ANGLO-SAXON ICONOGRAPHY IN THE

YORK PSALTER VIRGIN CYCLE

by

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ABSTRACT

The miniatures of the York Psalter (MS.U.3.2,
Univ. of Glasgow Library), an important manuscript from the
north of England dating ca 1170, have an obvious relation in
form, style and iconography to the pictorial cycles of 12th
century English manuscripts as exemplified by the St. Albans
Psalter, the Pembroke College MS.120 and the Four Psalter
Leaves. However, the York Psalter is distinguished by the
unique iconography of its Virgin cycle on the last three il-
lustrated folios--six scenes depicting the Death, Burial and
Assumption--which sets it apart from other representations of
the subject in manuscripts from the south of England. This
thesis is concerned with the literary and artistic sources for
this distinct imagery.

Chapter II analyzes the Virgin cycle first against
the common textual Latin source and then against one of its
recensions in an Anglo-Saxon homily on the narrative. The
Anglo-Saxon version is shown to explain some of the unusual
iconographic features in the cycle. The final scene of Assump-
tion, which does not accord with either of these texts, is anal-
yzed from the point of view of its dramatic form, and the
shrouded body motif is established as a characteristic trait
of Anglo-Saxon and later English art. Chapter III discusses
in general the tradition of Dormition-Assumption iconography in

Continental art and in particular the special tradition for
the theme in art of the British Isles, where by comparison
it occurs earlier and in more developed form. The recurrence
of a Death and Assumption cycle in expanded form in the York
Psalter can be seen as a logical development of a subject habi-
tually present in English art. Chapter IV notes that through-
out the iconography of the other miniatures, the artist of
the York Psalter has followed in the main a variety of models
from Byzantine art and contemporary English illumination. But,
in some unusual and inventive features, very often the proto-
type turns out to be insular art. Anglo-Saxon iconography,
which was the formative influence on the Virgin cycle, has
also contributed an imaginative aspect to some of the other
miniatures as well.

In an atmosphere of ever-increasing devotion to
Mary, the artist of the York Psalter Virgin cycle has com-
bined Anglo-Saxon literary sources and pictorial motifs. In
so doing he has created a unique iconography, imbued with a
new, highly original content.

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Chapter 1

Of the collection belonging to the University of
Glasgow Library, pride of place must go to the illuminated
manuscript dating *ca* 1170 which we know as the *York Psal-*
ter (Glasgow, Univ.Libr. MS. *Hunter U.3.2*). Traditionally
acclaimed an important work of the 12th century, it has
featured in major exhibitions of English medieval art and
it is known to us also by citation numerous times in scho-
larly literature.[1] Its luxurious decoration has caught
the attention of various art historians. Rickert describes
the manuscript as a ". . . large and splendid psalter. . . ."
and Miller counts it as ". . . one of the most beautiful of
the 12th century psalters to come down to us. . . .".[2]
Young and Aitken in 1908 were the first to systematically
describe its physical features in detail in their *Catalogue*
of the Manuscripts in the Library of the Hunterian Museum.[3]
More recently the style and iconography of the *Psalter* have
been surveyed in T.S.R. Boase's short monograph and in Kauff-
mann's 1973 catalogue, *Romanesque Manuscripts 1066-1190.*[4]

The first part of this Chapter will introduce
the manuscript by presenting a summary of its chief char-
acteristics in order to relate it to the mainstream of

English illumination during the 12th century. However, of greater interest I believe are the features less well known about the *York Psalter* and therefore the second part of the Chapter will outline its atypical aspects. These will form the focus of the following sections of this essay. As I will point out, the provenance of the *York Psalter* from the north of England and its Virgin iconography—two interrelated factors—suggest a new understanding of the manuscript and also evidence the nature of artistic activity north of the Humber at this time.

I.

To begin: a personal visit by me to Glasgow in 1977 confirms that the manuscript in its present condition contains 210 folios measuring 290 x 184 mm (11½ x 7½"),[5] a large scale which together with its lavish use of gold and brilliant colouring throughout the decoration contributes to its sumptuous appearance. The text is written in one hand typical of the 1160's, as noted by Boase,[6] except for prayers at the end which are in a late 14th century script. Originally written with feminine endings but la-

ter altered into the masculine plural, these prayers may be

an indication of the original owner of the *Psalter*. The

feminine gender as well as the emphasis on the Virgin in

several of the miniatures suggest that the patron of such

a deluxe work may well have been an abbess or lady of

high standing from Yorkshire, the area of origin of the

manuscript.[7] Thus, the *York Psalter* would be associated

with the tradition popular in England of illuminated psal-

ters and other devotional books produced for women, as

exampled by the *St. Albans* and *Shaftesbury Psalters*.[8]

On opening the *Psalter*, one is greeted first by

the decoration of the Calendar pages at the top in the

initial *H* with lively characters depicting the occupations

of the months, and lower down the page with the signs of

the zodiac in roundels (Figs. 2-14). While such illustra-

tion is customary in medieval psalters in England and

the Continent by the 12th century, the use of groups in

complex genre scenes as in the *York Psalter* instead of

single figures engaged in the characteristic activity has

been traced by Schapiro to specifically English influence

by early 11th century manuscripts such as the British Mus-

eum MS. *Tiberius B.v* folio 3 (Fig.1).[9] Consequently right

from the beginning there are hints here in the opening

pages and in the indications of its owner that the *York Psalter* responds to local as opposed to imported fashion.

Overall, the style of the miniatures--thirteen full-page illustrations and an elaborate *Beatus* page--(Figs. 15-28), is within the main trend of English illumination from the mid-century as generated by the impact of the new Romanesque style in the *St. Albans Psalter, ca* 1119-1123 (Hildesheim, St. Godehard's Treasury, unnumbered ms.).[10] From this pictorial tradition which descended through the *Bury Bible, ca* 1135 (Cambridge, C.C.C. MS 2), the Pembroke College MS 120, *ca* 1140, the *Lambeth Bible, ca* 1140-1150 (London, Lambeth Palace Libr. MS 3), and the *Winchester Psalter ca* 1150 (British Museum MS Nero C.IV),[11] the characteristic features of style are: the use of broad areas of colour with shaded edges as a means to build volume; the grouping of figures in compositions kept within the boundaries of the frame; the type of filling ornament inside the double borders of the frame itself; and architectural settings subjugated to the requirements of the narrative.[12]

The style of the initials--ten, large historiated initials at the liturgical sections of the Psalms and about 150 smaller gilt initials throughout the remaining text-- (Figs. 34-40) conforms to mid-century type. They feature

thick stems, large blossoms and inhabited scrolls.[13]
Like the initials in the *Winchester Psalter* which they
resemble, they are not overly lavish and include such
secular motifs as the mermaid combing her hair and the
harp-playing goat.[14]

A large part of the *Psalter's* visual charm is
due to its wide range of brilliant colour. The miniatures
are painted in clear, bright colours of vermillion and
lake red, pure orange, aquamarine green, a blue as rich as
lapus lazuli and in blended tones of slatey gray, brown
and beige. The effect of figures executed in these in-
tense pigments and outlined in black, silhouetted singly
or set in groups against tooled gold backgrounds, is no-
thing less than stunning. Such a palette of pure colour--
almost garish in effect at times--in tandem with the gold
ground is in keeping with the 12th century colour vocabu-
lary in English illumination as developed from Ottonian
and Byzantine sources. The drapery style also reflects
contemporary developments. Of the later 12th century
manuscripts in England, the *York Psalter* represents the
climax of English Romanesque stylization. As Wormald
notes: ". . .(it) is the reduction to its farthest limit
of the attempts first begun in the Bury Bible to make a

compromise between certain aspects of Byzantine art, par-
ticularly in the damp-fold convention and the English love
of pattern which of course had its true origins in barbaric
art.".[15] A similar process of schematized patterns is also
evident in the figural style of the *York Psalter*, with fi-
gures of elongated, tubular shape in rigid stances and
with a metallic appearance (Fig. 15). Yet, in spite of
the artist's tendency to conceive his figures as part of
an ornamental design, there is an immense expressiveness
in these characters as we see in the look of dawning despair
on the face of Abraham when he is told to sacrifice his
son (Fig.17). Often isolated against their gold backgrounds,
the figures of the *York Psalter* are capable of expressing
real human pathos.

In its organization of the illustrations, the
Psalter reveals its affinity to the English method of deco-
ration in 12th century psalters.[16] The subjects of the
miniatures represent events from the Bible and include six
scenes from the final days of the life of the Virgin. In
this the *York Psalter* (Figs. 15-26) belongs to the group
of deluxe English psalters whose text pages were prefaced
by a pictorial cycle of full-page scenes from the Old or
New Testament, or both, emphasizing the Life of Christ and

occasionally from the Life of the Virgin.[17] It is well
known that this practice of prefatory illustration was not
a Continental innovation, though it became a widespread
system by the 13th century. In spite of a possible ulti-
mate origin in Byzantine art which Pächt suggests,[18] the
earliest example of such a decorative scheme is attributed
to an English manuscript of the 11th century, British Mus-
eum MS *Tiberius C.vi*.[19] Here again the artist of the *York
Psalter* adopts a native tradition and as I will show in the
following chapters, it is this predilection for characteris-
tically English traits which is the hallmark of his creative
capacity.

One may conclude from this introduction that
there is obvious relation in style, form and iconography
between the miniatures of the *York Psalter* and other ex-
amples of English illumination between 1125 and 1175. I
would agree with Professors Boase and Kauffmann that in
overall appearance the manuscript is allied to the tradi-
tion established by the *St. Albans Psalter* line and two
other pictorial cycles represented by the manuscripts
dating *ca* 1140, viz: Pembroke College MS.120 and the set
of leaves now in different collections known as the *Four
Psalter Leaves*.[20] However, in the remainder of this Chap-

ter, I wish to present the atypical features of the *York Psalter* which set it apart from the main line of manuscripts produced in the south of England.

II.

Since most English Romanesque illumination centers in the southern schools, the *York Psalter* gains distinction first of all for being an important manuscript from a northern scriptorium. While we do have evidence of a northern revival in the 12th century in sculpture and in architecture, particularly in Yorkshire,[21] examples of illumination from the north are less well known. In comparison to the numerous manuscripts from the southern schools at Winchester, Bury St. Edmonds, Canterbury *et al.*, only three other contemporary psalters are assigned to the north. These are: the *Copenhagen Psalter* (Copenhagen, Royal Libr. MS Thott 143 2°, ca 1170, which is similar to the *York Psalter* in style, script and Calendar entries;[22] and two books now at Oxford, *Douce MS 293*, mid or third quarter 12th century, and *MS Gouch Liturg. 2 (S.C. 18343)*, late 12th century.[23] Of this northern group moreover the *York Psalter* is the most significant on another count, an aspect which distinguishes it not only from its colleagues in the north but from other 12th century manuscripts in general, *viz.* its Virgin cycle. These

miniatures (Figs. 24-26) in the *York Psalter* in contrast

to other representations of the subject, I believe rely

heavily on Anglo-Saxon sources for their unusual imagery.

It is this aspect--not suggested by earlier students of

the manuscript--on which I wish to concentrate in this

thesis. In the following chapters I shall claim that

this revival of indigenous iconography stems from a sepa-

rate northern tradition not reflected in the other 12th

century examples from the south. Therefore the northern

provenance of the *Psalter* assumes greater significance

for my argument since in part it accounts for the special

treatment of the Virgin cycle.

As noted by Boase and others, the primary evi-

dence for a northern scriptorium is in the selection of

saints in the Calendar which are associated with the north

of England. Among others, these are: Oswald (5 August),

Wilfrid (24 April), Cuthbert twice (24 April and again on

his translation), John of Beverley (7 May) described as

Archbishop though the primacy of York dates from after

his death, and Botolph (17 June).[24] Some of these are

national saints such as Oswald and Cuthbert, as we see from

their occurrence elsewhere in southern manuscripts, such

as the Calendar from the *Winchester Psalter*.[25] But John of

Beverley seldom occurs outside northern manuscripts and
the rare mention of the Bishop of York, Paulinus (d.644),
famous for christening Edwin at York in 627, supports the
theory that the *Psalter* in its northern connections origi-
nated in the diocese of York, if not the city of York it-
self. For St. Cuthbert both his feast and translation are
given which led Boase in his original assessment of the
manuscript to suggest possible patronage from Durham.[26]
But the absence of other Northumbrian saints such as Bede,
Benedict Biscop, Carilef, Boisilus and Aidan seems to ar-
gue against Durham. However, St. Augustine is given
greater emphasis for he is mentioned three times, a promi-
nence usually associated with some special meaning for
the owner of the manuscript. His feast on 28 August, its
octave 4 September and his translation on 11 October are
entries. Thus it is possible that there may be connection
with an Augustinian house.[27]

        Since the 1920's most art historians have re-
cognized York as the home of the *Psalter*, and in spite of
the fact that there are no marks, colophons or inscrip-
tions in its leaves, the manuscript is commonly referred
to as the *York Psalter*.[28] Reversing his earlier opinion,

Boase notes in his monograph, *The York Psalter*, that an
attribution to York is certainly reasonable on the basis
of the Calendar entries.[29] Also, though he does not dis-
cuss it in detail, a provenance from York is possible be-
cause of the known artistic activity there. By the 12th
century York was no longer the northern capital, though it
was still the northern metropolis and maintained an active
artistic community under its powerful prelate, Roger of
Pont l'Evèque, Archbishop of York from 1154 to 1181.[30] The
excellence of artistic production from York is well docu-
mented from sculpture, as evidenced by the famous *York
Virgin*, dated variously from the 10th to the 12th century,[31]
and also in the late 12th century series of over-life-
sized *Prophets* from the Benedictine Abbey of St. Mary.[32]
There is also proof of an early 12th century stained glass
atèlier at York producing work of high quality. Two frag-
ments are preserved at the Minster, one of which may re-
flect a figure from a *Tree of Jesse*, an early instance of
this new 12th century theme.[33] Sadly, there is no extant
evidence of manuscripts illuminated at York at this time,
though we do know of earlier ones and also of an important
scriptorium known for its individual style in the 13th
century.[34] Moreover, since the time of Archbishop Egbert
(729-737), and later under the administration of Alcuin

(from 780), the famed Library at the Minster School established a tradition of book-collecting at York.[35] Although little remains, the extent of this tradition is testified by the 13th century catalogue of the Austin Friars at York which lists not less than 646 books.[36]

While York is the accepted origin of the *Psalter*, the emphasis in the Calendar on St. Augustine indicates a more likely attribution to an Augustinian house. A provenance from the Augustinian Priory at Bridlington was first suggested by Zarnecki on the grounds of the connection between the manuscript and other works of art known to originate there.[37] The case for Bridlington may be summarized as follows. Although by no means as numerous as Cistercian establishments in the north, there were by the second decade of the 12th century a number of well-endowed and prosperous Augustinian houses in Yorkshire. The Priory of Bridlington, founded for the Augustinian Canons by Walter de Gant *ca* 1114 in honour of the Holy Mary[38], was known as a center of learning of some repute. It was also one of the richest houses. Supposing the *York Psalter* to have indeed been commissioned for the use of Bridlington--since the Calendar suggests this--it can still be argued that we do not in fact know if that Priory

produced it. Although I have not found documentary evi-

dence that Bridlington maintained an active scriptorium,

there is record of Robert the Scribe who was active in

1159.[39] The argument for Bridlington as an artistic center

grows stronger however since an important fragment of

sculpture dated to the late 12th century recently found

there, suggests that Bridlington supported at least an

important sculpture workshop.[40]

This small statuette (Figs. 29-30) represents

the lower half of a draped figure which would have mea-

sured originally about one foot in height. It is carved

in the round--a first for Yorkshire sculpture--with the

back left smooth indicating an original position in a

niche or against a background. The pose of the figure

leaning slightly forward has been compared by Zarnecki to

the scene of the *Visitation* in the *Copenhagen Psalter*

(folio 8v, Fig. 31) in expressive pose and rounded model-

ling. In their striking resemblence he concludes that

the two works surely originated in the same artistic cen-

ter, one which was capable of producing art of high qual-

ity.[41]

In light of the known relationship between the

Copenhagen Psalter and the *York Psalter* in style (compare

the *Beatus* initials, Figs. 28, 32) and in their near-
identical scripts and selection of feasts in the Calen-
dars (neither has an entry for Thomas Becket), a common
provenance for all three works is likely, *viz.* Bridling-
ton. However, a more direct connection between the *York
Psalter* and the Bridlington statuette can be shown. As
outlined by Zarnecki, a striking feature of the sculpture
is the decorative and illogical fold formed by its outer
garment (Fig. 29). This unusual and individual detail is
closely paralleled in numerous instances in the miniatures
of the *York Psalter, e.g. The Sacrifice of Isaac* (folio
9v, Fig. 17) and *Pentecost* (folio 15v, Fig. 22), where
the drapery has been treated almost identically to that
of the statuette. Such coincidence of style together
with the same high artistic standard in both the sculp-
ture and the manuscript in Zarnecki's opinion point very
strongly to Bridlington as origin.[42]

I have summarized here the most obvious aspects
of the relationship between the two psalters and their re-
spective connections to the sculpture fragment. From this
evidence one may reasonably conclude that they all origi-
nated in a northern *atelier* associated with the Priory of

Bridlington. This *atelier* must have been large enough
to require several artists working in different media and
it must have been in existance at least by 1170 to contin-
ue for thirty years to the end of the century when the
sculpture was produced. Alternatively the *atelier* could
have been in production a decade earlier than 1170 since
the script of the *York Psalter* has been dated to the
1160's.[43] Thus, a possible sequence of production by
the *atelier* might have been: first the text of the *York
Psalter* written under Robert the Scribe by 1159, or by
his pupils; the illuminations completed by the early years
of the 1170's; and the *Copenhagen Psalter* because of its
more classical style would have followed somewhat later,
ca 1175.

To summarize the evidence with regard to prov-
enance: a northern origin is virtually certain because of
the appearance in the Calendar of exclusively northern
saints such as Paulinus. Although York itself is a rea-
sonable attribution and many scholars have accepted it,
the emphasis in the Calendar on St. Augustine points to
an Augustinian establishment for the manuscript's origin.
Accordingly, Bridlington Priory, a wealthy and intellec-

tual center, should be considered. There are stylistic
links between the *York Psalter* and an important statuette
found at Bridlington, noteworthy for being the earliest
sculpture in the round in Yorkshire and evidence also of
Bridlington's importance as an artistic center. That
Bridlington is the common source is further attested by
another close comparison between the sculpture and the
Copenhagen Psalter, and the similarities of this manu-
script in style and Calendar to the *York Psalter* inter-
connect all three works to one *atelier*.

As I have stated earlier, the northern prov-
enance of the *York Psalter* is a significant factor in
explaining its unusual Virgin cycle, since I shall prove
how the iconographic tradition to which it belongs can
ultimately be traced to northern interests. This dis-
cussion will occupy the remaining Chapters of my thesis.
However, before proceeding it is necessary to record here
the contribution by other art historians on the problems
connected with this cycle.

The Death, Burial and Assumption of the Virgin
are depicted in six scenes on the last three folios of

the full-page illustrations of the *York Psalter* (Figs.
24-26). Although the subject occurs in at least two other
important 12th century psalters[44], that of the *York Psal-
ter* is unique. Not only is it unusual in being set out so
fully at this time but its representations in many details
are different from its southern contemporaries (Fig.33).
Although this variation presents considerable area for re-
search, I have found that little previous scholarship on
the Virgin iconography of the *York Psalter* has been pub-
lished. Most early art historians have commented only on
its lavish style and decoration, such as Millar (noted
above), though he records that according to its Calendar
it was executed in the diocese of York. He refers also
to the close stylistic relationship of the initials and
script to that of the *Copenhagen Psalter* . However, the
unusual iconography of the Virgin miniatures must not
have missed his eye since he includes several illustra-
tions of the cycle, though there is no mention of it in
his text.[45] In this same *genre* of art historical writing,
Saunders in 1933 acknowledges that York was capable of
producing first-rate illumination as seen in its *Psalter*
(which she calls the *Glasgow Psalter*), which she dates
ca 1170. Her only record of its distinctive iconography
is her mention of the increasing worship of the Virgin,
reflected through the introduction of representations of

her *Death and Assumption* into certain psalters, *e.g.* the

York Psalter, ca 1170, the *Winchester Psalter, ca* 1150, and

the *Westminster Psalter, ca* 1200.[46] While Saunders' des-

criptions are of interest from the viewpoint of historio-

graphy, of greater interest to this thesis in an earlier

work of her authorship, is her unwitting mention of ano-

ther extensive Virgin cycle dating from the 12th century.

This is found in ". . . the incomplete psalter from Bury

belonging to Mr. Dyson Perrins, depicting the birth, early

life and death of the Virgin. . . .".[47] Walter Oakeshott

also refers to this psalter from Bury as depicting a

Koimesis which would make it the second instance in the

12th century (see Fig.33 mentioned above) of the subject

under Byzantine influence in a manuscript from a major

southern scriptorium.[48] If we accept Oakeshott's des-

scription of this miniature—and there is no reason not

to—then it supports my thesis that the Anglo-Saxon icono-

graphy in the *York Psalter* Virgin cycle remains distinct

from southern versions.

German art historians have also expressed in-

terest in the Virgin imagery as an example of unusual

Assumption iconography and their extensive and thorough

lists have been invaluable for my own investigation.[49]
But the later English scholars have contributed the most
in analytical studies. Of these, Boase has examined the
Virgin cycle against some other types of *Assumption* and
traces the theme briefly in the writings of several theo-
logians. In seeking possible textual sources for its
unusual pictorial form, he notes in particular that the
mystic visions of Elisabeth of Schönau, which circulated
in England after 1165, seemed to express most clearly the
corporeal nature of the *Assumption* in the *York Psalter*.[50]
Although more recent scholarship continues to support this
connection, Deshman in 1970 criticized Boase's theory that
several of the miniatures were simply inventions on the
grounds that other recensions of the subject's textual
source were known in the West. He concluded that the *Psal-
ter's* relationship to the narrative text deserves a more
thorough study and this in fact has become one of the
methods of this thesis.[51]

From my own examination as presented in the
following Chapters of the literary sources and pictorial
traditions for the *Dormition-Assumption,* I propose that
the artist of the *York Psalter* has created a new icono-

graphy based on his insular heritage. In combining dif-
ferent elements of Anglo-Saxon ancestry, his imagery be-
comes unique and is imbued with a new, highly original
content.

Chapter II

The principal iconographic novelty of the minia-
tures of the *York Psalter* centers in the three folios of
full-page illustrations of the Death, Burial and Assumption
of the Virgin (Figs. 24-26). The subject appears else-
where in contemporary English art and on the Continent, but
these six scenes arranged in two registers per page are un-
paralleled at this time for being set out so fully, more so
if the blank pages in the same gathering were intended also
for illumination. However, copiousness aside, what interests
here is the fact that the iconography of the Virgin cycle is
noteworthy in two ways: in its relationship to the textual
basis and in the new pictorial form of the Assumption image.
In discussing these two aspects in this Chapter, I will pro-
pose that Anglo-Saxon sources lie behind these unusual images.

The cycle in the *York Psalter* does not agree in
several important details with the usual apocryphal Latin text
for the subject, the Pseudo-Melito translation, *De Transitu
Beatae Mariae* or *Transitus*. In fact the cycle contradicts the
text in places as I will point out below. This was no-
ticed first by Boase in his brief discussion of these scenes
as illustrations of the *Transitus* narrative, but his only
explanations for the variations are: i) because they are

inventions by the artist; and ii) that the 12th century *Visions* of Elisabeth of Schönau (d.1165) who described another version of the Virgin's death, influenced the scene of the Assumption. Boase's suggestions will be assessed in the second part of this Chapter. No one else, as far as I have found, has worked on the problem or examined the relationship of the *Psalter*'s Virgin iconography to other versions of the apocryphal story, though Deshman has noted that there were different recensions of the narrative current in the West by this time.

In order to isolate the deviations between text and miniature, I will first describe the six scenes of the Virgin cycle in the *York Psalter* and analyze them against the traditional *Transitus* text. I will then compare another account of the narrative in an insular recension in the Anglo-Saxon *Blickling Homilies ca* 971.[2] In my opinion, this text is the probable solution to the puzzle for it explains many of the cycle's deviations and anachronistic features.

The three folios are arranged as follows:

The Angel Announcing the Death to the Virgin

(upper register folio 17v Fig.24)

Beneath twin, rounded arches resting on three columns of simulated porphyry marble, the angel in the right arcade is shown behind an altar covered by a white cloth. He holds a blank scroll with his left hand and with the other gives the palm to the Virgin on the left. She wears a narrowly cut dress with a long white under-shift, and a cloak drawn up over her head. This attire differs from what she wears in the earlier miniatures (*e.g.* Figs. 21, 22); moreover, the proportions of her body have now changed so that the head is smaller and her hands overly large in comparison to her previous appear-ances. Her right hand is raised in greeting or possibly is a gesture of acceptance of her fate to come. In an attempt to render movement, the angel's wing passes be-hind the pillar on the right, and his drapery curves back illogically as he strides forward into the room.

The Virgin Announces her Impending Death to the Apostles

(lower register folio 17v Fig. 24)

Standing on the right, the Virgin tells of the forthcoming event and points to John in the center. She

is about to hand the palm to John who is nimbed and beard-
less according to Western fashion. To the left stands Peter,
also nimbed and clasping a closed book to his chest. Behind
him and seemingly at the back, are three Jews in round caps,
one of whom points uneasily toward Peter. The other arm
of the pointing Jew seems to pass behind Peter's back as
if to touch him. In addition, the Jews partially behind
Peter at the same time are trodding on his toes, a misun-
derstanding of the overlapping figures and an error which
does not occur in the other, more complex arrangements in
the following scenes.

The Death of the Virgin (upper register folio 18r Fig.25)

The Virgin lies in her bed, her head to the
right resting on a pillow which is depicted awkwardly at
right angles to the counterpane. She is represented as
still living, with eyes open as she watches Christ who
stands behind the bed. Christ is at the center of the
composition; his left arm clutching his outstretched dra-
pery and right arm in benediction toward Mary. At the
foot of the bed and behind it are the kneeling apostles,
six in all, headed by Peter who now holds in addition to
his keys the Palm which was handed to John in the prece-
ding scene. Behind them stand five Jews again depicted

in round caps. In the upper right corner, the heads of
eight witnessing angels appear. The scene is enacted be-
neath double arches resting on two lateral columns which
frame the composition. The central column we would expect
to see has been omitted in lieu of the standing Christ who
divides the composition into an earthly zone on the left,
which contains the apostles and the Jews, and a divine zone
on the right with the angels and the Virgin.

The Funeral Procession (lower register folio 18r Fig. 25)

    The apostles carry the body of the Virgin on
the bier which is covered by a mantle, while two accompanying
angels beneath stretch forward their veiled hands in the
ancient gesture of lamentation. The procession is led by Peter
with a closed book and the keys in his right hand, and the
palm in his left. He is shown in three-quarter view and is
about to walk out of our range of vision as well as the
composition which has no frame. Of all the scenes in the
Virgin cycle, this miniature is the only one not to have a
border. Peter turns his head back over his shoulder. One
of the Jews on the left side in front of the cortege stret-
ches his arms outward as if he were appealing to Peter. They
direct their gazes at each other. Other Jews are in the
background and wear round hats. The group, shown apparently

out of doors, proceeds on a scalloped surface consisting
of overlapping, stylized elliptical shapes which may rep-
resent rocky ground. However these forms do not resemble
the other depictions of groundlines elsewhere in the manu-
script, as in folios 7v, 8r and 9v (Figs. 15-17).

The Burial of the Virgin (folio 19v upper register Fig. 26)

The apostles lower the Virgin's body, completely
wrapped in grave linen, into her coffin which rests on a
base of simple design. Peter is recognisable on the
right, the palm and keys held out in one hand, the closed
book clamped against his chest by the other arm beneath
the drapery. It is an awkward arrangement, since his
upper torso appears to be in front of the apostle who
assists in the burial while the lower part of his body
is at the back. Above center, four angels cense the body,
their red wings spreading over the frame at the top.
This gives the illusion of distance between them and the
apostles, for the angels appear to hover on a pictorial
plane parallel to and in front of the one containing the
mourners. In all, fifteen mourners are present.

Assumption of the Virgin (folio 19v lower register Fig.26)

Occupying two thirds of the page, this dramatic

scene shows the totally swathed figure, her feet molded
and a band around the head, being carried aloft on a
tightly stretched sheet, with deeply indented edges held
by nimbed angels. The seven angels on each side hold the
sheet at equidistant points, which form a pattern of rib-
like sections resembling those of a rib-vaulted ceiling.[3]
Two additional angels below cense the empty sarcophagus.
Christ stands on the left, his right arm pointing to the
miracle he has just created. The presence here of the
divinity in the *Assumption* scene contrasts with his ab-
sence in the episode above where mortals perform the bur-
ial of the Virgin. There the appearance of censing an-
gels may refer to her immortality.[4]

Analysis - Textual Sources

In representations from Eastern art, the death
of the Virgin is termed a *Koimesis*. Alternatively, the
title of the theme in Western illustrations is known as
the *Dormition* (from *dormitio*: to sleep) or sometimes,
simply as the *Assumption*. The subject may be expressed
various ways: a cycle of scenes may refer to the dif-
ferent episodes connected with Mary's death, as in the
York Psalter, or a single scene may emphasize one speci-

fic aspect, *e.g.* in the *Winchester Psalter*, folio 29
(Fig. 33). The account of the Virgin's death is not in
the Scriptural Gospels, but occurs in a series of apo-
cryphal narratives of the 5th century or earlier, the
oldest account of it written in Greek or Syriac, and soon
afterwards appearing in Latin, Gaelic, Coptic and Arabic
versions. These texts, whose stated purpose was to trace
the history of Mary's life and the manner of her death,
were based on the premise that her death like her predes-
tination must have been unique. As she was exempt from
original sin at the moment of her conception, so she was
exempt also from death in the normal sense of the word.
Not only did Christ intervene personally to receive Mary's
soul at the moment of her dying, but also she was permit-
ted a bodily assumption when her two elements were reuni-
ted.[5]

The oldest and basic form of the legend in the
West was the *De Transitu Beatae Mariae*, a Latin text based
on earlier Coptic and Greek versions, attributed to Meli-
to, Bishop of Sardis in the later 2nd century, but in fact
at the earliest a 4th century work. Gregory of Tours in
the 6th century used this Pseudo-Melito version in an
abbreviated form in his treatise *De Gloria Martyrum* (590)
and this promoted the circulation and acceptance of the

account in the West at an early date. Because the assumption doctrine was based on legendary or apocryphal accounts, opposition from orthodox theologians arose in the 8th century. However by the 10th century various recensions of the Pseudo-Melito text were current and widely used in England.[6]

The story as it appears in the *Transitus* relates that the angel enters Mary's home to announce her forthcoming death and presents her with a palm. At her request, the apostles who had scattered throughout the world following Pentecost, miraculously reappear in Jerusalem where the obsequies were to take place. Mary gives John the palm, warning him that the Jews will attempt to destroy her body. On the third day while the apostles performed the last rites, Christ appears, receives her soul and delivers it to the archangels Gabriel and Michael. Three virgins prepare the body for burial; the apostles carry her bier to the tomb, accompanied by angels. The Jews attempt to seize the bier and the hands of their leader are fixed to it so that he cannot move them; Peter releases his hands when he confesses belief in Christ. Peter sends the converted Jew into the city to cure the blindness of the people by laying the palm on the eyes of believers. Mary is brought to the valley of Jehoshaphat (from her house on

Mount Zion) and laid in a new tomb near the Mount of Ol-

ives; Christ appears again and the apostles beseech him

to take the body of his mother up into heaven. Michael

returns the soul of the Virgin to her body, the grave is

opened, and the Lord greets her with the words: ". . .

Thou that didst not suffer corruption by union of the

flesh, shalt not suffer dissolution of the body in the

sepulchre. . . ."[7]. Mary rises up from the grave, wor-

ships Christ, and is borne by angels into Paradise.[8]

This summary of Mary's death, burial and assumption into

heaven as it is related in the *Transitus* is the most fami-

liar textual source for the subject.   In the following

analysis of the Marian cycle in the *York Psalter*, I have

used this version initially as a standard of comparison.

The first scene in the *York Psalter* cycle (Fig.

