

Illuminated Manuscripts

76 Medieval manuscripts are hand-made books, and the illumination found in them is an art of the book; there is almost no area of the study of this art in which this fact is not fundamental. Generally speaking, 'books' in Classical antiquity existed in the form of scrolls made of papyrus. Anyone who has handled a long text in the form of a scroll will have little difficulty in understanding the advantages, from the point of view of handling, of the codex (manuscript of bound pages). The codex seems first to have appeared in the first century AD, and was soon adopted by Christians; but it achieved widespread acceptance perhaps only in the fourth century. The Vatican Vergil [105] and the Gospels of S. Augustine [107] are rare survivals from the beginnings of a great tradition.

Medieval books were also written on a different material: parchment (sometimes referred to as vellum, which strictly refers to calfskin). Parchment can be made from the skin of almost any animal. It is thus more widely available than papyrus, though it demands that those who want to make books in any number must have the resources to involve themselves, either directly or by proxy, in animal husbandry on a large scale. The individual sheets of parchment are folded into quires or gatherings: four folded sheets, making a quire of eight pages, is the unit most commonly found. The individual quires were sewn not only to each other but also to leather cords or thongs which could then be attached to wooden boards, resulting in a strong structure and protective binding. It is this protection which has resulted in the survival of so much manuscript illumination in marvellously fresh condition. What has very often been lost are the precious bindings of metal and ivory which covered some books, mostly those displayed in the liturgy—though such coverings survive for the manuscripts shown in [113] and [120].

The parchment book was a far better vehicle for painting than the papyrus scroll: parchment provided a good support, and the finished result was not subjected to the process of rolling and unrolling. Drawing (like writing) was carried out with a quill or reed pen, using either carbon or metal gall inks. The range of colours used in painting with the brush was a matter of cost and availability. There were often several possible sources of the same or a similar colour: most of the blue we see in medieval manuscripts is not lapis lazuli transported at great expense, ultimately from Afghanistan, but azurite, a blue stone rich in copper found in many countries of Europe. Pigments were tempered with a variety of substances, most commonly white and yolk of egg (egg glair and egg tempera). Gold, both as leaf laid on gesso, and powdered into paint, was used in many of the most luxurious books; so was silver, which has often

blackened through oxidization. A small number of texts survive transmitting recipes for the materials and processes of manuscript illumination; but it seems likely that it was most common for techniques to be handed down by example in the workshop.

The luxury book in Byzantium

The history of the luxury book in Byzantium falls into three very different sections. In the early period (now often termed 'late antiquity') the bound book as we know it today supplanted the scroll. The introduction of images into such books, however, and notably into books of religious content, only seems to have gained momentum after the early fifth century. Within a few generations anonymous craftsmen had experimented with virtually every significant possibility in terms of how, why, and where images should be included in a book [96]. This period is now represented by a small number of often very fragmentary survivals. The second period is defined by the iconoclast controversy (726–843), when the validity of using images in any religious context was fiercely questioned, but eventually legitimated. No luxury books survive from this period, nor from the troubled century or so before iconoclasm, or the generation or so after its final defeat. The third period extends from the ninth to the fifteenth century, with a political but not an art-historical hiatus generally recognized during the occupation of Constantinople (1204–61) which resulted from the diversion of the Fourth Crusade. This period is often termed 'Middle' and 'Late' Byzantine. The greatest number of luxury books appear to have been made between very approximately 950 and 1200 [97–9, 103, 104].

It is characteristic of Byzantine culture (notably after iconoclasm) that it sought to manifest what to us must seem a fictitious continuity with its early history, and even with apostolic times, through adherence to tradition and the avoidance (or disguise) of innovation [97]. As a result Byzantine art can look unchanging over centuries. Yet many of the circumstances of the production and consumption of luxury books altered over the Byzantine millennium. New pictorial subjects were frequently introduced in response to newly composed texts, but they were generally 'disguised' by the skilful adaptation of familiar formulae. The resulting complex relationship with the past has been seen in modern studies in terms of a series of 'renaissances' (such as the Macedonian [97] and Palaiologan [100] of the tenth and thirteenth–fourteenth centuries—named after the ruling dynasties—even a 'Justinianic renaissance' in the sixth century), and Byzantine art has been praised according to the degree of Graeco-Roman illusionism it has been found to convey. In practice this approach reveals



96 *Joseph's Brothers with Benjamin before Jacob* (sixth century), Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS theol. gr. 31, 'Vienna Genesis', folios 20v–21r

more about modern art-historical prejudices than it does about Byzantine ideas and practices. The intellectual basis of Byzantine illumination was provided by the seemingly contradictory nature of religious belief: images had to express the coexistence of the divine and the human, the historical and the eternal.

The Byzantines had a particular interest in using precious materials in their art work, and in gleaming and reflective surfaces. This is conspicuous in their luxury books, which make extensive use of gold-leaf grounds for images and large panels of decoration, contrasted with a highly polished parchment surface. A technical drawback of this aesthetic is the loss of pigment owing to flaking which has affected many Byzantine manuscripts. Where the paint surface is missing it is characteristic that only the simplest and most schematic underdrawing is found. A greater contrast with contemporary manuscript production techniques elsewhere in Europe, with their highly detailed preparatory drawings, could hardly be imagined. Byzantine miniaturists must generally have created their images directly with pigments: theirs was an essentially painterly art.

Little is known or recorded about the individuals who alone or in collaboration were responsible for the production of luxury books. Many different scenarios can be reconstructed by detailed examination of the works themselves. Some books were made by monastic craftsmen (or -women) for use 'in house' [98]. Some were produced by laymen (or -women) in urban shops, working on commission from wealthy patrons (male [99]

and female [100]). Some artists produced figured images, ornament, and were also scribes. Sometimes there was a division of labour amongst several hands. Constantinople seems always to have been the principal (but never the sole) centre for the production and consumption of luxury books.

