



UNOFFICIAL PAINTING

Under its various aspects Carolingian court painting appears to have enjoyed a continuous, centralized development. It was closely associated with the dynasty that sponsored it and whose history it reflects; the dynasty was instrumental in its rise and evolution, from its hesitant beginnings to its mature mastery, and on to the strange Franco-Insular outburst which ended a century dedicated to the antique.

Quite different was provincial painting, sponsored by abbeys unconnected by any direct ties with the sovereign power. Disparate and erratic, these manuscript paintings appeared here and there in isolated groups at the instance of an abbot or under the stimulus of local circumstances, reflecting relations more or less closely maintained with neighbouring or distant regions. Such works lacked the sustained backing or patronage that would have enabled them to evolve and fully develop over a long period of time. These local and ephemeral flowerings can perhaps best be understood by reviewing the mingled art currents that nurtured them (though why they drew on one rather than another is not always very clear): antique and Mediterranean currents, insular and barbarian currents. Although these are, as we see, the same sources that nurtured court painting, the provincials were unable to draw from them any new or original effects, unable, in a word, to create; however blended together, the borrowings remain obvious. It is a minor art, of interest for the devices it reveals better than court painting, but deserving the name Carolingian only by virtue of being contemporary with the latter. It can be dealt with briefly.

Perhaps the only exception to this general tendency is the art of St Gall. Close to the ruler on account of its high standing in the Empire and the immunity it enjoyed, but geographically remote from the official art centre and in closer touch with Italy and alpine Bavaria, for nearly a century the abbey of St Gall was the seat of a school of painting incomparably less brilliant than that of the court, but active and thriving nonetheless. Founded in 612 by Gallus, a companion of the Irish monk Columban, St Gall was of no artistic importance until it was taken under the protection of Louis the Pious, who in 816 withdrew the abbot from the jurisdic-



159-160 - ST GALL (?). MARTYROLOGY OF WANDALBERT: MONTHS OF MAY AND NOVEMBER, DETAILS. BIBLIOTECA APOSTOLICA, VATICAN CITY.

tion of the bishop of Constance. It is just as well to point out at once that, in spite of the monastery's origins, Irish or English artists had an inappreciable share, if any, in the illuminated manuscripts executed there. The figure paintings belong to the alpine trend originating in Italy; they reveal both Merovingian reminiscences (unusual in Carolingian art, even in its provincial forms) and insular reminiscences (common everywhere at that time). Apparent echoes of official art can be explained by the independent use of the same models.

So the only painting we have from the oldest of the illuminated St Gall manuscripts, the badly battered Wolfcoz Psalter (named after a scribe active between 807 and 830), recalls in much more rudimentary form the evangelists painted at Aachen a few years earlier for Louis the Pious: grouped vertically, the psalmists are distributed over the page in the same way as the physicians in the Vienna Diosco-

158 - ST GALL. GOLDEN PSALTER: SIEGE AND SACK OF A TOWN. STIFTSBIBLIOTHEK, ST GALL.

rides, like a gathering of ancient philosophers and thinkers, whose dress and attitude they imitate. This motif was taken over by the St Gall painter (as it was by the Aachen painter) from the Hellenizing milieu of Lombardy; this is quite clear from the style of the Psalter, degenerate though it is. But while the figures of the Aachen painter (and those of the Xanten manuscript as well, which makes use of a similar theme) are successfully converted from antique personages into evangelists and shown engaged in an occupation that defines them clearly, the St Gall figures remain indistinguishable from any other thinkers.

Another St Gall manuscript, the Golden Psalter (*Psalterium Aureum*) of the late ninth century, shows us David's collaborators in their usual roles of musicians and dancers; this scene has been aptly compared with the similar one in the Psalter of Charles the Bald, but in fact it is closer to one in the Vatican copy of *Cosmas Indicopleustes*, a manuscript of Alexandrian ancestry that shows the dancer motif in a form closer to the antique original, a form we have already met with in official art. It is unlikely, however, that this motif reached St Gall by way of Carolingian court art. Such borrowings were made directly, like the exclusively Byzantine inspiration behind a third St Gall Psalter, of the early ninth century (of which only one picture, now in Zurich, remains).

