Alcuin Encyclopedia Article

Alcuin

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Alcuin

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English educator and cleric, also known as Alcuin of York, who, in answering Charlemagne's call for a revival of learning, was instrumental in bringing about the Carolingian renaissance and revision of the Roman Catholic liturgy. As minister of education for Charlemagne's Frankish empire, Alcuin established cathedral schools and scriptoria, which studied, copied, and preserved ancient Christian and pagan manuscripts, including those of the Greek mathematicians. The cursive script he developed for these scriptoria, called Carolingian miniscule, regularized European handwriting and made it more readable. He also wrote lesson texts on arithmetic, astronomy, and geometry and commentaries on religion and education.