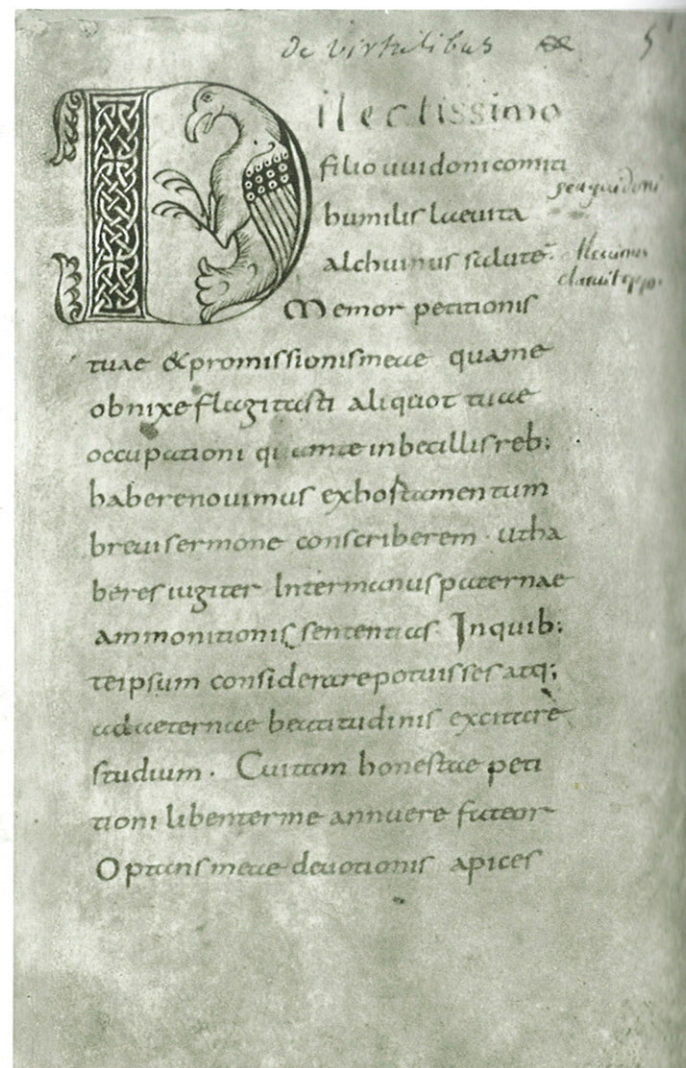


111 – TOURS. NEVERS GOSPEL BOOK. BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON.



112 – TOURS. ALCUIN, 'DE VIRTUTIBUS ET VITIIS.' TROYES.

### The Styles of Aachen and Reims Spread

At the bidding of Charlemagne, Alcuin had made his abbey of Saint-Martin at Tours a centre of Bible studies, where the sacred texts were revised and copied in the years 796–804. But even if he had wished to do so, he was unable to make Tours a centre for the production of fine books. All the lavish manuscripts were executed at the royal court, and the quite ordinary ones made at the abbey in his time were usually only rather clumsy imitations of those being produced at Saint-Amand under the supervision of Alcuin's friend Abbot Arn, later bishop of Salzburg. Most of the Tours manuscripts were Gospel Books with arcaded canon tables; the space within the arches was filled with queer metallic-looking creatures of insular derivation, reminiscent of those in the Book of Kells and the Lindisfarne Gospels. Alcuin, as an Englishman, seems to have surrounded himself with artists from his

113 – IRELAND. BOOK OF KELLS: VIRGIN AND CHILD. TRINITY COLLEGE LIBRARY, DUBLIN.





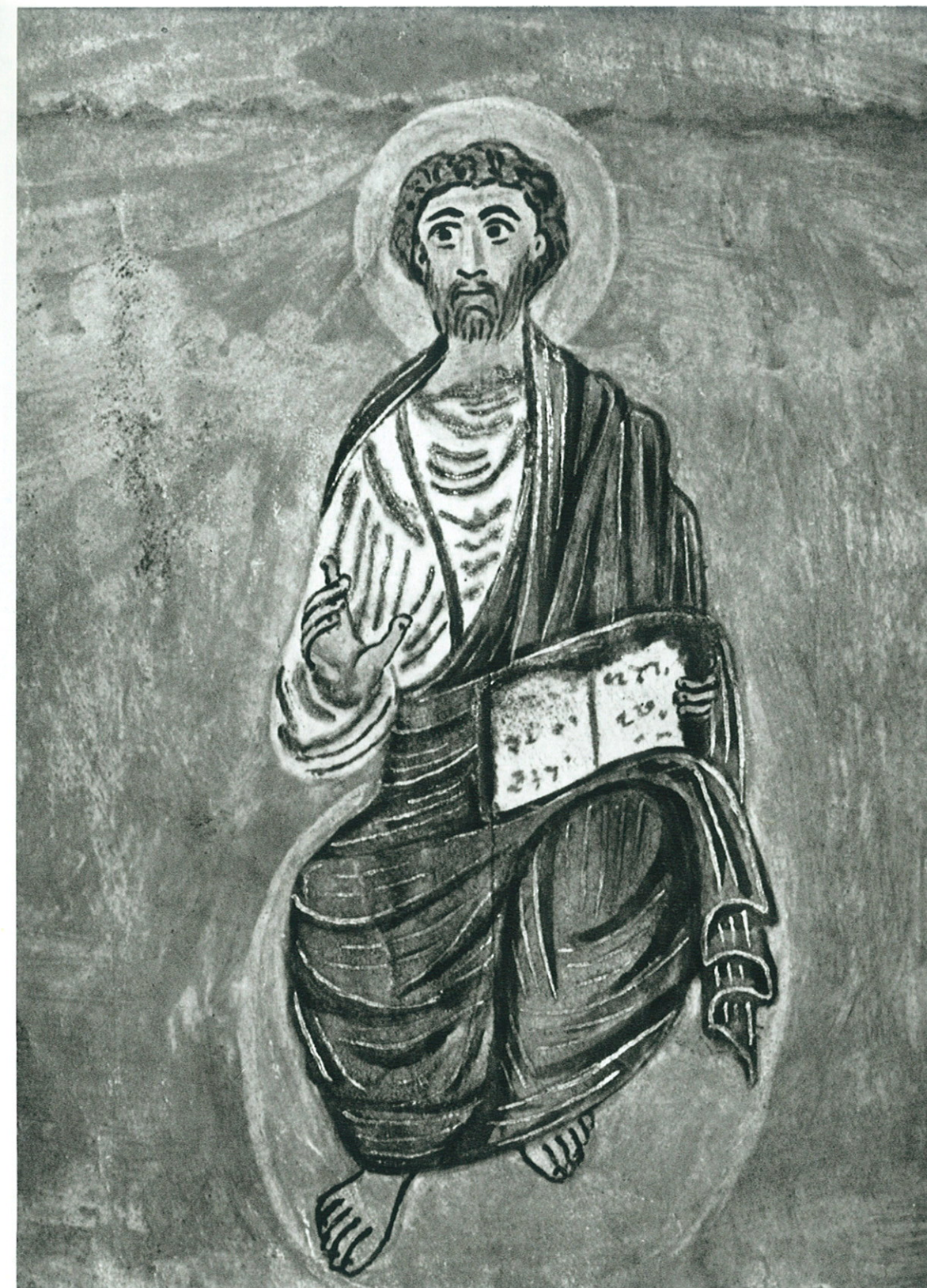


own country, but none was of outstanding merit. By now this great scholar was an old man, his sight was failing and he was in no position to play the patron.

Very different were his successors, the first of whom was his pupil Fridugisus, also an Englishman, abbot of Saint-Martin from 807 to 834. He kept in close touch with the Aachen court, served as chancellor of the empire from 819 to 832 and took a keen interest in books and scripts. He was a great civil servant, as were the next two abbots: Adalhard (834–843), a layman, seneschal of the court, and Count Vivian (843–851), also a layman, chamberlain to Charles the Bald. Men of high rank and loyal courtiers, they catered to the taste of their sovereign and employed the court illuminators as a matter of course, as Fridugisus had done after the death of Charlemagne. Thus we find striking similarities between the secondary figures in the Saint-Médard Gospels (figures which we know to have a long lineage behind them) and those in the manuscripts illuminated at Tours for Fridugisus. The decorative settings of the Tours canon table pictures, which copy exactly some of those in Charlemagne's Gospel Books, were to be magnificently developed by his successors. Actually, the art of the Tours painters was no more than mediocre and remained so until the time of Abbot Vivian; like the court art of the time, it was unimaginative, rather heavy-handed, strongly imbued with classicism. Indeed these painters may well have come from the court, as probably did some of their collaborators. They cannot be distinguished from among those who came from Aachen, but like them they seem to have belonged to the Italo-Alpine type. This may be accounted for by the friendship between Alcuin and Arn (who was abbot of Saint-Amand as well as bishop of Salzburg), the effects of which may have lasted after Alcuin's death. In any case the art of Tours was characterized from the outset by a clarity and sobriety resulting from a close imitation of the styles of antiquity and from a fine sparseness in the page design. From the time of Fridugisus, there was a sharp break with the insular style which had still predominated in the manuscripts commissioned by Alcuin; nothing remained of it but the large initial letters with their interlace patterns, and these too were much simplified and always on a white ground. Colours were few but vivid, discreetly enhanced with gold and silver. This reticence contrasted with the taste for lavish display prevailing in the entourage of Charlemagne and with the agitated art of Reims. The Tours painters' cult of antiquity is evidenced by the Virgilian scenes decorating a liturgical fan with an ivory handle (see p. 238), and by the illustrations of a mathematical treatise by Boethius in Bamberg.

