Wieczorek ed., vol. 3, Stuttgart 2000, pp. 813–818.

based on Acts 2, 1–11 /Fig. 1/³. The Gospel cycle thereby comes to include a representation actually based on a different book of the Bible. The epigraphs read as follows: 1. SPIRITUS HOC EDOCENS. LINGUIS HIC ARDET ET IGNE. 2. COMMUNIS VITA. 3. QUAE CAUSA TREMULI CONVENIUNT POPULI. 1. The Spirit teaches you. It burns in tongues and fire. 2. Common life. 3. Which is why the people come together trembling.

The miniature’s composition is divided into an upper area, in which the apostles are housed in a seven-arch arcade. In line with iconographic tradition, Peter is at the centre. Acts locates the event of Pentecost in a dining space. The benches that are integral parts of the architectural setting, however, show affinities with the iconography of council meetings⁴. Pentecost becomes a prototype for the learned assembly of the Church and its representatives. The number of arcades, seven, refers to the number in the wisdom literature: “Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars” (Proverbs 9, 1)⁵. Blue and green alternate, Pentecost containing the qualities of both hope and glory. Furthermore, by using these colour conventions the miniaturist suggests the meeting of the earthly and the heavenly Jerusalem, *Jerusalem terrestris* and *Jerusalem caelestis*⁶.

The lower area of the composition mirrors the upper row with nine figures in a semicircle. They refer to verse 14: “Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, ‘Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say’”. The men stand on mounds of bare earth “outside” the architecture. The hand gestures – opened towards the viewer – convey the themes of speaking and amazement. The contrast between upper and lower, between architecture and nature, reinforces the idea that a New Jerusalem is being founded: the apostolic “architectural” *Ecclesia* contrasts with the as yet “uncultivated” land of the pagans⁷.

At the centre is an octagonal well or pond containing 16 golden balls or discs (coins? hosts?). The epigraph *VITA COMMUNIS* probably refers to Acts 4, 32–35 on the holding of possessions in common:

Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and

brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

The *vita communis* refers to the institution of the ecclesiastical community through the Pentecostal event, but in this miniature could also refer specifically to monastic communal life⁸. It is notable that Peter wears a tonsure. There is, furthermore, a historical argument. In 930 a reform began in the monastery of Gorze, in the diocese of Metz, central to which was the monastic *communis vita*. The Codex Egberti may have come under the influence of these new emphases⁹.

3 For iconographic overviews I refer to the fundamental Claudine A. Chavannes-Mazel, “Paradise and Pentecost”, in *Reading images and texts: Medieval images and texts as forms of communication*, Mariële Hageman, Marco Mostert ed., Turnhout 2005, pp. 121–160. Older foundational works are André Grabar, “Le schéma iconographique de la Pentecôte”, in André Grabar, *L’art et archéologie de la fin de l’antiquité et du Moyen Âge*, Paris 1968, pp. 615–627; Kurt Weitzmann, “‘Loca sancta’ and the representational arts of Palestine”, in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 28 (1974), pp. 31–55; Stefan Seeliger, “Pfingsten”, in *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, Engelbert Kirschbaum eds, 8 vols, Freiburg im Breisgau 1968–1976, vol. 3, cols 415–423. For medieval case studies, see: Abel Fabre, “L’iconographie de la Pentecôte”, in *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, LXV, 2 (1923), pp. 39–41; Frédéric Lesueur, “Les fresques de Saint-Gilles de Montoire et l’iconographie de la Pentecôte”, in *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, LXVI, 1 (1924), pp. 19–29; Hugo Buchta, “A miniature of the Pentecost: From a lectionary in Syriac”, in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 4 (1939), pp. 613–615; Hanns Swarzenski, “An unknown Carolingian ivory”, in *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts*, 50, 279 (1952), pp. 2–7; Laurine Mack Bongiorno, “The theme of the Old and the New Law in the Arena Chapel”, in *The Art Bulletin*, 50, 1 (1968), pp. 11–20; Michael D. Taylor, “The Pentecost at Vézelay”, in *Gesta*, 19, 1 (1980), pp. 9–15; Elizabeth Leesti, “The Pentecost illustration in the Drogo Sacramentary”, in *Gesta*, 28, 2 (1989), pp. 205–216; John Cotsonis, “The Virgin with the ‘Tongues of Fire’ on byzantine lead seals”, in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 48 (1994), pp. 221–227; Peter Low, “‘You Who Once Were Far Off’: Enlivening scripture in the main portal at Vézelay”, in *The Art Bulletin*, 85, 3 (2003), pp. 469–489.

4 Christopher Walter, *L’iconographie des conciles dans la tradition byzantine*, Paris 1970, pp. 209–212.

5 See also Chavannes-Mazel, “Paradise and Pentecost” (n. 3), pp. 133–134.

6 Martine Malinski, “Les enluminures de la Jérusalem céleste dans quelques manuscrits monastiques du Haut Moyen Âge”, in *La Jérusalem Céleste*, Jacques Sys ed., Arras 2005, pp. 77–102.

7 See Jonathan Z. Smith, *To take place: Towards theory in ritual*, Chicago 1987, pp. 12ff. See also Catherine Delano-Smith, “The exegetical Jerusalem: Maps and plans for Ezekiel chapters 40–48”, in *Imagining Jerusalem in the medieval West*, Lucy Donkin, Hanna Vorholt eds, Oxford 2012, pp. 41–70.

8 Chavannes-Mazel, “Paradise and Pentecost” (n. 3), p. 128; Henry Mayr-Harting, *Ottoman book illumination*, 2 vols, London 1991, vol. 1, pp. 83–86 and *ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 79–80; Kassius Hallinger, *Gorze – Kluny: Studien zu den monastischen Lebensformen und Gegensätzen im Hochmittelalter*, 2 vols, Rome 1950–1951, vol. 2, pp. 736–764. See also John Nightingale, *Monasteries and patrons in the Gorze reform: Lotharingia c. 850–1000*, Oxford 2000.

9 Compare the Echternach Pericopes Book, c. 1000, Bremen, Staatsbibliothek, Hs/ b. 21, fol. 72v (*Der Egbert Codex*, Fig. p. 185); Sacramentary of St. Gereon, c. 1000, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. lat. 817, fol. 77 (Chavannes-Mazel, “Paradise and Pentecost” (n. 3), Fig. 6); Echternach Pericopes Book, 12th century, Brussels, Royal Library of Belgium, Ms. 9428, fol. 104v; Chavannes-Mazel, “Paradise and Pentecost” (n. 3), Fig. 8.

