CHAPTER 3

Decoration and Illustration

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The position of a chapter on decoration and illustration in a volume devoted to the twelfth-century book is in some ways an uncertain one. The simplest decoration may be considered merely part of the scribal design and structuring of the text, something to be studied by the palaeographer. In catalogues of manuscripts, the line to be drawn between rubrication (often treated, together with script, in a section devoted to codicological description) and decoration is obscure. At the other end of the scale, it could be said that the pictorial or illustrative elements in a manuscript, which accompany a text, whether a bible, liturgical book, chronicle, or book of natural science, should be treated as a constituent part of the relevant textual genre: historians should include in their treatment of the text the artistic production related to it. Yet it is the perception that these two ends of the scale, the 'lowest' decoration and the 'highest' illustration, are connected, that may constitute the distinctive field of the art historian. The elements of decoration and illustration exist in a state of hierarchical relation. They are aware of each other and do not usurp each other's roles. There is almost nothing which can usefully be said about either the humblest initial or the greatest full-page miniature if one forgets that in each case these elements form part of the entirety of the illumination in the same book (Figure 3.1). It follows that the different elements all participate in versions of a single stylistic vocabulary which could be applied at different levels. That vocabulary is often labelled 'romanesque', and we shall have to confront the term in our survey of the different questions asked of and the approaches taken to decoration and illustration in the twelfth-century book.

By Whom and for Whom?

First, however, we should touch on the evidence for the patronage and production of illuminated books: artistic styles are not self-generated,

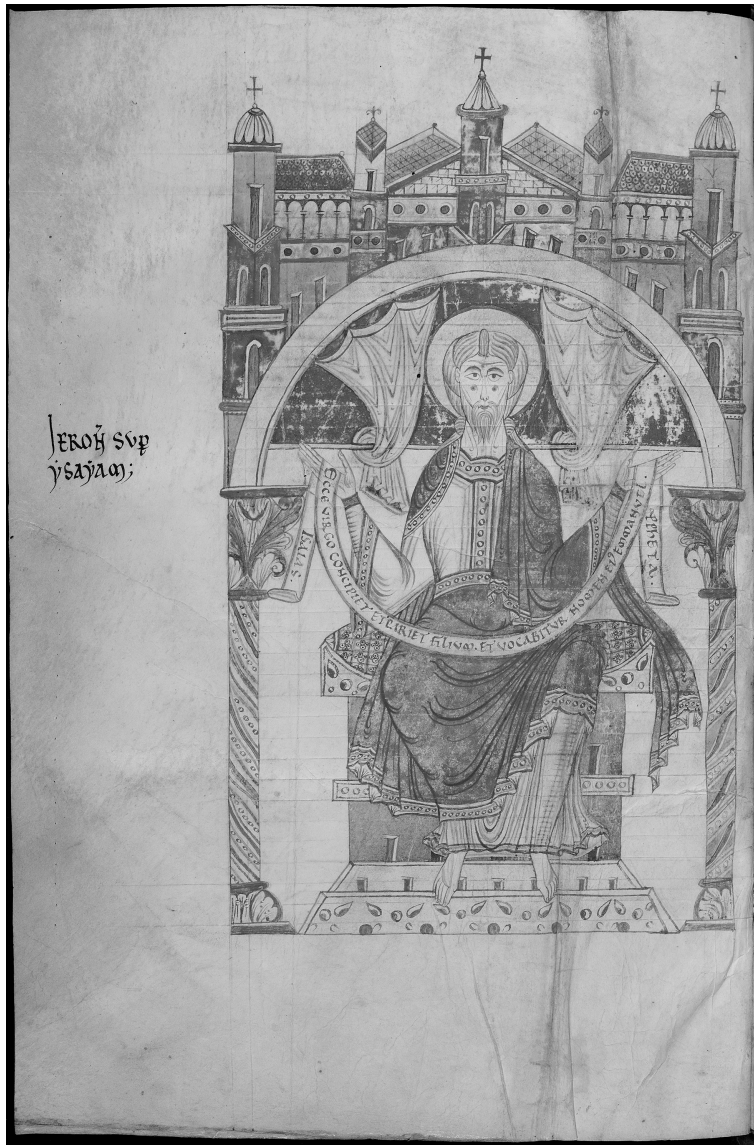

Figure 3.1 Frontispiece to the commentary of Jerome on the book of Isaiah, illuminated by Hugo 'pictor', Normandy, late eleventh century. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 717, ff. v^{v}–vi^{r}.

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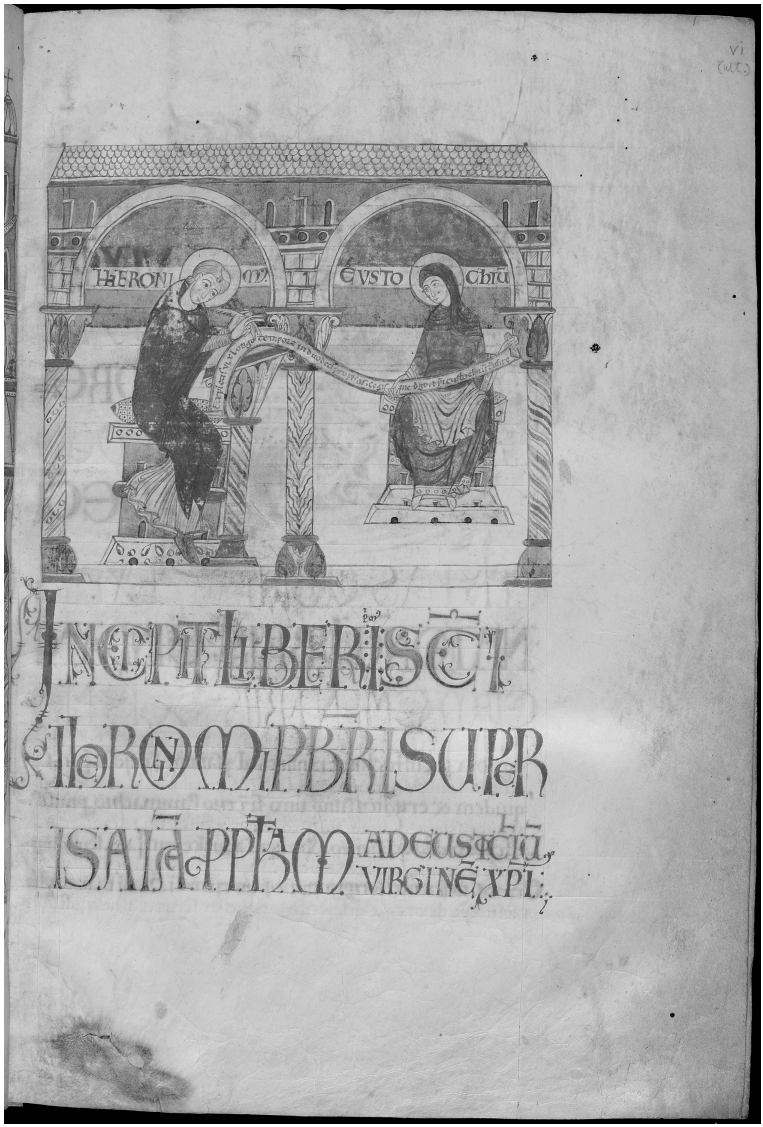

Figure 3.1 (cont.)