Chronologically, there is no reason why artists from the Aachen court should not have moved to the Loire valley after the death of Charlemagne. (Louis, the new emperor, had his own circle of painters at the time and in any case does not seem to have shown much interest in art after coming to the throne in 814.) The presence of Aachen artists there is confirmed by the fact that there now appeared at Tours, along with the secondary figures of the Saint-Médard Gospels, silhouettes, tiny figurines inset in medallions, cartouches and panels, profiles similar to coin effigies outlined in gold—motifs taken directly from engravings on fine stones and metal and carried by the Tours ateliers to a high degree of perfection. Antique cameos, intaglios and coins were much admired during the Middle Ages, and these marvels





116 – TOURS. WEINGARTEN GOSPEL BOOKS: ST JOHN, DETAIL. WÜRTTEMBERGISCHE LANDESBIBLIOTHEK, STUTTGART.

◀ 115 – TOURS. GOSPEL BOOK: ST LUKE. BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON.





117-118 - TOURS. BOETHIUS, 'DE ARITHMETICA': MUSIC, ARITHMETIC, GEOMETRY, ASTROLOGY — BOETHIUS AND SYMMACHUS. BAMBERG.

of delicate and precise workmanship were frequently used to adorn jewellery and the gold and enamelled bindings of Bibles, Gospels and other liturgical books made for the use of princes and cathedrals. Charlemagne's painters had already drawn inspiration from these precious objects, numbers of which were doubtless preserved in the imperial treasury. Simulated in colours, these pieces were transformed into figures tone on tone (intaglios) or monochromes on a coloured ground (cameos); in both cases, faces were always shown in profile. And soon the figures on engraved gems, 'lifted' from their stone supports, were utilized by the painters as independent motifs, first in the margins of manuscripts, then as complete pictures. These silhouetted figures also recall such monochrome friezes of Hellenistic inspiration, as those in the Farnesina in Rome. But it would seem that the influence of paintings of this kind took effect at Tours only indirectly, perhaps through the intermediary of the Reims artists, due to whom the silhouette technique persisted, in the form of engraved crystal, till the end of the Carolingian period. The illustrations of the St Gauzelin Gospels, made at Tours, and those of a Sacramentary illuminated for Rainaud, abbot of Marmoutier, were treated throughout in this manner.



119 - AUTUN. MARMOUTIER SACRAMENTARY. BIBLIOTHÈQUE MUNICIPALE, AUTUN.

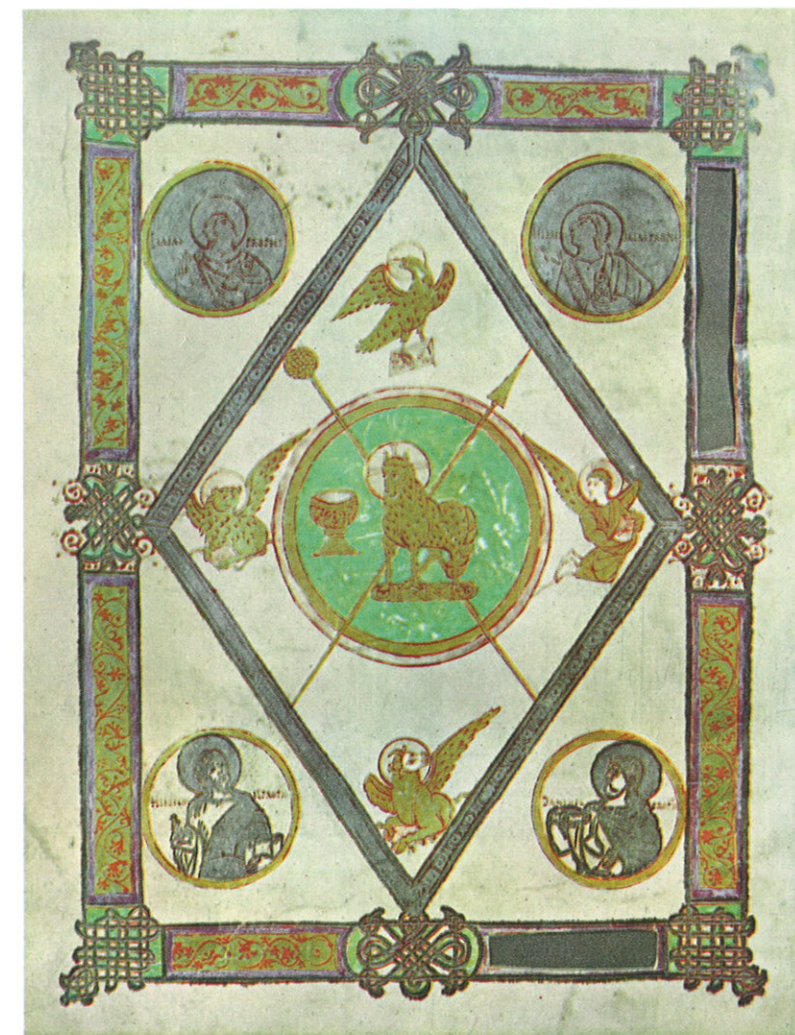




120 - TOURS. ST GAUZELIN GOSPELS. NANCY CATHEDRAL.

Tours was soon to profit by an influx of new talent, even more rewarding than that of the Aachen painters. This took place during the abbacy of Count Vivian (843-851), that is to say after the fall of Ebbo and the apparent dispersal of the group of artists he had employed. As it so happened, the newcomers came from Reims, so the coincidence seems worth noting. Artists related to those of Aachen appeared at Tours after the death of Charlemagne; and artists from Reims, or trained at Reims, came to Tours after the downfall of Ebbo, whose power had been on the wane from 833. These newcomers were to participate in an undertaking of considerable scope, begun at Tours but continued elsewhere; an illustrated Bible of which four copies have come down to us, or, actually, four successive editions produced over a period of nearly thirty years. Each edition shows an appreciable, highly interesting advance and enrichment over its predecessor.

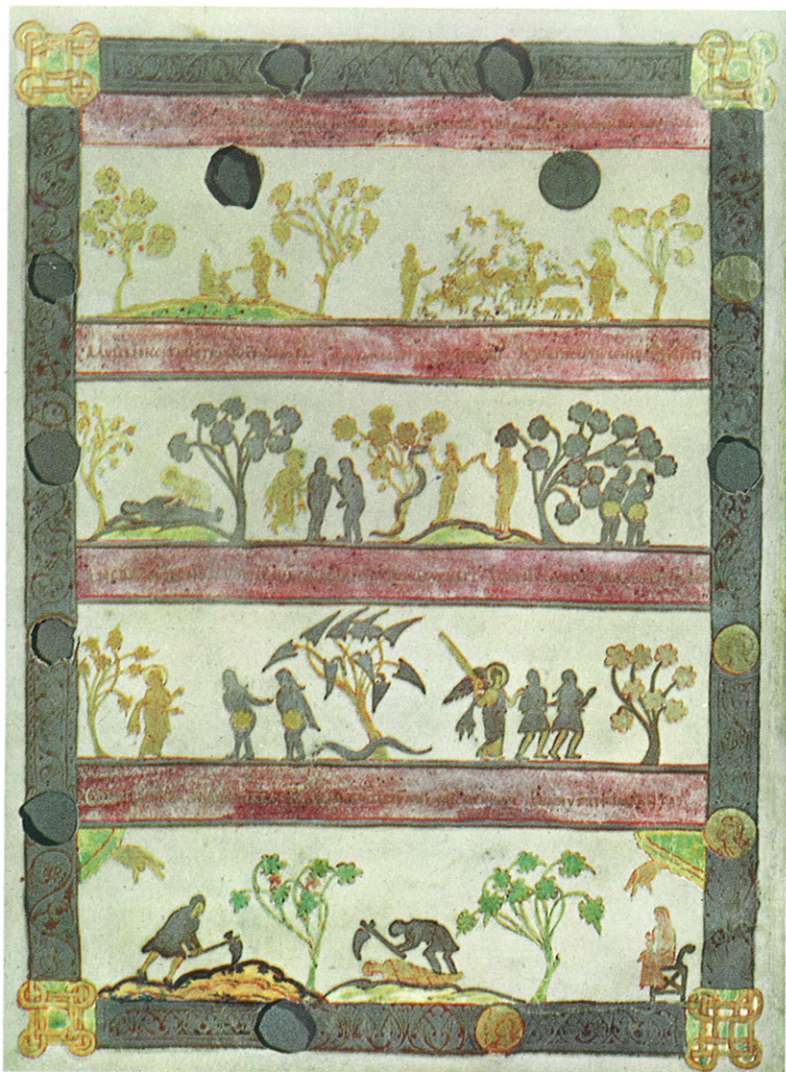
The Alcuin Bible, the first of the series (first, at least, in its logical sequence), dates from the time of Abbot Adalhard (834-843); it contains only two pictures (true, the text of the Apocalypse is lacking), but already the general programme of