No provincial atelier had closer affinities with the school of Reims than that of St Gall. The drawings, whether heightened with colour or not, that form the majority of the figure scenes in St Gall manuscript painting, particularly in the Golden Psalter where episodes in the life of David are represented, or in the Martyrology of Wandalbert, are akin to those of Hautvillers but less proficient: both descend from a common ancestor, the Greco-Latin art of northern Italy, but one is more successful than the other. The same origin can be detected in a curious Gospel Book written at St Gall about the middle of the ninth century by an Irish monk who described in Latin the illustrations he saw in his Greek model: thus Ireland, Greece and Rome were unexpectedly united in this alpine crossroads—a meeting in which court art seems to have had no part. The methods that lay at the source of Hautvillers book painting reappeared in many St Gall manuscripts, varying with the artist and the period. They appear, for example, in a vigorous drawing representing St Paul reviled by the Jews and in a magnificent coloured Prudentius now in Berne; movement, less excited than in the crowd scenes of the Utrecht Psalter, is similarly conveyed by the gesticulation of hands with expressive fingers and thumbs and by rounded backs bending under the stress of momentum—traditional devices inherited from the Santa Maria Antiqua and Castelseprio painters. In the Prudentius the horseman personifying Pride was modeled after some work similar to the Barberini diptych in the Louvre, and the martyrs surrounding Faith are treated like the figure of Stilicho on an ivory at Monza originating in northern Italy. Much later, about 925, the same features, more harshly handled, reappeared in a Book of the Maccabees now at Leyden. The Psalter of Folchard, of about 860, reveals no specifically 'Reimsian' characteristics, but the tympana and spandrels of its arcades with fluted, festooned columns enclose figure scenes of a distinctly Italo-Alpine type. The initial letters of St Gall manuscripts develop the bird and fish themes of Merovingian miniatures



Aerumae flens tenui uelamine limbus
 Concepit ingestas textis tur gentibus auras



adit qd pedibz sonat

Nemini infideli sonipes feritate superbit
 impatienti madidis frenarier oralupatis
 Huc illuc frendens obuerrit terga: negata
 libertate fuge: pressisq. tumescit habenis

inter faciem mēdētē

hordeis ostentatis habitu uentosa unago
 ut utraq. acie sup eminet. & falerrum
 Crausleccū equū uultu (q.) & uoce minā



163 - ST GALL. BOOK OF MACCABEES: THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM. UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, LEYDEN.

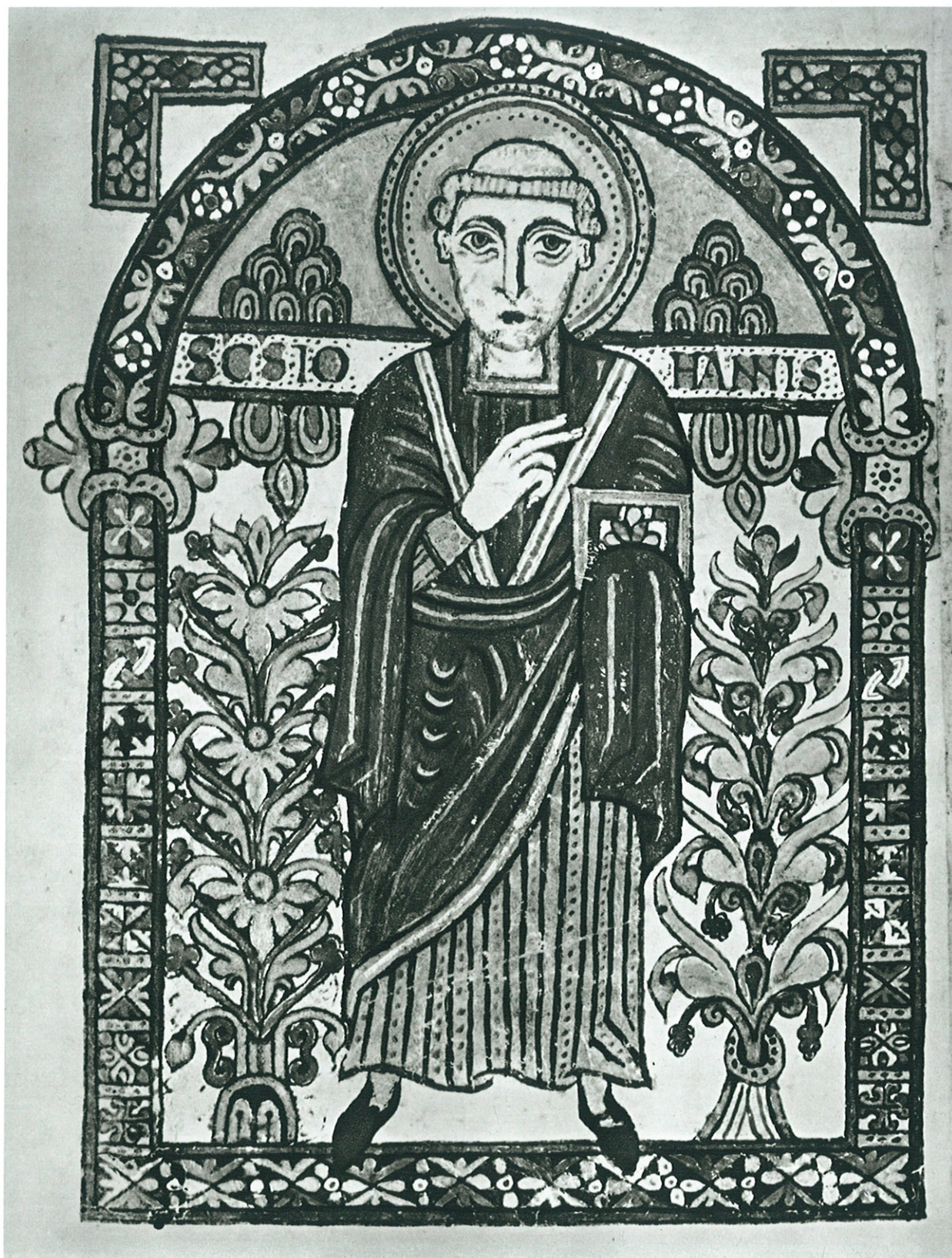
162 - ST GALL (?). PRUDENTIUS, 'PSYCHOMACHIA': PRIDE (ABOVE) AND HUMILITY AND HOPE (BELOW). BÜRGERBIBLIOTHEK, BERNE.