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organic forms, but exist in books made by and for particular people at particular times and places. Whereas the greatest illuminated manuscripts of the Carolingian and Ottonian periods were produced under the patronage of emperors, or of the imperial bishops who were often their relatives, the greatest patrons of illuminated manuscripts in the twelfth century were the monastic houses. Luxury books were still produced in monasteries either for the emperor himself, such as the gospel book made either for Henry IV or for Henry V at the abbey of St Emmeram, Regensburg, between 1099 and 1111 (Cracow Cath. 208),[1] or for other rulers, such as the Gospels of Henry the Lion, duke of Saxony and Bavaria, produced ca. 1185–8 at the abbey of Helmarshausen and containing two complex dedication miniatures extolling Henry's power (Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibl. Guelf. 105 noviss. 2° and BSB Clm 30055).[2] But the main patrons of illuminated books in the twelfth century were the monasteries themselves, and the production was carried out within their walls. It was not only the old-established Benedictine houses which were involved in this activity; the houses of the reformed Orders also contributed. The new Premonstratensian houses, for instance, belonging to the Order founded at Prémontré in 1120 by Norbert of Xanten, played a particularly active part in the production of illuminated books – witness the Bible from the abbey of Floreffe (near Namur) of ca. 1160 (BL Add. 17737–8) (Figure 3.2).[3] Monasteries sometimes produced illuminated books for others: the recipients could include dependent houses, such as Dover Priory (founded 1139), which probably received its Bible (CCCC 3–4) from its mother house, Christ Church Cathedral Priory, Canterbury.[4] Books are portable, and the carrying of them from one house to another, whether in the possession of an itinerant owner or as gifts, must have been an important means for the transmission of stylistic innovation. Among the gifts to Durham Cathedral Priory donated by Bishop William of St-Calais (sometimes called Carilef) were books written and illuminated in Normandy, where William had spent time in exile between 1088 and 1091;[5] and it was probably the 'Second Winchester' (or 'Auct.') Bible (Bodl. Libr. Auct. E. inf. 1–2) that was given by King Henry II of England to his new foundation, the Carthusian house at Witham, where Hugh (later bishop of Lincoln) was abbot.[6] By contrast, there is comparatively little evidence for the production of illuminated manuscripts by or for the secular (non-monastic) clergy, and an illuminated book made for one of their number might still have been produced in a monastic context: the Lectionary of Archbishop Frederick of Cologne (Cologne, Dombibl. 59) probably originated in one of the monastic houses in the city.[7] There is even less evidence

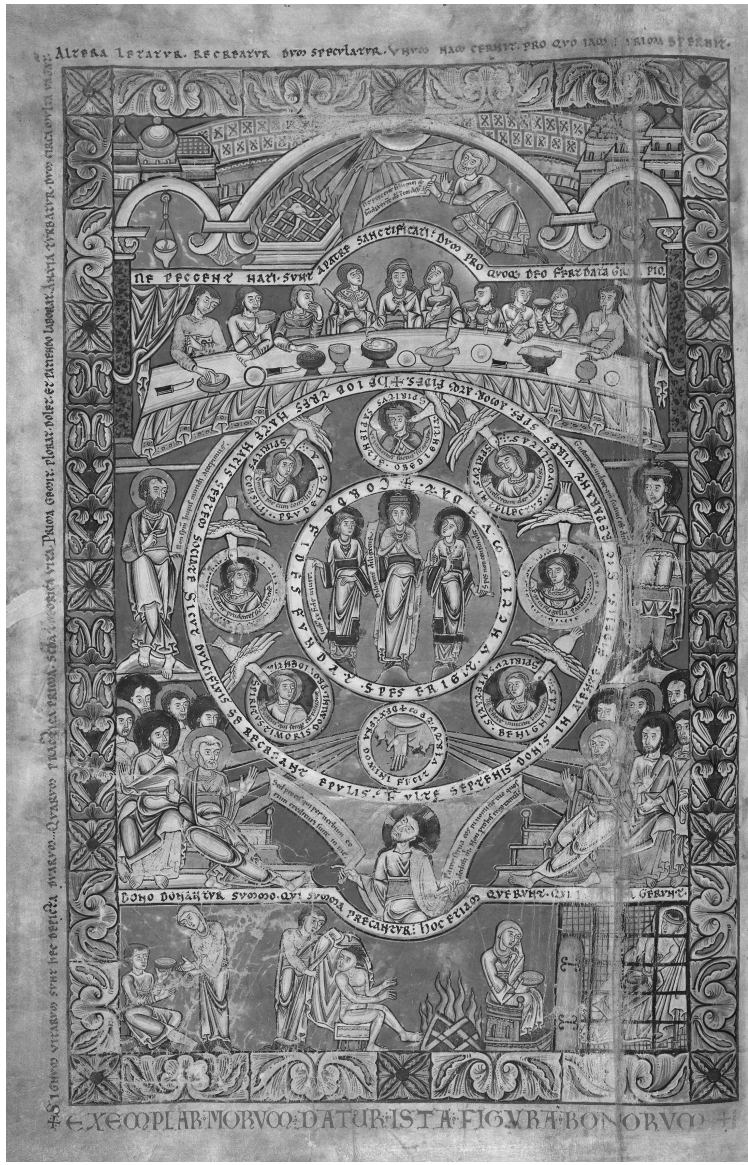

Figure 3.2 Frontispiece to volume 2 of the Floreffe Bible, showing scenes from the book of Job, virtues and works of mercy, and Christ and the Apostles, described by the tituli as a representation of the Active Life; valley of the Meuse (modern Belgium), ca. 1153–6. London, British Library, Add. 17738, f. 3v.

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for the lay patronage of illuminated books; not until the thirteenth century were wealthy literate laity sufficiently numerous to form an important source of patronage.

Most artists in the twelfth century worked anonymously in the sense that they did not append their names to their works. The signatures of artists are rarer than those of scribes: the Rule of St Benedict enjoins humility on monastic craftsmen. This complicates the model of patronage commonly applied to art historical studies of later periods in European art. Instead of named individual artists and patrons, whose relationship is commercial but who may in some sense be regarded as co-creators of the works of art, we must imagine artists who were themselves members of a corporate body which was the patron: this makes it especially difficult to explore the creative balance between individual and institution. But a few artists do identify themselves, either verbally or visually, as monks. In the case of the sumptuous Gospels of Henry the Lion, one individual, Herimann, monk of Helmarshausen, seems to have been responsible for both the script and the illumination. Hugo 'pictor', whose work is found in manuscripts from more than one Norman house, painted and labelled a self-portrait at the end of a manuscript which was subsequently taken to Exeter Cathedral (Bodl. Libr. Bodl. 717) (Figure 3.1).[8] The Premonstratensian canon Rufillus is one of several to have painted himself in the act of painting one of the initials in the book he illuminated (Cologny-Genève, Bibl. Bodmeriana 127, f. 244r).[9] The production of illuminated manuscripts was always collaborative, and the circumstances of that collaboration were evidently various. The artist-priest Sintram, an Augustinian canon of Marbach, depicted himself in adoration of the Virgin Mary together with the scribe Guta, a nun of the convent at Schwarzenthann, in a manuscript dated 1154 (Strasbourg, Bibl. du Grand Séminaire 37, f. 4r).[10]