121 - TOURS-MARMOUTIER. ALCUIN BIBLE. STAATLICHE BIBLIOTHEK, BAMBERG.

the series is clear. The directive idea is that of man's destiny on earth and in the afterlife, of which the Old Testament gives at once a description and a prefiguration. The Creation and Fall are depicted on four superimposed registers at the beginning of the Old Covenant; the Redemption by a symbolic picture at the beginning of the New. Both compositions consist of silhouetted figures, the first being a frieze chronologically ordered from top to bottom: the Creation (the work of six days); the birth of Eve (the woman's role); the punishment; the human predicament after the Fall (Adam and Eve tilling the soil) and the crime of Cain. The toiling Adam and Eve are not abandoned, for God's hand is outstretched above them (this small detail shows both the artist's enlightened sensitivity and his perfect understanding of theology). On the second page is the Sacrificial Lamb in a central medallion surrounded by the four evangelist symbols. The lance and the sponge-tipped staff, instruments of the Saviour's sufferings, cross its body, and a chalice rests beside it to receive His precious blood. In the corners are four medallions; they represent the four major prophets who announced the Redemption accomplished by the Lamb.





122 - TOURS-MARMOUTIER. ALCUIN BIBLE. STAATLICHE BIBLIOTHEK, BAMBERG.

The second book of the group, the Moûtier-Grandval Bible, written and illuminated at about the same time, treats more explicitly the theme of the Redemption and devotes four instead of two pictures to it. All that does not directly bear on man's immortal destiny, the kernel of the story is omitted: the creation of the heavens, and plants and animals, the death of Abel, are all dispensed with. A new image completes the Old Testament cycle, that of Moses receiving the Tables of the Law on Mount Sinai and delivering them to the Chosen People. In the front of the Gospels it is no longer the Lamb but Christ Himself in glory who is represented, dominating the world and holding the Book, guide of the Christian life. As in the first Bible, the Atonement counterbalances the Fall. But in the New Testament, preceding the Apocalypse, we find a new, symmetrical version of the table devoted to Moses, which does not illustrate the following text but merely alludes to it in certain details. On the celestial throne is the book with seven seals opened by the Lamb and the Lion of Judah, scion of the house of David (another prefiguration of Christ) under



123 - TOURS. MOUTIER-GRANDVAL BIBLE. BRITISH MUSEUM. LONDON.

the watchful eyes of the evangelists as represented by their attributes. Below them is Moses (he has the same features as in the scene of the Tables of the Law), his veil being drawn aside by the evangelist symbols. Thus the New Testament unveils the message of the Old, and the Apocalypse, supreme revelation, proclaims after the Atonement the final triumph of Christ. The images duplicate the text, as it were, while remaining independent of it; they embody its meaning and its message but do not, strictly speaking, illustrate it; in short, they provide a synthetic resume of it like some illustrations in the Gellone Sacramentary and the Corbie Psalter. We see here, on a much more highly developed and intellectual plane, the same procedure as in the Flavigny Gospels of culling from the text its essential features and evoking its significance by figurative means, relying here on an effort of the thinking mind, there on the simple mechanism of sight. The painter may have been familiar with a fifth-century Bible decorated on similar principles for Pope Leo the Great; this assumption has been made on the strength of the architectural forms in the scene





124-125 – TOURS. MOUTIER-GRANDVAL BIBLE. BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON.



of the Tables of the Law and other details. But this is purely speculative, and we are justified in seeing in the Moûtier-Grandval Bible a Carolingian creation cast (like all such works) in an antique mould. The Bible illustrators, with a vast and varied repertory to draw on, chose whatever motifs best served their turn; in one scene the Victories on the portico reproduce those that appear on the palace of Theodoric in a mosaic at Sant'Apollinare Nuovo at Ravenna. The intellectual effort and selective planning that evidently went into the making of this picture sequence rule out any possibility of its being a mere copy of an earlier work; moreover, the peculiar apocalyptic image, explained in a distich composed in rather halting Latin (like all the other *tituli* or legends), is of an inspiration too medieval for it to be assigned even to very late antiquity. It is in fact typically Carolingian. (Here we could add that the silhouettes in the Alcuin Bible cannot possibly come from any fifth-century painting. True, the Alcuin Bible might conceivably be merely a condensed version of the Moûtier-Grandval Bible, but this is unlikely.)

In the next two Bibles, made for the sovereign in person, many new pictures were added and the iconographic programme became more complex. One, like the Moûtier-Grandval Bible, was written and illustrated at the abbey of Saint-Martin,



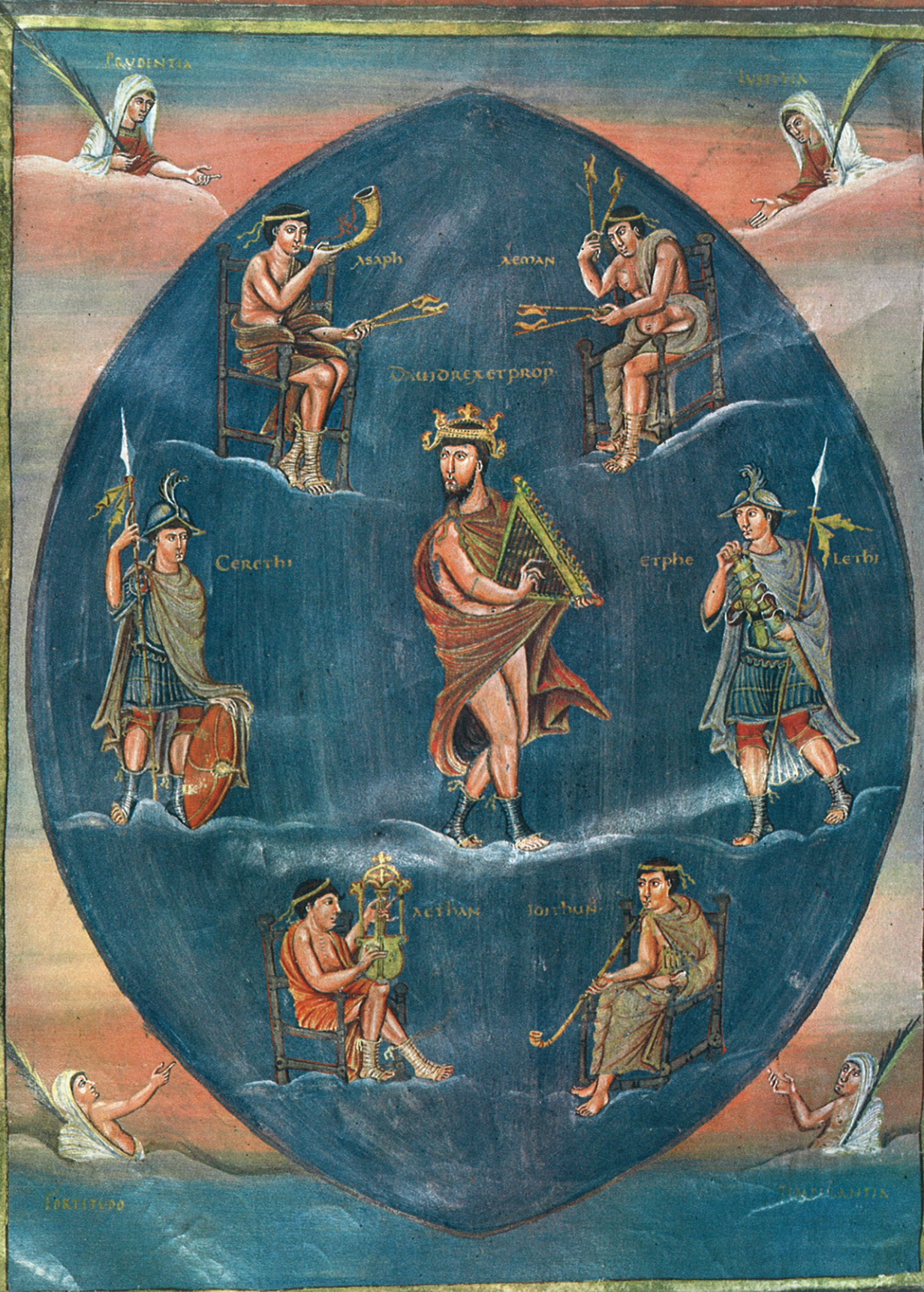
126-127 – TOURS. FIRST BIBLE OF CHARLES THE BALD. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS.



Tours, in the time of Abbot Vivian, about 846. It is known as the First Bible of Charles the Bald or the Vivian Bible. A painter trained in one of the many collateral branches of the school of Reims had made the Christ in Glory which replaced the Sacrificial Lamb in the Moûtier-Grandval Bible, and this same artist, whose hand is easily recognizable, painted four figures, three of them new, in the Vivian Bible; the other four pictures were shared between two of his colleagues at Tours.