In churches and monasteries luxury books were extra to normal requirements, and doubtless carefully preserved for use on special occasions. More workaday volumes would have been used until they wore out, and then replaced. The situation with regard to private ownership of books is less clear; quite often such books would find their way eventually into religious foundations at the wish of the owner. The Byzantines were clearly able to recognize books of unusual antiquity thanks to the change in script form from majuscule to minuscule in around the ninth century, although a version of majuscule was sometimes retained for the principal text of Gospel lections used in the liturgy. These Gospel lectionaries were held, like the cross, to be an image of Christ, and were the books most likely to receive a precious cover, in the early period (it would seem) constructed of ivory plaques, in the middle and late periods of metalwork, notably decorated with enamels. Such covers, intrinsically more valuable in material terms than what they contained, rarely survive on the books for which they were made.

Because of the inaccessibility of their Greek texts, even luxury Byzantine books were little known in western Europe until systematic collections began to be formed, beginning in the mid-fifteenth century. JL

The medieval West

78 A limited amount is known about the processes and circumstances of manuscript illumination. Until about 1200 the majority of illuminated books were produced in, by, and for monasteries; in the wake of the collapse of the urban culture of the Roman Empire, these institutions had emerged as the only places with the material resources and the literate skills to carry on such an undertaking. But the majority of medieval artists, in books as in other media, did not sign their works. Though many were undoubtedly monks, there is evidence that professional illuminators were active in the monastic context; since professionals could move from one monastic house to another in response to demand, this poses problems for the traditional identification of particular styles with particular monastic houses.

The variety of elements in a decorated book, as well as the process of production in separate quires, perhaps encouraged a division of labour. The analysis of the process of production is aided by the survival, in surprisingly large numbers even amongst the smartest books, of unfinished illumination. The person who sketches a composition using a lead point—the graphite pencil was mostly unknown in the Middle Ages—need not be the same as the person who paints the miniature; the person who lays gold leaf need not be the same as the person who paints a decorative border; the person who paints a figurative composition need not be the same as the person who paints a decorated initial letter. This can render the identification of individual hands a treacherous exercise, especially when the aim was to achieve a coherent whole, rather than to stress artistic individuality. The most basic collaboration was between scribe and artist. Though we cannot be sure how often these were the same person, it seems likely that the more the decoration is bound up with the writing of the text, the more likely it is that these elements were performed by the same individuals: it has been convincingly argued that both the script and the decoration of the Lindisfarne Gospels [118] were the work of a single individual, Eadfrith. But if scribe and artist were not one and the same, it is important to realize how many of the crucial decisions had already been made before the artist set to work. Whether the illumination consisted of initial letters (either decorated or historiated), or miniatures set into the text, often at the head of each chapter or major division of a work, the positioning of the illumination had already been determined by the spaces left in the text by the scribe. In some cases instructions for an artist as to the subject of a composition, or the letter required for an initial, or even the colours to be used, are still visible in the margin of the page—though whether this represents someone else's wishes being conveyed to an artist, or the *aide-mémoire* of the artist for himself, or a senior artist's instructions for one of his assistants, is difficult to reconstruct.

Beyond such instructions, how did artists decide what to draw and paint? Occasionally we meet sketches in the margins, though as with written instructions it is difficult to be sure of

their place in the design process. Sometimes it is clear that a rubric or chapter-heading works also as a guide to an illustration; at other times the inspiration seems to have been provided by a cursory reading of the first few lines of a chapter of the text, in which case the episode chosen by the artist may not represent the most important events described. It is not necessary to believe that all artists involved in book decoration were more than functionally literate: misunderstandings, both of texts and previous compositions, are common. Most important by far was the copying of compositions from one book to another. The texts of most medieval books are not original compositions; they are more or less accurate copies of already existing texts. Pictures were copied along with the texts to which they were attached. Sometimes this can be inferred from a composition, without its model having survived. Even more occasionally, both the model and its copy have survived. This is the case with the Utrecht Psalter [106], which must have been taken to Canterbury by about 1000; three copies of it survive from the next two centuries. Though the source of the copies is immediately identifiable, it is also striking how each of the copies has transformed its model. This is important, because in their search for lost models and lines of transmission art historians have perhaps failed to explain why they believe that medieval art develops at all. And yet it does, constantly. In a conservative tradition, small departures from the model may carry great significance. Often a composition may be copied, but its style transformed. This has led some to posit the existence of two different kinds of pattern book, one carrying compositions, the other a repertoire of figures and decorative motifs; the use of both in combination might allow the former to be brought to life in terms of the latter. Nevertheless, very few pattern books or sheets survive. Nor would it be right to assert that medieval illuminators were unable or unwilling to invent new compositions. In some cases, such as saints' lives, texts composed centuries before acquired illustrations at a particular moment, often one in which the monastic community possessing the relics of the saint wished to give new impetus to the cult of their patron. Even then, just as Christian saints and their biographers received their inspiration from the life of Jesus and its record in the Gospels, so artists, in illustrating these hagiographies, could seek inspiration from illustrated Gospel books.