164 – ST GALL. BOOK OF MACCABEES: MOUNTED WARRIORS. UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, LEYDEN.



165 – ST GALL. PSALTER OF FOLCHARD. STIFTSBIBLIOTHEK, ST GALL.



166 - SALZBURG. ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, 'HOMILIES ON THE GOSPEL OF ST MATTHEW.' NATIONALBIBLIOTHEK, VIENNA.

by combining them with cable mouldings and elongated animals of insular aspect in which gold and silver predominate, and with leafage recalling that in the Drogo Sacramentary, of gold on a coloured ground, and of a form which, stylized with the passage of time, was to characterize the ornament of 'Reichenau' and Echternach manuscripts in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

The situation of the bishopric of Salzburg was not unlike that of the abbey of St Gall. The monastery had been founded by monks from the British Isles, and after the Irishman Ferkil (called Virgil) had been installed by Pepin in 745 as abbot of Sankt Peter and bishop of Salzburg, English and Irish clerics contributed to its intellectual growth. Its geographical position and the ties formed in the eighth century between the Bavarian dynasty of the Agilofings and that of the Lombard kings, together with the relative proximity of Ravenna, opened the region to northern Italian influences and ensured the supremacy of Mediterranean art forms.

A Gospel Book known as the Codex Millenarius, produced at Kremsmünster about the year 800, and others written at Salzburg by the scribe named Cutbercht derived from the same Italic model but were probably illuminated by a group of Anglo-Saxon artists who had long resided north of the Alps; the same group painted the frescoes in the small church of Naturno (Naturns) in the Italian Tyrol. This phenomenon is comparable to the one that presided over the formation of Anglo-Saxon painting itself: the insular scribes and illuminators, whose activity everywhere was sporadically maintained outside the imperial ateliers, interpreted in their own way the repertory bequeathed by antiquity, and they played, as will be remembered, a key part in the rise of official art at the Carolingian court. Inserted in an early ninth-century Salzburg Gospel Book is a portrait of St John Chrysostom standing against a background patterned with characteristic plant forms. It reveals an active influence from the Middle East at Salzburg, just as at Corbie about the same time; but the illuminators, insular artists at both places, fell far short of the mastery shown by their contemporaries in Gaul.

The Bavarian monk Arn, of Freising, a pupil and friend of Alcuin, was abbot of Saint-Amand in Gaul and at the same time bishop, then archbishop of Salzburg. Due to him, a current of literary and artistic exchanges was established between northern Gaul and Bavaria: Salzburg scribes and illuminators drew inspiration from manuscripts executed at Saint-Amand, while from Salzburg Saint-Amand received works illustrated in the Italo-Alpine manner. Of the latter, we have three Apocalypse manuscripts, preserved at Valenciennes, Cambrai and Trier. The Valenciennes manuscript was made at Saint-Amand; it is signed '*Otolus indignus presbyter*,' a name which had been recorded forty years earlier in the ninth century in the diocese of Salzburg. The other two derive from a single model. These three works have nothing in common with the Franco-Insular manuscripts attributed to Saint-Amand. Certain British features noticeable in the Valenciennes Apocalypse derive from earlier Salzburg manuscripts; similar features appear in the Codex Millenarius and the Cutbercht Gospels. This link between Gaul and Bavaria, extending to Italy as well, is attested by still another work: a glossed Psalter written and illuminated in the abbey of Mondsee, near Salzburg, in the late eighth century, which belonged



168 - SAINT-AMAND. APOCALYPSE. BIBLIOTHÈQUE MUNICIPALE, VALENCIENNES.

167 - SAINT-AMAND. APOCALYPSE. BIBLIOTHÈQUE MUNICIPALE, CAMBRAI.



