

## Rezensionen

FRANÇOIS AVRIL AND YOLANTA ZALUSKA, *Manuscripts enluminés d'origine italienne, I. (VI<sup>e</sup>–XII<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, 1980. Pp. xxii + 104; 271 illustrations (56 pls.), 14 illustrations in color (8 pls.)

This volume devoted to manuscripts written and decorated on Italian soil from the time of Late Antiquity through the Romanesque epoch inaugurates a long-term and mammoth scholarly undertaking to catalogue illuminated manuscripts of the Bibliothèque Nationale, one of the world's greatest treasures for the study of the illuminated book. Four volumes, of which the present is the first, will treat the Bibliothèque Nationale's holdings of some 1700 illuminated manuscripts of Italian origin which antedate the end of the sixteenth century. The magnitude of the overall project is confirmed initially in that but a small fraction or one-tenth of the total Italian holdings is covered in this carefully prepared and admirable volume by François Avril and Yolanta Zaluska. The four catalogues of the Italian schools of illumination in turn belong to a larger plan to prepare „un répertoire raisonné des manuscrits enluminés conservés au département des Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale“, a program which will next encompass the collections of manuscripts of English and Spanish origin.

Given the fact that the Bibliothèque Nationale's holdings comprise the largest single collection situated outside Italy of Italian illuminated manuscripts of the period under review, Avril's and Zaluska's catalogue provided an opportunity to introduce new materials and fresh attributions in furthering our understanding of the Italian medieval illumination. The authors from the start define the purpose and the parameters of their investigation. The outlook is specific through entries which systematically and judiciously supply information pertaining to material description, date, localization, provenance and to codicological, historical and art historical evidence, but the authors also signal the value of illuminated books in terms of their broader cultural dimensions. The reader will find this volume offers much more than the state of the question, for the results of new research are evident throughout. The manuscripts discussed in the catalogue are divided into six major groups: Post-Antique (5/6–7th centuries); Insular, Lombard and Carolingian traditions (8–10th centuries); Beneventan schools and the Norman domaine (8–12th centuries); Romanesque in Central Italy (11–12th centuries); Northern Italy (11–12th centuries); Manuscripts of indeterminate origin (11–12th centuries). The headings are in general made on the basis of date (period), place of origin, or combination of both, or in terms of such specific elements as the Beneventan script which facilitate classification. The debt to E. A. Lowe's fundamental works, especially volume V (Paris) in the *Codices Latini Antiquiores* and his studies on Beneventan script, is noted by the authors in their treatment of manuscripts prior to ninth century and those of Beneventan character.

In his introduction to the volume François Avril describes the aims of the Paris entries which fall in scope somewhere between those of Elisabeth Klemm's catalogue of the Romanesque illuminated manuscripts in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, *Katalog der illuminierten Handschriften der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek in München*, III, 1 (*Die romanischen Handschriften der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek*), 1980, and the more abbreviated approach employed by Otto Pächt and J. J. G. Alexander for the Bodleian Library's series, *Illuminated Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library*, Oxford, 3 vols., 1966–73. With reference to individual entries, particularly noteworthy in the Paris scheme is the precision in describing the hierarchy of illuminated initials found in many volumes. For example, in the entry for the Italian Romanesque Bible (MS. lat. 50; no. 72) three groups of initials are distinguished: giant initials of "transitional geometrical" type which fill an area equivalent to a column of text; smaller "geometrical" or "transitional geometrical" letters with segmented shafts; and the full-shaft letters with rinceaux. Avril and Zaluska have in general been served well by their publisher, but in future volumes of the Paris series a greater abundance of illustrations will probably be required. The more ample illustration campaign of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek's series mentioned above provides quite suitable breadth of coverage in illustrative materials.

Among the Late Antique manuscripts treated in the catalogue are several adorned with fish-*A* initials, scribal creations which, as Carl Nordenfalk has noted, respect the basic shape of the script character and document early fashions of decorative lettering within books (MSS. lat. 2235 and 2769; nos. 4, 5, pl. II). Another dimension of Late Antique decorative embellishment is found in a volume of Basilian homilies (MS. lat. 10593; no. 7, pl. III) which opens with a depiction of a giant arch enclosing the table of contents. Decorative accent by means of architectural enframement is also found on a title page of lat. 2769 from the sixth century. Avril and Zaluska have narrowed Lowe's dating to one in the second half of the sixth century for the illusionistic rendition of the arch in lat. 10593. The classicizing outlook of the arch contrasts with the abstract, carpet-like pattern of interlace designs, also reproduced on pl. III, decorating one side of an isolated leaf in MS. lat. 12190 (no. 6). Carl Nordenfalk has appraised this ornamental page as a possible product of sixth-century Vivarium, but his attribution has been challenged by Katharina Bierbrauer (*Die Ornamentik frühkarolingischer Handschriften aus Bayern*, 1979, p. 72 f.). Also Avril and Zaluska appear to have included this item in their catalogue with some reservations, "Italie? VI<sup>e</sup> s. (2<sup>e</sup> moitié)?"