Thus the number of illustrations was more than doubled, but the directive idea, previously so clear, was now encumbered with historical scenes. It is a distinctive trait of this painter, whom we may call the Reims artist, to prefer detailed narrative and history in the antique style, over the synthetic tendencies of 'barbarian' art. Of the scenes of the life of St Jerome, he made those on three registers of Jerome leaving Rome for Jerusalem, dictating his translation of the Bible and distributing copies of it. By his hand too is the scene of David and his companions making music—pink figures on a blue ground, executed with precision like carved crystals. Then, following the Conversion of St Paul as depicted by a Tours painter, comes his famous picture showing Abbot Vivian, accompanied by the monks of Saint-Martin, presenting his Bible to Charles the Bald, a vivid scene of contemporary life.





129 - TOURS. FIRST BIBLE OF CHARLES THE BALD. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS.

◀ 128 - TOURS. FIRST BIBLE OF CHARLES THE BALD. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS.





130 – SAINT-DENIS (?). SAN CALLISTO BIBLE. SAN PAOLO FUORI LE MURA, ROME.

### The Painters of Charles the Bald

The production of Tours Bibles did not end with the First Bible of Charles the Bald; a fourth Bible, the San Callisto Bible, was made later, probably in 869, again for Charles the Bald but not in Tours itself. Its script, of the sort used at Reims, provides a striking confirmation of the continuity of Carolingian painting, apauage of the ruler and his family and quite independent of the monastic scriptoria. The abbey of Saint-Martin at Tours was then on the decline, though its scriptorium continued to function. The Reims artist, whom we have seen employed at Tours, was nearing the end of his career, and with age his style had hardened; seemingly he had to work against time and (this is not certain) to enlist the aid of other painters. No doubt the San Callisto Bible had to be ready for the wedding of Charles and Richilde in 869, when it was due to be presented to the king. Even more lavishly illustrated than the Vivian Bible, it contained not eight but twenty-four pictures, as well as large full-page illuminated initials: fifteen for the Old Testament (preceded by a large portrait of Charles enthroned beneath the Virtues, between his bodyguards and his wife attended by a lady-in-waiting) and seven for the New Testament. It is the painter's masterpiece, in which his personal taste for narrative painting definitely overruled the programme of the previous Bible. When we compare the scenes of the life of St Jerome with those in the Vivian Bible, we can measure the progress made by him in twenty-five years. True, his manner is a little heavier, but it is also more exact; the composition is livelier and more varied, movement accelerated, and spatial depth suggested. Instead of three superimposed pictures each centring on the figure of Jerome, there is a continuous narrative on registers running alternately from left to right, right to left, then again left to right (*boustrophedon*). We see the sail of the ship in which the saint is travelling belly in the wind; then (second register, right) we see the saint seated with his female assistants in an interior in which perspective depth is perfectly rendered, with copies of the Bible heaped in picturesque disorder on sagging shelves. Escaping from the dead hand of tradition, the Reims artist has made a breakthrough into the real world and seen there what no previous painter had even guessed at.

We have traced the evolution of this sort of decoration from its beginnings to its climax, outside Tours. At first it did not actually illustrate biblical episodes (in the manner of the Ashburnham Pentateuch), nor did it attempt (as did the Utrecht Psalter) to explain the Old Testament in terms of the New and demonstrate that the latter is the fulfilment of the former. In summing up the whole Bible, these early pictures expressed its underlying meaning and the spirit of its message. But little by little the artists lost sight of this guiding principle, so that in the end sumptuous historical pictures replaced the sober record of the Christian verities.

Under Charles the Bald Carolingian art entered its final and its finest hour. Around 848–851 it was once again to the ateliers of Tours, and this time to the Reims artist alone, that Lothair I, king of Italy, had recourse when he commissioned a Gospel Book, in which he had a portrait of himself included, for presentation to the collegiate church of St Martin. In a curious poem written under his orders, he





131 - SAINT-DENIS (?). SAN CALLISTO BIBLE. SAN PAOLO FUORI LE MURA, ROME.

confesses that, wishing to honour St Martin with a gift worthy of both donor and recipient, he was constrained to apply to the Tours atelier, there being none to equal it in his capital or elsewhere. (The British Museum Psalter attributed to him was probably made for Lothair II.)

Where was the royal atelier located after the decline of Saint-Martin of Tours? Either at Corbie or Saint-Denis, more probably the latter. Actually, the site matters little; it is the court that counts. The atelier was an adjunct of the court, worked for it exclusively and catered to the king's ostentatious taste. Charles the Bald had not his grandfather's genius for organization but, like him, encouraged learning

and cared for books, and his interest in religion and literature stimulated theological and philosophical activities in his entourage. From his reign date two compilations made for the use of laymen which were later to have an immense influence. His Book of Hours (more exactly, of prayers), the first of its kind, was still rudimentary, but it contained the basic elements of the great Books of Hours of the future. Unlike most of Charles's books it has few decorations—which suggests that it was in daily use; indeed the book (now in the Residenz, Munich) is so worn and shabby that the repainted portrait in the forefront is but the shadow of its former self.

Then we also have the Psalter of Charles the Bald, containing another portrait, an exceptionally handsome and convincing work; except for the picture of Lothair I and some medals, it is the only portrait of a Carolingian monarch done from life that has come down to us. In France we have to wait till the early fifteenth century before again finding an attempt at so accurate a likeness. The artist has not flattered his sitter; only a man assured of his royal master's esteem and the importance of his post could have dared to take such liberties. Charles is seated, facing the viewer, on a throne adorned with coloured marble inlays, under a gable from which emerges the hand of God, token of heavenly protection. Holding a globe and sceptre, he wears a robe of some plain but rich material embroidered with golden roses, and a cloak clasped with a large brooch on his right shoulder. His moustache droops in the Frankish manner, his thick hair belies his sobriquet 'the Bald' and is already streaked with grey, though at the time when the portrait was made, between 842 and 869, he could not have been more than forty-six (he was born in 823). He wears his crown at an almost rakish angle. His cheeks are puffy and his eyes turned sideways towards the companion picture of St Jerome on the facing page of the Psalter. There is a hint of anxiety and strain in the king's gaze, natural enough in the case of a man whose life was one long struggle and with whom began the disintegration of the Empire. Nevertheless a vainglorious inscription likens Charles to Josiah and Theodosius: Josiah the holy king, reformer of Judah, Theodosius the imperial lawmaker. Charles is placed on the same plane as the saintly translator of the Psalms, just as in the Gospel Book Lothair is shown on the same level as the Apostles and Christ Himself. This elevation of the two Carolingian kings to the rank of sacred, divine beings was a startling innovation; no one in the West, not even Charlemagne, had ventured to go so far, nor was anyone to do so subsequently. Thus we owe to Charles's painter the earliest portrait; in the space of barely a century the barbarian eye, under the guidance of antiquity, had adjusted itself to the spectacle of living, many-sided reality. One likeness of a contemporary Byzantine emperor has also come down to us: in a copy of the *Homilies* of St Gregory Nazianzen, dating from 880–886, are full-page portraits of Basil I and his wife, preceded and followed by full-page pictures of a large cross and Christ in Majesty. But Basil and Eudocia are shown standing, full face, with the hieratic immobility of all Byzantine ruler portraits, from that of Justinian at Ravenna (sixth century) to that of Manuel II Paleologus (fifteenth century). Both Charles the Bald and Lothair, however, are shown seated, in three-quarters view, with a sidewise glance: they firmly take their place in the living, moving world of men.





132 - TOURS. GOSPEL BOOK OF LOTHAIK. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS.



133 - TOURS. GOSPEL BOOK OF LOTHAIK. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS. ►





134 – SAINT-DENIS (?). PSALTER OF CHARLES THE BALD. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS.

The most powerful patron of Christendom, and an exacting one, Charles the Bald enlisted the services of the most gifted artist of the age, the man we have named the Reims painter. Heir of the old Hellenistic traditions, endowed with a fine feeling for the picturesque, a prodigious versatility and a gift for rapid execution, this man advanced from strength to strength in the course of a prolific career whose evolution can be traced in the many works unmistakably by his hand. He collaborated in the second Tours Bible, the so-called Moûtier-Grandval Bible (c. 840), and in the third, the First Bible of Charles the Bald (c. 846). Alone, or with assistants, he illuminated the Lothair Gospels (c. 849–851), then the Prüm Gospel Book (c. 850) which, like the scenes of the life of St Jerome in the First Bible of Charles the Bald, has a layout



135 – SAINT-DENIS (?). PSALTER OF CHARLES THE BALD. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS.

of the kind favoured by the Tours illuminators: this was his Saint-Martin period. As Charles's court artist he illuminated the San Callisto Bible (between 869 and 891), the Metz Sacramentary (869?) and lastly, the consummation of thirty years of toil, the famous 'golden' Gospels (*codex aureus*) of St Emmeram of Regensburg.