169 – NORTHERN OR EASTERN FRANCE (?). APOCALYPSE. STADTBIBLIOTHEK, TRIER.

shortly afterwards to the nuns of Notre-Dame of Soissons, among whom were Rothrude, one of Charlemagne's daughters, and Hildegard, who was probably a nun in this convent in the time of Abbess Gila. The Mondsee Psalter is thought to have been taken to Gaul by Liutpirc, wife of Tassilo III, Duke of Bavaria.

The imperial workshops of Aachen are credited with three small ivory plaques representing Christ and the symbols of Matthew and John, each in a medallion; they were copied in two Gospel Books of the late ninth century, one from Saint-Amand, now at Valenciennes, and the other, in Franco-Insular style, at Cambrai. These three plaques—and two more (of Mark and Luke) which are lost and known only from the manuscript copies—reproduced Early Christian originals of very high quality. Whatever their date, they bear witness to a north Italian presence in Mosan Gaul, a presence which lasted well into the Romanesque period, as though the Meuse and Schelde regions had been destined to maintain the artistic relations established by the Carolingian dynasty with southeastern Europe, Bavaria and Italy.



170 – EASTERN FRANCE. GOSPEL BOOK: SYMBOL OF ST MATTHEW. BIBLIOTHÈQUE MUNICIPALE, CAMBRAI.



171 - SAINT-AMAND (?). GOSPEL BOOK: THE LAMB SURROUNDED BY THE EVANGELIST SYMBOLS. BIBLIOTHÈQUE MUNICIPALE, VALENCIENNES.

