

COLOUR, PAINT AND GOLD: THE MATERIALITY OF ENGLISH MANUSCRIPT

ILLUMINATION IN THE TWELFTH CENTURY

TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME 1: TEXT

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ABSTRACT

During the first quarter of the twelfth century artists in the scriptoria of English monastic houses began using a painting technique with a more extensive range of colours than had been usual, and used with thicker and more opaque paint. Later, the use of gold leaf increased and gesso grounds were introduced. Such materials were reserved mainly for prestigious liturgical manuscripts such as Bibles and psalters, and also for illustrated saints' lives. The prefatory miniatures in the St Albans Psalter and the illustrations in the Bury and Winchester Bibles are examples. This study provides a visual and physical examination of many important illuminations—their paint, gold and colour—and explores their relationship with the texts they illustrate.

Original contributions to the scholarship can be found in the chapter on colour, which provides a focus for discussion not available in the previous literature; this includes a survey of colour words used in the Vulgate, and an analysis of the symbolic use of colours by the Alexis Master which reflected centuries of biblical exegesis; in the new analysis and interpretation of the 'Elkanah's Gift' miniature in the Bury Bible; in a new understanding of the materiality of the Four Psalter Leaves; in a clearer view of how the use of vellum was modified to accommodate thicker and heavier materials; in a better understanding of how gold was used, including details of a previously unrecognized decorative technique in the Auct. Bible; in the analysis and identification of hands in some of the manuscripts; in the new identification of an artist's mark in the Bury Bible, and in the emphasis on the writings of Jerome as a source of novel imagery.

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Antiquitates</i>	Josephus, <i>Antiquitates Judicae, Flavii Iosephi opera</i> (Niese, 1892; trans. Whiston, 1737, revised ed., 2006).
<i>Apologia</i>	Bernard of Clairvaux, <i>Apologia ad Guillelmum Abbatem</i> (Leclercq and Rochais, 1963; trans. Rudolph, 1990).
<i>Art Bull.</i>	<i>The Art Bulletin.</i>
ASE	<i>Anglo-Saxon England.</i>
BAA	British Archaeological Association.
BL	British Library.
BM	Bibliothèque Municipale.
<i>Burl. Mag.</i>	<i>The Burlington Magazine.</i>
<i>Camb. Hist. Rev.</i>	<i>Cambridge Historical Review.</i>
CCCC	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College.
CCNMTL	Columbia Centre for New Media Teaching and Learning.
CCSL	<i>Corpus Christianorum Series Latina.</i>
CCCM	<i>Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis.</i>
<i>Confess.</i>	Augustine, <i>Confessionum Libri Tredecim</i> (Verheijen, 1981; trans. Pine-Coffin, 1961).
<i>Cronica</i>	Jocelin of Brakelond, <i>Cronica Jocelini de Brakelonda</i> (Butler, 1949, and trans.).
CSEL	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum.</i>
<i>De Civ. Dei</i>	Augustine, <i>De Civitate Dei Libri XI-XXII</i> (Dombart and Kalb, 1955; also ed. in PL 41: 13-804; trans. Knight, 2009).
<i>De Div. Art.</i>	Theophilus, <i>De Diversis Artibus</i> (Dodwell, 1961, and trans.).
<i>De Doc. Chr.</i>	Augustine, <i>De Doctrina Christiana</i> (PL 34: 15-122; trans. Knight, 2009).
<i>De Inst. Incl.</i>	Aelred of Rievaulx, <i>De Institutione Inclusarum</i> (Talbot, 1971: 635-682; trans. Walker and Webb, London, 1957; modified by Author).
<i>De Sacrosancti</i>	Innocent III, <i>De Sacrosancti Altaris Mysterio</i> (PL 217: 773-916; trans. Author).

- De Tab.* Bede, *De Tabernaculo* (Hurst, 1969: 1-139; trans. Holder, 1994).
- DOP* *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*.
- Douay-Rheims Bible* *The Bible in English* (Challoner, 1792; Rockford ed., 1989).
- EHR* *The English Historical Review*.
- Enarrationes* Angelomus, *Enarrationes in Libros Regum* (PL 115: 243-552; trans. Author).
- Epistula* Jerome, *Epistulae* (Hilberg, 1910-18; trans. Wright, 1933; also trans. Fremantle, 1893, revised Knight, 2009; also trans. Ferrante, 2012).
- Exp. Apoc.* Bede, *Expositio Apocalypseos* (Gryson, 2001; trans. Marshall, 1878).
- Exp. Hyst.* Andrew of St Victor, *Expositio Hystorica in Librum Regum* (van Liere, 1996; trans. Author).
- Exp. Reg.* Hildemar of Corbie, *Expositio Regulae Sancti Benedicti* (Mittermüller, 1880; trans. Braunfels, 1972: 237-38).
- Hist. Calamitatum* Peter Abelard, *Historia Calamitatum* (PL 178; 113-82; trans. Radice, 1974).
- Hist. Sch.* Peter Comestor, *Historia Scholastica Theologiae Disciplinae* (PL 198: 1049-1722; trans. Author).
- JAIC* *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation*.
- JBAA* *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*.
- JHNA* *Journal of the History of Netherlandish Art*.
- JWCI* *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*.
- KJB* *The Holy Bible* (Authorised King James Version).
- Libellus Cuthb.* Reginald of Durham, *Libellus De Admirandis Beati Cuthberti Virtutibus* (Raine, 1835; trans. Shapiro, 1977: 1-27).
- Libellus Godr.* Reginald of Durham, *Libellus De Vita et Miraculis Sancti Godrici* (Stevenson, 1845; trans. Author).
- M. Vita Hug.* Adam of Eynsham, *Magna Vita Sancti Hugonis* (Douie and Farmer, 1961; trans. Author).
- Meditationes* Anselm, *Meditationes* (PL 158: 725-820; trans. Ward, 1973: 221-37).
- Nat. Hist.* Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* (Brotier, 1826; trans. Bostock and Riley, 1855).
- NPNF* *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (revised and trans. Knight, 2009).