At the beginning of these last Gospels, a magnificent book whose text was written in gold letters by Liuthard and Berenger, we see Charles enthroned with a bodyguard at his side, blessed by the hand of God attended by angels, and paid homage by personifications of the provinces. Next we see the Lamb on high with the twenty-four elders of the Apocalypse gazing up in humble adoration; then Christ in Majesty surrounded by the four evangelists and the major prophets; and





136 – SAINT-DENIS (?). PSALTER OF CHARLES THE BALD. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS.

finally portraits of each of the evangelists. The canon tables reproduce those of the Saint-Médard Gospels. Traces of the style of most of the great Carolingian manuscripts are to be found in these paintings, but for all their lavish opulence, carried to a point entailing some loss of firmness in the composition, they signify at once the climax and the end of Carolingian book painting.

The Reims painter's masterpiece, the Metz Sacramentary, was doubtless made for Charles the Bald, perhaps for his coronation as king of Lorraine in September 869. His deposition on August 8 of the following year would explain why the volume was left unfinished. Indeed, it seems less a sacramentary than a commemorative coronation book, in which only the canon tables were completed.



137 – SAINT-DENIS (?). GOSPEL BOOK OF ST EMMERAM OF REGENSBURG. BAYERISCHE STAATSBIBLIOTHEK, MUNICH.





138 – SAINT-DENIS (?). GOSPEL BOOK OF ST EMMERAM OF REGENSBURG. BAYERISCHE STAATSBIBLIOTHEK, MUNICH.



139 – SAINT-DENIS (?). GOSPEL BOOK OF ST EMMERAM OF REGENSBURG, DETAIL.





140 - SAINT-DENIS (?). METZ SACRAMENTARY: CORONATION SCENE. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS.

141 - SAINT-DENIS (?). METZ SACRAMENTARY: SAINTS IN HEAVEN. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS. ▶







142 – SAINT-DENIS (?). METZ SACRAMENTARY: CHRIST IN MAJESTY, MASTER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS.



143 – SAINT-DENIS (?). METZ SACRAMENTARY: ST GREGORY. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS.

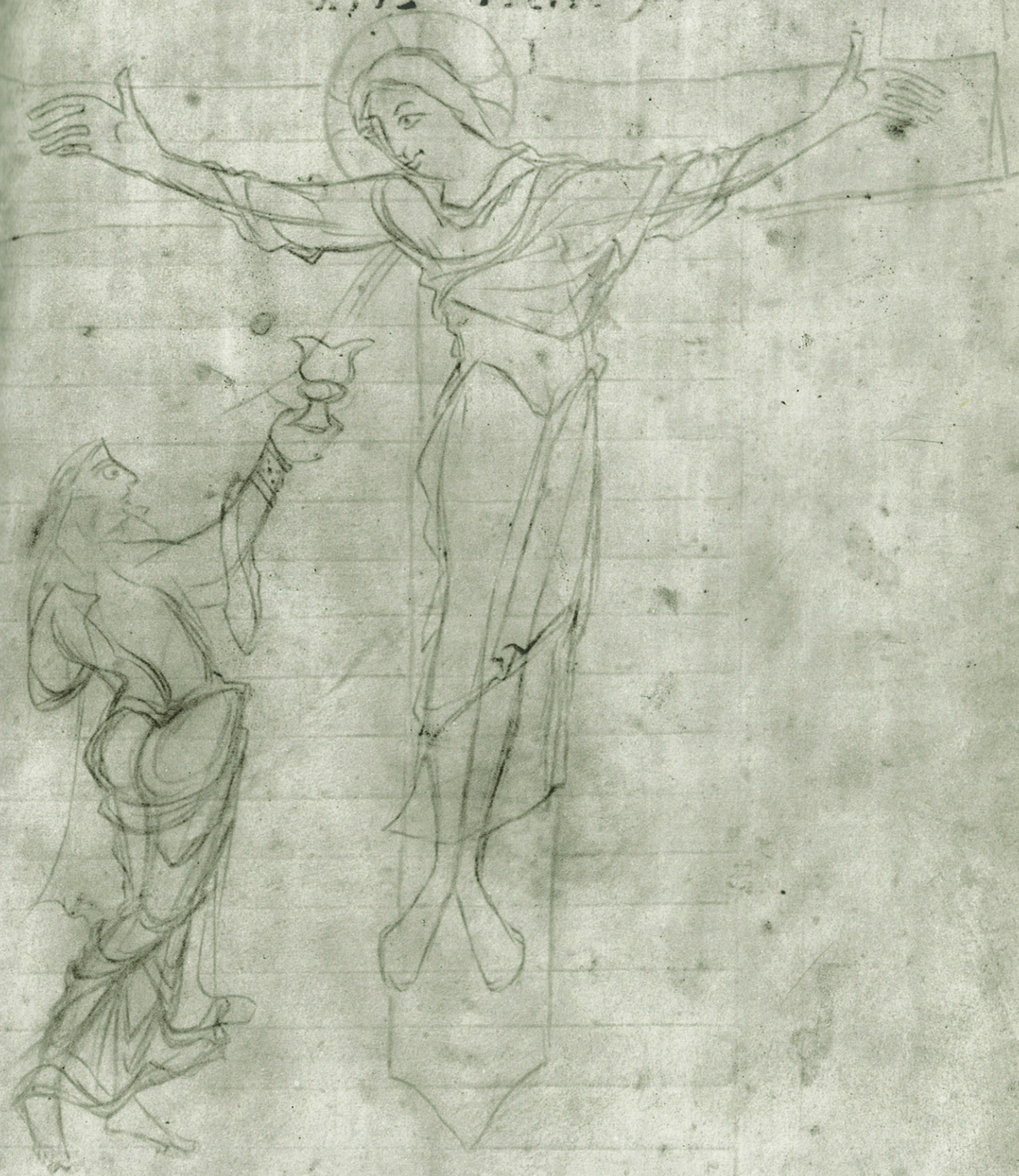
The book begins with a picture of the crowning of a youthful prince who is escorted by two archbishops clad in the pallium; almost exactly the same scene figures in the San Callisto Bible (where the theme is the anointing of Solomon by Zadok and Nathan). Here the prince and the archbishops are unidentifiable; they may be allegories. Then, before an image of Christ teaching, come the male and female saints of Paradise, a Christ as master of heaven and earth, and a fine portrait of St Gregory. The saint is seated on a thronelike chair, with his clear-cut, resolute face turned to the right, and his limbs from the knee down hidden behind a curtain hung between him and the two scribes at his feet. One is writing, while the other is parting the curtain to see what is happening; the Holy Ghost in the form of a dove is whispering in Gregory's ear, and he has paused in his dictation to listen.

As he lifts the curtain the scribe strikes a curious dancelike attitude, which was often used by the Reims illuminators to depict a man rising to his feet or simply, as here, reaching up to an object above his head. This attitude had made its first



appearance at Reims in the Utrecht Psalter; it persisted unchanged down to the St Emmeram Gospels, after figuring in the Metz Sacramentary and the San Callisto Bible. An unnatural stance, it is strained to the utmost in the many variations of it made by the Carolingian painters. Early examples are found among the figures in the canon tables of the Saint-Médard Gospels: the artists of Louis the Pious, precursors and masters of Ebbo's artists, worked at Aachen, as we have seen, at the same time as Charlemagne's, and the same models may have passed freely among them all. This figure has a long history behind it; like others, it illustrates the way in which the Carolingians treated motifs bequeathed by antiquity. Its origin is sufficient explanation. A Roman relief in the Museo delle Terme in Rome—of Alexandrian inspiration, be it noted—gives us the key. It shows some women performing a ritual dance under the eyes of an array of Egyptian deities posted in niches above them. The women contort their limbs, twist their hips, stretch their arms towards the gods, and their undulating bodies perfectly convey the idea of self-abandon mimed by the rhythmic movement of the dance. The Reims artists, acquainted with figures of this kind, seen from behind in three-quarters view, copied this distinctive twist with its revelation of the flexions of naked limbs glimpsed beneath light, clinging garments. But in taking over a procedure widely current in antiquity, they applied it mechanically, wherever it served their turn, but never to represent a dance—the only theme to which it was really appropriate. The last of many instances of it is a very fine drawing in a Gospel Book of the Meuse region, datable to the late ninth century, in which a figure personifying the Church holds up a chalice towards Christ crucified, to receive the blood flowing from His side. The curious twist of the body, which is swathed in a clinging garment that reveals the play of muscles beneath, assuredly derives from the Alexandrian relief; here the Church is substituted for the Egyptian dancing girl.

Who was this fine artist, the glory of Carolingian painting, whom we have called the Reims artist? We simply do not know. The scribe who wrote the Psalter of Charles the Bald added his name to the litanies: '*Hic calamus facto Liuthardi fine quievit*' ('here, its task accomplished, Liuthard's pen has come to rest'). Liuthard's name appears again, with his brother Berenger's, at the end of the St Emmeram Gospels: '*Hactenus undosum calamo descripsimus aequor. . . En Berengarius Liuthardus nomine dicti*' ('with our pen we have delineated the surging sea [a common image of the time, meaning the Bible], we who bear the names of Liuthard and Berenger'). Here again the reference is to the script alone, since the handwriting is similar in both books while the illustrations are not. A Gospel Book in Darmstadt (apparently unconnected with Charles the Bald) contains a third signature of Liuthard—but is it the same man? Here he describes himself as a painter, not a scribe. The evangelist portraits, in the best Reims style, are therefore by his hand, and they have nothing in common with the art of the Psalter of Charles the Bald or the St Emmeram Gospels. In the San Callisto Bible, the last work of the Reims painter, there figures the name of a certain Ingobert, 'copyist and faithful scribe'—here again the writer, not the painter. In brief, we have to accept the fact that nothing is known about the painters of Charles the Bald.







