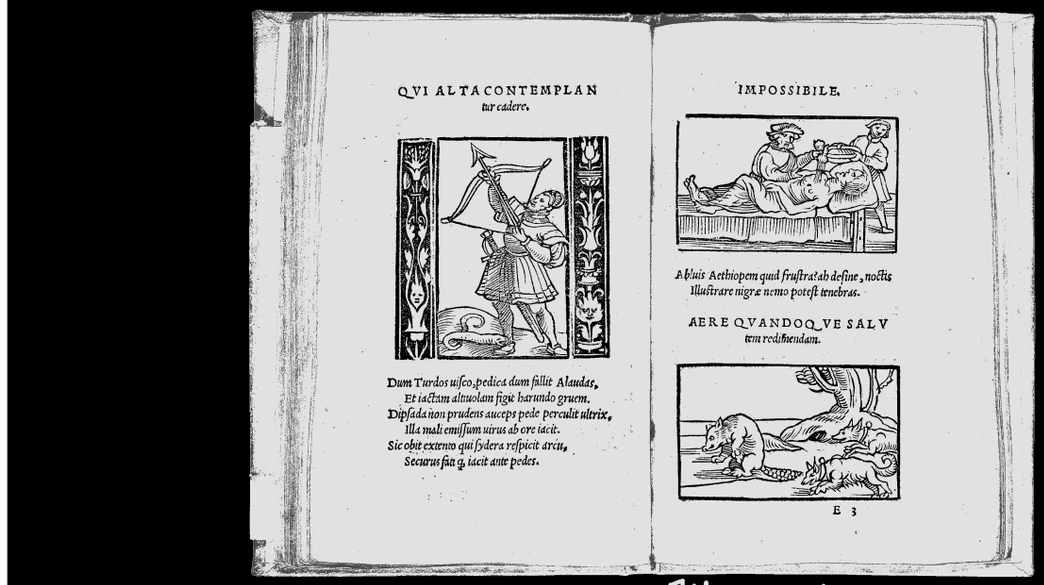
TYPOGRAPHY THEORY PRACTICE
Leeds Beckett University, 25 October 2025

JAMES LANGDON

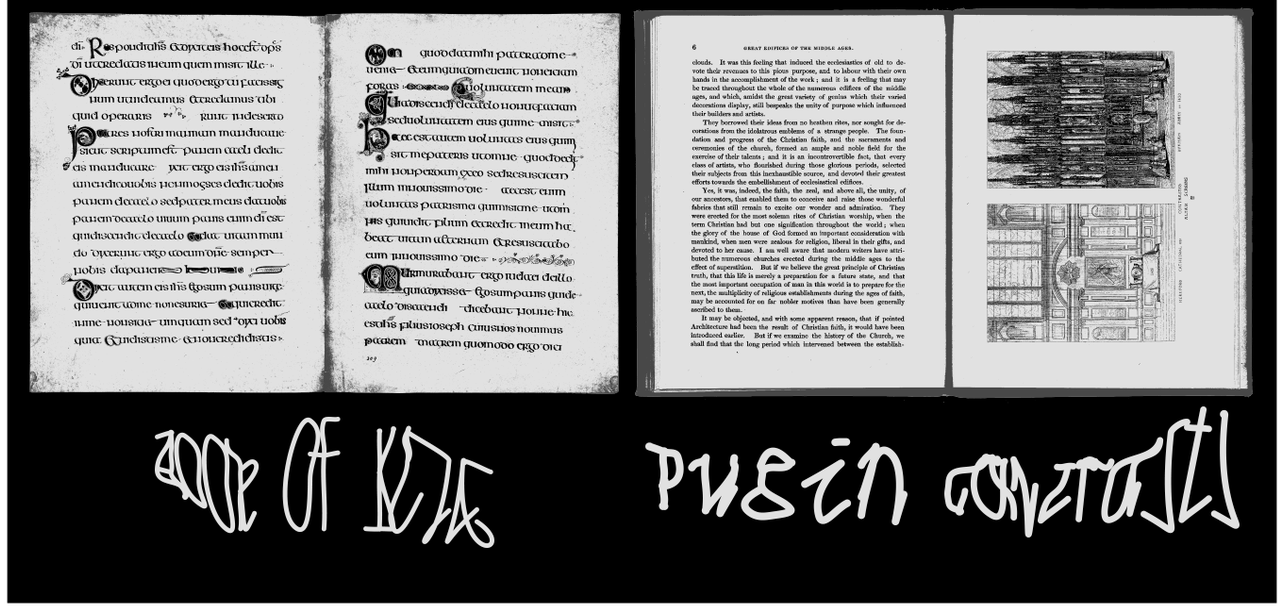
Words and images combined

Supported by Commercial eye



The subject of the research is the integration of text and image. My concern in this first part is prosaic: to theorise the graphic labour implicit in integrating text and image on sequences of pages of long form content. This is about conventions of page layout and the factors which determine why, despite generations of automation, integrated arrangements of text and image remain relatively labour-intensive.

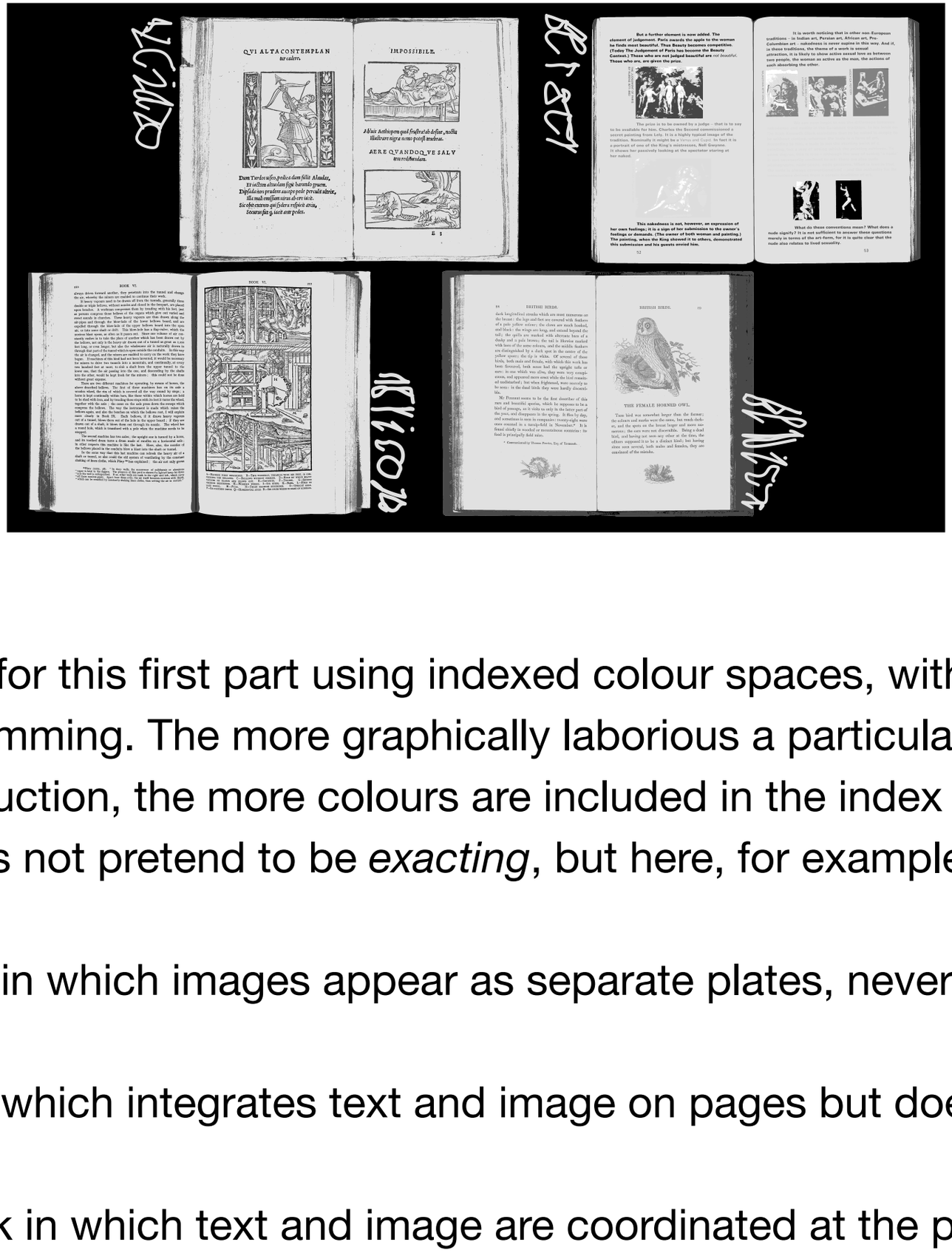
Graphic labour elaboration.