As underscored by the second grouping of manuscripts in the catalogue, Italy in the seventh century surrendered its pioneering role in nurturing the early development of the illuminated codex in the Latin West. The Paris manuscripts show that Italy in the Early Medieval period produced no equivalent to the rich and varied pictorial and/or ornamental traditions of the insular, Carolingian and Ottonian schools of illumination. A bright spot in manuscript illumination in Northern Italy during the Carolingian era was marked at Verona in the time of

Bishop Egino (796–99), and this episode is well represented in Paris by the initials in MSS. lat. 10457 and 10616 (no. 18, pl. IV). The initial style exemplified in these books from Verona, which was also an important outpost for the use of the Caroline minuscule in North Italy, features letter contours of poised regularity in combination with a fine ornamental repertoire including interlace patterns and fish and bird motifs. For technical considerations such as the characteristic use of the compass in executing initials of this type, see the observations of Bierbrauer, *op. cit.*, p. 38 ff. 82 f. The authors, following Bischoff's suggestion, associate the single purple codex in the catalogue (MS. lat. 9451; no. 17, pl. IV) with another North Italian center (Monza?) directly related to the Carolingian court of King Pepin. An indigenous Italian tradition is represented in Paris by manuscripts written in Beneventan script, a school which endured through the Romanesque period at Monte Cassino and other South Italian centers. This distinctive Beneventan script was matched by an equally distinctive initial style as seen in the South Italian Exultet roll (MS. nouv. acq. lat. 710; no. 33, pls. A; VII). The highly-charged curvilinear impulses in decorative lettering at Monte Cassino in the period around 1100 are exemplified in a fragment from an early copy of Leo of Ostia's *Chronicon Cassinense* (MS. nouv. acq. lat. 2199; no. 32, pl. VIII).

In the Romanesque period, Central Italy established itself as a major center of book production, and about one-third of the manuscripts treated in the Paris catalogue belongs to this phase of Italian illumination. This school originated in the new wave of ecclesiastical reform fostered by Papal Rome from the mid-eleventh century onwards, and its most characteristic product was the giant Bible or *bibbia atlantica*. In sheer quantity of production, the Italian Romanesque Vulgate "edition" must have rivalled the output of the Carolingian scriptorium of Tours, which is thought to have executed on average some two pandects each year during the first half of the ninth century (B. Fischer, in *Die Bibel von Moutier-Grandval*, p. 61). Whereas the giant Bibles hold pride of place among these volumes (MSS. lat. 50 and 104; no. 72, pls. D–E, XXIX–XXX), the Bibliothèque Nationale's holdings from this period also shine with valuable books of Biblical commentaries and patristic literature including some later annotated by Petrarch.

E. B. Garrison (*Studies in the History of Mediaeval Italian Painting*, I, p. 23 ff.) and Knut Berg (*Studies in Twelfth-Century Tuscan Illumination*, p. 11 ff.) have introduced the term, "geometrical", to describe the dominant initial style used in these Romanesque manuscripts. In addition, they proposed that this Romanesque decorative style, though based in large measure on earlier Carolingian models, was invented for outfitting the giant Bibles with ornamental alphabets to punctuate the opening of the books of the Old and New Testaments. The "geometrical" decorative vocabulary readily spilled into copies of patristic literature and such canonical collections as Burchard of Worms's *Decretum*. The R-initial which opens a copy of Gregory the Great's *Moralia in Job* (MS. lat. 2213; no. 65, pl. XXIV) gives evidence of such a process, for its upright stem seems derived from the "geometrical" Genesis initials of the giant Bibles, while on the other hand the lobe