Although most illuminated books were made for monastic patrons, they were not necessarily illuminated by monks: there is evidence of lay professional artists working for (and sometimes in) monasteries. Studies of the illuminated manuscripts produced by individual religious houses have been made, and the word 'school' has even been applied to them in conformity with the model applied to Renaissance and later European art;[11] but the most outstanding (and thus best known) artistic productions from those houses have sometimes been found to accord least well with the house style identified in more modest productions. Whereas the skill of writing in this period was largely limited to those in clerical orders of varying sorts, the skill of painting could be acquired by a layman.[12] The lay

illuminator of the Dover Bible is another to have painted himself in the act of painting an initial, while his assistant prepares the colours (CCCC 4, f. 241v). In several cases there is evidence for lay artists working in association with monastic scribes: the lay painter Felix depicted himself in an initial (albeit in separate roundels) with the scribe John, the one-eyed monk of Corbie (BnF lat. 11575, f. 1r).[13] The Bible from Bury St Edmunds of ca. 1135 (CCCC 2) was illuminated by a lay artist known as 'Master Hugo', who was also a sculptor and metalworker (Figure 3.3).[14] Royal patronage had made Bury one of the richest foundations in the country, so it could also afford to attract the artist known by modern scholars as the Alexis Master, previously active at St Albans, to illustrate the Life of its patron saint (New York, Pierpont Morgan Libr. M. 736).[15] Thus the style of a lay artist was not necessarily the property of a particular monastic house, and the mobility of professionals, no less than the mobility of books, must have contributed to the spreading of stylistic innovations. In the middle and second half of the twelfth century there is increasing evidence of itinerant artists. The master of the Lambeth Bible (London, Lambeth Palace 3 + Maidstone Museum P. 5) illuminated the Gospels of Abbot Wedric of Liessies in Hainault in 1146 (of which two leaves survive: Avesnes, Société Archéologique).[16] A series of manuscripts with illumination in the 'Transitional' style of the last quarter of the century is associated with a group of artists who evidently worked on both sides of the Channel: the artist of the initials in the last volume of the Capucins Bible, produced perhaps in Troyes (BnF lat. 16743–6), had previously been employed at St Albans under Abbot Simon (1167–83).[17] Nevertheless, from the twelfth century we have almost none of the apparatus associated with professional artists which survives from the thirteenth, such as contracts, property records, and verbal and visual instructions. Lay artists clearly participated in monastic production and may well have received boarding and lodging in a monastic house while active there, but there is little evidence for the establishment of independent lay professional workshops of the kind found in later centuries.

Styles and Techniques

Whether monastic or lay, artists (like those involved in other aspects of book production) must usually have learnt their craft by practical instruction. The technical manuals from this period include treatises by practising artists, extracts from earlier sources (sometimes with added original material), and isolated recipes or instructions. They vary in the extent of their usefulness,

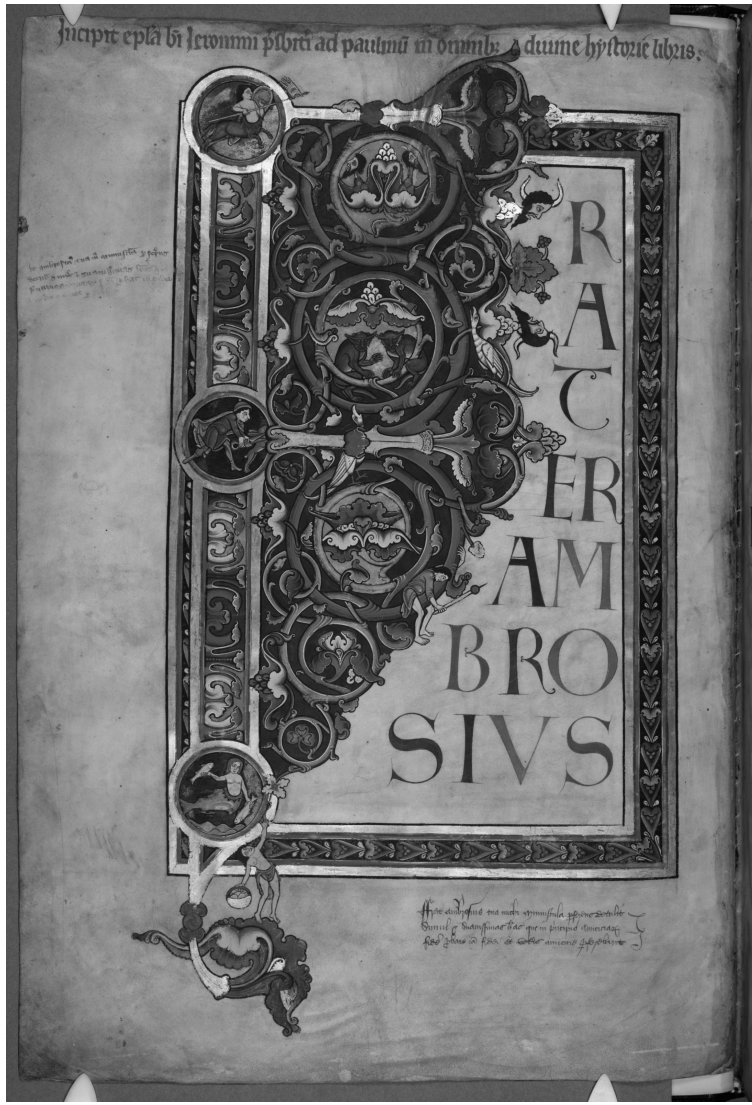

Figure 3.3 Initial F(rater Ambrosius), letter of Jerome to Paulinus, from the Bury Bible: England, ca. 1135. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 2, f. IV.

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and seem never to have achieved a wide circulation.[18] The evidence for techniques must derive mostly from the manuscripts themselves, occasionally supplemented by references in documentary sources.[19] Illumination was a collaborative activity, carried out almost always before the book was bound. By leaving spaces to be filled, it was the scribe who decided (or at any rate whose work determined, on the instruction of others) the distribution of decoration and illustration. Preliminary drawings survive in hard point, (greyish) lead point or (brownish) crayon, sometimes gone over in ink, but there are few of the marginal instructions for subject-matter found in later manuscripts. Though drawings can be of high aesthetic quality, they were not usually regarded as finished works of art, though (as we shall see) they were considered suitable for certain kinds of subject-matter, and strong graphic traditions are evident in manuscripts from particular parts of Europe (Figure 3.4).[20] The Anglo-Saxon technique of tinted drawing makes a reappearance in a manuscript of Bede's Life of St Cuthbert (Oxford, University Coll. 165), produced at Durham Cathedral Priory in the early twelfth century and probably the earliest surviving manuscript containing a cycle of religious narrative illustrations to have been produced in England after the Norman Conquest.[21] Unfinished manuscripts, and manuscripts in which a change of plan is identifiable, are a particularly valuable resource. In the Winchester Bible (Winchester Cath. 1) we have both.[22] We can see that initials drawn by one set of artists were painted over and completed by subsequent artists, who respected the subject-matter but updated the style. Full-page miniatures were added to the book, which had originally been conceived as containing only initials. We can study the various stages of finish, observing for instance that if gold was involved, it was inserted onto the preliminary drawing before the application of other colours, perhaps because the act of burnishing threatened the surrounding area. Colour washes were overlaid with stronger or lighter tones to provide shadows and highlights before the final outlining of the contours of figures and drapery folds. In twelfth-century manuscripts the choice of colours is sometimes specified in instructional notes, words, or abbreviations situated within the margin or within the artistic space and designed to be covered.[23] This has been taken as evidence of a division of labour, though it is not impossible to imagine a scribe/artist writing notes to himself. The reliable analysis of pigments has been hampered by a reluctance to take samples, though the possibilities of identification by new imaging techniques such as Raman spectroscopy are just beginning to be realized.