24) *The Angel Announcing the Death to the Virgin*, is a

typical representation of the event--see by comparison

the wall-paintings in the Church of All Saints, Chalgrove[9]--

and it illustrates the passage ". . . Behold, said he,

this palm branch. I have brought it to thee from the

paradise of the Lord, and thou shalt cause it to be car-

ried before thy bier on the third day when thou shalt be

taken up out of the body.".[10] The Virgin's unusual close-

fitting and absolutely straight shift does not articulate
her body as do her other different draperies in her ear-
lier appearances. This change is not necessarily a mean-
ingless alteration by the artist as Boase implies, but
I believe it indicates, as does the change in proportion,
that a different model was used here. The artist in my
opinion has shown Mary preparing herself for death in her
funeral garb, for he has interpreted literally the lines
in the narrative, ". . . Then Mary put off her garments
and clothed herself in her best raiment. . . .".[11] There
may be thematic reasons also in his using the same pattern
here on the Virgin's shift and in the *Death* scenes fol-
lowing. By connecting these episodes visually, the ar-
tist may have wished to suggest her forthcoming death.
Also, as Heimann has suggested, he would have avoided any
confusion with the *Annunciation* of the birth of Christ.[12]

While the first register in this folio (17v)
adheres closely to the *Transitus* narrative, the lower scene
does not follow the text so closely and disagrees with the
Pseudo-Melito version. According to this there is no men-
tion of Peter; nor should the Jews appear at this time and
yet the artist has shown both. The *Transitus* plainly
states that the Virgin gives the palm to John alone. Con-

sequently we may suspect that here the artist has added

the extra figures out of order himself, as his own inven-

tion--as Boase believes--[13] though there seems to be no

formalistic reason why he would alter the composition in

this way. More likely he used a different text or pictor-

ial models reflecting a different apocryphal account of

the cycle which would account for the anachronistic ele-

ments.

Folio 18r (Fig. 25) also reveals significant

deviations from the *Transitus*. In the upper register

The Death of the Virgin follows in the main the normal

Eastern formula for the *Koimesis*, but unlike it, Christ

does not hold the soul of the Virgin as he would in the

Byzantine manner. Also in contradiction to the text and

to representations under Byzantine influence,[14] the Vir-

gin here is still living. We may compare an almost con-

temporary English miniature in the *Winchester Psalter,*

(folio 29, Fig.33), which is depicted in accordance with

the scene as described by John of Warzburg (*ca* 1130), rep-

resented on a painting in the Church of Mount Zion.[14-a] The

Virgin lies dead on a couch, surrounded by the grieving

apostles. A bearded apostle leans over the foot of the

bed in an attitude of grief; another bearded apostle is

shown behind the bed near the top and gently touches the

the Virgin's breast as if to determine whether the heart-
beat truly has stopped. Peter in front is censing and ab-
ove, two angels with arms and hands veiled prepare to re-
ceive the soul. Christ in the center holds up the soul of
the dead Virgin, which is shown as a small, swaddled child-
like figure. In its acute feeling for hieratic form, the
Winchester Psalter miniature like its Byzantine prototypes
reproduces the static, solemnized episode from the Eastern
tradition. In the *York Psalter* scene, almost everything
has changed. Now the narrative element instead is stressed.
The Virgin lies wakeful on her bed and the apostles, instead
of lamenting their loss, stand or kneel behind her bed with
expectant, not mournful, expressions. The artist depicts
the earlier moment of Christ's arrival when ". . . suddenly
the Lord Jesus came with a great multitude of angels, and
a great light came down upon that place. . . .".[15] This
change of time increases the tension of the scene for in-
stead of ritualizing the event, he emphasizes the dramatic
expectation of the Virgin's death. As in the preceding
miniature, he again introduces anachronistic features in
the presence of the five Jews in the background. Here they
appear too early since the *Transitus* connects them to the
following scene. Also, he displays Peter prominently hold-
ing the palm, and this arrangement contradicts the text

which explicitly states that ". . . John carried the
palm. . .".[16]

The bottom register (folio 18r, Fig. 25) depicts
The Funeral Procession interrupted by the impious Jew in,
surprisingly, a subdued, almost formal manner with res-
trained gestures and calm expressions. The event itself
calls for a sober atmosphere but the treatment of the act
of sacrilege is not at all in keeping with the dramatic
incident described in the *Transitus* text which is normal-
ly represented when the leader of the Jews cries out in
his agony for Peter to help him. The text describes:

> And behold, one of them who was a prince of the
> priests of the Jews in his degree was filled with
> fury and wrath and. . . he came near and would
> have overthrown the bier and cast the body on the
> earth. And forthwith his hands dried up from his
> elbows and clave to the bier. And when the apos-
> tles lifted the bier, part of him was hanging and
> part clave to the bier, and he was wrung with ex-
> treme torment as the apostles went on and sang . . . .
> Then that prince cried out, saying: I beseech thee
> holy Peter . . . for I am sore tormented with great
> pains. Remember that when the damsel that kept the
> door knew thee in the judgement hall and told the
> rest, that they might challenge thee, then I spake
> on thy behalf. [17]

In contrast to the restraint of the Glasgow miniature,
other English versions of this scene, for instance the
representationsat Croughton and in the *Luttrell Psalter*[18],
(*ca* 1300 and *ca* 1320 resp.), stress the agonizing moment

when the prince hangs by his hands from the bier. The

artist of the *York Psalter* does not illustrate this mo-

ment describing the dreadful consequences which befall

those who dare defile the bier of the Mother of Christ, but

depicts instead the moment afterwards, that is following

the miracle accomplished through faith. ". . . Peter . . .

made the bier stand still . . . and he [the prince of the

Jews] came near and kissed the bed, and forthwith all pain

left him and his hands were made whole . . . even the apos-

tles themselves marvelled and wept for gladness.".[19] In

the miniature, the apostles who carry the bier look back

over their shoulders in surprise, which they could do only

once Peter had stopped the procession and the prince had con-

fessed his belief. The *Pseudo-Melito Transitus* does recount

this incident of the restoration of the withered hands, but

it does not provide for the gesture of the Jew stretching

forth his hands. Is this posture an expressive invention

of the artist, or once again can we detect another detail

that derives from a different recension of the narrative?

One more feature in this scene deserves mention

here: the distinctively scalloped baseline on which the pro-

cession is shown. While there is no description in the

Transitus of the locale where the event takes place, one

would expect an indication of the scene in open air, such as the one in the *Sacrifice of Isaac* miniature (folio 9v, Fig. 17), or an independent setting such as the neutral space depicted in *The Virgin Announces her Impending Death* (folio 17v, Fig. 24). Here however in the *Funeral Procession*, the unique shapes beneath the feet of the apostles attract our attention for they are an essential part of the composition. They extend beyond the figural group to the edges of the vellum, a device not occurring in the other representations of groundline.

It remains to examine the final miniature of the Virgin cycle, the *Burial* and *Assumption*, in the *York Psalter*, as it relates to the *Transitus*. In contrast to the straightforward compositions of the preceding scenes in the cycle, folio 19v (Fig. 26) is a striking and highly imaginative design. The earlier mood of restraint has changed to a dramatic, highly charged atmosphere befitting the miracle. Beneath the scene of her burial, the Virgin's body, wrapped like a mummy, is lifted to heaven on an outer shroud which has been drawn back in a kind of glory by angels. Their prominent red and orange wings create an effect ". . . as though the whole picture were aglow with the flicker of flames.".[20] In Western depictions of this scene,

the Virgin sometimes is shown carried up in a cloth as she is
in the *York Psalter, e.g.* in the 12th century missal from Tours
(Fig.41), or she is represented partially shrouded as a mid-
12th century illumination from the Cologne school which shows
similar folds winding across the body (Fig. 42).[21]   But ac-
cording to Boase, who discusses the scene in detail, the
totally swathed body has no parallels in Assumption iconography
earlier or later.   This motif in the *York Psalter* makes a dra-
matic statement of the corporeal nature of the miracle, for
there is no doubt that here the body, still wound in its
grave linen, is being physically raised from the tomb to hea-
ven.[22]   The scene does not correspond with the account in the
Transitus and is incompatible with it, for there the Virgin
rises and kneels before Christ:

> . . . the apostles carrying Mary came into the place of
> the Valley of Jehoshaphat. . . and laid her in a new
> tomb and shut the sepulchre. . . and lo, suddenly the
> Lord Jesus came with a great multitude of angels and
> light flashing with great brightness. . . . And he
> commanded Michael the archangel to bring the soul of
> the holy Mary.   And Behold Michael . . .rolled away
> the stone from the sepulchre and the Lord said: Rise
> up, thou that didst not suffer corruption by union of
> the flesh, shalt not suffer dissolution of the body in
> the sepulchre.   And immediately Mary rose up from the
> grave and blessed the Lord. . . and the Lord kissed
> her and departed, and delivered her to the angels to
> bear her into Paradise. [23]

Boase concludes that the pictorial form of the Assumption must
have been invented by the artist, since there is for this
particular treatment of the scene ". . . neither a prototype

nor any successors.".[24]

Though Boase rejects the *Transitus* as the textual
basis for the *York Psalter Assumption*, he does however sug-
gest that the artist's imagination may have been stimulated
by a different text. Another description of this episode
occurs in the popular *Visions* of Elisabeth of Schönau, *ca*
1165,[25] and Boase has associated this text with the highly
unusual form of the *Assumption* in the manuscript, since
both expressions stress the corporeal nature of the event.
This particular relationship will be assessed in greater de-
tail in the second part of this Chapter, but I mention it
here briefly in connection to the cycle as a whole in order
to note that Elisabeth's *Visions* deal only with the *Assump-
tion*. They do not include the earlier episodes described
by the *Transitus*. Consequently the *Visions* cannot be used
to explain the anachronistic features and unusual details
in the other miniatures which Boase attributes to the origi-
nality of the artist.

What needs to be analyzed now is whether the
first two miniatures in the Virgin cycle of the *York Psalter*
(folios 17v, 18r) can be related to another version of the
Transitus, as Deshman hinted. Based on my own examination,
I have found that the account of the death and assumption

of the Virgin in the *Blickling Homilies*, an Anglo-Saxon

vernacular text written *ca* 971[26], is associated in several

significant details to the scenes in the *York Psalter*. For

the main flow of events the author of this commentary has

followed the Latin authority (*Transitus*) fairly closely.

Accordingly, he includes the arrival of the angel and presenta-

tion to the Virgin of the palm, the arrival of Christ with

angels and a great light at the bedside of Mary, the attemp-

ted desecration of the bier in the funeral procession by the

leader of the Jews and his subsequent conversion, the burial

of Mary and raising of her soul to Michael, and finally her

resurrection from the tomb and eventual assumption to Para-

dise.[27]

Similarity of the main episodes aside, there are

several differences however between the vernacular and Latin

versions of the narrative. These additions in the derivative

text in the homilies seem to me to supply the explanation for

some of the anomalies in the *Psalter's* iconography. In my

opinion the *Blickling* text could have been one of the sources

behind the pictorial cycle, though not the exclusive model,

for at times the artist of the *York Psalter* Virgin miniatures

seems to follow also the traditional *Transitus* narrative.

On the basis of the close connection to both these sources,

I believe the artist had before him an illustrated manuscript

of the *Transitus*--supposing such a model would have exist-
ed, a possibility to be suggested later--on which he based
his cycle of miniatures. At the same time he introduced
elements also from the other literary example at his dis-
posal, the account in the *Blickling Homilies*, which he
knew in the text only and transformed in his visual imag-
ery in the *Psalter*.

Initially the *Blickling* account agrees with the
Pseudo-Melito *Transitus* when, following the receipt of the
palm from the angel who announced her forthcoming death,
Mary ". . . again returned to her house and put aside, with
all humility, the palm-twig that she had previously re-
ceived. . . and invested herself with the finest garment."[28]
But then the vernacular text (*Blickling*) differs for in-
stead of continuing with the description of John's specta-
cular arrival on a cloud, the following scenes witness her
announcement to her kinsfolk and the apostles (first Peter
and Paul, then the others), that she would ". . . depart
from the body . . . . Then the holy Mary called all the
apostles into her closet, and showed them all her garments,
which she desired to have on at her burial and Peter said
. . . that the third day was come in which she would depart
from us.".[29] This contradicts the *Transitus* version which

specifically describes the Virgin showing John alone her
grave-clothes in ". . . the secret part of the house. . ."
and charging him with the palm of light to be carried be-
fore her bed borne to the tomb.[30]

In addition to this change of circumstance, the
Blickling sermonist has altered the emphasis in the roles of
the characters attending Mary's last rites. Peter, instead
of John, holds the privileged position as the active leader
of the apostles and of all the mourners present. In con-
trast to the Latin text where Mary invites all to keep watch
together without ceasing until ". . . the hour when the Lord
shall come and I shall depart out of the body . . .", in the
Anglo-Saxon version it is the blessed Peter who entreats
them all, with the time of death arrived, to keep watch with
him.[31] This text continues that there suddenly shone a great
light ". . . so that all the *fiends* who were there, and those
who saw the light, were overpowered." [italics mine].[32] The
Transitus also recounts the moment just before Christ's arri-
val but describes it as the hour when all in the house were
asleep, saving the apostles and the three virgins who were
there.[33] Peter continues to receive additional distinction
several times as the guardian of the deathwatch in the *Blick-*
ling version, for when Mary rested upon her bed ". . . at the
head sat the blessed Peter.".[34] Later he is the one who ad-
dresses the Lord concerning the whiteness of Mary's soul and

he also leads the apostles in placing her upon the bier, an
emphasis that is lacking in the general descriptions in the
Transitus.

The Anglo-Saxon account matches the Latin version
in the command of the Lord to Peter to find a new tomb and
to deposit the body there, but their accounts of the funeral
procession are different. The latter describes Peter as lift-
ing up the head of the body and with the other apostles car-
rying the blessed Mary, with John bearing the palm of light
before the bier. The former does not specifically mention
Peter as holding the palm in front of the *cortege*, but nei-
ther is John described with this honour. Instead John says,
"Thou art the purest virgin, and it is fitting for thee to
depart on thy bier, and for *us* to bear this palm-twig . . ."
[italics mine].[35] This passage in the *Blickling* does nothing
to single John out as the apostle especially chosen to carry
the palm, as specified in the *Transitus*. Instead the Anglo-
Saxon version would allow the artist to show Peter rather
than John in the miniature bearing the palm in front of the
procession.

Distinguishing Peter once more, the *Blickling*
continues that after the apostles arose and lifted up the
bier, supporting it with their hands, Peter, again in the

role of spokesman and leader, says: "Israel went out of
Egypt, and sang Hallelujah; and the Lord is truly support-
ing this bier.".[36]   Unlike the account in the Latin author-
ity, the Anglo-Saxon homilist considered it important to
stress divine assistance in his additional phrase about the
Lord's support.

The remainder of the vernacular account parallels
the *Transitus* in most respects through the incident of the
sacriligious Jew and the final burial and assumption of the
Virgin. But the latter part of the account of the assumption
reflects confusion in the translation of more than one *Transi-
tus* manuscript, according to the analysis and comparison of
the two texts by Willard. Thus, Michael takes charge of
Mary's soul twice, once at her deathbed and again at the
sepulchre, whence he ". . . lifted her up in the clouds be-
fore the presence of the Lord.".[37] The apostles too, having
gone to the Lord in the clouds, supplant the role of the an-
gels in the *Transitus* and with all their power, themselves
raise the body of Mary up in the clouds to the ". . . bliss
of Paradise.".[38]

To summarize so far: the account of the Assumption
in the *Blickling Homilies* appears to depend on the Latin ver-
sion *Transitus* for the principal elements of the narrative.

However, the Anglo-Saxon account presents several varia-
tions in detail which differ from the Latin authority, par-
ticularly in its emphasis on Peter who is singled out over
the other apostles. When both versions are considered as
textual sources for the Virgin cycle in the *York Psalter*,
many of the unusual iconographic features in these minia-
tures become clear as I will illustrate below. In other
words, it seems to me that the Anglo-Saxon text provides
the answers--where the *Transitus* cannot--in explaining
the iconography. Consequently I feel that the artist prob-
ably used the *Blickling* version as an additional literary
model for his imagery.

In the first two scenes of the Virgin cycle
(folio 17v, Fig.24), the artist must have combined the
Anglo-Saxon and Latin versions of the narrative for the
miniature contains aspects from both accounts. From the
Transitus he illustrates the episodes of the presentation
of the palm in the upper register, and the meeting between
the Virgin and John in the lower. But at the same time,
he introduces new characters in the figures of Peter and
the Jews in accordance with the *Blickling* version. The
additional group is fitted in awkwardly to the left of the
central action, and the confusion evident in the overlap-
ping figures as I described earlier shows that the artist

was hesitant about squeezing them into the miniature. It
seems reasonable to infer from this unusual arrangement that
the artist had introduced Peter, thereby stressing his im-
portance, from his knowledge of the *Blickling* description.
The appearance here of the Jews is hard to explain but their
inclusion in the next set of scenes is less difficult. In
the upper register of the *Death of the Virgin* (folio 18r
Fig. 25), the artist may have interpreted the *Blickling*
lines referring to the "fiends" present at the activities
preceding Mary's death, an anti-semitic reference which
would be in keeping with the sentiment of the time, parti-
cularly at York.[38] An illustrated *Transitus* of the Pseudo-
Melito version would naturally depict the Jews in the fol-
lowing episode of the *Funeral Procession*, but while follow-
ing this model for the general layout, the artist has again
included the Jews anachronistically in the *Death* as well.
As he did before, he blends his sources to produce a dis-
tinct iconography.

The unusual emphasis on Peter throughout these
miniatures could reflect the similar stress in the Anglo-
Saxon narrative which repeatedly brings Peter to our atten-
tion in all the episodes. For example, in the scene of the
Death, while the artist does not show Peter at the actual
head of the bed as stated in the text (perhaps for lack of

space in his composition), he does stress Peter by showing
him in slightly larger scale and at the head of the apost-
les, adjacent to Christ. The *Blickling* text names him as
the one who brings in the palm-twig at Mary's death and
surely this is the privileged circumstance which the artist
had in mind in his depiction of Peter holding the palm here
and in the next episode.

In the *Funeral* scene, John does not lead the pro-
cession as it is explicitly stated in the *Transitus* but
Peter is depicted at the head of the group carrying the palm.
This emphasis on Peter's position of honour and as leader
tacitly agrees with his principal importance in the Anglo-
Saxon version. As I have noted above, the *Blickling*
sermonist added to Peter's praises for this moment the
statement that the Lord was truly supporting the bier.
The following line in this text ". . . and then the apost-
les went into the clouds, and they then carried the bier,
and sang God's praise. . ."[39] seems also to associate the
procession with a celestial atmosphere. With this is mind,
the peculiar shapes supporting the figures in the miniature
are now evident: a clear statement of clouds they must be.
They do not resemble the representations of ground or natural
setting as shown in the other miniatures and since no locale
is specified in the *Transitus* for this scene, I suggest that

the artist has painted clouds as the visible sign of divine support. This supposition explains too why this particular register is the only one in all the illuminations to be shown without a painted frame or architectural framework. In the other miniatures the frame or use of an architectural setting limits the composition spatially, in spite of an occasional hand or foot straying over the edge, as in folios 8r, 13v, 15v (Figs. 16, 20, 22). Here he has removed such restrictions not because his composition was overly crowded as one might expect but in consideration of the theme and its source. In a heavenly, cloud-filled zone as depicted by the artist of the *York Psalter*, space is limitless, cannot be contained, and continues beyond any boundary. As far as I have ascertained, the *Blickling* version of the *Funeral Procession* is the only text to describe clouds as the location of the scene and the Lord's support as the underlying means of transport.[40] Therefore it seems reasonable to conclude that the *Blickling* account was used by the artist as the source for his unusual and imaginative depiction of an aerial procession.

The artist has included one other original detail in this scene that betrays his familiarity with the vernacular, Anglo-Saxon account. As I pointed out earlier, the

artist has chosen not to illustrate the moment of greatest

drama in the incident of sacrilege, as is normally repre-

sented, that of the Jew's agony. Instead he emphasizes the

miraculous salvation which shows the Jew, his bland expres-

sion obviously denoting all pain departed, with his hands

not hanging but made whole once again. Boase too comments

on this change of circumstance, writing that ". . . the

later versions of this scene show the prince hanging by his

hands from the bier, as it is described in the *De Transitu*

. . .",[41] though he offers no explanation for this altera-

tion. With the *Blickling* version of the scene however, the

reason for the change is accounted for. The artist has il-

lustrated the lines *following* the Jew's appeal to Peter who

tells him: "Stretch forth thy hand, and say that thou belie-

vest. . . then shall thy hands become restored and be as

they were before. . . .",[42] the exact gesture in the minia-

ture of the man reaching forward with his arms as described

by this text. Once again the *Blickling* account clarifies the

iconography and reveals the artist's dependence on Anglo-

Saxon material.

This Chapter so far has discussed the close rela-

tion between the Virgin cycle in the *York Psalter* and the

vernacular account in the *Blickling Homilies* as the basis

for its novel features. The Anglo-Saxon version in con-

junction with the Transitus was the literary source for
the iconography of the first four scenes--the Angel Announ-
cing, the Virgin Announces her Death, the Death of the Vir-
gin, the Funeral Procession. However, the Anglo-Saxon text
does not account for the unusual pictorial form of the
last folio in the Virgin cycle--the Burial and Assumption--
any more than does the Latin text. Both versions, as noted
earlier, describe Mary rising from the grave, worshipping
before Christ, and subsequently delivered to heaven by
angels in the Latin text and, strangely, by the apostles
in the Anglo-Saxon text. Consequently this seemingly orig-
inal image, unconnected to either of the proven textual
sources, needs to be explained another way. This aspect of
the iconography of the Virgin cycle is the next concern of
this Chapter.

Analysis - Assumption

In his analysis of the Assumption scene in the York
Psalter, (folio 19v, Fig. 26), Boase suggested that ano-
ther literary source might lie behind the inspiration of the
new pictorial form.[43] According to his argument, the artist
could have known of the Visions of Elisabeth of Schönau, a
German Benedictine nun who received about 1156 a revelation

of the Virgin's bodily assumption. Elisabeth's vision described ". . . in a very remote place a sepulchre bathed with light and the form of a woman in it, and a great multitude of angels standing about it. And she was raised from the sepulchre and with the multitude of angels she was carried up on high.".[44] The vision continues that Christ came to meet her, carrying in his right hand the sign of the cross and they entered the portals of light. Elisabeth, further assured by an angel of the truth of her vision, records that ". . . Mary was carried into heaven both in the spirit and the flesh. . . .".[45]

This popular account offering proof of the bodily assumption--a controversial issue in 12th century mariology both English and Continental--was current in England during the last half of the 12th century, where it is thought to have circulated first by word of mouth and later by the end of the 1170's in manuscript. Boase has traced the route taken by the *Visions* between the Continent and England and my own research verifies his account.[46] A redaction of Elisabeth's work apparently was sent first to the Cistercian House of Ford in Devonshire shortly after Elisabeth's death in 1164 by Roger Gustum, a monk of Ford temporarily in a Continental monastery where the *Visions* were popular. Along

with the *Visions* Roger included an undated prefatory letter
and on the basis of its contents, the time of transmission
can be assigned to the period between 1171 and 1178. In a
detailed analysis of this accompanying letter, Boase deduces
that the *Visions* could have reached England most likely in
1172 or 1173.[47]

That Elisabeth's *Visions* spread rapidly from Ford
to different parts of the country is seen in the number of
extant 12th century manuscripts containing her story. Of
these, two originated in the north of England: Durham Chap-
ter Library *MS B.IV[B]* and Oxford, St. John's College *MS.
149*, both written in a late 12th century northern English
script.[48] On this evidence it is probable that Elisabeth's
narrative was current in the north country when the *York
Psalter Assumption* was being painted, and it is therefore
feasible, in Boase's opinion, that the artist based his
imagery on her description. The miniature of the *Assumption*,
he argues, is ". . . the clearest statement possible in vis-
ual terms of the incorruptible body being carried from the
grave direct to heaven, the event as confirmed by Elisabeth
of Schönau's vision. . . .".[49] Boase suggests that the ar-
tist found inspiration in the *Visions* but does not say whe-
ther the text alone was the direct stimulus, or whether an
illustrated version of Elisabeth's work might have been a
model. Though I have found no indication that such an illus-

trated manuscript has survived, it is a compelling con-
nection in any event, for her description of the physical
assumption directly from the sepulchre in a place bathed
with light does indeed evoke the image of a female form
ascending in a kind of glory. Still, Boase's argument
does not convince me.

For the earlier scenes in the Virgin cycle, I
have suggested that the artist has resourcefully combined
elements plainly described in a different recension of
the narrative, together with a model of the traditional
Latin text. Given that the artist has depicted a high-
ly unusual form in the *York Psalter Assumption*, distinct
from conventional iconography (as seen for example in
the *Winchester Psalter*, Fig. 33), it is not unreasonable
to seek another source also for this episode, the most
significant of the Virgin's story. But the comparison
Boase makes between this scene and the *Visions* seems to
me to be valid only in a general sense. Though it omits
Mary worshipping before Christ as stated in the other
versions, and describes her being carried up on high by
angels, the account by Elisabeth provides for the rising
body only as ". . . the form of a woman. . ."[50]. Nowhere
in her text does Elisabeth record specifically the ascent

of the figure totally wrapped in a shroud which seems to
me is the greatest single dramatic feature of the *Assump-
tion*. In the earlier scenes of the Virgin cycle, the ar-
tist had directly interpreted his textual sources; thus
one could expect also for the *Assumption* miniature to
find a similar direct relationship between the visual and
verbal image. Yet the *Visions* do not provide detailed
descriptions. Elisabeth does not make any reference to
such a unique form and it is this lack of specific men-
tion which in my opinion discounts her text as a probab-
le source for the *Assumption*.

On another count too the probability of Elisa-
beth's *Visions* as direct inspiration is diminished since
northern insular literature describes a more vivid physi-
cal assumption, though not of the Virgin. In fact, the
image of the shroud-wrapped body rising from the grave in
a kind of glory was not new to Elisabeth of Schönau nor
was it invented by the artist of the *York Psalter*, for it
existed in written form at an early date in the north of
England. As early as the 8th century Bede apparently had
in mind similar imagery. In connection with the death of
the English saint Ethelburga, he records the vision of one
of her sister nuns, thus: "Leaving her cell one night at
first light of dawn, this sister saw distinctly what ap-

peared to be a human body wrapped in a shroud and shining more brightly than the sun. This was raised up. . . until it entered the open heavens. . . .".[51] Such vivid imagery of the miracle over corruption brings us closer than Elizabeth's description to the imagination that invests the pictorial form of the *York Psalter* Assumption.

As noted above, what chiefly establishes the uniqueness for the Assumption is the dramatic emphasis on the totally swathed body of the Virgin vertically posed in the center of the scene. Although I agree with Boase's assertion that the form is without visual comparison elsewhere, at least for Assumption iconography, the motif of the mummy-like form as connected to burials is common enough. The shrouded body is usually associated with another subject, the Entombment of Christ, such as we see in the *St. Albans Psalter*, p.43, *ca* 1119-1123 (Fig. 43) for which Otto Pächt has linked the form of the shroud drawn over Christ's head, but not face, to the shrouding of the corpse in mummy fashion in Sant'Angelo in Formis (wall-painting, *ca* 1072-1100, Fig. 44).[52] Representations of totally enshrouded bodies including the head and face as seen in the *York Psalter* are indeed rare in Western Continental art, though not unknown. The motif occurs in Spain as I have found for instance on an ivory panel depicting scenes from

the *Life of St. Aemilius* from the reliquary shrine (1053-
1067) at the Abbey of San Millàn de la Cogolla, Rioja
(Fig. 45). But the motif, rare as it is in Continental ex-
amples, must have been of special interest to English ar-
tists since, in addition to its dramatic use in the Glasgow
miniature, the form appears in numerous other instances of
English art in the 12th century and earlier. For example,
the Malmesbury sculpture of the *Entombment of Christ, ca*
1170 (Fig. 46) depicts the body enshrouded from head to
foot. The same subject is similarly treated, again as a
corpse totally wrapped, in the Leaf in London, *MS.661*
(Fig. 47).[53] In different contexts we find it over and over
in contemporary examples: *e.g.* in the initial of the *Burial*
of Judas Maccabeus from the *Winchester Bible, ca* 1150-1180
(folio 350v, Fig. 48), in a late 12th century *Romance of*
Alexander (Fig. 49),[54] and a second time in the *York Psalter*
Raising of Lazarus, where the totally shrouded form appears
to be also a unique representation in Lazarus iconography
(Fig. 18). The motif continues in use late in the century
when it appears in the *Paris Psalter, ca* 1170-1200 from
Christ Church, Canterbury (Paris, Bibl. nat. *MS.lat.8846*
folio 156v Fig. 50). That the motif is a characteristic
English trait is seen from its appearance not only in nu-
merous 12th century examples but also in earlier Anglo-
Saxon art as well, for instance in the burial scenes of

patriarchs in the 11th century *Aelfric Pentateuch* (British Museum *Cotton Claudius B.iv* folio 72v, Fig. 51)[55].

The evidence so far shows that the image of the shrouded body rising from the grave to glory existed in the insular imagination in the north from the time of Bede. As associated with entombment, the motif persisted generally in English art from the 11th century onward. Given the English preference for this motif, its recurrence in the *York Psalter* becomes less surprising. Though the connection of the shrouded body to Assumption iconography may be original, the artist of the *York Psalter* could have derived his unique pictorial form from the well-stocked bank of indigenous imagery. Consequently one may consider Boase's argument--that Elisabeth's *Visions* lie behind the form of the *Assumption*--as weakened since the artist could equally have relied on this persistent native tradition.

Another possibility for the source of the *Assumption* might be that the artist adapted his composition from a different subject such as a Tree of Jesse, itself a new expression of the ever-increasing devotion to the Virgin in the 12th century.[56] Similar prototypes predating the *York Psalter* which may have been known to the artist occurred in the *Shaftesbury Psalter ca* 1130-1140 (British Library *MS*

Lansdowne 383 folio 15, Fig. 52), the *Lambeth Bible ca* 1140-
1150 (folio 130, Fig. 53) and in the *Winchester Psalter ca*
1150 (folio 9, Fig. 54). In the *Lambeth Bible* miniature
the vertical, elongated form of the Virgin functions as the
central column of the design, with the horizontal recumbent
Jesse lying across the bottom. These compositional elements
have been replaced in the *York Psalter* Assumption by the
empty coffin beneath the suspended body of Mary. The nimbed
angels on the sides could substitute for the roundels con-
taining the busts of prophets in the *Bible* and as Turner
notes, the figure of Christ pointing to his Mother in the
York Psalter could perhaps have similarly evolved from such
a figure as one of the prophets pointing to the Virgin in the
miniature of the Tree of Jesse in the *Winchester Psalter* (Fig.
54).[57] Another representation of the Tree of Jesse closer
to home may have been at York itself. In the glass of the
south wall at York Minster are depicted prophets in roun-
dels dating from the mid-12th century and Lethaby suggests
that the missing portions may have contained the other fi-
gures necessary to complete a Tree of Jesse.[58]

In a review of Boase's monograph, Adelheid Hei-
mann describes the *York Psalter* Assumption as a new and
experimental composition, an awkward arrangement which
might have been improved had the artist shifted the burial

episode to the bottom register. Such a switch, he comments, would result in a more effective sense of upward motion since the Assumption motif would gain additional impetus from being at the top of the page (Fig. 55). But in my opinion such a reconstruction would not be feasible because it would alter the sequence of action from top to bottom used in the other miniatures of the Virgin cycle. Moreover, an arrangement of the burial in the upper register and resurrection in the lower is not unusual and has occurred before, for example in the 11th century *Bamberg Gospels* (Bamberg, Staatbiblio. *MS 94.A.11.18* folio 155, Fig. 56) which shows on the left side of the miniature a similar composition for the scene of the Incarnation.

Whatever the source for the *York Psalter Assumption*, the unique design of the Virgin ascending against the shroud must have enjoyed certain currency for I have found one descendant in a later English alabaster, dating *ca* 1400 (Fig. 57) now owned by the Metropolitan Museum of New York. In this lovely small work we again see the grave sheet tautly stretched by lateral angels, holding the central figure of the Virgin in strict, vertical ascent, though here her form is not shrouded; instead beautifully draped folds bend softly over the base.[59]

To summarize: although the artist of the *York Psalter* may have devised an experimental composition for the *Assumption*, he also created a distinct iconography by combining different sources. He did so by transforming in highly imaginative fashion a motif and idea already in existence in the Anglo-Saxon repertory, with which he would be well familiar, into a cycle of the Virgin. This Chapter has described his nearest sources as primarily Anglo-Saxon ones: the vernacular account of the Assumption in the *Blickling Homilies* for the first two miniatures, and Anglo-Saxon and later English art for the pictorial form in the last miniature of the cycle.

What remains to be considered now is the relationship of this imagery to the larger bank of Dormition-Assumption iconography in Eastern and Western art in general, and specifically its tradition in the art of the British Isles. The next Chapter will focus on these two aspects, concluding that the insular pictorial tradition—just as its literary heritage—is the formative influence on the Virgin cycle in the *York Psalter*.

Chapter III

In presenting the immediate sources for the Vir-
gin cycle in the *York Psalter*, the preceding Chapter has
analyzed an Anglo-Saxon commentary on the Assumption narra-
tive as the textual basis for the iconography. It has re-
lated also the motif of the shrouded body--the chief nov-
elty of the *Assumption* miniature in the *Psalter*--as a char-
acteristic trait of Anglo-Saxon and later English art.
This Chapter will now consider first: the theme of the
Death and Assumption of the Virgin viewed in the wider
setting in order to evaluate the artist's originality on
a larger scale; and second: the pictorial tradition for
the theme in English art. To my knowledge this is an area
which has not been dealt with in any detail. I will show
how an early cult of the Virgin was expressed in the north
of England by the end of the 7th century. I will propose
further that the cycle in the *York Psalter* does not relate
either to earlier or contemporary representations of the
Assumption in Continental art except in general resemblence.
Instead the uniqueness of the Glasgow Virgin cycle should
be seen as stemming from an early insular pictorial and
literary tradition of Mary worship.