<i>Orationes</i>	Anselm, <i>Orationes</i> (PL 158: 855-1014; trans. Ward, 1973: 91-219).
<i>Passio Edm.</i>	Abbo, <i>Passio Sancti Edmundi</i> (Winterbottom, 1972: 65-87; trans. Author).
<i>Phil. Cons.</i>	Boethius, <i>Philosophiae Consolatio</i> (Bieler, 1957; trans. Watts, 1969).
<i>PSAS</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.</i>
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologia Cursus Completus: series Latina</i> , 221 vols (Migne, 1844-65).
<i>Quaest. in Vetus Test.</i>	Isidore of Seville, <i>Quaestiones in Vetus Testamentum</i> (Pl 83: 207-424; trans. Author).
<i>Quaestiones</i>	Pseudo-Jerome, <i>Quaestiones in Libros Regum</i> (Saltman, 1974; trans. Author).
<i>Regula</i>	Benedict, <i>Regula Sancti Benedicti</i> (McCann, 1952; trans. White, 2008).
<i>Regulae Past.</i>	Gregory the Great, <i>Regulae Pastoralis Liber</i> (PL 77: 13-128; trans. Knight, 2009).
<i>RMLW</i>	<i>Revised Medieval Latin Word-list.</i>
<i>Sententium</i>	Peter Lombard, <i>Sententium Quatuor Libri; Liber IV De Doctrina Signorum</i> , (PL 192: 839-962; trans. Silano, 2010).
<i>Sermones</i>	Hugh of St Victor, <i>Sermones Centum</i> (PL 177: 899-1210; trans. Author).
<i>V&A</i>	Victoria and Albert Museum.
<i>Vita Ailredi</i>	Walter Daniel, <i>Vita Ailredi Abbatis Rievall'</i> (Powicke, 1950, and trans.).
<i>Vulgate</i>	<i>Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Versionem</i> (Weber, 1983).

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125. Musician with stringed instrument, detail f. 32v Gough Psalter. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Gough Liturg. 2. The Bodleian Library (Bodleian Library Luna Database).
126. Bishop, detail f. 9r Sermons of Maurice de Sully. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Douce 270. The Bodleian Library (Bodleian Library Luna Database).

127. Last Supper, f. 11r Douce 293. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Douce 293. The Bodleian Library (Bodleian Library Luna Database).
128. Holy Women at the Tomb, f. 13r Shaftesbury Psalter. London, BL Landsdowne MS 383. The British Library Board (British Library Digital Database).
129. Job initial, f. 304r Auct. Bible. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Auct. E. infra 1. The Bodleian Library (Bodleian Library Luna Database).
130. Hosea initial, f. 274v Auct. Bible. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Auct. E. infra 1. The Bodleian Library (Bodleian Library Luna Database).
131. Beatus initial f. 2r. Auct. Bible. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Auct. E. infra 2. The Bodleian Library (Bodleian Library Luna Database).
132. Psalm initials, f. 44r Auct. Bible. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Auct. E. infra 2. The Bodleian Library (Bodleian Library Luna Database).
133. Morgan Leaf, recto. New York, Morgan Library MS M. 619. The Morgan Library and Museum (Donovan, 1993 fig. 27).
134. Green paint, Hannah and Eli, Morgan Leaf recto detail. New York, Morgan Library MS M. 619. The Morgan Library and Museum (Morgan Library).
135. Samuel's tunics, Morgan Leaf recto detail. New York, Morgan Library MS M. 619. The Morgan Library and Museum (Morgan Library).
136. King Antiochus, unfinished frontispiece to Maccabees, detail f. 350v Winchester Bible. Winchester Cathedral Library MS 17. The Dean and Chapter of Winchester (Donovan, 1993 fig. 71).
137. Two figures, Ezra initial, detail f. 342r Winchester Bible. Winchester Cathedral Library MS 17. The Dean and Chapter of Winchester (Donovan, 1993 fig. 71).
138. Figure by Apocrypha Master, detail f. 12r Bodleian Comedies of Terence. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Auct. F. 2. 13. The Bodleian Library (Bodleian Library Luna Database).
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140. Unpainted figure by Master of the Leaping Figures, intitial to Epistle to Philimon, f. 459r Winchester Bible. Winchester Cathedral Library MS 17. The Dean and Chapter of Winchester (Oakeshott, 1945 pl. X).
141. Figure of Egyptian, Exodus initial, detail f. 21v Winchester Bible. Winchester Cathedral Library MS 17. The Dean and Chapter of Winchester (Donovan, 1993 fig. 17).
142. Morgan Leaf, verso. New York, Morgan Library MS M. 619. The Morgan Library and Museum (Donovan, 1993 fig. 27).
143. Grey undercoat over green, Morgan Leaf verso detail. New York, Morgan Library MS M. 619. The Morgan Library and Museum (Morgan Library).