The font-like pond in the centre of the composition alludes unmistakably to iconographic representations and architectural ground plans of baptismal fonts and baptisteries. In the early-medieval narrative and visual traditions the font naturally had an extremely rich meaning that extended from the complex of symbols surrounding baptism (by the Holy Spirit) to the synecdochal evocation of Paradise and the Heavenly Jerusalem / Fig. 2/. “*Flumen* (of paradise) *est spiritus sanctus* says Ambrose (c. 340–397) in his *De Spiritu Sancto*”¹⁰. The *Sacramentarium Leonianum* (7th century) includes prayers for the *benedictio fontis* on Easter Saturday¹¹. At the beginning, the Holy Spirit is invoked and asked to wash away all that is impure, all “stains of sin”. “*Hic omnium peccatorum maculae deleantur*”. The baptismal font becomes the fountain of life, the regenerative water and purifying stream that comes from the wound in Christ’s side (“*sit fons vivus, aqua regenerans, unda purificans qui te una cum sanguine de latere suo produxit*”). The one who is baptized is compared with one reborn of an immaculate womb: “*ut, sanctificatione concepta, ab immaculato divini fontis utero in novam renata creaturam progenies caelestis emergat*”.

With its golden “coins” that resemble eucharistic hosts, the baptismal font in the Codex Egberti is related to the eucharistic fountain or the *fons pietatis*¹². The concept of the *fons pietatis* was already mentioned by Gregory the Great (540–604). He compares Christ with a source of mercy in which we, sinners, must immerse ourselves in order to wash away our sins¹³. In the seventh-century Gelasian Sacramentary, Christ is venerated as the *fons pietatis* that must save us from our sins¹⁴. John Chrysostom (354–407) says that the water (from the wound in Christ’s side) is the image of salvation that springs from the body of Christ. The body of Christ is like a source of eternal life, says the Church Father¹⁵. An inscription that was applied to the Lateran Baptistery some time around 440, during the time of Leo the Great, reads: “*Fons hic est vita qui totum diluit orbem / Sumens de Christi vulneris principium*”¹⁶. In this way the font is also brought into connection with the Holy Sepulchre. This association was made early on. Augustine (354–430) says: “*Propter sepulturam: Consepulti sumus Christo per Baptismum in mortem*”. One must enter into the death of Christ and purify oneself in the sacrifice in order to rise up as one newly born¹⁷.

The emphatic presence of a (baptismal) font in the centre of the composition means that the Codex Egberti interprets Pentecost not only from the per-

spective of the social model of monastic community, but also from a paradisaical-baptismal tradition with resonances of redemption by Christ’s sufferings. The fact that this is the closing miniature in the manuscript reinforces the eschatological relationship between Pentecost, *fons pietatis* and the perspective that the apostolic Church provides on the Heavenly Jerusalem.

Vision and Speech in the Codex Egberti

Above Peter’s head the upper margin of the miniature has a patch of gold leaf applied, branching into twelve beams: the Holy Spirit descending upon the twelve apostles. This motif from the Book of Acts is usually represented by a dove, sometimes in combination with the *manu Dei* / Fig. 3/¹⁸. Furthermore, the beams are usually more clearly separated to the heads of each of the twelve apostles. The Codex Egberti deviates from these conventions. Nor is there any trace of tongues of fire above the heads. It is possible that this extremely pared-down solution results from a conscious iconographic decision, and by extension expresses a position on the role of the image and the Pentecostal epigraphy in the medium of the manuscript.

The miniature was produced during what is known as the 10th-century wave of *iconophilia*, which went further than the initial debate that had arisen at the court of Charlemagne (742–814)¹⁹. The

¹⁰ *De Spiritu Sancto*, I, c XVI, 156, PL 16, col. 740.

¹¹ Translated in Paul A. Underwood, “The fountain of life in manuscripts of the Gospels”, in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 5 (1950), pp. 41–138, sp. pp. 59–60.

¹² The same position is defended by Chavannes-Mazel, “Paradise and Pentecost” (n. 3), p. 136; See also Barbara Baert, “The washing wound: Late-medieval ideas concerning Christ as Fons Pietatis”, in *Mitteilungen für Anthropologie und Religionsgeschichte (MARG)*, 16 (2004), pp. 177–215.

¹³ Maj-Brit Wadell, *Fons Pietatis*, master thesis, Göteborg 1969, p. 9: commentary on Zachariah 13, 1: PL 76, cols 1039–1041.

¹⁴ Georg Manz, *Ausdrucksformen der lateinischen Liturgiesprache bis ins elfte Jahrhundert*, Beuron 1941, p. 196.

¹⁵ Wadell, *Fons Pietatis* (n. 13), p. 14; Konrad Burdach, *Der Gral: Forschungen über seinen Ursprung und seinen Zusammenhang mit der Longinuslegende*, Stuttgart 1938, p. 91.

¹⁶ Underwood, “The fountain of life” (n. 11), p. 55.

¹⁷ *Augustini Opera Omnia*, PL 40, col. 257.

¹⁸ As for example (1) the Evangelary of Henry the Lion, 1185–1188, Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf, MS. 155 Noviss 2°/München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 30055, fol. 112v, with Mary present and (2) Sacramentary of St. Gereon, c. 1000, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 817, fol. 77; Chavannes-Mazel, “Paradise and Pentecost” (n. 3), figs 20 and 6.

¹⁹ For a thorough contextualization (something beyond the scope of this article), see Lawrence G. Duggan, “Was art really the ‘book of the illiterate’?”, in Hageman/Mostert, *Reading images and texts* (n. 3), pp. 9–62; see also Ann Freeman, “Scripture and images in the Libri Carolini”, in *Testo e immagine nell’alto medioevo*, Spoleto 1994, p. 163.

2/ Fountain of Life, Evangelary of Godescalc, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, ms. nouvelle acquisition latin 1203, fol. 3v, 781-783

problematization of figurative language in Western Europe shows the influence of the Byzantine debates about images (such as in the Second Council of Nicaea, 787). The early Carolingian definition of an image, necessarily operating at a disadvantage within a model of knowledge based upon the word, could not be maintained. Pope Hadrian II (792–872), under the influence of the iconophile position of the early 9th century, defended “spiritual sight” (Council of Paris, 825)²⁰. The image transcends narrativity and can become the vehicle of a higher sight. That higher sight is accompanied by the artist’s hand itself, which is capable of weaving levels of interpretation into the image. Such visual power was celebrated in Ottonian artistic milieus well into the 10th century. Augustine (354–430) had formulated three levels of interpretation, but these were now applied in the context of the image²¹. Words can be read without being understood. That is purely physical sight. There is also a spiritual sight, in which the words are interpreted by an intellectual mediator. This was often a scholar who expounds the text. Finally there is true intellectual sight, which takes place in the mind, free of all sense impressions, such as line, colour, sound, smell or taste. This is where God can be beheld. According to Augustine, this sight requires an intellectual power to distinguish things from their material nature in the virtue of the purely spiritual. This is the looking that takes place immediately in the spirit.