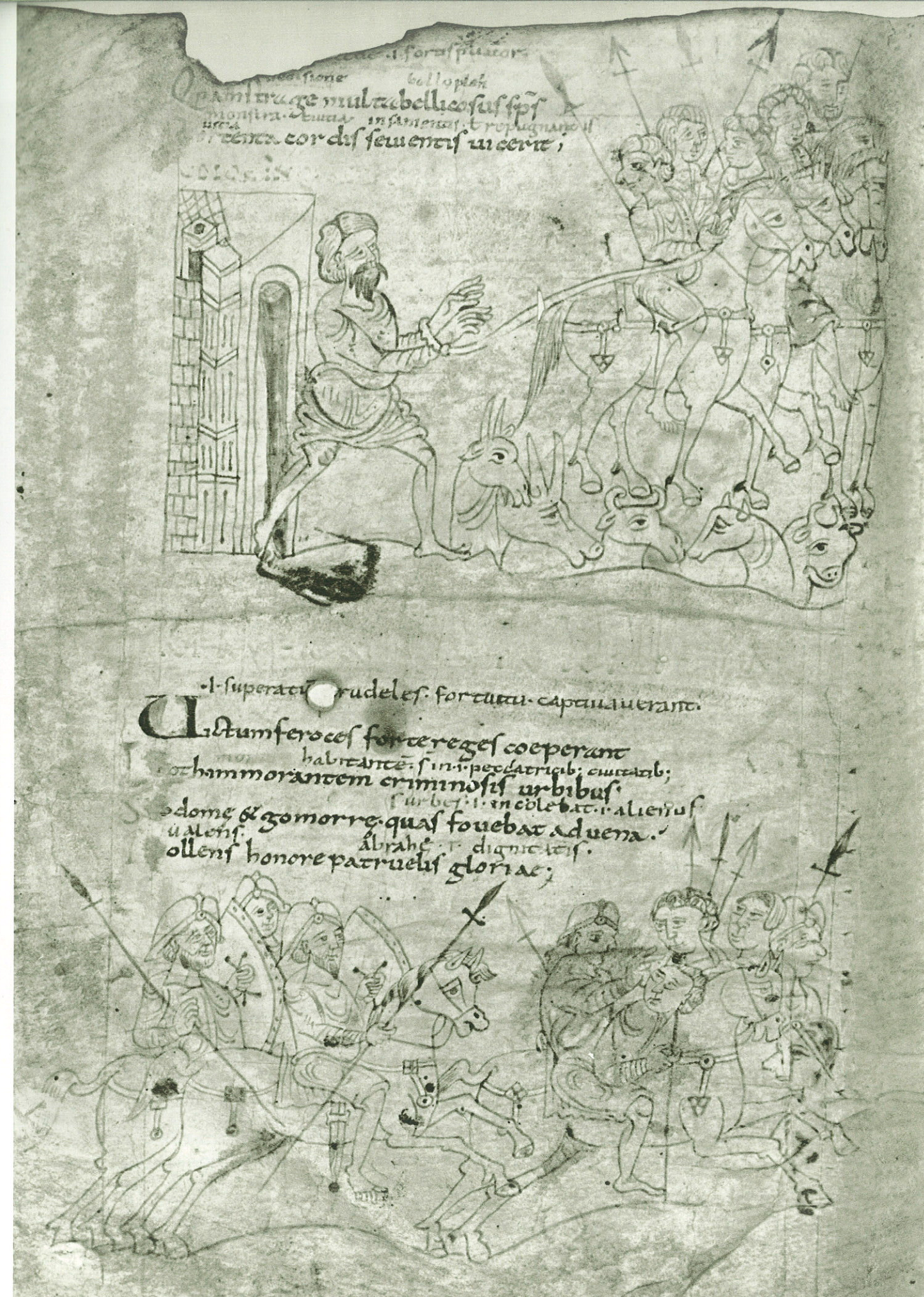


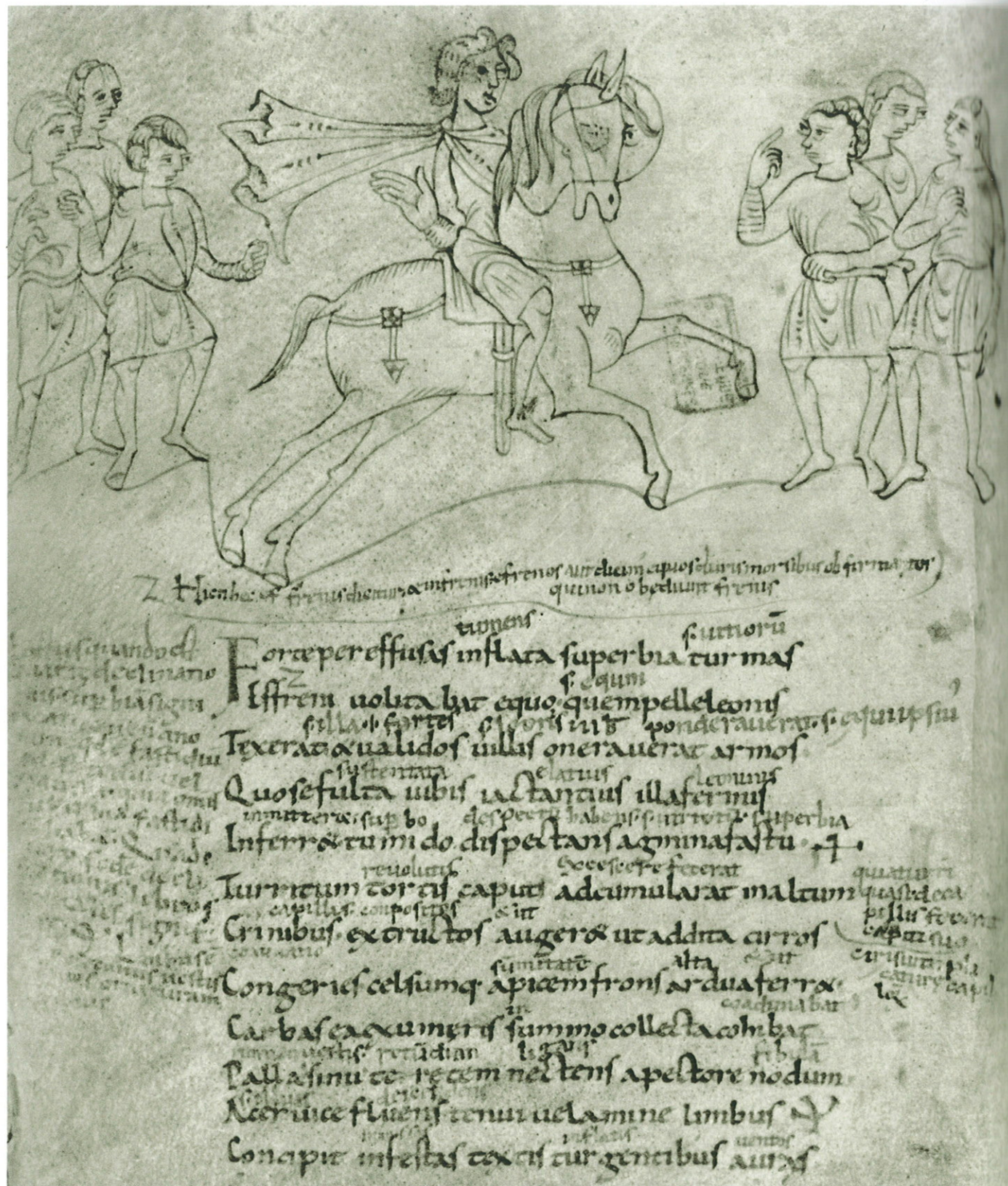
172 - REIMS. TERENCE, 'COMEDIES': CHARACTERS IN 'THE EUNUCH.' BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS.

The connections between Saint-Amand and Salzburg made themselves felt as far afield as Tours, and something has already been said about their effect there on the school of illuminators at the abbey of Saint-Martin.