144. Red under gold, detail f. 70r Bury Bible. CCCC MS 2. Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College (Parker Library on the Web).
145. Red under gold, detail f. 134v Dover Bible. CCCC MS 2. Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College (Parker Library on the Web).
146. Red outline and glue, Flagellation, detail p. 44 St Albans Psalter. Hildesheim, St Godehard's Church MS 1. Dombibliothek Hildesheim (The St Albans Psalter Project).
147. Glue layer, detail f. 158r Lambeth Bible. London, Lambeth Palace MS 3. Lambeth Palace Library (Shepard, 2007 pl. 13).
148. Christ's golden robe, Entry into Jerusalem, detail p. 37 St Albans Psalter. Hildesheim, St Godehard's Church MS 1. Dombibliothek Hildesheim (The St Albans Psalter Project).
149. Gold in Psalm heading, detail f. 93v Vespasian Psalter. London, BL Cotton MS Vespasian A. I. The British Library Board (McKendrick and Doyle, 2007 pl. 16, p. 29).
150. Painted gold, St Ætheldryth, detail f. 90v Benedictional of St Æthelwold. London, BL Add. MS 49598. The British Library Board (<http://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/resources/facsimiles.htm>).
151. David's golden tunic, detail f. 93 Eadui Psalter. London, BL Arundel MS 155. The British Library Board (British Library Digital Database).
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153. Robes, Jeremiah initial by the Leaping Figures Master, detail f. 148r Winchester Bible. Winchester Cathedral Library MS 17. The Dean and Chapter of Winchester (<http://winchester-cathedral.org.uk/>).
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155. Gold show-through, Ps. 86 initial, p. 245 St Albans Psalter. Hildesheim, St Godehard's Church MS 1. Dombibliothek Hildesheim (The St Albans Psalter Project).
156. Gold leaf pieces, Ps. 112, detail p. 303 St Albans Psalter. Hildesheim, St Godehard's Church MS 1. Dombibliothek Hildesheim (The St Albans Psalter Project).
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164. Gold leaf pieces, Genesis initial, detail f. 6v Lambeth Bible. London, Lambeth Palace MS 3. Lambeth Palace Library (Shepard, 2007 pl. 2).
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166. Gold leaf on unfinished initial to Joshua, f. 104 Auct Bible. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Auct. E. infra 1. The Bodleian Library (Bodleian Library Luna Database).
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168. Psalm initials, f. 51r Auct. Bible. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Auct. E. infra 2. The Bodleian Library (Bodleian Library Luna Database).
169. Tinted gold, initial to Exodus, f. 18r Abbot Simon's Bible. CCCC MS 48. Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College (Parker Library on the Web).
170. Tinted gold, initial to Paul's Letter to Ephesians, f. 258v Abbot Simon's Bible. CCCC MS 48. Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College (Parker Library on the Web).
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172. Gold leaf, initial to Galatians, detail f. 260r Dover Bible. CCCC MS 4. Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College (Parker Library on the Web).
173. Gold leaf pieces, initial to Galatians, detail f. 260r Dover Bible. CCCC MS 4. Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College (Parker Library on the Web).
174. Gold leaf pieces, initial to Galatians, detail f. 260r Dover Bible. CCCC MS 4. Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College (Parker Library on the Web).

175. Gold decorated with black, initial to II Chronicles, f. 97v Dover Bible. CCCC MS 4. Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College (Parker Library on the Web).
176. Gold decorated with black, initial to capitula, f. 242v Dover Bible. CCCC MS 4. Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College (Parker Library on the Web).
177. Piece of gold leaf, initial to Deuteronomy, detail f. 64v Laud Bible. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Laud Misc. 752. The Bodleian Library (Bodleian Library Luna Database).
178. Psalm initial, p. 254. St Albans Psalter. Hildesheim, St Godehard's Church MS 1. Dombibliothek Hildesheim (The St Albans Psalter Project).
179. Show-through of colours and gold on p. 253 St Albans Psalter. Hildesheim, St Godehard's Church MS 1. Dombibliothek Hildesheim (The St Albans Psalter Project).
180. Gold panels, initial to Hosea, f. 318r Bury Bible. CCCC MS 2. Parker Library (Thomson, 2001 pl. 32).
181. Gold background, St John, Avesnes Leaf. Avesne-sur-Helpe, Musée de la Société archéologique, the Avesnes Leaves (A World History of Art at <http://all-art.org/>).
182. Gold background, detail f. 117r Pericopes Book of Henry II. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS Clm. 4452. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (Wikipedia).
183. Gold background, Adoration of the Magi, detail f. 8r Gospel Lectionary. New York, Morgan Library MS G. 44. The Morgan Library and Museum (Morgan Library).
184. Gold background, Entry into Jerusalem, detail f. 26r Gospel Lectionary. New York, Morgan Library MS M. 780. The Morgan Library and Museum (Morgan Library).
185. Gold background, St Luke, f. 76v Greek New Testament. London, BL Add. MS 28815. The British Library Board (Reeve, 2007 p. 36).
186. Gold background, f. 9v Queen Melisende's Psalter. London, BL Egerton MS 1139. The British Library Board (British Library Digital Database).
187. Gold background, Four Evangelists, f. 3v Latin Gospels. Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. MS 5974. Vatican Library (Folda, 2008 fig. 37).
188. Gold background in Ruth miniature, detail f. 130r Lambeth Bible. London, Lambeth Palace MS 3. Lambeth Palace Library (Palmer and Brown, 2010 p. 40).
189. Gold background, initial to Ephesians, detail f. 262v Dover Bible. CCCC MS 4. Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College (Parker Library on the Web).
190. Incised gold background, St Matthew, f. 11v Greek Gospels. Modena, Biblioteca Estense Cod. Gr. 1. Modena, Biblioteca Estense (Wikimedia Commons).