The style in which artists worked in the twelfth century is often described as romanesque, a concept which has been subjected to scrutiny

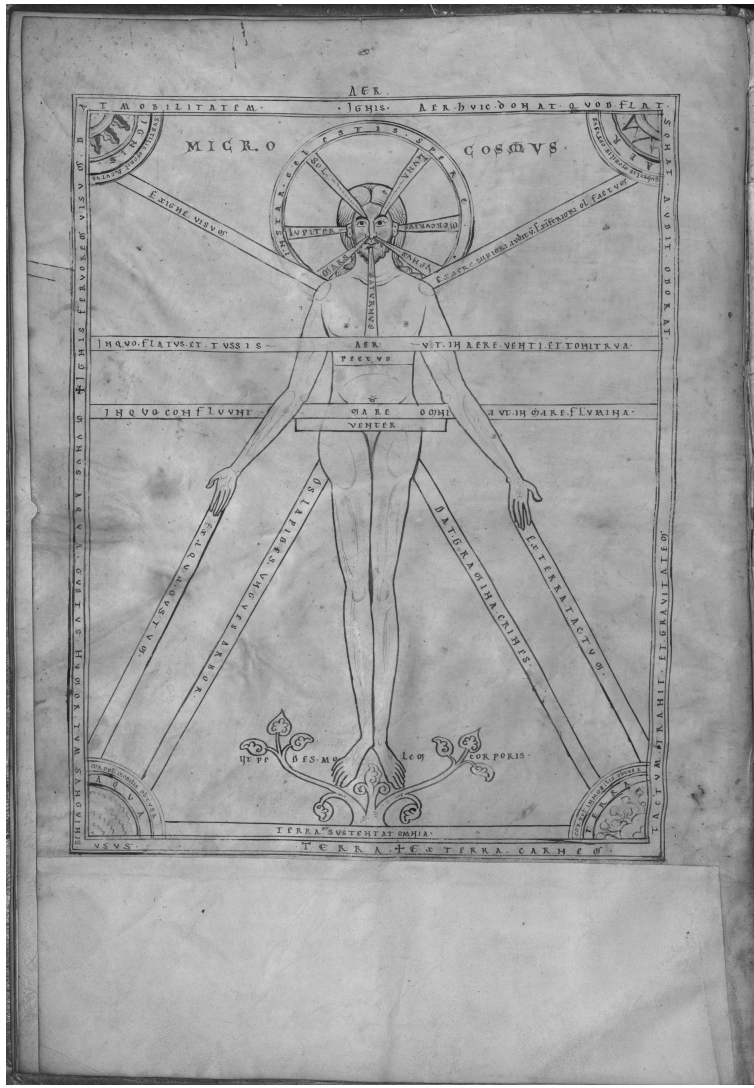

Figure 3.4 Drawing of man as microcosm, from the Prüfening Miscellany, Germany, 1158–65. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 13002, f. 7v.

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in recent writing.[24] This is a term applied to all the arts. It is the internationalism of the arts which justifies the use of a single descriptive term; indeed, the romanesque style is often characterized as the first international style in Western Europe since the fall of the Roman Empire. Even with a manuscript from the middle of the eleventh century, it is often possible at a glance to distinguish the style of the illumination in national terms such as Ottonian or Anglo-Saxon. But by the middle of the twelfth century that sense of national identity is less emphatic, though stronger regional traditions persisted in France and Germany than in the politically more centralized kingdom of England (and many of the most important modern catalogues and studies of twelfth-century illuminated manuscripts are still arranged by country).[25] Some features considered characteristically romanesque, such as the stern figures relating to one another by intense stares and expressive rhetorical gestures, were descended from their Ottonian predecessors. Art historians have begun to explore the performative implications of gestures such as the raised and curving index finger, which has its roots in the classical *declamatio*.[26] But there are important differences between the Ottonian and romanesque aesthetic. Gone are the remnants of classical space, the pink and blue skies and clearly defined ground which had survived into the Ottonian period; they are mostly replaced by flat backgrounds of different coloured panels. The depiction of drapery – the discussion of which has traditionally occupied a central place in the study of romanesque art – delineates the individual body but at the same time forms a linear pattern which welds individual figures into a unified whole. The ordered balance and high seriousness of many of the figural compositions contrasts with the exuberant invention of the decoration, something to which we shall return.

The identification of a Byzantine element, of 'Byzantine influence', is also intrinsic to the characterization of romanesque. The new internationalism of romanesque art was partly a function of the respect for the ancient traditions of Constantinople (and admiration for its wealth) among the kingdoms of the West, fuelled by new contacts in the age of the Crusades and the Norman kingdom of Sicily.[27] Facial modelling with ochre or greenish shadows and white highlights was derived from Byzantium. The 'damp fold', the pear-shaped panel of drapery which delineates the body beneath, was a formula derived from Byzantine art which has been thought to give expression to new forms of self-confidence and self-consciousness. Art historians have identified two 'waves' of the concentration on Byzantine art, one early in the century and another distinct phase around 1170 in which the expressive characteristics of late Comnenian art make an