These transitions from corporeal sight to spiritual vision are important dynamics in the medieval and early modern exegesis of sight and insight as early as the Venerable Bede (673–735). In his *Homily* 11.15, he says: “For indeed all those who believe, whether they be those who saw Him in the flesh, or those who believe after his Ascension, share in the most benevolent promise as writes Matthew: ‘Blessed are the pure of heart for they will see God’”. Matthew 5 : 8, is indeed a central phrase in these reflections on spiritual seeing²². The route to the ultimate vision in the spirit is cumulative. The iconophiles of the 10th century followed Augustine in regarding the image as the perfect mediator to the intellectual force and the virtue of the purely spiritual. The codex is, by extension, the carrier of this spiritual sight. In the manuscript the word is consummated, opened, unveiled and revealed in the visual medium, not in the verbal²³. In spiritual sight the visual medium is eschatological: in spiritual sight, the image gets the “last word”.

The new theoretical position of images affected Ottonian iconography and led to ingenious interpretations of biblical texts with an eye to their visual power. The function of the *tituli* and the epigraphs in the picture plane was newly ambiguous²⁴. In the first wave of theoretical debate, the *Libri Carolini* referenced the epigraph as an argument for the weakness of visual language. After all, was it not the word, and the word alone, that could give unequivocal meaning to the ambiguous image: “This is Venus” or, “This is Mary”²⁵? In the definition of “spiritual seeing”, however, the relationship between image and epigraph became intertwined²⁶. The *titulus* “speaks”, it is the *vox* of the *imago* and provides an auditive element to the optical framework. The “new” spiritual seeing operates at the level of synaesthesia, with a particularly active coupling of the optical and the auricular²⁷.

In the Codex Egberti there are also letters that partake in the visual idiom, and are cleverly worked into the iconographic grammar²⁸. The materiality of the gold leaf links the unknowable, still unformed word, to the known and formed word. The gold leaf is the highest “colour”: the very light of God²⁹. This process of spot to line to letter – the genesis of writing and thereby also of speech – mirrors the secret of Pentecost: the breaching of the world of tangibility and form that generates speech, knowledge, insight. In the miniature this emanation *literally* breaks the word EDOCENS in two: EDO – CENS. The lettered reader now sees two component words: EDO- (to bring out, come to light, produce from the mind) and CENS- (to speak solemnly). The EDOCERE of Pentecost *literally* takes place by breaking the word open to its core. The result is that the codex combines seeing and hearing. The miniature “speaks” through the gold leaf and the *tituli*³⁰. The letters are the material representatives of speech, and beyond speech the representatives of a visible invisibility. Wenzel also refers to Augustine in this respect: *Foris enim cum per corpus haec fiunt, aliud est locutio, aliud visio: intus autem cum cogitamus, utrumque unum est*. “When these things are done outwardly by means of the body, then speech and sight are different things; but when we think inwardly, the two are one”³¹. It is precisely this core thought that is revalued in Ottonian manuscript art in the debate over “spiritual sight”.

The Codex Egberti presents an iconography of Pentecost that is typological (the *fons pietatis*), monastic (*vita communis* reform) and framed by an intellectual view on the agencies of the image, the word and *tituli* that contribute to a specific “spiritual seeing”.

I would now like to compare this interpretation with another example of Pentecost in the Benedictional of Archbishop Robert (end 10th century).

- 20 Herbert L. Kessler, *Spiritual seeing: Picturing God’s invisibility in medieval art*, Philadelphia 2000, p. 35.
- 21 *De civitate Dei*, CCSL 448, p. 856. The standard work is by Henri de Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale : Le quatre sens de l’Écriture*, Paris 1959, passim.
- 22 *Homilia* 11.15. Robert Deshman, “Another Look at the Disappearing Christ: Corporeal and Spiritual Vision in Early Medieval Images”, in *The Art Bulletin*, 79 (1997), pp. 518–546, sp. p. 536.
- 23 Jesse M. Gellrich, *The idea of the book in the Middle Ages: Language, theory, mythology, and fiction*, Ithaca 1985, p. 116.
- 24 Arwed Arnulf, *Versus ad Picturas: Studien zur Titulusdichtung als Quellengattung der Kunstgeschichte von der Antike bis zum Hochmittelalter*, Munich 1997, pp. 229–250, sp. p. 236.
- 25 *Libri Carolini*, 4.16, MGH 529; Gilbert Dagron, “Mots, images, icônes”, in *Nouvelle revue de psychanalyse*, 44 (1991), p. 151.
- 26 See also: Jeffrey Hamburger, “The iconicity of script”, in *Word & Image*, 27 (2011), pp. 249–261.
- 27 Emmanuelle Pirotte, “La Parole est aux images : La lettre, l’espace et la voix dans les évangéliaires insulaires”, in *L’image : Fonctions et usages des images dans l’Occident médiéval*, Jérôme Baschet, Jean-Claude Schmitt eds, Paris 1996, pp. 61–75; Jean-Claude Bonne, *De l’ornemental dans l’art médiéval : Le modèle insulaire*, in Baschet/Schmitt, *L’image* (n. 27), pp. 207–250, sp. p. 234.
- There is an analogy between the way in which the picture poem and the decorative full page miniature functioned in the proto-Carolingian (Celtic) context as a meditative gate to the sacred: “d’une ellipse et d’une tension qui s’opposent au dévidoir linéaire de l’écriture alphabétique”; Éliane Formentelli, “Rêver l’idéogramme”, in *Écritures : Systèmes idéographiques et pratiques expressives*, Anne-Marie Christin ed., Paris 1982, pp. 209–233, sp. p. 215. See also Anne-Marie Christin, *L’image écrite ou la déraison graphique*, Paris 1995, passim.
- 28 Jean Wirth, “Voir et entendre : Notes sur le problème des images de saint Augustin à l’iconoclasme”, in *I cinque sensi*, Florence 2002, pp. 71–86.
- 29 Harald Kleinschmidt, “Lichtwahrnehmung und Pfingstauffassung im Frühmittelalter”, in *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte*, 61, 2 (2009), pp. 124–142. On the symbolic use of gold leaf in the visual arts, see also Barbara Baert, “Between technique and symbolism: Gold in the pre-Eyckian panel-painting: A comparative history”, in *Pre-Eyckian panel painting in the Low Countries*, Cyriel Stroo ed., Brussels 2009, pp. 7–22.
- 30 Other miniatures in the Codex Egberti also interweave text and image in inventive ways. On folio 91 with the *Noli me tangere* (Ronig, “Egbert Codex”, p. 178) no physical touch between Christ and Mary Magdalene is depicted, but the miniaturist does ensure that Christ’s hand touches the *titulus* MARIA. He therefore ‘touches’ her in the name Mary. When, according to John’s Gospel, Christ addresses Mary by name, she recognizes him as *Rabbouni*. By connecting the *titulus* to Christ’s hand, the miniaturist is able to convey that Mary was not physically touched but was reached spiritually through the word (and understanding) that Christ gave her by *calling* her: touching the *titulus* is equalized with speech (and hearing). This principle is developed in Barbara Baert, “The Pact between Space and Gaze: The Narrative and the Iconic in *Noli me tangere*”, in *Fiction sacrée : spiritualité et esthétique durant le premier âge moderne*, Ralph Dekoninck, Agnès Guiderdoni, Émilie Granjon eds, Leuven 2013, pp. 243–270.
- 31 *De trinitate*, col. 1070, cited from Horst Wenzel, *Hören und Sehen: Schrift und Bild: Kultur und Gedächtnis im Mittelalter*, Munich 1995, p. 330; See also Michael T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066–1307*, Cambridge 1979, p. 202.