191. Incised gold background, St Matthew, detail f. 30v Greek Gospels. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Cromwell 16. The Bodleian Library (Bodleian Library Luna Database).
192. Incised gold background, St John, detail f. 205r Greek Gospels. Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. gr. 364. Vatican Library (www.vatican.va/exhibits).
193. Patterns and colour, Job initial, detail f. 304r Auct. Bible. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Auct. E. infra 1. The Bodleian Library (Bodleian Library Luna Database).
194. Drawing of some pen-drawn motifs in Auct. Bible vol. 1 (Author).
195. Gold form of Hosea initial, detail f. 274v Auct. Bible. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Auct. E. infra 1. The Bodleian Library (Bodleian Library Luna Database).
196. Drawing of incised motifs on Hosea initial, Auct. Bible vol. 1 (Author).
197. Gold form of Daniel initial, detail f. 264r Auct Bible. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Auct. E. infra 1. The Bodleian Library (Bodleian Library Luna Database).
198. Drawing of incised motifs on Daniel initial, Auct. Bible vol. 1 (Author).
199. Gold form of initial 'H' to Job, f. 292v Auct Bible. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Auct. E. infra 1. The Bodleian Library (Bodleian Library Luna Database).
200. Drawing of incised motifs on gold of Job initial, Auct. Bible vol. 1 (Author).
201. Drawing, of various ring, dot and cross motifs in gold of Auct. Bible vol. 1 (Author).
202. Drawing of various motifs in gold of Auct. Bible vol. 1 (Author).
203. Iona spoon, detail. National Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh (Stratford, 1986 pl. XIIIb).
204. Drawing of diaper strip in Haggai initial, f. 287r Auct. Bible (Author).
205. Drawing of diaper strips in Zachariah initial, f. 288r Auct. Bible (Author).
206. Gold form of Haggai initial f. 287r Auct. Bible. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Auct. E. infra 1. The Bodleian Library (Bodleian Library Luna Database).
207. Diaper strip on initial to II Samuel (II Kings) initial, detail f. 149r Auct. Bible. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Auct. E. infra 1. The Bodleian Library (Bodleian Library Luna Database).
208. Drawing of diaper patterns on initial to II Samuel (II Kings), f. 149r Auct. Bible (Author).
209. Diaper strip on initial to Esther, detail f. 124r Dover Bible. Dover Bible. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 4. Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College (Parker Library on the Web).
210. English nielloed silver flask. St-Maurice d' Agaune (Stratford, 1986 pl. XIVb).

211. English nielloed silver flask, detail. St-Maurice d' Agaune (Stratford, 1986 pl. XIVa).
212. Drawing of incised dots on gold, initial to I Kings (III Kings), f. 165r Lambeth Bible (Author).
213. Drawing of incised dots on gold, initial to Isaiah, f. 198v Lambeth Bible (Author).
214. Incised gold, initial to Zephaniah, f. 266v Dover Bible. CCCC MS 4. Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College (Parker Library on the Web).
215. Drawing of incised gold, Zephaniah initial f. 266v Dover Bible (Author).
216. Incised gold roundel initial to Nahum, detail f. 265r Dover Bible. CCCC MS 3. Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College (Parker Library on the Web).
217. Incised gold, Micah initial, f. 263r Dover Bible. CCCC MS 3. Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College (Parker Library on the Web).
218. Drawing of incised gold, Micah initial f. 263r Dover Bible (Author).
219. Archbishop Hubert Walter's chalice. Canterbury Cathedral Treasury (Stratford, 1982 pl. XXIVA).
220. Detail of incised crosshatched triangles on the foot of Archbishop Hubert Walter's chalice. Canterbury Cathedral Treasury (Stratford, 1982 pl. XXVA).
221. Rotated detail of initial to II Chronicles, f. 97v Dover Bible. CCCC MS 4. Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College (Parker Library on the Web).
222. Detail of silver drinking cup, with niello decoration. Metropolitan Museum of Art. (metmuseum.org).
223. Gold, Judith initial, detail f. 134r Dover Bible. CCCC MS 4. Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College (Parker Library on the Web).
224. Drawing, Judith initial f. 134r. Dover Bible (Author).
225. Gesso and gold, initial, detail f. 3v Hunterian Psalter. Glasgow University Library MS Hunter U. 3. 2. (229). University of Glasgow Library (<http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk>).
226. Gesso and gold, roundel, detail f. 3v Hunterian Psalter. Glasgow University Library MS Hunter U. 3. 2. (229). University of Glasgow Library (<http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk>).
227. Drawing, incised patterns on gold backgrounds, Hunterian Psalter (Author).
228. Drawing, incised patterns on gold backgrounds, Hunterian Psalter (Author).
229. Damaged incised diaper pattern, Isaac miniature, detail f. 9v Hunterian Psalter. Glasgow University Library MS Hunter U. 3. 2. (229). University of Glasgow Library (<http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk>).
230. Drawing, incised patterns on gold of Psalm initials, Hunterian Psalter (Author).

