

PART THREE



Sculpture and Applied Art

The Heritage of Antiquity

To my wife

WHEN the migration of peoples had come to an end and the Carolingian kings had established a new political and social order, artistic activities found new impulses in new directions. These innovations can be most clearly seen in the countries north of the Alps. At the emperor's court and in the wealthy monasteries that flourished under imperial patronage, the centralized power in the hands of the new masters, headed by Charlemagne, gave rise to artistic centres of the first importance. Bearing as it did the imprint of a single sovereign, art assumed an appearance of unity. On the other hand, the artistic production of the provincial monasteries decreased in importance. Furthermore, we know all too little about the secular art because of the very few objects that have come down to us. This is due to the gradual abandonment of the custom of placing objects in tombs as Christianity became more widespread.

Consequently, in the field of sculpture and applied art, our knowledge is limited to the great ecclesiastical art preserved in church treasuries. But even that is only a minute fraction of the wealth of the period, of whose existence we have documentary evidence. Virtually all cathedral churches and important abbeys contained immense treasures donated by sovereigns and dignitaries. Suffice it to recall the works that were formerly preserved at Saint-Denis, Reims, Metz, Saint-Riquier, Luxeuil and Auxerre. Charlemagne's victorious campaigns against the Avars and other foes brought the kingdom of the Franks a vast quantity of vessels of precious metals, which the emperor later donated to the pope and to various churches and monasteries. In addition, as a result of the sovereign's friendly relations with the Islamic world and the Byzantine Empire, the Carolingian court and the imperial abbeys obtained possession of a great many works of art; some of them arrived by sea, others via the 'Baltic bridge' in the north. These foreign products—rock crystal, glassware and textiles—newly influenced the output of the Frankish workshops.

At first glance, antiquity seems to have been the predominant influence in Carolingian art, due to Charlemagne's political ideas. Although his first reaction to the



189 - COMB OF ST GAUZELIN. CATHEDRAL TREASURY, NANCY.



190 - FRAGMENT OF CLOTH WITH A QUADRIGA. CATHEDRAL TREASURY, AACHEN.

ancient tradition had been one of rebuttal, after he was crowned in Rome on Christmas Day, 800, his consciousness of the dignity of a Roman emperor led him to adopt the imperial principle of the *civitas Dei* in order to exploit the heritage of ancient Rome as a solid foundation for his new power. It is mainly works of his Palace School that have been preserved in the church treasuries, chiefly because of their historical importance. As a result, our view of the general artistic ideas of the period is somewhat distorted. Objects produced in the provincial workshops were more liable to destruction. Those still extant show hardly any antique influence and prove that the Merovingian stylistic tradition was far from dead.

Moreover, in those works the influence of insular art is clear to see. It appears chiefly in art of the territories that received Irish, Scottish and Anglo-Saxon missions;

for instance, the regions that border on the Rhine as far south as St Gall and the Germanic lands down to Salzburg. In the same way, the secular products of the popular workshops—swords, spurs, belt buckles and brooches—derive rather from the Germanic or Nordic tradition. Many a precious object pillaged by the Northmen is still preserved in the Scandinavian countries, as for instance the gold buckle of Hon in Norway. Also worthy of mention in this context are the brooches from the treasure of Muizen, in Belgium, which contained coins dated between 866 and 884.

The objects that have come down to us or are described in manuscripts of that day differ totally in shape and kind from those of the Merovingian period. The development of the liturgy and still more the love of pomp that characterized the wealthy founders of the new abbeys helped lead to the production of a great many objects whose ornamentation became increasingly luxurious. Chalice covers became larger and more sumptuous; the covers of ecclesiastical manuscripts came to be lavishly adorned with ivory, gold and precious stones. Ivory chairs of state disappeared, but in their place we find others made of metal copied from antique models, like the 'Throne of Dagobert,' richly decorated altar frontals like the *paliotto* in Saint Ambrogio, Milan, metal vessels for holy water, and the precious sculptured ornamentation of tombs, choir railings and *ciboria*. Frequent mention is made of extremely rich altar crosses, of which many remarkable specimens have survived, such as the Rupert Cross at Bischofshofen, which might easily be taken for an Anglo-Saxon work, or the so-called Cross of the Ardennes in Nuremberg. There is a great deal of documentary evidence for the existence of precious silks. They were nearly all imported from the Orient and very few have survived.

But our attention is caught first and foremost by the very numerous reliquaries. The steadily growing devotion to relics was accompanied by a greater richness of ornamentation in metal, ivory and enamel. Such ancient techniques as filigree work and the use of gems for ornamentation were still largely employed after being brought to a higher degree of execution. Decoration with coloured enamels had only just been introduced and from the end of the eighth century the enameller's skill was called upon to embellish articles for religious worship and crowns for secular use. On the other hand, silver plating and inlay work lost popularity.

Sculpture in the round was still a rarity. We know that Charlemagne had the large equestrian statue of Theodoric transported from Ravenna to Aachen. And the equestrian statuette of an emperor, now in the Louvre, is an example of a copy from an ancient work. Otherwise we have very little information concerning sculpture in the round. It was only towards the end of the tenth century that works of any size appeared, mostly for use as reliquaries.

When we observe certain seventh-century works of art, we realize that the monuments dating from the early days of the Carolingian period at the end of the eighth century mark a further development of the artistic genius of the Merovingian age. Although we do not possess the link in the chain that connects the two periods, objects still extant like the Tassilo chalice at Kremsmünster, the Enger reliquary in Berlin, and the first cover of the Lindau Gospels, in New York, enable us to verify the survival of pre-Carolingian decorative art. One of its major characteristics is so

direct a derivation from the animal style of the British Isles that we are justified in speaking of an Irish-Anglo-Saxon artistic province on Germanic soil. The Tassilo chalice is a typical example of this trend. Its ornamentation is so closely akin to that of Anglo-Saxon models that scholars such as Johannes Brönstedt and others attributed it to the Northumbrian school. But its dedication by Duke Tassilo of Bavaria (748–788) and his wife Liutpirc dates it with certainty, and it was in all probability executed on the occasion of the foundation of the monastery of Kremsmünster (c. 770), to which it was donated. Stylistic and historical considerations seem to indicate that it was manufactured at Salzburg, where the bishop, an Irishman called Virgil, cultivated the traditional art of his nation. The five oval divisions of the bowl, in which Christ and the four evangelists are portrayed in simple line drawings in niello work, recall the style of the Anglo-Saxon manuscripts such as the Gospel Book of Cutbercht, in Vienna, or of those produced in the Salzburg workshops under the influence of scribes from northern England. The plant and animal tracery in the angular fields between the medallions, around the upper edge, and on the foot also prove that the chalice is closely related to the art of the English miniaturists of the late eighth century. A superficial glance would seem to show that



◀ 191 – CHALICE OF TASSILO. ABBEY TREASURY, KREMSMÜNSTER.

192 – FIRST COVER OF THE LINDAU GOSPELS. NEW YORK. ▶





193 - ENGER RELIQUARY: CHRIST BETWEEN TWO ANGELS AND VIRGIN BETWEEN TWO APOSTLES. BERLIN.

the animal ornamentation is similar to what we know of seventh-century Merovingian art. However, more detailed examination of the chalice reveals that the animals are portrayed in their entirety in perfect accord with the most recent developments of Nordic art. More or less at this same time we find the same style of animal representation on a pouch-shaped reliquary at Chur, in which the resemblance to the insular models is extremely striking.

Perhaps the most remarkable example of this animal ornamentation at the very dawn of the Carolingian period is offered by the first cover of the Lindau Gospels now in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. The volume, from the aristocratic nunnery of Lindau, was probably executed in southern Germany in about 800 or slightly later. On it we can see a cross with curved arms surrounded by a narrow border embellished with animals in cloisonné enamel and set with garnets and incrustations of champlevé enamel. The spandrels are filled with splendid animal tracery. Book covers of the same type are found on Irish manuscripts, and the animal designs so closely resemble those occurring in Anglo-Saxon ornamentation that a great many scholars have agreed in viewing this work as imported from the British Isles. However, certain continental motifs and the resemblance to the Theodelinde book cover at Monza (c. 603) prove that its origin must be sought in southern Germany, perhaps in the St. Gall district. For instance, the four bust images of Christ in champlevé enamel on the arms of the cross recall the silver-plated busts on some belts from the Bavarian territory, and the animal ornamentation in the spandrels and at the tips of the vertical branches of the cross call to mind certain silver-plated buckles from Burgundy. On the other hand, the animals in cloisonné enamel on the border of the cover are still technically very close to the earliest known Italo-Byzantine enamel round the edge of the Castellani fibula in the British Museum and on armlets in the archaeological museum at Salonica. The linear arrangement of cloisonné-mounted garnets also links this work with many objects of the late Merovingian period, such as the round fibula of Wittislingen and the abbot's crosier of Delémont. Owing to its close stylistic affinity with the Tassilo chalice on the one hand and with various early Carolingian objects on the other, such as the Rastede (Oldenburg) earrings, the Lindau book cover may be dated to about the year 800.

The closest parallel to the first Lindau book cover is provided by the Enger reliquary in Berlin. Several scholars view this work as a christening gift presented to Duke Widukind of Saxony by his godfather Charlemagne in about 785. The decoration is symbolical: on the front a faceted cross is formed by the precious and semiprecious stones, while the angles are filled with shapes of cloisonné animals which, though somewhat more primitive in design, recall those that embellish the Lindau book cover. This work too demonstrates the continuity of Merovingian art, which we can see in the decoration in precious stones like that of the reliquary of Teuderigus at Saint-Maurice d'Agaune. It is uncouth compared with the Carolingian pouch-shaped reliquaries of a later date, such as the pouch of St Stephen in the Imperial Jewel Collection in Vienna or the simply designed piece in the Monza Treasury, whose surface is covered with precious stones arranged symmetrically to reveal clearly the form of a cross. The extremely stylized animals on the clasp of the Enger reliquary may be considered as almost the first stage in the development of the similar motif at Monza. The stiff, stylized forms of the reliefs on the back of the reliquary—representing Christ between two angels and the Virgin between two apostles under semicircular arches—recall those of insular examples and are closely linked with the miniatures of the same period. What a long way we have travelled from the original types of the first centuries of Christian art!



195 - CROSS. BAYERISCHE NATIONALMUSEUM, MUNICH.



196 - CROSS OF THE ANGELS. CÁMARA SANTA, OVIEDO CATHEDRAL.

Spain

The same type of primitive cloisonné enamelwork with plant and animal motifs reappears in a curious form in some goldsmiths' work in Spain. In particular, the animals—adorned with garnets and enamel—on the lid of an agate casket donated by Fruela II in 910 and now in the Cámara Santa at Oviedo, are very similar in style to the Lindau book cover and the small cross in the Bavarian National Museum in Munich. For this reason we are led to presume that the casket lid is older and was perhaps executed by an itinerant artist. There is also an astonishing resemblance between these works and the enamels on the Santiago cross (874), now lost and the Victory cross at Oviedo (908), both of which were donated by Alfonso III. The latter have such a strikingly primitive quality that they were thought to have been taken from still earlier objects. The close kinship of these Asturian works with others made in Italy can be clearly seen in the Cross of the Angels at Oviedo, a beautifully executed object donated by Alfonso II in 808. At first sight its shape recalls earlier northern Italian crosses, such as the Cross of Desiderius (756–774) at Brescia and that of Berengarius at Monza. The extremely delicate filigree work

194 - RELIQUARY. CATHEDRAL TREASURY, MONZA.

that entirely covers the front is very much like that on certain round fibulas of Lombard origin.