The discussion is historically contingent on professional practices of page production: scribes working with pen and ink; print workshops and factories doing modular typography in wood and metal; and networked digital typography with its capacity to abstract away technical dependencies.

The two examples shown here sit at the poles of a broad historical sweep:

- in the first, on the left, text and image are frequently, organically, and intricately combined and have relatable proportions.
- in the second, divisions of labour and mechanisation have departmentalised text and image for practical and, ultimately, economical reasons.

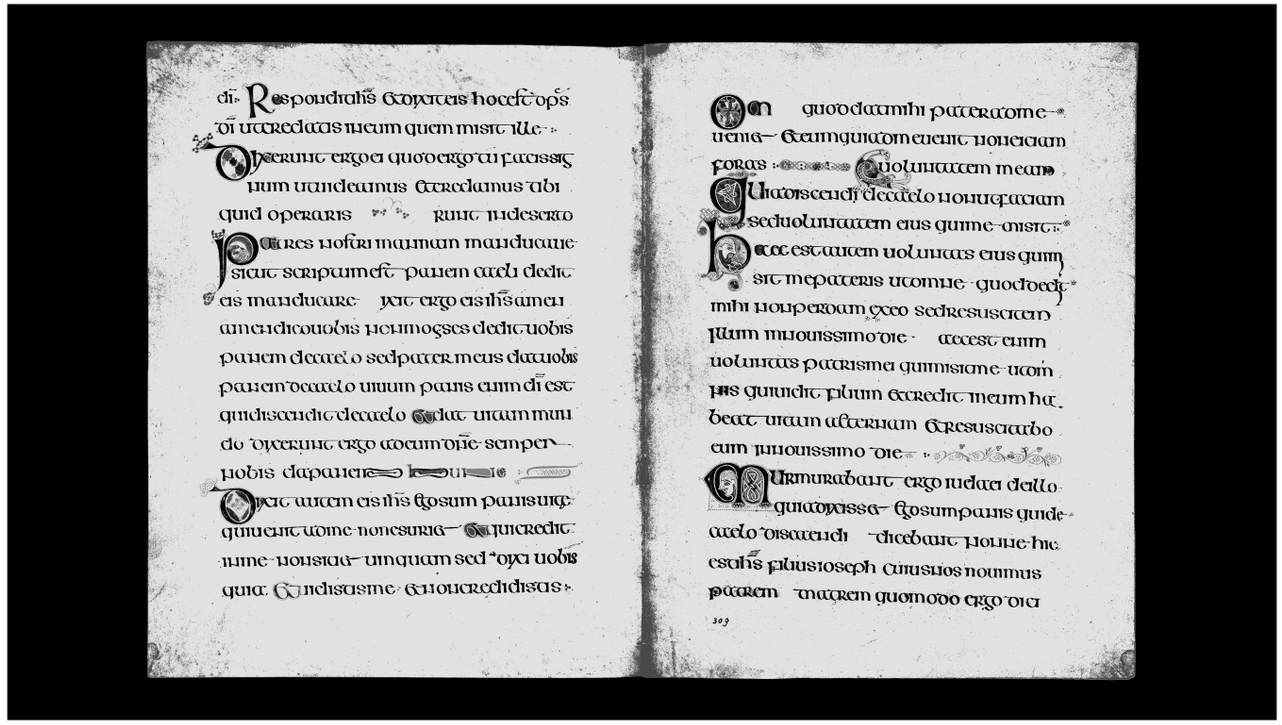


I've prepared images for this first part using indexed colour spaces, with the intention of illustrating *and* diagramming. The more graphically laborious a particular layout is, in its original mode of production, the more colours are included in the index of its representation here. This device does not pretend to be *exacting*, but here, for example, left to right:

- a 16th century book in which images appear as separate plates, never on the same pages as the main text,
- a 16th century book which integrates text and image on pages but does not semantically synchronise them,
- an 18th century book in which text and image are coordinated at the page level,
- and a 20th century book in which text and image are entwined down to the paragraph.

The underlying historical dynamics don’t proceed consistently toward integration. They would be better characterised as flip-flopping between phases of greater and lesser integration — I won’t refine that now but I covered it in my presentation here last year and that video is on YouTube.

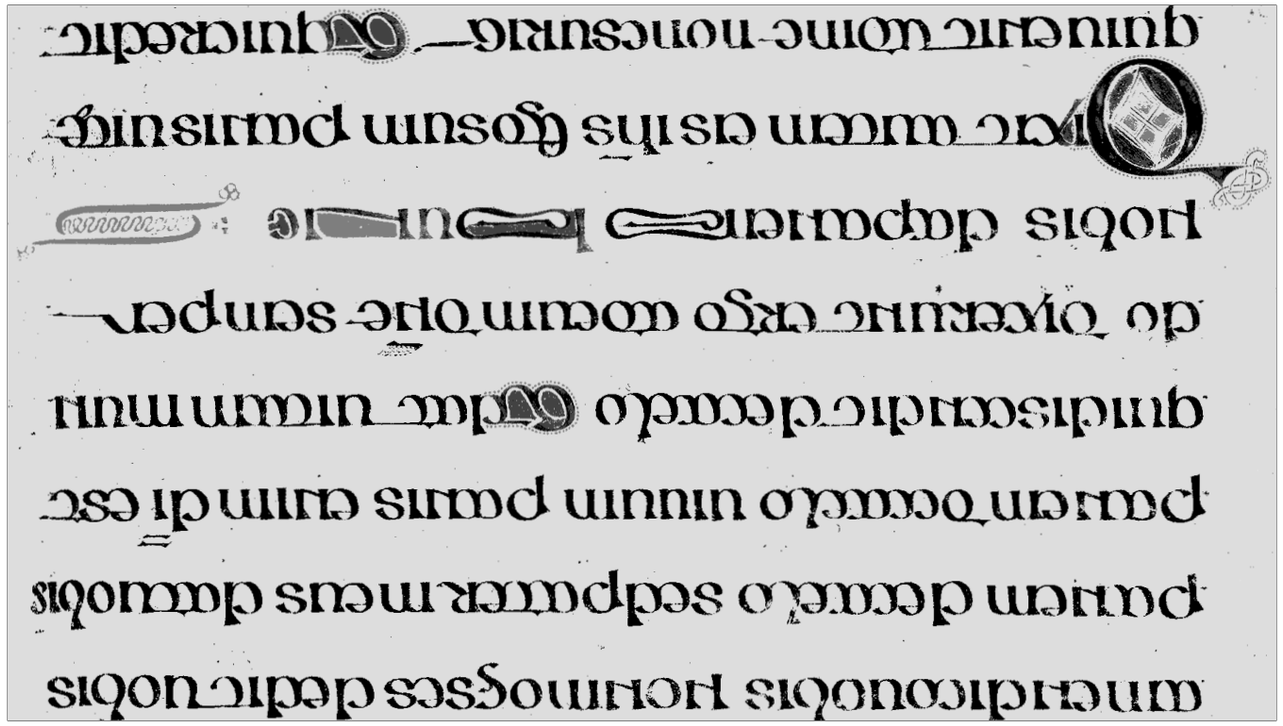
An initial claim then:
The more *spatially* and *semantically* integrated text and image, the more graphic labour is required to manage the complexity of their layout.