Like all religions founded upon written texts, Christianity places great emphasis on the production of copies of its scriptures. It is in Gospel books that the noblest, most formal script and the finest decoration are found in the early Middle Ages. Illustrated books were carried from Rome to Canterbury [107], and from Northumbria back to the continent of Europe, by founders and missionaries for whom the embellishment of the word of God formed part of the tools of evangelization. The Insular Gospel books from Ireland and northern Britain [108, 118] are amongst the most magnificent books ever created. Despite this fact there has been a tendency, inspired by those who have looked at the Middle Ages from the vantage point of Classical antiquity or the Renaissance, to define medieval art in terms of its relation to concepts of 'naturalism', and thus to see even the Book of Kells in terms of a decline. Yet it would be even stranger for human society to have changed and for art not to have changed with it. In confronting the arrested Christ of

Kells, we should note that the posture is the Classical 'orans', denoting prayer and intercession; but instead of seeing the figure and its draperies as a flattened echo of a Classical idea, we should be struck by a powerful new aesthetic. The iconic Christ commands the attention of the viewer: there is no possibility of distraction. All elements of the picture are subordinated to the central idea. And in an art produced by those whose form of social organization was designed to shield them from the distractions of the world, in order to allow them to concentrate on a higher spiritual reality, the central idea was unlikely to be anything so banal as the imitation of nature. Perhaps this is why the depiction of other-worldly figures and events is achieved with such perfect conviction.

Yet for those engaged in the search for spiritual truth, might not even pictures of sacred subjects prove a distraction? The medieval West never experienced the doubts on the nature and role of art which provoked the crisis of iconoclasm in the Greek east; hence it never had to develop as sophisticated a theology of pictorial art. The standard justification for pictorial images in the West was that defined early on by Pope Gregory the Great: that pictures were the books of the illiterate, and could help to teach religious truth to those unable to read for themselves. Yet this justification is surely inappropriate for a context in which, almost by definition, most of those who came into contact with the pictures were also engaged in the reading of the text—though we should not forget that a large book being read aloud by one person might simultaneously be seen by others. There were occasional expressions of dissent—most famously that of S. Bernard in the twelfth century, the leading light of the ascetic Cistercian order, which does seem for a time to have limited the degree of luxury with which its books could be embellished. But on the whole, whatever their other austerities, medieval monks seem to have been content to devote their not inconsiderable resources to the production and decoration of books, alongside the construction of churches and manufacture of objects for liturgical service. Indeed, alongside Bibles and Gospel books, liturgical books were the other necessity for a monastic house [110, 118, 120]. At the heart of the divine service of the monastic life was a book of the Old Testament, the Psalms; and it was the psalter which emerged as the vehicle for the most extensive picture series of the Life of Christ, often as a prefatory pictorial cycle distinct from the text. Yet monastic libraries could also contain a wide variety of other texts: not only the works of the Early Christian Fathers, such as Augustine and Jerome, crucial to the interpretation of scripture, but also pagan classics. Almost none of the Latin classics survive in copies dating back to Classical antiquity; they survive because they were copied by Christian monks, whose admiration for them was often justified in terms of the elegance of their Latin style. Occasionally, as with the plays of the Roman comedy writer Terence, a set of illustrations was also faithfully transmitted.

Monastic houses might also produce illustrated books for important laymen, underlining the contact that in fact existed between the cloister and the outside world. Though the Emperor Charlemagne patronized a court school of painting at Aachen, the Gospels of Otto III [113] were probably produced at the island monastery of Reichenau on Lake Constance. But

from the end of the twelfth century, it can no longer be said that monasteries retained their pre-eminence in book production and decoration. The growing prosperity and urbanization that had contributed to the spread of the Romanesque style throughout Europe also encouraged the formation of new forms of social organization capable of providing books for themselves. The professional craftsmen who had previously moved from monastery to monastery now settled in towns, where they could obtain commissions from those teaching or studying in the newly founded universities, as well as from the mendicant orders of Franciscans and Dominicans set up to minister to the increasing urban population. Whilst in the twelfth century, Bibles had been produced in large, multi-volume sets, in the thirteenth the one-volume portable Bible, produced on parchment of tissue thinness, makes an appearance. The evidence suggests that professional illuminators like William de Brailes in Oxford—and it is perhaps no coincidence that more are known to us by name—lived in close proximity to other members of the book trade in a particular area of the town, combining to manufacture books for payment—though this is still a bespoke trade. At the same time we can also see the patronage of a wider range of illustrated books by the aristocracy, some of them with texts in the vernacular rather than Latin [114]. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries some royal or aristocratic collectors were to commission sufficient numbers of books—of history, literature, and science, as well as biblical and devotional texts—to build up considerable libraries. What we might identify as the hallmarks of the Gothic style—a sense of linear elegance and courtly refinement, as well as an increasing attention to naturalistic detail—might most profitably be explored as the response to the tastes of a new set of patrons. Many of the manuscripts produced in these new circumstances—the law book from the university of Bologna, or the Arthurian romance from Paris—fall into familiar types, and were clearly mass-produced in a way that no books previously had been. Though often modest, the minor decoration in such books plays an important role in helping to articulate and organize the text—even merely to enliven it, a function well captured in the account of a legal document in *Bleak House*: 'an immense desert of law-hand and parchment, with here and there a resting-place of a few large letters, to break the awful monotony, and save the traveller from despair'.

The survival in their thousands of Books of Hours from the later Middle Ages is testimony to the spread of literacy and book ownership down the social scale. If a middle-class family possessed a single book, it was more likely to be such a devotional book than the text of the scriptures *tout court*. Though the presence of illustrations seems to have been an integral part of such books, they could nevertheless range in quality from the finest works of art [116, 117] to the humblest of objects. At the same time, wealthy humanist patrons were collecting manuscripts of the rediscovered Classical texts which might be seen as the scriptures of the Italian Renaissance. As Peter Ugelheimer of Frankfurt proudly boasted on the frontispiece of the copy of Aristotle which he owned, and whose publication he had probably supported [122]—a frontispiece bursting with Classical motifs—'Peter Ugelheimer has brought Aristotle forth to the world'.