**The Pentecost Iconography in the
Benedictional of Archbishop Robert
(end 10th century): multilingualism**

In the Benedictional of Archbishop Robert (Winchester Abbey, late 10th century) the full-page miniature of Pentecost is filled with a complex architectural construction /Fig. 4/³². An arch rests on two massive pillars. The lowest section of the pillars supports a second arch formed by the apostles. Peter can be recognized by his keys and his tonsure. The top section with the arcade is supplemented with various geometrical figures. In the circle is the *manu Dei*, in the *mandorla* below it the dove of the Holy Spirit. The circle evokes the cosmic eternity of God. The *mandorla* is a very ancient representation of the most holy. It divides the timeless world from the temporal. The scheme therefore indicates an epiphany: the descent of a secret into the material world. The *mandorla* schematizes the breaking open of reality, literally “split”, to reveal the endless vacuum behind it³³. Another notable detail is the double arch that marks the transition from the dove to the apostles. This geometrical structure in combination with the *mandorla* may evoke the Trinity.

A sea of flames escapes from the dove’s beak, spreading to the heads and even to the lips of the apostles. Unlike in the Codex Egberti, the motif of the fiery tongues and the miracle of the tongues descending on the apostles is here very much in focus. The Pentecost in this Benedictional thematizes speech not by bringing together image and *tituli*, but by placing the focal point in the midst of a great red, flaming baptism of fire³⁴. In his *Pentecost and Linguistic Self-Consciousness in Anglo-Saxon England: Bede and Aelfric*, Kees Dekker links the miniature to the commentaries and homilies of Aelfric (c. 955–c. 1010) who was schooled in the same abbey. In his homilies Aelfric laid great stress on the miracle of multilingualism³⁵. In his view, precisely into this multilingualism the actual foundation of the Church was generated.

Behind the apostles is a slender column that accentuates the vertical axis of the *manu Dei* and the dove. The column symbolizes the cosmic centre or the *umbilicus mundi*: it ties together the three cosmic zones: earth, heaven and underworld. The column is the axis of the world, the *axis mundi*. This axis is a mythic phantasm pointing to a centre in which the separated natural world and supernatural world(s) run together and are united. In the words of Mircea

Eliade: “Seldom do we find a more pathetic avowal that man cannot live without a ‘sacred centre’ which permits to ‘cosmicize’ space and to communicate with the transhuman world of heaven”³⁶. Some speak of a suspension of the passage of time, a stillness at the eye of rotation. The *axis mundi* brings centre and order to the world. Without the *axis* no way could be found, only going astray would be possible. The *axis* has a centrifugal attraction that links humanity to the rotation of the cosmos itself. There is no symbol more universal in cosmogony than this ur-phantasm of the pole, the column, the tree³⁷.

In Christianity the *axis mundi* finds a counterpart in the symbol of the Tree of Life³⁸. The Tree of Life

32 Rouen, Bibliothèque Municipale, Y.7 (396), fol. 29v; Chavannes-Mazel, “Paradise and Pentecost” (n. 3), p. 132, Fig. 15. The dating is controversial; David N. Dumville, *Liturgy and the ecclesiastical history of late Saxon England*, Woodbridge 1992, p. 87, dates it to the second quarter of the 11th century, but it is dated to the late 10th century by Anton von Euw, “Rouen, Bibliothèque municipale, Ms. Y.7”, in *Vor dem Jahr 1000: Abendläändische Buchkunst zur Zeit der Kaiserin Theophanu*, Anton von Euw, Gerd Bauer eds, Cologne 1991, no. 46, p. 158.

33 Walter Weber, *Symbolik in der abendländischen und byzantinischen Kunst*, 2 vols, Basel 1981, vol. 1, pp. 373–380.

34 For closely related iconography from the same workshop, see the Benedictional of Aethelwold, London, The British Library, Ms. Add. 49598, fol. 67v; Chavannes-Mazel, “Paradise and Pentecost” (n. 3), Fig. 5; Robert Deshman, *The iconography of the full-page miniatures of the benedictional of Aethelwold*, Princeton 1995, Fig. 27.

35 Kees Dekker, “Pentecost and linguistic self-consciousness in Anglo-Saxon England: Bede and Aelfric”, in *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 104, 3 (2005), pp. 345–372, Fig. 3, p. 365.

36 Mircea Eliade, *Australian religions: An introduction*, Ithaca 1973, pp. 51–53. The Achilpa tribe in Australia takes its *axis mundi*, the *kauwa-auwa*, everywhere. The proximity of the pole gives the tribe peace in the face of chaos. The pole breaking would be a sign of the approaching end of the world. The anthropologists B. Spencer and F. J. Gillen once witnessed the drama of the pole breaking. The members of the tribe were seized by fear, wandered round aimlessly, and finally sat on the ground to await death; Barbara Baert, *Navel: On the origin of things*, Ghent 2009, p. 59.

37 Stephen J. Reno, “Religious symbolism: A plea for a comparative approach”, in *Folklore*, 88, 1 (1977), pp. 76–85.

38 Romuald Bauerreiss, *Arbor Vitae: Der Lebensbaum und seine Verwendung in Liturgie, Kunst und Brauchtum des Abendlandes*, Munich 1937; Stephen J. Reno, *The sacred tree as an early Christian literary symbol: A phenomenological study*, Saarbrücken 1978; Gabrielle Dufour-Kowalska, *L’arbre de vie et la Croix: Essai sur l’imagination visionnaire*, Geneva 1985; Marion L. Kuntz/Paul G. Kuntz, “The symbol of the tree interpreted in the context of other symbols of hierarchical order, the great chain of being and Jacob’s Ladder”, in *Jacob’s Ladder and the tree of life: Concepts of hierarchy and the great chain of being*, Marion L. Kuntz, Paul G. Kuntz eds, New York 1987, pp. 319–334; “Cross – wood – tree: Grains of thought”, in *Fascinating facets of Flanders (Fascinierende facetten van Vlaanderen)*, exhibition catalogue (Lisbon, Centro Cultural de Belém/Antwerp, Hessenhuis 1998), Paul Vandenbroeck ed., Antwerpen 1998, pp. 108–122. On the basis of notes made by the monk Arculf, Abbot Adamnanus of Iona (c. 624–704) refers to a column in the Constantine double church in Jerusalem that casts no shadow (*De locis sanctis*, I, 11.1–4). He says explicitly that this column indicates the *umbilicus mundi* or navel of the world and that the centre of the world is in Jerusalem. Saint Adamnan, *De locis sanctis*, Dennis Meehan ed., Dublin 1958, p. 56; John Wilkinson, *Jerusalem pilgrims before the crusades*, Warminster 1977, p. 99. It is not clear whether the column in the Pentecost iconography in fact refers to this location in Jerusalem; Chavannes-Mazel, “Paradise and Pentecost” (n. 3), pp. 131–132.