It is still difficult to localize with any certainty the many illustrated copies of classical or late antique scientific and literary works which were executed in Gaul, Germania and Italy during the ninth and tenth centuries: Terence, Prudentius (whose *Psychomachia* became an inexhaustible source of themes for medieval artists, both manuscript illuminators and fresco painters), Donatus and other grammarians, Martianus Capella (whose *Liber de nuptiis Mercurii et Philologiae*, a strange medley of philosophy and astrology, enjoyed a long vogue), Isidore of Seville, various books on astronomy, cosmography, medicine, geometry, and finally the treatises of those Roman *agrimensores* who taught the barbarians the science of land surveying. All these manuscripts contain a wealth of highly interesting illustrations, but they have little bearing on Carolingian art; these drawings, in which colour is rare (the fine St Gall Prudentius is a signal exception), give us vivid glimpses of the world of antiquity and it is enough merely to mention them here.

It is equally difficult to fix the place of origin of a ninth-century Gospel Book illustrated with drawings (Crucifixion, Descent from the Cross) which were faithfully copied, even to the final signature, from a Gospel Book of undetermined date (but probably of the eighth century) owned by a bookseller named Gaudiosus, who had his shop in Rome near the church of San Pietro in Vincoli; the Crucifixion is closely patterned after the fresco in the *presbyterium* of Santa Maria Antiqua. This later Gospel Book was preserved at Saint-Aubin of Angers, although it may not have been written there. Like the illustrated copies of scientific works, it transmits, without any reinterpretation, a genuine image of an earlier period.





The trends of official art and its derivatives could not but exert a strong influence on provincial painters. The classicism of Charlemagne's court artists at Aachen was accordingly taken up in the ateliers of the neighbouring abbey of Fulda, where it competed, sometimes in the pages of the same manuscripts, with insular motifs imported by British missionaries—for Fulda was founded under the aegis of Pepin by the Anglo-Saxon monk Boniface. Of two Gospel Books written at Fulda towards the mid-ninth century by insular scribes and left unfinished (some of the headings and rubrics were added subsequently in Carolingian minuscule), one was provided, on blank or newly inserted sheets, with magnificent canon tables and remarkable evangelist portraits of an inspiration as purely antique as the best paintings from Charlemagne's ateliers. They appear to be by a hand contemporary with the original script. Two distinct groups were evidently at work at Fulda, and the one representing the classical trend enjoyed a prestige attested by works executed at the abbey in the pure tradition first of Charlemagne's painters, then of the Tours painters. The personality of Rabanus Maurus, a pupil of Alcuin and abbot of Fulda in 822, undoubtedly had something to do with the introduction there of the Tours style, as is shown by a copy of his famous poem *De Laudibus Sanctae Crucis* with the verses ingeniously broken up to form large allegorical figures—a copy whose illustrations, peopled with short, thickset personages, represent, by way of Saint-Martin of Tours, a rather degenerate offshoot of the Italo-Alpine family.

The Goth Theodulf, bishop of Orléans from about 788 to 821 and abbot of Fleury and Micy, brought Spanish ideas to Gaul and cast them in forms inspired by the prevailing classical taste. Apart from the text itself and its layout, the copies of the Bible that he wrote out at Charlemagne's request contain nothing which recalls his origins: the script is an admirable small Carolingian minuscule, and the illuminations consist of canon tables designed in the best official manner. Except for its general layout and divisions, this Bible is quite unlike the slightly later Visigothic Bible now at La Cava, near Naples, which is also unillustrated. At Germigny, not far from Fleury, Theodulf had an oratory built and decorated with mosaics; a Gospel Book from Fleury may also have been made for him. It opens with a fine miniature showing the symbols of the four evangelists, with wings dotted with eyes and with no haloes, like those in the mosaics of the late fifth or early sixth century at Naples, Capua and Santa Pudenziana, Rome. The decoration of the Gospel Book preserved at Tours is in the same vein, but of a different type.

But it was the prolific school of Reims that went through the richest, most extensive cycle of development, spreading through northern Gaul, into the Rhineland (to Cologne in particular), to Freising, and towards the Danube to Weltenburg; it was Reims painting too, so highly original, that best preserved its character and above all its quality. Finally, in and around Cologne, the Franco-Insular school produced a considerable number of mediocre works. We should have a most unflattering impression of these last insular offshoots, equally unremarkable in the British Isles themselves, and elsewhere quite monstrous, were it not that one of them, stemming directly from the British Isles it is true, appeared at Fleury, the abbey of Theodulf (who, however, had nothing to do with it personally).



177 - FULDA. GOSPEL BOOK: ST LUKE. UNIVERSITÄTSBIBLIOTHEK, WÜRZBURG.



178 – FULDA. RABANUS MAURUS, 'DE LAUDIBUS SANCTAE CRUCIS': RABANUS PRESENTING HIS BOOK TO GREGORY IV. VIENNA.