appearance. All this of course does not explain the means or routes by which such ideas travelled. Once a stylistic trait had been adopted in one Western centre, it presumably did not require further direct contact with Byzantium for it to be picked up in another. Italy has usually been seen as the main channel – Roman and south Italian painting in the early part of the century, Sicilian and Venetian mosaics in the later part. It is striking that two early model books or sheets show the copying of Byzantine models by Western artists: the early thirteenth-century model book at Wolfenbüttel (Herzog August Bibl. Guelf. 61. 2 Aug. 8°) and the single leaf of ca. 1200 in Freiburg (Augustinermuseum, G 23/1a).[28] But Byzantine illuminated books were also portable – witness the Greek psalter from St Gereon, Cologne (ÖNB theol. gr. 336) – even if most literate people in the West would not have been able to read a Greek text.[29] While there was no 'reform style' as such, the abandonment of the Ottonian tradition, which was closely identified with Imperial patronage, and the adoption of a more Italianate style in the newly reformed monasteries, has been seen as the outcome of the sociocultural change brought about by the conflict between Empire and Papacy. The concept of influence, so prevalent in art historical writing, has been subjected in this generation to more rigorous analysis.[30] Often represented as an emanation from one work of art to a successor, influence should really be viewed from the other direction, as the choice of a successor or inheritor which makes them an active agent rather than a passive recipient. Thus Western artists, at the same time that they were choosing to adopt some of the stylistic principles and formulae of Byzantium, seem generally not to have chosen to adopt their compositions, and to have remained faithful to Western traditions in subject-matter. There was no Western equivalent of the Byzantine Painter's Manual, which codified the representation of Christian subjects; attempts such as the Cistercian *Pictor in Carmine* of ca. 1200 never achieved widespread authority.[31] In recent years the whole discussion of Byzantine influence has been recast. Following Hans Belting's conception of the 'history of the image before the age of art', attention has been paid to the origins and transformation of the cult image in its passage from Byzantium to the West.[32] The switch of attention from production to reception has enlarged the scope of enquiry. But the study of the transformation from Hellenistic panel painting to Byzantine icons and subsequently to the Western altarpiece has tended to diminish the attention paid to miniature painting, and a concentration on the cult image also fails to do justice to the range of imagery, especially narrative imagery, contained in books.

The renewed influence of Byzantine forms in the period from 1170 was accompanied, first of all in England and France, by a change in the depiction of drapery, in which the abstract patterns of the damp fold were replaced by cascading multiple folds. The use of intense single colours, such as vermilion or ultramarine, is now balanced by more subtle combinations of mauve, fawn, and grey. Smaller and neater figures accord with the reduced size of many books and the fine white outlines which are usually considered a feature of Gothic illumination make their first appearance. Towards the end of the century overt Byzantine modelling becomes less apparent in the calm classicizing spirit of the style sometimes referred to as 'Transitional' – a style which in fact differs as radically from romanesque abstraction as it does from the elegance of courtly Gothic.[33]

Embellishing the Word

It was in the twelfth century that the decorative and illustrative potential of the initial was fully exploited. The practice of decorating initial letters had not been characteristic of the ancient world. The emergence of this manner of embellishing the word in the early Middle Ages has been linked both to the growth of textual reception through private reading rather than listening to a text read aloud and to the Christian emphasis on truth revealed through the written word of the gospels. Alexander has stressed the conflict inherent in the decoration of initials.[34] On the one hand, the legibility of script depends upon the repetition of clearly defined forms which carry a consistent significance: scribes were trained to write letters regularly and distinctly. On the other hand, the decorated initial thrives on ambiguity and variation: letters can become symbols, conveying the mystery of the Divine Word by their very complexity.[35]

The most basic function of decorated initials, as of tituli, rubrics, and punctuation, was to structure a text, aiding memorization and cueing the process of recollection by means of which a reader engaged with a text.[36] To achieve this it was important to maintain a decorative hierarchy, so that the size and elaboration of the initial could act as a guide, communicating the position of major and minor textual divisions even before a word was read. The clarity of the decorative hierarchy, with the parts subjugated to the interests of the whole, together with the endless invention displayed by the romanesque decorated initial, can create an exquisite combination of function and ornament even in a modestly decorated book. The initials used to mark secondary textual divisions, or even primary divisions in less luxurious manuscripts, are sometimes called 'arabesque', following the

term proposed by Alexander.[37] They include foliage and tendrils but are inorganic and two-dimensional: they are the ancestors of Gothic *fleuronnée* initials. It has been suggested that the arabesque initial derived from the initials of ninth-century manuscripts from Tours. Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, despite the strong Carolingian influence on their script and decoration, did not develop this form: the main components of their decorated initials are interlace, and bird and animal forms. It is in Norman manuscripts of the first half of the eleventh century that we can observe the appearance of simple scrolls, which become more complex later in the century, and it was Norman influence which gave impetus to the development in England.

These arabesque initials are intimately connected with the script of the book. They appear in greatest profusion in the patristic volumes with which twelfth-century libraries were stocked. The scribe leaves a space for the initial to fill, whether that initial is executed by the same person or by someone else. Sometimes a guide letter is still visible in the margin or within the initial space. The fact that there seem to be fewer missing initials in twelfth-century manuscripts than in those from later centuries suggests that the initials were inserted within the monastic scriptorium as part of the main production process. Much of their liveliness stems from the colour contrasts, especially of red, green, blue, and violet, which often appear very similar to those of the accompanying display headings. Under-drawing is sometimes visible, but the final form of the initial does not always follow it. The distinction between what is done with the pen and what is done with the brush can be difficult to ascertain. House styles – that is, particular features observable in the arabesque initials of manuscripts from individual religious houses or orders – can in some cases be identified; but the limitless variety and inventive power of these initials produced for the most part by those living a communal religious life subject to a rule has been contrasted with the relative uniformity of later initials produced in commercial circumstances. Nevertheless there is some evidence of an effort on the part of the reformed monastic orders to extend their austerity into the area of book production, and specifically to restrain the exuberance of the initial. A Cistercian statute of 1131 forbade the illumination of initials in more than one colour: 'litterae unius coloris fiant et non depictae'. This rule was not rigorously followed in all Cistercian houses, and even when they stuck to the letter of the rule, single-colour initials could still be very elaborate.[38]

What does this interweaving of script and initials imply about the distinction between scribes and artists? Hugo 'pictor', the late eleventh-

century Norman monk already mentioned, refers to himself as an illuminator but depicts himself as a scribe. This may just reflect the strength of the tradition of the scribal portrait. But the self-portrait of the nun Guda (Frankfurt, Stadt- und Universitätsbibl. Barth. 42, f. 110v) is accompanied by the inscription: 'Guda peccatrix mulier scripsit quae pinxit hunc librum.'[39] The lay artist Hildebertus is depicted in one manuscript as an artist (Stockholm, Kungliga Bibl. A. 144, f. 34r) and in another (Prague, Metropolitan Libr. A. 21. 1, f. 153v) as a scribe in the act of throwing his sponge at a mouse which is eating his lunch, while his assistant Everwinus paints an arabesque initial.[40] The four principal twelfth-century scribes at Corbie, near Amiens – Nevelo, Ingelrannus (Enguerrand), John of Amiens the 'one-eyed', and Elias (Hélie) – are all recorded as having ruled, written, rubricated, and illuminated their manuscripts.[41] In general it seems fair to assume that the closer the relation of script and decoration, the more likely they are to have been executed by the same hand. In the later Middle Ages, different individuals, who might be working at different times and in different places, specialized in the execution of script, rubrics, penwork initials, painted initials, borders, and miniatures.