and the *axis mundi* each evoke Paradise and by extension the Heavenly Jerusalem (as the *fons pietatis* did in the Codex Egberti)³⁹. The iconography of Pentecost is receptive to the *axis mundi*/Tree of Life archetypes at the levels of both form and content /Fig. 5/. From a compositional point of view, the column and the tree of life are powerful symbols of the centre⁴⁰. And at an interpretive level, they optically establish the transcendental link to the divine and the invisible. By adding these symbols of life, the Pentecost iconography is charged with a cosmic significance that goes beyond the mother text and fertilizes the image with an ur-symbol⁴¹.

In the miniature in the Benedictional only three base colours are used beneath the gold highlighting: red, blue and green. The colours refer to the natural elements fire, water/air and earth/vegetation. Red is the main liturgical colour for Pentecost: the fiery tongues; even the hair of the apostles are saturated with red pigment, as though their heads and brains indeed were absorbed by the immense power of this sea of fire. Blue has associations with wind, air, and baptism. The green is also applied to the *axis mundi*, making explicit the relationship with the Tree of Life. The three base colours are repeated in the arch on which the apostles sit. The arch calls to mind Christ's rainbow throne in the Last Judgment. In this context the motif expresses "the apostles' ability to exercise Christ's judicial authority in this world as well as in the new world"⁴². Here there is another possible link to Aelfric's homily, in which he says: "and on this day all believing men became gods, just as Christ said: 'I said you are gods'; and you are all children of the highest; the chosen ones are God's children, and also gods, not by nature but through the gift of the Holy Spirit"⁴³.

***Ruach* and Scent in the Benedictional of Archbishop Robert**

In the Benedictional miniature a contrast is achieved between the centre and the periphery, between stillness and movement, between the monumental structure of the architecture and the lushness of the vegetation. This *horror vacui* is created by the exuberant acanthus leaves that grow over everything like visual groundcover. The movement in the iconic space is also remarkable: leaves curl over the pillars with virtuosity, the hems of the apostles' clothing flap upwards in capricious pen strokes, and

the curtains on the two towers that crown the whole waft out playfully and wrap themselves around the slender columns⁴⁴.

Unlike the interpretations in the Codex Egberti, the Benedictional Pentecost shows an excess of optical dynamism. Just as the story mentions wind, the stylistic result is an exceptionally mobile surface that blows in all directions. This makes it hard for our eyes to rest on any one spot, but is counterbalanced by the geometrical anchoring of the composition on the central axis. The gaze is cast back and forth between stability and being overwhelmed, between the visual registration of a *Gestalt* and being lost in the details. It is as though the miniaturist would make us aware of the mysterious meaning of Pentecost by means of this double visual affect. The Holy Spirit is not only iconographically present in the form of the dove, the whole formal approach within the optical framework suggests a dynamic breathing out of his power⁴⁵. The idiom is *itself* pneumatic. In this miniature, Pentecost is a cosmic event in which time and space collapse into one another at the moment of a single overwhelming (visual) gust of wind. This *pneuma* still combines, in the underlying Hebrew concept *ruach*, the meanings of voice (of God, as in Genesis 1), thunder, wind and the human in a single semantic space⁴⁶.

According to Daniel Lys, the concept *ruach* that appears in the book Genesis as the breath/wind of the creator God, reflects a typically Semitic understanding of the interaction between human and environment, between individual and God⁴⁷. The author indicates that the Old Arabian root for wind (*raha*: to breathe) incorporates the idea of getting bigger and shrinking, of spatial extension and reduction, just as we fill our lungs with air and then let it escape⁴⁸. *Ruach* has to be understood from the perspective of its rhythm, of the fact that as a principle of life it is not static, but always dynamic. "Donner de l'air, c'est à dire de l'espace (d'où intervalle) pour pouvoir respirer (d'où "soulagement") dans une situation critique"⁴⁹.

David Abram adds another perspective in relation to *ruach* in his *The Spell of the Sensuous*. The author analyzes the complex of air, breath, wind and *ruach* in the light of the transition from oral culture to script. Air is, in principle, invisible, and for an oral culture the air/wind is "the archetype of all that is ineffable, unknowable, yet undeniably real and efficacious", of what is unknown but nevertheless "there"⁵⁰. "Is it possible that a volatile power once propitiated as a local storm god came to be generalized, by one