231. Gold in Psalm initial, f. 449v Hunterian Psalter. Glasgow University Library MS Hunter U. 3. 2. (229). University of Glasgow Library (<http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk>).
232. Incised gold pattern, author portrait, f. 1r Peter Lombard Sentences. Troyes, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 900 (<http://www.enluminures.culture.fr>).
233. Drawing, incised patterns in gold, f. 1r Peter Lombard Sentences (Author).
234. Drawing incised patterns, Beatus initial, f. 17r Copenhagen Psalter (Author).
235. Drawing, incised marks in gold, Beatus initial, f. 33v Gough Psalter (Author).
236. Gold leaf and green cross, Genesis initial, detail f. 5r Winchester Bible. Winchester Bible. Winchester Cathedral Library MS 17. The Dean and Chapter of Winchester (<http://winchester-cathedral.org.uk/>).
237. Gold, Adam and Eve, detail f. 7v Hunterian Psalter. Glasgow University Library MS Hunter U. 3. 2. (229). University of Glasgow Library (<http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk>).
238. Baptism f. 5r from detached miniature cycle, MS M. 44. New York, Morgan Library MS M. 44. The Morgan Library and Museum (Morgan Library).
239. Detail, doubled vellum, p. 2 Imago Mundi. CCCC MS 66. Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College (Parker Library on the Web).
240. Opening of St Matthew's Gospel, f. 16r Trier Gospels (Gospels of Otto III). Manchester, John Rylands Library MS lat. 98. University of Manchester (Alexander, 1978 pl. 12).
241. St Luke, f. 37v Mostyn Gospels. New York, Morgan Library MS M. 777. The Morgan Library and Museum (Morgan Library).
242. Patched initial, Jerome's prologue f. 5v Bury Bible. CCCC MS 2. Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College (Thomson, 2001 pl. 10).
243. Initial to Ezra, f. 131v Morgan Lothian Bible. New York, Morgan Library MS M. 791. The Morgan Library and Museum (Morgan Library).
244. Patched miniature, f. 9r Life of St Cuthbert. London, BL Yates Thompson MS 26. The British Library Board (British Library Digital Database).
245. Genesis initial, f. 7v Abbot Simon's Bible. CCCC MS 48. Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College (Parker Library on the Web).
246. Genesis initial, detail f. 7v, and show-through on f. 7r, detail. Abbot Simon's Bible. CCCC MS 48. Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College (Parker Library on the Web).
247. Silk curtain raised, initial 'H', Assumption of the Virgin, f. 112v Morgan Gradual and Sacramentary. New York, Morgan Library MS M. 711. The Morgan Library and Museum (Morgan Library).
248. Corrector's inserted verse, detail p. 97, Tours Bible. St Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 75. St Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek (<http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/>).

249. Correction, detail p. 168, Tours Bible. St Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 77. St Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek (<http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/>).
250. Garment colours, Thomas miniature p. 52 St Albans Psalter. Hildesheim, St Godehard's Church MS 1. Dombibliothek Hildesheim (The St Albans Psalter Project).
251. Red and green garments, mosaic, San Vitale (Grabar, 1953 p. 63).
252. Portrait of Justinian, mosaic, San Vitale (Grabar, 1953 p. 66).
253. Interior Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Ravenna (<http://mybyzantine.wordpress.com/>).
254. Herod's robe, detail p. 23 St Albans Psalter. Hildesheim, St Godehard's Church MS 1. Dombibliothek Hildesheim (The St Albans Psalter Project).
255. Apostle's robe, detail p. 52 St Albans Psalter. Hildesheim, St Godehard's Church MS 1. Dombibliothek Hildesheim (The St Albans Psalter Project).
256. Coronation colours, detail f. 8v Life of St Edmund. New York, Morgan Library MS M. 736. The Morgan Library and Museum (Morgan Library).
257. Silk tunic, detail f. 12v Life of St Edmund. New York, Morgan Library MS M. 736. The Morgan Library and Museum (Morgan Library).
258. Solomon's silk tunic, detail f. 57r Dover Bible. CCC MS 4. Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College (Parker Library on the Web).
259. St Luke's silk robe, detail f. 193r Dover Bible. CCC MS 4. Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College (Parker Library on the Web).
260. Byzantine angel's robe, detail f. 12v Sermons of St John Chrysostom. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS Coislin 79 (Wikimedia Commons).
261. The finding of Edmund's body, detail f. 15r, Life of St Edmund. New York, Morgan Library MS M. 736. The Morgan Library and Museum (Morgan Library).
262. Moses, detail f. 94r Bury Bible. CCC MS 2. Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College (Parker Library on the Web).
263. Ruth gleaning, detail f. 130r, Lambeth Bible. London, Lambeth Palace MS 3. Lambeth Palace Library (Grabar and Nordenfalk, 1958 p. 168).
264. The Descent from the Cross, p. 47 St Albans Psalter. Hildesheim, St Godehard's Church MS 1. Dombibliothek Hildesheim (The St Albans Psalter Project).
265. Magdalen opening, pp. 50 and 51 St Albans Psalter. Hildesheim, St Godehard's Church MS 1. Dombibliothek Hildesheim (The St Albans Psalter Project).
266. St Martin's cloak, p. 53 St Albans Psalter. Hildesheim, St Godehard's Church MS 1. Dombibliothek Hildesheim (The St Albans Psalter Project).