So we can see that the continuous evolution undergone by art during the seventh and early eighth centuries, and prolonged well into the ninth, spread to Spain as well. What still remains to be discovered is if direct Byzantine influences made themselves felt there or if, in this case too, Italy played the part of intermediary. It would seem, however, that during the ninth century the influence of Carolingian art reached Spain from France. This can be inferred from the filigree work on the Victory cross at Oviedo in which one notices the very close affinity with the ornamentation on the cover of the Psalter of Charles the Bald in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. In 906 Alfonso III also commissioned an imperial crown at Tours.



197 - RELIQUARY OF BISHOP ALTHEUS. CATHEDRAL TREASURY, SION.

Italy

How far North Italian influence made itself felt can be seen in the reliquary at Sion donated by Bishop Altheus (780-799) in honour of the Virgin Mary. It is true that the animal ornamentation alongside the inscription and name of the donor at the bottom is typically Germanic. But the embossed figures of the Virgin and St John, as well as the plant motifs and even more the two plaques in cloisonné enamel portraying the four evangelists and a third no doubt representing the Virgin framed by a helianthus, reveal a strong affinity with the art of northern Italy. The cloisonné enamels also give a clear impression of being improvements on such primitive objects as the Castellani fibula in London or the Senise earrings in Naples. To realize how close the link is between these works, which were undoubtedly executed in Italy, and those of the Orient, we have merely to compare them with the enamels preserved in the Fieschi-Morgan collection in New York. From a stylistic point of view, their relationship with the enamels of the Milan altar (*paliotto*) is far slighter, if one refuses to accept as such the blue ground that is elsewhere so typical of Milan.

The candelabra with plant motifs on the gold and enamel ewer at Saint-Maurice d'Agaune and the iron faldstool with niello inlays at Pavia are close to Italo-Byzantine art. The same style of severely linear folds appears in northern Italy in a ninth-century reliquary at Cividale adorned with saints under arcades. Once again, the shape of the reliquary is of Merovingian type and the barbarized cameos which date probably from the seventh century, were copied from antique models. Similar gems occur on the reliquary of Teuderigus at Saint-Maurice d'Agaune, the Gospel Book of Lebuinus at Utrecht, and the Cross of Desiderius at Brescia or in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection in Washington. Another closely related piece is the cameo in the Virgin's Crown in the treasury of Essen Cathedral.

Relief work in silver continued to be practiced in northern Italy for a very long time, as we can see from the plaque representing St Leopardus, preserved in the church of Osimo. In Rome, relief was treated in a still more severely linear manner, as for example in the two silver reliquaries from the treasury of the Sancta Sanctorum in the Vatican, which were executed from a gemmed and an enamelled cross (the former of which has been lost) during the reign of Pope Pascal I (817-824). In each the silversmith's work is so similar in style (only the lid of the gemmed cross is reproduced here) that one is justified in attributing them both to the same Roman workshop. Like the mosaics of the same period, they offer a remarkable example of the conservative character of the Roman style, which differed so greatly from that of Milan. However, the two scenes of Christ's childhood on the enamelled cross (on whose sides we can decipher the name of Pope Pascal who commissioned it), stylistically totally different from those on the silver casket, are more lifelike and animated. The freshness of this narrative is undoubtedly due to the fact that the enameller, far more than the silversmith, sought his inspiration in the Eastern Church and may perhaps have found it in earlier Syro-Palestinian models. But the strong colours of the enamels, especially a certain translucid green, distinguish this cross from ancient Eastern works, such as those we can see in the Fieschi-Morgan



199 - LID OF A RELIQUARY: CHRISTOLOGICAL SCENES. VATICAN CITY.

collection, as well as from the reliquary of Bishop Altheus and other Western works of the same type. The enamelwork differs so greatly from others in Italy that one might be justified in attributing it to an Eastern artist.

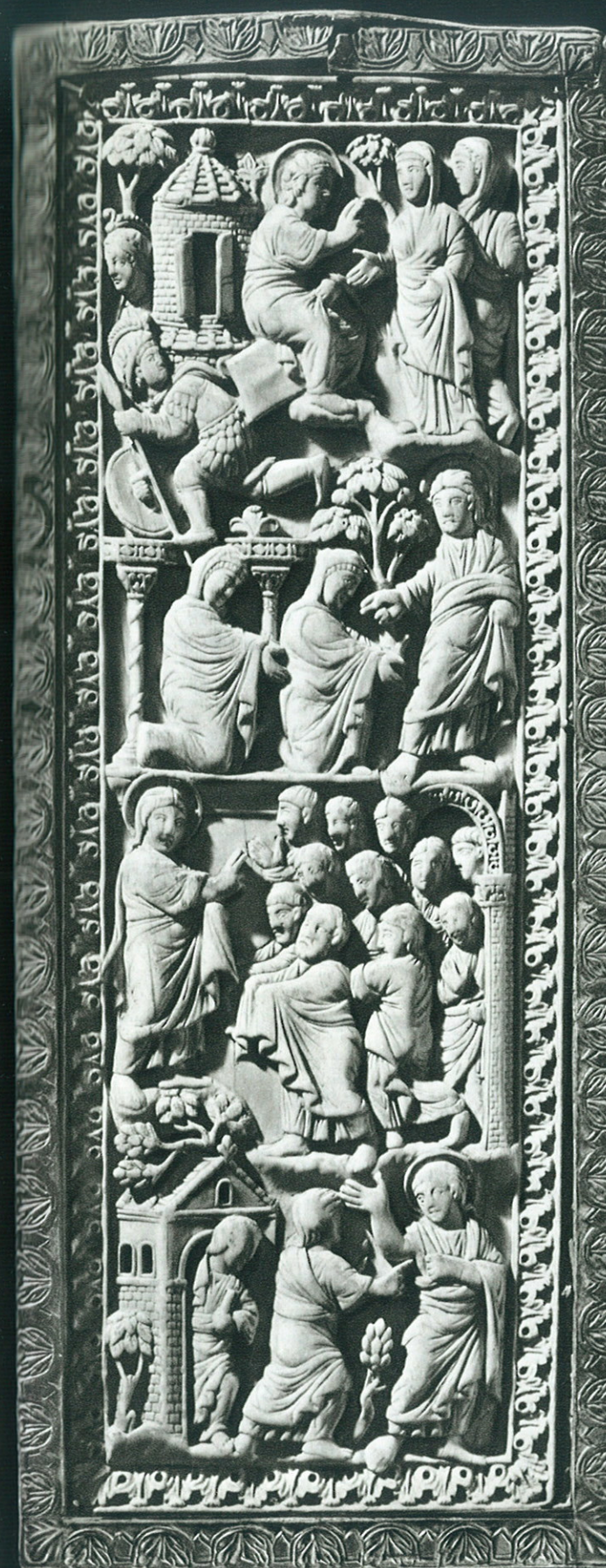
Compared with the art of northern Italy, that of central Italy in general and Rome in particular occupied a position of secondary importance during the entire ninth century. Proof of this is provided by the ivory diptych from Rambona, in the Vatican, representing the Crucifixion and the Virgin in Glory (c. 900) or by the figure of an enthroned evangelist at Trento (formerly in Vienna). Ornamental sculpture in stone remained true to the conventions it had evolved in the eighth century. The type of ornament most in favour during the ninth continued to be interlaced ribbons and extremely stylized animals in the oriental style. Rome offers more facilities than anywhere else for studying that art from the reign of Pope Adrian I (772-795) to that of Stephen V (885-891). Still, a great many ornamental works of this kind can be found throughout both northern and central Italy, among them some reliably dated crosses in Bologna. The extremely interesting cross engraved on both front and back with interlaced ribbons and stunted tendrils at Budrio, near Bologna, which bears the inscription of Bishop Vitalis



200-201 - GENOELSELDEREN DIPTYCH: CHRIST TRIUMPHANT - ANNUNCIATION AND VISITATION. MUSÉES ROYAUX D'ART ET D'HISTOIRE, BRUSSELS.

(789-814), belongs to this group. It dates from the beginning of the ninth century.

Alongside this group, which perpetuated the Merovingian tradition during the first years of the Carolingian era and consists of works that make an almost anti-classical impression, there are objects executed as early as the end of the eighth century that reveal a perfect knowledge of ancient art and intentionally return to late antique and early Christian models. One of these is the ivory diptych from Genoelselderen, in Brussels, representing Christ crushing underfoot the dragon and the basilisk. Stylistically, the design of the ornamental borders and the linear treatment of the drapery are directly derived from insular art. Judging from the inscrip-



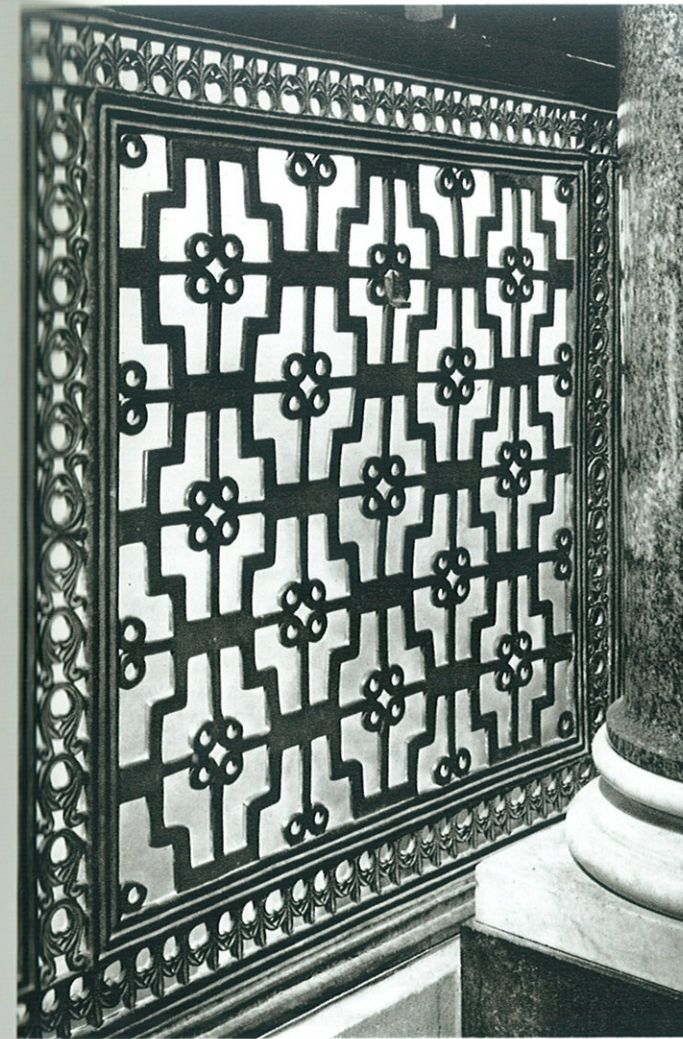
202 - IVORY DIPTYCH: CHRISTOLOGICAL SCENES. CATHEDRAL TREASURY, MILAN.

tion alone, we might be tempted to say the diptych came from England. But we can also clearly see a link with the Trier Apocalypse (see p. 181) and therefore with northern France. For all their stylistic and iconographic peculiarities, which might lead us to attribute them to an earlier period, two ivory pyxes adorned with Christological scenes, one in Vienna and one in London, must be viewed as copies executed during the Carolingian era, in the late eighth or early ninth century.