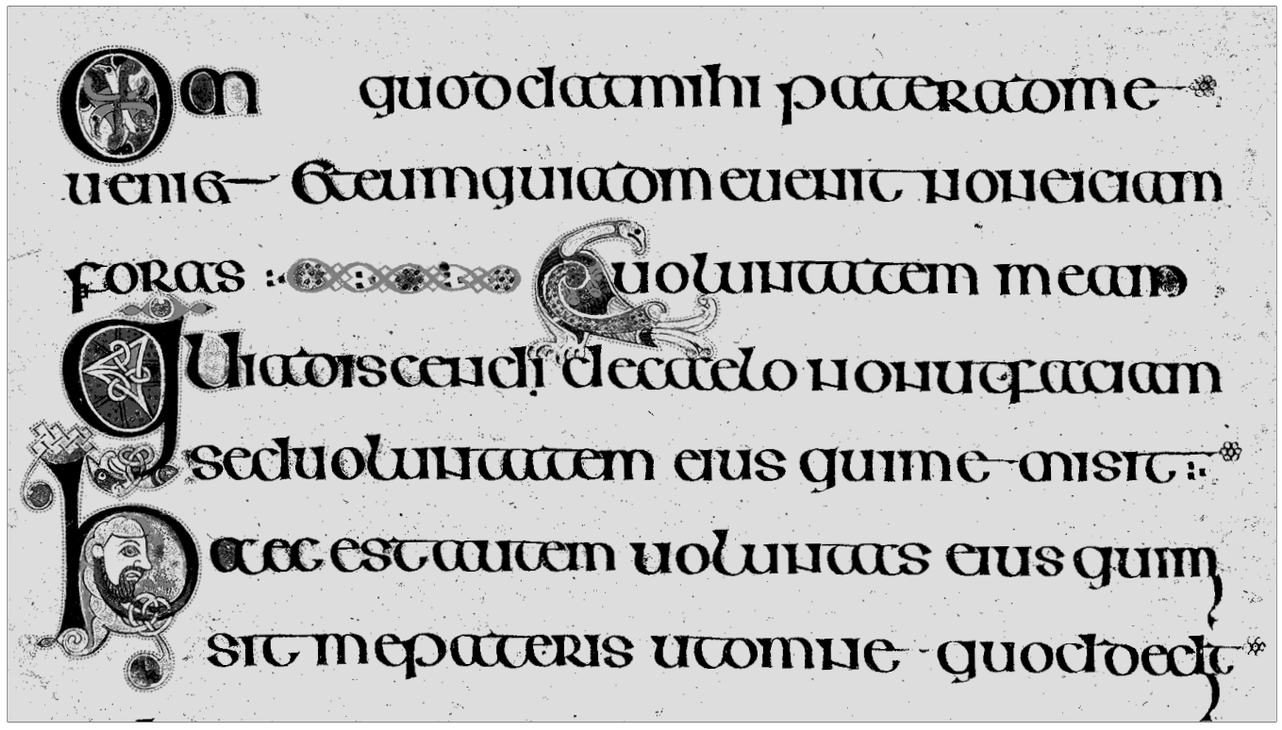


I just described this 8th century manuscript as having frequent, organic, and intricate combinations of text and image.

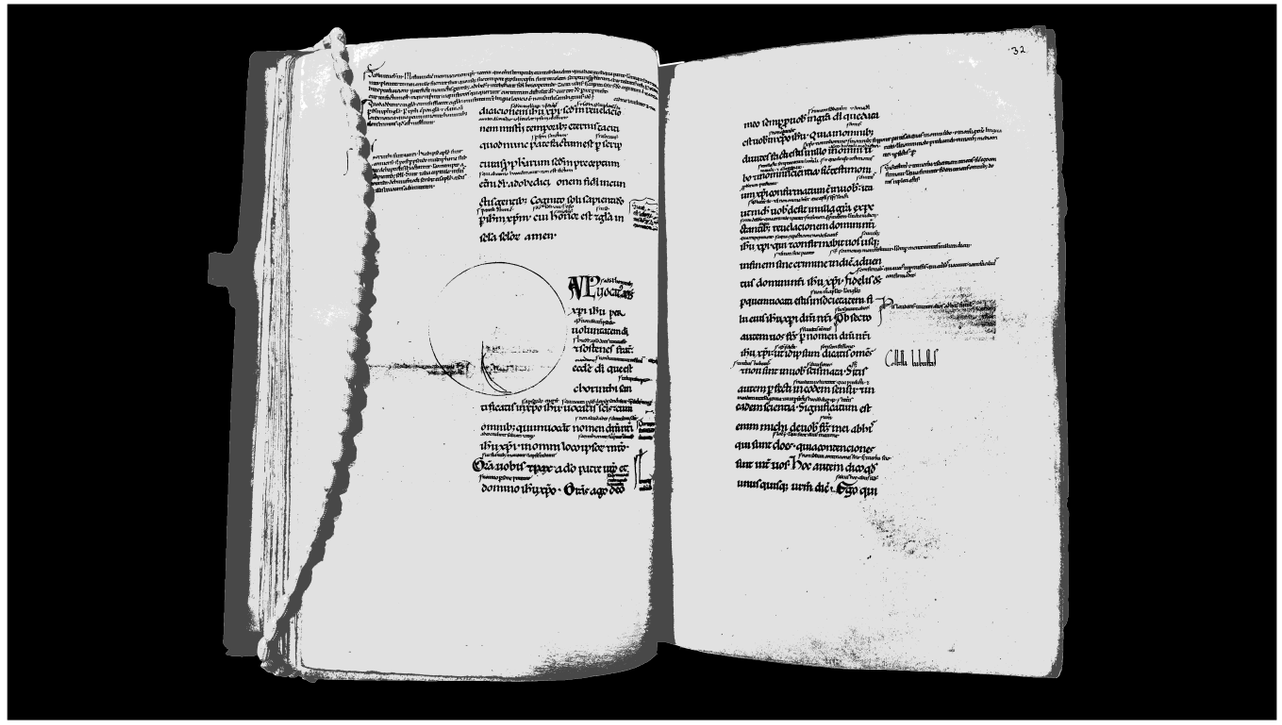
Note how its illustrations are largest and most elaborate at the left edge of the text block, but can potentially appear at any point on a line. The distinction between text and illustration is soft.

On the line third from the bottom here, text morphs into illustration. The scribe's concern is obviously to maintain an even line-length, but the gradual nature of the slippage is telling.



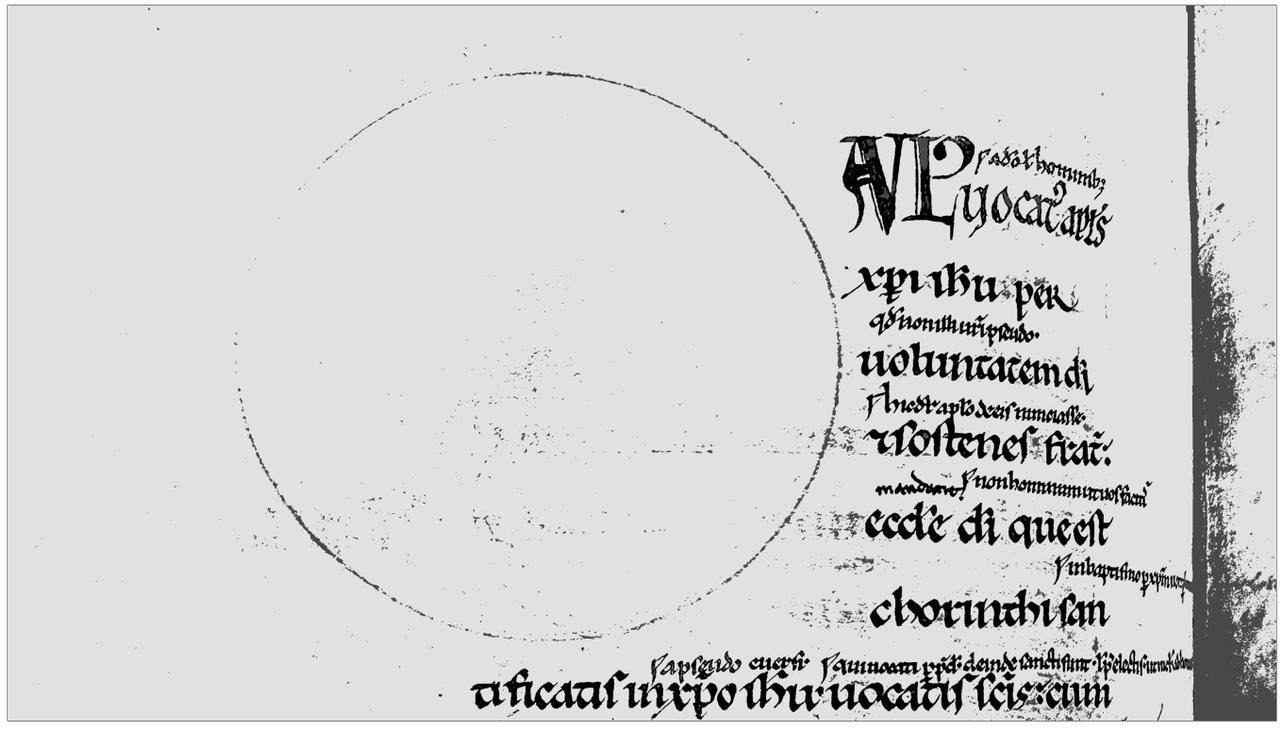


Illustrations inhabit text scenographically.