Moving up the decorative hierarchy, the foliate forms of the twelfth-century painted initial are so ubiquitous that it becomes easy not to notice this incorporation of the natural world into the sign language of writing. The foliage of a twelfth-century initial is different from that of earlier examples. In Anglo-Saxon and Ottonian manuscripts, foliage stems were arranged in loose spirals with shoots growing in all directions, terminating in a turned-over trefoil or quatrefoil. From the beginning of the twelfth century, starting in England and the region of the Meuse, increasing emphasis was placed on individualized flowers. Typically the stem terminates in a small circle from which emerges a central petal surrounded by two smaller ones. Other petals or leaves and blossoms were added until flowers of this kind, usually placed in the centre of foliate spirals, became the dominant motif. In the second quarter of the century they develop into large, luxuriant plant formations which extend in all directions like a fleshy octopus. This type of decoration reached its maturity in England in the Bury Bible of ca. 1135,[42] and became universal in Northern Europe in the third quarter of the century (Figure 3.3). Only Italy and to some extent southern France stand apart from this development. Art historians have struggled to explain, as opposed merely to describe, this vocabulary. Vine scrolls and other types of arboreal ornament have been interpreted as symbols of renewal and regeneration in the context of Church reform. One might see the taming of the natural world as a traditional function of ornament. The desire to

impose order on a chaotic universe is expressed in twelfth-century literature: the *Cosmographia* of Bernard Silvester opens with Nature's complaint of the state of chaos in the universe. Recently Weinryb has taken this idea further by focusing on the account of creation in Plato's *Timaeus*, in which the divine *artifex* creates the four elements not *ex nihilo* but out of primordial matter that was in a chaotic, amorphous state.[43] In the Latin translation of Calcidius, the Greek term *hyle* for the primordial matter was rendered as *substantia* in the text but as *silva* in the commentary. Thus the raw material of the foliate initial may be understood as the primordial matter of Creation, shaped by the human *artifex* into accordance with the Word of God.

The twelfth century also saw the introduction, enmeshed in such foliage scrolls, of animals and of clambering elongated human figures, often engaged in combat with dragons or hybrid monsters. Plant scrolls inhabited by birds or beasts had originally been a classical motif which reappeared in the margins and frames of manuscripts from the Carolingian period. The animals or hybrid creatures themselves could be derived from Near-Eastern textiles, or from astrological illustrations, calendar scenes, or bestiaries. Such inhabited scrolls were adapted to the decoration of initials already in the tenth century and more commonly in northern French manuscripts of the early eleventh century. What was new was the regular introduction of human figures into the foliage decoration. An early example appears in a manuscript from Mont-St-Michel, of the third quarter of the eleventh century (Avranches, Bibl. mun. 72, f. 151r), in which a man with an axe is attacking a lion within the body of an initial P,[44] and it is seen at its most inventive in the Giant Bible from Jumièges of the last quarter (Rouen, Bibl. mun. 8).[45] It was in England that this type of initial was to reach its peak, though there are examples from all over Northern Europe, especially Flanders, the Meuse, and the Rhineland. The distinction made by modern scholars between decorated and historiated initials is not always clear. Many of the initials which feature human figures do not seem to represent an identifiable narrative or history – hence the use of the additional term 'figured' or 'figurative'. Some of these initials may have been intended to represent the eternal struggle of human beings, trapped in a hostile world of sin, searching for salvation. Speaking of a different medium, that of stone carving, the Cistercian Bernard of Clairvaux, writing to William of St-Thierry in ca. 1125–6, castigated the distraction caused by hybrid creatures from the claustral concentration of the religious life.[46] His rhetorical question, 'What signifies these ridiculous monsters?', suggests that to a contemporary eye they lacked symbolic meaning – though the alignment of dragons with the Devil is a feature of Christian writing from biblical

times, and the fact that Bernard was exercised to condemn the capitals which tempted monks to read in the marble may be taken as proof that there were some who did precisely that. Monks, who were used to reading long expositions of biblical texts, meditating on the implications of the text and using it as a stimulus for prayer, might surely have searched enigmatic images in their books for spiritual edification.[47]

From about 1170 a new form of decorated initial developed in France and England. There was clearly a growing taste for minuteness of form. The foliage becomes thinner and more stringy, the spirals more regularly and tightly wound, the ground now usually of burnished gold. Many of the old floral forms have been retained, including the 'octopus' flower, but they have generally become smaller and are often surrounded by groups of white dots. The principal animal presence now consists of small white lions which inhabit the scrolls in profusion. The initial itself is placed on a framing panel, usually of blue, red, or gold, often itself decorated with small circles or dots. Such initials, neater and more refined but perhaps less vigorous and inventive than their predecessors, feature in the glossed biblical books commercially produced in considerable numbers in Paris and exported throughout Europe.[48]

Illustrating the Text

In surveying the illustration of texts in the twelfth century, we encounter on the one hand persistent traditions, and on the other an expansion and enrichment in arrangement and subject-matter. Though the detailed study of iconographical prototypes – tracing the descent of individual motifs and of whole compositions – is no longer considered sufficient explanation of the meaning of each new pictorial event, this is nevertheless an art with strong patterns of expectation, in which context the invention of new forms, or even small departures from tradition, may be deliberate and meaningful.[49] In recent years the emphasis has shifted from the study of iconography as a self-contained system to its role in the rhetoric and theology of images.[50] In fact iconography has proved a resilient concept and has begun to be applied to new fields such as colour.[51] Heslop has pointed to the establishment of a visual vocabulary of class stereotypes, based on classical paradigms, in English manuscripts.[52]

To begin with the book greatest in authority (and also in size): the twelfth century saw the production of magnificently illustrated monastic Giant Bibles, reviving a Carolingian tradition.[53] These lectern books, often in two volumes, were read in both church and in refectory, and must have

been impressive symbols of the status of the communities which possessed them. They may have originated in Italy, but very soon they were also being produced in the valleys of the Meuse and the Rhine. The one surviving volume of the Lobbes Bible of 1084 (Tournai, Bibl. du Séminaire 1) is perhaps the first to feature a full set of historiated initials, in many cases excerpted from larger cycles such as that of the Carolingian bible in S. Paolo fuori le Mura, Rome, but simplified, compressed, and ingeniously fitted into the confines of the letters.[54] Many of these scenes, such as King David and the Amalekite for II Samuel, are subsequently found in bibles throughout the twelfth century. From about the 1130s, these Giant Bibles are found all over Europe, with several of the most outstanding examples produced in England. Some or all of the biblical books were provided with a miniature or a historiated initial, whose subject was designed to summarize the content of the book (such as the Crossing of the Red Sea for Exodus) but was often drawn from the events occurring near its beginning. Certain Old Testament scenes, such as the Ascension of Elijah for II Kings, were chosen for their typological significance as a prefiguration of the New. Some manuscripts also have a full-page frontispiece to some of the biblical books. As in the case of the Tree of Jesse illustration for the Book of Isaiah in the Lambeth Bible (f. 198r), these frontispieces can go beyond the illustration of the biblical narrative to become vehicles of complex typological or theological doctrines. Likewise the miniatures of the Floreffe Bible encapsulate complex biblical exegesis and are closely related to the pictorial diagrams of contemporary Mosan metalwork (Figure 3.2).[55]