At that time enthusiasm for classical art led artists to copy objects in ivory in so masterly a fashion that it is no easy matter to establish the late date at which they were made. It is not surprising that a great many of these copies were made in Milan, where there were still a quantity of objects that dated back to the earliest Christian times. The best example is a diptych in Milan, with Christological scenes displaying the same arrangement of the figures, treatment of drapery and vigorous handling of bodies as, for instance, in the scenes of the Passion on a small fifth-century casket in the British Museum. And only a certain stiffness in the folds and the schematic treatment of the architecture warrant the conclusion that the Palermo diptych in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, is a Carolingian copy and not a fifth-century original.



203 - MARBLE FRAGMENT OF AN AMBO WITH A PEACOCK. MUSEO CRISTIANO, BRESCIA.



204-205 - AACHEN, PALATINE CHAPEL. TRIBUNE, BRONZE RAILING - THE WOLF PORTAL, DETAIL: LION'S MUZZLE.

The Palace School of Charlemagne

In northern Europe, too, artists copied works of the late antique period, and the objects produced in metal and carved ivory at Charlemagne's court reveal most clearly the signs of a new creative intention. The works dating from the early years of the Carolingian era bear witness to the classical spirit that was nurtured by the emperor himself and by the men of letters who surrounded him. It is in this context that Charlemagne afforded the most singular proof of his political ambition, namely, the *renovatio* of the Roman Empire. In this effort he consciously opposed Byzantium and the Empire of the East; the fact of such political rivalry tempts one to infer that he also rejected Eastern art. Thus the architecture and decoration of the Palatine Chapel at Aachen were inspired entirely by late antique models of the type found in Rome and especially in Ravenna, and by those that had been removed from Ravenna to Aachen.

It is this antiquarian spirit that pervades the eight bronze railings of the parapet of the tribune (already mentioned by Einhard), in particular those that were executed last. They were long thought to have been taken from the mausoleum of Theodoric in Ravenna. Undoubtedly the pattern is the same as on the stone balustrades of Sant' Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna, but the relief is flatter and the design differs considerably from the sculptural motifs of antique models. Traces of a foundry have been unearthed at Aachen in the vicinity of Charlemagne's palace, so one may presume that these railings were executed locally. The same may be said of the leaves of the great Wolf Portal and the three smaller side doors. The arrangement of the heavy bronze doors, which were cast in a single piece, is simple and linear, but here too the acanthus-leaf ornament that surrounds the lion's mask has a less vigorous relief than the models from which it was copied.

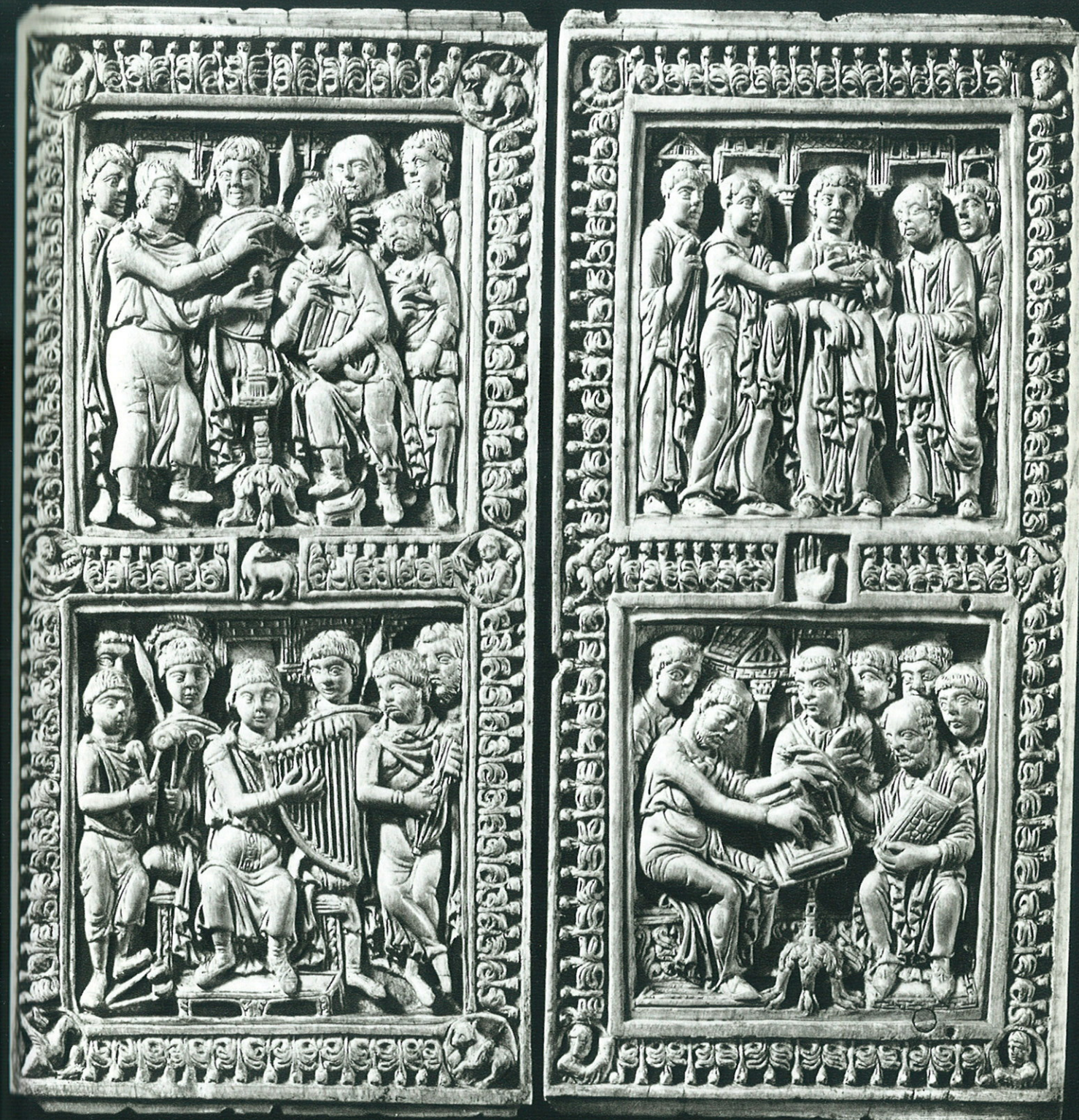
The so-called statuette of Charlemagne in bronze preserved in the Louvre, an imitation of an ancient classical model, probably represents one of the emperor's successors in triumph wearing the imperial robes and crown; possibly it is the ideal effigy of a Carolingian monarch. In contrast, the origin of the 'Throne of Dagobert' (Cabinet des Médailles in Paris), one of the major symbols of French history, has always been a subject of dispute. Discovered in damaged condition (*'disruptam'*) by Abbot Suger of Saint-Denis, after being restored it was used for the coronation of the kings of France. In shape it resembles the Roman curule chairs we know from the consular diptychs of the Eastern Empire dating from the sixth century. Its lower part alone is antique. Its upper part, notably the arms and back embellished with openwork tracery, dates from Suger's day. The attribution of this work to St Eligius, who lived during the reign of King Dagobert, obviously rests on legend, for at that time there was certainly no possibility of executing such a stylistically and technically outstanding copy of an antique work.

Completely antique in character was the base in gold and silver, now unfortunately lost, that was formerly in the Treasury of St Servatius at Maastricht. Known today only from two seventeenth-century drawings, the 'Einhard reliquary,' as it was called, belonged no doubt to a cruciform reliquary (see p. 35). It is a copy of a Roman triumphal arch with the effigy of a victorious emperor on horseback. The date can be inferred from the inscription, which names Einhard as the donor.

The antiquarian trend of Charlemagne's Palace School is most clearly manifest in the ivories which, though derived from antique models, have an individual quality of their own. The school was patronized by court dignitaries like Alcuin and Einhard, who may well have called in able carvers from Italy. It went into a decline at the emperor's death but its influence remains visible in some later reliefs, such as the Crucifixion at Narbonne and the Christ Enthroned in Berlin. Its products were closely linked with the miniatures in the Trier manuscript that was written about the year 800 for the Abbess Ada, and for that reason Adolf Goldschmidt coined the name 'Ada Group' for the artists who made them. Whether they worked at the Court of Aachen itself or in the rich imperial monasteries at Trier or Lorsch is hard to say. We come across the same problem in connection with the later Carolingian schools, whose production was always conditioned by the will of the reigning monarch. The



206 - SO-CALLED STATUETTE OF CHARLEMAGNE. LOUVRE, PARIS.



208 – IVORY COVER OF THE DAGULF PSALTER. LOUVRE, PARIS.

207 – IVORY BOOK COVER: CHRIST TRIUMPHANT AND CHRISTOLOGICAL SCENES. BODLEIAN LIBRARY, OXFORD.



centres of that production changed very often, for each new master gave preference to the school of his own palace or of the monasteries he patronized, whether Metz, Tours, Reims, Corbie or Saint-Denis. Thus we cannot restrict research to the Palace School of Charlemagne at Aachen but must consider other places of origin. The ivory panels used as book covers were also supplied by monastery workshops.

When we examine these works we are amazed to see how close the artists kept to their antique models, although they do not seem to have preferred any particular style. The ivory covers of the Dagulf Psalter in the Louvre, those with the Christological scenes at Oxford and those with the Holy Women at the Tomb in Florence found their inspiration in Western works of the early fifth century. On the other hand, the St Michael at Leipzig and the covers of the Lorsch Gospels derived from oriental models of Justinian's day. We know that French churches once contained a quantity of late antique and early Christian objects that may have served as models for sculptors of a later date. Thanks to a lucky chance we still possess the fragments of a five-part diptych of early Christian workmanship on which the splendid book cover at Oxford was modelled. In the centre is an effigy of Christ in Triumph and round the edge a series of Christological scenes. The figure of Christ crushing 'basilisks and lions' can be seen repeated several times at Ravenna in the guise of Christ Victorious with the cross resting on His shoulder: for instance, in Bishop Neon's Baptistry and on the tympanum of the city gate in a mosaic in Sant' Apollinare Nuovo. The diptych's two early fifth-century side panels are in Paris and Berlin.