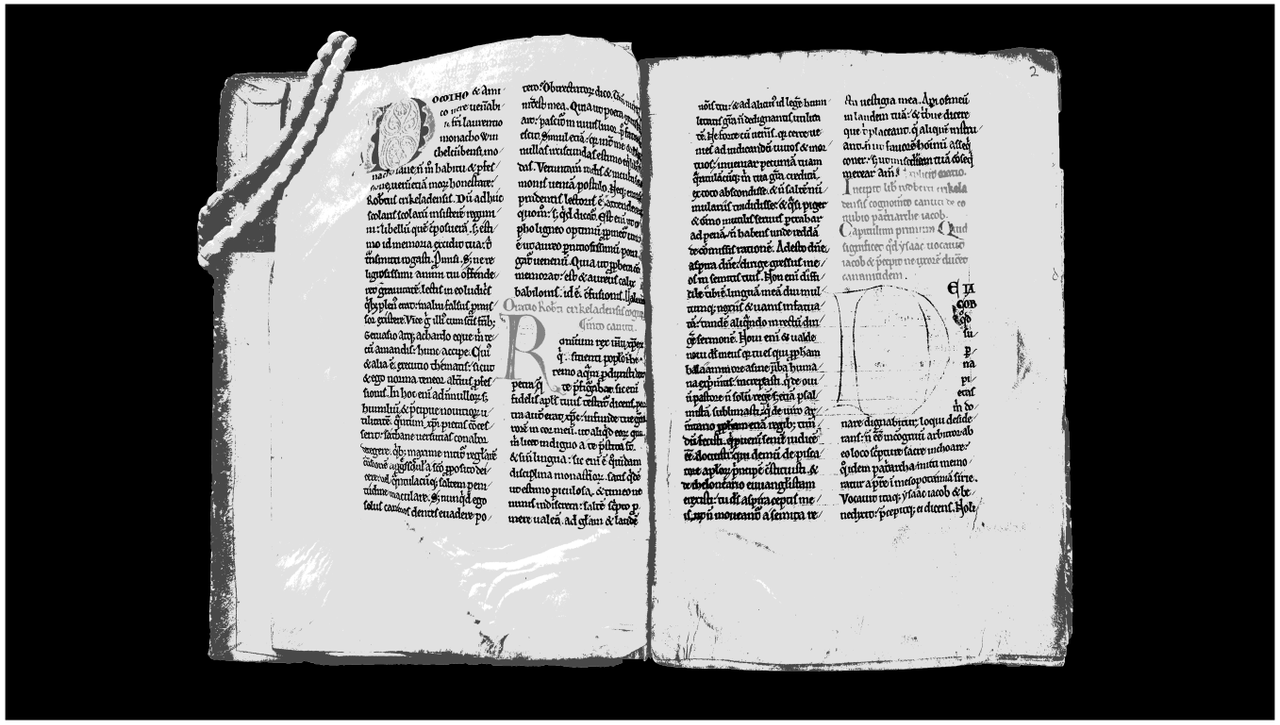


Movement away from such conjoining of text and image is not simply a consequence of mechanisation. In fact, the production of the scriptorium, the print workshop, and computerised typesetting have *in common* a departmentalisation of text and image during the eras when they have been dominant means of production. Think about why Adobe InDesign, Illustrator, and Photoshop remain separate software products.

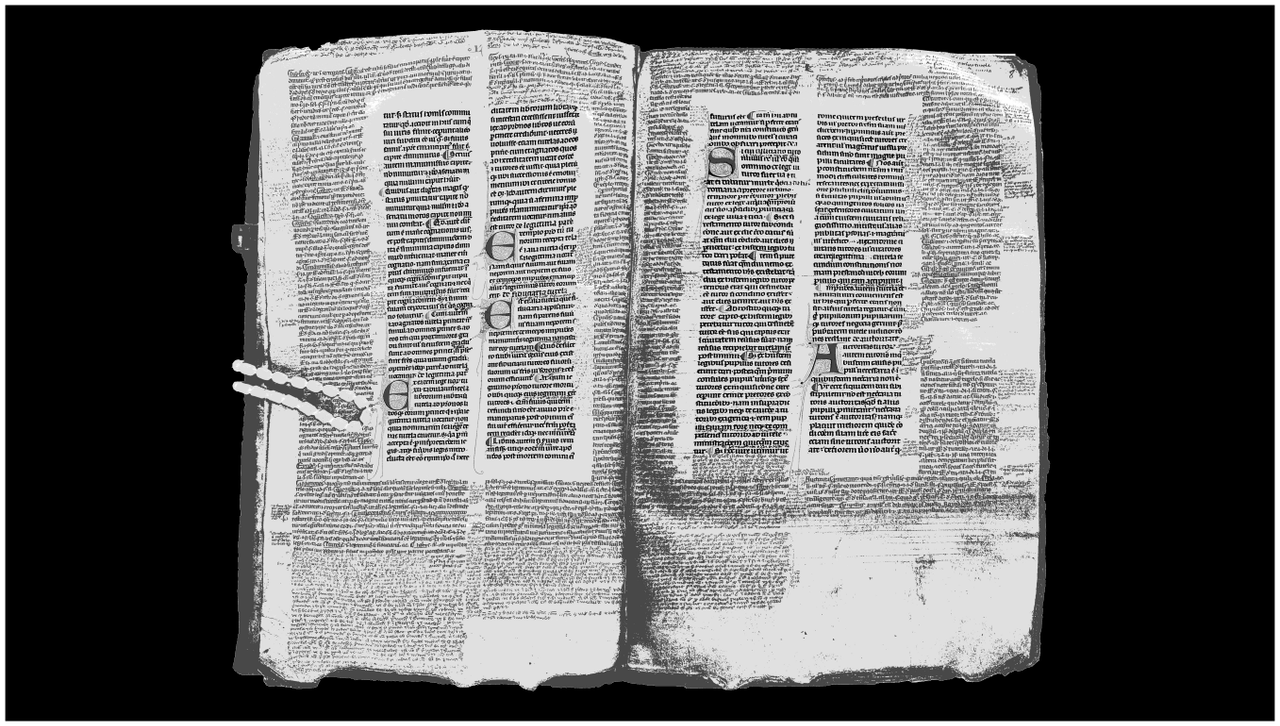
This is a page from an unfinished 12th century manuscript at Hereford Cathedral — I'll show a number of examples from the library there which I've recently had the chance to view in person. Notice, on the verso page, the scribe responsible for the main text marked a space into which a second scribe was to have added illustration.



The handoff is vague — a circle lightly drawn with a compass.



In other cases handoffs between scribes defined the precise scope of an illustration, such as this outline for an uppercase D on the recto.



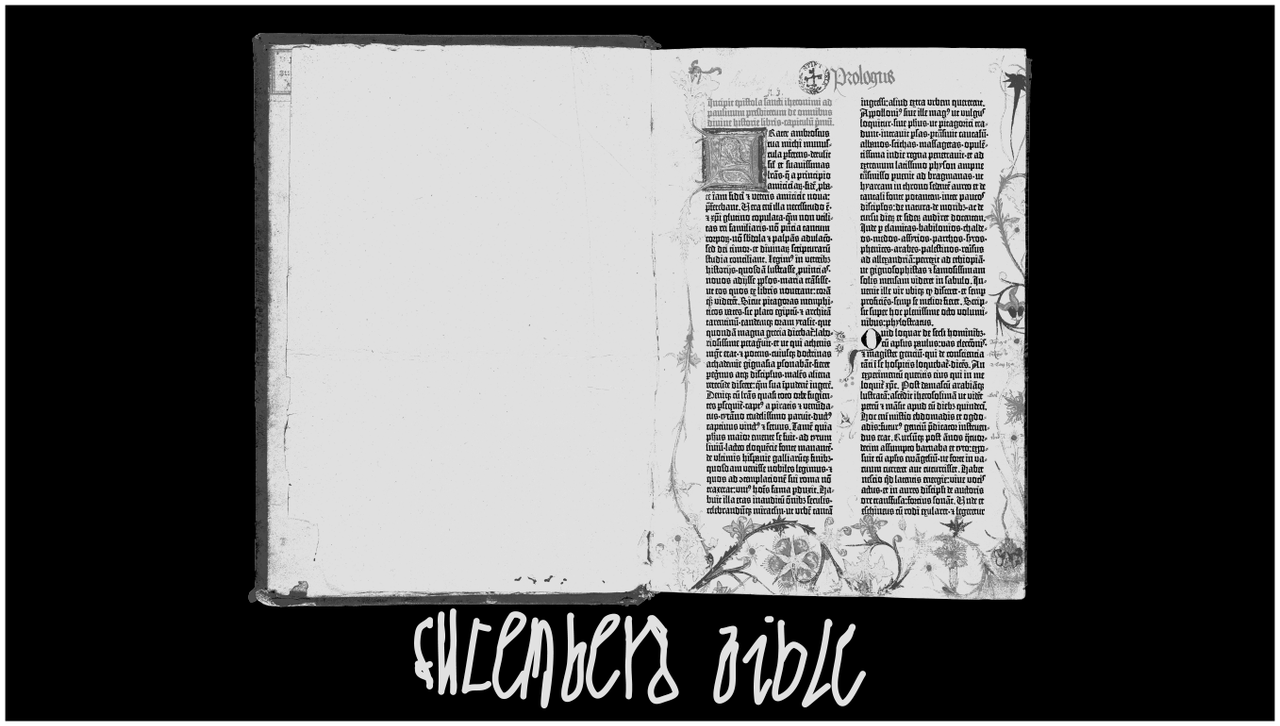
I don’t intend to resolve confusion around whether illustrations had primarily textual or pictorial or decorative purposes. The point is that when different intensities and visualities of graphic labour met in medieval books, **they tended to do so at specific positions on the page**.