Imaging the Bible

Most luxury books made in the Byzantine world were religious in content. Amongst such books the Bible held a special place. Attempts to produce the entire Bible—in one or more volumes—were rarely made, however. Instead, one or more biblical books were selected for special treatment. The most widely made luxury book contained the four Gospels

(hundreds of copies still survive). The next most popular was the Psalter: the Psalms and Odes (or Canticles) and other hymns and prayers. Sections of the Old Testament, such as the Prophets, or even Genesis, might be made as a single volume. The appearance of the images in these books, however, is far from predictable.

The Vienna Genesis was made in the sixth century [96]; it is a picture book, with every page given over half

to text and half to an image, executed on purpura-dyed ('purple') parchment and written with silver ink.

The Paris Psalter (mid-tenth century, [97]) is a massive volume containing a vast body of commentary. Its images are on leaves that were inserted as prefaces; the David and Melody is assumed to reproduce a Late Antique Orpheus composition.

The Turin Prophet Book—late tenth century [99]—gathers together

medallion 'portraits' of the twelve prophets (from Hosea to Malachi) as a joint frontispiece.

The Theodore Psalter—dated 1066 [98]—provides images as a form of marginal commentary. It was made for the abbot of the Studios monastery in Constantinople by a senior priest, Theodore, who was possibly both scribe and artist.

The Palaiologina Gospels [100] were made at the end of the thirteenth

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97 *David and Melody* (mid-tenth century), Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS gr. 139, Paris Psalter, folio 1v



98 The end of Psalm 76 and opening of Psalm 77 (1066), London, British Library, MS Add. 19352, 'Theodore Psalter', folios 99v–100r



century for a female member of the ruling dynasty, probably Theodora, widow of Emperor Michael VIII (reigned 1261–82). Her monogram appears in the Canon Tables, concordances of parallel passages in the Gospels. This book looks back to products of c.1100 in terms of its ornament, and to books of c.975 in terms of its figure style.

A crucial aspect of the visual impact of all such luxury books on

viewers and readers (today as well as in the past) involves their design as a series of double-page openings. Unfortunately this feature is all too often lost in reproductions. Continuity or symmetry between one page and the next might be particularly sought for [96, 99, 100], but the effects of disjuncture and contrast could also be used to highlight aspects of particular significance [98].

These effects were carefully planned and routinely achieved even when the diptych-like result was the product of more than one specialist craftsman working on physically separate sheets of parchment which would only be brought permanently into their present juxtaposition when the finished book was sewn and bound. As is generally the case in highly skilled craft products, the viewer apprehends the result

(sometimes perceived as 'obvious' or 'predictable') without awareness of the techniques and decisions that brought it about. JL



99 *The Twelve Minor Prophets* (late tenth century), Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS B.I.2, 'Turin Prophet Book', folios 11v–12r



100 *Decorated Canon Tables* (end thirteenth century), Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS gr. 1158, 'Palaiologina Gospels', folios 5v–6r

Imperial books

The Byzantine world had a highly complex social structure. The position of the emperor (or empress) at the pinnacle of this structure, beneath God, was rarely questioned. Luxury books played an important role in making imperial power manifest. Imperial books, as the term is now understood, are self-selected on the basis of some explicit imperial

link. This leaves open the question of whether such books were gifts from the imperial family, within the imperial family, or to the imperial family from outside.

The manuscript known as the Paris Gregory [101] contains homilies of the fourth-century Bishop Gregory of Nazianzus, prefaced by portraits of Emperor Basil I and his family. Datable to 880–3, the manuscript's full-page frontispieces

may have been devised by the learned Patriarch Photios.

The Menologion of Basil II—c.1000 [103]—is an illustrated calendar devised as a picture book with an image and sixteen-line text on every page, and several commemorations for each day. Its connection to the emperor is established in prefatory verses that seem to refer to an image (no longer present).

The Emperor Nicephorus

Botaneiates (1078–81) was represented in a copy of John Chrysostomos's homilies [104] receiving the book from the saint (or giving it to him) in the presence of Archangel Michael, and on the facing page listening to the text as it is read to him by a certain monk Sabas.

In the manuscript now called Paris grec 1242 [102] the former emperor John VI Kantakouzenos (abdicated 1354) was represented

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101 *Vision of Ezekiel* (880–3), Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS gr. 510, 'Paris Gregory', folio 438v



102 *John VI Kantakouzenos as Emperor and as the Monk Ioasaph* (mid-fourteenth century), Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS gr. 1242, folios 123v–124r

twice in a single image in a copy of his own theological works: at the left he is shown as emperor, and at the right in retirement as the monk Ioasaph.

An easily overlooked but functional aspect of these imperial books, as of all luxury books, is that they were intended to be seen by only a tiny number of people. The messages of the images in such books were believed to be appreciated constantly by God and the saints, but

they were not able to influence more general perceptions. The great extent to which our modern views are shaped by reproductions of the images in such books is thus problematical.

JL



103. 'Menologion of Basil II', pages 299–300 (c.1000), Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS gr. 1613

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104 Emperor Nicephorus Botaneiates with S. John Chrysostomos and Archangel Michael, Monk Sabas with the Emperor (late eleventh century), Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS Coislin 79, folios 2bisv–2r