179 – FLEURY. GOSPEL BOOK: EVANGELIST SYMBOLS. BÜRGERBIBLIOTHEK, BERNE.



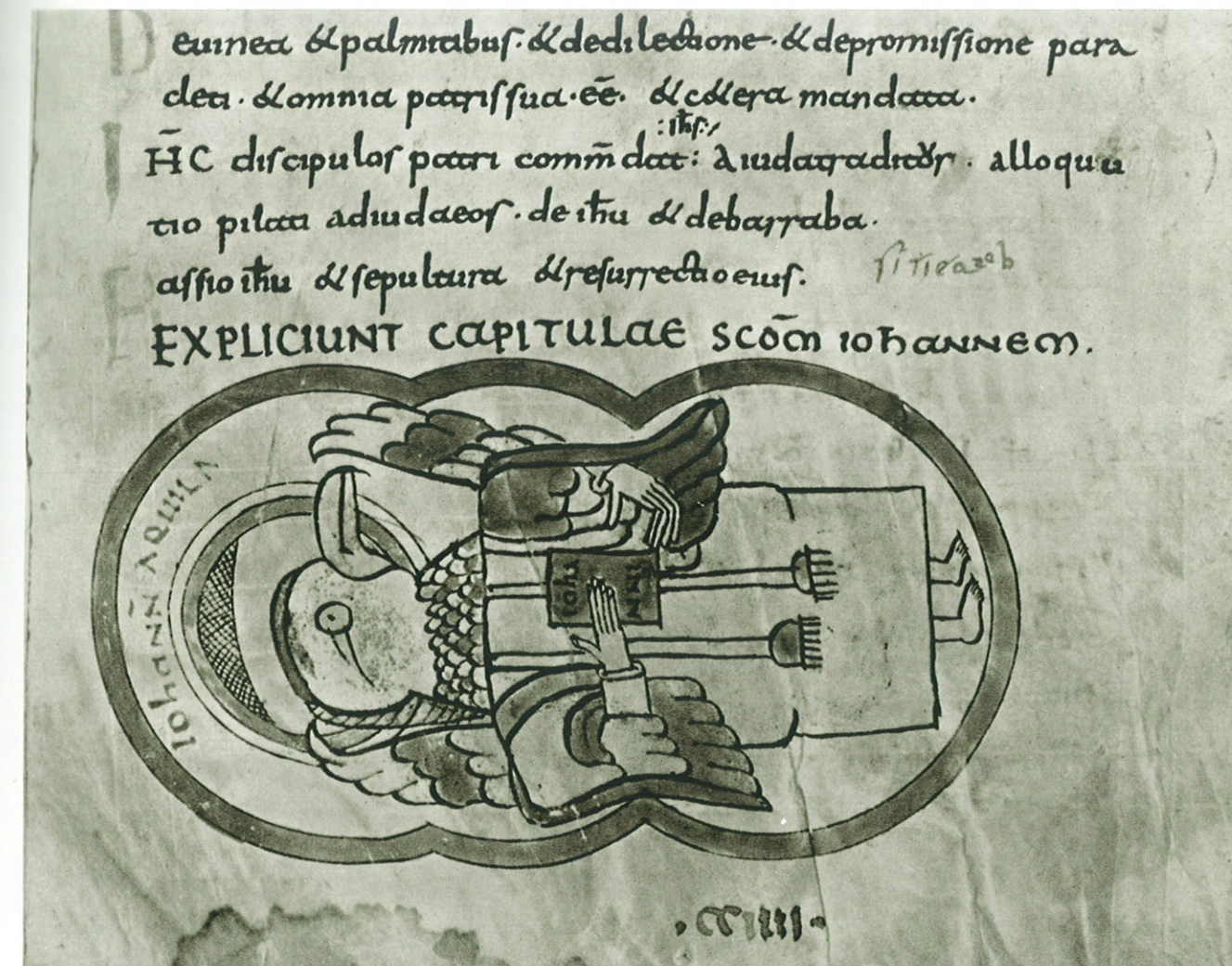
180 - FREISING. GOSPEL BOOK OF SCHÄFTLARN: ST MARK. BAYERISCHE STAATSBIBLIOTHEK, MUNICH.



181 - WELTENBURG. GOSPEL BOOK OF WELTENBURG: ST MATTHEW. NATIONALBIBLIOTHEK, VIENNA.



182 - COLOGNE (?). GOSPEL BOOK: ST MARK. KUNSTGEWERBE MUSEUM, COLOGNE.



183 - BRITTANY. GOSPEL BOOK: ANIMAL-HEADED SYMBOL OF ST JOHN. BIBLIOTHÈQUE MUNICIPALE, TROYES.