The reasons for this are relatively easy to decode here. Disregarding the surrounding marginalia shown in brown, imagine the first scribe proceeding steadily through the main text. Each stroke is performed with similar speed and intensity to maintain quality of line. Perhaps they slowed at the end of each line while deciding whether to break a word. Graphic labour is spread relatively evenly across these columns of text.

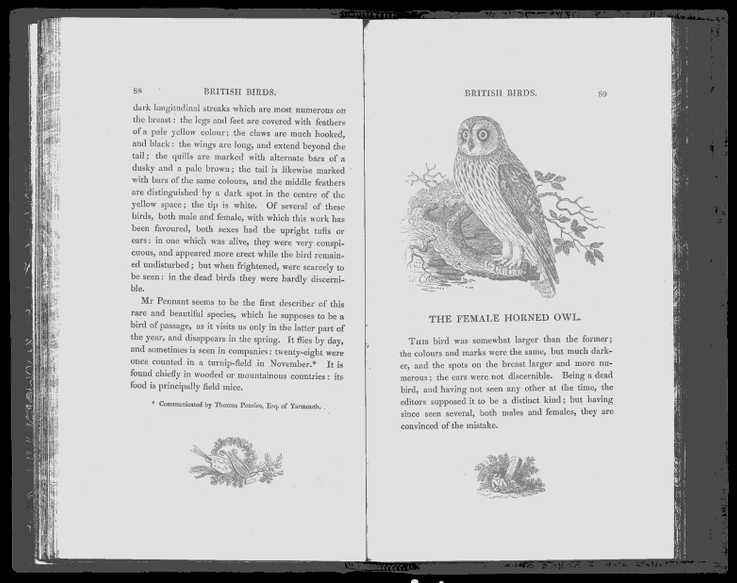


The second scribe was responsible for these illustrated letters. It's probably not insightful to speculate on the comparative amounts of labour expended by the two scribes, but I will venture a second claim:

Handoffs in the scriptorium caused the most intensive graphic labour to occur at the left edge of the text block, often at the start of a section. These spaces were easy for the scribe writing the main text to make allowances for, and gave the second scribe access to marginal space within which to elaborate their forms.



At first, the advent of print preserved these spatial arrangements. Gutenberg experimented with printing headings and illustrations in a second ink in his bible. The first three lines of the left column here were *printed* red, before the page was illustrated by a scribe. For economical reasons, Gutenberg took to leaving unprinted space for illustrations to be commissioned by the buyer of the book, as had been the manuscript tradition.


88 BRITISH BIRDS.

dark longitudinal streaks which are most numerous on the breast: the legs and feet are covered with feathers of a pale yellow colour: the claws are much hooked, and black: the wings are long, and extend beyond the tail; the quills are marked with alternate bars of a dusky and a pale brown; the tail is likewise marked with bars of the same colours, and the middle feathers are distinguished by a dark spot in the centre of the yellow space; the tip is white. Of several of these birds, both male and female, with which this work has been favoured, both sexes had the upright tufts or ears: in one which was alive, they were very conspicuous, and appeared more erect while the bird remained undisturbed; but when frightened, were scarcely to be seen: in the dead birds they were hardly discernible.

Mr Pennant seems to be the first describer of this rare and beautiful species, which he supposes to be a bird of passage, as it visits us only in the latter part of the year, and disappears in the spring. It flies by day, and sometimes is seen in companies: twenty-eight were once counted in a turnip-field in November.* It is found chiefly in wooded or mountainous countries: its food is principally field mice.

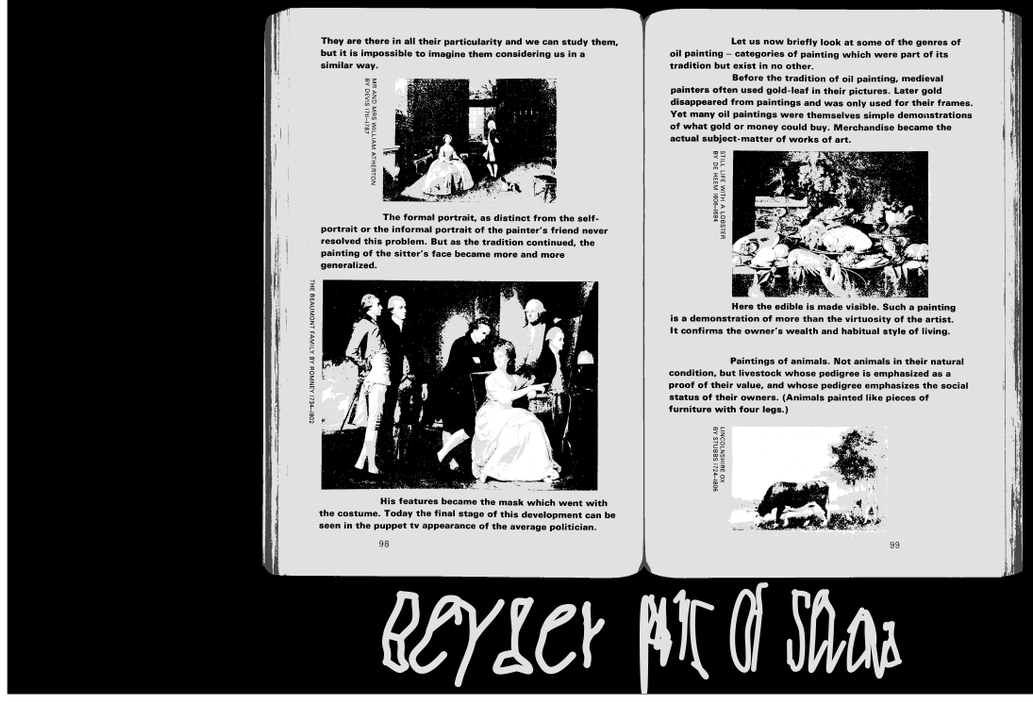
* Communicated by Thomas Pennant, Esq. of Yarmouth.

BRITISH BIRDS. 89

THE FEMALE HORNED OWL.

This bird was somewhat larger than the former; the colours and marks were the same, but much darker, and the spots on the breast larger and more numerous; the ears were not discernible. Being a dead bird, and having not seen any other at the time, the editors supposed it to be a distinct kind; but having since seen several, both males and females, they are convinced of the mistake.

Canonically, changes in page layout practices of course reflect the achievements of great protagonists. Thomas Bewick used the ends of hardwood blocks to make his engravings stiff enough to be placed in chases with metal type, enabling these integrated layouts to be printed in a single impression. Crucially, Bewick was the author and illustrator of this book, simplifying the coordination of text and image. He produced these smaller, more ambient illustrations to modulate space and keep the main texts and images synchronised.



Berger Ways of Seeing

John Berger’s ‘Ways of Seeing’, designed by Richard Hollis, is celebrated for its integration of text and image.

But a further element is now added. The element of judgement. Paris awards the apple to the woman he finds most beautiful. Thus Beauty becomes competitive. (Today The Judgement of Paris has become the Beauty Contest.) Those who are not judged beautiful are *not beautiful*. **Those who are, are given the prize.**



THE JUDGEMENT OF PARIS
BY HANNES KOTTHAUS

The prize is to be owned by a judge – that is to say to be available for him. Charles the Second commissioned a secret painting from Lely. It is a highly typical image of the tradition. Nominally it might be a Venus and Cupid. **In fact it is a portrait of one of the King's mistresses, Nell Gwynne. It shows her passively looking at the spectator staring at her naked.**

This nakedness is not, however, an expression of her own feelings; it is a sign of her submission to the owner's feelings or demands. (The owner of both woman and painting.) The painting, when the King showed it to others, demonstrated this submission and his guests envied him.