Classical and Christian

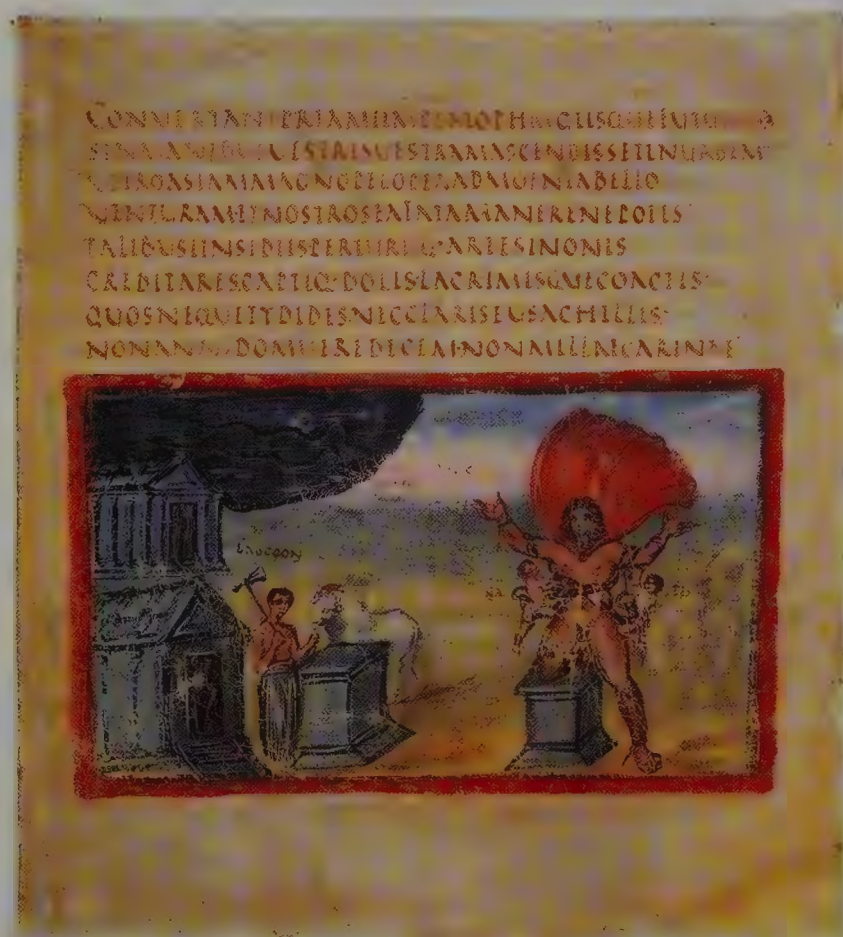
The most important surviving example from late antiquity of an illustrated book of Classical literature is the fragmentary Vatican Vergil [105]. Christians had been swift to adopt the codex form for their own writings. The Gospels of S. Augustine [107] is traditionally identified as one of the books supplied by Pope Gregory the Great for the mission of

S. Augustine of Canterbury; the 'portrait' of the Evangelist Luke is derived from the author portraits of Classical poets and philosophers.

The new religion had flourished in Ireland from the middle of the fifth century, and had developed its own traditions of script and decoration. In the scene of the arrest of Christ from the Book of Kells [108], the painterliness of the Classical tradition has been replaced by a rhythmically

linear style; and the viewer is confronted by the mesmerizing gaze of Christ. On the continent of Europe, Charlemagne's efforts to create a Christian Roman Empire are reflected in the mixture of Christian and Classical texts illustrated in the Carolingian Renaissance. In the Utrecht Psalter [106] the text of each Psalm is combined with a pen drawing which literally portrays the concrete images of the words. The

sketchy style of the drawings, as well as the script, were modelled on Late Antique manuscripts. MKm



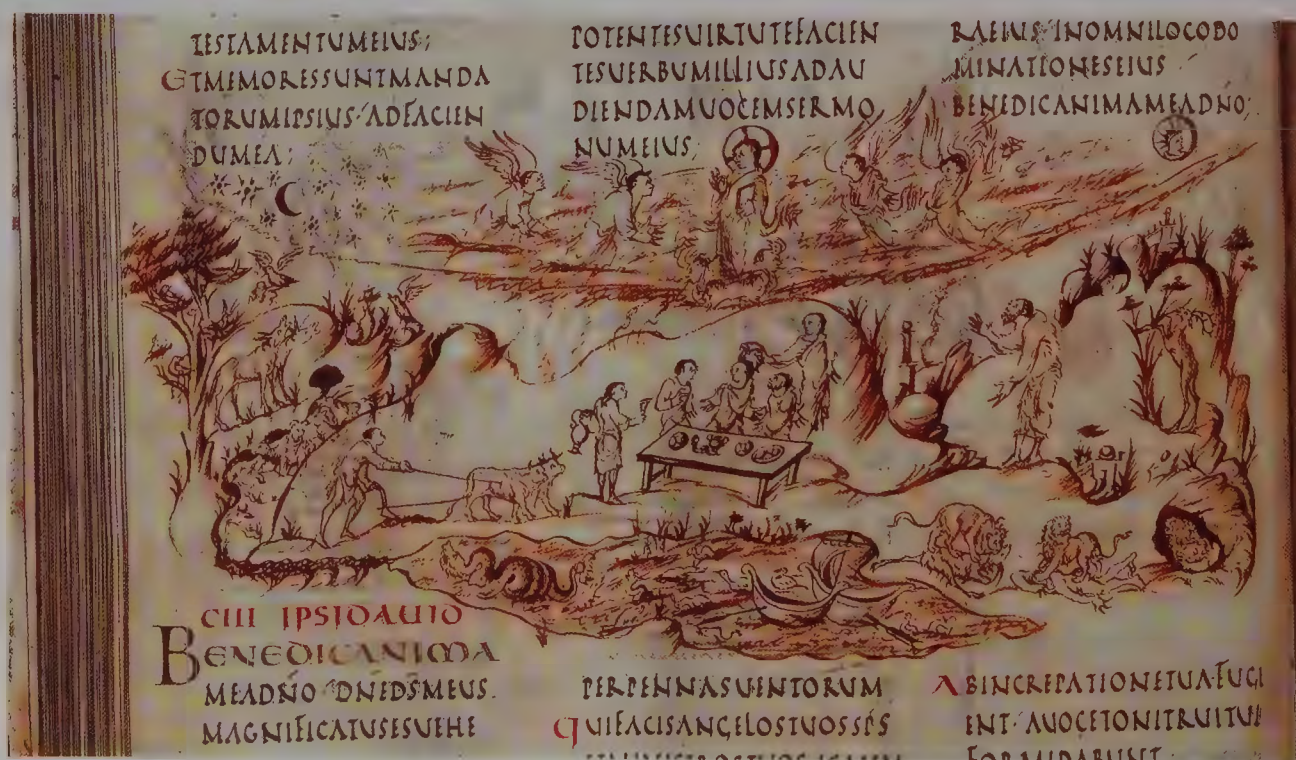
105 Above: Rome, Vatican Vergil (early fifth century), Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 3225, folio 18v