145 – METZ. DROGO SACRAMENTARY. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS.

### *Drogo's Atelier at Metz*

We are still concerned with a member of the Carolingian family when we turn to Drogo, an illegitimate son of Charlemagne by a woman named Regina; he was born in 807, after the death of Liutgard, the emperor's wife. Like Ebbo, Drogo was educated at the palace; his half brother Louis had him ordained priest at Frankfurt in 823 and in 826 appointed him bishop of Metz, a position he held till his death in 855. He remained faithful to Louis, then to Lothair. During his time Metz developed into an active art centre, producing many works of high quality, paintings and ivories, the credit for which may justly be assigned to the bishop, who was versed in the same intellectual disciplines as Louis and Ebbo. Drogo's role as a promoter and patron of the arts is proved by the fact that the masterpiece of the Metz school, the so-called Drogo Sacramentary, bears his name in gold letters at the end of a list of the bishops of Metz; it must have been made for him personally.

146 – METZ. DROGO SACRAMENTARY. THE ASCENSION. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS.

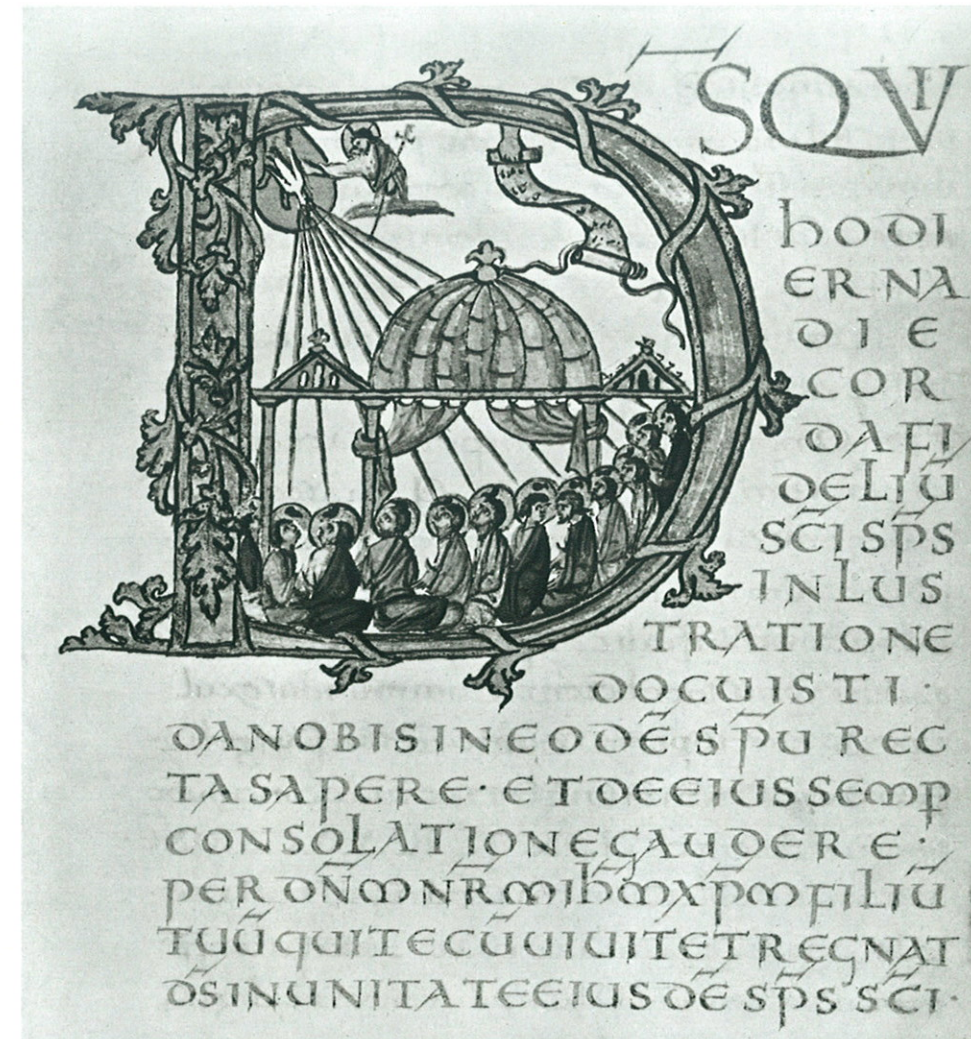






147 - METZ. DROGO SACRAMENTARY: THE HOLY WOMEN AT THE TOMB. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS.

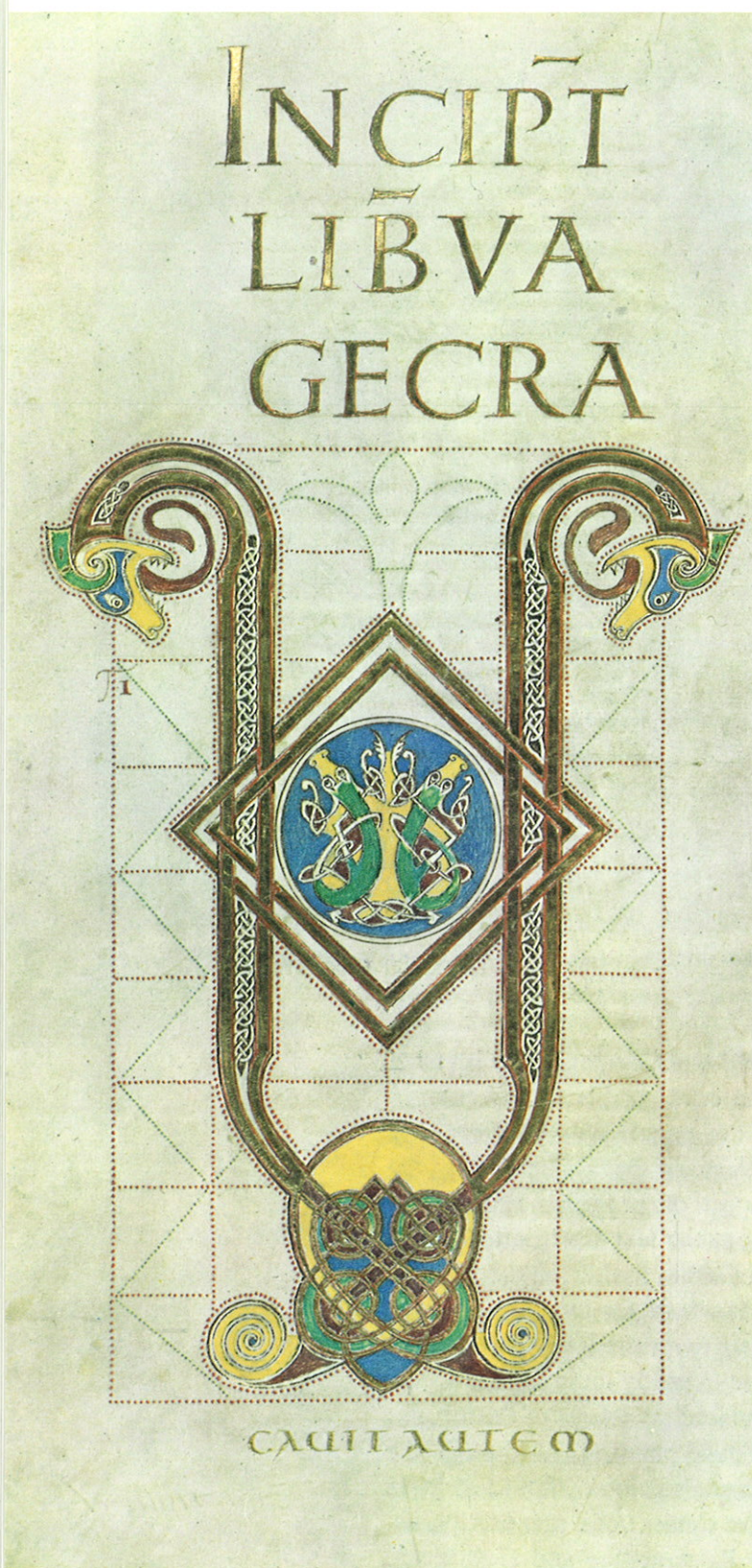
The art of Metz stems from Hautvillers; either the young bishop borrowed artists from his elder Ebbo or—more likely, in view of the dates—a group of Reims painters, or painters trained by them, settled at Metz after the downfall of Ebbo, as another group migrated to Tours. The Drogo Sacramentary, made after 844, has no full-page pictures, only historiated lettrines containing tiny figures deriving from those of Reims. Methods employed in the Utrecht Psalter are combined with the silhouetted forms of Tours; both alike, as we know, were inherited from the painters of Charlemagne and Louis the Pious. Thus the family tradition continued. But the Metz painter must also have seen mural decorations or mosaics like those in the Santa Costanza mausoleum in Rome, that fourth-century work still permeated with antique motifs: foliage scrolls, *putti* at play among light structures outlined against the background. (Since persons of rank generally took their whole household with them on their travels, quite possibly this painter accompanied Drogo when he went to Rome in 844 with a large group of prelates and high officials escorting Louis II, Lothair's son, who was crowned king of Italy by Pope Sergius II. It was