- 39 Édouard Delebecque, "Où situer l'arbre de vie dans la Jérusalem céleste : Note sur Ap. XXII, 2", in *Revue Thomiste*, 88, 1 (1988), pp. 124–130.
- 40 Rudolf Arnheim, *Die Macht der Mitte: Eine Kompositionslehre für die bildende Künste*, Cologne 1983, p. 22: "Die Orientierung im Raum wird nur dann wirklich verständlich, wenn man sie zu einem weiteren dynamischen Zentrum in Beziehung bringt, nämlich zu dem Beschauer".
- 41 A golden streamer is attached to the column. This motif is unclear, but it does strengthen the archetypically rotating dynamic of the *axis mundi*. Ernst Gombrich writes about rotation as the most important form of dynamics in design; "We follow, I believe, not with the eyes, but with the mind"; Ernst Gombrich, *The sense of order: A study in the psychology of the decorative art*, Oxford 1979, p. 139.
- 42 Dekker, "Pentecost" (n. 35), p. 366, n. 77.
- 43 CH I. xxii, 198–208; Dekker, "Pentecost" (n. 35), p. 369; Aelfric is here probably paraphrasing Psalm 81, 6, which is cited by Christ in John 10, 34.
- 44 It is not clear whether this is an allusion to the curtain of the Temple. The motif of the curtain also appears in the context of the Annunciation. In a Marian context the relationship with the Temple curtain is explained by the apocryphal writings in which she wove the Temple curtain out of purple wool. An example is the Sinai icon (Monastery of St Catherine, c. 1100), on which Mary carries a spindle with purple wool (fig.: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Annunciation_Icon_Sinai_12th_century.jpg). One thread emerges from the spool and runs over the still unborn Jesus shown in Mary's womb; Barbara Baert, "The Annunciation revisited: Essay on the concept of wind and the senses in late medieval and early modern visual culture", in *Critica d'arte*, 47–48 (2011/2013), pp. 57–68.
- 45 Alessandro Nova, *The book of the wind: The representation of the invisible*, Ithaca 2011, p. 36 indicates that since the early Christian period, and especially in the writings of Ephrem the Syrian (306–373), the wind, the Holy Spirit and *pneuma* are regarded as an image of God and the impossibility of seeing Him, just like the wind, which is transparent and therefore not directly 'depictable' but only indirectly, for instance by waving grass or flapping textiles. This image of transparency serves as an argument both for the iconoclast ("If artists are not in a position to convey the features of a colorless phenomenon, how could they be in a position to represent divinity?", p. 37) and for the Ottonian iconophile theorists of the image ("The Transparency of the phenomenon is compared here to the invisibility of the Holy spirit; paradoxically, it is the impalpable air, which we do not see directly, that makes us understand that a superior reality exists, invisible but eternal and as real as the terrestrial world", p. 36).
- 46 On the semantics and symbolism of *ruach* see: Harry Meyer Orlinsky, "The plain meaning of *ruach* in Gen 1.2", in *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, New Series, 48, 2 (1957), pp. 174–182; Daniel Lys, *Rûach, le souffle dans l'Ancien Testament : Enquête anthropologique à travers l'histoire théologique d'Israël*, Paris 1962; Harry E. Jones, *Essays in applied psycho-analysis*, 2 vols, New York 1964, vol. 2, p. 295ff.; Robert Luyster, "Wind and water: Cosmogonic symbolism in the Old Testament", in *Zeitschrift für Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 93, 1 (1981), pp. 1–10; Richard B. Onians, *The origins of European thought about the body, the mind, the soul, the world, time and fate*, New York 1988, p. 498; Bissera V. Pentcheva, "Hagia Sophia and multisensory aesthetics", in *Gesta*, 50, 2 (2011), pp. 93–111.
- 47 Daniel Lys, *Rûach* (n. 46). On the philosophical impact of *ruach* on modern Jewish thought in philosophy and anthropology, see James Arthur, "Diamond, Maimonides, Spinoza, and Buber read the Hebrew Bible: The hermeneutical keys of divine 'fire' and 'spirit' (*ruach*)", in *The Journal of Religion*, 91, 3 (2011), pp. 320–343.
- 48 Old Arabian distinguishes *rih* (wind) and *ruh* (spirit). Hebrew does not; Lys, *Rûach* (n. 46), p. 24. In contemporary Jewish culture the idea is still current that God had to make himself as small as possible (concise) to make the universe possible; with thanks to Prof. Dr. Dror Ze'evi, Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Israel.
- 49 Lys, *Rûach* (n. 46), p. 21.
- 50 David Abram, *The spell of the sensuous: Perception and language in a more-than-human world*, New York 2007, pp. 225–260, sp. p. 226.

5/ Pentecost with Tree of Life, Echternach Pericopes Book, Bibliothèque Royale Albert I, Brussels, ms. 9428, fol. 104v, early 12th century

tribe of nomadic herders, into the capricious power of the encompassing atmosphere itself? That it was experienced not as an abstract power entirely outside of sensuous nature, but as the unseen medium, the ruach, the ubiquitous wind or spirit that enlivens the visible world”⁵¹.

Abram indicates that the spoken word (and the sung word especially) is conceived of as “structured breath”, which gives air and wind a linguistic-semantic potential. The principle of air/wind communicates, it “thinks”, and breath structures this in speech within the communication between person and nature, between human and God⁵². Hence *ruach* as breath, spirit and wind – that sometimes seems to come from all directions – makes time a spatial given⁵³.

People can carry different “levels” of *ruach* within them. The prophets are the most privileged bearers of *ruach*⁵⁴. *Ruach*, just like *psychij*, is a principle of life that dwells in the head. This provides the logic to the Rabbinical practice of consulting a dead person through the skull⁵⁵. Hair growth (as with bearded prophets, or long-haired Samson) is an emanation of strong *ruach* forces. Visions, for example, are caused by the *ruach* in the head. At Pentecost the apostles have fallen subject to this power: they speak in all languages and in tongues, and in the miniature in the Benedictional their heads and hair literally glow with this fiery potential.

Ruach is an elixir of life that belongs to both God and man. Through *ruach* the human being can know God, reach him; he can be human⁵⁶. This is why *ruach* is so close to Theophany⁵⁷. As *ruach* is fundamentally involved in the movement of air in space, *ruach* in the Bible is linked to odour, to perfumes, and thus to sacrifices and the honour paid to God.

Research into the impact and meaning of odour as part of a model of knowledge has long been underestimated⁵⁸. Nevertheless, in ancient, oral cultures – as well as in late antique and medieval epistemology – rites and models were developed in which scent (incense, oils, flowers) occupied a prominent place⁵⁹. Odour is an ephemeral element that reaches us through the air⁶⁰. Winds carry odours with them, but so do the mouth and speech. An odour is phantasmic. In the sacral context odour plays a crucial role as an evocation of, and a way of recognizing, the divine. The unseen God manifests himself through his voice and through scent, and is worshipped with the scents of sacrifice, incense, herbs, perfumed oils⁶¹. Perfume is a medium that allows people to move

between the now and the transcendent⁶². Odour may be only the fifth sense in the Platonic model, it is nevertheless an exceptional sense of knowledge⁶³. Odour evokes insights in a flash: as an *anamnesis*, as an intuition⁶⁴. Odour is also the pre-eminent binding agent of synesthetic apprehension⁶⁵.

The specific scent-*pneuma* connotation is not made explicit in the Book of Acts, but the biblical commentaries and apocryphal writings did not fail to mention the emphatic presence of odour in the events of Pentecost. However, in the article *The Odor of the Spirit at Pentecost* Henry Cadbury defends the position that in the (Eastern and gnostic) patristic commentaries on Pentecost retain an articulation of odour as a wind archetype⁶⁶. Both the commentaries of Ephraim the Syrian (c. 306–373) and the Armenian translation of the Syrian *Catena* contain various references to odour and perfume. Ephraim says:

“Vox superna et odor internus et linguae quae inter nos omnes loquuntur. Vox et odor omnesque linguae quibus iam ante vos louimur. Et e voce quam audistis, et odore fragrantiae quem accipitis, et omnes linguis quas loquimur et auditis”.

And the *Catena* includes the phrase six times: A sweet smell exhaled from the violence of the wind and filled all the house (1). And how did the wind fill the house? Evidently with a sweet odour and brilliant light (2). In various forms it appears for not a wind and smell and light only, but tongues visible they saw, and these like fire, to indicate many persons through fire (3). The voice which came from heaven was audible to all citizens, and the smell which exhaled from the violence of the wind collected the many together (4). These same people whom we dread sound stirred and the fragrant smell led gathered together (5). And to us is witness the violent sound which resounded, and the sweet odor which exhaled and the strange tongues we speak (6).