106 Right: Reims, Utrecht Psalter (second quarter of the ninth century), Utrecht, University Library, MS 32, folio 59v



107 Above: Rome, Gospels of S. Augustine (late sixth century), Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 286, folio 129v

108 Opposite: Iona?, Book of Kells (eighth or early ninth century), Dublin, Trinity College, MS 58, folio 114r





The monastic age

Until about 1200 monasteries were the chief producers of illuminated manuscripts in Europe. At the abbey of Monte Cassino near Naples, where S. Benedict had composed his monastic rule in the first half of the sixth century, illustrations were composed around 1070 to accompany a collection of texts in celebration of the saint's life [111].

In England S. Aethelwold, Bishop of Winchester, was one of the leaders of the Anglo-Saxon monastic reform movement; the scene of the holy women meeting the angel at the tomb of Christ [110] comes from a benedictional (a book of episcopal blessings) made for him. The combination of restless, animated drawing with the heavily foliated framework is characteristic of manuscripts illuminated in Winchester.

In Spain a strong pictorial tradition was associated with the commentary on the Apocalypse written about 776 by the Asturian monk Beatus of Liébana. The striking colours and double-page composition in this later copy [109] are typical of a pictorial tradition isolated from the rest of Europe.

By contrast the Romanesque style of the Lambeth Bible [112] forms part of the first truly European medieval

artistic movement. The tree of Jesse leads through the Virgin Mary to the bust of Christ. The figures in the roundels on either side give pictorial expression to complex theological doctrines. MKm



109 Morgan
Beatus (Tabara,
Léon?, mid-tenth
century), New
York, Pierpont
Morgan Library,
MS 644, folios
152v-153r



110 Top left:
Winchester,
Benedictional of
S. Aethelwold
(c.970–80),
London, British
Library, Add. MS
49598, folio 51v

111 Left: Monte
Cassino, *Life of*
S. Benedict
(1071?), Vatican
City, Biblioteca
Apostolica
Vaticana, Vat. Lat.
1202, folio 36r

112 Above:
Canterbury,
Lambeth Bible
(mid-twelfth
century), London,
Lambeth Palace
Library, MS 3, folio
198r

Patronage of the laity

Medieval rulers had themselves portrayed in books which emphasized divine sanction for their power, as well as the cultivation and luxury of their courts. In the Gospel book of the German Emperor Otto III [113], Otto is shown seated in majesty as he is approached in homage by female personifications of Rome and the provinces of the Empire. The

thirteenth century saw the first large-scale patronage of illuminated book production by the aristocratic classes. In the Trinity Apocalypse [114] the text is in the vernacular, not Latin; the aristocratic lady shown leading the fight against the beast may represent the patron. The illustrations of the Manesse Codex [115] are a record of the poetic culture, both amorous and chivalric, of noble society; the minnesinger engage in tournaments

under the gaze of their mistresses. The Book of Hours contained prayers to be said by devout laypeople at different times of day. The opening of the office for the dead in the Rohan Hours [116] represents the judgement of man by his maker; the majestic figure of God looks down with an expression of tender pity at the emaciated body, as S. Michael does battle with a devil for possession of the man's soul. Reading their

devotional texts, laypeople imagined themselves witnessing sacred events and conversing with holy figures. In her Book of Hours [117], Mary of Burgundy is shown reading in an oratory. Beyond the still life on the sill, the window opens into a church where she is again shown, kneeling before the Virgin and Child. MKm

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114 Below:
England, Trinity
Apocalypse
(c.1255-60),
Cambridge, Trinity
College



113 Above left
and right:
Reichenau,
Gospels of Otto III
(c.998-1001),
Munich,
Bayerische
Staatsbibliothek

115 Right: Zurich,
Manesse Codex
(early fourteenth
century),
Heidelberg,
Universitätsbiblio-
thek, Cod. Pal.
germ. 848, folio
54r



116 Right: France,
Rohan Hours
(1420s), Paris,
Bibliothèque
Nationale

117 Opposite:
Ghent?, Hours of
Mary of Burgundy
(late 1470s),
Vienna,
Österreichische
Nationalbibliothek





The letter and the page

Throughout the Middle Ages artists experimented with the relationships between texts and their decoration, and especially with the embellishment of initial letters. In the Lindisfarne Gospels [118], the opening words of S. John's Gospel, which speak of the Word becoming flesh, acquire a talismanic significance. The cross with the lamb at its centre dominates a

page from a sacramentary (the book used by the celebrant at mass) from Chelles, a double monastery of monks and nuns [119]. The letters formed of birds and fish are typical of Merovingian ornament, and contrast with the interlace, frets, and spiral patterns of the Lindisfarne Gospels.