To substantiate this claim, I have found that in
comparison to Continental examples, the theme of the Death

and Assumption occurs earlier and in more developed form
in English art. From an early date in Northumbria, an indi-
genous tradition of Mary worship expresses itself appar-
ently in terms of a concentration on that theme. All told,
the emphasis on the Virgin cycle in the *York Psalter* is
consistent with this extended lineage of native interest.
More than any other imported influence, this heritage
was the generative force on the Virgin iconography in the
manuscript.

A brief overall view of the development of
the subject in Continental art follows. In general, the
early representations of the Assumption in art under East-
ern influence are variants of the Virgin *orans*, as in the
relief on the 4th century sarcophagus from Sant'Engracia,
Saragossa, (Fig. 58) which depicts the Virgin standing be-
tween apostles, the hand of God raising her by the wrist.[1]
Another early example of this type recurs in the 8th cen-
tury Byzantine fabric now preserved at Sens with the Virgin
in prayer between two angels while two other angels pros-
trate themselves at her feet. Here the lack of a mandorla
might result in a mistaken identification of the subject as
an Ascension were it not for the inscription which states:
"*cum transisset Maria Mater Domina de Apostolis*", proof

that this is indeed an Assumption of early date (Fig 59)[2]and
probably our earliest depiction of certain attribution.

The hieratic type of Assumption, expressed by
the orant Virgin, continued in use into the 10th and 11th
centuries as exampled by the famous ivory bookcover of
Tuotillo, (10th century, St. Gall Monastery Library, Fig.
60). However, an alternative dramatic narrative version
of the theme has been identified in the 9th century fres-
coes at the Temple of Fortuna Virilis in Rome as an illus-
trated cycle of the *Transitus*. In her analysis of the three
scenes in question, Lafontaine argues that a close rela-
tionship exists between the frescos and a Coptic recension
of the text. Likely the artist had copied from a *Transitus*
manuscript illustrated with an extensive Dormition cycle.[3]
Given the reputation of the apocryphal text at this time
as an unreliable theological proof, such extensive narra-
tive cycles seem unusual. But as I shall demonstrate be-
low this occurrence was not unique to Italy since a narra-
tive cycle is found in English art of even earlier date.
Thus we can conclude that illustrated manuscripts of the *Tran-
situs* could have circulated in the West before the 9th century.

To return to Continental developments: in addition
to the 9th century narrative cycle in Italy, by the end of

the 10th century the Byzantine formula for the *Koimesis* had come into general usage. Its standard structure according to the Greek versions of the text was the division of the apostles into two groups, the one at the left headed by Peter censing and the one at the right headed by Paul bending over to kiss Mary's feet. John, always bearded in this scene, is shown behind the bier and leans over the Virgin. Christ is habitually included at the death scene to hand the soul of the Virgin to the flying angels. The number of mourners may vary from the twelve apostles proper to as many as sixteen, including bishops who were present at the Dormition, and additional mourners may also appear as anonymous members of the crowd. This standardized iconography occurs extensively over several centuries, *e.g.* the late 10th century ivory in the gold cover of the Gospel Book of Otto III (Munich, Staat.Bibl.Clm.4453 Fig.61-62); the central panel of an ivory triptych of similar date from Constantinople (Fig. 63); in icons from Saint Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai, 12th century (Fig.64); the mid-12th century mosaics from the Martorana, Palermo (Fig. 65); and a late 13th century wall-painting in the Church of the Peribleptos, St. Clement (Fig.66).

Besides the *Koimesis*, other iconographic types for the Death and Assumption appeared. Generally the treatment of the theme in the West is more variable and in some instances

combines exclusively Western features--such as the Coronation --with or without other elements from the conventional *Koimesis*. These 10th and 11th century representations can be grouped into two basic types. One depicts the Virgin *orans* in a mandorla mounting on a cloth such as the Sacramentary from Augsbert folio 123v (British Museum MS Harley 2908 10th century, Fig. 67). The other type maintains the presence of Christ following Byzantine iconography but may add other details such as the hand of God or the crown, and may vary also the depiction of the Virgin's soul as a diminutive nimbed figure of Mary (though her body is shown dead on the couch beneath), or the more usual, small swaddled child-like form. For example Ottonian versions blend the tradition of Christ present to receive the soul with the tradition of the orant Virgin in several different ways. The late 10th century *Prüm Gradual* (Paris, Bibl.Nat. MS.lat. 9448 folio 60v Fig. 68) adds a coronation to the *Koimesis* setting. The *Pericope Book of Henry II*, also 10th century, (Munich,Bayr.Staatsbibl.Clm.4452 folio 119 Fig.69), uses a half-length Virgins *orans* in a medallion which is poised over the deathbed scene. Different other combinations outlined by J.J.G.Alexander continue in the 11th century, sometimes with the hand of God, or the Virgin crowned, and at times with Mary carrying the palm. The North French type exampled by 11th century Morgan MS 641 (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library

MS.*641* folio 142v Fig.70) shows a crowned, full-length

orans, carrying the palm with the right hand, ascending

in a mandorla assisted by angels with the hand of God. Here,

as in the manuscript from Augsbert, the death of Mary is not

shown and has been substituted by the rising mandorla. Con-

sequently it remains ambiguous, according to Alexander, as

to the question of her bodily assumption for these repre-

sentations are really of a Virgin in Glory in the tradition

of the Tuotillo ivory.[6]

I have drawn these distinctions to make the point

that in almost all of the early images there is reluctance

to depict the actual raising of the Virgin's body, which re-

flects the controversy on the question of her bodily assump-

tion. A brief history of the controversy is included here

to show how religious distrust restricted representation of

the subject in most instances to one emphasizing her spiritual

ascent, or one which glorified a symbolic Virgin as in the

orans.

The Assumption had been celebrated at least since

the 6th century as a festival on August 15th and it was one

of the twelve principal feasts in the liturgical calendar.

During Charlemagne's time the feast came close to being sup-

pressed in the West altogether on the grounds of its assoc-

iation with the apocryphal narratives and their dubious
theological value. The Abbot of Corbie, Paschasius Rad-
bert (d. 860), condemned the *Transitus* in a famous letter,
Cogitus me (wrongly attributed to St. Jerome), in which
he repudiated the text of the narrative as a work not to
be accepted. The letter acknowledges that there is an
empty church in the valley of Jehoshaphat at the foot of
the Mount of Olives where there is an empty tomb, but how
or why the most holy body was removed is not known, nor
whether it was taken away or resurrected. This letter
states the central issue of the controversy, *i.e.:* whether
the Assumption was to be interpreted as the spiritual entry
of the Virgin into heaven, or whether the body was actually
taken up. Paschasius Radbert's letter, incorporated in a
sermon, enjoyed tremendous prestige in the Carolingian period
and it was widely used in the Breviary lessons for the Office
of the Assumption.[7] Owing to its influence, Western theolo-
gians divided into two schools over the question: the agnos-
tic view featured in the work of Odilo of Cluny (d.1049),
whose conservative sermon on the Assumption states that ".
. . we should trust the position taken by Jerome [meaning
Paschasius Radbert] . . . ." and on the other hand Notker the
Stammerer of St. Gall (d.912) adopted the opposite view with
his firm belief in the bodily assumption, an idea he had
found in Gregory of Tours. As a result of this division, the

Transitus retained uncertain status and belief in the bodily assumption was retarded in the West until the early 12th century when another sermon opened up a new line of approach. This treatise, wrongly attributed to St. Augustine but possibly of English authorship, gradually ousted the influence of the Pseudo-Jerome (Paschasius Radbert) and has been connected to the milieu of St. Anselm of Canterbury (d.1109). Promoting the general acceptance of a corporeal assumption, it is reflected in the writings of other theologians working in England, *e.g.* Honorious of Autun (d.1136) who was at one time at Canterbury, Ailred of Rievaulx, (d.1167) who affirmed the bodily assumption using the arguments of the Pseudo-Augustine, and in William of Newburgh's Commentary on the Canticle which was written on the request of Abbot Roger of Byland, 1142-1196.[8]

Representations of the physical assumption thus begin to appear from the 12th century in England and the Continent. The 12th century missal from Tours (Fig. 41), depicts the empty tomb, the body gone, while the Virgin mounts in a cloth held by angels. French portal sculpture particularly expressed the new interpretation in various experiments; for instance the bas-relief from Autun, *ca* 1130, shows Mary rising with the help of angels. A tympanum from La Charité-sur-Loire, *ca* 1150, shows Christ in Majesty stretching out his hand to the Virgin who is being drawn into the mandorla.[9] On the tympanum from St.Pierre-le-Puellier, Bourges (now in the Musée

de Berry), the whole story of the *Transitus* is depicted:
the angel's message followed by a damaged section which may
have shown the Dormition, the funeral procession and in the
upper register the Virgin is laid in the tomb and then car-
ried aloft by two angels.[10]   At Senlis, *ca* 1180-1190, two
lintel reliefs depict the Death and Assumption.   The first
relief is carved without Christ (though the work is much da-
maged); the second shows a bodily resurrection.   Angels lift
the body from the tomb in its shroud, while one of them holds
a crown over the Virgin's head (Fig.71).[11]   At Clermont-
Ferrand, the shrouded body of Mary, eyes open, is lifted by
Christ from the coffin which is shown as solid stone saving
the impression made by her departed body (Fig. 72).

The Virgin cycle in the *York Psalter* matches cer-
tain features with these pictorial traditions in Continental
art.   It displays the same narrative aspects of the story
and dramatizes the corporeal nature of the Assumption, fea-
tures of Western iconography for the subject in the 12th cen-
tury.   Also it follows in part the dicta of *Koimesis* icono-
graphy in the presence of Christ at the deathbed.   But this
is relationship only in a general sense and such common char-
acteristics ultimately stem from the same source behind the
subject.   On the other hand, the artist of the *York Psalter*
departed from these visual formulae when he introduced the
many unique elements outlined in Chapter II, such as the new
emphasis on Peter over the other apostles, the anachronistic
presence of the Jews, the different moments of the narrative

which he has opted to illustrate, the extent of the cycle
itself and above all, the dramatic presentation of the
Assumption as a shrouded body dominating the scene. This
combination of features is not found in the wider stream
of Dormition-Assumption representations which makes it all
the more likely that the artist depended on the Anglo-Saxon
recension of the narrative in the *Blickling Homilies*, so
far the best explanation of the artist's exceptional icono-
graphy.

Boase (1962) first pointed out the originality of
the totally shrouded Virgin, though he has not substantiated
his statement with many comparisons. My own findings concur
with his statement however and on the basis of the research
presented here, it does appear that the form of the *York
Psalter Assumption* does not occur elsewhere in Western or
Eastern representations. The illustration of a physical
Assumption as a rising shrouded corpse in such graphic man-
ner is apparently unique to this manuscript. Consequently
the argument of its origin as a specifically English motif
with Anglo-Saxon ancestry, as traced in Chapter II, now as-
sumes ever greater weight.

In his monograph on the *Psalter*, Boase does not
thoroughly explore the frequency of the theme of the Death

and Assumption in English art. He mentions in passing the
unenterprising examples (as compared to the French experi-
ments in portal sculpture) in the contemporary *Winchester
Psalter* and two earlier miniatures: the *Benedictional of
Ethelwold ca* 980 (British Museum *MS. Add. 49598* folio 102v
Fig. 73) and the slightly later *Benedictional of Archbishop
Robert* (Rouen, Bibl.Mun. *MS.Y.7* folio 4 Fig. 74) which he
cites merely as unusual 10th century types.[12] But as I
have found there are indeed other English representations
of the Death and Assumption of the Virgin and their signi-
ficance should be considered.

    The Virgin cycle in the *York Psalter* need not rep-
resent simply another, more original variation of the many
different types developed for the iconography of the Death
and Assumption. I believe it is more likely that the Glas-
gow miniatures stem from a different tradition not reflect-
ed in the Continental representations or for that matter in
contemporary English work of southern provenance, which
would have been the first to absorb the mainstream of out-
side influence. Manuscripts of the 12th century from the
southern schools at Winchester, Canterbury and Bury St. Ed-
monds follow middle-Byzantine and later Eastern iconography
and depict the subject as a faithful *Koimesis*. We may com-
pare examples in the *Winchester Psalter* (Fig. 33) of the
Death of the Virgin pendant to an adjacent miniature of the

Virgin Enthroned, the pair often described as copies of a

Byzantine diptych.[13]   These representations have been com-

pared to the Sicilian mosaics and to work from Mount Sinai

and have even been likened to Crusader art such as the

Virgin Enthroned in the mid-12th century Jerusalem manu-

script known as *Queen Melisende's Psalter* (British Museum

MS. Egerton 1139).[14]   In any event, the miniatures are

thoroughly Byzantinized and strictly adhere to Eastern

iconography.   The other English psalter of the second half

of the 12th century sometimes called the Bury Psalter (as

it is thought to be from Bury St. Edmonds), has a conven-

tional *Koimesis* and an extensive cycle in the 13th century

Luttrell Psalter also follows the prescribed Byzantine for-

mula.[15]

        There are numerous instances of the Death and

Assumption in later English work from the 13th century,

again from the south, for example: wall-paintings from

Burgh St. Peter, Norfolk; Chalgrove; Wimborne, Dorset;

and the cycle from Brook, Kent, all reflect the Eastern

pictorial tradition.   Another important cycle allied to the

East Anglian school of illuminators and dated by M. R.

James between 1280 and 1300 is the wall-painting at the

Church of All Saints, Croughton, Northhamptonshire.[16]

This extensive treatment under strong Byzantine influence

contained originally 25 episodes which formed an almost

complete Life of the Virgin, including scenes introducing

her parents. English representations from the 14th century

have been listed by James, such as the *Braile Horae* formerly

in the Perrins Collection; the Lady Chapel at Ely and the one

at Dorchester: I mention them here as illustrations of the

continuing popularity of the Death and Assumption in English

art. What is especially noteworthy in these examples is the

fact that they all originate in schools south of the Humber

and they all reflect the influence of the Byzantine tradi-

tion. Their Virgin imagery, as far as I can ascertain, con-

trasts sharply to that of the *York Psalter* which remains a

unique example of northern iconography in English art.

Since contemporary parallels are unsatisfactory in

supplying an explanation for the Virgin cycle in our northern

manuscript, one is tempted to examine earlier insular art

for representations of the Death and Assumption. The Anglo-

Saxon repertory had already provided a textual source which

clarified many of the cycle's unusual features. Therefore

we might expect also to find artistic models to support the

theory of an Anglo-Saxon tradition for the theme. Fortunate-

ly, the liklihood of such ancestry is increased since there

is reference by Olav Sinding in his pioneering iconographical

study, *Mariae Tod und Himmelfahrt* (1903), to a late 7th-early

8th century manuscript of Bede known as the *Pilgrim's Travel Report (De Liber Locis Sanctis)*[17] which includes what may be the earliest extant illustration of the Death of the Virgin in a work of English provenance (Fig.75). While it was impossible to trace the present whereabouts of the manuscript with the drawing in time for this essay (the work in question may well be lost), Sinding's authority appears to be reliable since he is continuously cited by modern art historians for his accurate analysis of Dormition iconography. Sinding claims Bede's illustration (if indeed Bede is the draughtsman) is the oldest surviving picture we have of a Death of the Virgin: it includes the column of the Flagellation, Mary's deathbed and two figures. Mary lies on the stone bench and for the first time in known examples which I have been able to trace, her body is shown wrapped in a heavy linensheet prepared for the grave. Like Mary in the death scene of the *York Psalter*, she is awake and watchful. On the bed is the inscription: *"Hic Sancta Maria Obiit"*. Behind the bed stands an angel in accordance with Early Christian tradition--still retained in Byzantium as well as in Britain and Ireland at this time--that Christ after his ascension should not be represented as he had been on earth.[18] The angel, presumably signifying victory over death, holds the palm branch, evidence that the artist knew the apocryphal story in detail. At a time when Continental art expressed the Assumption as a

hieratic *orans*, it seems astonishing to see a picture of
the Death of the Virgin shown in her shroud and accompanied
by the angel with the palm in an 8th century work from the
north of England. If Sinding's identification is correct
(and there is no counter-evidence to refute it), this il-
lustration could be the genesis of the pictorial tradition
of the Death and Assumption in English art. Sinding justi-
fies the early appearance of the narrative elements by the
explanation that Bede was not painting a decoration or cult
picture, but merely wanted to illustrate the inscription
and may possibly have transformed a representation of the
dying Virgin for this purpose.[19] However, Bede could have
been interested in the subject also because of the preva-
lence in the north of an early cult of the Virgin and this
worship is borne out by written evidence, other 8th century
expressions of the Death, as well as important Celtic and
Northumbrian representations of the Virgin as *Hodegetria*.

The immediate source of Bede's drawing is one of
the earliest written references in England to the theme of
the Death of the Virgin and the site of her passing, *viz.*:
Adamnan's late 7th-early 8th century travelogue of the Holy
Land, *De Locis Sanctis*.[20] This treatise summarized his in-
terview of the pilgrim Arculf who had recently returned from
a journey to the Near East which he had made about the years
679-682. Adamnan reported the traveller's description of the

Church of the Holy Virgin Mary adjoining the Round Church

(the Holy Sepulchre) as a quadrangular building. Arculf

presented Adamnan also with a plan drawn on a wax tablet

of four of the Jerusalem churches under discussion, includ-

ing the church where Mary died.[21] The plan, obviously too

fragile to exist for long in wax and evidently transferred

to parchment, exists today in a 9th century copy where Mary's

church is indicated in the center bottom (Vienna, Staat.

Bibl. Cod. 458, folio 4v, Fig.76).[22] Adamnan presented a

copy of his book at York to the Northumbrian King Aldfrith

(685-705) and from the king the book came into the hands of

Bede, who quoted it in his *History* and used it as the basis

of his own *De Liber Locis Sanctis*.[23]

Since illustrated *Transitus* manuscripts were not

copied in Continental art until the 9th century (as in the

frescos from the Temple of Fortuna Virilis, Rome), Bede's

little drawing with elements culled from the apocryphal

story evidences that a recension of the *Transitus*, perhaps

an illustrated one, could have been available in Northumbria

over a century earlier. Possibly a tradition of *Transitus*

painting in manuscript or wall panel was already in existence.

Certainly by the second half of the 7th century we know that

Benedict Biscop (628-689), founder of Wearmouth and Jarrow,

had made several trips to Rome and returned ". . . loaded

with more abundant spiritual merchandise than before. . . "

including ". . . a large quantity of books of all kinds

and pictures of sacred representations to adorn the central

nave from one wall to the other. . .".[24] Of these pictures

". . . a likeness of the Virgin Mary and of the twelve apos-

tles. . ." were to be installed on boarding in Biscop's

Church of St. Peter and it is tempting to speculate that

such representations could have included a cycle of the

Virgin's Death. It is at least possible that the library

established by Biscop had a copy, illustrated or not, of

the *Transitus* story in some form, since different recen-

sions have been identified from the later Anglo-Saxon period

in England and Ireland. Knowledge of the apocryphal story

could have been familiar also from copies of the work by

Gregory of Tours, known to have existed in Northumbrian

libraries.[25]

     While the drawing from Northumbria may be the

earliest artistic indication of Dormition iconography in

England, we have other more complete evidence that the

theme was especially popular in insular devotions from

another 8th century work. A developed cycle of the Death

and Funeral Procession and a possible Assumption is carved

on a stone slab from the Church of Wirksworth, Derbyshire,

described first by Betty Kurth in 1945 (Fig. 77).[26] It

depicts the Virgin borne to her burial with John at the

head of the procession bearing the palm and a man shown

with his arms outstretched and touching the bier. All the
characteristic features of the apocryphal story are present
including the circular cloud with the angels and the Jewish
priest who loses a hand. Adjacent to the group is another
depiction of a figure in a mandorla surrounded by angels.
Kurth identifies this scene as an Ascension but it could
as well be an Assumption, thus rounding out the narrative.
That such an early rendering of a fully developed Dormition
iconography based on the *Transitus* narrative should occur in
England when, Kurth comments, ". . . up to now no examples of
early Christian or Carolingian times were known. . .", docu-
ments the uniqueness of this subject for Anglo-Saxon art.[27]

Contemporary to the Wirksworth slab is the 8th cen-
tury English ivory Assumption now at Munich which is depicted
as the Virgin *orans* (Bayer Nat.Mus. no MA 164 Fig.78). However
more interesting to the theory that a *Transitus* pictorial
tradition continued to the Anglo-Saxon period is the Dor-
mition in the *Benedictional of Ethelwold, ca* 980 (Fig.73).
This miniature presents the subject on a full page with the
Virgin reclining on a bed tended by three weeping women.
At the bottom in the lower register is a group of apostles
and at the top four angels descend with clothes and a scep-
tre. The divine Hand holds a crown. From his analysis of
the iconography, Robert Deshman concludes that the core of

this miniature was copied intact from a cycle of miniatures illustrating an apocryphal narrative of the Virgin's death and assumption. He points out further that the iconography is important since it is the first actual Coronation of the Virgin in Western art, predating by some 150 years another English Coronation on the capital from Reading, *ca* 1130.[28] The *Benedictional of Archbishop Robert* of slightly later date (Fig. 74), also contains a miniature of the Death of the Virgin. Here however the narrative elements have been suppressed and the subject is in more simplified form without the apostles and hovering angels seen in the earlier Benedictional. Surrounded by mourners and about to receive her crown, Mary is shown orant in the ". . . traditional position of assumption in most Continental representations.".[29]

The entrance of the Coronation into Dormition iconography in English art does not directly relate to the cycle in the *York Psalter*.[30] I have included it here as demonstration of the inventive capacity of English medieval art (to borrow a phrase of Adolph Goldschmidt) which is the reason why England ". . . shows herself more independent of convention than the Continent in the iconographic sphere.".[31] The artist of the *York Psalter* miniatures inherited a tradition of Virgin iconography not only emphasizing the Death

and Assumption but a tradition notable also for its crea-
tive innovations.

That these last examples are of southern proven-
ance does not diminish the argument that the pictorial tra-
dition for the Death and Assumption was generated by nor-
thern interests. It is well known that the north of England
lost its artistic importance during the 8th century follow-
ing the inroads made by the Danish invasions, and it is con-
sistent with this shift to the south that representations
of the Death should appear in southern artistic centers.
Other important representations from the north may simply
have disappeared as a result of the inestimable damage and
loss suffered by the northern provinces also during the
Viking raids when, for example, we know that in 867 York
was burned extensively and the Minster school destroyed.[32]
The vast devastation by William the Conqueror in 1069 must
also account for great artistic losses from the Humber to
the Forth.[33]

To conclude: first, the oldest surviving repre-
sentation of the Death of the Virgin, illustrating a recen-
sion of the *Transitus* manuscript, can be attributed to a
Northumbrian provenance. Second, the theme of the Death
and Assumption recurs as a pictorial tradition in signi-

ficant later examples from the Anglo-Saxon period. There-
fore, evidence suggests that from the end of the 7th century
the Death and Assumption as it is related in the apocryphal
narrative existed in artistic form in England, moving from
the north to the southern centers in accordance with the
political history of the country. The recurrence of the
cycle in expanded form in the *York Psalter* can be seen as
a logical development of a subject habitually present in
English art from the Northumbrian period.

My main purpose in this section has been to exam-
ine the insular antecedents for the iconography of the
Death and Assumption of the Virgin. I wish to point out fur-
ther that the early practice of Mary worship expressed it-
self visually also in images of the Virgin and Child. This
subject is represented in Northumbrian art in important iconic
works of hieratic style. Derived from the seated *Hodegetria*
of Eastern iconography, two closely related representations,
the late 7th century carving on Cuthbert's coffin reliquary
at Durham and the early 9th century miniature in the *Book of
Kells*, grant additional distinction to the north of providing
the earliest examples in the West also of this variant of
Marian iconography. They evidence the availability of impor-
ted prototypes in northern artistic centers for these two
works are thought to have been modelled after a work of art

in Northumbria received as part of Biscop's stock of trea-
sures in the second half of the 7th century. That this
prototype enjoyed the status of a revered icon is witnessed
by the frequent representations of the theme in Northumbria
and Scotland and, according to Kitzinger ". . . in several
instances we find at least traces of the St. Cuthbert-Kells
type.".[34]

There are other representations of the Virgin and
Child through the later Anglo-Saxon period, notably the 10th
century York Virgin (Fig. 79), which copies a Byzantine icon-
ography, but most are small portable ivories of iconic type.[35]
Compared to the imaginative and developed cycles in the
Wirksworth slab or the miniatures of the *Benedictionals*,
these icons lack the expressive content and inventive use
of their prototypes. One might say that devotion to the
Virgin was expressed in English art in two ways: first by
the dual themes in Northumbrian representations--the
Death of the Virgin and the Virgin and Child--and: second,
by a concentration in later Anglo-Saxon representations
on the single theme, the Death and Assumption.

Besides the evidence of artistic examples, the
worship of Mary is documented in written form by the earl-

iest Christian writers in England. In addition to his in-
terest in the circumstances of Mary's death recorded in his
Pilgrim's Travel Report, Bede's sermon delivered on the
Feast of the Assumption extols her role as Intercessor.
Elsewhere he refers to her ". . . immaculate purity and
perfect sanctity. . ." and from him too we have recorded
the words of the 7th century Irish poet Sedulius praising
Mary's peerless position in the human race as well as her
stainless virginity.[36] Bede expresses also a concern indir-
ectly related to the Virgin's incorruptibility. In his
Hymn for the Subject of Virginity in honour of the 7th
century English nun, Etheldreda, he praises her since

> To heaven devoted, there she won new fame
> And breathed her last, to heaven devoted there.
> Veiled in the tomb sixteen Novembers lay
> Nor rots her virgin flesh in the tomb
> XT, thine the power. even in the sepulchre
> Her vesture spotless gleams. XT, thine the power.[37]

A poem by Aldhelm who was known to have main-
tained close contact with the Northumbrian King Aldfrith,
(d.705), shows how quickly the observance of Mary's festi-
vals, introduced into Roman liturgy by Pope Syrius (687-
701), were taken up by the Anglo-Saxons.[38] By the 8th
century four of her festivals, including the Feast of the
Assumption, appear in the Calendar of the Lindisfarne de-
pendency.[39] A record of early devotion is preserved also

in the early 9th century *Book of Cerne* (Cambridge, Univ.
Library L1. I.10) which contains prayers of earlier date
venerating Mary. Celtic literature documents worship of
the Virgin too: Nordenfalk notes that an early Marian cult
within the Columban order is attested by the hymn *De Beata
Maria Virgini* ascribed to Saint Cuchuimnei who lived around
700.40

To continue an analysis of Marian literature in
England through the later periods is beyond my intent in this
essay, though I will refer in the last Chapter to some impor-
tant expressions of the Cult of the Virgin in the 12th century.
The examples cited here witness the early existence of devo-
tion to Mary in Northumbria and document in written form what
is expressed also in visual images from the 7th century onward.
In summary: this Chapter has analyzed the pictorial traditions
of Death and Assumption iconography in Continental art in the
Carolingian, Ottonian and Romanesque periods. It has explored
the significance of this theme in English representations.
Beyond its Anglo-Saxon textual connections (proposed in
Chapter II), the Virgin cycle in the *York Psalter* rests on
the artistic tradition for the theme in insular and later
Anglo-Saxon art, stimulated by a long history of indigenous
Mary worship. In my opinion the Virgin miniatures in the
York Psalter can be explained as a revival of Anglo-Saxon

iconography originating in the north in the tradition of pictorial narrative which had influenced images of the Death and Assumption from the 8th century.

CHAPTER IV

Anglo-Saxon Iconography in the other Miniatures of the
York Psalter

This thesis has claimed that insular iconography
deriving from northern traditions has been revived in the
Virgin cycle of the *York Psalter*. To show this, I have
concentrated first (in Chapter II) on isolating the text-
ual basis for the cycle which corresponds closely to an
Anglo-Saxon vernacular derivative of the apocryphal Latin
narrative. Second, I have analyzed (in Chapter III) the
iconography of the theme of the Death and Assumption of
the Virgin in Western and Eastern art, narrowing the field
to the significance of the English contribution. From my
findings, I have proposed that a Northumbrian heritage for
the iconography of the Death and Assumption, descended
through important Anglo-Saxon representations, has re-sur-
faced in the miniatures of the *York Psalter*. The question
now arises whether Anglo-Saxon antecedents play a role in
the iconography of the other miniatures.

Like those of the Virgin cycle, the iconography
of the rest of the miniatures has received little detailed
attention. Brief references by Turner, Boase and Kauffmann
have noted two general influences: i) the undercurrent of
Byzantine iconography present in most English illuminated
manuscripts especially after the second half of the 12th

century when political contact increased[1]; and ii) the
alliance to the pictorial traditions established by the
St. Albans Psalter and its progeny. Certainly diverse
traditions are at work throughout the iconography of the
miniatures and the artist's often unique combinations ob-
tain from his customary blending of different sources.
For example, strong Byzantine influence is reflected in
the Genesis miniatures (folios 7v, 8r Figs. 15, 16) which
can be paralleled in the 12th century mosaics from Paler-
mo, *ca* 1160, and Monreale, *ca* 1180 (Figs. 80, 81. Some-
times the artist revives an Early Christian motif, such
as the portrayal of Isaac as a naked figure in the Sacri-
fice of Isaac (folio 9v Fig.17). Kauffmann points out
this was a motif revived in Continental art in the 12th
century,[2] but I have found comparisons also in the 11th
century ivory plaque from the Cathedral of Salerno (Fig.
82) and the late 11th century wall-painting from Concordia
Sagittaria (Fig. 83). Other iconographic motifs in this
miniature, *viz.:* the draped altar, long sword instead of
a knife, and the device of the arresting angel, derive
from similar representations in the *Lambeth Bible,* *ca* 1150
(Fig. 84) and the 6th century mosaic from San Vitale, Rav-
enna (Fig. 85). Elsewhere the artist uses an iconography
common to local versions, such as his miniature of *Christ
at the Sea of Tiberias* (folio 13v, Fig. 20), a rare theme
which is paralleled in Pembroke College *MS.120.*[3]

It is not the intent nor within the scope of this essay to analyze the iconography of all the other miniatures in the *York Psalter*. However, I do wish to point out that for some of the subjects I have identified certain iconographic features of Anglo-Saxon origin which indicates that the artist, as he did for the Virgin cycle, opted to follow insular traditions. The remainder of this Chapter will therefore present these observations from my own research. They are not meant to be definitive conclusions but may open discussion on the iconographic sources for the miniatures of this manuscript.

Characteristic Anglo-Saxon iconography affects the full-page miniature of the Ascension (folio 14r Fig.21) in both treatment of theme and compositional features. The Ascension here is represented as a Disappearing Christ. Above the Virgin and assembled apostles, the legs of Christ are seen, the upper torso having vanished from their sight into a cloud formed by differently coloured bands of wavy lines. This type of Ascension has been credited by Meyer Schapiro as an Anglo-Saxon invention expressed for the first time in Western art in English manuscripts around the year 1000, for example the Missal of Robert of Jumièges (Rouen, *MS.Y.6* Fig.86) and the *Hereford Troper* (British Museum, *MS.Caligula A.XIV* Fig. 87). He notes that in the new variant

". . . only the legs or feet of Christ were represented, the
rest of the body disappeared in the clouds. . . . It is as if
the artist wished to show Christ as he looked to the apostles
who observed from below. . . . Even the mandorla which enclos-
es Christ. . . is cut by the clouds.".[4] This description cor-
responds exactly to the image in the *York Psalter* which shows
Christ disappearing between a layer of clouds and an aureole.
In contrast Eastern Ascensions normally show Christ standing
or enthroned in a mandorla, e.g.: the 6th century *Rabula Gos-
pels* (Florence, Bibl.Laur.Cod.Plut. 1 56, Fig. 88), the 6th
century ampulla from the Monza Cathedral Treasure (Fig. 89),
and the 12th century mosaic at Monreale (Fig. 90). Western
Continental versions may show Christ active and striding for-
ward as in the *Drogo Sacramentary* (Paris, Bib.Nat.MS lat.9428,
folio 71v, Fig. 91), and 10th century Anglo-Saxon representa-
tions also differ from the Ascension with a Disappearing Christ.
The miniature in the *Benedictional of Ethelwold* (Fig.92) has
been connected by Deshman to the 9th century ivory at Minden,
and the Ascension in the *Athelstan Psalter*, (Brit.Mus. MS Galba
A.XVIII, Fig. 93) combines different Continental traditions.[5]

On balance it seems as if the variant which devel-
oped in English art around the year 1000 could be the prototype
for the Ascension in the *York Psalter*. Other exceptional icono-
graphic features coincide as well. In the miniature in the

York Psalter, an angel descends from each of the upper
corners and Christ's feet are supported by their wings.
The angels hold scrolls inscribed according to Acts 1:
9-11. In other 12th century English Ascensions such as
the Pembroke College Ms.120 (Fig.94), the *Winchester Psal-*
ter and the *St. Albans Psalter* (Fig. 95), the angels
do not carry scrolls. As far as I have found, the angels
in Continental Ascensions also do not hold scrolls but
customarily use their hands in gestures toward the main
figures in accordance with Western or Eastern traditions.
Carolingian representations such as the ones in the *Drogo*
Sacramentary or the Bible from San Paolo fuori le Mura
depict the angels pointing with one hand toward Christ
and with the other hand toward the lower group.[6] In Byzan-
tine art, *e.g.* in a copy of the Homilies of the Virgin by
James of Kokkinobaphos, first half of the 12th century
(Paris, Bibl.Nat. Ms.grec.94, Fig.96), the angels point
as a rule only toward Christ.[7]

However the use of scrolls in the Ascension is
characteristic of the representations of the new variant
with the Disappearing Christ in England about the year
1000. For example, in the Psalter from Bury St. Edmonds
(Vatican. Reg.Ms.12 folio 73v Fig.97), the angels gesture
toward Christ with one hand and hold scrolls with the other.
On another folio (103) of the same manuscript, the scroll

recurs but is held this time by the ascending Christ who is supported by a cloud. In the *Hereford Troper* (Fig. 87), the angels together hold a scroll which carries Christ as he steps up into the clouds. This unusual and practical support system might have inspired the artist of the *York Psalter*. His Ascension uses a similarly unorthodox method of transport since Christ stands on the wings of the angels for additional support, a feature also which seems unparalleled in Eastern or Western art.