It is worth noticing that in other non-European traditions – in Indian art, Persian art, African art, Pre-Columbian art – nakedness is never supine in this way. And if, in these traditions, the theme of a work is sexual attraction, it is likely to show active sexual love as between two people, the woman as active as the man, the actions of each absorbing the other.



RAJASTHAN 18TH CENTURY



VISHNU AND LAKSHMI
11TH CENTURY



MOCHICA POTTERY

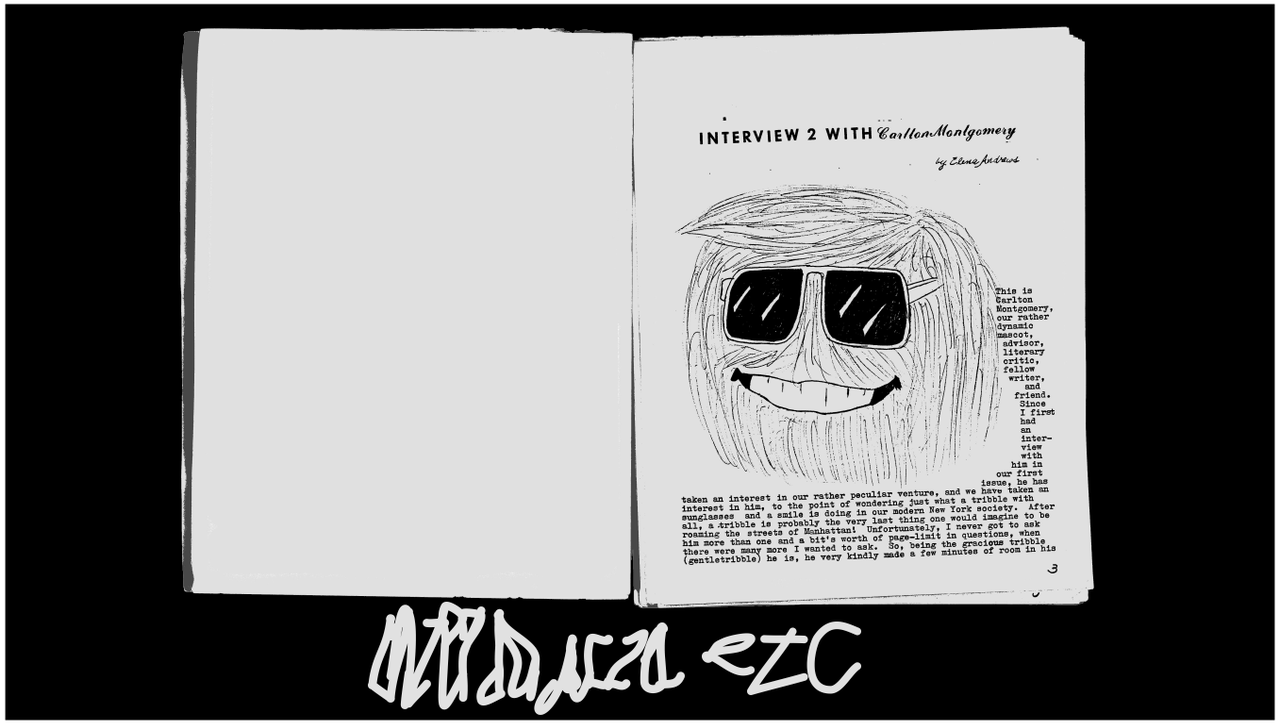




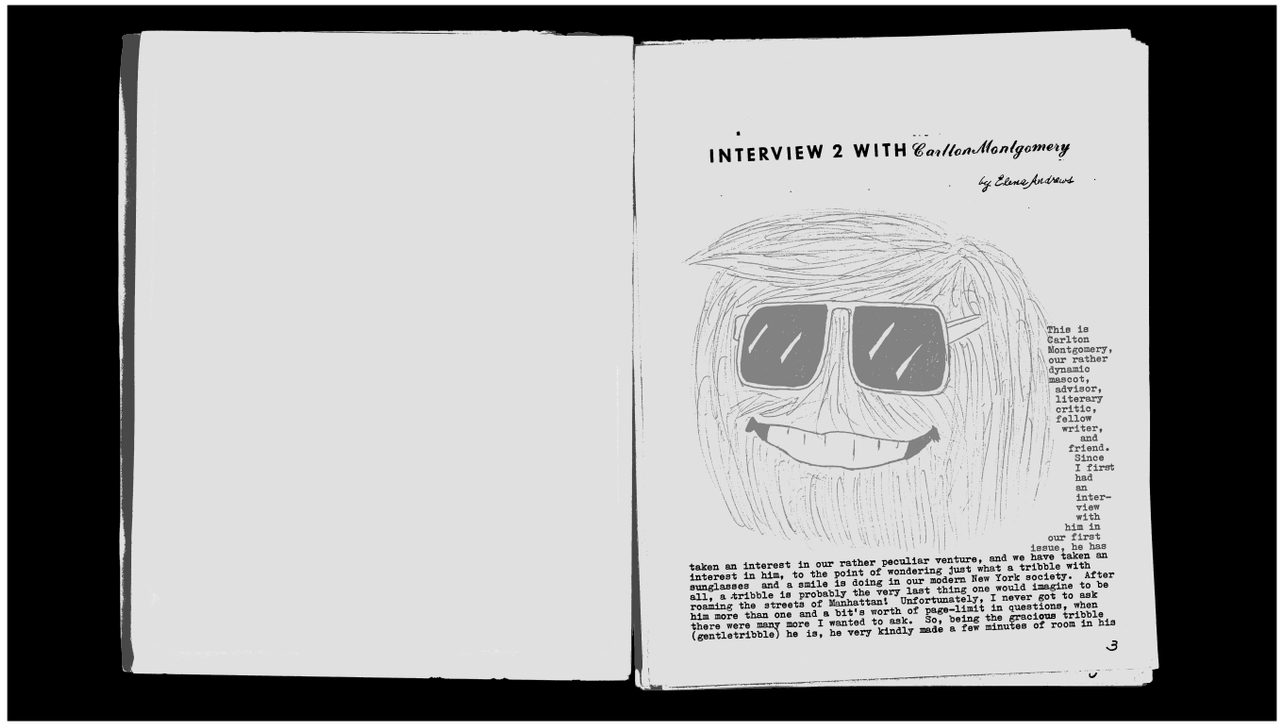
What do these conventions mean? What does a nude signify? It is not sufficient to answer these questions merely in terms of the art-form, for it is quite clear that the nude also relates to lived sexuality.

Paragraphs end precisely at the bottoms of pages and images are sized to maintain synchronisation between content and page. A bold typeface mediates the optical density of text and image. I've coloured this to suggest how each successive integration of text and image compounds the complexity of the layout and increases the risk that changing it would be even more graphically laborious.

It is significant that the mythology of this book is not about technological innovation. The book is mythologised for going against the prevailing economy of mainstream publishing by *coordinating* editorial and design roles. Without such close cooperation, these layouts would be impossible for a designer alone to produce in a project of this nature.



Outside mainstream publishing, technological innovation does carry the narrative of a liberation of the means of production. The typewriter and the photocopier were the tools of independent publishing, and fandom is a genre in which we find aberrations of graphic labour.



INTERVIEW 2 WITH *Carlton Montgomery*

by Elena Andrews

This is Carlton Montgomery, our rather dynamic mascot, advisor, literary critic, fellow writer, and friend. Since I first had an interview with him in our first issue, he has taken an interest in our rather peculiar venture, and we have taken an interest in him, to the point of wondering just what a tribble with sunglasses and a smile is doing in our modern New York society. After all, a tribble is probably the very last thing one would imagine to be roaming the streets of Manhattan! Unfortunately, I never got to ask him more than one and a bit's worth of page-limit in questions, when there were many more I wanted to ask. So, being the gracious tribble (gentletribble) he is, he very kindly made a few minutes of room in his

These are pages from a Star Trek fanzine. In ‘The Cultural Economy of Fandom’, John Fiske writes:

“Fans produce and circulate among themselves texts which are often crafted with production values as high as any in the official culture. The key differences between the two are economic … fans do not write or produce their texts for money; indeed, their productivity typically costs them money.”