Very obvious imitations can be found also in other ivories. One example is the Harrach diptych in the Schnütgen Museum, Cologne, in which the women at the Tomb recall those on the early Christian book cover in the Bavarian National Museum in Munich. And the Nativity on the Oxford book cover calls to mind the representation of the same scene at Nevers. Architectural details were also copied, as in the Harrach diptych, the Dagulf Psalter and the Aachen diptych, for instance from such early works as the five-part diptych in Milan. The arcades resemble those of the Archangel Michael in London and the throne of Maximilian at Ravenna. Another typical and antiquarian feature is the tall format used occasionally by the Palace School. It too occurs in diptychs of the late antique period.

But it is in the Oxford book cover that we can see most clearly how a Carolingian sculptor transformed his model. Though the iconography scrupulously reproduces that of the fifth century, the style reflects the new manner. The difference is most evident in the handling of the volumes: the figures are pressed closer together, their movements are less natural, and the three-dimensional effect has almost disappeared. Moreover, their anatomical structure is not displayed. In accordance with the medieval spirit, the bodies are dissembled by almost manneristic masses of folds.

The same transformation is also manifest in the front and back covers of the Dagulf Psalter, which, commissioned by Charlemagne as a gift to Pope Adrian I (772-795), are the earliest dated ivories of the Ada School. In contrast to their late antique models and like the Oxford work, the Dagulf figures and ornamentation seem stilted and lifeless; again, there is almost no three-dimensional effect. As in the case of other book covers, the subject matter matches the manuscript: David

◀ 209 - IVORY BOOK COVER: CRUCIFIXION AND CHRISTOLOGICAL SCENES. CATHEDRAL TREASURY, NARBONNE.

210 - IVORY COVER OF THE LORSCH GOSPELS. MUSEO SACRO, BIBLIOTECA APOSTOLICA, VATICAN CITY. ▶
211 - IVORY COVER OF THE LORSCH GOSPELS. VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON. ▶



choosing the scribes for his Psalms and playing the harp; the pope dispatching his envoys to St Jerome and Jerome dictating his version of the Psalms. Some reliefs related to the Dagulf covers show more liveliness in the movement of the drapery; for instance, the panel representing the Crucifixion and the Holy Women at the Tomb (the upper part of which, now lost, was formerly in Berlin, while the lower part is preserved in Florence), the Harrach diptych and the Oxford cover. In this respect the Aachen diptych and the Crucifixion at Narbonne are outstanding works. The latter gives the impression of being a late copy, but so far as the iconography is concerned its link with the Palace School is very close.

The Lorsch Gospels covers—the victorious Christ in the Vatican and the Virgin in Triumph in the Victoria and Albert Museum—mark the culminating point of this monumental style and a turning point in the output of the Palace School. They repeat so exactly a sixth-century design that parts of the two panels have been viewed



as antique originals. Some scholars went so far as to ascribe them to the Ottonian period. However, just as the miniatures of the relevant manuscript came from the Lorsch scriptorium, so the reliefs too may have been executed at Lorsch. They undoubtedly date from about 810, and their subject matter pinpoints the political tendency of the court to assimilate Imperial Roman iconography. In the late antique Barberini diptych (Paris, Louvre) the emperor had been placed on a par with the heavenly hierarchy; here the Blessed mirror the earthly hierarchy. But while the panel with the figure of Christ closely follows late antique models, that with the Virgin enthroned between Zacharias and John the Baptist reveals the rich drapery of the Palace School and a recasting of the antique forms in the crucible of a new, less rigid style.

In the St Michael ivory at Leipzig the feeling for physical detail has been virtually eliminated. While the fragment of an Ascension at Darmstadt calls to mind, in some particulars, the Lorsch Gospels covers, it is also linked with the diptych of the Crucifixion and the Holy Women at the Tomb in Florence. It is superior in quality to many products of the Palace School. The evolution of the 'Carolingian renaissance' was not brought to an end by the death of Charlemagne in 814: the quest for a balance between the styles of antiquity and those characteristic of the period continued into the second half of the ninth century.

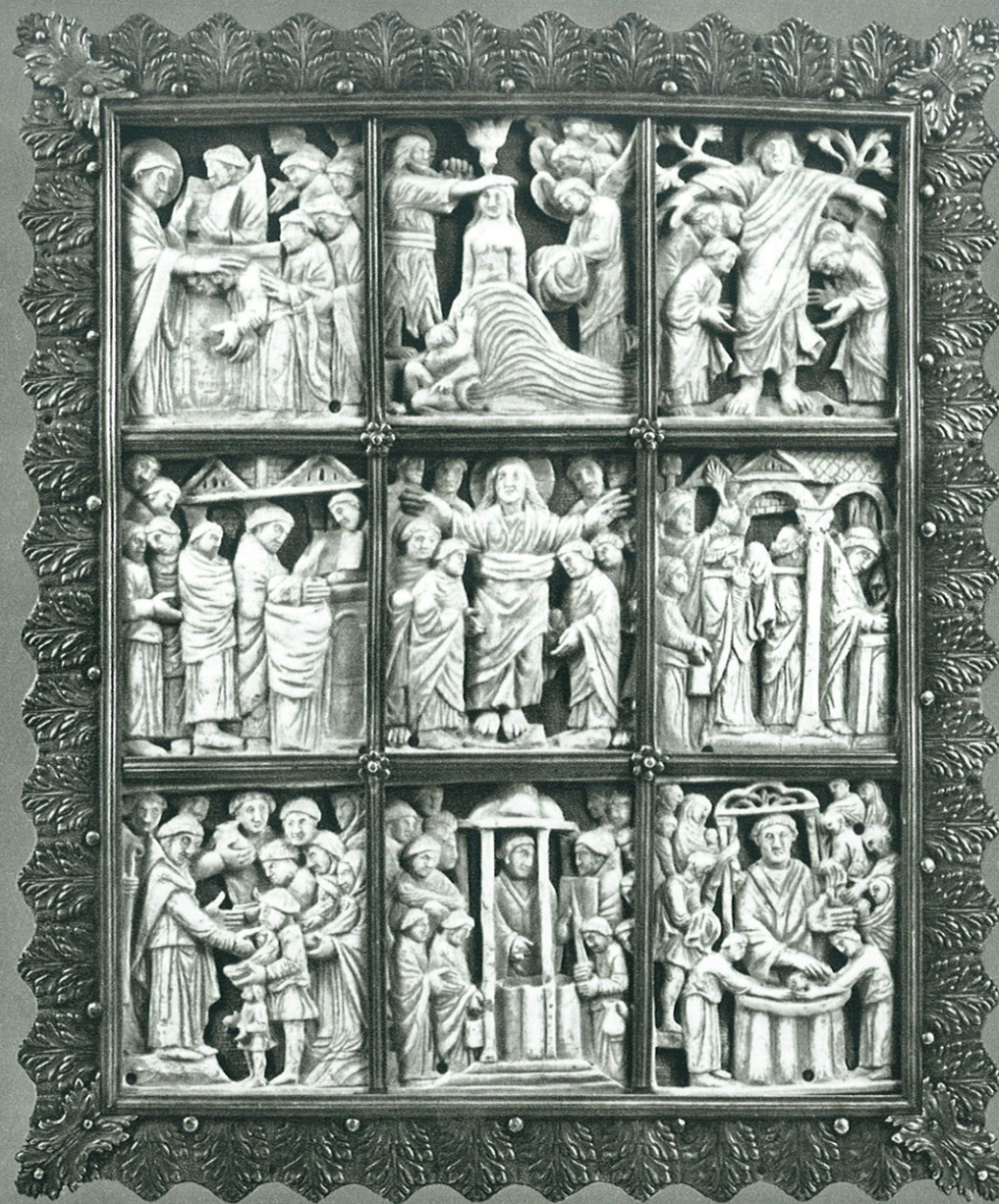
Art after Charlemagne

The great humanists who belonged to the emperor's circle and survived him were no doubt anxious to prolong the antiquarian trend after his death. It was in this spirit that artistic production maintained the same high level of quality during the reigns of Louis the Pious, Louis the German and Lothair I. It seems improbable that an important school continued to function at the imperial court under those three monarchs; but the style of Charlemagne's Palace School spread to the peripheral centres. This is demonstrated by the book cover with Christ in Majesty in Berlin (Goldschmidt, I, no. 23), the ivory with the two sovereigns in triumph at Florence (Goldschmidt, I, no. 10) whom József Deér identified as Charlemagne the conqueror of heretics and barbarians and the St Gregory (?) in the Vienna National Library (Goldschmidt, I, no. 21). But from then on the bishops, whose power had greatly increased and the rich Benedictine abbeys played an increasingly decisive part in artistic production. With the disappearance of a strong central power, the ancient bishoprics and the monasteries began to make it clear that they meant to exercise control in the sphere of art, particularly when they were governed by representatives of the great Frankish nobility.

The first city where the arts experienced a new period of prosperity was Metz, where the powerful Archbishop Drogo (826–855), a half brother of Louis the Pious, was closely connected with the imperial court. A number of important ivory reliefs produced by that school are still extant. Their origin can be established beyond

212 – IVORY WITH ST MICHAEL. MUSEUM FÜR KUNSTHANDWERK, LEIPZIG.

213 – IVORY FRAGMENT OF AN ASCENSION. HESSISCHES LANDESMUSEUM, DARMSTADT.



214 — IVORY COVER OF THE DROGO SACRAMENTARY. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS.

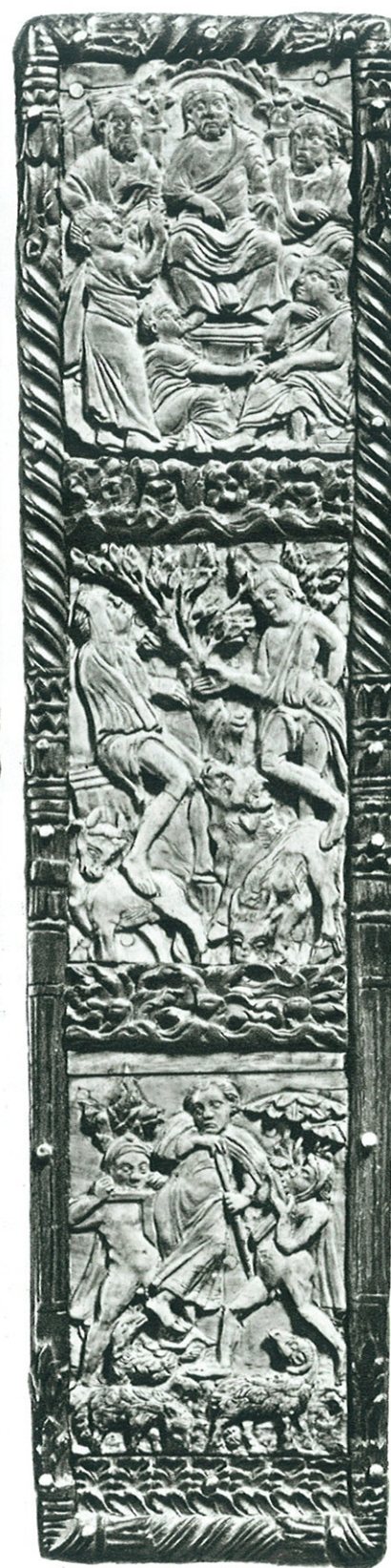
any doubt due to their kinship with the Drogo Sacramentary (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale) and also with the miniatures of the Metz School. We might add that a great many ivory reliefs mentioned by Adolf Goldschmidt as coming from the Metz School derive from manuscripts that were written in that city. The small openwork reliefs on the cover of the Drogo Sacramentary—they reproduce liturgical scenes and episodes from the life of Christ inspired by the text of the volume itself—display a flatter, more pictorial method of treating the subject and a greater scenic unity than those of Charlemagne's Palace School. There is a possibility that this style was influenced by the works of the Reims School, which was also going through



215 — IVORY COVER OF THE DROGO SACRAMENTARY. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS.

a period of renaissance at that time. Also closely related are the ivories with scenes from Christ's childhood and Passion that formerly adorned the front and back covers of a Metz Gospel Book now in the Bibliothèque Nationale (lat. 9388).