The author wonders what intertextual and typological basis could underlie the emphatic manifestation of scent in the exegetical commentaries on Pentecost⁶⁷. The relationship between the manifestation of God in a space that is “filled” (*ruach*, wind, odour, etc.) can be found in Isaiah 6:4: “the house was filled with smoke, and of incense”. John 12 specifies: “the house was filled with the odor of the ointment”. John uses the word *pnou*, which is usually translated as wind. *Pnou* is interesting, because it also means scent. Augustine (345–430) rendered it *flatus*, but Cyprian of Carthage (ca. 200–258) had still earlier used *spiritus*. Ephraim combines the ideas of voice (wind) and tongue with that of odour⁶⁸. Henry

J. Cadbury writes: “The odor is a particularly satisfactory symbol for a god because of its real but refined sensory character. It is less tangible than hearing as hearing is less tangible than seeing, and while all three of these senses often share in the theophany, the coming and the going of the goddess, the margins of her visibility are to be detected by smell rather than by sight”⁶⁹.

With its references to nature (acanthus, column/tree of life) and emphatically green coloration, the Benedictional evokes the sense of smell in an optical way. The miniature’s dynamic-pneumatic total effect is as it were a visual pendant to the intangibility but nevertheless all-pervading quality of *ruach* and odour in a space. Furthermore, we know that medieval celebrations of Pentecost made use of flower, fresh herbs and other fragrant, aromatic foliage⁷⁰. In medieval churches in Canterbury and in Visby (Gotland) *oculi* have been preserved: a round window or “eye” generally in the vaulting or high in the walls⁷¹. At Pentecost the *oculus* was edged with red flowers. By means of these sweet-scented attributes God is invited, invoked. Sometimes celebrations included the releasing of a live dove through the *oculus*⁷². This also throws new light on the geometrical “openings” – the *oculus*? – of the *manu Dei* and the dove in the miniature in the Benedictional.

touching in history, Berkeley 2007, p. 62: “Scent is to reveal truth, incense is to enjoy devotion”, p. 63 “when it came to expressions and practices of religious faith especially, smell operated in tandem and enjoyed a rough equality with hearing and seeing, and at times, it trumped both”.

63 On the hierarchy of the senses, see: Hans Jonas, “The nobility of sight: A study in the phenomenology of the senses”, in *The phenomenology of life: Towards a philosophical biology*, Hans Jonas ed., Chicago 1982, pp. 135–156; Carl Nordenfalk, “The five senses in Flemish art before 1600”, in *Netherlandish Mannerism*, Görel Cavalli-Björkman ed., Stockholm 1985, pp. 135–154.

64 In the prologue to the *Liber Floridus*, smell and taste appear as metaphors of knowledge. The author wants to offer the reader the honey that the bees collect from flowers in the garden. He also refers to the etymology of *sapere* as *sapor*, which consequently inserts the notion of taste and smell into the heart of wisdom, or *sapientia*. The notion of the bees and the garden is of course topical: it refers to paradise. However, this reference to the *locus amoenus* defines smell and taste as primordial senses of a lost world. We can see how Lambert is interested specifically in the prototype of scent as a ‘knowledge-generating sense’. This is why he refers to the *Legend of the Rood*, a story that was profoundly embedded and widely disseminated in medieval culture. It mirrors precisely the importance that odour gains in the more intuitive and cosmological realms of deeper insight. In the legend, Seth returns to paradise to collect healing oil from the Tree of Life in order to cure the dying Adam. However, the angel Michael instead gives him a branch of the Tree of Knowledge. Seth – like the aforementioned dove – becomes the carrier of a twig from which a new covenant will grow. As Adam smells the branch, he feels contented and falls into the deep sleep of death. In the Gnostic sources for this motif, the scent of the branch does even more: it offers him universal knowledge, the *gnosis* Adam desired and transmitted to Seth; Karen de Coene, *Navelnacht : Regeneratie en kosmologie in de middeleeuwen*, doctoral thesis, Leuven 2006, p. 68; Barbara Baert, “Adam, Seth and Jerusalem: The Legend of the Wood of the Cross in Medieval Literature and Iconography”, in *Adam, le premier homme*, Agostino P. Bagliani ed., Florence 2012, pp. 69–99.

65 Eric Palazzo, *Les cinq sens au Moyen Âge : État de la question et perspectives de recherche*, in *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale*, 55 (2012), pp. 339–366, sp. pp. 347–351 refers to the tenth book of Augustine’s Confessions, chapters 9 and 11, where the author interprets *synaesthesia* as the door towards the soul and the inner self; Laura Katrine Skinnebach, *Practices of perception : Devotion and the senses in late medieval Northern Europe*, doctoral thesis, Bergen 2013, pp. 233–257, sp. p. 259: “These [devotional] practices effected an overstepping of perception, not by extending the abilities of the individual senses, but by transforming materiality”.

66 Henry J. Cadbury, “The Odor of the Spirit at Pentecost”, in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 47, 3, 4 (1928), pp. 237–257.

67 Cadbury, “The Odor” (n. 66), p. 238.

68 Cadbury, “The Odor” (n. 66), p. 241.

69 Cadbury, “The Odor” (n. 66), p. 242.

70 See Martin Roch, “Théophanie et liturgie : Les odeurs de la dédicace de l’église Sainte-Agathe selon Grégoire le Grand (Dial., II, 30, 1–7)”, in *Mises en scène et mémoires de la consécration de l’église dans l’Occident médiéval*, Didier Méhu ed., Turnhout, 2007, pp. 41–74.

71 The *oculus* is also represented in the iconography of the Annunciation. In the altarpiece of Gentile da Fabriano (c. 1421–1425), a ray of light emanating from God’s chest penetrates into Mary’s room through a six-lobed *oculus* and strikes her below the heart, where the shape of the window is reflected on her lower body. The ‘eye’ of Mary’s room is repeated as an optical photogram: she bears the divine light of a supernatural impregnation in an entirely pictorial fashion. The light has descended into painterly virtuosity: the subtle golden rays, the hidden energy of the dove and the optical resonance of a window on textile, which turns Mary’s belly into a kind of ‘receptive eye’ of ‘wind-ness’; Barbara Baert, “Wind und Sublimierung in der christlichen Kunst des Mittelalters: die Verkündigung”, in *Das Münster: Zeitschrift für Christliche Kunst und Kunstwissenschaft*, 66/2 (2013), pp. 109–117, Fig. 10; Barbara Baert, “The annunciation and the senses: Late medieval devotion and the pictorial gaze”, in *Late medieval devotions: Images, instruments and the materiality of belief*, Henning Laugetud/Salvador Ryan ed., Dublin 2014, Fig. 6, forthcoming.

72 Johannes Tripps, *Das handelnde Bildwerk in der Gotik*, Berlin 2000, pp. 141–145; the author suspects that the custom goes back to the 10th century. The *oculus* was also used to enact the Ascension with statues.