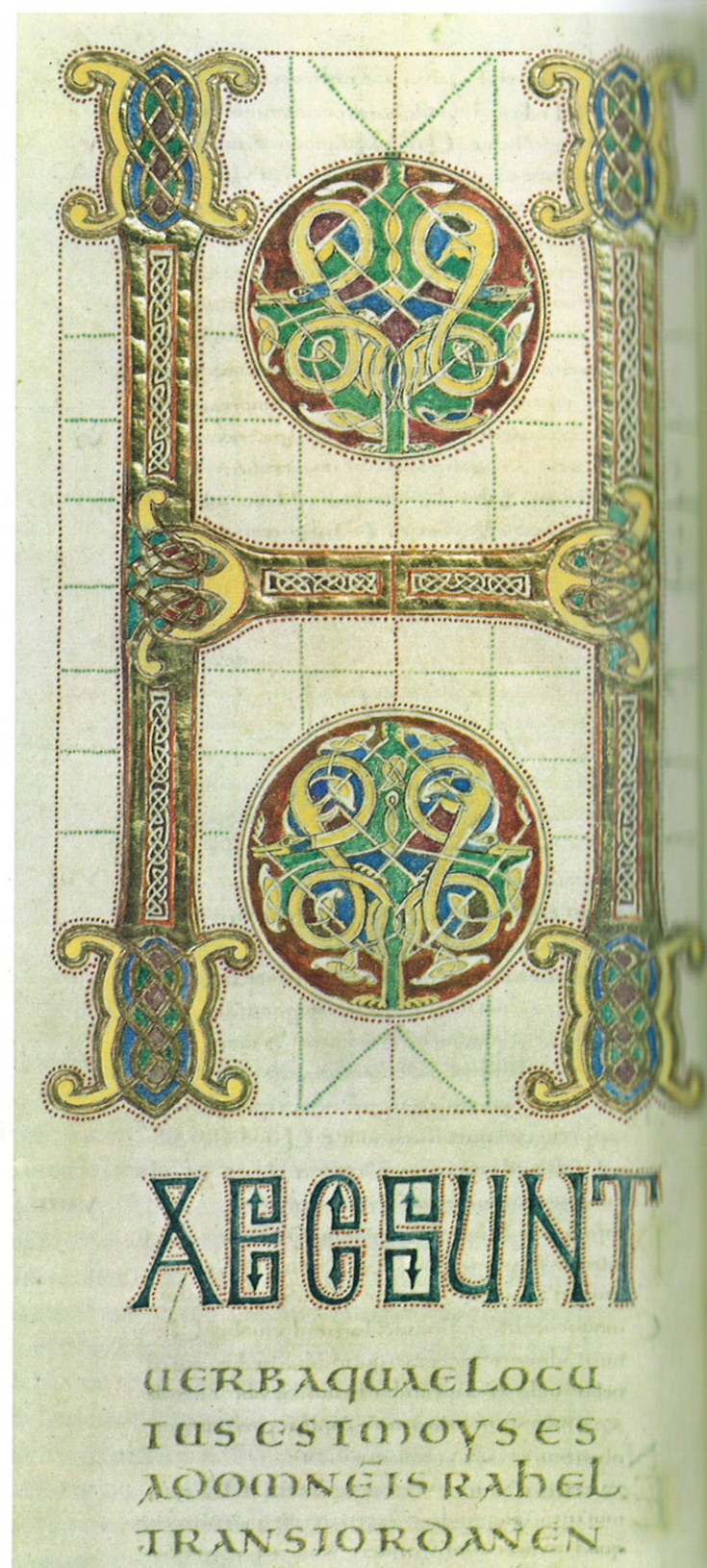
148 - METZ. DROGO SACRAMENTARY: PENTECOST. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS.

then that Drogo in his capacity of papal legate in Gaul and Germania was invested with the pallium which he is shown wearing on the cover of his Sacramentary.) The painter is sparing in his use of colours, which are mostly almond green and violet, and this discretion gives his work a peculiar elegance that is stressed by the luxuriant vine scrolls clustering round the stems and loops of the initials and tempering their rigid outlines. The figure subjects taken from the text are inserted in the initials without being integrated into them as in the Corbie Psalter or the Gellone Sacramentary: another indication of the Mediterranean taste for analysis, for concrete, individualized forms, so different from the decorative synthesis of the North—a taste the Carolingian painter was trying to assimilate. Already in an insular work, the Canterbury Psalter, the figure of David had been placed inside one of the initials; this was a volume strongly influenced by antique figure painting. Although the example had been followed at Aachen by Charlemagne's painters, it was at Metz that the historiated initial, used as the basic decorative element of a manuscript, acquired the definitive form which was to continue in Romanesque and Gothic art.





149-150 – SAINT-AMAND (?). SECOND BIBLE OF CHARLES THE BALD. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS.



### *Franco-Insular Painting*

Our study of some details of the evolution of Carolingian painting has revealed indisputable links between the various groups of painters; the same is true of the other contemporary arts of stone and ivory carving and goldwork. The various aspects assumed by painting within a relatively short period—barely a century—follow each other like the generations of a family, each different from but stemming from its predecessor without any drastic changes, and all so closely interlinked as to defy any strict chronological tabulation. In a word, Carolingian art evolved like life itself, the life of a family. One of its forms, however, is an exception to this rule imposed by the reigning dynasty; and of this final form, no precedent is to be found in the court art hitherto in vogue. What is equally remarkable is that after giving rise to a work of a most unusual kind, this late art became almost completely static and, though more prolific than any other, hardly evolved at all. Although its sole distinctive feature was a straining after the novel and bizarre, it was curiously uninventive, repeating itself ad infinitum. The reason was that it emerged too late, at a period when Carolingian power was waning and the creative urge diminishing. It was given a sort of official consecration by Charles the Bald but had no aftermath. This new development was in effect a sudden reversion to a much earlier art, the decorative art of the British Isles, as if nothing had happened in the domain of painting for a hundred years. A violent reaction against the excesses of the figural style, this curious return to the past—generally described as Franco-Saxon or Franco-Insular art—was the earliest of the revolution in taste, of which so many were to follow. Henceforth painting and European art in general were to oscillate between the narrative and the decorative, between the classical and the baroque, as a direct result of their dual ancestry, Mediterranean and barbarian.

What was the starting point, the immediate cause, of this final avatar of Carolingian art which, given its proliferation, must have had a seminal centre? Attention has been drawn to the presence at the court of the famous scholar John Scotus Erigena ('son of Erin'), yet the magnificent Second Bible of Charles the Bald, presented to the king about 871–877, is unique of its kind; none of the other Franco-Insular manuscripts can be associated with the king or his family or his entourage. It is true that Charles's wife, Ermentrude, who died in 869, had presented the abbey of Saint-Vaast with three of the six manuscripts written in gold and silver letters which it possessed in the thirteenth century, and which may have included a Franco-Insular Gospel Book now in Arras and known to have been brought there from Saint-Vaast—but this remains a moot point. Some have thought that the active centre at this time was Saint-Denis, of which Charles was abbot and where many works of art were made for him. But the abbey of Saint-Amand seems more likely, for sound historical, liturgical and palaeographic reasons; for instance, Charles was its patron. In any case this group of works, dating to the last quarter of the ninth century, can be localized approximately in a region midway between Trier and the





151 – SAINT-AMAND (?). GOSPEL BOOK OF SAINT-VAAST OF ARRAS. BIBLIOTHÈQUE MUNICIPALE, ARRAS.

North Sea. It was here that the School of Echternach had produced those insular-style Gospel Books which, with their clear, elegant layout, were the distant precursors of the Second Bible of Charles the Bald. The works of this region show the abiding influence of the insular tradition: from those of the abbey of Saint-Bertin, which had already provided Louis the Pious with a Psalter executed in a similar style, to those of St. Maximin of Trier and even, in the eleventh century, those of Verdun. When we compare the First Bible of Charles the Bald, with that of San Callisto, so elaborately ornamented, or with the St Emmeram Gospels, this Second Bible is in marked contrast. It contains no figures, no ornaments taken directly from the



152 – NORTHERN FRANCE (?). GOSPEL BOOK OF FRANCIS II: CRUCIFIXION. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS.