But in England especially, the book which most commonly received extensive illustration was not the whole Bible but the Psalter. Recited both by monks and by the laity, the Psalms were the prime devotional texts of the earlier Middle Ages. The text of the Psalms is often preceded by a liturgical calendar which can contain pictorial cycles of the occupations of the months and the signs of the zodiac, either within the KL monogram itself (for the Latin *kalends*), which stands at the head of each month, or in separate roundels. The monastic text of the Psalter was divided first into eight sections, marking the beginnings of the parts to be read at matins each day and at vespers on Sunday: that is, at Psalms 1, 26, 38, 52, 68, 80, 97, and 109 (Vulgate numbering). At the same time the threefold formal division at Psalms 1, 51, and 101, which had Insular origins, was also retained, the two systems combining to make a tenfold division. These divisions were marked by large decorated or historiated initials. A consistent choice of subjects begins to appear in the initials of some

twelfth-century psalters, but it is not until the following century that a regular series becomes standard. The subjects themselves are usually not literal illustrations of the text, but were suggested either by the Psalm's *titulus* or by its opening verse. The small group of manuscripts containing a literal illustration to every Psalm was directly inspired by the presence at Canterbury of an extraordinary exemplar, the Carolingian Utrecht Psalter (Utrecht, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit 32).[56] The initials in the St Albans Psalter (Hildesheim, Dombibl. St. Godehard 1) are exceptional in responding to the allegorical, tropological, and eschatological exegesis of the Psalms.[57] Several psalters also have a cycle of full-page miniatures prefacing the text. This practice had begun in eleventh-century England, but only became common in the twelfth. As well as narrative subjects drawn from the Old and New Testaments, especially from the life of Christ, these cycles sometimes also include images of the Tree of Jesse, King David, the Virgin and Child, and Christ in Majesty. The scenes do not illustrate the text of the Psalms directly, but can be related to the Christian typological reading of the Psalms as messianic prophecies with King David, their presumed author, as the precursor and ancestor of Christ. Thus in England it was the Psalter, not the complete Bible, which carried the largest cycles of New Testament scenes. This is less universally true on the Continent, though there are examples such as the early thirteenth-century Psalter of the Landgrave Hermann of Thuringia (Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibl., HB II 24).[58]

In gospel books, each gospel may begin with an Evangelist portrait and a large decorated initial; decorated canon tables preceding the biblical text are found only occasionally after 1100. Only very rarely, as in the exceptional typological scheme of the Gospels of Henry the Lion, were gospel books furnished with extensive picture cycles. Gospel lectionaries containing the passages to be sung at Mass through the liturgical year occasionally contain New Testament miniatures. The tradition of illustrating the Commentary on the Apocalypse by Beatus of Liébana was peculiar to Spain, where the gradual assimilation of romanesque style to Mozarabic forms may be traced in a series beginning with the manuscript from Santo Domingo de Silos of the late eleventh century (BL Add. 1695).[59] Among liturgical books, only the Mass books (sacramentaries and missals) were regularly illustrated, usually with a large miniature of the Crucifixion before the Canon of the Mass; but the abbey of St Michael at Hildesheim produced two outstanding missals with complex typological schemes, the Ratmann Missal of 1159 (Hildesheim, Dom-Museum DS 37)

and the Stammheim Missal of the 1170s (Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum 64).[60] At the same time we can observe, sometimes in a female context, the beginning of the illustration of Office books such as the breviary.[61] Few illustrated manuscripts announce the manner of their use as clearly as the Exultet Roll. These large-format manuscripts from southern Italy contain the prayer for the blessing of the Paschal candle sung by the deacon on Holy Saturday. Uniquely, its illustrations face the opposite way to the text so that it could be unrolled over a lectern and hang down with its pictures to be seen the right way up by the congregation. As well as religious and liturgical scenes such as the Crucifixion and the Passage of the Red Sea, these rolls contain a representation of bees and a beehive in honour of the providers of the wax for the candle.[62]

The handsome copies of the biblical commentaries and other works of the Church Fathers, with which monastic and cathedral libraries were stocked, generally contain only decorated initials. Illustrative traditions were established only for one or two patristic works, such as the *Moralia in Job* of Gregory the Great and the *De civitate Dei* of Augustine. Similarly, the works of medieval theologians and commentators on Scripture, if illustrated at all, usually attracted only an author portrait and one or two historiated initials. The *Prayers and Meditations* of Anselm of Bec and Canterbury provides a rare example of such a text attracting an extensive scheme of illustration.[63] Copies of the text had been sent to Anselm's monastic and lay friends during his lifetime, but it is uncertain whether these early copies already contained pictures. From about 1070, all over Europe, illustrated saints' Lives were produced by communities which thus proclaimed the virtuous lives, miracle-working powers, and continuing protection of their patrons; they had seldom been illustrated before.[64] The picture cycles of these manuscripts are closely related, just as the authors of their texts sought to bring the lives of their subjects into conformity with the pattern set by Christ. These manuscripts are all dedicated to single saints or to a small group of related ones. By contrast some passionals, which contain shorter saints' Lives arranged in the order of the liturgical year, contain a historiated initial depicting each saint, or even an episode from the saint's life.[65] In canon law a tradition of illustrating Gratian's *Decretum* spread from Bologna to Paris.[66]

Perhaps no text composed in the twelfth century can rightly be described as secular. The illustrated twelfth-century encyclopaedias, for example, the *Liber Floridus* written by Lambert, canon of St-Omer (Ghent, Universiteitsbibl. 92), and the *Hortus Deliciarum* of Herrad of Hohenbourg in Alsace (destroyed in 1870, but partially

reconstructable), attempt to assimilate all aspects of monastic learning into a Christian world picture.[67] Monastic chronicles and world histories are most often illustrated (if at all) by ruler portraits, sometimes in genealogical trees to underline the importance of dynastic pedigree. The *History of the Two Cities* by Otto of Freising (Jena, Universitätsbibl. Bos. 9. 6) and the *Liber ad honorem Augusti* by Peter of Eboli, celebrating the conquest of Sicily by the Emperor Henry VI (Bern, Burgerbibl. 120), are rare examples at this period of the invention of narrative cycles of illustration for historical texts.[68] But most illustrated twelfth-century secular manuscripts contain texts which had their origins in the classical world, either as Latin works or as late antique Latin translations of Greek works. Sometimes continuities between antique and medieval picture cycles can be identified, though the pictorial tradition in most cases seems to extend only as far back as the fourth or fifth century CE. In such instances the pictures in the twelfth-century manuscripts usually seem to have been adapted not directly from late antique exemplars, but from Carolingian or Anglo-Saxon intermediaries. Of literary, historical, and philosophical works, only the comedies of Terence and the *Psychomachia* of Prudentius were regularly provided with cycles of pictures. The battle of virtues and vices, composed by Prudentius in the fifth century CE, depicts allegorical figures of classical origin, but the text is Christian.[69] The illustrated Terence manuscripts, with their scene-by-scene illustrations reflecting the masks and even perhaps the gestures of the Roman stage, represent the end of a monastic antiquarian tradition – though the original sketchy three-dimensionality has been replaced in the twelfth-century manuscript probably produced at St Albans (Bodl. Libr. Auct. F. 2. 13) by the firm outlines and stylized draperies of romanesque art.[70] In later centuries the illustrations are clothed in knightly Gothic garb to cater to the tastes of a secular readership. The classics are present even in the vernacular: one of the few examples of a romanesque cycle of illustrations to a vernacular text is the early thirteenth-century manuscript from Regensburg of the Middle High German version of the *Aeneid* by Heinrich von Veldeke (Berlin, Staatsbibl. germ. fol. 282).[71]