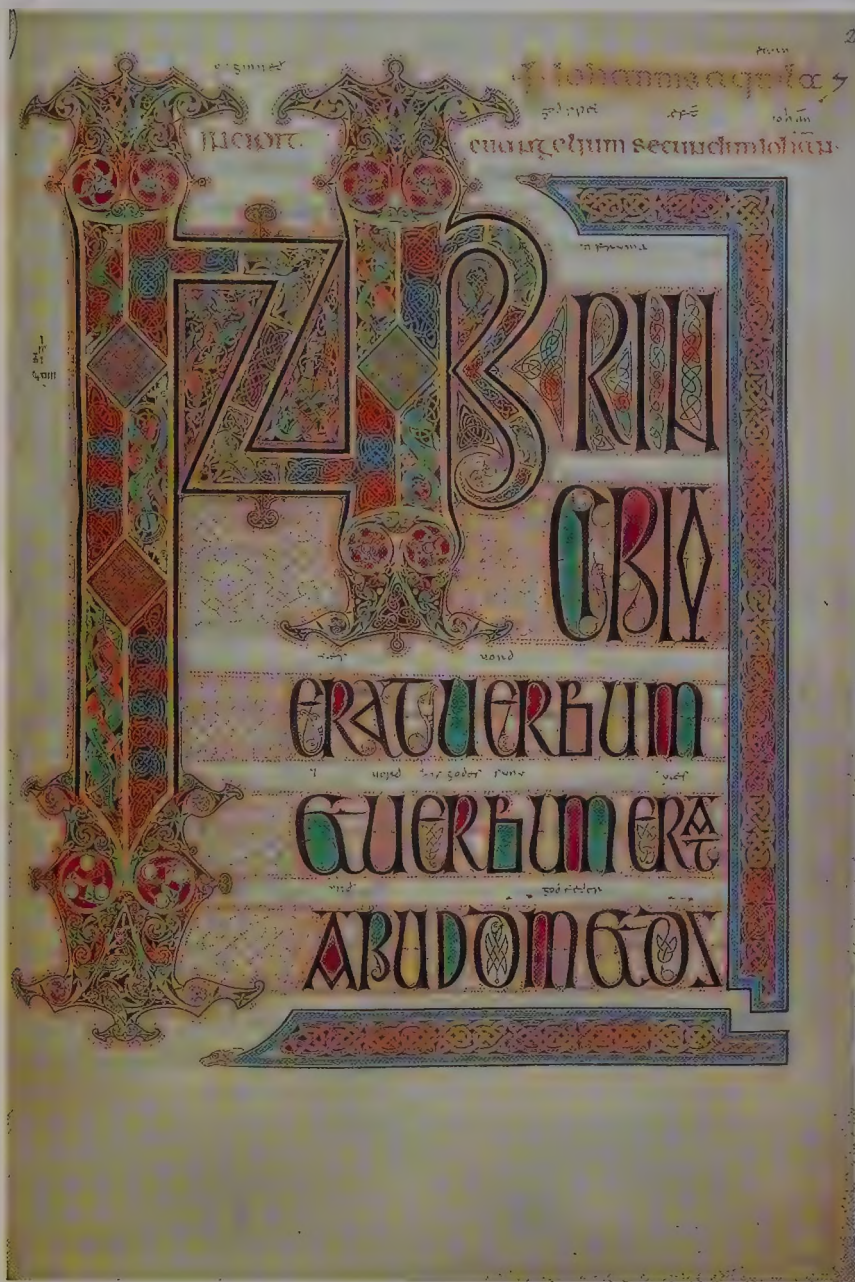
In another sacramentary [120], made a century later for Bishop Drogo of Metz, the narrative scenes are accommodated within an initial which

is itself entwined by acanthus stems. In the Ormesby Psalter [121], the historiated initial to Psalm 109 is combined with a border on all four sides of the text; in such cases the vignettes in the margins often satirize the illustrations of the sacred stories found within the text space.

Even after the invention of printing, it was initially common for luxury books to be decorated by hand. The frontispiece from an

edition of the works of Aristotle [122] depicts a grandiose monument, with Aristotle and his commentator Averroës at the top, and satyrs and putti at the bottom—all apparently seen behind a torn piece of parchment on which the text is printed. MKm