The Clandestine Adventure of the Arcane Tomato

by: Margaret McMahon

Unbeknownst to Captain Kirk, who was in the gym, Sherlock Bones stalked the halls seeking adventure. Just as he passed the Botany Lab, he found it.

Lt. Sulu ran out with a wild yelp, just as he sauntered by.

" My prize tomato is gone!", he shrieked.

" Don't tell me," said our hero,"The giant tomato that you were growing in the lab to be the biggest tomato in history, is missing under extremely suspicious circumstances. And furthermore, you are in need of assistance. Professional assistance such as mine. Of course."

"Huh? What?"said Sulu in true consternation. "But how could you possibly know?"

"It's nothing my dear boy, don't compliment me. It is merely a job. Truly elementary.

"Speaking of elementary.-- wait a second." And with that he ran to the wall communicator.

"Hello, Sickbay? Sherlock Bones here. Nurse Watson come up if convenient, if inconvenient, come up all the same!"

"Yes doo- sorry -Sherlock Bones" came the voice of our heroine, Nurse Christine Chapel, called Nurse Watson by Sherlock Bones. Christine went promptly to the lab and joined them.

Sulu, more puzzled than ever, turned to Christine for some explanation as Sherlock Bones started into the lab to search for clues.

"I find it best humor the doctor, when he gets in one of these moods",she whispered to Sulu. "The Captain will be here soon ,and he'll straigh tea this all out."

"Why don't y'all come in, Mr. Sulu and you too, Nurse Watson.",said our hero.

As soon as they joined him, he began his formal preliminary questioning.

"When did you last see your tomato?"

"Before lunch."

"Can you give me a brief description of it? Be specific."

"Well, you know what a tomato looks like."

"Please describe it. I need facts, man!"

"Well, it looked, well, like,like a regular tomato. Only bigger. I feel pretty silly."

"Mr. Sulu, if you wish me to solve this case, you will tell me all the facts" said Sherlock Bones. "Please, describe the tomato."

"Well, it was greenish, and big."

There was a giggle and the three turned around to see Ensign Chekov who entered in time to hear most of the preceding conversation.

"Eet seems dat I left a fuel consumption report when I wisited my plants",he said hurriedly. He then busied himself.

A fitting account of the graphic labour displayed on this page,

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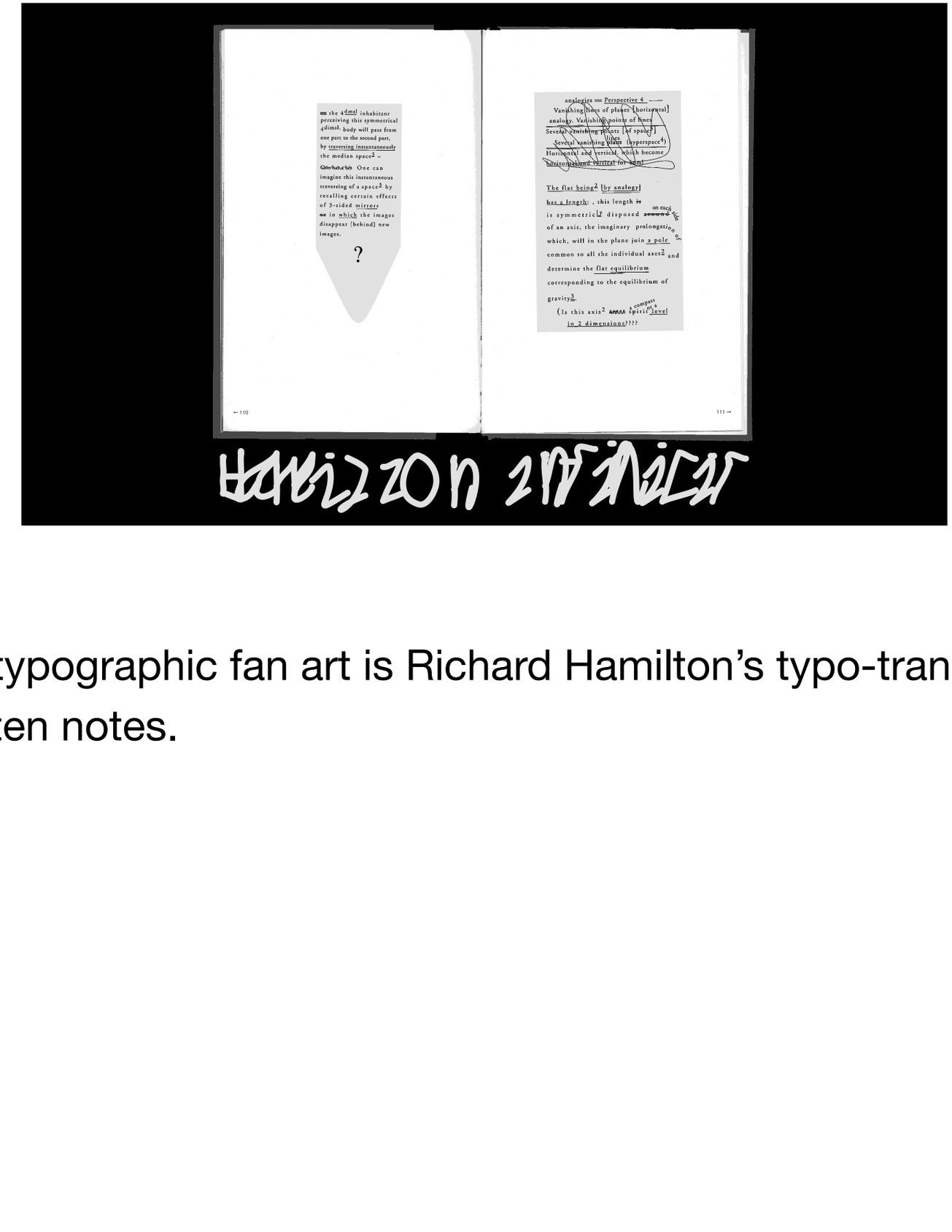
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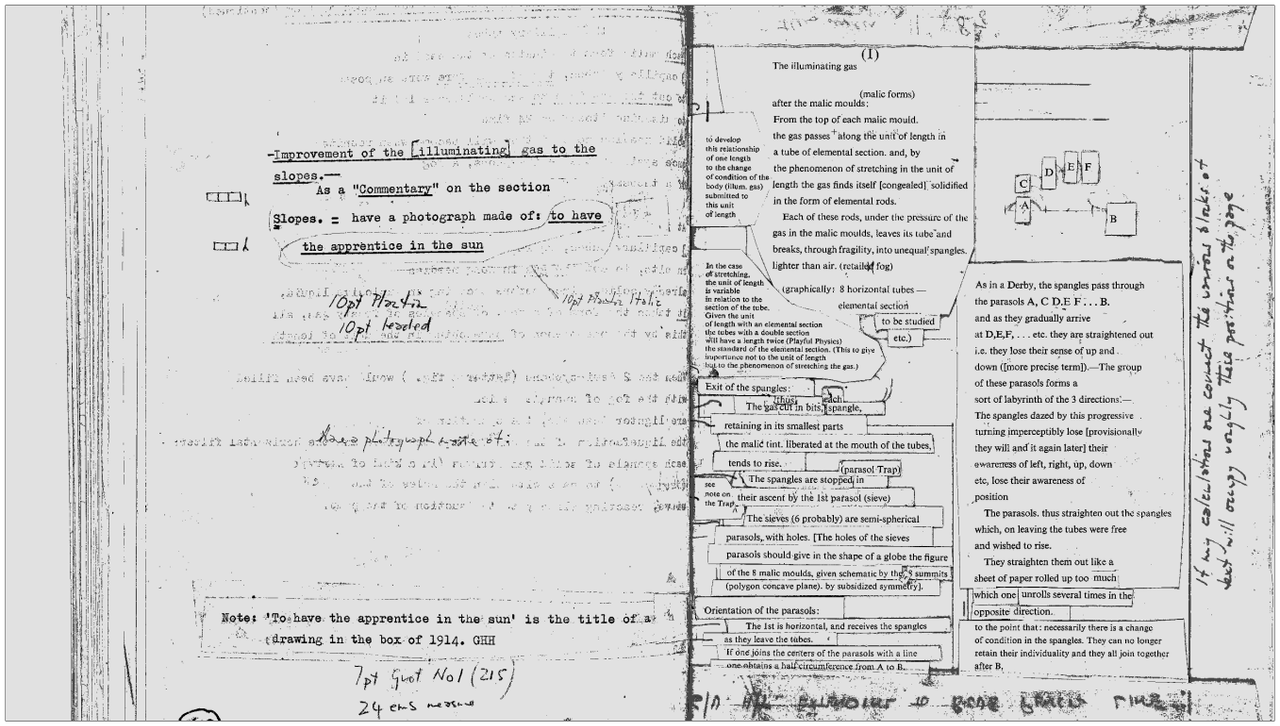
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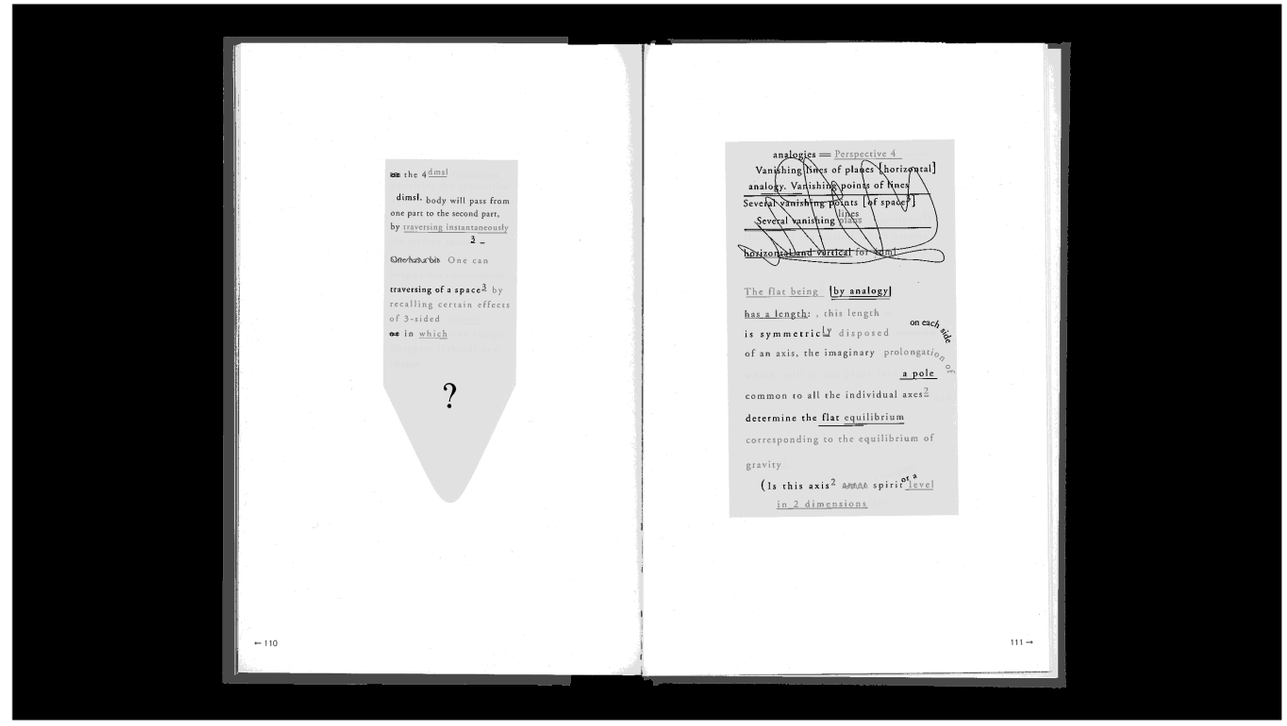
in which lines of text are manually spaced to fit around the image. It will always be more laborious to entwine text and image like this, and here laboriousness has cultural resonance.