267. Alexis drawing and coloured text, p. 57 St Albans Psalter. Hildesheim, St Godehard's Church MS 1. Dombibliothek Hildesheim (The St Albans Psalter Project).
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269. Danish messenger, detail f. 10v Life of St Edmund. New York, Morgan Library MS M. 736. The Morgan Library and Museum (Morgan Library).
270. Danish messenger, detail f. 11r Life of St Edmund. New York, Morgan Library MS M. 736. The Morgan Library and Museum (Morgan Library).
271. Danish messenger, detail f. 11v Life of St Edmund. New York, Morgan Library MS M. 736. The Morgan Library and Museum (Morgan Library).
272. Ascension of Christ, detail p. 54 St Albans Psalter. Hildesheim, St Godehard's Church MS 1. Dombibliothek Hildesheim (The St Albans Psalter Project).
273. Three apostles, detail f. 4r Benedictional of St Æthelwold. London, BL Add. MS 49598. The British Library Board (Wormald, 1959 pl. 2)
274. Three martyred saints, f. 119v Passionale, Arundel 91. London, BL MS Arundel 91. The British Library Board (British Library Digital Database).
275. Assumption of the Virgin, f. 75v Sacramentary M. 641. New York, Morgan Library MS M. 641. The Morgan Library and Museum (Morgan Library).
276. Ascension of Christ, f. 48r Lectionary M. 780. New York, Morgan Library MS M. 780. The Morgan Library and Museum (Morgan Library).
277. Ascension of Christ, f. 33v Gospel Lectionary Egerton 809. London, BL Egerton MS 809. The British Library Board (British Library Digital Database).
278. Apostles' tunics, Transfiguration, Choir vault, Church of St Sophia, Ohrid (Chatzidakis and Grabar, 1965 pl. 30).
279. Blue tunics, detail f. 6v Queen Melisende's Psalter. London, BL Egerton MS 1139. The British Library Board (British Library Digital Database).
280. St John dictating, f. 178v Codex Ebneranius. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Auct. T. infra 1.10. Bodleian Library (Bodleian Library Luna Database).
281. White tunics, nave mosaics Sant' Appolinare Nuovo (<http://mybyzantine.wordpress.com/>)
282. Christ and the centurion, detail f. 22r Codex Egberti. Trier, Stadtbibliothek, cod. 24. Der Stadtbibliothek Trier (Wikimedia Commons)
283. Christ hands the keys to Peter, detail f. 152 Pericopes Book of Henry II. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS Clm. 4452. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (<http://www.mcah.columbia.edu/>)
284. Harrowing of Hell, detail p. 49 St Albans Psalter. Hildesheim, St Godehard's Church MS 1. Dombibliothek Hildesheim (The St Albans Psalter Project).

285. Christ and Peter, detail f. 68v Anselm Meditationes. Verdun, BM MS 70. Verdun B.M. (<http://www.enluminures.culture.fr/>).
286. Christ in House of Simon, detail p. 36 St Albans Psalter. Hildesheim, St Godehard's Church MS 1. Dombibliothek Hildesheim (The St Albans Psalter Project).
287. Pilate and the Jews, detail p. 45 St Albans Psalter. Hildesheim, St Godehard's Church MS 1. Dombibliothek Hildesheim (The St Albans Psalter Project).
288. Ascension, f. 13v. Shaftesbury Psalter. London, BL Lansdowne MS 383. The British Library Board (British Library Digital Database).
289. Christ, detail f. 281v Bury Bible. CCCC MS 2. Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College (Thomson, 2001 pl. 8).
290. Sponsa et Sponsus, f. 270v Winchester Bible. Winchester Cathedral Library MS 17. The Dean and Chapter of Winchester (<http://winchester-cathedral.org.uk/>).
291. Hosea initial, f. 198r Winchester Bible. Winchester Cathedral Library MS 17. The Dean and Chapter of Winchester (<http://winchester-cathedral.org.uk/>).
292. Samuel and David, Morgan Leaf, verso detail. New York, Morgan Library MS M. 619. The Morgan Library and Museum (Morgan Library).
293. Ezechiel initial, f. 258v Lambeth Bible. London, Lambeth Palace MS 3. Lambeth Palace Library (Shepard, 2007 pl. 12).
294. Isaiah initial, detail f. 173v Dover Bible. CCCC MS 3. Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College (Parker Library on the Web).
295. Tunics in initial, detail f. 186v Bodleian Anselm. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Auct. D. 2. 6. Bodleian Library (Bodleian Library Luna Database).
296. Christ and apostles. Sanctuary apse, Church of Our Lady, Asinou (The Guide to the Church of Our Lady of Asinou p. 14).
297. Blue panels, detail of ceiling of St Michael's Church, Hildesheim (Michaelisgemeinde Hildesheim).
298. Adam and Eve, red panel, detail of ceiling of St Michael's Church, Hildesheim (Michaelisgemeinde Hildesheim).
299. Psalm 105 initial, p. 205 St Albans Psalter. Hildesheim, St Godehard's Church MS 1. Dombibliothek Hildesheim (The St Albans Psalter Project).
300. Daniel miniature, f. 285v Lambeth Bible. London, Lambeth Palace MS 3. Lambeth Palace Library (Shepard, 2007 pl. 14).
301. Red hats, Entombment, detail p. 48 St Albans Psalter. Hildesheim, St Godehard's Church MS 1. Dombibliothek Hildesheim (The St Albans Psalter Project).
302. Saxon leaders, detail f. 8r Life of St Edmund. New York, Morgan Library MS M. 736. The Morgan Library and Museum (Morgan Library).

303. Edmund and archers, detail f. 14r Life of St Edmund. New York, Morgan Library MS M. 736. The Morgan Library and Museum (Morgan Library).
304. Edmund beheaded, detail f. 14v Life of St Edmund. New York, Morgan Library MS M. 736. The Morgan Library and Museum (Morgan Library).
305. Satan's red panel, detail f. 11v Hunterian Psalter. Glasgow University Library MS Hunter U. 3. 2. (229). University of Glasgow Library (<http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk/>).
306. Satan's red panel, f. 22r Gough Psalter. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Gough Liturg. 2. The Bodleian Library (Bodleian Library Luna Database).
307. Satan's red panel, First temptation of Christ, French glass *c.* 1179-80, from Troyes Cathedral. Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A Images).
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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

The research undertaken for this thesis and the ideas expressed in it are entirely the work of the author.