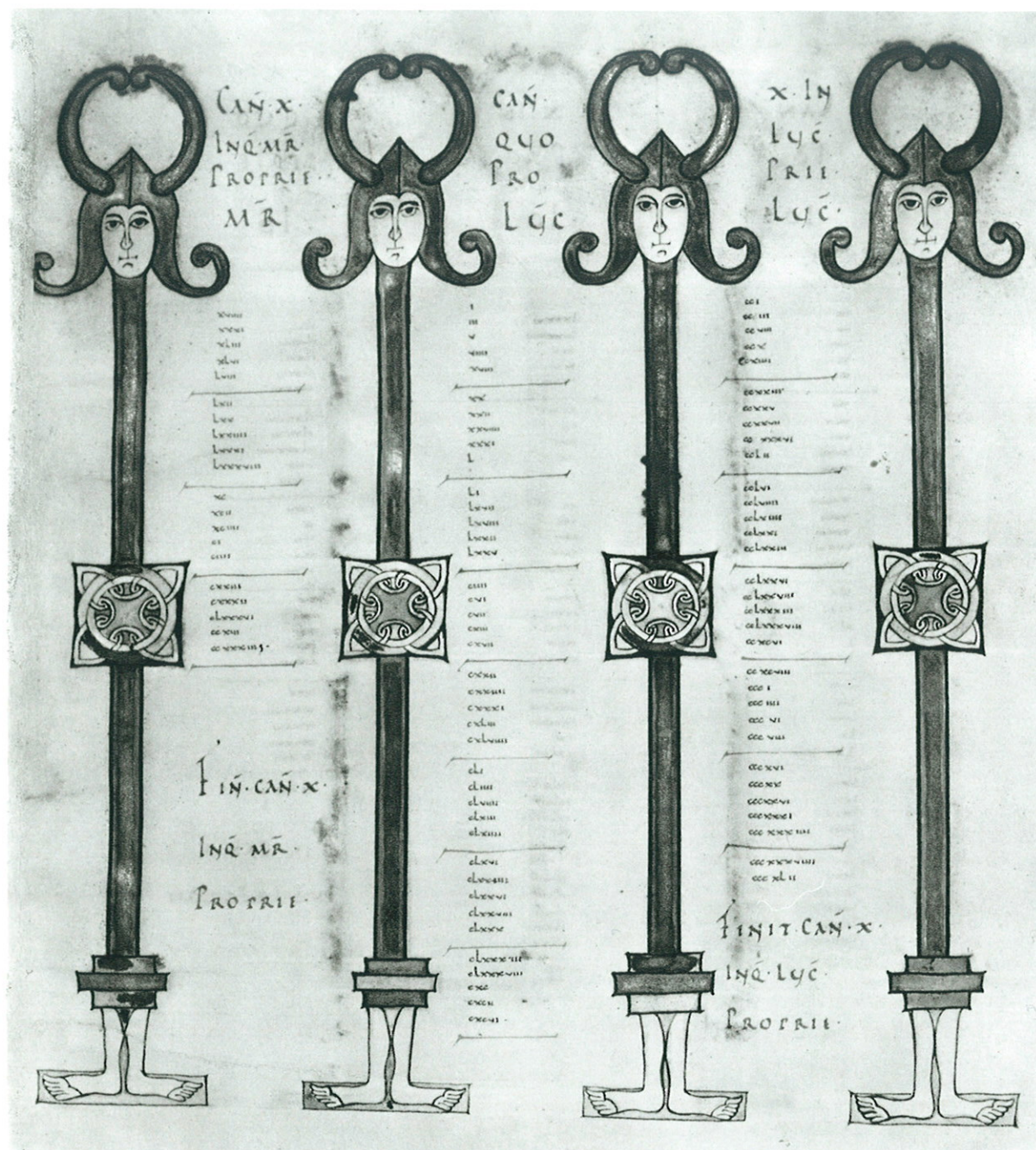
153 – NORTHERN FRANCE (?). GOSPEL BOOK OF FRANCIS II: ST LUKE. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS.



154 – SAINT-OMER. PSALTER OF LOUIS THE GERMAN. STAATSBIBLIOTHEK, BERLIN.

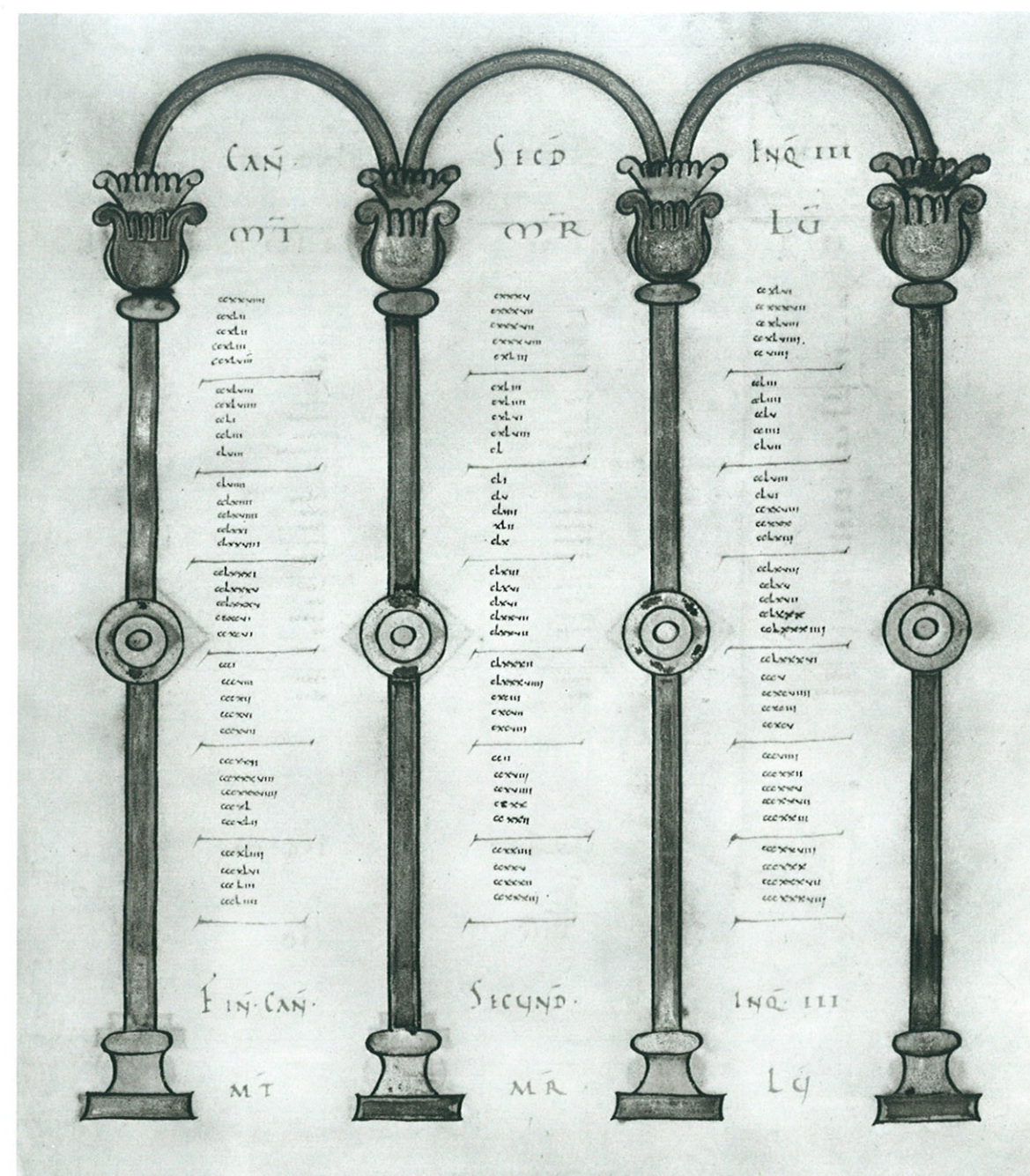
animal or even the vegetable kingdom; everything in it is pure patterning, and one might imagine it had been censored by some ruthless iconoclast. The entire Franco-Insular group shows, with rare exceptions (and these are figures of the Reims type), an exclusive taste for the strictly decorative. The colours are almost always metallic, gold and silver, sprinkled with touches of light green, bright yellow and carmine. It is the flawless beauty of the script, the huge initials, the canon tables stripped of all ornaments, that justify our seeing in this Second Bible the grand finale of Carolingian art. The lessons of the past century had not been lost; though nothing now survived of their material innovations, there remained the stately, well-balanced





155 - SAINT-AMAND (?). GOSPEL BOOK: CANON TABLES. BIBLIOTHÈQUE MUNICIPALE, TOURS.

composition, the clearly thought-out programme, and that sober elegance, achieved by other means, which we find in the Metz and Tours artists—and this just when these qualities were being submerged by the exuberance of the great Reims painter of Charles the Bald. Thus regained, these qualities could not be lasting; while they do honour, if not to the king to whom the Second Bible was presented, at least to those who designed it, subsequent works from the atelier of, presumably, Saint-Amand show that this taste was little appreciated outside the royal court.



156 - SAINT-AMAND (?). GOSPEL BOOK: CANON TABLES. BIBLIOTHÈQUE MUNICIPALE, TOURS.

So we now turn from the court and its dependencies to the marginal art of the provinces. Under Charles the Bald's successors, artistic enterprise passed from the king's direct control, and the great Carolingian art died with the last art patron of the dynasty. In the following pages we survey the after-developments: local offshoots inherited the techniques of an earlier age or were quickened by the intense activity that prevailed at the court and spread outwards from it, and deposited here and there seeds which in some cases bore fruit and in others came to nothing.