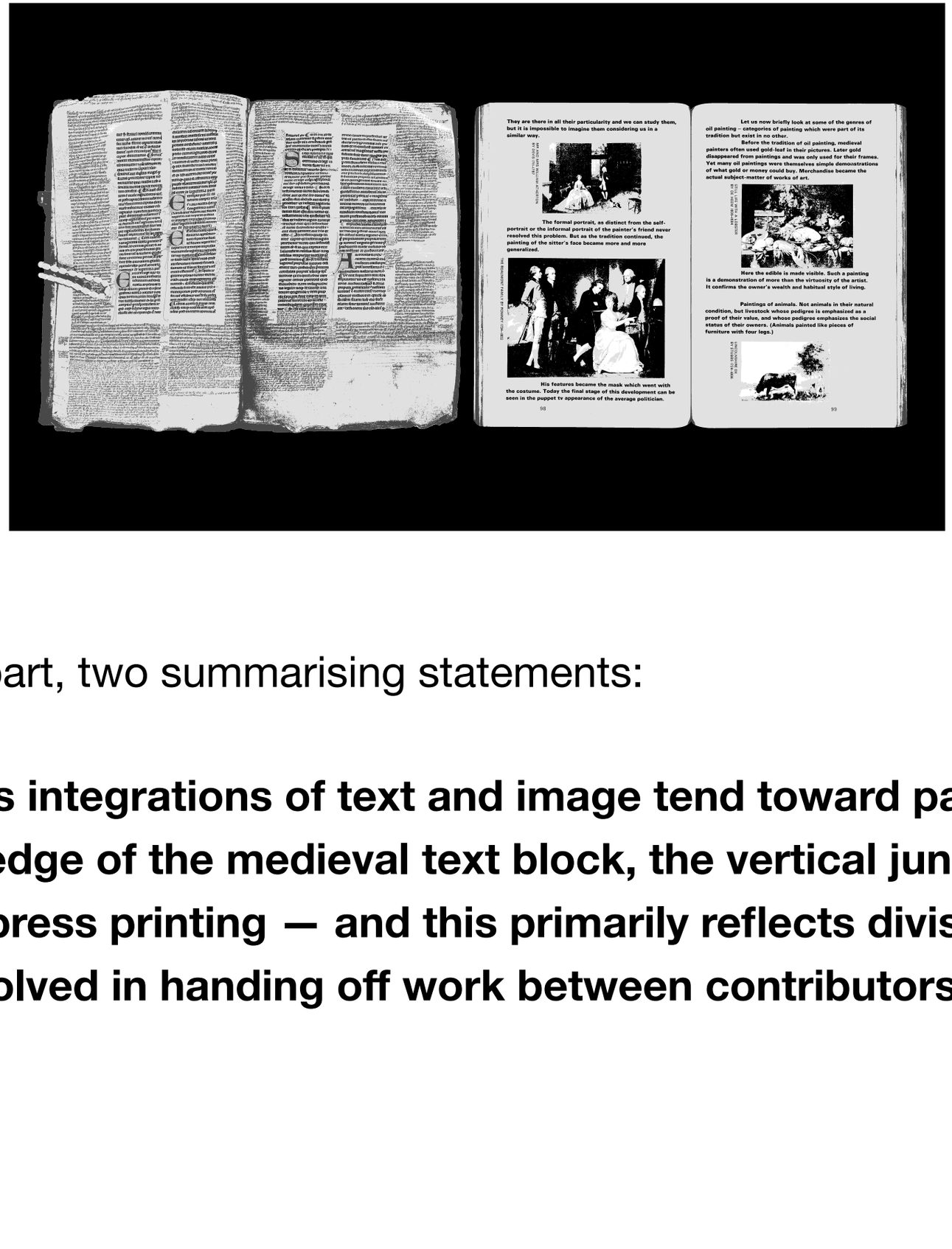
An extreme piece of typographic fan art is Richard Hamilton’s typo-translation of Marcel Duchamp’s handwritten notes.



Hamilton first produced a letterpress edition. This image shows the extremely laborious cut and paste process of its preparation. Practically every line of text is styled differently, according to a complex scheme of references to the original notes.



Later, Hamilton made another typo-translation using QuarkXpress. Here I change colour each time the text deviates from a standard, to show how laborious this process is compared to conventional computerised typesetting, in which hundreds of linked text boxes can be manipulated as if they were a single typographic object.



Concluding this first part, two summarising statements:

Graphically laborious integrations of text and image tend toward particular positions on the page — the left edge of the medieval text block, the vertical junctures between paragraphs in letterpress printing — and this primarily reflects divisions of labour and the coordination involved in handing off work between contributors.

and

Technology is an accelerant: it quickens production, changing what is practicable for smaller and smaller groups of collaborators by enabling them to consolidate roles. But, within a given technological means of production — scriptorium, print factory, one-person digital design studio — it remains more laborious to integrate text and image than to separate them.

Elaborate: 1000 hours to produce one book with earlier means of production, and a fraction of that time to produce 1000s of books with the later. But relative to not integrating…