INTRODUCTION

Books are not made to be believed, but to be subjected to enquiry. When we consider a book, we mustn't ask ourselves what it says but what it means, a precept that the commentators of the holy books had very clearly in mind.¹

In 2009 the St Albans Psalter was unbound and exhibited at the Dom-Museum in Hildesheim.² To the visitor, surrounded by the separated miniatures in a single exhibition space, the colours seemed startlingly bright and fresh. Although dominated by the rich blues, other colours were unexpectedly vibrant; the lush greens especially caught the eye because in virtually all reproductions they appear relatively muted and flat.

After the exhibition the unbound bi-folios were available for examination at the Dombibliothek at Hildesheim, and it was possible to look at them in the same way the artists saw them, spread out as they applied their colours, and to see and compare pairs of images hardly seen together in this way since they were painted in the twelfth century.³ Moreover, close examination of the miniatures revealed the artist's touch in the under drawings, in his brush strokes, variations in the painted and gilded surfaces, and his corrections. To find this human trace, the touch of the artist, in such a well-known manuscript made almost 900 years ago, was like encountering buried treasure.

Similarly, examination of the two twelfth-century Psalter Leaves in the Morgan Library revealed unexpected signs of modernization, where a delicate, lightly handled medium had been over-painted with a very different opaque layer of thicker body

¹ Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose*, 1984: 316.

² 12th September 2009 - 24th January 2010, at the Dom-Museum, Hildesheim.

³ The word 'artist' will be used to denote the painters, illuminators and designers of the illuminations under discussion. This follows the practise of Oakeshott, Dodwell, Geddes and others. Where function sometimes requires it, especially when describing a division of labour, different words such as draughtsman or colourist will be used.

colour; the two other Leaves in London were similarly over-painted. This did not seem to have been acknowledged or mentioned anywhere in the literature on the Leaves, and demanded exploration and explanation.

These encounters emphasized how little is known about the coloured surfaces of Romanesque illuminations, and even less about the processes used to create them. This study therefore takes as its starting point the materiality of the illuminations, the physical nature of the surfaces, the layers of paint, gold, and colour, the marks on their surfaces, and sometimes beneath the surfaces. Important manuscripts examined include the St Albans Psalter, Bury Bible, Lambeth Bible, Dover Bible, Morgan Life of St Edmund, Verdun Anselm, Auct. Bible, Laud (Giffard) Bible, Morgan Leaf, and the Four Canterbury Psalter Leaves.

HISTORIOGRAPHY

As John Gage has noted, “writers with no important visual interests” have tended to look no further than iconography, and have turned away from “the visual characteristics of artefacts towards a concern with the sort of representation which may readily be conveyed in verbal terms”.⁴ Similarly, Camille described Art History scholarship as “overly text-driven”.⁵ This study begins with the illuminations themselves, and focuses on the issues which the artists dealt with while planning and completing them, including their responses to texts.

The illuminations featured have generated an extensive scholarly literature, and much of it has been iconographic or text-based in nature, but they have also been very fully explored stylistically. There have been important contributions made by many scholars, including Alexander, Ayres, Cahn, Dodwell, Henderson, Kauffmann, Oakeshott, Pächt, Schapiro, Stirnemann and Wormald, all of whom have added to our

⁴ Gage, 1993: 10.

⁵ Camille, 1994: 68.

understanding. Scholars who have studied palaeography, such as Thomson and Parker McLachlan, have analysed scribal writing styles and contemporary documents in centres such as St Albans and Bury St Edmunds, providing details of locations and dates of production which have become accepted with some confidence.

Nevertheless, the great modern catalogues and monographs are now thirty to over fifty years old: Pächt, Dodwell and Wormald's *St Albans Psalter* from 1960, Kauffmann's survey from 1975, Oakeshott's *Two Winchester Bibles* of 1981, and Cahn's *Romanesque Bible Illumination* from 1982. They are marvels of detailed and thorough scholarship, and they have undoubtedly stood the test of time, but some of the information they provide requires updating.

A generation of scholars including Donovan, Petzold, de Hamel, Haney, Heslop and Geddes has, since then, produced important work and pushed the scholarship forward, not least Haney's work on iconography and Geddes's on the St Albans Psalter Project at Aberdeen. Gameson's catalogue *Early Anglo-Norman Manuscripts* has proved invaluable, as has Thomson's *Manuscripts from St Albans Abbey*; and without the online images of the St Albans Psalter on the Aberdeen University website, which introduced the author to medieval colour, this thesis would not have been possible.

Another important contribution was Andreas Petzold's breakthrough 1986 doctoral thesis, which contains a comparative study of the colours found in the St Albans Psalter miniatures and two or three closely related manuscripts. He described and categorized individual colours and the pigments used (frequently citing Roosen-Runge),⁶ and each colour was identified by a number, and listed in an appendix. By making a sweep of the previous scholarship, he identified their supposed stylistic and iconographic antecedents in Ottonian art and elsewhere. In addition, he made some valid suggestions about

⁶ Petzold cited Roosen-Runge, 1967, *Farbgebung*. Roosen-Runge has been shown to have been mistaken in his conclusion about the pigments used in the Lindisfarne Gospels and other manuscripts, especially the blues and greens. See Brown, 2003 : 434-35.

possible symbolic meanings of colour, but apart from some brief discussion of what he calls “antithetical pairs” of pages, he did not discuss openings, or mnemonic colour.