It is in Brittany that we find the monstrous offshoot. At Landévennec in particular and at other undetermined places, Gospel Books were illustrated (they are so uncouth, one hesitates to say decorated) with animal-headed evangelist portraits; that is, the head of each evangelist is replaced by that of the animal symbolizing him. These outlandish figures stamp the sacred text with a half-pagan character; here we leave the realm of art for that of magic. Gradually losing their barbarian overtones, such figures spread throughout the West down to the fifteenth century, extending to northern Germany and Scandinavia. They first appeared, as far as we know, in England and Spain in the seventh century. This is not the only coincidence between the art of two countries both indebted to Middle Eastern and Coptic art, for these animal saints came from Egypt (as Émile Mâle pointed out long ago), and from Egypt too came some of the ornamental motifs of insular art which have been dealt with in the preceding pages.

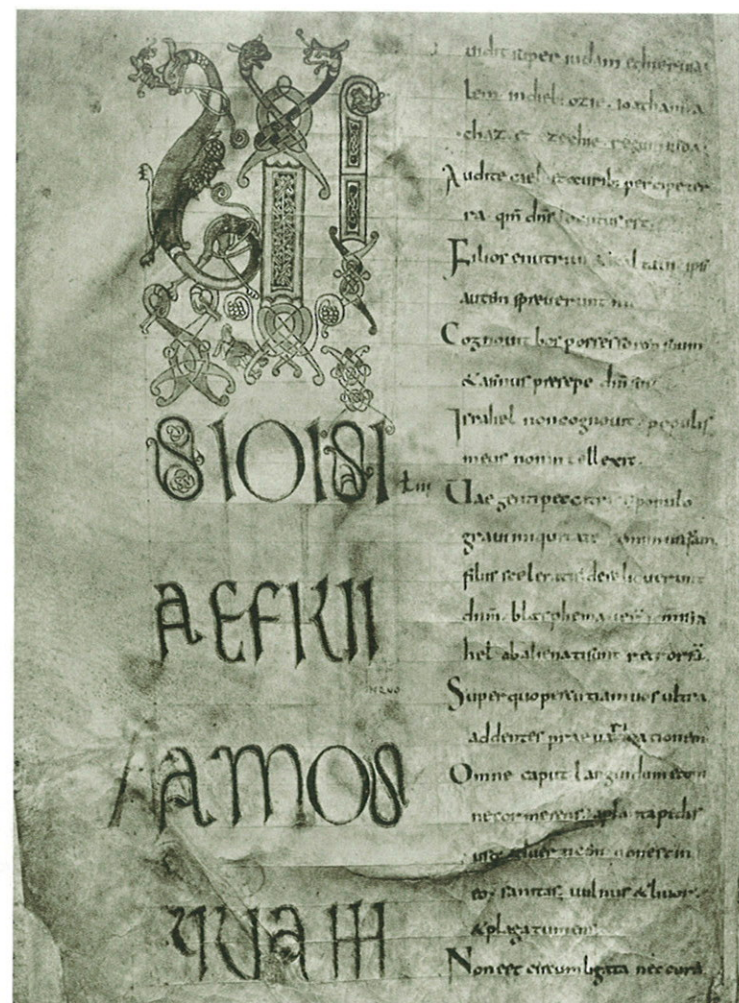


184 - BRITTANY. GOSPEL BOOK: ANIMAL-HEADED SYMBOL OF ST MATTHEW. BIBLIOTHÈQUE MUNICIPALE, BOULOGNE.

MATHEVM INCI PIT PRE FATIO SECVN DVNI MARCV



185 - BRITTANY. GOSPEL BOOK: ANIMAL-HEADED SYMBOL OF ST MARK. BIBLIOTHÈQUE MUNICIPALE, BOULOGNE.



186 - FLEURY. BOOK OF THE PROPHETS. BIBL. MUNICIPALE, ORLÉANS.

The other insular offshoot is to be found at Fleury (i.e., Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire), where the classicism of Theodulf had no effect on book painting and where there seems to have been no consistent line of development, for we find the greatest variety of styles. Until about 830 the Fleury painters, like those of St Gall, kept to Merovingian decorative themes. Acrobats and wrestlers adorn certain lettrines—antique reminiscences due perhaps to the proximity of Tours—and the bold, graceful initials of these early ninth-century Gospel Books and biblical texts are indistinguishable from the models devised at York and Canterbury. Fleury, where this survey of provincial Carolingian painting comes to an end, already heralds the diversity of Romanesque book painting: here, currents flowing from remote antique and barbarian sources, held in check elsewhere by dictatorial patrons, ran freely, just as they were to do in the late tenth century and afterwards, before submitting to the discipline which shaped the Gothic masterpieces. Meanwhile the art of the Carolingian rulers was continued in Germany and England in the marvels produced by the Ottonian and the Winchester illuminators.

JEAN PORCHER