Since the motif of the disappearing Christ had already appeared in 12th century English work predating the *York Psalter* (e.g. the *St. Albans* and *Winchester Psalters*), we may assume it had become popular. But the coincidence as well in the other details between the *York Psalter* and the Anglo-Saxon representations cited above does suggest some closer association. One could say that likely the artist admired the new English Ascension in its most innovative aspects and incorporated much of it in his own imagery.

Other motifs derived from insular iconography feature in the miniatures of the *York Psalter*. For example: the representation of Christ in Glory (folio 16, Fig. 23), depicts the four symbols of the evangelists full-length and equipped with halos, wings and either scrolls or book. This multiple combination, which is adopted also for the scene of Ezekiel's Vision in the *Bury Bible*, is infrequent in contemporary English or Continental work, though fully equipped sym-

bols are common in Carolingian art of the late 8th and early
9th century.[8]   It is not my intent here to try to unravel the

iconographic development of the evangelist symbol but we may

note that the full-length type with all its attributes which

is preserved in the *York Psalter* had already occured in a

variant known in England by the end of the 7th century. The

fully equipped symbol occurs on the top of St. Cuthbert's

Coffin *ca* 698, on four pages of the *Lindisfarne Gospels* (Bri-

tish Museum Cotton Nero D.iv folios 25v, 93v, 137v, 209v,

early 7th century) and in the 9th century *Book of Cerne* (Cam-

bridge, Univ.Libr.Ll.I 10) Figs. 98, 99, 100).[9]

In the miniature of David Harping in the *York

Psalter* (Fig. 27), the harp is exceptional for its addition of

a lion's head and the peg at the top, two details which J.J.G.

Alexander regards as originating in the 10th century *Benedic-

tional of Archbishop Robert*.[10]   The scene of the Third Tempta-

tion (Fig.18) depicts a particularly English devil in a type

invented by the Anglo-Saxon miniaturist who, according to

Nordenfalk, creates a grotesque caricature ". . . with his

preposterous nose, huge mouth and beast-like body. . . an

alarming adversary of the heavenly hosts.".[11] Finally, the

motif of the round, cap-shaped hats depicted on the Jews in

the Raising of Lazarus (Fig. 18) and the Virgin cycle in the

Psalter can be traced to an Anglo-Saxon origin. Although

this type of head covering had become a common mark of identi-

fication for the Jews by the 12th century in England and the

Continent, the special type of round hat depicted in the
York Psalter belongs to a tradition whose most significant
aspect is its remarkably early appearance in the 11th cen-
tury *Aelfric Pentateuch* (Fig.10.).[12]

To sum up: throughout the miniatures the artist of
the *York Psalter* has followed a variety of models, combining
iconographic elements from Byzantine art and from contempo-
rary pictorial traditions in English illumination. However
in some unusual and inventive features very often the proto-
type turns out to be insular art. Anglo-Saxon iconography
which is the formative influence on the Virgin cycle also con-
tributes an imaginative aspect to the other miniatures as well.

Conclusions

In Chapter II I have explained the distinctive
iconography of the Death, Burial and Assumption of the Vir-
gin by relating the cycle to the vernacular account in the
10th century *Blickling Homilies*, an Anglo-Saxon recension of
the original Latin text known as the *Transitus*. This Chap-
ter has also traced the pictorial form of the shrouded body
in the Assumption as a characteristic trait of English art.
The persistent recurrence of the motif from early 8th century
insular art onward supports the theory that the artist of the
York Psalter found his inspiration at home rather than abroad.
Consequently we may doubt the value of the specific connec-
tion forwarded by Boase between the Assumption in the *Psalter*

and a popular 12th century Continental account of the miracle
in the *Visions* of Elisabeth of Schönau. We may also discard
his suggestion that the emphasis on Peter in the Virgin cycle
is a reference to York Minster which is dedicated to the
saint, since Peter figures prominently in the Anglo-Saxon text.

An additional comment on the *Blickling* text may be
noted here in these *Conclusions*. Chapter II has cited the
confusion of the homilist when he recounts at the end of the
story the episode of the Virgin's soul being reunited with
her body at two different moments. This emphasis on a dual
reunion may have stimulated the imagination of the artist of
the *York Psalter* Assumption. His depiction of the totally
shrouded body could also be interpreted as an apt expression
of the reunion of the soul—often portrayed in Assumptions
as a swaddled figure—with Mary's body, together ascending
in harmony from the tomb. As such he would belong to that
line of English miniaturists who have created new imagery
from inherent ingenuity and a sensibility to the fittingness
of form and content.

An influence from liturgical drama on the *York Psal-
ter* Assumption is also possible. Although there are no extant
manuscripts of an Assumption play connected with York before
the 15th century cycles enacted by the York Weavers' Guild,
there is evidence that as drama the subject was important in
the north. Civic organizers would go out of their way to

stage the Assumption on occasions of special importance, as York in 1486 honoured the visit of Henry VII.[13]. We do know that other dramatized cycles from the Old and New Testaments such as the Anglo-Norman *jeu d'Adam* and the *Peregrinus* plays were popular in England by the 12th century. The specific stage directions from a copy of the *Peregrinus* have been convincingly cited first by Emile Mâle and later by Pächt to explain the unusual pilgrim's costume worn by Christ in the Emmaus miniatures of the *St. Albans Psalter*.[14] Similarly, there could have been some connection between the unique form of the Assumption in the *York Psalter* and an early drama. In the 15th century play the Assumption is related from the divine point of view with the angels commanded by Christ to fetch the Virgin's body from the tomb. Accordingly an image of the Virgin was raised by some machinery to the heavens in the upper reaches of the church which was the usual place for the performance. From these directions Anderson has noted the similarity between the type of device which would have been suitable in this scene and the distinctive design of the sheet which is grasped by the angels in the alabaster Assumption in New York (Fig.57),[15] itself a descendent of the *York Psalter* miniature.

Chapter III has examined the development of the Death and Assumption in the wider setting of Continental iconographic traditions. It appears that the Virgin cycle

in the *York Psalter* does not relate to these formulae, or to
southern English versions of the subject, other than in gen-
eral resemblence common to all representations. However,
another indigenous tradition does relate more closely to the
cycle in the northern manuscript. Images of the Death and
Assumption of the Virgin can be traced back to important manu-
scripts of the 10th century, an 8th century Saxon carving,
and to what may be the oldest surviving Dormition in Western
art, the late 7th-early 8th century work attributed to Bede.
Northumbrian interest in the Virgin is attested further by
expressions of a Marian cult in the north in written form
from the 7th century and in representations of the *Hodegetria*.
Therefore, while miniatures of the Death and the Virgin in
12th century manuscripts from the south of England reflect
contemporary Byzantine influence by depicting the *Koimesis*,
I can account for the unique Virgin iconography in the *York
Psalter* because of its association with this separate north-
ern tradition. Thus the northern provenance of the manuscript
is a significant factor in the argument of insular ancestry.

A northern tradition of Marian iconography suggests
further that a pictorial cycle not known in the south, and
distinct from the archtetype discussed by Kauffmann for the
St.Albans-Pembroke Coll.Ms.120-Four Leaves group, was avail-
able to artists in the north. This is borne out also by the
stress on narrative elements in representations stemming from

this line. The illustration in Bede's work, the Wirksworth
slab, the two Benedictionals and the *York Psalter* are not in
any sense hieratic as Carolingian and Ottonian versions tend
to be. Instead the English works reflect in its various
recensions the narrative in the *Transitus*. Perhaps even
earlier than Deshman believed, manuscripts of this text
illustrated with extensive Dormition cycles may have been
available to English artists at least from the end of the
7th century in Northumbria and later in the south. In a
small way this gives us a clearer idea of the kind of Early
Christian illuminated manuscripts which were circulating be-
tween English libraries. We know that in the 11th and 12th
centuries artists in England had recourse to Late Antique and
Early Christian models of the Old Testament, since iconogra-
phic features in the *Aelfric Pentateuch, St. Albans Psalter*
and *Lambeth Bible* scenes of Genesis have been shown by Dod-
well, Pächt and others to depend on a *Cotton Genesis* recen-
sion.[16] Swarzenski also has noted that it is possible that
the miniatures in the *Gospels of St. Augustine* (Cambridge,
C.C.C.MS 286) are English copies made in the 8th century of
Late Antique miniatures which had found their way to England.[17]
Similarly, supposing that an early illustrated *Transitus*
manuscript did exist, one may conclude that the Apocryphal
Gospels as well as the Scriptures were subjects for illumi-
nation in the Early Christian period. In its wider impli-
cations, the pictorial tradition to which the Virgin cycle in

the *York Psalter* attaches itself, is of very respectable an-
cestry and extends its significance beyond the orbit of Eng-
lish art.

In this last Chapter, I have outlined other aspects
of Anglo-Saxon iconography in the *York Psalter* miniatures such
as the new type of English Ascension, the characteristic de-
vil and the round hat tradition for depicting Jews. One
could argue that these features recur generally in 12th cen-
tury English illumination and are not confined solely to the
York Psalter, but their combination with a Virgin cycle of
Anglo-Saxon ancestry suggests more than coincidence. The re-
vival of indigenous iconography in an important manuscript
from a northern scriptorium may also be due to a resurgence
of national sentiment in the north after the Conquest. This
is consideration properly belonging in another thesis. How-
ever it is not unreasonable to suggest that in view of its
political history of rebellion and independence from the 7th
and 8th century uprisings by the kings of Northumbria[18] to
the troublesome period following the Norman takeover, the
north country traditionally exerted an individual character.
Such quality is consistent with the particularly English as-
pects of the iconography of the *York Psalter*. Perhaps in
their appreciation and preservation of insular traditions,
these miniatures may express in patriotic terms the inclina-
tion to avoid imported influences.

The abundance of Marian imagery in the *York Psalter* is justified also by an explanation of larger implications: contemporary religious sentiment. The emotion and intellectual stimuli behind the Virgin cycle in the wider sense must be attributed to the ever-increasing worship of Mary, venerated not only in religious literature and art, but by immense popular devotion in England and on the Continent. That England's contribution played a major role in the advancement and propagation of the cult is widely acknowledged. Already by the 9th century, the Feast of the Assumption had been instituted as a holiday according to the laws of Alfred and Lanfranc later recognized it as one of the five principal festivals in the liturgical calendar. The chief promoters of the cult in the 12th century included the elder Anselm's biographer and devoted English disciple, Eadmer (d. 1124), the great Cistercian spiritual leader of Yorkshire, Ailred of Rievaulx (d.1167), Osbert of Clare, the English prior at Westminster (1127-1128), and the younger Anselm, Abbot of Bury St. Edmonds, 1121-1148.[19] Southern has identified this Anselm as the one responsible for copying and popularizing a collection of the *Miracles of the Virgin*, which was to be a major catalyst in the dissemination of popular veneration.[20] Anselm is noted too for his efforts to reinstate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception at Bury. This Feast, unknown to the Normans, had been generally abolished after the Conquest and its reintroduction at Bury St. Edmonds

and in several other monasteries was the subject of intense
disputes.[21] This friction and the related controversy sur-
rounding the question of the bodily Assumption must have
created an atmosphere suitable for advanced iconographic
innovations. In this setting of provocative intellectual
conditions, the early appearance of new iconographic for-
mulas in English art in advance of Continental develop-
ments--such as the actual Coronation of the Virgin which
Zarnecki has identified at Reading--should not be surpri-
sing.

Under the compelling surge of the cult of the
Virgin, the unique Marian cycle in the *York Psalter* also
mirrors this creative environment. By its preservation of
indigenous iconography, one might say that in these minia-
tures there is revival of a special form of insular piety.
Of such northern spiritual atmosphere, Knowles has com-
mented that it was to remain a different thing from the
religious sentiment of the south[23] and William of Malmes-
bury also has given us an evocative description of the
special temper of northern devotion. There is thus some
satisfaction in observing that although the northern heri-
tage of the *York Psalter* is distant by centuries, the
present-day guardian of the manuscript remains in the
north.

[1]C.M. Kauffmann, *Romanesque Manuscripts 1066-1190* (London: Harvey Miller, 1973), p.118, cites the literature and exhibitions to 1973 on the *York Psalter*. See also Olav Sinding, *Mariae Tod und Himmelfahrt,* (Christiania, 1903) pp.88-9; Robert Deshman, *The Iconography of the Full Page Miniatures of the Benedictional of Ethelwold*, (Princeton: University Press, 1970 Unpublished Ph.D. dissertaion) p.102, n.76.

[2]Margaret Rickert, *Painting in Britain: The Middle Ages* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1954), p.98 . Eric G. Millar, *La Miniature anglaise du Xe au XIIIe siècle.* (Paris: G. van Oest, 1926), p.41f., pl.60f.

[3]J.Young and P.H.Aitken, *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of the Hunterian Museum in the University of Glasgow.* (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1908) no.229.

[4]Kauffmann *Romanesque Manuscripts*, No.95 pp.117-8.

[5]*Ibid.,* and my own measurements of the manuscript concur.

[6]T.S.R. Boase, *The York Psalter*, (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1962), p. 5.

[7]*Ibid.,* and T.S.R.Boase, *English Art 1100-1216*. History of English Art Series, ed.T.S.R.Boase, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), pp.242.

[8]Carl Nordenfalk, *Romanesque Painting from the Eleventh to the Thirteenth Century.* (Lausanne: Skira, 1958) p.172 notes: "There is no question that England played a decisive part in the creation of the de luxe Psalter for private use, and we need not be surprised at the fact that . . . the calendar saints in the Psalter of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem . . . derive from an English prototype."

[9]Meyer Schapiro, "The Image of the Disappearing Christ. The Ascension in English Art around the year 1000", *Gazette des Beaux arts*, 1943, p.148: "Where artists of the preceding period and throughout the XII and XIII centuries, with few exceptions, represent the months by a single figure. . . in English calendars of the early XI century. . . whole groups of cooperating figures (sometimes as many as five or six), are introduced." Another example would be British Museum MS. Julius A.VI: see Nordenfalk, *Early Medieval Painting from the Fourth to the Eleventh Century (Skira, 1957), p.191.

[10]See Otto Pächt's magisterial study on this key manuscript, *The St. Albans Psalter*, (London: Warburg Institute, 1960). The dating used for this work and others follows Kauffmann's *Romanesque Manuscripts* .

[11]See Kauffmann, *Romanesque Manuscripts,* Nos. 56, 35, 70, 78.

[12]Pächt, *op.cit.,* pp. 105-114.

[13]Nor do the initials show fine spirals and tiny white beasts, which Kauffmann notes came into prominence in the 1170's and which appear in the *Copenhagen Psalter. Romanesque Manuscripts,* p.118. Boase, *York Psalter,* p.243.

[14]The secular feature of an animal playing a musical instrument is paralleled in the Sigena wall-paintings, *ca* 1170, which were supposedly painted by English artists who were in part responsible for the miniatures of the *Winchester Bible.* Though this is not necessarily a sign of direct influence, it demonstrates the wide range of contact available to travel-ling English painters and also the directions in which popular motifs could journey. Otto Pächt first noticed the coinci-dence in "A Cycle of English Frescoes in Spain", *Burlington Magazine,* May, 1969, pp.166-175.

[15]Francis Wormald, "The Development of English Illumi-nation in the Twelfth Century", *Journal of the British Archeo-logical Association,* 3rd. series, VIII, 1943, p.44.

[16]Kauffmann, *Romanesque Manuscripts,* p.45f. Nordenfalk, *Romanesque Painting,* pp.170-171.

[17]Pächt, *op.cit.,* pp.51-53.

[18]*Ibid.,* p.53.

[19]Francis Wormald, "An English Eleventh-Century Psalter with Pictures: British Museum Cotton MS Tiberius C.VI", *The Walpole Society,* 38, 1960-62, p.1f.

[20]Boase, *The York Psalter,* p.6; Kauffmann, *Romanesque Manuscripts,* p.118 and p.31f. On the Four Leaves see Kauffmann, *Romanesque Manuscripts,* No. 66 and M.R.James, "Four Leaves of an English Psalter 12th Century", *Walpole Society,* No. XXV (1937) 1-23.

[21]George Zarnecki, *Later English Romanesque Sculpture, 1140-1210,* (London: Alec Tiranti Ltd., 1953), pp.34-38.Boase, *York Psalter,* p.241.
[22]Kauffmann, *Romanesque Manuscripts,* Nos. 96; also M.Mackeprang, V.Madsen, C.S. Petersen, *Greek and Latin Manu-scripts in Danish Collections* (1921), pp. 32-42, Pl.48-60. Neither Calendar of the *York Psalter* or the *Copenhagen Psalter* has an entry for Thomas Becket whose murder in December, 1170, led to his widespread cult in the years shortly afterwards. This omission has been interpreted by Boase and others to mean that these psalters were likely completed by 1170 or by 1173 when Becket was canonized.

[23]Kauffmann, *Romanesque Manuscripts,* Nos. 94, 97.Boase, *York Psalter,* p.244-245.

[24]Boase, *York Psalter,* p.5; Young and Aitken, *Catalogue,* p.174.

[25]Francis Wormald, *The Winchester Psalter* (London: Harvey Miller & Medcalf Ltd., 1973) reproduces pages from this psalter's Calendar. See pp.111 and 116.

[26]Boase, *English Art,* p.242.

[27]Kauffmann, *Romanesque Manuscripts,* p.118.

[28]Boase, *York Psalter,* p.5. The manuscript is sometimes referred to as the Glasgow Psalter, see O.E.Saunders, *A History of English Art in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932), p.58f.

[29]Boase, *York Psalter,* pp.5-6.

[30]William Page, ed. *The Victoria History of the Counties of England. A History of Yorkshire* (London: Constable & Company, 1913) v.3, p.17f. Also J.Raine, *Historians of the Church of York and its Archbishops* (Rolls Series 71) I (1879), II (1886), III (1894); George Benson, *Later Medieval York: The City and County of the City of York from 1100 to 1603* (Wakefield, Yorksh: S.R.Publishers Ltd., 1968).

[31]David Talbot Rice, *The Byzantine Element in Late Saxon Art* (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), pp.7-8. John Beckwith, *Ivory Carvings in Early Medieval England,* (London: Harvey Miller & Medcalf Ltd., 1972), p.91, assigns a date not later than the 12th century. See also Eric Mac-Lagen "A Romanesque Relief in York Minster", *Proceedings of the British Academy,* X, 1921-1923, 479-485.

[32]Boase, *English Art,* p.241. Also Renee Marcouse *Figure Sculpture in St. Mary's Abbey, York.* (York: Yorkshire Philosophical Society, 1951).

[33]W.R. Lethaby, "Archbishop Roger's Cathedral at York and Its Stained Glass", *Archeological Journal* LXXII (1915)p.42.

[34]Eric Millar, "Fresh Materials for the Study of English Illumination", *Studies in Arts and Literature from Belle da Costa Greene* Edited by Dorothy Miner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954), p. 290.

[35]*V.C.H. A History of Yorkshire*, p.6f. Also see The Rev. G.F. Browne, *Alcuin of York* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1908), p.84: ". . . Alcuin suceeded Albert in the mastership of the School of York and in the ownership of the great library. . . . Alcuin tells us that it contained all Latin literature, all that Greece had handed on to the Romans, all that the Hebrew people had received from on high. . .and had works of the learned men of the English Church such as Aldhelm of Malmesbury, and Bede. . . ."

[36]M. R. James, *The Catalogue of the Library of the Augustinian Friars at York now first Edited from the Manuscript at Trinity College, Dublin.* (Cantabrigiae: Ioanni Willis Clark, 1909), p.16. Of interest in James' list is No. 609 *Item tractatus beati Augustini de Assumptione beatae Virginis.*

[37]Zarnecki, *Romanesque Sculpture in England* pp.47-48.

[38]Otto Lehmann-Brockhaus, *Lateinische Schriftquellen Zur Kunst in England, Wales und Schottland vom Jahre 901 bis zum Jahre 1307. Band I.* (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 1955), p.114, "No.418) *Cartularium abbathiae de Whiteby ord. S. Benedicti, vol.2 Nr.639, p.688: Iste Gilbertus de Gant . . . fundavit monasterium canonicorum de Bridlington in honore s.Mariae.* ca a.1113."

[39]D.Knowles and R.N.Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses England and Wales* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1953), p. 129. Also see Dugdale, *Monasticum Anglicanum,* VI,col.234.

[40]Zarnecki, *Romanesque Sculpture,* p.47.

[41]*Ibid.,* p.48.

[42]*Ibid.*

[43]Boase, *The York Psalter,* p.5.

[44]*Winchester Psalter* (British Museum Cotton MS Nero C.iv, folio 29; Psalter from Bury St. Edmonds (formerly of the Dyson Perrins Collection) No. 55 in *Catalogue of Forty-Six Western and Oriental Illuminated Manuscripts* (London: Sotheby & Co., 1959), folio 92b.

[45]Millar, E.G. *La miniature anglaise,* p.49.

[46]E. Saunders, *English Illumination* I (Florence &
Munich, 1928) n.1, p.41.   Saunders also identifies as a
Death of the Virgin the representation in the large initial
'E' in the St. Jerome on Isaiah manuscript in the Bodleian
Library (Bodl.MS. Bodley 717).   According to Boase this is
incorrect since he attributes the subject to the burial of
Paula, to whose death Jerome refers in his introduction.   Ab-
ove Paula sits the Virgin, carrying the 'virga', Isaiah's
'shoot out of the seed of Jesse', enthroned between Jerome
and Isaiah. See Boase, *English Art*, p.29, pl.5a.

Fig. i

Burial of Paula. Initial E. Bodl.717, folio 6v (Boase,
pl.5a)

[47]E. Saunders, *A History of English Art,* pp.57-58.

[48]Walter Oakeshott, *Sigena:Romanesque Paintings in
Spain and the Winchester Bible Artists.* (London: Harvey Mil-
ler & Medcalf Ltd., 1972), p.79.

[49]O.Sinding, *Mariae Tod und Himmelfahrt,* (Christiania,
1903); K. Künstle, *Ikonographie der Christlichen Kunst* (Frei-
burg, 1928) I, pp. 564-567; H. Feldbusch, *Die Himmelfahrt
Mariä (Tukas-Bücherei zur Christlichen Ikonographie, Band II)*
(Düsseldorf, L.Schwann, 1951) pp. XII-XVIII; Jos. Hecht, "Die
frühesten Darstellungen der Himmelfahrt Mariens", *Das Münster*
IV, 1951, 1-12. See also biblio. for K.Wessel and G.Schiller.

[50]Boase, *York Psalter,* pp.9-11 and 13-14.

[51]Robert Deshman, *Iconography,* p.102, n.76.

30-a.
See Also J.Beckwith, *Ivory Carvings,* p.13f and especially
p.58f., for description of early York as cultural center of the
north. "This culture was made possible by the teaching of Theo-
dore, Hadrian, later Aldhelm, at Canterbury but in the north the
Irish monks at Lindisfarne and Benedict Biscop at Wearmouth and
Jarrow were responsible for centers of learning with important

librairies which put England in the forefront of early
medieval civilisation.", p.13.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II pages 21-59

[1] J.P.Migne, ed. *Patriologiae cursus completus. . .
Series Graeca V* (1857) 1231; C.Tischendorf, *Apocalypses
Apocryphae* (Lips: 1866) pp.124 ff and pp.95-112 for the
apocryphal book of St. John the Evangelist's description of
Mary's assumption. Translations of the *Transitus* text and
comments on its various recensions, see: M.R. James, *The Apo-
cryphal New Testament* (1924), pp.209-216. See also Assump-
tion article in *A Catholic Dictionary of Theology I*, 170-179
with extensive bibliography.

[2] The Rev. R.Morris, ed. *The Blickling Homilies of the
Tenth Century* (London: Early English Text Society, 1880),
136-151. The manuscript was then owned by the Marquis of Lothian.

[3] G. Henderson, *Gothic* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Pen-
guin Books Ltd., 1967) p.74 pl.32.

[4] Olav Sinding, *Mariae Tod und Himmelfahrt*, p.89, first
noticed this. I am grateful to Dr. Mary Morehart for assist-
ance in the German translation.

[5] *A Catholic Dictionary of Theology I*, 170-179; F. L.
Cross, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (London:
Oxford University Press, 1958), p.98f; F.L.Cross, *The Early
Christian Fathers* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1960)
p.75f; Hilda Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion*
(London: Sheed and Ward, 1963), p.133f.

[6] Gregory of Tours' work is in Migne, *Patriologiae. . .
Series Latina*, 71, 708B,C; R. Deshman, *Iconography*, p.100,
n.68 notes at least two Anglo-Saxon translations of an abridged
version of the recension by Gregory of Tours.

[7] M.R.James *Apocryphal*, p.216.

[8] *Ibid*.

[9] M.R. James, "Wall-Paintings in Croughton Church,
Northamptonshire, II", *Archeologia* LXXVI, 1927, 180-202. See
pp.201-202, fig.1.

[10] M.R. James, *Apocryphal*, p. 210.

[11] *Ibid*., p.211.

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[12]Adelheid Heimann, review of T.S.R. Boase, *The York Psalter, Burlington Magazine*, 105, 1963, p.222.

[13]Boase, *The York Psalter,* p.22.

[14]For examples, Figs. 33, 63, 64,65, 66, 68, 69.

[14-a] A. Stewart, trans. *Description of the Holy Land,* (Palestine Pilgrims, Text Society, 1896), p.43.

[15]M.R.James, *Apocryphal,* p.212.

[16]*Ibid.,* p.213.

[17]*Ibid.,* p.214.

[18]E.G.Millar, *The Luttrell Psalter* (London: British Museum Trustees, 1932), p.35. The death, funeral, burial and assumption of the Virgin are depicted on folios 95, 97, 98, 98b, 99, 99b, 100.

[19]James, *Apocryphal,* p.214.

[20]Boase,*The York Psalter,* p.26.

[21]Albert Boeckler, *Deutsche Buchmalerei Vorgotischer Zeit,* (Munich: Karl Robert Langewiesche, 1959), pl.48.

[22]Boase, *York Psalter,* p.26.

[23]James, *Apocryphal,* p. 215-216.

[24]Boase, *York Psalter,* p.13.

[25]Migne, *PL* 195, col.138. See also J.P.Strachey, ed. "Poem on the Assumption", *Cambridge Anglo-Norman Texts,* ed. O.H.Prior, (Cambridge: University Press, 1924) pp.13-26.

[26]Morris, *Blickling Homilies,* pp.136-151. See also R.Deshman, *Iconography,* p.100, n.68. The account of Christ's Ascension in the *Blickling Homilies* has been associated by Schapiro with the new image of the disappearing Christ in English art around 1000: "The Image of the Disappearing Christ", *Gazette des Beaux Arts* 1943, 134-152.

[27]Morris, *Ibid.*

[28]*Ibid.,* p.138.

[29]*Ibid.*

[30] James, *Apocryphal,* p.211.

[31] Morris, *Blickling Homilies,* p.144.

[32] *Ibid.*

[33] James, *Apocryphal,* p.212.

[34] Morris, *Blickling Homilies,* p.144.

[35] *Ibid.,* p.148.

[36] *Ibid.*

[37] *Ibid.,* pp. 154 and 156. See R. Willard, "On Blickling Homily XIII: The Assumption of the Virgin", *The Review of English Studies,* XII, January 1936, pp.1-17 and "The Two Accounts of the Assumption in Blickling Homily XIII", *The Review of English Studies,* XIV, January 1938, pp.1-19.

[38] Morris, *Blickling Homilies,* p.156.

[38-a] R.B. Dobson, *The Jews of Medieval York and the Massacre of March 1190,* (York: St. Anthony's Press, 1974

[39] Morris, *Blickling Homilies,* p.148.

[40] See M.R.James, *Apocryphal,* pp.209-216 for other versions.

[41] Boase, *The York Psalter,* p.24.

[42] Morris, *Blickling Homilies,* p. 152.

[43] Boase, *The York Psalter,* pp.9-16.

[44] *Ibid.,* p.10.

[45] *Ibid.*

[46] See Ruth J. Dean, "Elizabeth, Abbess of Schönau, and Roger of Ford", *Modern Philology,* XLI, May 1944, 209-220; J.P.Strachey, *op.cit.,* n.25; Ruth J.Dean, "Manuscripts of Elizabeth of Schönau in England", *Modern Language Review,* XXXII (1937) 62-71; H. Talbot, "The Verses of Roger of Ford on our Lady", *Collectanea ord. cisterciensium reformatorum,* VI (1939), 44-54.

[47] Boase, *The York Psalter,* p.10.

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48
For MS 149 see H.O.Coxe, *Catalogus Codicum Manuscriptorum qui in collegiis aulisque Oxoniensibus hodie ad servantur II* (Oxford, 1852), 45-46.

49 Boase, *York Psalter*, p.13.

50 *Ibid.*, p.10.

51 Bede, *A History of the English Church and People*, (Trans. by Leo Sherley-Price, Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1970), Book Four, Chapter 9, pp.220-221.

52 Otto Pächt, *The St.Albans Psalter*, p.72-73 and p.72,n.7.

53 A.Heimann, *op.cit.*, p?222.

54 evidence that the motif was used in representations of secular burials, also see below.

55 See Francis Wormald, "Continental Influence on English Medieval Illumination", *Transactions of the International Congress of Bibliophiles, London 1965* (London: 1967), pp.4-5: ". . . your attention is drawn to Cotton MS Claudius B.iv in the British Museum. This is an eleventh-century copy of the Pentateuch and Joshua in Old English belonging once to . . . Canterbury. In it there is a large number of illustrations telling the story of the Old Testament. . . In one scene, f.72b, of the burial of Joseph, the corpse is wrapped up like a cocoon which on closer inspection bears astrong resemblence to a mummy case."

56 Arthur Watson, *The Early Iconography of the Tree of Jesse* (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), especially Ch.VII.

57 D.H. Turner, "The Last Phase of Romanesque", *Apollo* 77 Fall 1963, pp.150-151.

58 Lethaby, *op.cit.*, p.42 f.

59 Augusta S. Tavender, "Mediaeval English Alabasters in American Museums, II", Speculum, XXXIV no.3 July 1959, p.437

*54 cont'd. The motif is found also on folio 18, The Burial of Edmund, Pierpont Morgan MS 736 (New York), illustrated on Pl.21 of MA thesis: *The Pierpont Morgan Life and Miracles of St. Edmund: Some observations on the content and style of its Illuminated Miniatures*, by Pamela Fraser, UBC, September 1978.

[1]F. Cabrol, "L'Assomption dans l'art", *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, ed. R. Leclerq (Paris: 1947), 2989, 2990, fig. 1025. This attribution is disputed by Sinding and James, (Tristram & James, 1927).

[2]l'Abbé E.Chartraire, "Une représentation de l'assomption de la très sainte Vierge au VIII siècle", *Revue de l'Art Chrétien*, 40, 1897, pp.227-229.

[3]Jacqueline Lafontaine, *Peintures Mediévales dans le Temple dit de la Fortune Virile à Rome.(Etudes de Philologie, d'archéologie et d'histoire anciennes, Tome VI*, Brussels, Ravenstein, 1959), pp.28-35.

[4]Kurt Weitzmann, *Catalogue of the Byzantine and Early Medieval Antiquities in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection III* (Washington, 1972), p.71.