These ivories demonstrate that the Metz School continued to utilize early Christian models but, more than Charlemagne's Palace School, gave them the imprint of its own style. The figures are smaller and more lifelike; light and shade are much used to animate the scenes. On the other hand, the principal figures are mostly set in the foreground. A third book cover not far removed from the foregoing is preserved in the Liebighaus at Frankfurt; it is a five-part diptych in the early



217 - IVORY FAN (FLABELLUM), DETAILS. MUSEO NAZIONALE, FLORENCE.

218 - LEAF OF THE AREOBINDUS DIPTYCH. PARIS.

216 - IVORY COVER OF A GOSPEL BOOK: PASSION SCENES. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS.



219 - LEAF OF THE AREOBINDUS DIPTYCH, DETAIL: ADAM AND EVE. LOUVRE, PARIS.

Christian style. The centre panel, which represents the temptation of Christ, is surrounded by four scenes from His childhood on a smaller scale.

A younger school linked with this older group and now known as the Second Metz School appeared during the second half of the ninth century. Though it borrowed a great many elements from its predecessor, its style developed in the direction of increasingly lively movement and gradually disappearing antiquarian character. Because its products were also influenced by other West Frankish workshops, such as that of Saint-Denis, they must therefore be given a later dating; all the more so because of their obvious links with the ivories produced at Metz during the tenth century. Most of the group are quite remarkable carvings from the second half of the ninth, as exemplified by the book covers in Berlin (Goldschmidt, I, no. 81), in the Würzburg University Library (Goldschmidt, I, no. 82), in Paris (Goldschmidt, I, no. 83) and in Coburg Castle (Goldschmidt, I, no. 87). To these must be added the exquisitely carved comb of St Heribert in the Schnütgen Museum at Cologne (Goldschmidt, I, no. 92), the Brunswick casket (Goldschmidt, I, no. 96) and the side panel of a casket in the Kofler Collection, Lucerne.

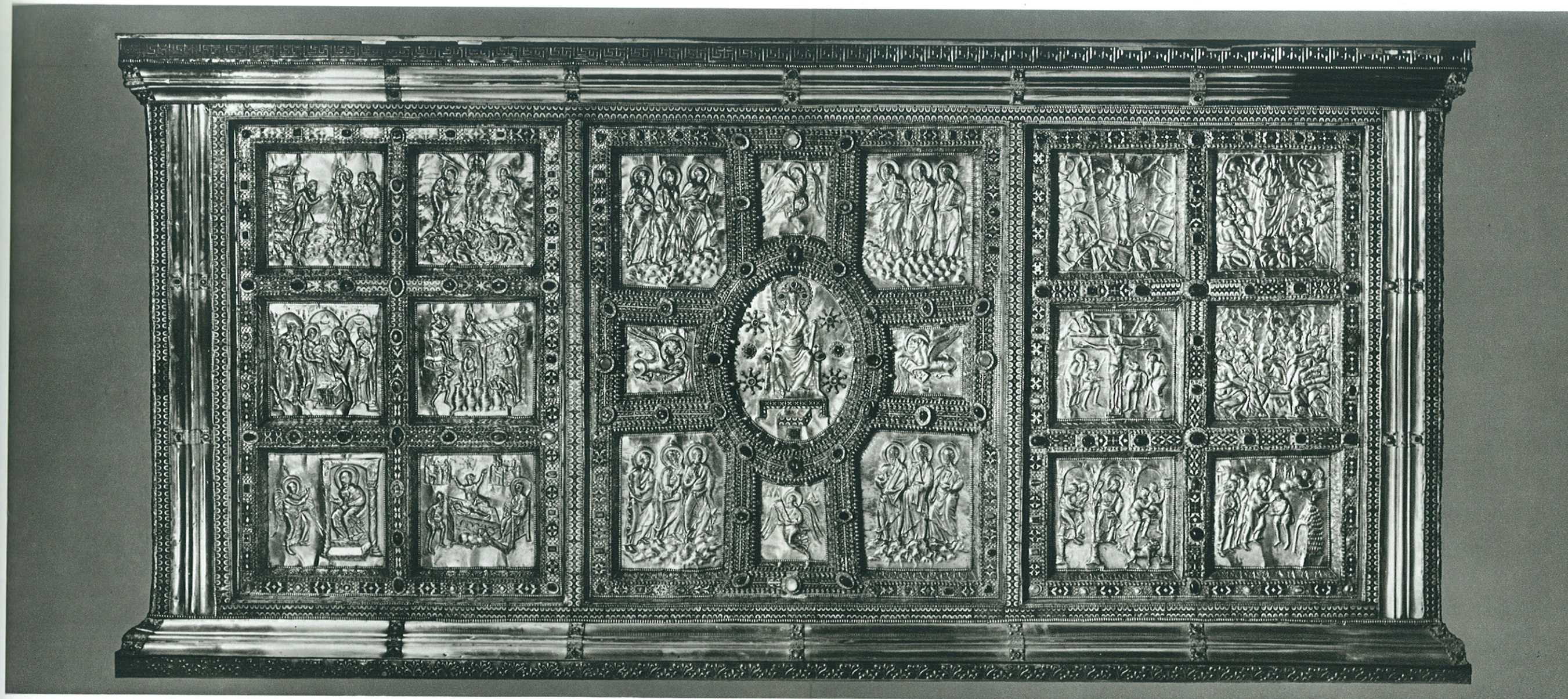
Quite rightly attributed to the School of Tours is the magnificent flabellum from Saint-Philibert at Tournus, now in the Florence National Museum. The name 'Johel' carved in the ivory stands no doubt for Abbot Gelo, who towards the middle

of the ninth century succeeded Hilbold at Cunault and distinguished himself in all the arts. The style of the fan's miniatures, which are closely allied to its ivory reliefs, is another reason for attributing this work to the Tours School. What surprises us is the genuinely antique spirit pervading the reliefs on the handle, which give the impression of having been copied from a manuscript of Virgil's *Eclogues*. The six panels, interpreted in the Christian sense, represent Melibœus with the flock of goats, Pan and Gallus, Alexis, Damon, Palaemon and the poet foretelling the birth of the Redeemer. The scrollwork on the handle also evinces a revival of classical motifs, while the saints on the cup-shaped capital—one of them is St Philibert—display the highly developed style of the Tours School. The vigorous handling of the drapery folds and the physical details of the figures are an advance from the style of the older Metz School and prepare the way for the works of the second half of the ninth century. Unfortunately, very few pieces of this type from the Tours School are still extant, but the fan has a certain kinship with the Garden of Eden on an ivory book cover in the Louvre recalling models of the late antique period, and with the curious diptych in the Musée de Cluny, Paris, whose centaurs and other fabulous creatures differ from their models by their greater elegance and liveliness.

Art under Charles the Bald

After the division of the Carolingian empire in 843, Charles the Bald (died 877) once more concentrated all the imperial forces in the lands of the West Franks. The immense number of fine manuscripts and the splendid pieces of goldsmiths' work executed at his order in the workshops he controlled at Corbie, Reims and Saint-Denis show that, like Charlemagne, he exploited the arts to enhance the royal prestige. He too had a marked predilection for antiquity, as is proved by the decoration of the lost reliquary ('Ecrin de Charlemagne') of Saint-Denis, which was studded with precious stones. He lent his support to the artistic zeal of his most intimate friends, Archbishop Hincmar of Reims and Abbot Hilduin of Saint-Denis. Due to the two prelates and to the monarch himself, the fame of the abbey of Saint-Denis soon spread far and wide. It came to be considered one of the foremost schools for the goldsmith's art, and its name was soon so well known that other monasteries sent their monks there for training. This flourishing school extended its influence as far afield as Winchester. During the last years of the reign of Charles the Bald, when Charles himself was secular abbot of Saint-Denis (876-877), the monastery became, if possible, still more important and received showers of gifts, particularly from the ruler. Many of the works produced in its workshops have an eclectic character: they reveal certain influences of Charlemagne's Palace School and occasionally the more classical impact of the Tours School. When the Saint-Denis School reached the peak of its evolution towards the middle and during the second half of the ninth century, it was artistically far ahead of all its predecessors. In its works the illusion of perspective is more marked, the figures achieve greater life and





221 – MILAN, SANT' AMBROGIO. ALTAR, FRONT: MAJESTAS DOMINI AND CHRISTOLOGICAL SCENES.