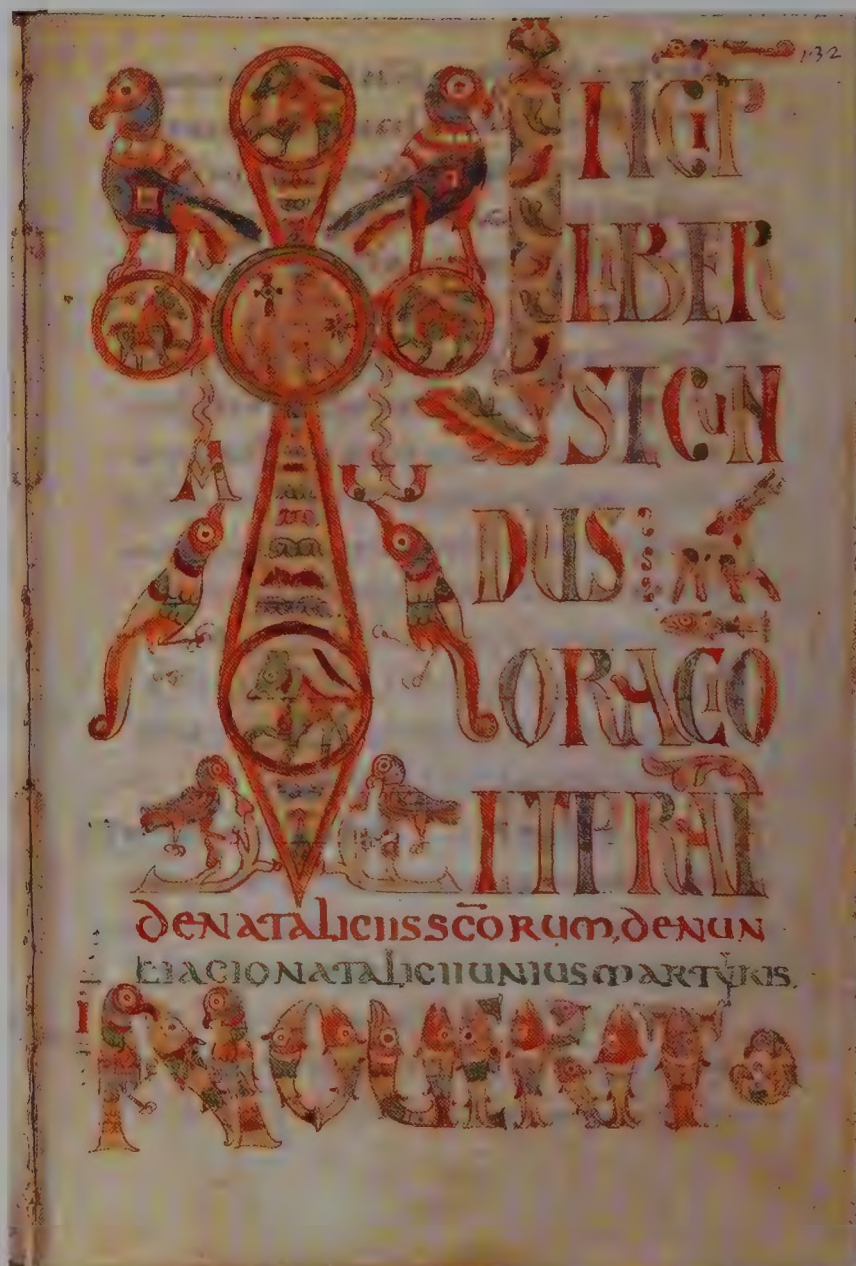
90



119 Chelles, Gelasian Sacramentary (mid-eighth century), Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Reg. Lat. 316, folio 132r

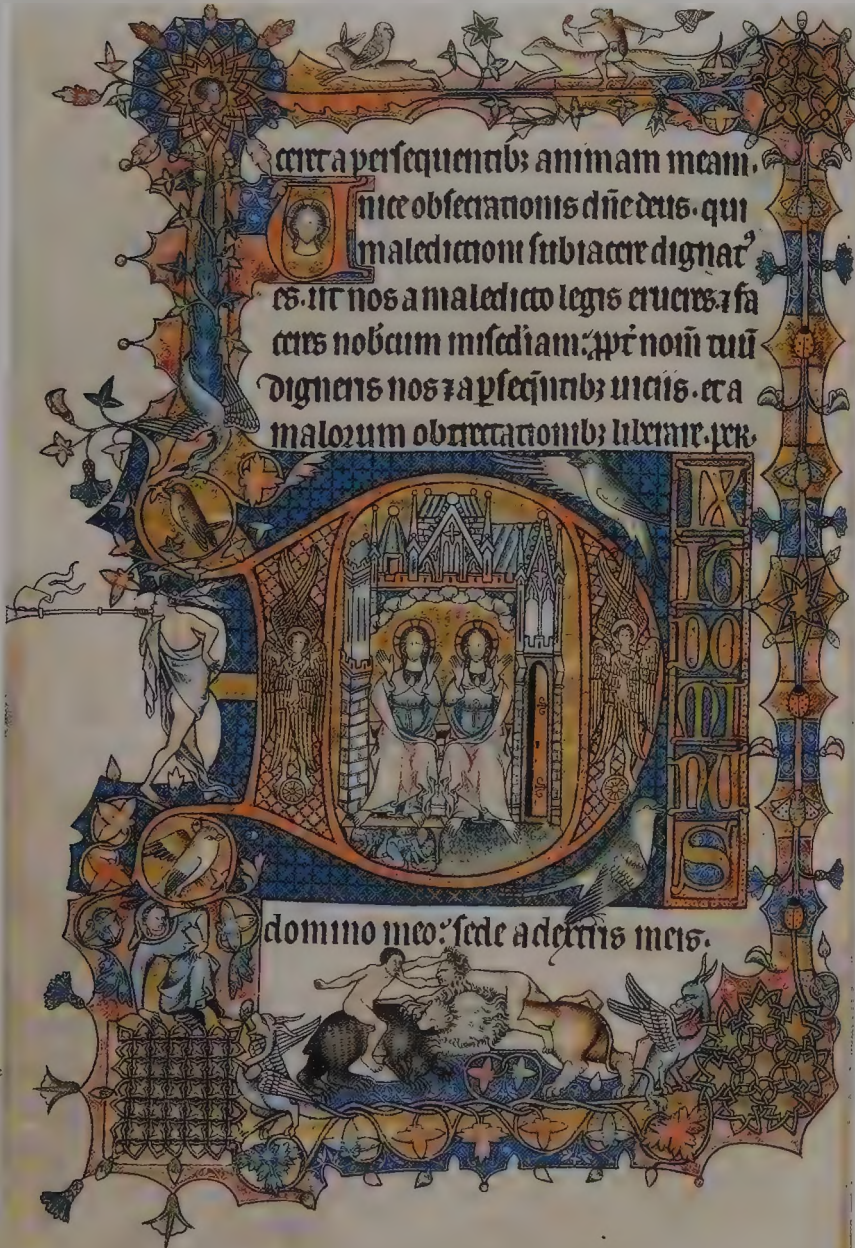
118 Lindisfarne, Lindisfarne Gospels (c. 698), London, British Library, Cotton MS Nero D.IV, folio 211r

120 Opposite: Metz, Drogo Sacramentary (c. 844-55), Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS lat. 9428, folio 58r





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domino meo: sede ad dextris meis.



121 Norwich,
Ormesby Psalter
(late thirteenth
century—c.1325),
Oxford, Bodleian
Library, MS Douce
366, folio 147v

122 Venice,
Aristotle (1483),
New York, Pierpont
Morgan Library,
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2r

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