[5]See also the following representations of the Koimesis: Steatite plaque, late 10th, early 11th century (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Mus.), Weitzmann, *ibid*.fig. 197, showing the soul as a completely wrapped figure; mosaic, middle of the 14th century (Prague: National Gallery) The Bohemian Master, (Demus, *Byzantine Art and the West*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970, fig.154); wall-painting, *ca* 1320, Church of the Annunciation, Gracanica, Yugoslavia (Schug-Wille, *Art of the Byzantine World*, New York: Harry N.Abrams Inc., 1969) il-. lustrated on p.219; ivory from the end of the 10th century (Darmstadt, Hessische Landesmuseum S.6 (H.Feldbusch, *Die Himmelfahrt*, pl.2) my fig.ii, p.117.

[6]J.J.G. Alexander, *Norman Illumination at Mont St. Michel 966-1100* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), pp. 155ff. See also V.Léroquais, *Les Psautiers Manuscrits Latins des Bibliothèques publiques de France, Tome I* (Macon: Protat Frères, 1940-41) Pl. XLVII The Death and Coronation of the Virgin (Paris: Bibl.nat.MS lat.238, fol.62v) late 12th century, which depicts the soul as a small, naked female form.

[7]H.Graef, *Mary:A History*, p.178 f.

[8]*Ibid*.p. 222-249. See also Valerie I.J. Flint, "The Commentaries of Honorius Augustodunensis on the Song of Songs", *Revue Benedictine,* 84, 1914, pp.196-211.

[9]Boase, *York Psalter*, p.12; Louis Réau, *Iconographie de l'art Chrétien*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1957, II, 597-635.

[10]Boase, *York Psalter*, p.12.

[11] *Ibid.;* Réau, *Iconographie,* fig. 41.

[12] Boase, *York Psalter,* p. 11.

[13] F. Wormald, *The Winchester Psalter* (London: Harvey Medcalf Ltd., 1973), pp. 87-90, ""How then are these two miniatures to be explained? They are not additions and are clearly contemporary with the rest of the full-page miniatures. . . The situation has now somewhat altered by the discovery of a large number of icons preserved in the monastery of St. Catharine on Mount Sinaï . . . . Some of these icons were produced in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem and Weitzmann has published one icon which is almost certainly by an English artist (see Wormald fig.91). If an English icon could find its way to Mount Sinaï it is equally possible for a Byzantine diptych to find its way to Winchester and to be copied there. Historically this would be perfectly possible, particularly at Winchester where the bishop, Henry de Blois, was a well known collector of curiosities and antiques."

[14] O. Demus, *Byzantine Art and the West,* p.158ff, Demus fig. 10.

[15] See note 44, p.103; note 18, p.106. Also M.R. James, "Wall-paintings in Croughton Church, Northamptonshire", Part II, *Archeologia,* LXXVI, 1927, pp.202-204. *

[16] *Ibid.,* p.185f.

[17] O.Sinding, *Mariae Tod und Himmelfahrt,* p.68-69. Also p.114, n.224: "Ed.Geyer o.a. St.Pag.309, where however Bede's drawing is not reproduced. This is shown in Mommert: Die Dormitio, u.s.w. Leipzig, 1899, S.91; and in the Society of German Palestinians, 1831". See Jack Finegan, *The Archeology of the New Testament: The Life of Jesus and the Beginning of the Early Church,* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969), p.106, quotes Theodosius (530) who describes the Valley of Jehoshaphat as ". . . where Judas betrayed the Lord and also that there is there a church of St. Mary the Mother of the Lord (*ecclesia dominae Mariae Matris Domini*)."; p.xviii cites Bede's *Liber de Locis Sanctis* as the standard guidebook to the holy places for pilgrims of the Middle Ages: *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* vol. 38, ed. P.Geyer, (Vienna, 1938), *Itinera Hierosolymitana Saeculi iiii-viii.*

[18] Sinding, *Mariae Tod und Himmelfahrt,* p.69.

[19] *Ibid.*

* *On* the so-called Bury Psalter, see also the *Descriptive Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts in the Library of Charles William Dyson Perrins,* 2 vols. (Oxford: University

Press, 1920).

[20]Denis Meehan, ed. *Adamnan's De Locis Sanctis.* *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* Vol. III (Dublin: The Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1958) p.43f. Also see J.Finegan, *The Archeology*, p.xviii and P.Geyer, *CSEL:* (38) *Adamnai de locis sanctis libri tres*, pp.219-297 and *Bedae liber de locis sanctis*, pp.299-321.

[21]D.Meehan, *Adamnan's*, p.3 and J.Finegan, *The Archeology*, xviii. Peter H.Blair, *Northumbria in the Days of Bede* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1976) also discusses the association between Arculf, Adamnan and Bede in Chapters 2 and 3.

[22]Meehan, *Adamnan's*, opposite p.47.

[23]*Ibid.*, p.3-5.

[24]C.Plummer, ed., *Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica, Historia Abbatum*, 6, (Oxford: 1896) I, p.369.

[25]R.Willard, "On Blickling Homily XIII" *R.E.S.* 1936, pp.2-5. Also G.F.Browne, *Alcuin of York*, p.84.

[26]Betty Kurth, "The Iconography of the Wirksworth Slab", *Burlington Magazine*, LXXXVI (April 1945), 114-121

[27]*Ibid.*, p.121.

[28]R. Deshman, *Iconography*, pp.83-89.

[29]*Ibid.*, p.89. See also Elżbieta Temple, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts 900-1066* (London: Harvey Miller, 1976)pp. 51-53.

[30]R. Deshman, *Iconography*, pp.88-91. On another English Coronation, see George Zarnecki, "The Coronation of the Virgin on a Capital from Reading Abbey", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 13 (1950) pp.1-12.

[31]A. Goldschmidt, "English Influence on Medieval Art of the Continent", *Medieval Studies in Memory of A.Kingsley Porter*, II (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1939), p.719.

[32]W.Page, ed. *A History of Yorkshire* and *A History of York (The Victoria Histories of the Counties of England)*, vols. III, IV, Vol.III: p.6, 396.

NOTES for pages 60-84.

[33]*Ibid.*

[34]Ernst Kitzinger, "The Coffin-Reliquary", p.264.

[35]See J. Beckwith, *Ivory Carving in Early Medieaval England* (London: Harvey Miller & Medcalf, 1972) nos. 15, 24, 40.

[36]The Rev. T.E. Bridgett, *Our Lady's Dowry, or How England gained and lost that Title* (London: Burns and Oates, 1875), Ch. 1.

[37]Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors, editors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p.399. This was first brought to my attention by Doreen Nalos.

[38]H. Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England* (London: B.T.Batsford, 1972), p.186-190.

[39]*Ibid.*, p.189.

[40]Carl Nordenfalk, *Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Painting* (London: Chatto and Windus Ltd., 1977), p.116. For additional discussion on early Marian devotions in England, see Graef, *Mary:A History*, Ch.4, pp.162-165, 172-174.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV   pages 85-99

[1]D.H. Turner, "The Last Phase of Romanesque", p.151, suggests a different attribution for folio 13v (see below, note 3); Boase, *The York Psalter,* points out the unusual features of some of the miniatures such as the naked Isaac in folio 9v, but makes no attempt to analyze the iconography in detail; Kauffmann, *Romanesque Manuscripts*, pp.118-119. As far as I know, the iconography of the entire cycle has never been published, although a Ph.D. dissertation in progress (brought to my notice by Dr. Mary Morehart) may prove of interest: Jane Heatherington Brown, "The York Psalter: a Codicological, Paleographical, and Art Historical Study". University of North Carolina, *Art Journal,* Spring 1979.

A key aspect of the pictorial cycle is its incomplete state. The thirteen full-page miniatures are on facing pages, and each pair of pictures is followed by a pair of blank pages. I have indicated this in the sequence of illustrations for this thesis. I include here the collation of the illustrated folios in order to show the struc-

ture of each gathering, since this would have bearing on the decoration of both the blanks and the cycle as a whole. For example, the Assumption of the Virgin is on folio 19v, the left side of the folio, and it faces a blank page on the right, numbered as folio 20r. One would expect to see on this blank page a miniature of the Coronation, given the emphasis on the Virgin in the psalter and the appearance of the subject in other English psalters, e.g. the *Winchester Psalter*. This suggestion would be plausible for the companion blank facing the Assumption folio as well as the next following blank (20v) are all leaves contained in the fifth gathering. The new sixth gathering begins only at folio 21r, also blank, followed by the scene overleaf of David Harping. One could thus conceivably argue that the Virgin cycle did not end with the scene of the Assumption and probably included an additional miniature of the Coronation, or Virgin Enthroned.

The stitching appears to be untampered (from my own obervation), and thus the collation for the miniatures runs as follows:

Second gathering:	four leaves	2:1/1v	2/2v 3/3v	4/4v
Third gathering:	two leaves	3:1/1v	2/2v	
Fourth gathering:	four leaves	4:1/1v	2/2v 3/3v	4/4v
Fifth gathering:	four leaves	5:1/1v	2/2v 3/3v	4/4v
Sixth gathering:	two leaves	6:1/1v	2/2v and continuing.	

This corresponds to the handwritten folio numbers and subjects:

Folio

7r Blank 2:1
7v Creation 2:1v
   Temptation
8v Blank 2:2v
9v Sacrifice 2:3v
10v Blank 2:4v
11v Temptation 3:1v
    Lazarus
12v Blank 3:2v
13v Incredulity 4:1v
    Christ on Water
14v Blank 4:2v
15v Pentecost 4:3v
16v Blank 4:4v
17v Announcement-Death 5:1v
18v Blank 5:2v
19v Assumption 5:3v
20v Blank 5:4v
21v David 6:1v

Folio

8r Expulsion 2:2 (second gathering)
   Labour
9r Blank 2:3
10r Blank 2:4
11r Blank 3:1 (third gathering)
12r Emmaus 3:2
    Christ's Appearance
13r Blank 4:1 (fourth gathering)
14r Ascension 4:2

15r Blank 4:3r
16r Christ in Majesty 4:4
17r Blank 5:1 (fifth gathering)
18r Death 5:2
19r Blank 5:3
20r Blank 5:4
21r Blank 6:1 (sixth gathering)
22r Beatus 6:2r

Also to note from the structure of the third gathering is
the fact that it contains only two leaves, whereas the oth-
ers have four leaves of illustrations. This suggests, (and
Kauffmann, p.118, has noted this also) that two leaves may
be missing. Such an omission may explain the lack of any
scenes between the Raising of Lazarus (folio 11v) and the
Emmaus miniature (folio 12r), where normally one would ex-
pect to see scenes from the Passion.

[2]Kauffmann, *Romanesque Manuscripts*, p.119.

[3]In folio 13v of the *York Psalter*, Christ on the
right stands upon the surface of the water and reaches with
his right hand to Peter, who is naked and half-submerged.
On the left, six apostles in a boat turn their heads (saving
one man who stares ahead) toward the event. The scene has
been identified by Boase, *(The York Psalter*, Plate 3)as Christ
Saves St. Peter upon the Waters, according to the text in
Matthew 14:22-31. This identification however creates a chro-
nological confusion, since the scene of the Doubting Thomas
in the upper register is an event which occurs after the
Resurrection, and Christ saves Peter before the Passion.
Surely the artist would not have combined models in such a
way. For Boase there seems to be no clear explanation for
the out-of-order scene, unless the common theme of lack of
faith on the part of an apostle is the link between them.
However, Turner ("The Last Phase of Romanesque", p.151) sug-
gests that the scene is in fact the appearance of Christ at
Tiberias. Although based pictorially on a representation of
Christ saving Peter, the subject is meant to show Peter
swimming to his risen Lord on the shore of the sea of Tiber-
ias, according to John 21:4-8. Thus there would be no chro-
nological break between this scene and the one of the doubt-
ing Thomas above it. And though Christ at Tiberias is an
unusual Post-Resurrection subject, two previous instances in
English art may be cited: Pembroke College MS 120, folio 31b
(where Peter is described as being half-naked:see M.R.James,
*A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of
Pembroke College, Cambridge,* Cambridge University Press, 1905,
p.123); and the leaf in New York, MS.521 (Pierpont Morgan
Library), see M.R.James "Four Leaves", p.9 no.5b, Plate V.

At attribution of this scene to Christ at Tiberias
would also concur with vs 7 of John 21: "Therefore that disci-
ple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now
when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fish-
er's coat unto him (for he was naked), and did cast himself
into the sea." The 10th century *Egbert Codex*, folio 90, also
depicts Peter's nakedness, now covered by a coat. (see Franz
Ronig, *Codex Egberti*, Trier: Spee-Verlag, 1977, p.113.

[4]Meyer Schapiro, "The Image of the Disappearing Christ", p.134.

[5]R. Deshman, *Iconography,* p.148f.

[6]*Ibid.*

[7]*Ibid.*, p.150-152. See also Otto Pächt's discussion of the St. Albans Ascension in *The St. Albans Psalter,* p.56 and p.95.

[8]Ernst Kitzinger, "The Coffin-Reliquary", p.235f.

[9]*Ibid.*, p.234 and p.234 n.1. See also Meyer Schapiro, "Two Romanesque Drawings in Auxerre and some Iconographical Problems", *Romanesque Art,* (New York: George Braziller Inc., 1977) pp.306-327; by the same author, "The Miniatures of the Florence Diatessaron", *Art Bulletin* 55, 1975, pp.494-531; and Francis Wormald, *The Miniatures in the Gospels of St. Augustine* (Cambridge: at the University Press, 1954) pp. 7-8.

[10]J.J.G. Alexander, *Norman Illumination*, p.112.

[11]Carl Nordenfalk, *Early Medieval Painting,* pp. 190-191.

[12]Ruth Mellinkoff, "The round cap-shaped hats depicted on Jews in British Museum Cotton Claudius B.IV", *Anglo-Saxon England 2* (Cambridge: 1973), pp.155-166, especially pp.163-165.

[13]Rosemary Woolf, *The English Mystery Plays*, (London: Routledge and Kegal Paul, 1972), Ch.XII, p.160 f.

[14]Emile Mâle, *L'Art religieux du XIIe siècle en France* (Paris, 1922),p.137ff; Otto Pächt, *The St. Albans Psalter,* p.74ff.

[15]M.D.Anderson, *Drama and Imagery in English Medieval Churches,*(Cambridge: University Press, 1963), pp.152-155.

[16]C. R.Dodwell, *The Canterbury School of Illumination 1066-1200,* (Cambridge: University Press, 1954), p. 91ff; O.Pächt, *St. Albans Psalter,* pp.80-81; Rosalie B. Green, "Adam and Eve Cycle in the *Hortus Deliciarum,*" *Late Classical and Mediaeval Studies in Honor of Albert Mathias Friend,Jr.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955) pp. 112-131. A recent discussion is found in Herbert L. Kessler, *The Illustrated Bibles from Tours.* Studies in Manuscript Illumination. No. 7.(Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1977).

[17] Hans Swarzenski, "Unknown Bible Pictures by William de Brailes," *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, I, 1938, pp.55-69. See also Francis Wormald, *The Miniatures in the Gospels of St. Augustine: Corpus Cristi College MS 286* (Cambridge: University Press, 1954) p.13ff.

[18] See P.H.Blair, *Northumbria in the Days of Bede*, Chapters 1 and 2 for discussion of the activities of these warrior kings of 7th century Northumbria, as he terms them; also D.Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England:A History of its Development from the times of St. Dunstan to the Fourth Lateran Council 943-1216* (Cambridge: University Press, 1949) who describes Yorkshire as follows: "From more than one point of view the north of England was a field ready for sowing. Despite the spread of monasticism after the Conquest, it was still largely virgin soil. . . . In the north, too, the spiritual atmosphere was congenial. In the early decades of the twelfth century a renaissance, intellectual and religious, was taking place at York itself and other centres, which were at last recovering from the Scandinavian invasions and the more recent harrying of the Conqueror, and the earnest, somewhat stern northern piety. . . was to remain a different thing from the religious sentiment of the south. . . ." (p.229). That a wave of enthusiasm for native history arose in the late 11th and early 12th centuries is evident in the historical writers whose works show an increasing pride in England and its insular traditions. Ordric Vitalis, who was sent around the year 1085 to become a monk in a Norman monastery, wrote a history of Norman achievements but he wrote and thought of himself as an Englishman in exile. William of Malmesbury, whose *Gesta Regum* was written about 1125, followed Bede's example in writing history as distinct from biography or annals. Geoffrey of Monmouth, Bishop of St.Asaph, (ca 1165-75), wrote an imaginative *History of the Britons, ca* 1139, later revised in 1147, which by its tone and character encouraged a revival of English feeling. See Doris Mary Stenton, *English Society in the Early Middle Ages (1066-1307)* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1972), pp. 271-274; G.O.Sayles, *The Medieval Foundations of England,* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd.1966), Chapter XVIII.

[19] See R.W.Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1965) p.246ff; H.Graef, *Mary:A History,* pp.210-224. *p.117.

[20] R.W.Southern, "The English Origins of the 'Miracles of the Virgin'", *Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies* (London: Warburg Institute, 1958), IV, pp.176-216.

[21] A. Gasquet and E. Bishop, *The Bosworth Psalter* (London: G.Bell, 1908), pp.47-51; D. Knowles, *The Monastic Order,* pp. 510-513.

[22]George Zarnecki, "The Coronation of the Virgin",
p.12.

[23]David Knowles, *The Monastic Order*, p.229.

[*]See also A. Gasquet and E. Bishop, *The Bos-
worth Psalter*, p.72-73.

Fig.ii Koimesis. Ivory, end of the 10th century
(Darmstadt: Hessische Landesmuseum S.6)
(Feldbusch, Pl.2)

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ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1   January: Plowing. Detail from Calendar
Page. British Museum Cotton MS Tiberius
B.v, folio 3.
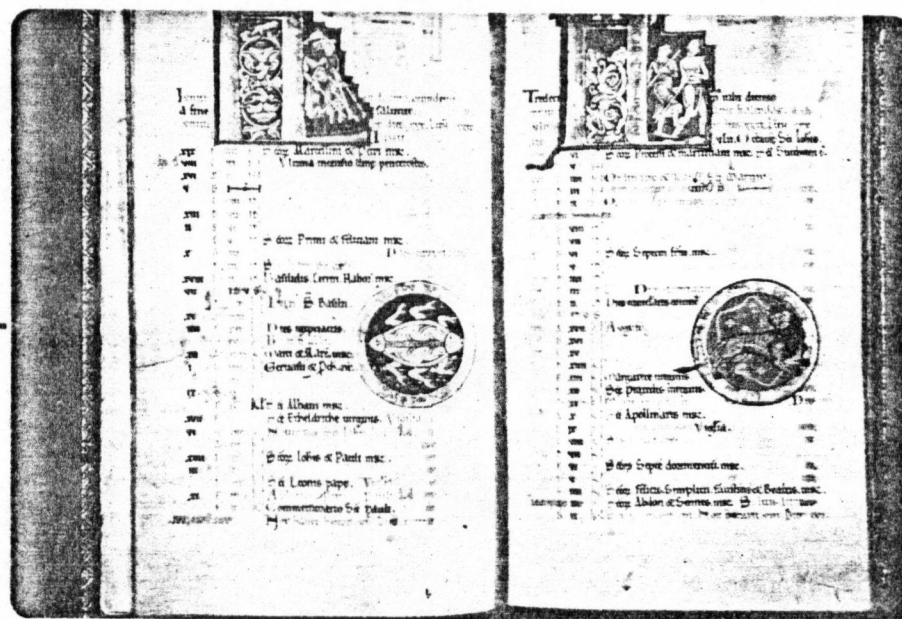
Fig. 2   June: Pruning. July: Mowing. Calendar
Pages. Glasgow: Univ.Libr. MS U.3.2.
Folios 3v, 4.

Photos from slides: UBC
Slide Library

Fig. 3 Glasgow, Univ.Libr. MS U.3.2.
Folio 1   January: Feasting

Fig. 4 Glasgow, Univ.Libr. MS U.3.2
Folio 1v February: Warming before
a Fire

Photos from slides: UBC Slide Library

Fig. 5 Glasgow, Univ. Libr. MS U.3.2.
        Folio 2 March:Digging

Fig. 6 Glasgow, Univ.Libr.MS U.3.2
       Folio 2v April: Lovemaking

Photos from slides: UBC Slide Library

Fig. 7   Glasgow, Univ.Libr.MS U.3.2.
Folio 3 May: Hawking

Fig. 8 Glasgow, Univ.Libr.MS U.3.2
Folio 3v June: Pruning

Photos from slides: UBC Slide
Library

Fig. 9   Glasgow, Univ.Libr.MS U.3.2.
Folio 4 July: Mowing

Fig.10 Glasgow, Univ.Libr.MS U.3.2
Folio 4v August: Reaping

Photos from slides: UBC Slide Library

Fig.11 Glasgow, Univ.Libr.MS U.3.2
       Folio 5 September: Gathering
       Grapes

Fig.12 Glasgow, Univ.Libr.MS U.3.2
       Folio 5v October: Treading
       Grapes

Photos from slides: UBC Slide
                    Library

Fig. 13 Glasgow, Univ.Libr.MS U.3.2
Folio 6 November: Gathering Acorns
for Hogs

Fig.14 Glasgow, Univ.Libr. MS U.3.2
Folio 6v December: Killing Hogs

Photos from slides: UBC Slide Library
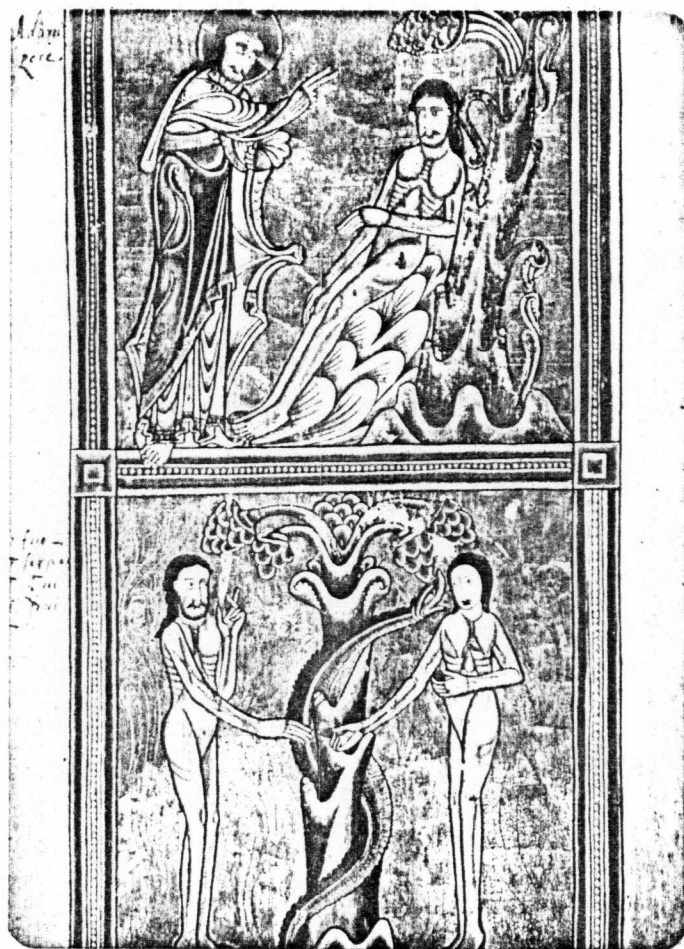
Fig. 15 Glasgow, Univ.Libr.MS U.3.2
Folio 7v Creation of Adam;
The Temptation (2:1v)
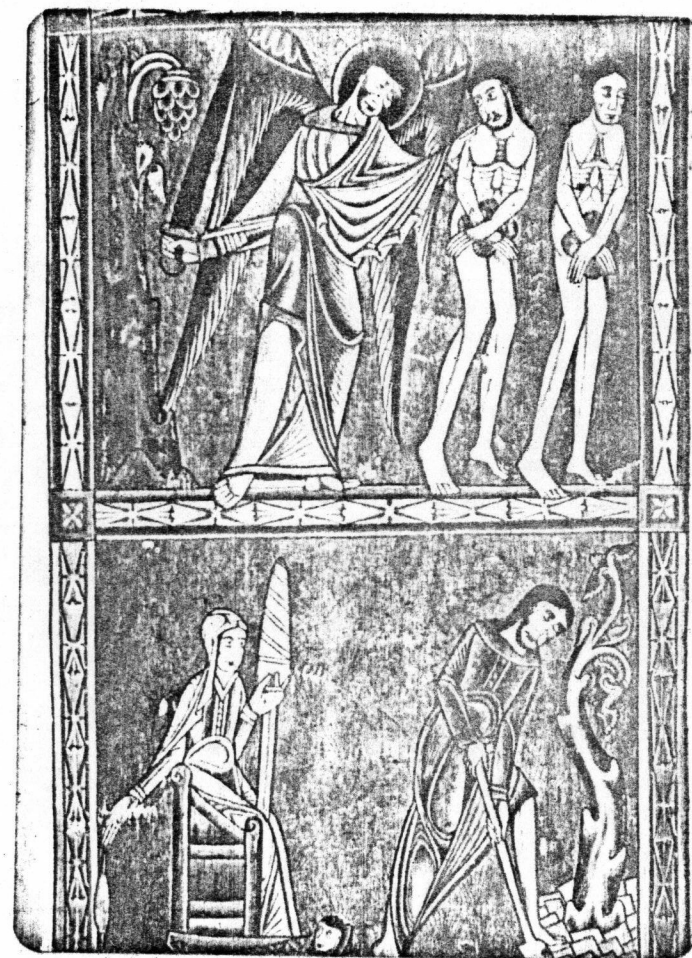
Fig. 16 Glasgow, Univ.Libr. MS U.3.2
Folio 8 Expulsion from Paradise;
Adam digging, Eve Spinning (2:2r)

Photos from slides: UBC Slide Library
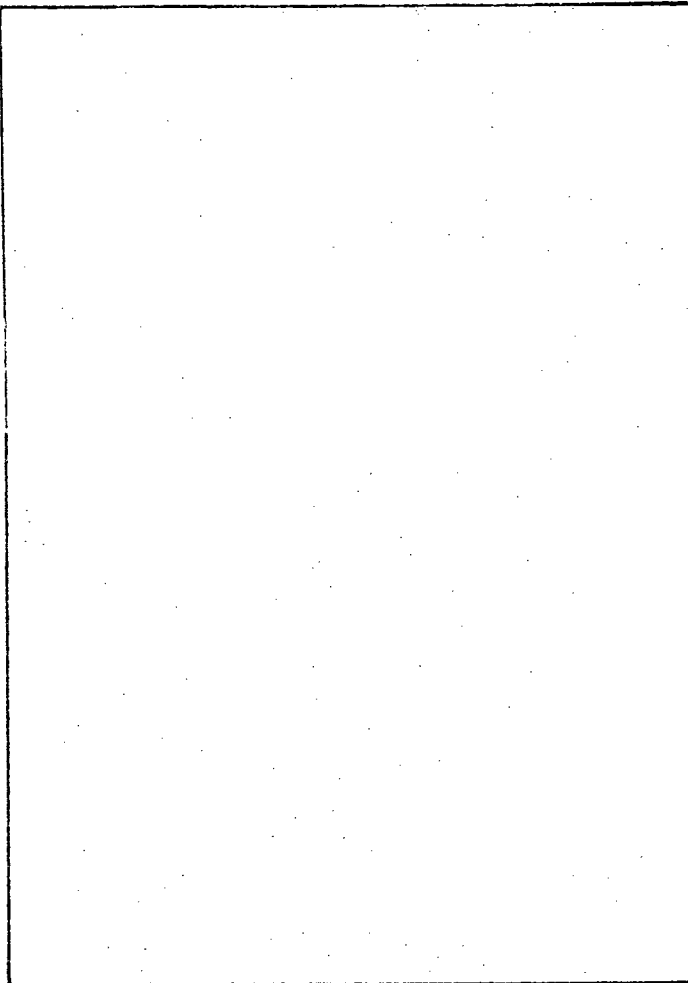
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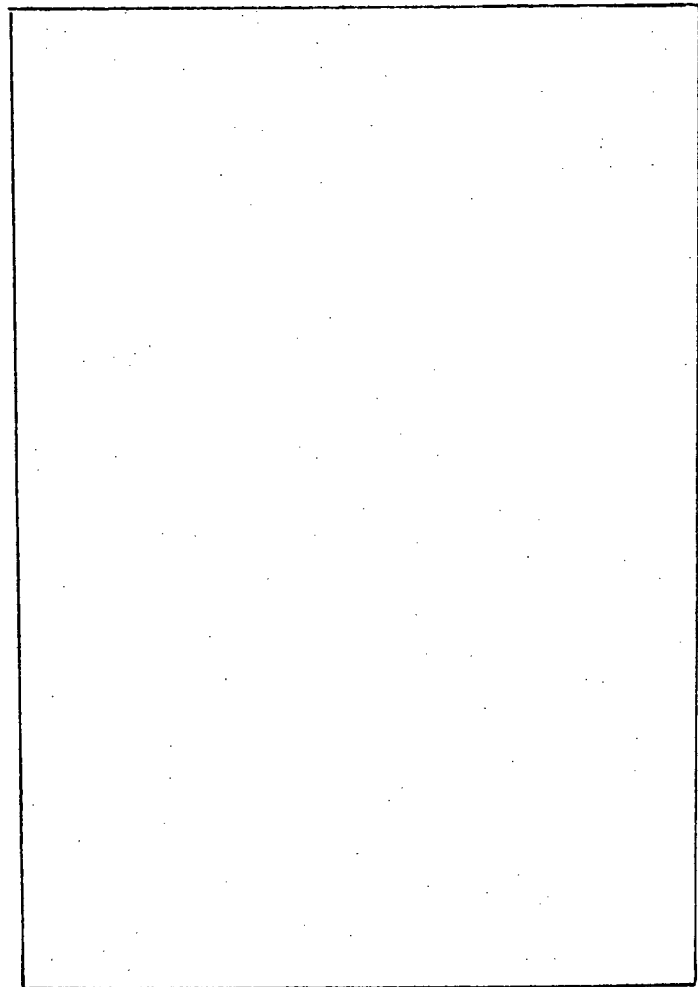
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Fig. 17   Glasgow, Univ. Libr. MS.U.3.2.
           Folio 9v Angels Tells Abraham
           to sacrifice his son; Sacrifice
           of Isaac (2:3v)