and the tail of the letter are assembled in more piecemeal fashion. Since the Italian Vulgate manuscripts would normally contain no "geometrical" *R*'s for accenting the opening word of Old and New Testament books, the illuminator of Gregory's *Moralia* may have fallen back on his own devices and composed this *R*-initial *ad hoc*. Other initials of the *Moralia in Job* are far less ornamentally ambitious than the prologue-*R* and suggest that the manuscript belongs to an early phase of Italian Romanesque illumination represented by initials of the Bible of Henry IV, an Italian giant Bible which antedates 1075 (München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 13001; see K. Berg, *Institutum Romanum Norvegiae: Acta ad Archaeologiam et Artium Historiam Pertinentia*, II, 1965, p. 175 f.; F. Mutherich in *Suevia Sacra: Frühe Kunst in Schwaben*, 1973, no. 174, p. 178 f.) A comparison between the *A*-initial which opens Book XXXIII of the Paris *Moralia* and the letter which opens the text of I Chronicles or Judith in the Bible of Henry IV provides grounds for arguing a date much earlier than that proposed in the catalogue (*Abb. 4 a und b*). Further decorative elements in the *Moralia* initials (e. g. trefoil terminals) call to mind ornamental letters in such other early Italian giant Bibles as the Palatine Bible (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MSS. Pal. lat. 3-5) and a Bible now at Admont (Stiftsbibliothek, MSS. C, D). They too, like the Bible of Henry IV, migrated northward after their production, and it is of no little interest that the *Moralia* had reached France by the twelfth century.

No one would claim that the majority of the Italian Romanesque Bibles and their related works represent the "finest hour" of Italian illumination, but their historical significance and their impact should not be underestimated. The most accomplished of these Italian pandects, the Santa Cecilia Bible (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS. Barb. lat. 587), stands artistically on a par with the most celebrated early Romanesque illuminated manuscripts on either side of the Alps and antedates the wide majority of them by some decades. The figure of the crowned and enthroned figure of Ecclesia personifying Wisdom in Paris lat. 104 (pl. E) descends from the style of the figure of Ruth in the Santa Cecilia Bible (fol. 81 v), and for that reason the reviewer would date lat. 104 nearer to 1100 than the catalogue may suggest. The authors, in this reviewer's opinion, correctly place the initials decorating a copy of St. Augustine's *Enarrationes in Psalmos* (MS. lat. 16724; no. 71, pls. XXVII-XXVIII) close to the workshop which carried out the decorative program of the first volume of a Bible, lat. 50. Although MSS. lat. 50 and 104 were later brought together as a Bible in two volumes, the catalogue indicates that these manuscripts were not made at the same time. Lat. 50 contains no figurative designs, but the Commentary on Psalms (lat. 16724) carries a marginal drawing of a prostrate figure. The use of bunched angular or V-shaped folds to cloak the figure finds a parallel in the Tobit frontispiece of the Pantheon Bible (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS. Vat. lat. 12958) and displays a stylistic trait which seems to derive as a reduction of the broken-fold patterns found in miniatures by Garrison's "First Master" of the Pantheon Bible (Garrison, *Studies*, IV, p. 120 ff., figs. 83-88, 99). The association therefore made by Garrison and

the authors between lat. 16724 and the Pantheon Bible atelier on the basis of initial style also seems confirmed by considerations of figure style.

What lat. 50 lacks in pictorial illustration is offset by the quality of its ornamental letters. It shows that the so-called Italian Romanesque *bianchi girari* or "white vine scrolls" have come of age and appear in combination with full-shaft or "geometrical" lettering. These rinceau patterns set against multi-colored backgrounds ultimately take their cue from Ottonian initial styles of the eleventh century (Berg, *Studies*, pp. 12, 20 f.; C. Nordenfalk, "Italian Romanesque Illumination", *Burlington Magazine*, CXII, 1970, p. 401), but by the late eleventh century they had in some Central Italian centers shed much of their Ottonian heritage. The robustness of Ottonian interlace and bulbed tendrils, often characterized by whirlpool tensions, is gradually harvested by Italian masters who render more even, "classic" spinings knit of harmonious webs. As if identifying with the ancient Mediterranean homeland of the vegetal rinceau, the "white vine scrolls" of lat. 50 demonstrate how Italian Romanesque illuminators made this ornamental rinceau something very much their own. The sequence of illustrations in the catalogue (pls. XV-XXXIII) provides a glimpse of this process of reinterpretation and transformation. This contribution of Italian illuminators to the history of decorative lettering took a new lease on life in Renaissance Italy when humanist circles revived this immaculate, organic decor and skillfully adapted it to books filled with the new intellectual pursuits of the Quattrocento (O. Pächt, "Notes and Observations on the Origins of Humanistic Book Decoration", *Fritz Saxl: A Volume of Memorial Essays from his Friends in England*).