The other illustrated 'secular' texts are mostly technical and scientific, including herbals, bestiaries, and treatises on astronomy and astrology. Of these, the bestiary (the popularity of which was to reach its height only in the thirteenth century) had travelled furthest from its late antique roots; the animal lore in its text was by now almost entirely in the service of Christian moralizing themes, and the picture cycles are medieval in inspiration.[72] The main purpose of the herbal was to identify plants and

to describe their medicinal properties; illustrations were integral to the identifications, though in most cases artists did little more than copy the conventionalized pictures they found in their exemplars.[73] Illustrations accompanying medical tracts, such as drawings of cautery figures, were also traditional.[74] The illustrations were designed to show the points on the body where the cautery iron should be applied to cure specific ills; the purpose was to readjust the imbalance of bodily humours, not merely to prevent the spread of infection. The occasional representation of operations for the removal of cataracts and nasal polyps, found in conjunction with the herbal, are not, however, detailed enough to have been of any practical application. The monastic study of the natural sciences is attested by the survival of illustrated astronomical manuscripts. The texts, mostly based on Cicero's verse version of the Greek of Aratus with later accretions, were illustrated by pictures of the planets, constellations, and signs of the zodiac. The twelfth-century versions were derived from Carolingian models which themselves were based on late antique exemplars. By these means images of classical gods and mythological figures entered the consciousness of the medieval monastery. In one instance (Bodl. Libr. Bodl. 614) illustrated astronomical and astrological texts are found in conjunction with the illustrated *Marvels of the East*, descriptions of natural wonders and monstrous races going back ultimately to ancient Greek descriptions of the fabulous peoples of India.[75]

The twelfth-century love of classification found its pictorial expression in diagrams illustrating books of natural science, the texts of which were often excerpted from the works of earlier medieval authors such as Isidore of Seville and Bede.[76] The balanced and elegant construction of these figures could be used to depict the harmonious relations between microcosm and macrocosm in the constitution of the universe according to Christian cosmology: the four seasons, elements, humours, and ages of man, for instance, or the seven planets, sacraments, and liberal arts.[77] Such diagrams, often in ink outline, drew on the formulations of twelfth-century texts such as the *Cosmographia* of Bernard Silvester and the *Elucidarium* of Honorius Augustodunensis: they combine the biblical idea that God created man in His own image with the ancient teaching (found in Plato's *Timaeus*) that mankind consists of the same elements as the material world. Some of the monastic houses of southern Germany, such as Hirsau and Zwiefalten in Swabia or Prüfening and Regensburg in Bavaria, specialized in the production of such drawings (Figure 3.4).[78] The diagrams were designed to impress the relations between different parts of a subject on the memory of the reader. Indeed, the organization of space in many romanesque illustrations

may reflect the same purpose, with geometric or architectural forms providing a grid within which images, often identified by inscriptions, are grouped hierarchically around a central motif or figure. Nordenfalk's classic definition of romanesque style contrasted the miniature of the ascension of St Amand in the first illustrated Life of the saint of ca. 1070–80 (Valenciennes, Bibl. mun. 502), still essentially Carolingian in character, with the same scene in the Life of the mid twelfth century (Valenciennes, Bibl. mun. 501), now characterized by strict symmetry, frontality, and a compartmentalized layout.[79] Caviness has explored the way in which such governing principles created a visual syntax for the representation of divine order in romanesque art more widely.[80] Thus the word 'illustration' does not begin to do justice to the variety of relationships we can observe between the texts and images which were juxtaposed with each other in the twelfth century.

Notes

1. Mütherich and Dachs 1987, no. 26.
2. Kötzsche 1989.
3. Cahn 1982, cat. no. 46.
4. Ibid., cat. no. 28.
5. Mynors, *Durham*, 32–45.
6. Oakeshott 1981.
7. Dodwell 1993, 278–9 and pl. 276.
8. Gameson 2001.
9. Gullick 2006.
10. Alexander 1992, figure 28.
11. For example, Dodwell 1993.
12. Clanchy 1993, esp. 224–52.
13. Alexander 1992, figure 17.
14. Thomson, *The Bury Bible*.
15. Kauffmann 1975, no. 34.
16. Riedmaier 1994; Shepard 2007.
17. Cahn 1996, no. 79.
18. Clarke 2001.
19. Alexander 1992; Barral i Altet 1986–90; De Hamel 1992.
20. Evans 1969; Holcomb 2009.
21. Lawrence-Mathers 2003, 89–108.
22. Oakeshott 1981.
23. Petzold 1990.
24. Hourihane 2008.

25. Kauffmann 1975 (England); Cahn 1996 (France); Klemm 1980–8 and Butz/von Borries-Schulten 1987 (Germany); Murano and Saggese 2005. Fingernagel 2007 includes a series of essays arranged by country.
26. Camille 1985.
27. Demus 1970.
28. Buchthal 1979; Scheller 1995.
29. Legner 1985, vol. 2, cat. E 41.
30. Lowden and Bovey 2007.
31. Wirth 2006.
32. Belting 1994.
33. Hoffmann 1970.
34. Alexander 1978, 87.
35. Hamburger 2014.
36. Carruthers 2008.
37. Alexander 1978.
38. Glorieux-De Gand 1990; Lawrence 1995; Reinecke, Reinecke and Tivig 1998.
39. Smith 1997, figure 6.
40. Alexander 1992, figs. 18–9.
41. De Mérindol 1976, 1. 431–45.
42. Thomson, *The Bury Bible*.
43. Weinryb 2013.
44. Alexander, *Mont St Michel*, pl. 12a.
45. Cahn 1982, cat. no. 106.
46. Rudolph 1990.
47. Heslop 1986.
48. De Hamel, *Glossed Books*, esp. ch. 4.
49. Cassidy 1993.
50. Hamburger and Bouché 2006.
51. Petzold 1999.
52. Heslop 1990.
53. Cahn 1982; Kauffmann 2003, 73–104.
54. Cahn 1982, cat. no. 48.
55. Ibid., cat. no. 46.
56. Van der Horst, Noel, and Wüstefeld 1996; *Eadwine*.
57. Bepler, Kidd, and Geddes 2008; Pächt, Dodwell, and Wormald 1960.
58. Heinzer 1992.
59. Williams 2002–3.
60. Teviotdale 2001.
61. Seeberg 2002.
62. Cavallo 1973.
63. Pächt 1956.
64. Abou-El-Haj 1994; Hahn 2001.
65. Michon 1990.
66. Melnikas 1975.
67. Derolez 1968; Green et al. 1979.

68. Kölzer and Stähli 1994.
69. Katzenellenbogen 1939; Norman 1988; Stettiner 1895–1905.
70. Jones, Webber, and Morey 1931.
71. Henkel and Fingernagel 1992.
72. Clark 2006.
73. Collins 2000.
74. MacKinney 1965.
75. James 1929.
76. Murdoch 1984.
77. Saxl 1957.
78. Boeckler 1924; Mütherich and Dachs 1987.
79. Grabar and Nordenfalk 1958, 182–9.
80. Caviness 1983.