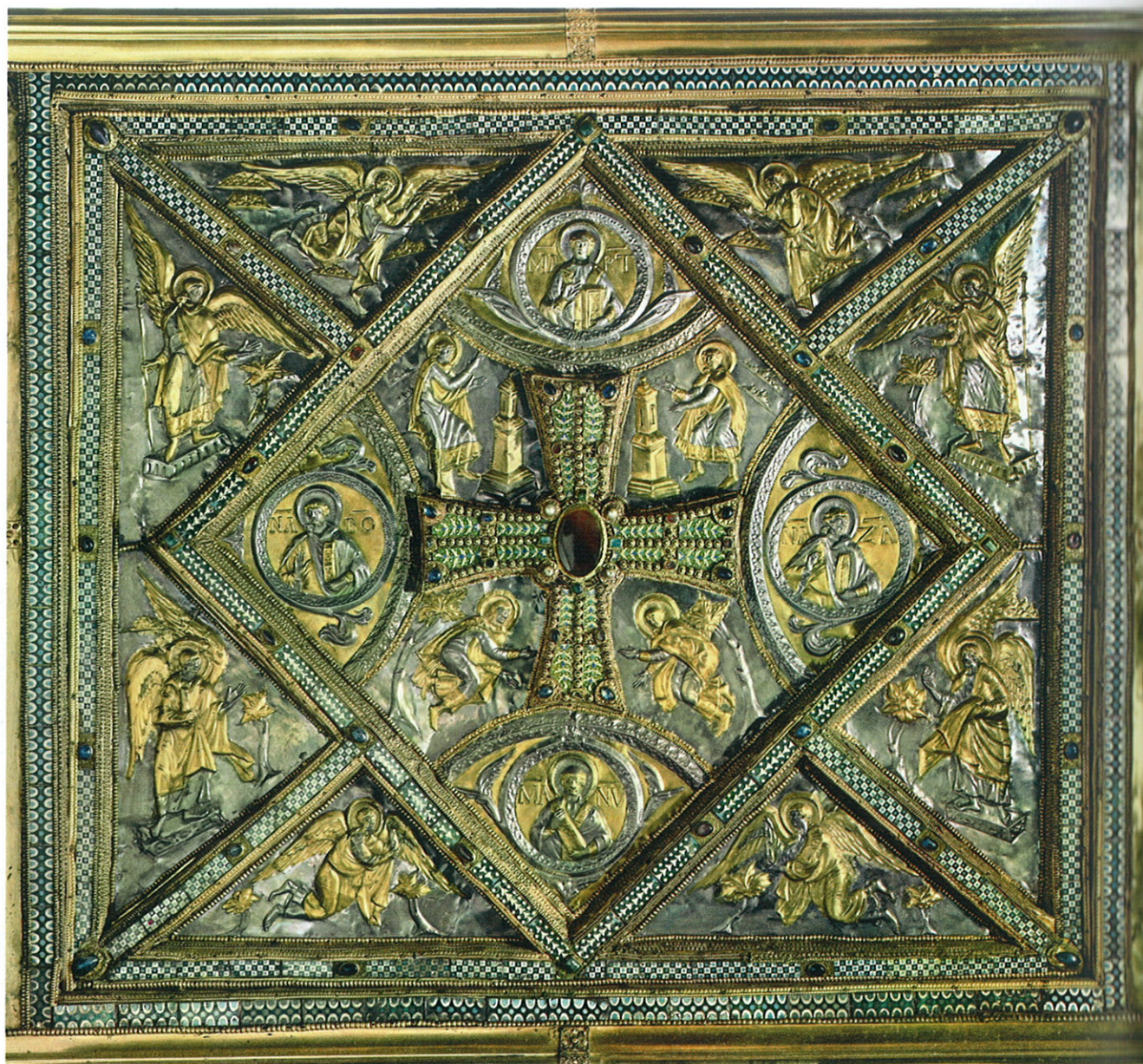
movement, the physical forms are more clearly asserted. About the year 830, the pen drawings in the Utrecht Psalter, a product of the Reims School, which recall the reliefs on the 'Pouch of St Stephen' in the Vienna Treasury, reveal clearly for the first time this stylistic transformation. The impact of such early works can be traced down to the latest products of the Corbie-Saint-Denis group and to the cover of the St Emmeram Gospels (c. 870), the best example of them.

The golden altar (*paliotto*) of Sant' Ambrogio in Milan, in which we can see early signs of this new trend, dates from the very beginning of the great new era under the reign of Charles the Bald. In the centre of the front is an effigy of Christ in Majesty surrounded by Christological scenes in twenty rectangular panels. The

rear is adorned with scenes from the life of St Ambrose, while on each side is a cross framed in a lozenge and surrounded by angels and saints. This gilt bas-relief is framed by narrow bands of splendid enamelwork. On the rear there is also a portrait of Archbishop Angilbert II (824–859), a member of the Frankish aristocracy who commissioned the altar and, opposite him, a portrait of Vuolvinius, the artist who executed it. Through these individuals the reliefs can be dated with a certainty to about 840. Since for technical reasons the front cannot be separated from the back, we are justified in presuming that the entire work was executed before the middle of the century. It is true that the front differs slightly from the rear; indeed, the discrepancies are clear to see. The master of the Christological scenes is more

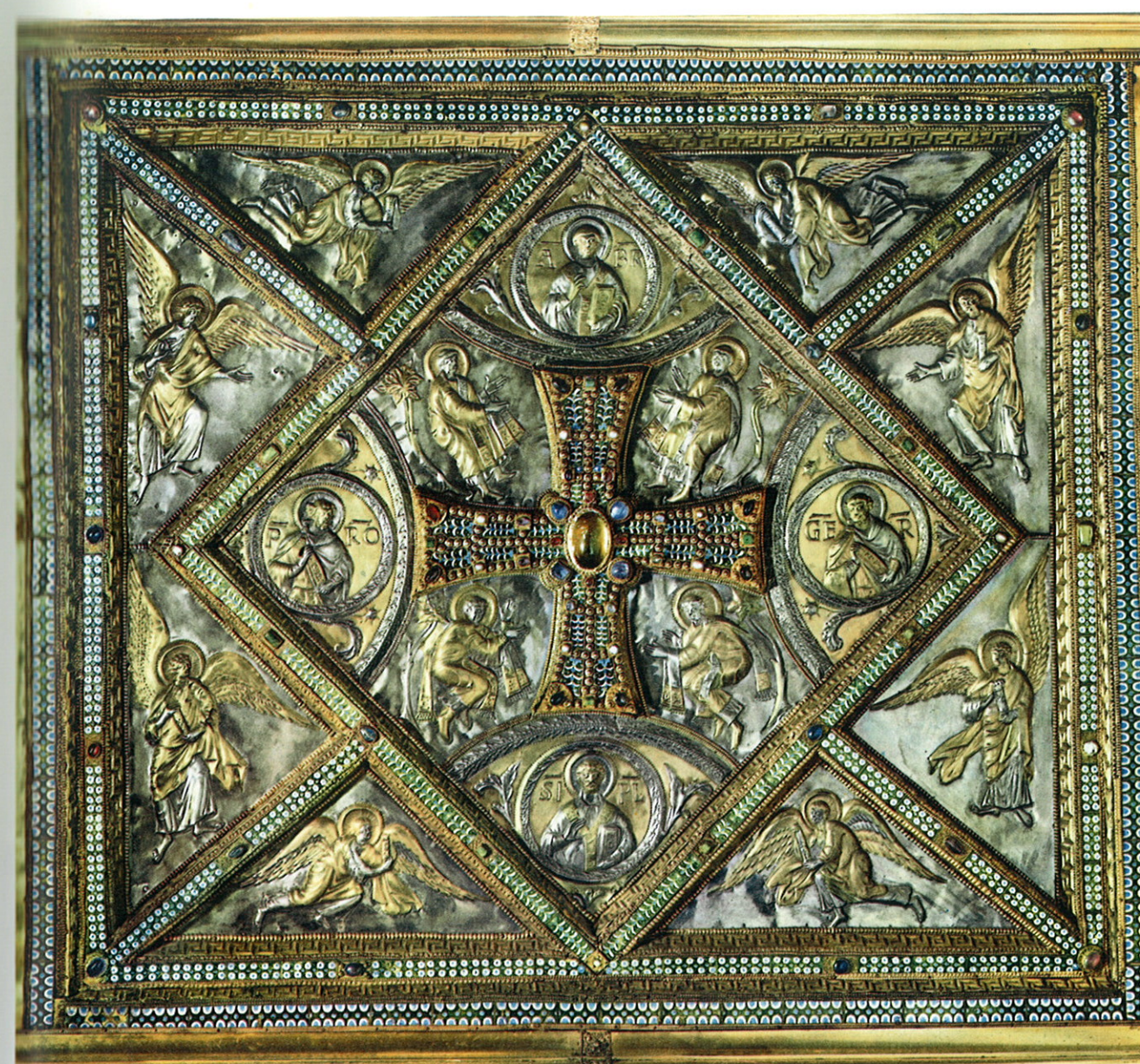
220 – MILAN, SANT' AMBROGIO. ALTAR, DETAIL OF THE BACK: ST AMBROSE AND ANGILBERT.

222 – MILAN, SANT' AMBROGIO. ALTAR, DETAIL OF THE BACK: ST AMBROSE AND VUOLVINIUS. ►



223 - MILAN, SANT'AMBROGIO. ALTAR, SIDE.

progressive than Vuolvinus, whose style calls to mind the cubic forms of the Tours School. The tranquil outlines of Vuolvinus' figures are simpler and completely separated from their space, which is vaguely indicated by a few scattered architectural elements. In this way, through his broad conception of forms and his taste for simplicity, Vuolvinus achieved a more monumental effect than did the master of the front, who, however, is his superior on a purely artistic plane. The latter displays a livelier manner, seen in his more spirited drawing; here and there we can recognize Byzantine models or references to the style of the Utrecht Psalter. But he is less



224 - MILAN, SANT'AMBROGIO. ALTAR, SIDE.

antiquarian, with the result that his figures are almost reminiscent of the Reichenau School. Although on the spatial level a stronger illusionistic impression is apparent, the bodily forms are all but erased and pictorially dominated by the uniform rhythm of the drapery. When we consider the reliefs in detail, we find that the style of the Christological ones is not absolutely consistent, so that we are tempted to presume them to be the work of two different artists. They have, however, certain traits in common: for instance, a more intense psychological characterization and a dramatic representation of the action that is unequalled by the scenes on the back.



225 - IRON CROWN WITH ENAMELLED GOLD PLAQUES. CATHEDRAL TREASURY, MONZA.

The Sant' Ambrogio altar was probably executed in Milan, which had been an important art centre since Roman times. It remains to be seen whether Angilbert summoned Vuolvinus and the master of the Christological reliefs to Milan from one of the West Frankish abbeys and whether they were personally in contact with Reichenau. The use of cloisonné enamel to frame the scenes and of disks around the heads that recall antique enamels is important as a means to identify this altar with the Lombard art of northern Italy. This type of cloisonné enamel was unknown in northern Europe; therefore the small enamel plaques on the Altheus reliquary at Sion also seem to have been influenced by the Milanese school. The altar is also linked with the iron crown at Monza, particularly in the technical treatment and the colouring of the enamels. Also recalling the art of the Milanese enamellers is the little portable altar from Adelhausen in the Augustinermuseum at Freiburg im Breisgau, undoubtedly made in an Upper Rhenish workshop in the ninth century.

The new style revealed for the first time by the masters of the Sant' Ambrogio altar and of the Utrecht Psalter reached its full development shortly after the middle of the century. It can be seen in a great many works, most of which were linked with

the patronage of Charles the Bald and his court. A number of important pieces have been lost and are known only from documents. But some of the most outstanding, including the gifts donated by the king to the abbey of Saint-Denis, are extant.

A group of engraved rock crystals, produced no doubt in Lorraine, is typical of this stylistic transformation. In some of the earliest, for instance the seals of Theodulf, abbot of Fleury (died 821) at Halberstadt, of Lothair II (855-869) at Aachen and of Archbishop Ratpodus of Trier (833-915) at Hamburg, the influence of antique models is still evident. The most important piece still extant, in the British Museum, bears the inscription of Lothair II and is completely covered with eight scenes from the life of St Susanna. The lively movement of the figures and the graphic, nervous manner of their treatment reveals a link with the Utrecht Psalter. Of the remaining specimens that have come down to us, the two representations of Christ's Baptism at Rouen and Freiburg im Breisgau are still allied stylistically with the Lothair Crystal. Others—for instance, the Crucifixions in the British Museum, the Augustinermuseum at Freiburg im Breisgau, the Cabinet des Médailles in Paris, and Count Cini's collection in Venice—already evince the decline of this art form which took place towards the end of the ninth century.