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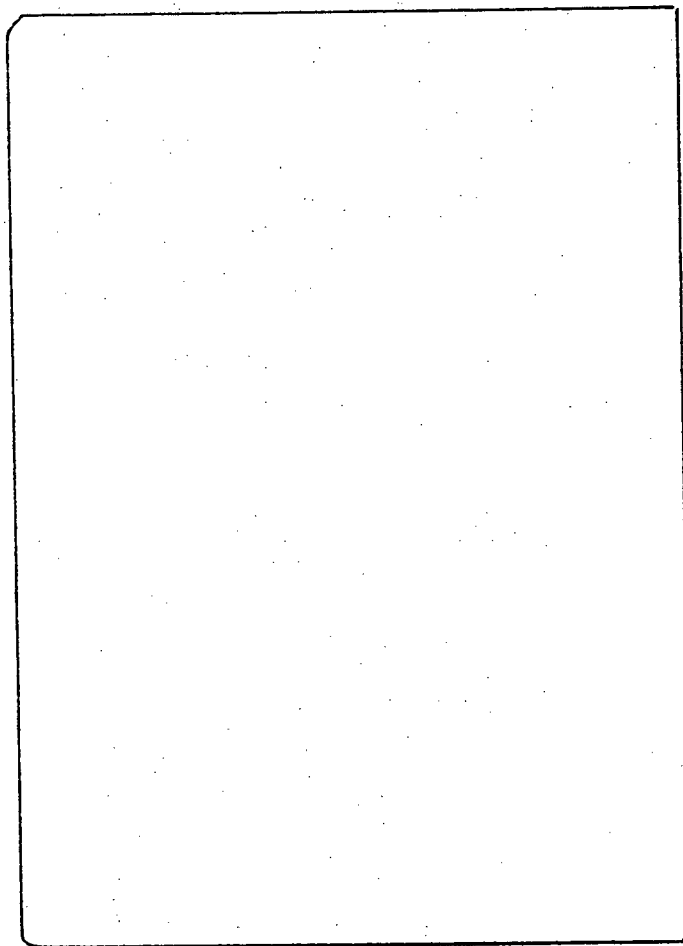
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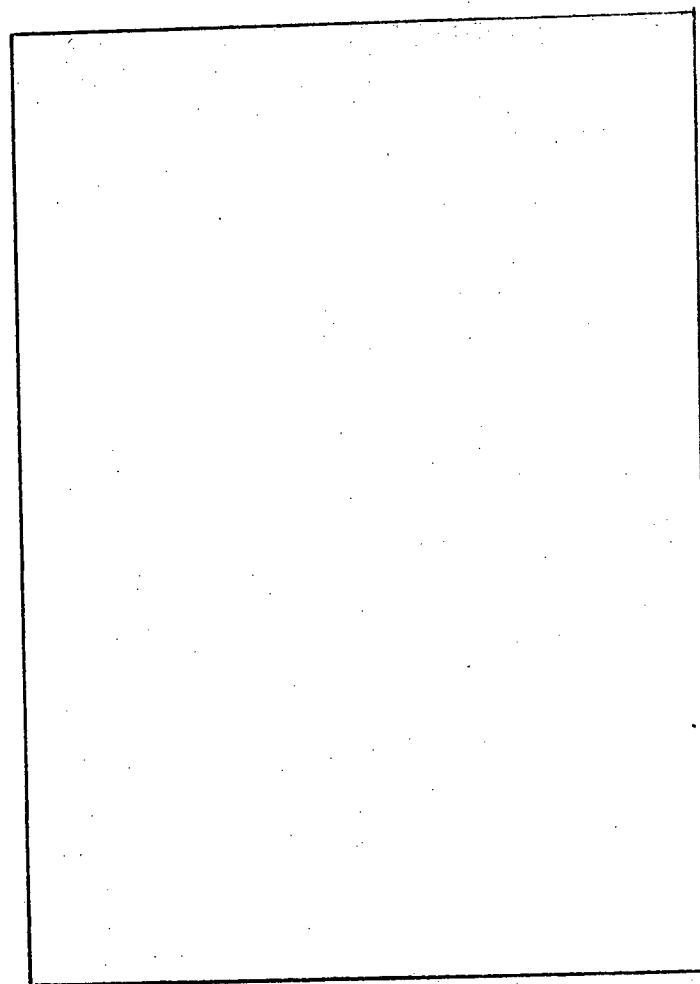
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Fig.18 Glasgow, Univ.Libr. MS U.3.2
Folio 11v Third Temptation of
Christ; Raising of Lazarus
(3:1v)
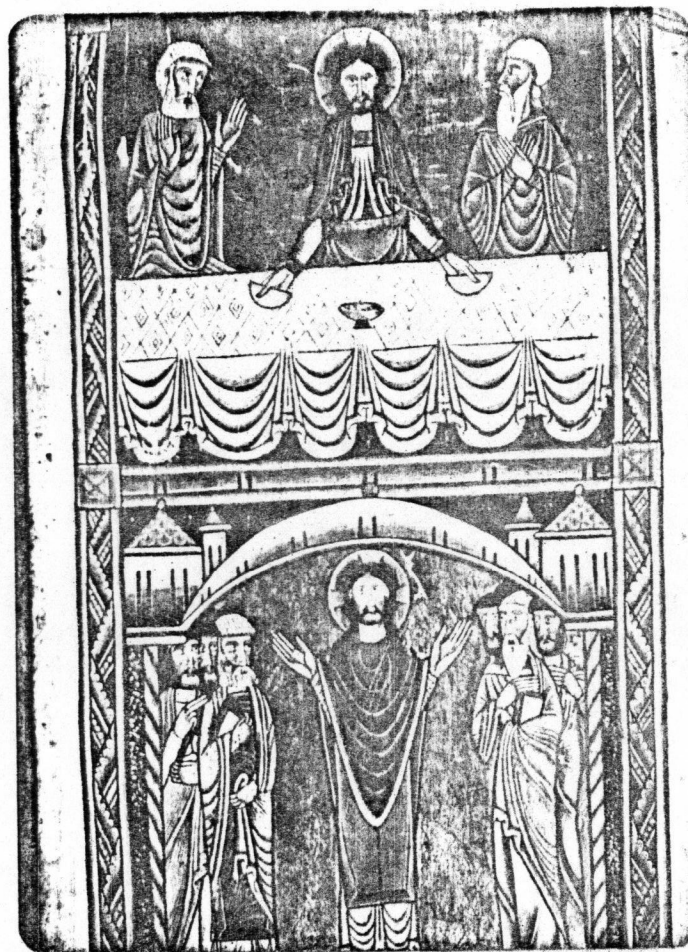
Fig. 19 Glasgow, Univ.Libr. MS U.3.2
Folio 12 Supper at Emmaus;
Christ's Appearance to the Dis-
ciples (3:2r)

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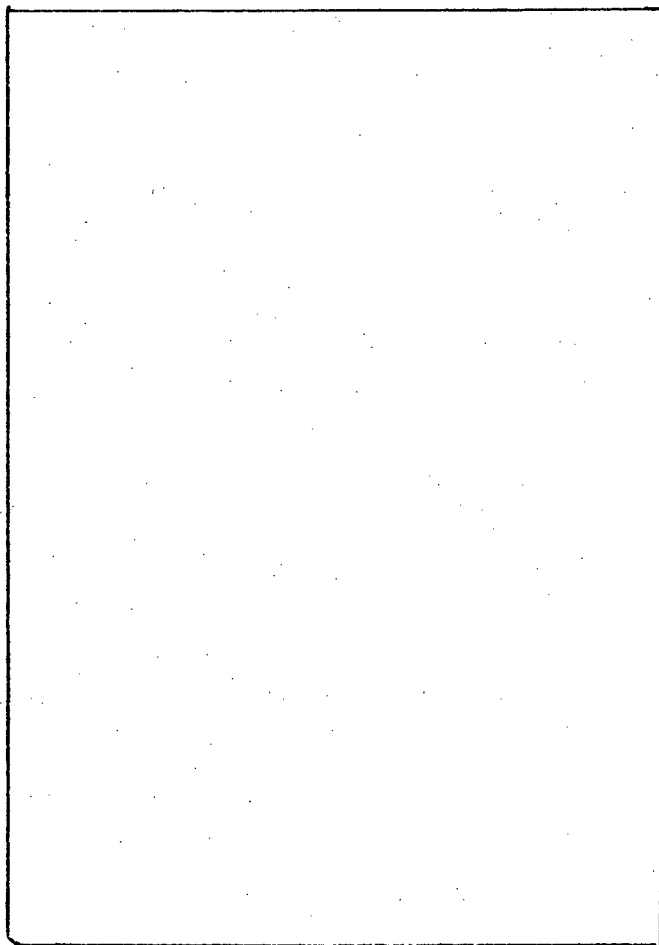
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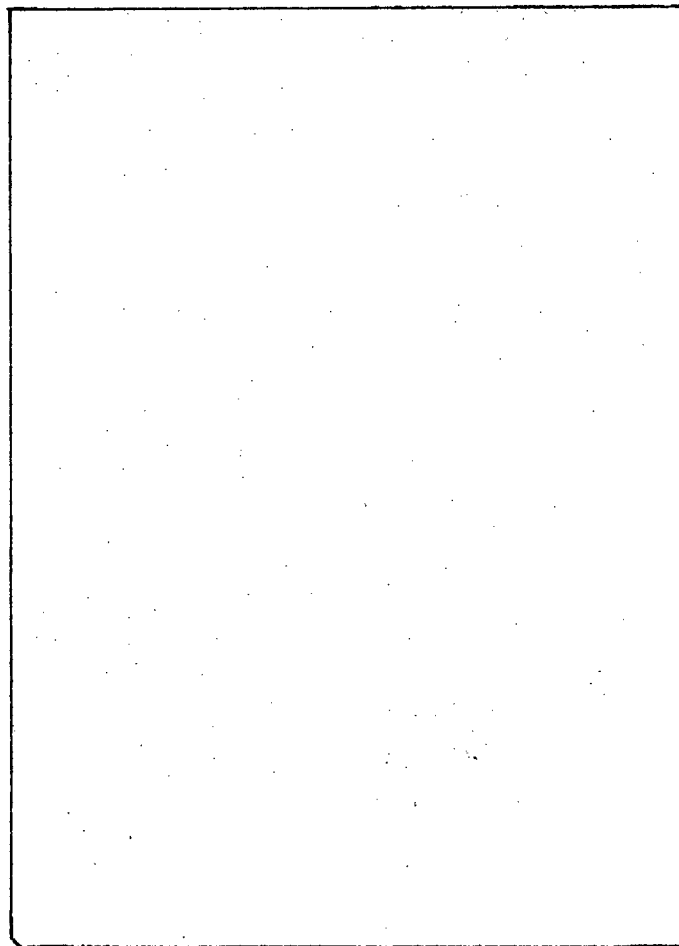
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Fig. 20 Glasgow, Univ.Libr. MS U.3.2
Folio 13v Doubting Thomas; Christ
at the Sea of Tiberias
(4:1v)

Fig. 21 Glasgow, Univ.Libr. MS U.3.2
Folio 14 Ascension
(4:2r)

Photos from slides: UBC Slide Library
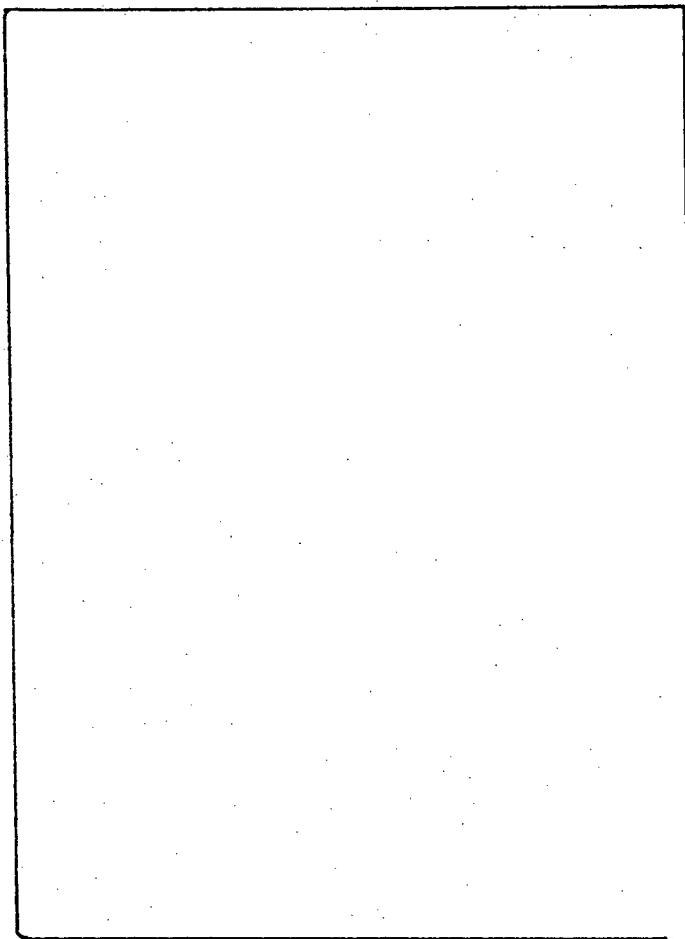
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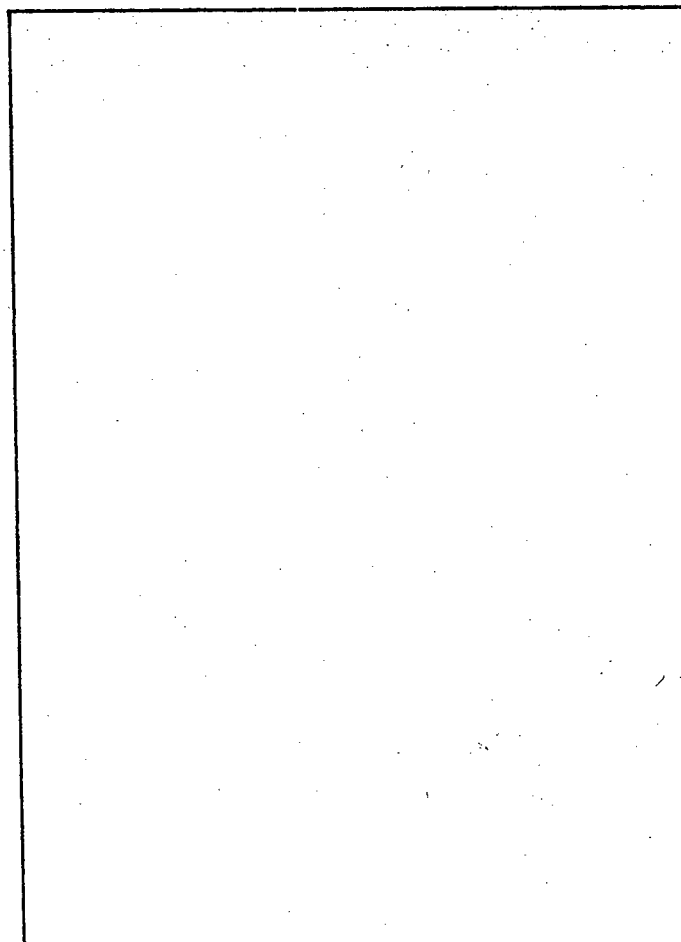
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Fig. 22 Glasgow, Univ.Libr. MS U.3.2
Folio 15v Pentecost
(4:3v)

Fig. 23 Glasgow, Univ.Libr. MS U.3.2
Folio 16 Christ in Majesty
(4:4r)

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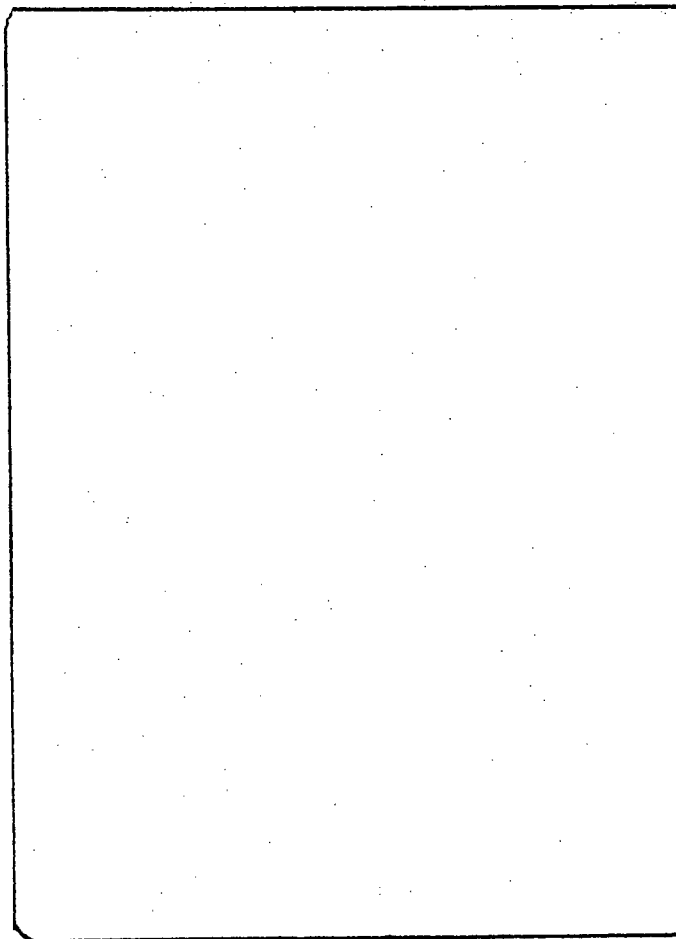
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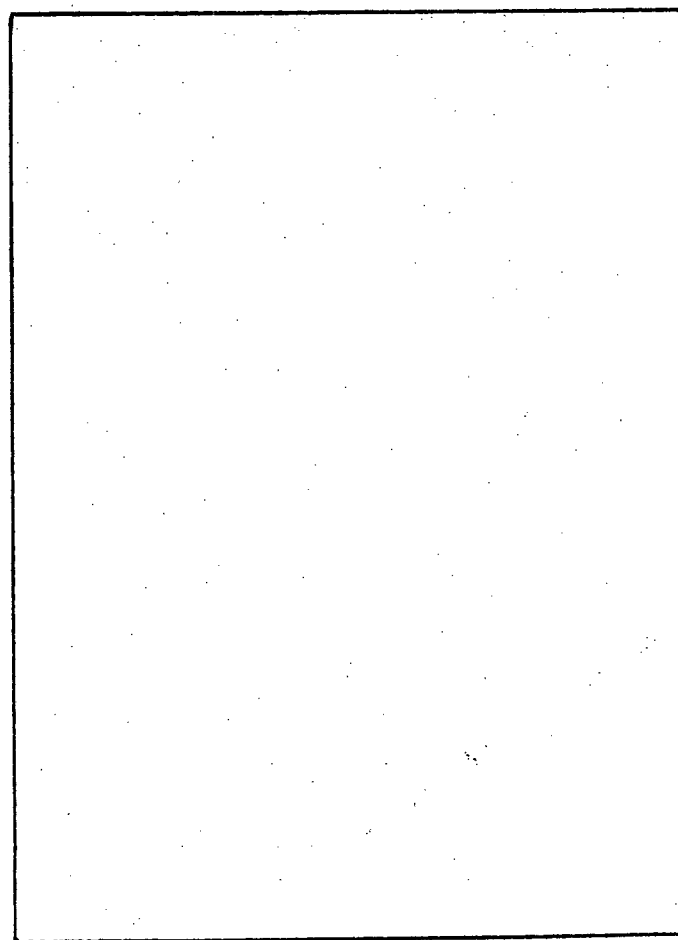
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Fig. 24 Glasgow, Univ.Libr. MS U.3.2
Folio 17v Angel Announcing the
death to the Virgin; Virgin An-
nouces Impending Death to the
Apostles (5:1v)

Fig. 25 Glasgow, Univ.Libr. MS U.3.2
Folio 18 Death of the Virgin;
The Funeral Procession

(5:2r)

Photos from slides: UBC Slide Libr.
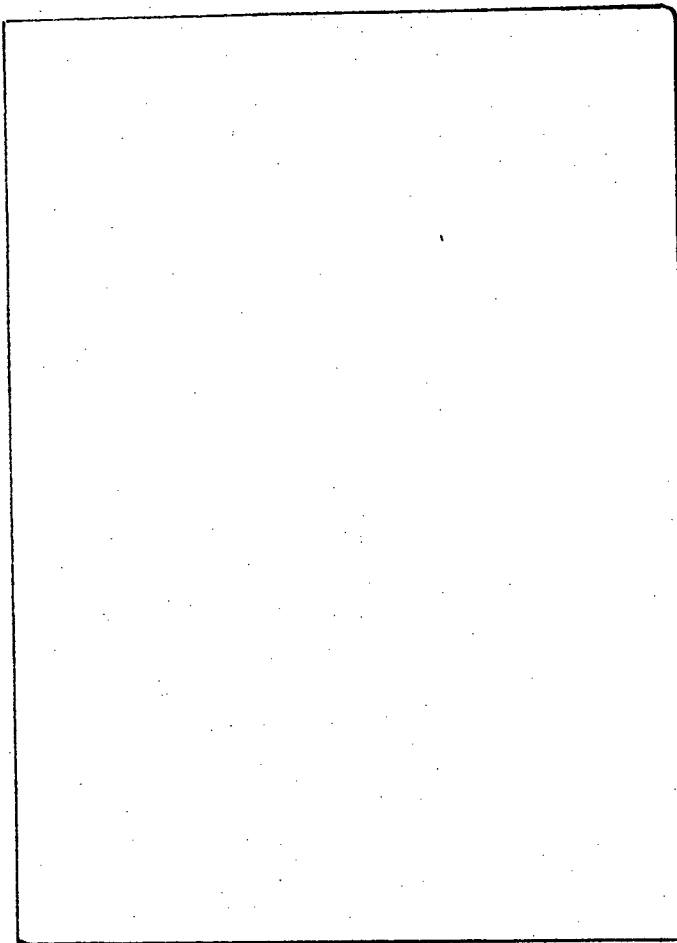
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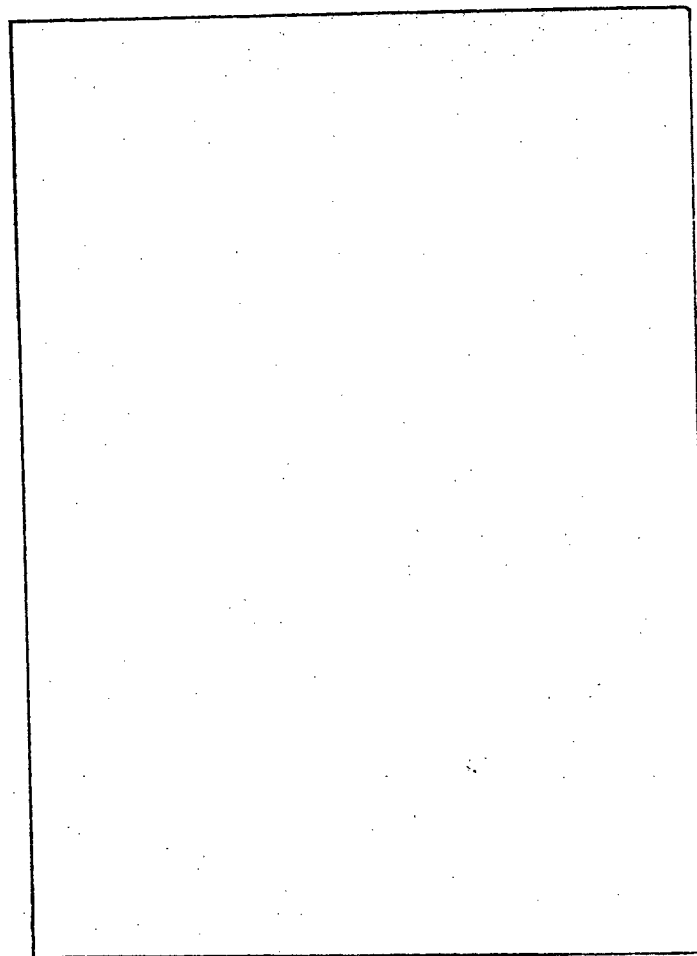
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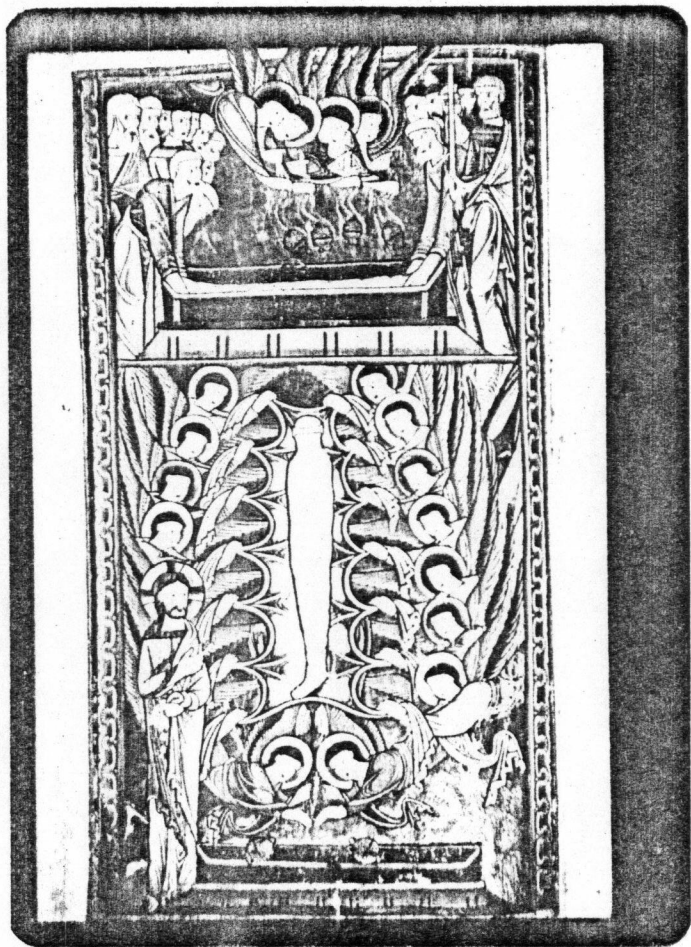
Fig. 26 Glasgow, Univ.Libr. MS U.3.2
         Folio 19v Burial of the Virgin;
         The Assumption
         (5:3v)
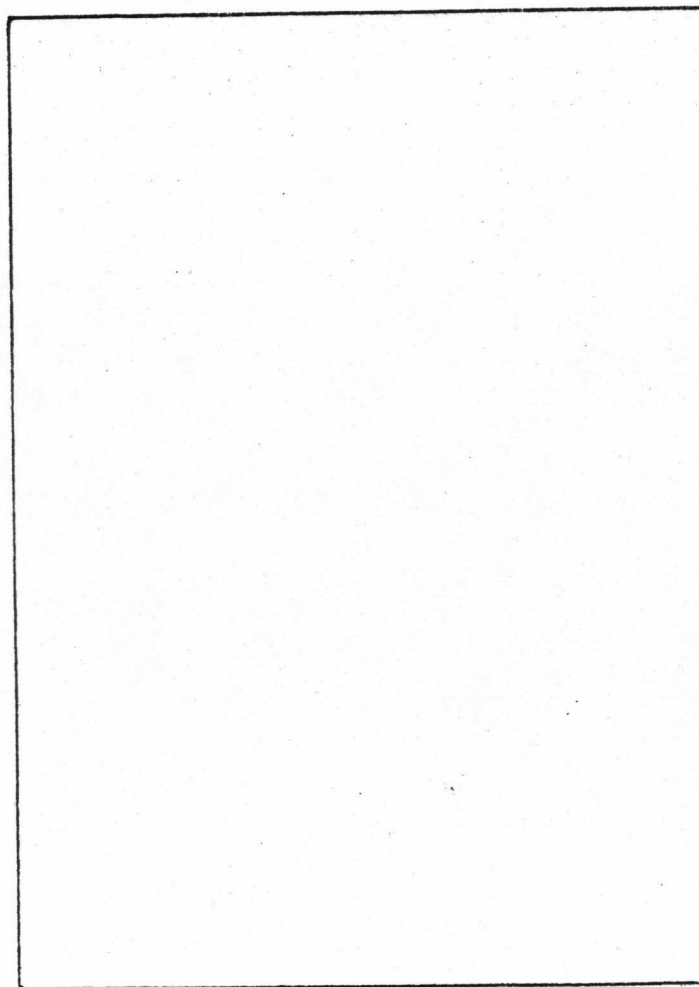
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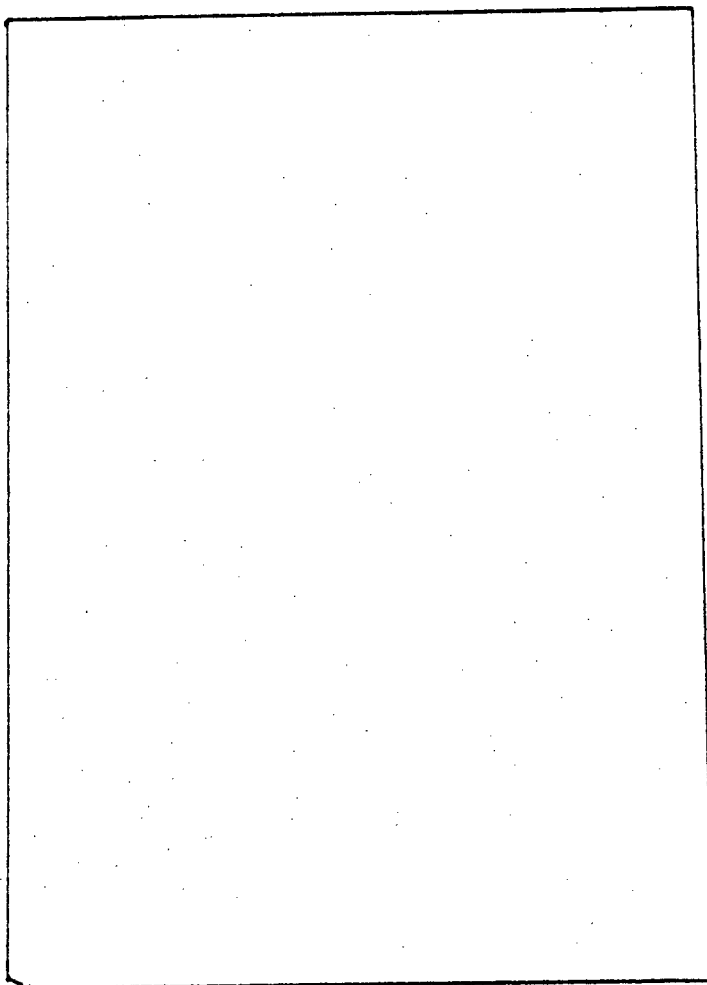
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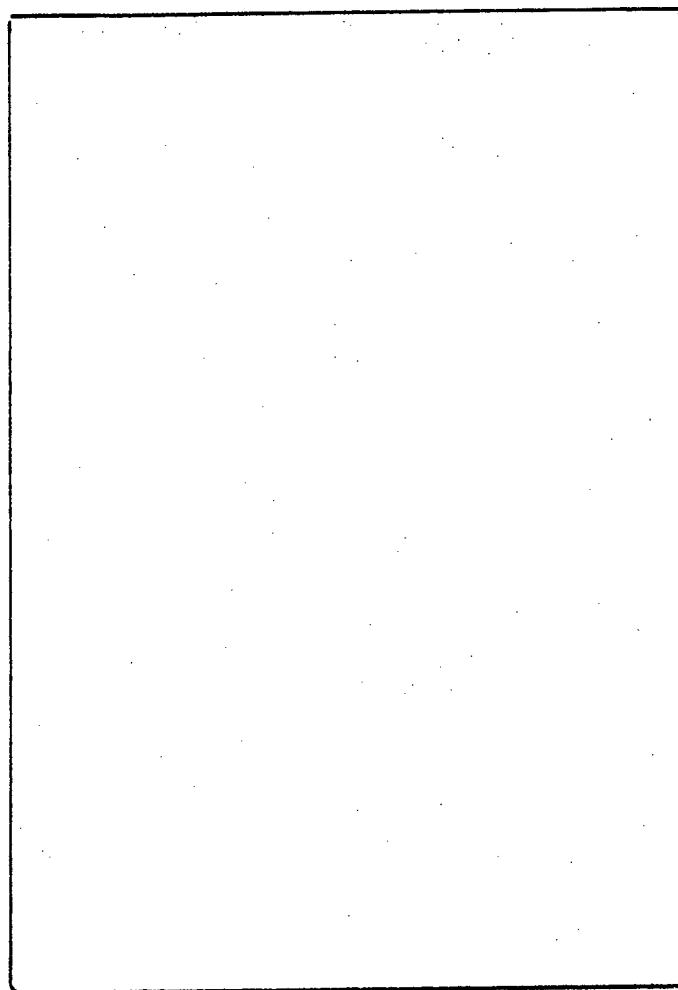
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Fig. 27 Glasgow, Univ.Libr. MS U.3.2
Folio 21v David Harping
(collation 6:1v)
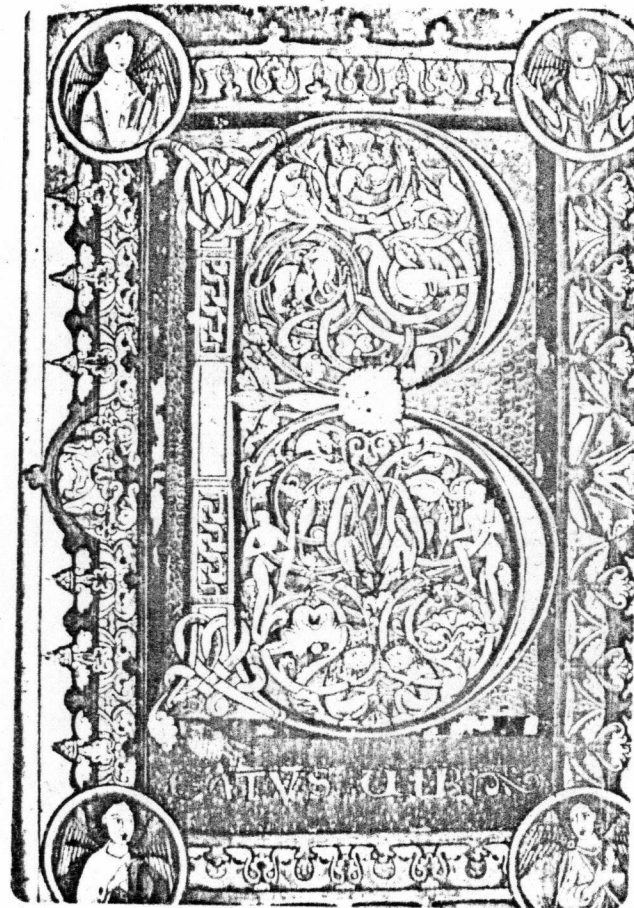
Fig. 28 Glasgow, Univ.Libr. MS U.3.2
Folio 22 Beatus Initial
(collation 6:2r)

Photos from slides: UBC Slide Libr.
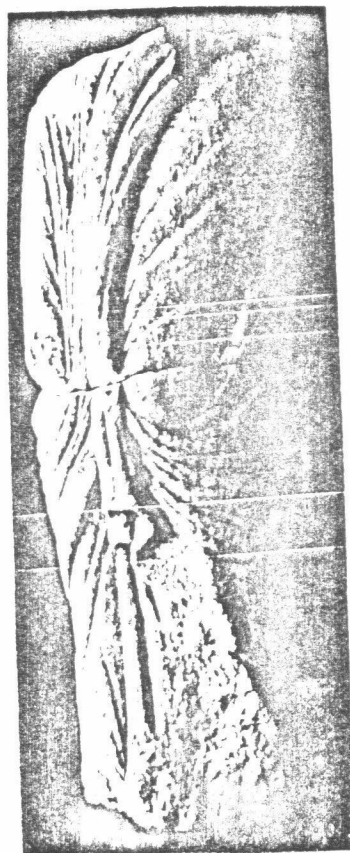
Fig. 29 Statuette from Bridlington; Backview: Fig.30
(London: Victoria and Albert Museum)

(Zarnecki: pl.115, 116)
1953

Fig. 31. The Visitation
Copenhagen Psalter
(Copenhagen: Royal Libr.MS
Thott 143 2o)

(Zarnecki, pl. 117)
1953

Fig. 32. Beatus Initial. Full page miniature.
Copenhagen Psalter. (Copenhagen: Royal
Library MS Thott 143 2o, folio 17)

(Boase, Pl.86)
1953

Fig. 34 Glasgow, Univ.Libr. MS U.3.2
Folio 94 Initial to Psalm 72
Woman suckling two men
(?Mother Church)

Photo from slide: UBC Slide Library

Fig. 33 *Winchester Psalter*(British
Museum MS Nero C.IV folio
29) Death of the Virgin

(Kauffmann, fig. 221)
1973

155

mierere mea.
et meas ftvat indivit
benedicam ce domit

Oomnui proteltor ti
aquo trepidabo.

