



# The Uta Codex: Art, Philosophy, and Reform in Eleventh-Century Germany

*Adam S. Cohen*

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Created at the behest of the abbess Uta, it is not only one of the most beautiful of Ottonian manuscripts but also one of the most complex. The collection of liturgical readings is preceded by four full-page frontispieces illustrating the Hand of God, Uta dedicating the codex to the Virgin and Child, a Crucifixion, and Saint Erhard (the convent's patron saint) celebrating Mass. Four evangelist portraits accompany the readings from each Gospel. In this groundbreaking study, Adam Cohen provides comprehensive explications of the codex's renowned illuminations as well as the first thorough investigation of its historical context. Cohen shows that the lavish miniatures, among the most elaborate pictures of the Middle Ages, use figures, ornaments, Latin tituli, and geometric schemata to fashion visual exegeses of great range and complexity. Through consideration of questions of function, patronage, and program, Cohen also demonstrates that the codex commemorates the abbess Uta's efforts to reform conventual life and education. The Uta Codex will be of interest to scholars of medieval art as well as those exploring questions of women, monastic culture, and intellectual life in the Middle Ages.

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