An obvious affinity with the style of the Utrecht Psalter can be seen in a group of carved ivories, to which Adolf Goldschmidt gave the collective name of Liuthard after the copyist of three royal manuscripts. It includes the covers of the Psalter of Charles the Bald in the Bibliothèque Nationale and of a prayer book he owned, formerly in the Zurich Cathedral and now in the Swiss National Museum in that city. It also contains the large plaque of the Crucifixion in Munich, from the cover



226 - LOTHAIR CRYSTAL: SCENES OF THE LIFE OF ST SUSANNA. BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON.



227 - ROCK CRYSTAL: THE CRUCIFIXION. AUGUSTINERMUSEUM, FREIBURG IM BREISGAU.



228 - IVORY BOOK COVER. SCHWEIZERISCHES LANDESMUSEUM, ZÜRICH.



229 - COVER OF THE GOSPEL BOOK OF HENRY II. BAYERISCHE STAATSBIBLIOTHEK, MUNICH.



of a royal manuscript donated by Henry II to Bamberg Cathedral, and a number of other objects scattered in various collections. The two ivory plaques on the cover of the Psalter of Charles the Bald, which was copied by Liuthard (c. 842–869), reproduce the illustrations of Psalms L and LVI in the Utrecht Psalter. On the back Nathan charges David and Bathsheba with the murder of Uriah; on the front the soul of the Psalmist seeks refuge in God's lap from lions and men who threaten him. The carver transposed the line drawings from the manuscript to the ivory with great spirit: the figures, distributed respectively in two and four registers, move within their frames in a lively, almost nervous manner. This master at the court of Charles rendered his theme with an extremely lifelike movement—in contrast to the rather hieratic postures of the figures in the scenes we have observed in Charlemagne's Palace School—and mustered his figures with psychological insight, insisting on absolute unity of action. The effects he obtained in this way far surpass in intensity those achieved by the artist of the Christ on the Sant' Ambrogio altar in Milan, in which the influence of the Eastern Church, as displayed by the Utrecht Psalter, is still more in evidence. The Zurich plaques were carved by a less skilful artist. The scenes from Psalms XXIV and XXVI have also been transposed in relief after the manner of the drawings in the Utrecht Psalter. They show us the Psalmist before the Temple in which Christ stands, and the distribution of the scrolls of the Law.

The Crucifixion on the Gospel Book of Henry II in Munich was carved by the master to whom we owe the front cover of the Psalter of Charles the Bald. It is surrounded by the Holy Women at the Tomb, the Resurrection, the Sun and the Moon mounted on four-horse chariots, Oceanus, Gaea and Roma, in a sumptuous frame embellished with enamels and precious stones. This grandiose composition is one of the finest and most perfectly balanced products of the School of Charles the Bald. Executed in about 870, perhaps at Saint-Denis itself, it is surpassed by no other work of that period. A small book cover with the scene of Abner and Joab by the pool of Gibeon, formerly in the Treasury of Saint-Denis and now in the Louvre, is similar in style but less impressive. Towards the end of the century composition lost vigour and movement lost liveliness, but the style lived on nonetheless. The workshop where these extraordinary ivory carvings were produced remains unknown. Many products were inspired by the Second Metz School, whose impact, almost a century later, was still felt in the monastery workshops of the Eastern Empire.

Among works of Charles the Bald's Palace School those executed in precious metals can bear successful comparison with the carved ivories. Saint-Denis, in particular, received a quantity of valuable gifts from the monarch, which were very likely executed in the abbey's own workshops. Many of these pieces have been lost and are known only from old drawings or engravings. By a lucky chance we know of one of the most important, the abbey's famous altar frontal: it is depicted in a Franco-Flemish painting entitled 'The Mass of Saint Giles' dating from the end of the fifteenth century and now in the National Gallery, London. The reliefs in repoussé gold comprised, in the centre, a Christ in Majesty that recalls the one on the cover of the St Emmeram Gospels and represents a great advance in plastic



231 – COVER OF THE PSALTER OF CHARLES THE BALD. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS.



232 – COVER OF THE PSALTER OF CHARLES THE BALD. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS.



233 – IVORY BOOK COVER: JOAB AND ABNER. LOUVRE, PARIS.

portrayal over the Christ on the Milan altar. The lateral fields represented two saints under arcades above which hung crowns flanked by angels.

Another of the abbey's sumptuous treasures that disappeared during the troubled times of the French Revolution, the '*Ecrin de Charlemagne*,' was also probably donated by the same monarch. It was a reliquary over three feet high, shaped like the façade of a church, which we know from a drawing of 1791 now in the Bibliothèque Nationale. Only the gem that topped it, an antique intaglio representing Julia, daughter of the Emperor Titus (79–81 A.D.), is still kept in the Cabinet des



234 – INTAGLIO FROM THE 'ECRIN DE CHARLEMAGNE.' PARIS.

235 – GOLD COVER OF THE CODEX AUREUS FROM ST EMMERAM OF REGENSBURG. BAYERISCHE STAATSBIBLIOTHEK, MUNICH.



Médailles. The setting of the gem proves that the work was not earlier than the reign of Charles the Bald. The stones are set in the same simple manner one sees on the cover of his Psalter in the Bibliothèque Nationale.

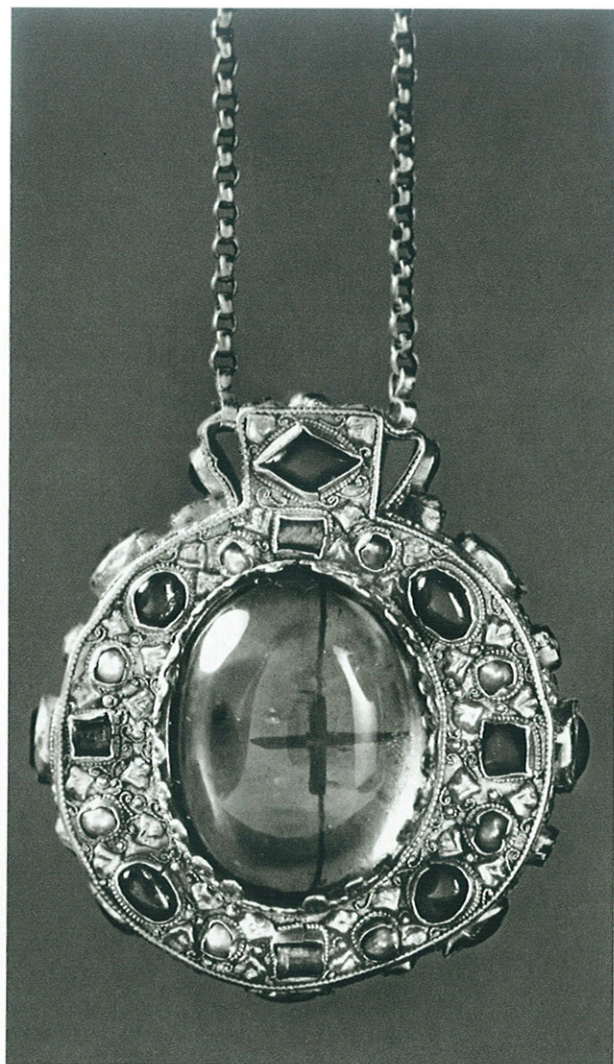
The three finest pieces of goldsmiths' work that have survived from the Palace School of Charles the Bald are the second cover of the Lindau Gospels, now in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, the portable altar (*ciborium*) of King Arnulf, and the cover of the St Emmeram Gospels in Munich. Technically and stylistically they form a group that demonstrates the unbroken development of the style initiated by the Utrecht Psalter. Since the manuscript of the St Emmeram Gospels was penned by the brothers Berenger and Liuthard for the king in 870 and since the style of the reliefs relates them very closely to the miniatures within, we may infer that the metal-work was executed at the same time. The manuscript was probably produced at Corbie, so the cover may well have the same origin; but for other equally valid reasons it might be ascribed to Saint-Denis. (Some scholars, such as Georg Swarzenski, date this work to the late Reims period; and if we accept the close analogy between the miniatures and the reliefs, they might very well have been produced in the same workshop. But Carl Nordenfalk rejects this possibility.) An argument in favour of the latter attribution is that in 835 the abbey received as a gift the Greek manuscript of the works of Dionysius, the *Areopagite*, which was translated there in 858. The iconographic novelty in the second Lindau cover of the representation of the Sun and Moon above the Cross and the angels hovering in the corners was evidently inspired by the description in Dionysius' letters to Polycarp. The second Lindau cover is also related stylistically to the Sant' Ambrogio altar as is seen by comparing the angels on the cover with those on the side panels of the altar. But the cover is livelier and more nervous, in the manner of the Utrecht Psalter.

The simple, calm forms of the circular reliefs on the sides of the reliquary of St Stephen in the Vienna Treasury also recall the mid-century school. The surface arrangement and the wealth of ornamentation in precious stones around the edges are typical of the stylistic phase of the St Emmeram Gospels and the 'Talisman of Charlemagne' at Reims. In about 896 the Gospel Book was presented by King Odo or Charles the Simple to King Arnulf, who sent it together with the *ciborium* to the monastery of St Emmeram at Regensburg. It was restored there under Abbot Ramwold (975-1001). In the centre Christ is seated on a throne surrounded by the four Evangelists. In the corners are represented the woman taken in adultery, the money changers driven from the temple, the healing of the leper and the blind man restored to sight. The opulent border is embellished with a profusion of precious stones, in which the dominant colours are blue, green and gold.

Despite a few minor differences in the style of the reliefs, the *ciborium* of King Arnulf in Munich is very closely related to the second Lindau cover and still more to the St Emmeram Gospels. The *ciborium* and the Gospels have the same history. On the base of the former is an inscription naming King Arnulf as the donor. On the four tympana are the Hand of God, the Lamb, the Angel and the Globe; on the sloping sides of the roof, scenes from the New Testament: the temptation of Christ, the raising of Lazarus, the parable of the lilies of the field, the calling of



236 - SECOND COVER OF THE LINDAU GOSPELS. PIERPONT MORGAN LIBRARY, NEW YORK



237 - 'TALISMAN OF CHARLEMAGNE.' REIMS CATHEDRAL.



238 - CIBORIUM OF KING ARNULF. SCHATZKAMMER DER RESIDENZ, MUNICH.



239 - CIBORIUM OF KING ARNULF, DETAIL: CHRIST AND ST PETER. SCHATZKAMMER DER RESIDENZ, MUNICH.

Peter and the resurrection of the young man of Nain. Stylistically, the reliefs are still very close to the drawings in the Utrecht Psalter, while at the same time they resemble the miniatures of the so-called Corbie School. Since the St Emmeram Gospels date from about 870, the *ciborium* may be attributed to a time very close to that year. True, the reliefs on the book cover display a certain technical progress, while those of the altar are still linked with earlier works, such as the ivory plaques of the Psalter of Charles the Bald and the Lothair Crystal with the life of St Susanna in London. The book cover represents a more advanced phase of evolution and already points the way to the following period. In particular, the figures are more mutually coherent and their bodily forms are more forcefully asserted; while those



240 – BRONZE RELIQUARY. COLLEGIATE CHURCH OF ST VITUS, ELLWANGEN.

on the altar are still executed rather in the nervous, incorporeal manner of the Utrecht Psalter. They give the impression of hovering in an immaterial space and call to mind works in chased bronze such as the Ellwangen casket, whose lid and front are adorned with planets and princely personages. Thus the St Emmeram Gospels mark the transition to an art that came to full fruition about 900.