Fig. 36 Glasgow, Univ.Libr. MS U.3.2
folio 46 Initial to Psalm 26
Samuel annointing and crowning
David

de autate domm
ut muditam.

on auertat faciem i
mquacamq; die tri

Fig. 35 Glasgow, Univ.Libr. MS U.3.2
folio 128 Decorative Initial D
to Psalm 101

Photos from slides: UBC Slide Library.

Fig. 38 Glasgow, Univ.Libr. MS U.3.2
Folio 101 Initial to Psalm 77
Battle of a man and a Centaur
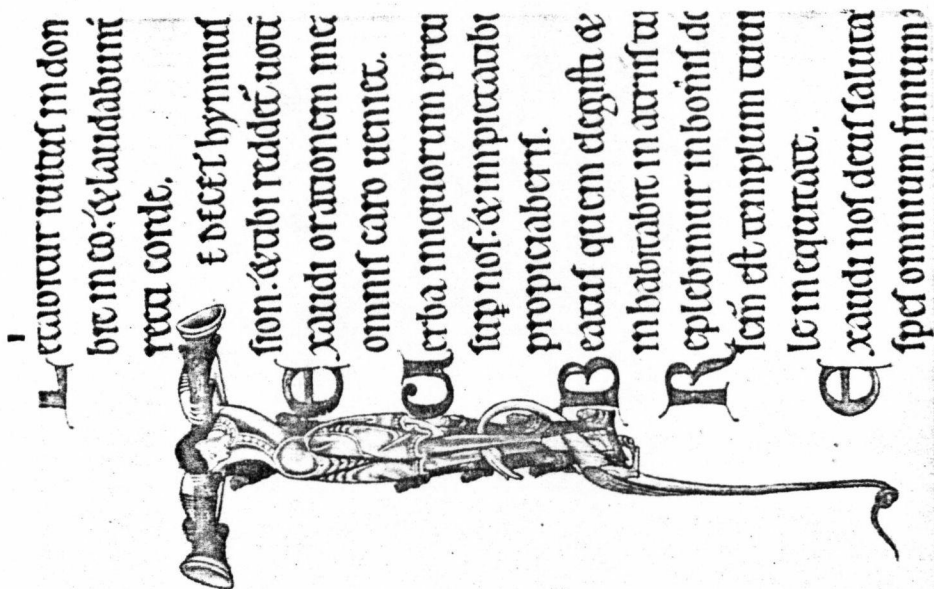
Fig. 37 Glasgow, Univ.Libr. MS U.3.2.
Folio 85v Decorative Initial T
to Psalm 67

Photos from slides: UBC Slide Library.

Fig. 39 Glasgow, Univ.Libr. MS U.3.2. Folio 75
Initial to Psalm 51 Q, Doeg whispering to
Saul and pointing to David
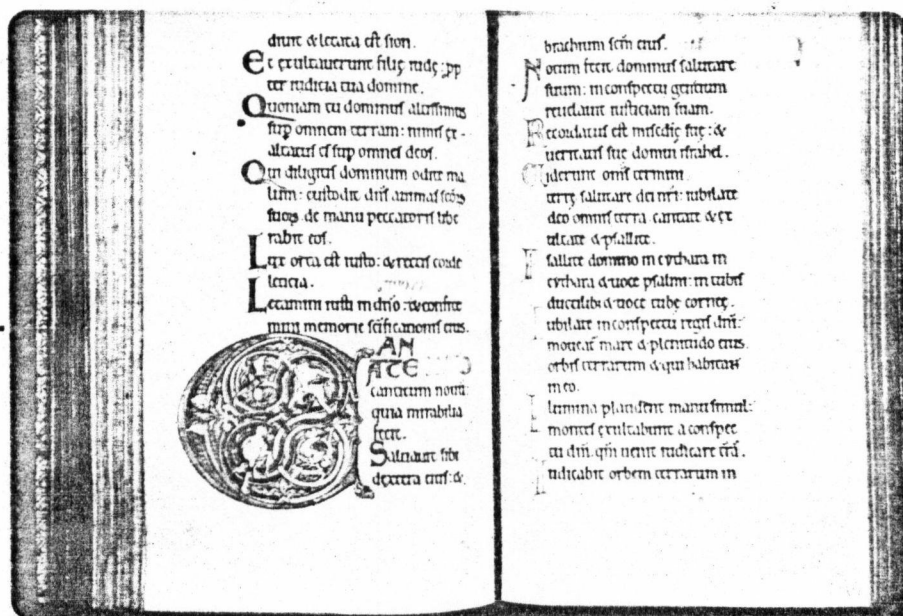
Fig. 40 Glasgow, Univ.Libr. MS U.3.2 Folio 125v
Decorative Initial to Psalm 97

Photos from slides:
UBC Slide Library.
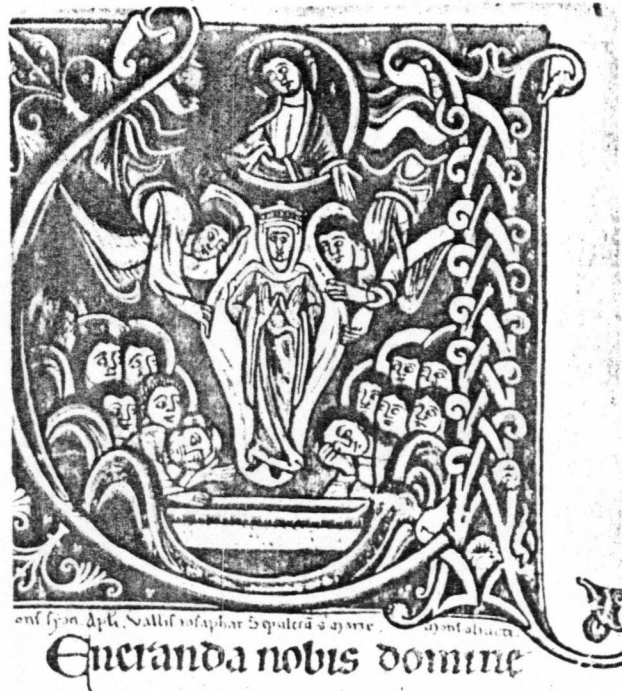
Fig. 41 Assumption, 12th century Missal
(Tours, Bibl.comm. MS folio 98)

(Feldbusch, Pl. 5)
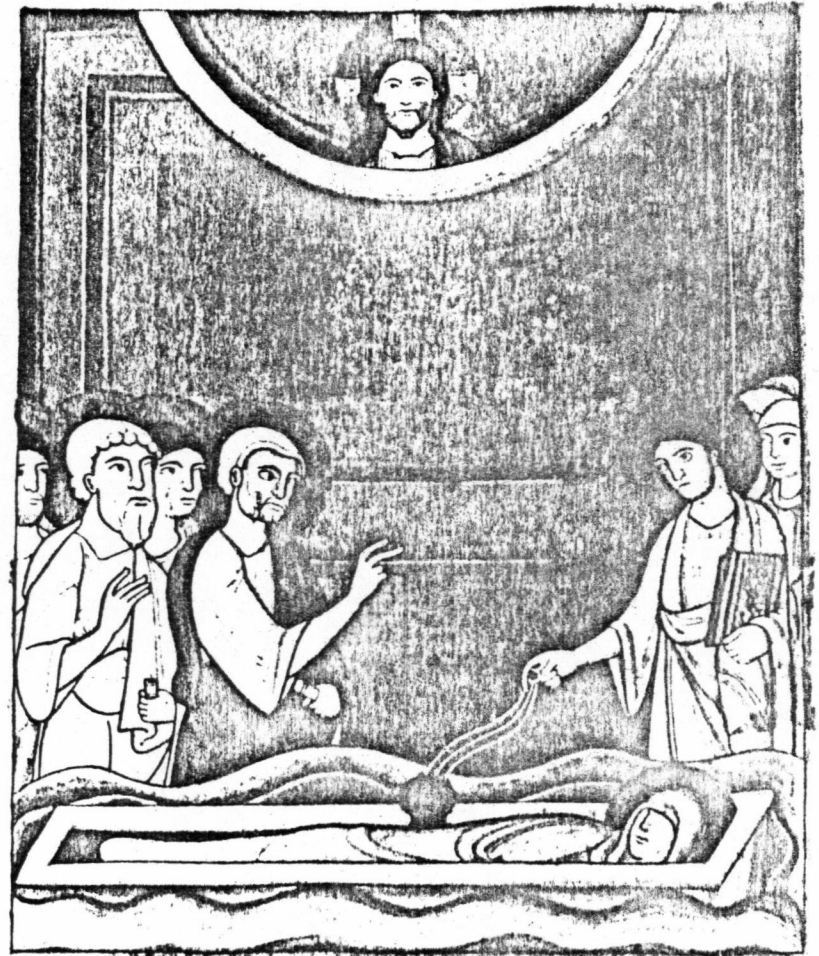
Fig. 42 Death of the Virgin, mid-12th
century Pericope Book (Paris,
Bibl.Nat.MS lat.17325)

(Boeckler, Pl. 48).

Fig. 43   Entombment of Christ *St. Albans Psalter ca*
           1119-1123 (Hildesheim, St. Godehard, unnum-
           bered ms. p.48)

(Pächt, 1960, pl.33a)

Fig. 44 Entombment of Christ *ca* 1072-1100 (Sant'Angelo
in Formis, wall-painting, nave, north wall.

(Demus, Romanesque, pl.156)

Fig. 45 Burial of St. Aemilius. Ivory
panel from reliquary shrine 1053-
1067, Abbey of San Millan de la
Cogolla, Rioja (province of Logrono)

(de Palol, Pl.81)
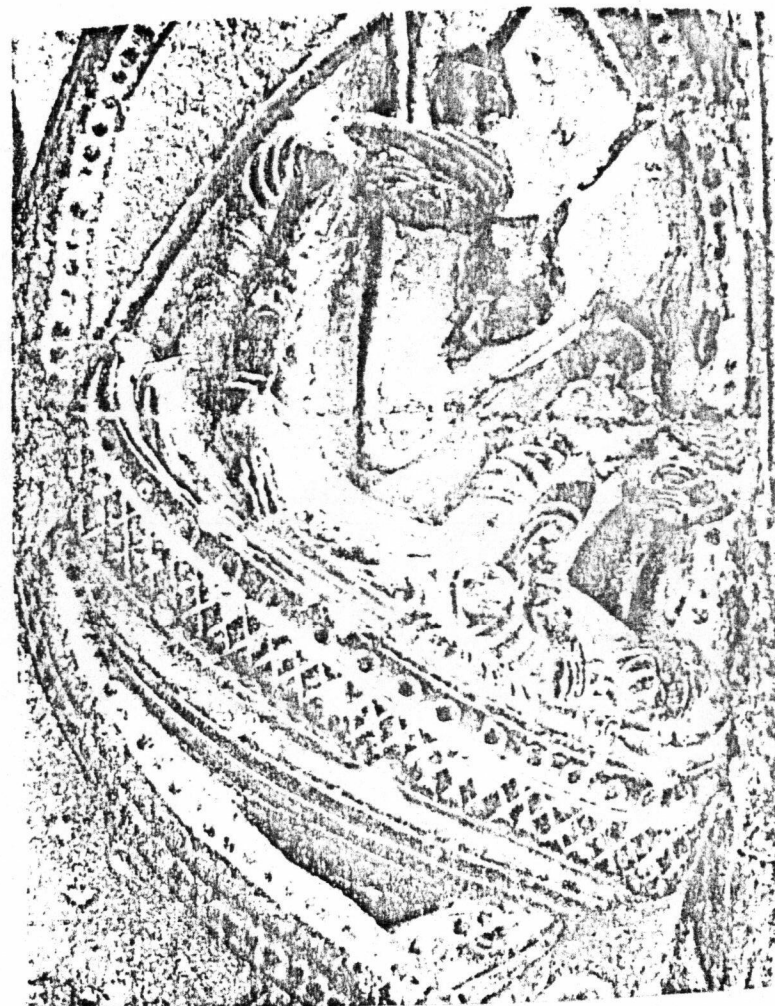
Fig. 46 Entombment of Christ *ca* 1170
Sculpture, Malmesbury Abbey,
Wiltshire.

(Zarnecki, 1953,
Pl.94)
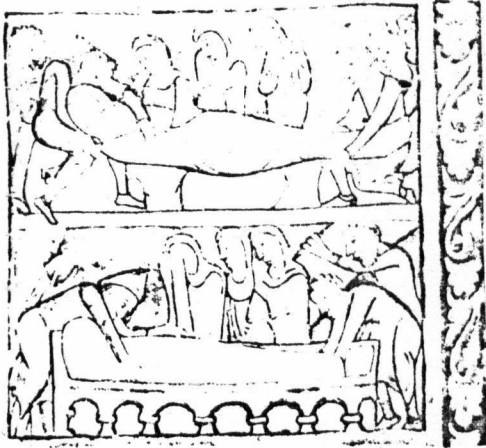
Fig. 47 Entombment *ca* 1140
      (Victoria & Albert Mus.
      MS 661 verso of psalter
      leaf) (James,1937,Pl.VIII)

Fig. 48 Burial of Judas Mac-
      cabeus 1150-1180 (Win-
      chester Cath.Libr.
      Bible, folio 350v)
      (Boase 1953 Pl.63a)

Fig. 49 Burial of the King, first half 12th cen-
      tury. (Cambridge, Trinity Coll. MS.0.9.
      34 folio 79)

Photo from slide,
UBC Slide Libr.

Fig. 50 Burial of the Dead (from Seven Acts of Mercy)
1170-1200 (Paris, Bibl.Nat.MS lat. 8846 folio
156v) *The Paris Psalter*

(Leroquais, Pl. CIV)
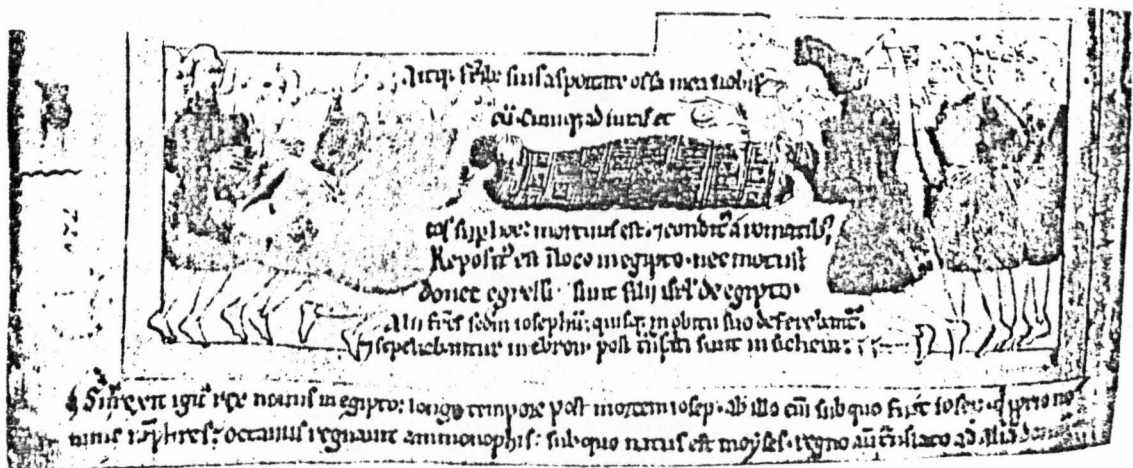
Fig.51 Burial of Joseph, 11th century (British
Museum Cotton MS Claudius B.iv folio 72v
lower half) *Aelfric Pentateuch*

(Wormald, Continental Influ-
ences, fig. 1)

Fig.52 Tree of Jesse *Shaftesbury Psalter*
(Brit.Libr. MS Lansdowne 383 folio
15, ca 1130-1140)

Photo from slide: UBC Slide
Libr.
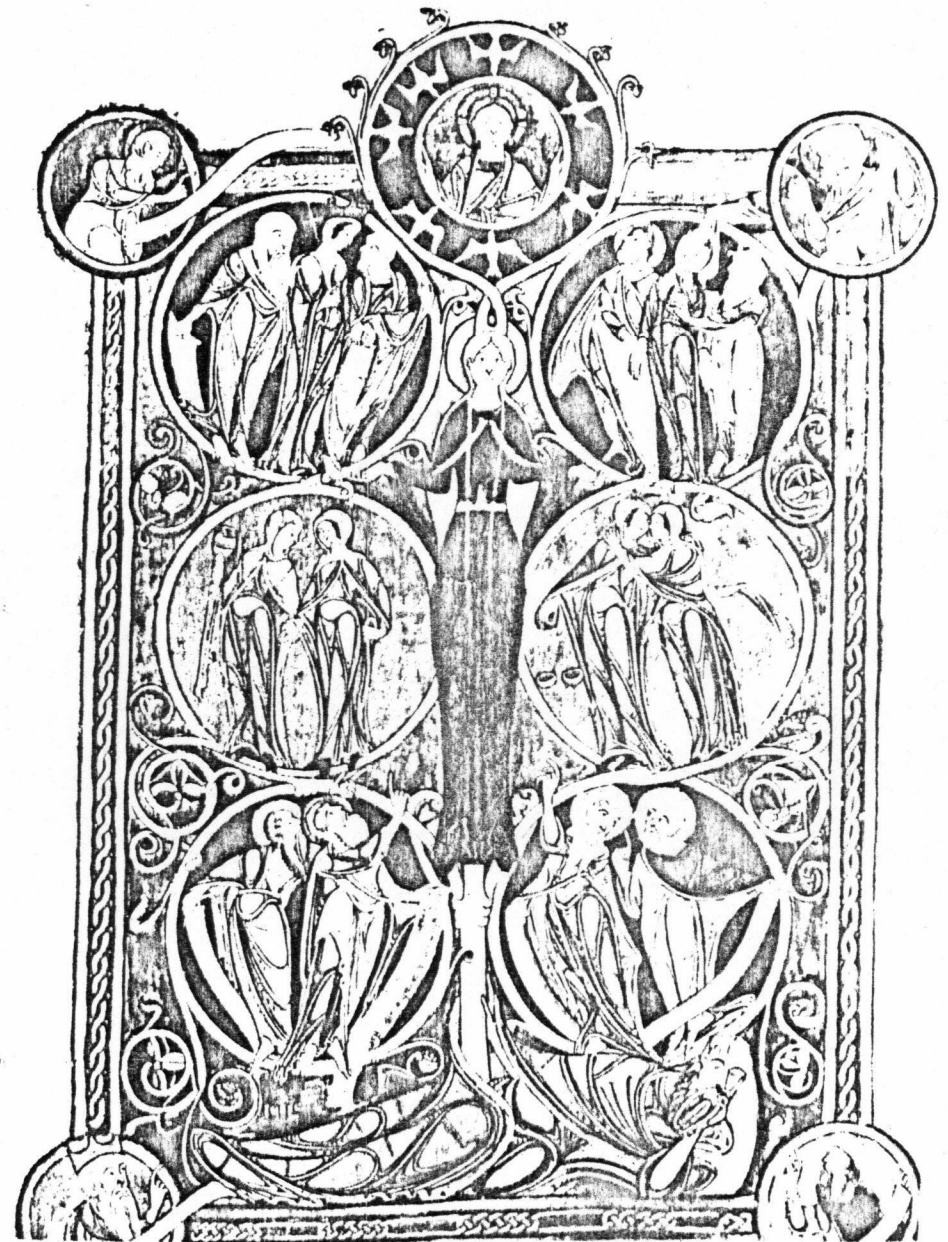
Fig. 53   Tree of Jesse *Lambeth Bible* ca
1150 (London, Lambeth Palace
Libr. MS.3 folio 198r)

(Watson, Pl. XV)
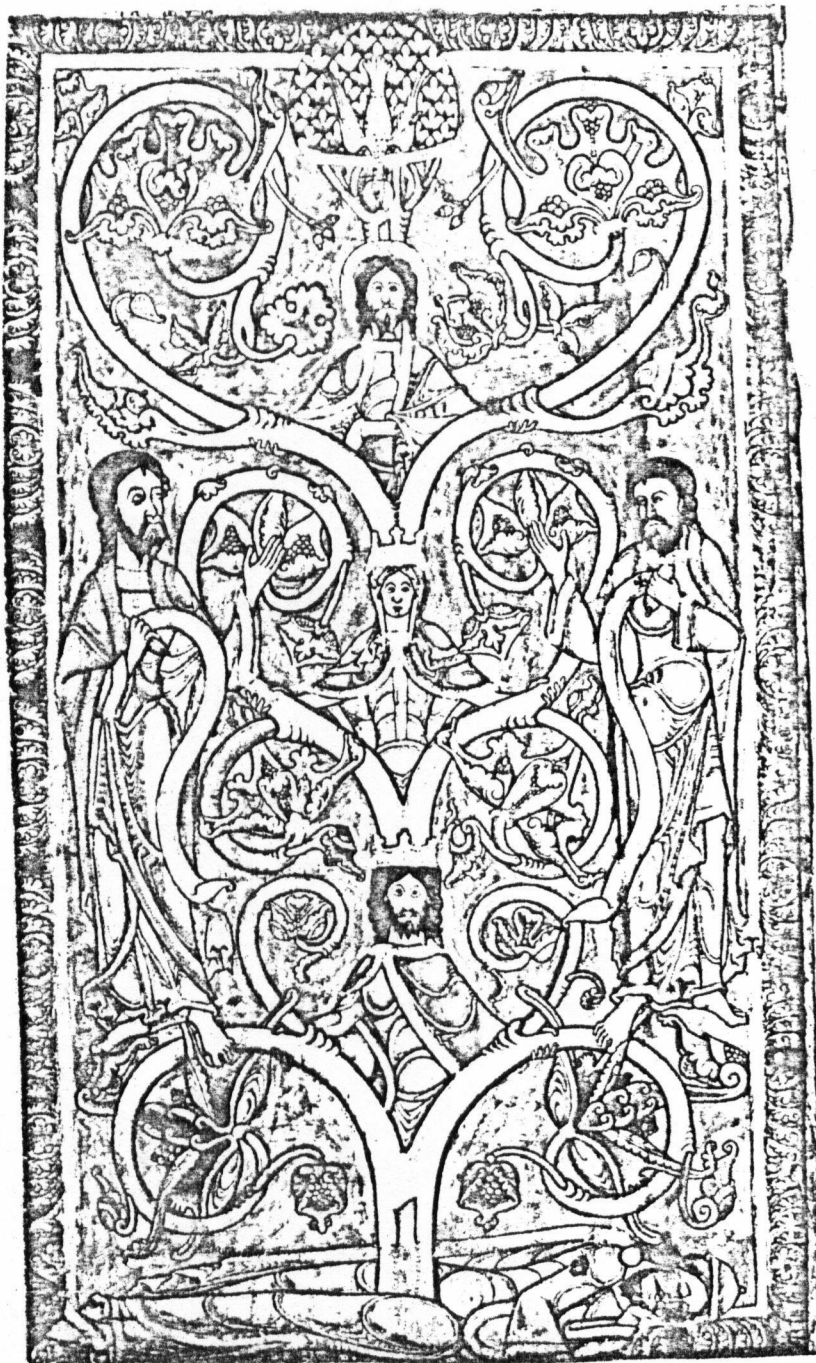
Fig. 54 Tree of Jesse *Winchester Psalter ca* 1150
(British Museum Cotton MS Nero C.iv folio
9r)   (Watson, Pl.XIX)

Fig. 55 Reconstruction of Assumption
York Psalter (Glasgow, Univ.Libr.
MS U.3.2 folio 19v)
[reconstruction mine]
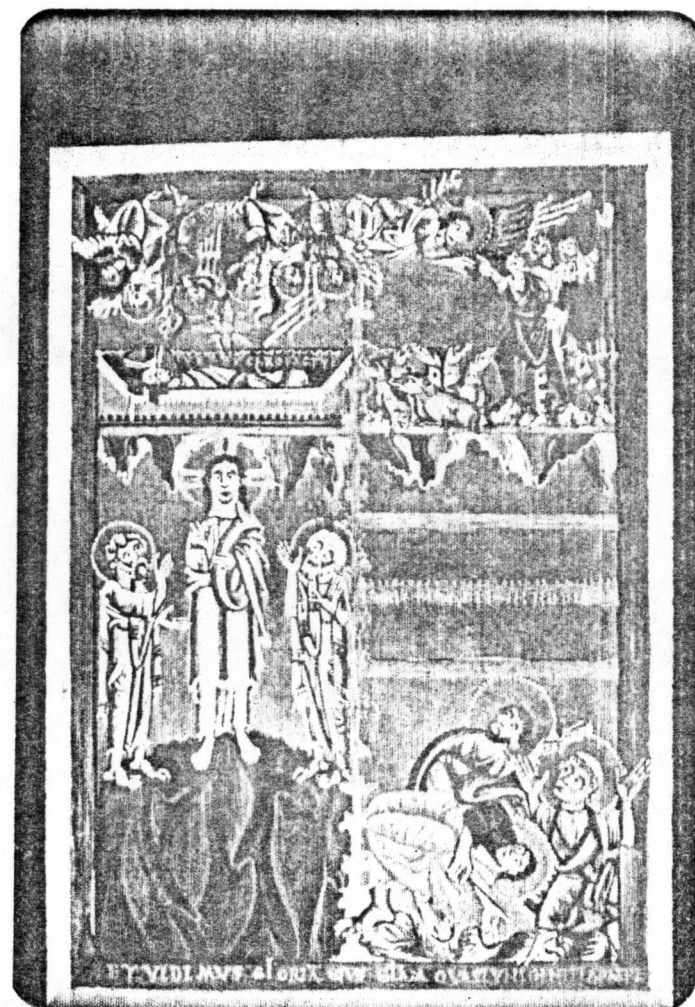
Fig. 56 Incarnation scene *Bamberg
Gospels* 11th century (Bam-
berg Staatbiblio.MS 94.A.
11.18 folio 155) Photo from
slide, UBC Slide Libr.

Fig.57 Assumption of the Virgin
ca 1400 Alabaster, height:
50 cm.(New York:Metropoli-
tan Museum, The Cloisters)

(Tavender, p.438)

Fig.58?Assumption of the Virgin, 4th century
Sarcophagus, Sant'Engracia, Saragossa

(Leclerq, fig.1026)
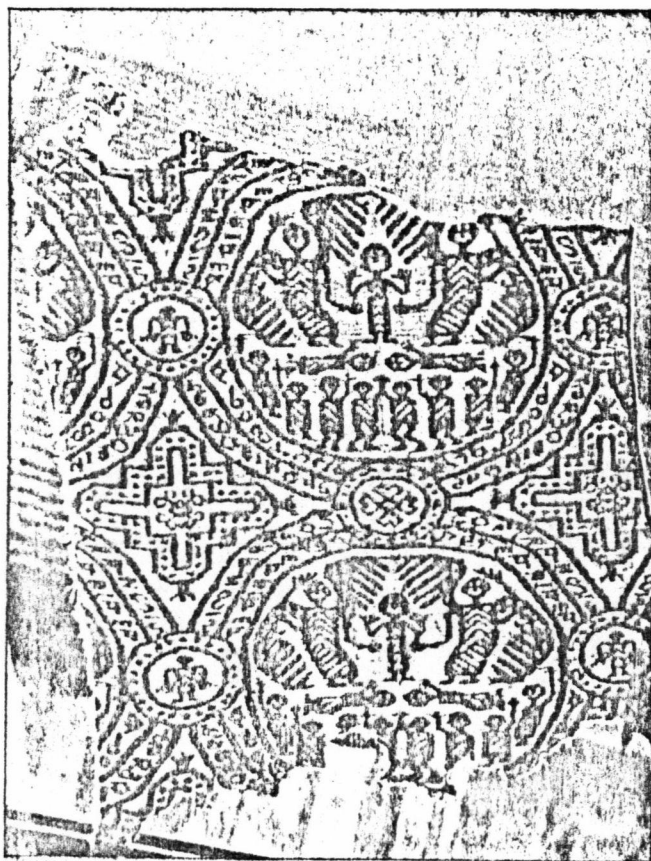
CO(ΙΙ) TRAN⌠ΙΩ ⟩ TER δΟ(ΙΙ)ΙΝΟ d(
ΩΕΤ (Ι)ΑRΙΑ (Ι)Α ⟩ ΑΡΟΩΤΟΛΙΩ .
Cum transisset Maria mater domino de aposto

Fig. 59 Assumption of the Virgin
8th century Byzantine bro⁊
cade textile (Sens Cathedral
Treasure)

(*Revue de l'art Chrétien*
1897, p.228)

ASCENSIO SCEMARIE

S.GALLƐ PANƐ PORRIGITVRSO

Fig. 60 Assumption of the Virgin
early 10th century. Ivory
bookcover of Tuotillo
(St.Gall Monastery Libr.)

(Feldbusch, Pl.4)

Fig. 61

Fig. 62, detail

Koimesis, late 10th century (Reichenau)
Ivory relief in gold bookcover, *Gospel
Book of Otto III* (Munich, Bayerische Staat-
bibl. Clm. 4453)

Fig.63 Koimesis, late 10th century
Constantinople. Central panel of
ivory triptych. (Washington, Dum-
barton Oaks Collection)
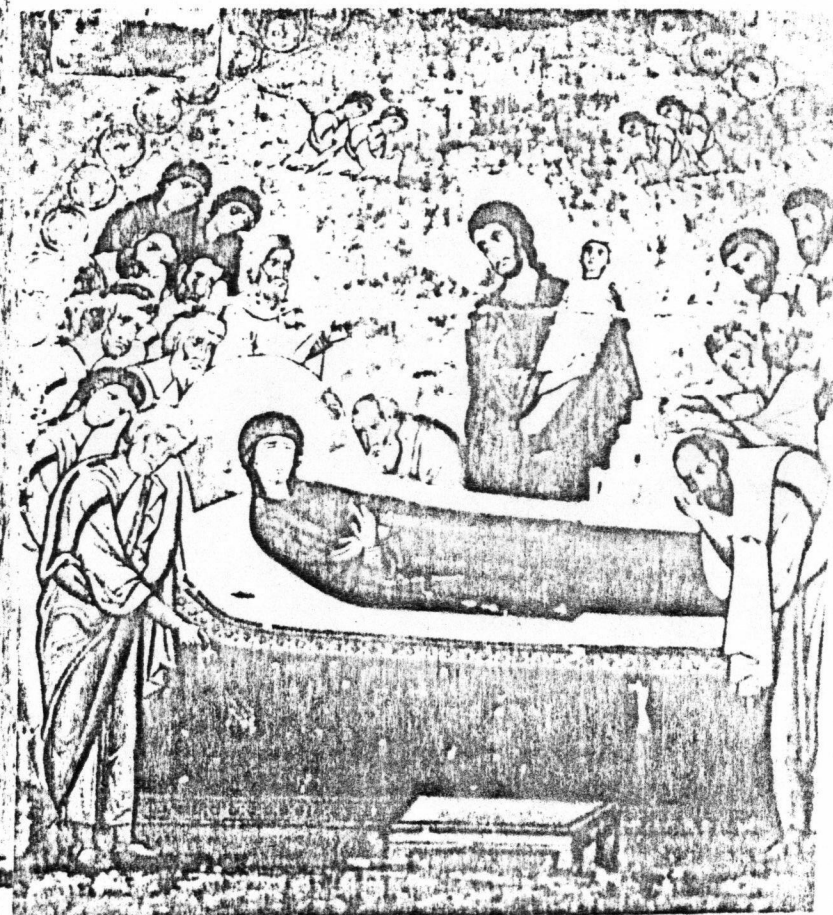
Fig. 64 Koimesis, 12th century
Icon, Saint Catherine's
Monastery, Mount Sinai

(Wormald, fig. 94)

Fig. 65 Koimesis, mid-12th century
mosaic, Martorana, Palermo

(Demus,1949, Pl.56)
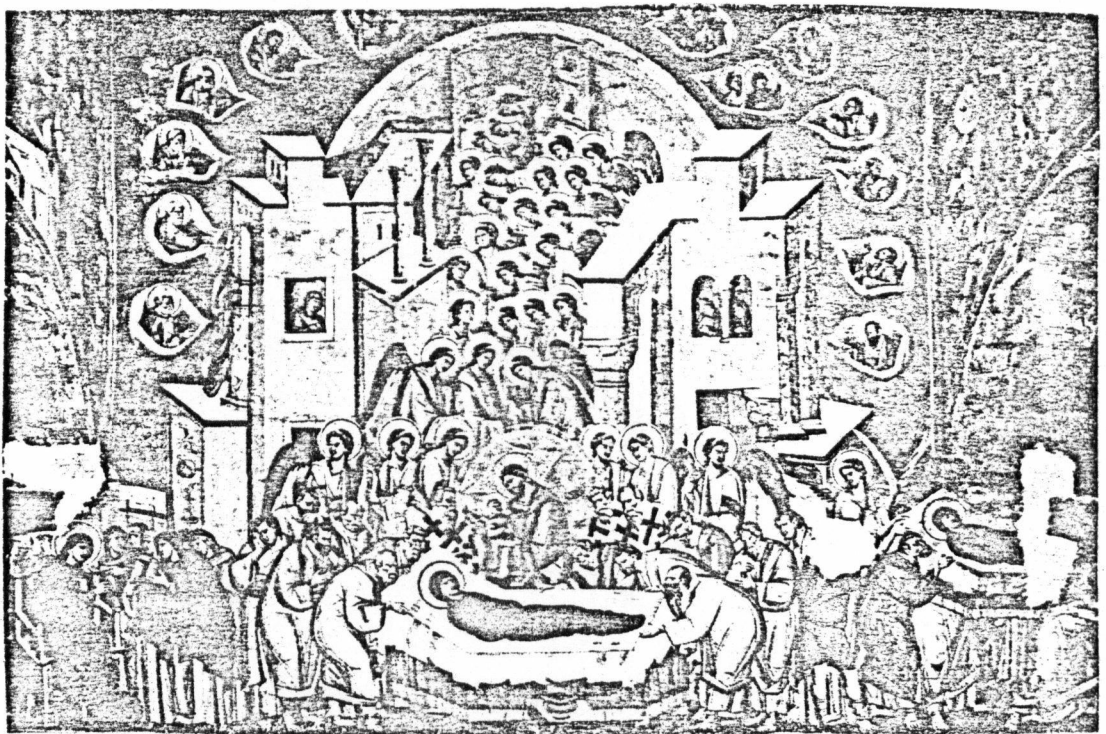
Fig. 66   Koimesis, *ca* 1295
          Wall-painting, Church of Saint Clement,
          formerly Saint Mary Peribleptos, Ohrid,
          Yugoslavia.