With reference to a copy of St. Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* which contains both "geometrical" and rinceau initials (MS. lat. 2056; no. 55, pl. XVI), the authors rightly propose an Italian origin rather than the French one suggested by Danielle Gaborit-Chopin (*La décoration des manuscrits à Saint-Martial de Limoges et en Limousin du IX<sup>e</sup> au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, pp. 117 ff., 193 f.). The reviewer's examination of the volume, which was written by Italian hands, confirms the Italian localization. The manuscript apparently reached Limoges by the late eleventh or early twelfth century since a French scribe of that period added a prologue to the volume and other French hands are evident in the last quires of the volume. Given this background of provenance, we are reminded that E. B. Garrison saw the penetration of Italian artistic ideas at Limoges in some initials of the so-called "Second" Bible of St. Martial and the *Vita S. Marialis* (*Studies*, I, p. 46, n. 6).

No less intriguing in terms of provenance is the catalogue's indication that a copy of St. Ambrose's *Expositio in Evangelium Lucae* made in Italy in the second half of the eleventh century once belonged to Cluny. Avril and Zaluska accept Delisle's identification of MS. nouv. acq. lat. 1439 (no. 53, pl. XVI) as a manuscript mentioned in the twelfth-century inventory at Cluny. Because of the great Burgundian abbey's direct associations with Rome, the possible relationship of the Cluny scriptorium to developments in Italian illumination or vice versa looms large as a question in the minds of art historians. The volume in question carries rinceau

designs of Ottonianizing ancestry, but Ottonian initial styles had also taken root in the scriptorium at Cluny in the eleventh century as demonstrated by Meyer Schapiro (*Parma Ildefonsus*) and Carl Nordenfalk (*Art de France*, IV, 1964) in their studies of the golden tendril initials which adorn the Lectionary of Cluny and the Parma Ildefonsus. Their research has made it clear that Ottonianizing initials of the Lectionary and the Ildefonsus were dependent on models from imperial Germany rather than from any Italian intermediary sources. On the other hand, the beaded interlace designs and petalled foliate patterns which inhabit the decorative frames and borders of some pages of the Ildefonsus manuscript (*Parma Ildefonsus*, fig. 24) and the Crucifixion miniature of the Cluny Lectionary (*Parma Ildefonsus*, fig. 38) may reveal that Italian or Italianate "geometrical" schemes were also known and emulated there. Comparative material for the investigation of such affiliation in ornament may be found in other manuscripts in the Paris catalogue (cf. pls. C, E XXIV). Since the "geometrical" repertoire was far from a wholesale adoption on pages of the Parma Ildefonsus and the Cluny Lectionary, a more precise linking between patterns of book illumination at Cluny and Rome must await further research on the sources underlying the development of the "geometrical" initials and ornamental frames of the Italian giant Bibles themselves. Given the losses to Cluny's library, this issue in Romanesque illumination may be impossible to resolve with the traces at hand.

One of the most splendid Italian Romanesque volumes in Paris is a copy of the first sixteen books of Gregory the Great's *Moralia* which once belonged to Petrarch (MS. lat. 2219; no. 86, pls. H. XXXVI–XXXVII). The initials of this book, which is assigned a Tuscan origin (Pisa?) in the third quarter of the twelfth century, exhibit a decorative opulence and wondrous calligraphy embodying a calculated disposition of script, rubrics, and ornamental letters entirely in keeping with High Romanesque principles. The reviewer would like to point out a related manuscript in Vienna (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 221), for the hand which executed the bird which serves as the tail of the *Q*-initial at Book XV of the *Moralia* seems to have been schooled in the same atelier as an illuminator of initials featuring bird motifs in the Vienna volume (fols. 23, 96 v, 105).

In addition to signaling these manuscripts of exceptional quality, another merit of the Paris catalogue is the coverage it gives to neglected manuscripts whose modest decorations aid nevertheless in filling out the picture of Italian illumination as a whole. The book furthermore recommends itself by the adequate provision of appropriate illustrative materials which can be put to use by art historians in studying the give-and-take which characterized much of the relationship between Italian illumination and that of the Northern schools during the Early Middle Ages. We can only hope that future volumes in this series emanating from Rue de Richelieu will maintain standards similar to those achieved in this inaugural work.

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