There is no work still extant from this latter period that can be compared with those I have just described. Nonetheless, the Tuotilo ivories at St Gall, made about 900, represent a further development of this style. Needless to say, we must keep in mind that these ivories are the products of a provincial school. The Christ in Majesty and the four evangelists, in particular, are good examples of the continuity of the themes treated on the St Emmeram Gospels. The composition of the scenes is now governed by a stricter symmetry, and the highest points of the relief form a single plane parallel to the background. Gone are the multiple planes of Carolingian reliefs, and the most remarkable innovation consists in the altered relationship of the subject matter to the spectator. The political change in the Frankish Empire under the House of Saxony (911–1024) also made itself felt in the artistic sphere.

W. F. VOLBACH



241 – IVORY BOOK COVER: MAJESTAS DOMINI. STIFTSBIBLIOTHEK, ST GALL.



Conclusion

ONE of the objects of this book has been to show by means of pictures—by bringing before the reader's eyes the actual sources of our knowledge—the interest and relevance of the civilization of the Carolingian period. This period constitutes an important chapter in the history of art; indeed it represents a decisive intermediate stage between antiquity and the Middle Ages.

As in the case of the preceding period, the interpretation of art forms so remote from our own time raised problems so complex that three specialists had to be called on to cope with them. Moreover, though the Carolingian Empire at the time of its greatest extent covered a large part of western Europe, it will be noted that this book does not deal with the countries lying outside its frontiers, such as the British Isles, Scandinavia and Spain. These will be dealt with in further volumes of the Arts of Mankind series.

Discoveries made in the course of the past thirty years have to a large extent revolutionized our previous knowledge of Carolingian art. An attempt has been made in this volume to present a critical synthesis of these recent investigations.

One result is that we now have a much clearer idea of the limitations of our knowledge. There is in particular one very important gap in our sources of information. It is commonly supposed that barbarian goldsmiths' work was exclusively a product of the Merovingian period. This is an error. In his account of the siege of Paris by the Northmen in 885 and 886, a contemporary, Abbo of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, ends his long descriptive poem with invectives against the love of luxury. His words are informed with a kind of tragic grandeur because they were prompted, we feel, by what he had seen around him in daily life. He upbraids the Parisians with having kindled the wrath of God by their display of wealth, above all by the extravagant luxury of their clothes and jewellery. A few years later the chronicler Richerus indignantly levels the same charges against the clergy and monks of Reims. Indeed,

there can be no doubt that the notables of that day decked themselves out no less richly than did the Merovingian leuds. This is confirmed by a passage in the chronicle of the monk Heiricus of Auxerre: in 841, to thank St Germanus for having restored his eyesight, Conrad, count of Aargau, 'took off his gold bracelets' and laid them as an offering on the tomb of the bishop of Auxerre.

But whereas entire cases of ornaments, weapons and even items of clothing of the Merovingian period can be admired in our museums, not as much has been preserved from the Carolingian period. From the ninth century on, an accident of history has deprived us of an essential source of archaeological information—objects found in graves. The custom of burying the dead man with the clothes, weapons and ornaments which he needed for his life in the next world goes back to very early times. It was practised in Roman antiquity but became general among the Franks from the sixth to the eighth century.

The reason that this custom died out in the course of the ninth century can readily be inferred: since Gallo-Roman times the cemeteries had been situated outside towns, in the suburbs, for the dead were not permitted to be buried within the ramparts; now, with the Norse invasions in full spate, the insecurity of these defenceless cemeteries *extra muros* became an object of concern, as in the case of the *areae* and catacombs of Rome two centuries earlier. Norse raiders and individual looters were breaking into the tombs to strip the dead of their valuables. Two facts concerning these burials have now been established: first, excavations have shown that the graves in cemeteries situated *extra muros* no longer contain any precious objects; secondly, the precise indications given in *Gallia Christiana* for each town in Gaul show that in a great many dioceses, from the third quarter of the ninth century on, bishops and officials were buried *intra muros*, generally inside the cathedral. This was the origin of our urban cemeteries of the Middle Ages. It should be noted that for these dead protected by the town walls and the paving of the cathedrals, the Church continued to observe the ancient custom. A great many of the graves inside cathedrals have been opened in the course of time: the dead men were found clad in their ceremonial robes and wearing their jewels. Unfortunately almost nothing remains today of these grave furnishings, which were dispersed as soon as they were found.

Another category of goldsmiths' work, one much more important than mere objects of personal adornment, for the history of art, is now almost entirely beyond our ken. I refer to the many ninth- and tenth-century altar frontals in gold or silver, often inlaid with precious stones, which were melted down under the Old Regime or during the Revolution. The main recorded examples of these lost altar frontals are mentioned in our Chronological Table. Some of them contained such a weight of precious metal that the funds obtained by selling them off sufficed to rebuild the church of which they had been the principal ornament. Our knowledge of these lost masterpieces is usually limited to a brief mention of them in documents. Nothing

is known of the technical details of their execution. From the few recorded indications we have, we can divine something of the iconographic richness of the scenes in embossed metal which decorated not only the front of the altar but the sides as well. Nothing can compensate for the loss of these magnificent altar frontals, veritable large-scale sculptures, which were a creation of the Carolingian period and served as models for the first works of Romanesque sculpture.

It must be admitted that even in the field of architecture the gaps in our knowledge are equally great. Of ninth-century work, the only part we know well is 'official art,' to extend to architecture the expression so aptly applied by Jean Porcher to the scriptoria and painters' ateliers which catered to the taste of the court and the ruler's entourage.

It is true that, where architecture is concerned, the official art of the period governed not only the construction of the palaces and villas belonging to men of high rank, like the country residence of Theodulf at Germigny, but also the construction of the great monastic and cathedral complexes, for new institutions required new designs adapted to their needs.

But just how much do we know about the architecture of the new monasteries, some fifty of them, which were founded in Gaul between the Loire and the Mediterranean, most of them between the mouth of the Rhône and the valley of the Garonne, or about the twenty-five other monasteries built by the Franks south of the Alps, chiefly in Lombardy, during the first half of the ninth century? Practically nothing. Our ignorance is even more complete regarding rural architecture, and this is a serious lacuna. If we were better informed about this latter architecture, we should probably find that it goes far to explain certain rustic modes of building and decorating which characterize early Romanesque architecture in France. One of the plates in this book illustrates an early medieval bas-relief in the Brescia museum which bears out this hypothesis, at least in Italy, for it combines antique reminiscences with curious animal images drawn from folk art.

Another point is even more instructive. There are good grounds today for regarding the tenth-century monastic churches erected in the Spanish March, in Roussillon and Catalonia, as a Carolingian art exported to these borderlands at the same time that a political, military and religious organization was established there to contain and keep a watch on the Moors of Spain—an organization which moreover proved so effective that it successfully protected these provinces against the Norse invaders. Although strongly marked by local practices, this rustic art reflects the major architecture of northern Gaul at the end of the Carolingian period. The same is true of many small country churches in the Montpellier region, whose significance has only just been realized.

Of course the study of folk survivals in Carolingian art is by no means devoid of interest, since it bears directly on a much-discussed problem: the origins of Romanesque art. But that is not the heart of the matter. The facile achievements which the Carolingian artists owed to their skill in imitating the antique must not make

us overlook the great burst of creative power which gave a new lease on life to architecture at that time, leading to the development of new techniques and practices by which all medieval architecture was later to benefit.

For centuries the Mediterranean basin had been the home of stone-built architecture. Yet the completely vaulted church of the medieval West was not the creation of Rome or Lombardy. Despite the profound impact of Byzantine influences, Italy kept, on the whole, to the timber-roofed basilica whose harmonious design had been worked out there as early as the fourth century.

The new type of church appeared in Gaul five centuries later. It was the outcome of rational calculation applied to the problem of disposing, at both the west and the east ends of the timber-roofed nave, sanctuaries and oratories on two or even three entirely vaulted storeys which would answer the needs of the new liturgy and also those of the cult of relics.

The Carolingian crypt with its mighty vaults, standing on the same level as the nave and communicating with it, was much more than a simple development of the Roman *confessio*, enlarging on it by the addition of burial places for churchmen and high-ranking laymen. It amounted in effect to a second church added to the first, a place of retreat conducive to meditation and miracles. It was entered through narrow passages, by the flickering light of lamps which were kept burning day and night round the 'Holy of Holies,' the sacred place where the venerated tomb lay. Here were worked the wonders which pilgrims and worshippers entreated of God through the intercession of the saints.

Standing over the crypt, the raised sanctuary too was often vaulted, giving it at times a shadow-laden atmosphere of mystery. In front of the choir reserved for the monks or canons, and beside the ambo, was a life-size figure of Christ on the cross, a majestic wood carving plated with gold- or silver-leaf.

In some places, beginning in the second half of the ninth century, a further step was taken: of displaying, for the veneration of the faithful, a bust of the saint whose relics were preserved in the church. These reliquary shrines, given the form of the human figure, preceded and inspired two works of very different quality: the reliquary statue of St Foy in the church of Conques and the superb gold Virgin given by Abbess Mathilda about the year 1000 to the Essen Cathedral. We all know how important a part statuary was to play in the art and piety of the Middle Ages. That statuary owed nothing either to pagan antiquity or to Byzantium. It has its source in the reliquary statues designed in the Carolingian period with the express purpose of representing the martyr or confessor by an image in the round, giving the illusion of life much more tellingly than could be done in a mosaic or a painting.

The characteristic 'westwork' of Carolingian churches—a monumental structure at the west end, with altar and sanctuary on the upper storey so as to allow free entrance into the nave on the ground floor—led to an increasingly skilful use of the antique pillar of cruciform section to carry the thrust of transverse arches and

various types of vaulting. So, by about the year 1000 it was possible to cover a large double-aisled church like Orléans Cathedral almost entirely with vaulting.

With their double-apse plan, entailing substantial additions at both the west and the east end, the churches of the Carolingian period covered a considerable area; some of them attained a size never afterwards surpassed. An even more arresting innovation was the height to which these towered churches rose. The westwork of the abbey church of Corvey, a mighty 'hand of peace' reaching heavenwards over the monastery and the surrounding countryside, remains the finest symbol of that yearning for the heights which the architects of the ninth century so keenly felt.

Churches with corner towers had been built from late antiquity (witness San Lorenzo, Milan), but the bell tower, whether detached or not, was created in Gaul, not in Italy. Monte Gargano, where the archangel Michael appeared to the bishop of Sipontum in 492, overlooks the Adriatic, but Carolingian Gaul not only consecrated mountaintops to the archangels, it also established lofty oratories over the entrance of the church or at the top of the chevet—sacred aeries, so to speak, where the winged servants of Heaven were invited to come down and protect mankind from lightning and sin.

At a time when town walls were being rebuilt everywhere to ward off the Norse invaders, the stone-built church towering over the city came to be regarded as a holy citadel, defended by the relics of its saints and the prayers of its clergy.

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