                              (Schug-Wille, p.217)

Fig. 67 Assumption, 11th
century *Sacramentary
from Augsbert* (British
Museum MS Harley 2908
folio 123v)

(Alexander, Norman
Illum. Pl.42c)

Fig. 68 Koimesis with Coronation
late 10th century *Prüm Grad-
ual* (Paris, Bibl.Nat. MS lat.
9448, folio 60v)

(Sinding, pl.IXa)

Fig. 69 Death of the Virgin and Assumption, 10th century. *Pericope Book of Henry II* (Munich, Bayerische Staatbibl.Clm. 4452 folio 119)

(Feldbusch, Pl.1)

Fig. 70 Assumption, 11th century Morgan 641 (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MS 641 folio 142v) (Alexander, Norman Illum.Pl.40)
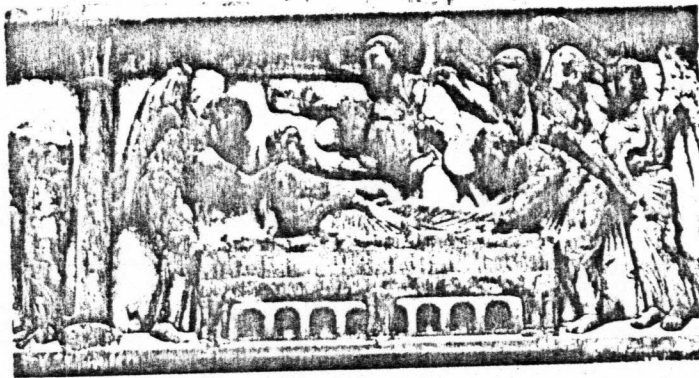
Fig. 71 Death of the Virgin and Assumption. Cathedral of Senlis. Tympanum of West Portal, *ca* 1180-1190

(Bazin,Pl.595)

Fig. 72 Assumption, 12th century. Capital from Clermont-Ferrand.

(Feldbusch, Pl.[3])

Fig. 73 Death of the Virgin, *ca* 980
Benedictional of Ethelwold (British
Museum MS Add.49598 folio 102v)
(photo from a slide, UBC Slide
Library)

Fig. 74 Death of the Virgin, late 10th
century. *Benedictional of Arch-
bishop Robert.* (Rouen, Bibl.
Mun. MS Y.7 folio 4)

(Rickert, pl.29b
1959)

Fig. 75 Death of the Virgin, late 7th-early
8th century, English, ?Northumbria
From Bede's *De Liber Locis Sanctis*
(ex Olav Sinding *Mariae Tod und Himmel-
fahrt* Pl.VIIb)
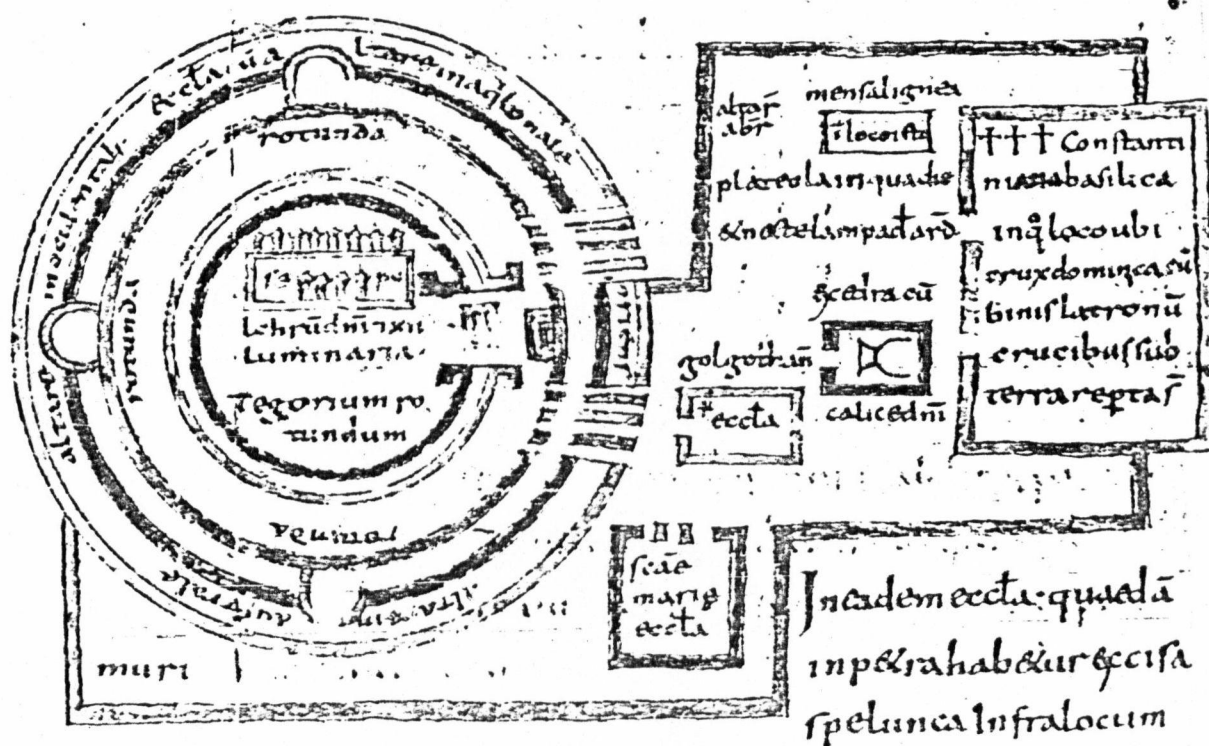
Fig. 76 Plan of four Jerusalem Churches (Arculf)
(Vienna, Staat.Bibl. Cod.458, folio 4v)
Meehan, opp.p.47.
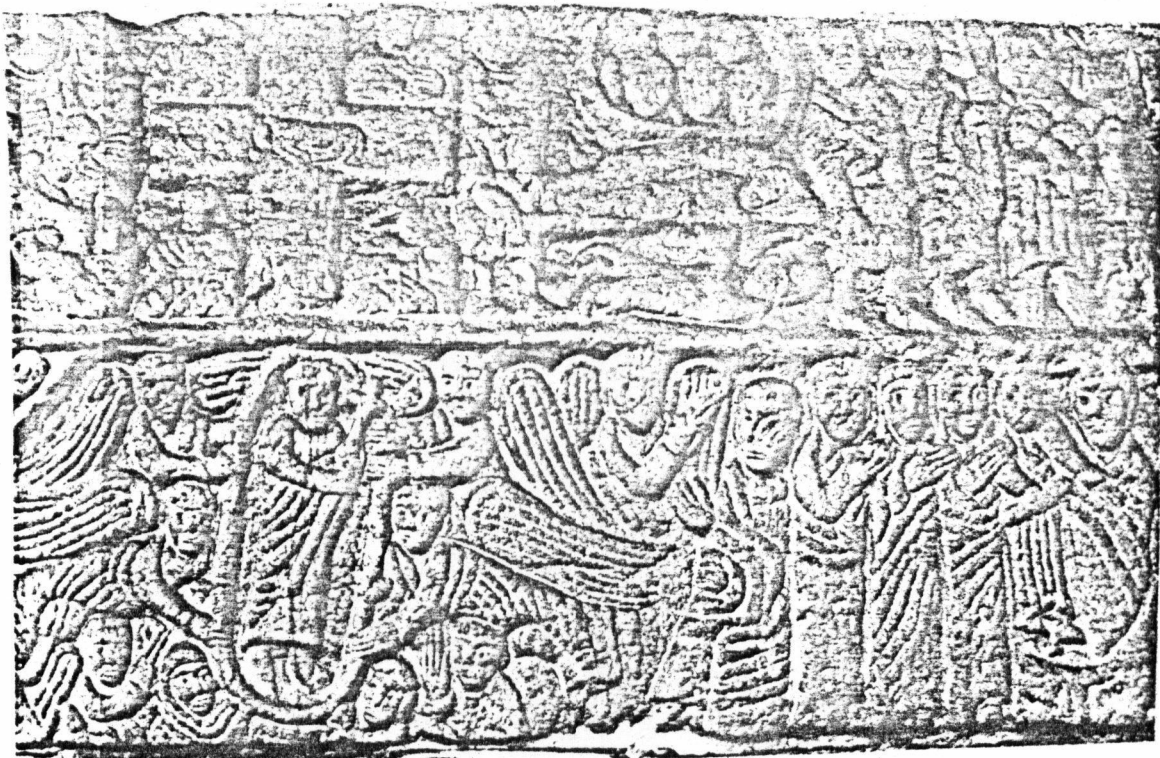
Fig. 77   Death of the Virgin, stone slab 8th
           century. Church of Wirksworth, Derbyshire.
                              (Anderson, pl.24
                                 1971)
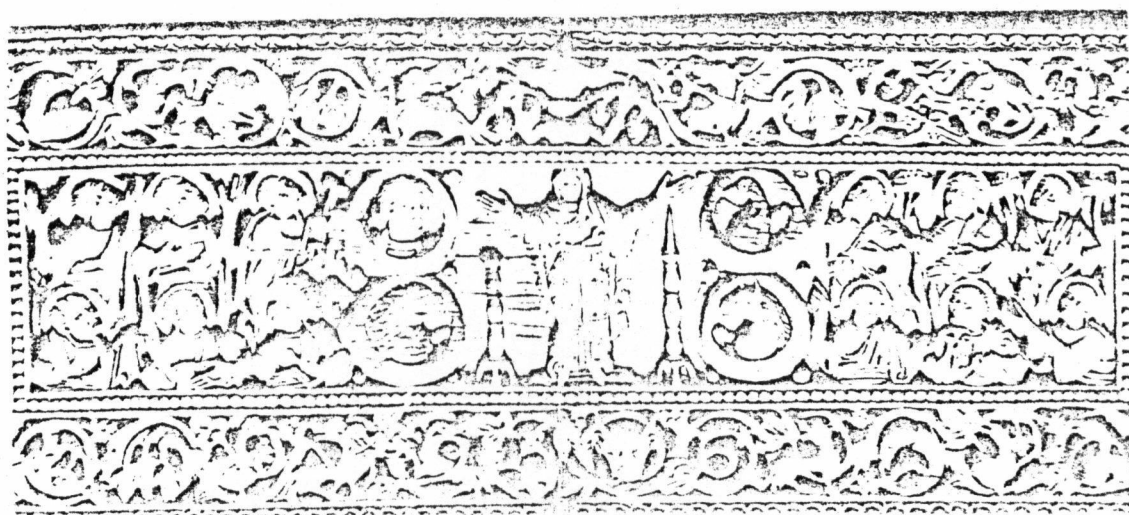
Fig. 78   Assumption. Ivory, 8th century
           (Munich, Bayer.Nat.Mus. no MA 164)
                      (Beckwith,1972, No.24)

Fig. 79   Virgin   and Child. Stone relief.
?10th–12th century. York Minster.

(Talbot Rice, Pl.22)
1952

(Demus, 1949, Pl.95a)

Fig. 80 Creation of Adam *ca* 1180
Mosaic, Monreale

(Demus
1949, Pl.28b,29a)
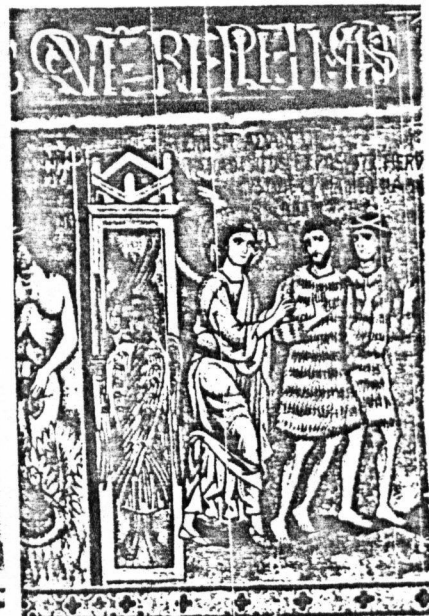
Fig. 81 Fall of Man and Expulsion from Paradise
ca 1160 Mosaic, Palermo, Palatina.

Fig. 82 Sacrifice of Isaac, 11th century ivory
plaque. Cathedral of Salerno.

(Weitzmann, 1955,
fig.16)

Fig. 83   Sacrifice of Isaac, late 11th century
Wall-painting, Concordia Sagittaria,
Cathedral, Baptistery .(Demus, *Romanesque Mural Painting*, Pl. 9)

Fig. 84   Sacrifice of Isaac *Lambeth Bible*
ca 1150 (London, Lambeth Palace
MS 3 folio 6)
Photo from slide, UBC Slide Libr.

Fig. 85   Sacrifice of Isaac, 6th century
Mosaic, Church of San Vitale,
Lunette, Presbytery, left wall
Ravenna. Photo from slide, UBC
Slide Libr.

Fig. 86 Ascension, *ca* 1000
Missal of Robert of Jumieges
(Rouen, MS.Y.6)
(Schapiro, fig.5
1943)

Fig. 87 Ascension, *ca* 1000
Hereford Troper, (British
Museum MS.Caligula A.XIV)
(Schapiro, fig. 6
1943)

Fig. 89   Ascension, 6th century
Ampulla (Monza, Cathedral
Treasure)

(Pächt, 1960,133c)

Fig. 88   Ascension, 6th century
Rabula Gospels (Florence,
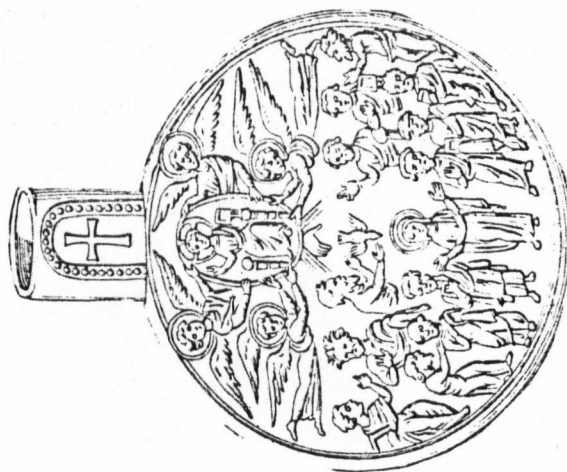Bibl.Laurentiana Cod.Plut.
1 56) Photo from slide, UBC
Slide Libr.
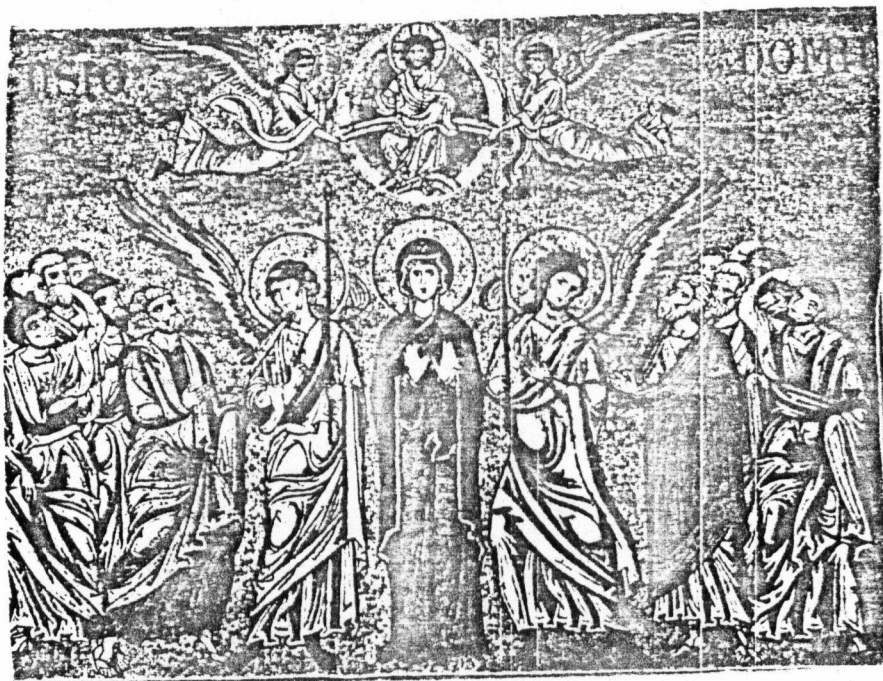
Fig. 90   Ascension, ca 1180 Mosaic
           Monreale   (Demus, *Mosaics* Pl.74B)

Fig. 91 Ascension, mid-9th century   Fig. 92   Ascension, 10th
        Drogo Sacramentary, Metz   century. *Benedictional*
        (Paris, Bibl.Nat.MS.lat.   *of Ethelwold* (Brit.Mus.
        9428, folio 71v)   MS.Add.49598)

(Alexander, *Norman Illumination*   (Alexander, *Norman Illum.*Pl.39e)
        Pl.39d)

Fig. 93 Ascension, 10th century
Athelstan Psalter (British
Museum MS.Galba A.XVIII)
(Schapiro, fig.1
1943)
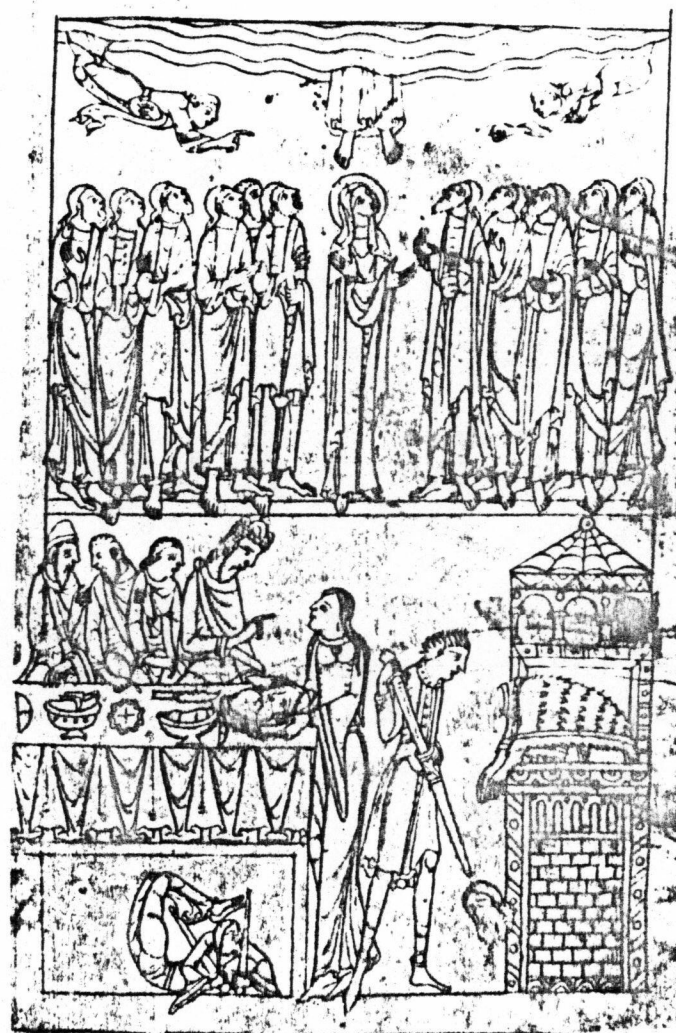

Fig. 94   Ascension, ca 1140 Pembroke College
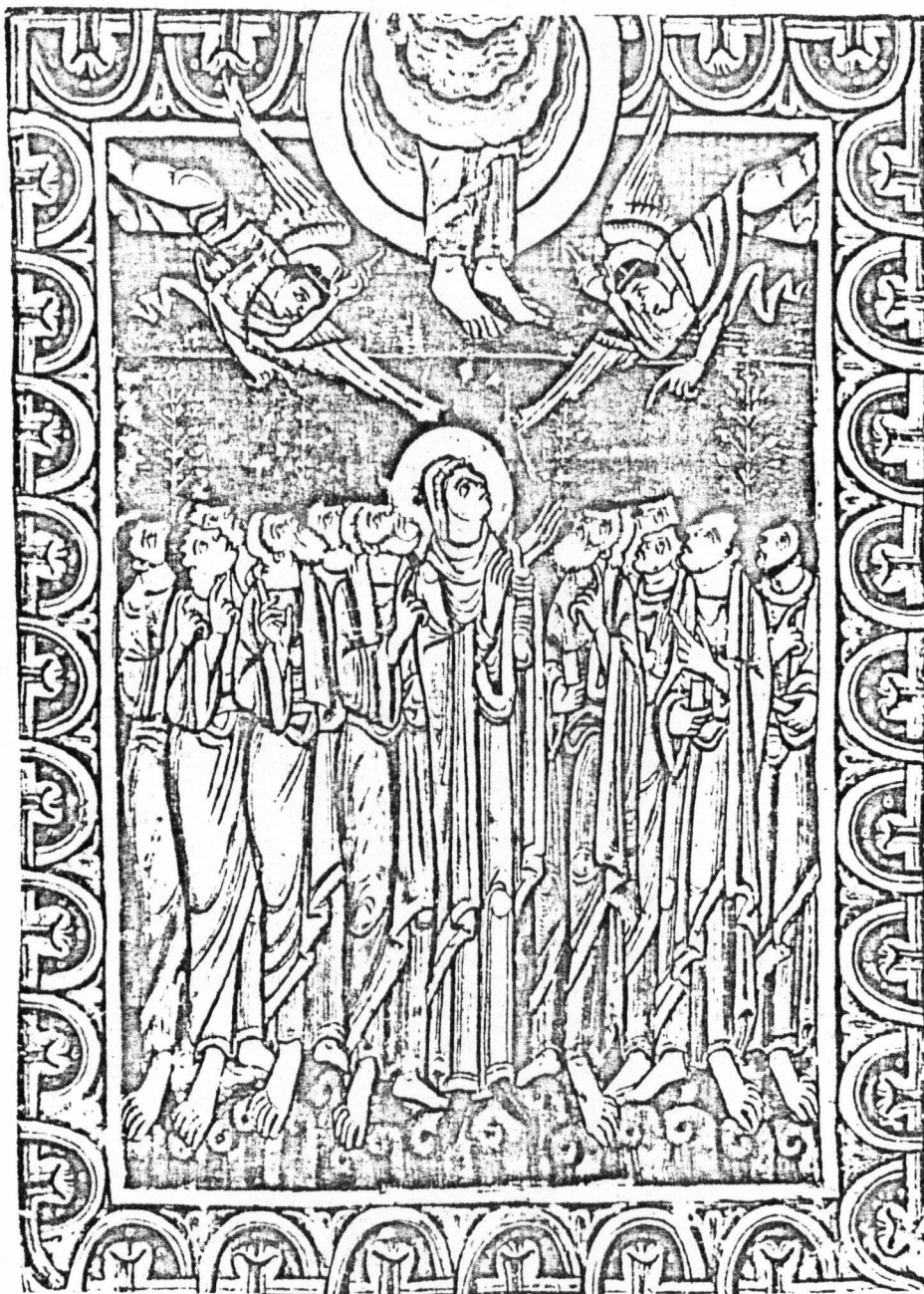MS 120 (Kauffmann, fig.100)
1973

Fig. 95   Ascension, *ca* 1119-1123
           St. Albans Psalter (Hildesheim,
           St. Godehard's. unnumbered ms)
           p.54

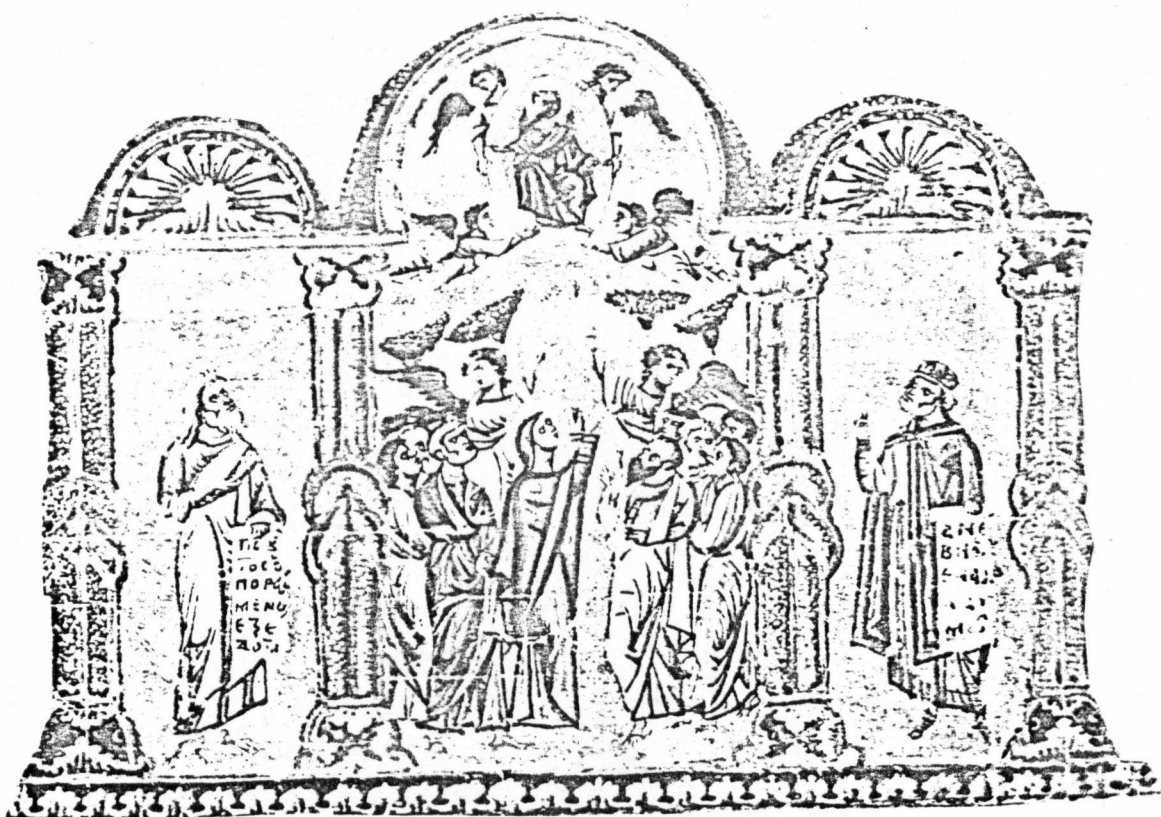   (Pächt, *St.Albans*, Pl.33a)

Fig. 96   Ascension, first half 12th century
Copy of the Homilies of the Virgin by
James of Kokkinobaphos (Paris, Bib.Nat.
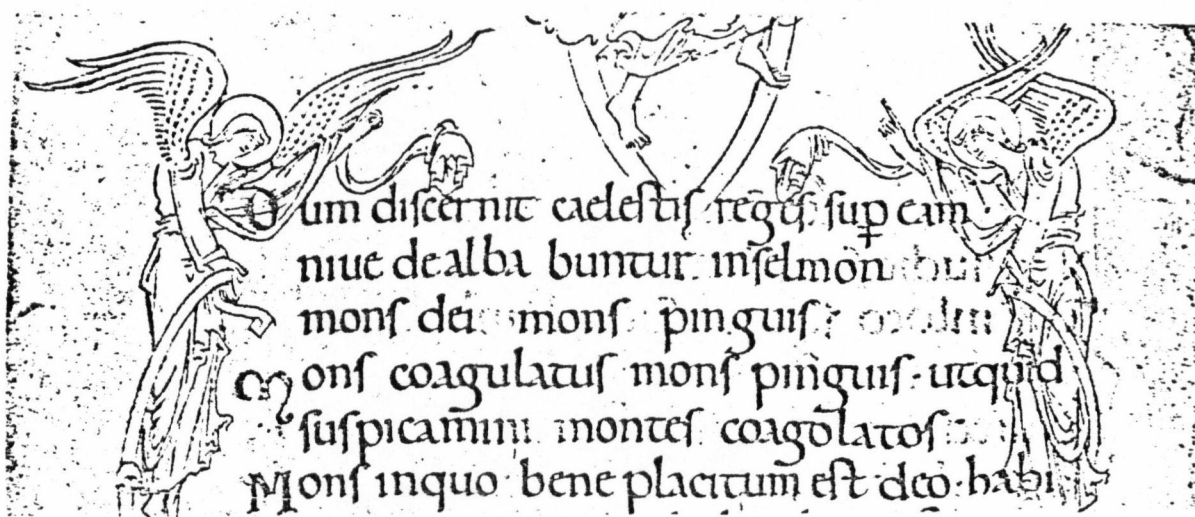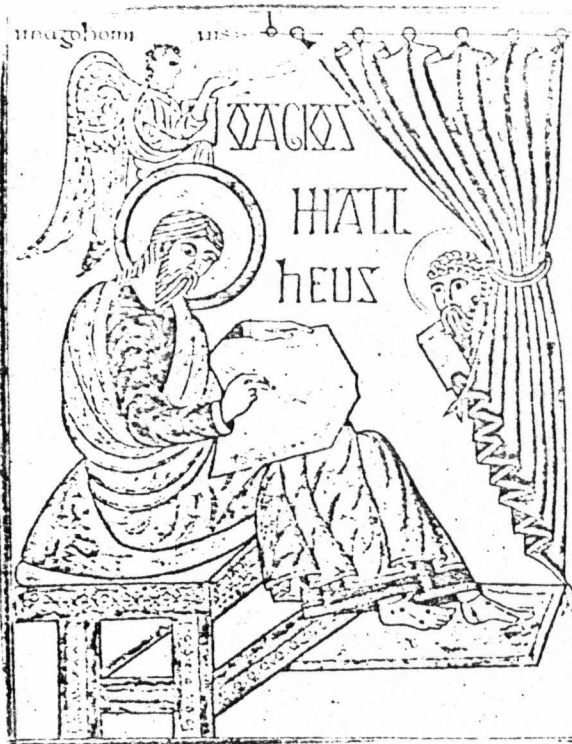MS.grec.94)
(Schug-Wille, p.173).

Fig. 97   Ascension with Disappearing Christ
ca 1000, Psalter from Bury St.Edmonds
(Vatican,Reg.MS.12 folio 73v)

(Schapiro, fig. 3
1943)

Fig. 98   Evangelist symbols, ca 698
           Incised decoration, wooden coffin
           reliquary of St. Cuthbert (Durham
           Cathedral Library)

(Kitzinger, *Coffin Reliquary*
   Pl. I)

St. Matthew (f.25v)

St. Mark (f.93v)

St. Luke (f.137v)

St. John (f. 209v)

Fig. 99   Evangelist Symbols, ca 698-721
            Lindisfarne Gospels (British Museum Cotton
            MS Nero D.IV) Kitzinger, *Coffin Reliquary*
                    Pl.XII

Fig. 100   Evangelist Symbol St. Luke, ca 818-830
           Book of Cerne (Cambridge, University
           Library Ll.I.10) folio 21v.

(Rickert,1954, Pl.62)

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