

## Signs and Wonders: Evangelist Symbols and The Development of Early Christian Orthodoxy

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**Abstract:** The early development of evangelist symbols is a subject that raises interesting points about the maturation of Christian iconography in the late antique and early medieval periods. Regarding this topic, it is important to address how the development of evangelist symbols reflected early Christian orthodoxy, as well as what ideological issues faced by the early Christians were reflected in the iconography they developed. By probing some of the issues discussed at ecumenical councils and by examining the contexts and subtexts of early artistic depictions of the evangelists, I hope to address the relationship between the development of Christian orthodoxy and Christian iconography. One way to track the establishment of uniform Christian doctrine is to look at the use of evangelist symbols. Because these symbols were taken from imagery in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, they were perfect for Christians who wanted to gain credibility by emphasizing the links between the established canon of sacred Hebrew texts and the new canon of Christian texts. The evangelist symbols' ties to the gospels and New Testament were also useful to Christians who wanted to emphasize and support the idea of Christ's dual nature. Although there is no conclusive evidence that the early Christians consciously used the evangelist symbols for these specific purposes, tracking the adoption and use of evangelist symbols is a useful way to analyze the development of the Christian orthodoxy.

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