By way of conclusion. Pentecost as a visual synaesthesia?

Gregory the Great (540–604) says:

“*Visus quippe, auditus, gustus, odoratus, et tactus, quasi quaedam viae mentis sunt, quibus foras veniat (...). Per hos etenim corporis sensus quasi per fenestras quasdam exteriora quaeque anima respicit, respiciens concupiscit*”⁷³.

“For seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching are, as it were, ways of the mind, by which the mind goes beyond itself (...). For through these bodily senses the soul views, as it were through windows, the things exterior to it, and on viewing them longs after them”⁷⁴.

Gregory the Great links the *sensorium* and the co-operation of the senses with the desire of the soul: synaesthesia.

David Chidester identifies three reasons for synaesthetic experience being regarded as an efficient medium for contact with God. Synaesthesia is claimed to be “more immediate, compelling and highly charged”; “more transcendent, extraordinary and super-natural” and finally “more unified, complete, total and all-encompassing”⁷⁵. The connection between synaesthesia and spirituality was already made by Augustine in his *Confessions*⁷⁶, and its origins might lie in the Eastern desert fathers who showed a more than average interest in descriptions bordering on mysticism in which some senses passed into others or, more radically, all five senses imploded into an exceptional, overwhelming experience⁷⁷. Augustine writes that we never say things like: “Hear how it flashes”, or “Smell the light it gives”, or “Savour how it shines” or “Feel how it glitters” (Confessions, X, 35). Augustine follows his analyses by asserting that nevertheless in the experience of the soul and spiritual surrender, there is a convergence of hearing and seeing. “And in the innermost centre of the human heart he [Augustine] maintains that hearing is sight and sight is hearing. It is seeing beyond seeing; hearing beyond hearing”⁷⁸. When the Egyptian monks listened to Abbot Pachomius, it seemed to them as though a great light shone through his words. One Life of the saint specifies: “All the brethren were like men drunk with wine and (...) saw the words coming forth from his mouth like birds of gold, silver and precious stones, which flew over the brethren in secret and went into the ears of many of those who listened well”⁷⁹.

Clinical psychologists distinguish two types of synaesthesia: selective (hearing becomes seeing and vice versa) as described by Augustine, and radical

(all the senses are drawn into a single vortex) as described by Gregory the Great and the desert fathers⁸⁰. The first type is to some extent still rationally filtered given that hearing and seeing are regarded as the highest senses of knowledge in the classical Western hierarchy. The second type testifies to an all-consuming experience such as in *anachoresis*. The contributions to knowledge through touch, scent and taste are left out of account in the first type. Radical synaesthesia leads to a total experience that is much closer to a mystical emotion or even to *raptus*.

In the visual interpretations of Pentecost in the Codex Egberti and in the Benedictional of Archbishop Robert respectively, we can recognize traces of both types of synaesthesia in form as well as in content. The Codex Egberti interprets Pentecost in the perspective of hearing and seeing. The miracle of multilingualism springs from the subtle but effective splitting of a single word – EDO-CENS – which produces the suggestion of “to produce from the mind” alongside “to speak”. The benedictional is a visual transport of movement and wind. Pentecost is here interpreted as a voracious whirlwind of *dynamike*. The miracle does not come from a split word but bursts from the eye of the storm.

Whatever option the artist’s mind takes for the miraculous event of Pentecost, he must depict the almost undepictable. The desire of the soul in synaesthesia can be compared to the desire of taming and exploring the visual medium as such. It is precisely this desire that forms the artistic *raison d’être*; the artist’s hand will have to go on working forever, for the ultimate consubstantiality of the visual with God. There is the undertaking of a pact: a desire that “sets open” the visual medium, turns it into a window on the world just like the golden letters that split, or just like the *oculus* that is a doorway to wind and scent. The hermeneutics of the visual as opening, desire and hope articulates the essence of Pentecost and the limits and the paradoxes of what the visual arts can and cannot achieve.

⁷³ Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job*, XX, II, ed. PL 76, col. 189; Palazzo, *Les cinq sens* (n. 65), p. 350.

⁷⁴ Gregory the Great, *Morals on the Book of Job*, James Bliss, Charles Marriott trans., 3 vols, Oxford 1844–1850, vol. 2, pp. 515–516.

⁷⁵ David Chidester, “Symbolism and the senses in Saint Augustine”, in *Religion*, 14 (1984), pp. 31–51, sp. p. 46.

⁷⁶ Rex Warner, *The confessions of St. Augustine*, New York 1963, passim.

⁷⁷ Chidester, “Symbolism” (n. 75), p. 33.

⁷⁸ Chidester, “Symbolism” (n. 75), p. 46.

⁷⁹ Violet Macdermot, *The cult of the seer in the ancient Near East*, Berkeley 1971, p. 766.

⁸⁰ Erich von Hornbostel, “The Unity of the Senses”, in *A source book of Gestalt Psychology*, Willis D. Ellis ed., New York 1972, p. 122.

/Summary/ Pentecost in the Codex Egberti (c. 980) and the Benedictional of Archbishop Robert (late 10th century). The Visual Medium and the Senses

This article focuses on two miniatures representing Pentecost, on folio 91 of the Codex Egberti (c. 980) and on folio 29 verso of the Benedictional of Archbishop Robert (late 10th century). The decision to treat the two miniatures together is due to the contrast in how they treat the iconographic theme. By examining the differing visual interpretations of these images of Pentecost, this article will contribute to current research questions about medieval visual culture: the debate concerning ‘spiritual seeing’ during the Ottonian period, the relationship between image and epigraph (titulus), and the visualization of ruach (pneuma, spiritus) and the senses. Because the theme of Pentecost is particularly receptive for these research questions, the case studies from the Codex Egberti and the Benedictional of Archbishop Robert are exemplary for the broader interdisciplinary issues of the visual medium and the senses. I furthermore defend in this paper that in the visual interpretations of Pentecost in the Codex Egberti and in the the Benedictional of Archbishop Robert respectively, we can recognize traces of synaesthesia in form as well as in content. The Codex Egberti interprets Pentecost in the perspective of hearing and seeing. The miracle of multilingualism springs from the subtle but effective splitting of a single word – edo-cens – which produces the suggestion of ‘to produce from the mind’ alongside ‘to speak’. The benedictional is a visual transport of movement and wind. Pentecost is here interpreted as a voracious whirlwind of dynamike. The miracle does not come from a split word but bursts from the eye of the storm.

Whatever option the artist’s mind takes for the miraculous event of Pentecost, he must depict the almost undepictable. The desire of the soul in synaesthesia can be compared to the desire of taming and exploring the visual medium as such. It is precisely this desire that forms the artistic *raison d’être*; the artist’s hand will have to go on working forever, for the ultimate consubstantiality of the visual with God.