While acknowledging the importance of Petzold’s thesis, this study takes a much broader view of the evolution of illumination during the twelfth century, drawing together research on materiality and colour, stylistic developments, technical processes, patronage and textual sources.

Alexander’s *Medieval Illuminators and their Methods of Work* is a wide-ranging study, well-illustrated largely in black and white, encompassing the whole of the medieval period in Europe. It has useful detailed references from earlier scholarship, and it most usefully deals with the transmission of iconography, style and motifs, using many illustrations for comparison. Basic methods of production are described: painting techniques, divisions of labour, the use of model books, artists contracts, materials and their cost, and patronage. As such it is an indispensable reference work.

The various other online collections should be mentioned here: the Parker Library, the Bodleian Library, French municipal libraries on the *Enluminures* web site, the Getty Museum, the British Library, the V&A, the Morgan Library and the St Galler Bibliothek to name just a few. Access to coloured images of complete manuscripts, with bibliographies and related documentation, provides a resource of inestimable value for students of medieval manuscripts and their colour.

Exhibitions and their catalogues have included *Cambridge Illuminations* at the Fitzwilliam Museum (2005), *Sacred* (2007) at the British Library, *Albani Psalter* (2010) at Hildesheim, and *Lambeth Palace Library Treasures* at Lambeth Palace (2010).

METHODOLOGY

An interest in the colours used in the St Albans Psalter was the author’s starting point, and colour is therefore a central theme. In recent scholarship twelfth-century colour has

been rather disregarded, and the study therefore attempts to redress the balance; virtually all 364 illustrations in Volume 2 of the thesis are in colour, for example. Colour is considered a material in itself, separate from the paint in which it is suspended, or the pigments from which it was made, and an attempt is made to re-evaluate its importance.

The author has endeavoured to find an approach to writing about the colour and materiality of the illuminations without needing to discuss pigments, but in a way that explores how the illuminations were made, and to tie this as closely as possible to the more usual scholarship about who made them, when, and for whom, how and where they were used, and who read them. Colour is regarded as having important iconographic and symbolic function, even though it is acknowledged that it was understood in ways that are still rather unclear. Because of this emphasis, there is only minimal discussion of traditional iconography.

The relationship between colour and the various types of source texts available to artists and their advisors in the twelfth century is discussed, beginning with the Vulgate text itself,⁷ and the four colours of the Tabernacle, followed by the work of Jerome, Augustine, Gregory the Great, and Bede, and others, and eventually twelfth-century commentators such as Hugh of St Victor and Bernard of Clairvaux. The author has reached back as far as possible to the original primary sources used by the artists and their advisors, rather than relying entirely on the secondary literature. The work of the Alexis Master, as the first great twelfth-century colourist in England, is considered in

⁷ The Vulgate Latin text quoted is the *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*, ed. R. Weber, 3rd edition, (Stuttgart, 1983). The Latin texts of Jerome's Vulgate prologues are also from the Stuttgart version. English translations from the Vulgate are from the Douay-Rheims Bible, (Rockford, 1989). Where necessary, oddities in the translation of colour words in Douay-Rheims have been pointed out in the thesis text. Where it is felt to be necessary, and particularly when discussing colour words, or critical meanings, the original Latin texts are placed in footnotes. Latin source texts are from recognized scholarly editions, or from the *Patrologia Latina*. Translations from Latin into English are from established bibliographic sources, checked and sometimes modified by the author, or translated by the author when no other accurate translations could be found.

the light of these source texts, as is the work of later artists who may or may not have been influenced by his work, such as Master Hugo at Bury, or the painters of the Morgan Leaf and the Winchester Bible. A selection of such texts, generally accessible to artists and patrons in the twelfth century, is discussed to explore their relationships with the images.

Collections of medieval letters and the writings of Theophilus, Bernard of Clairvaux, Walter Daniel, Reginald of Durham, and Jocelin of Brakelond have provided direct access into the twelfth-century monastic world that the artists knew.

The manuscripts considered fall into two groups. The first consists of thirty-seven manuscripts examined personally by the author, which are designated 'manuscripts examined' in the bibliography. They have been selected primarily for the importance of their illuminations, and for what is perceived to be unusual or enigmatic qualities, either of technique, that is the use of materials and colour, or their relationship to the texts they illustrate, or some characteristic that seems to contradict established opinion.

The second group consists of equally well-known and important manuscripts, examined through reproductions, in facsimile, or in online databases. These manuscripts are designated 'manuscripts examined in reproduction or facsimile' in the bibliography.

They are all generally considered elite manuscripts, but the choices are subjective, and the Author acknowledges that there are some omissions; lack of space precludes any detailed discussion of the colour in the two hundred and eleven initials in the St Albans Psalter, for example.

Chapter 1 recounts in a general way the literature on monastic books and how they were read and who read them during the Anglo-Norman period, with a brief introduction to professional artists and their work, followed by a discussion of the nature of the scriptorium. This places the illuminations in context, and is intended as an

introduction to the subsequent chapters, which deal with the material evidence found on the manuscript pages.

Chapter 2 contains observations on the various ways paint was used by individual artists, with descriptions of their techniques and discussion of their achievements. Similar chapters on gold and vellum follow. In Chapter 5, because colour and paint are not the same, the significance of colour is discussed separately.

A selection of case studies is presented in Chapter 6, which expands on the observations made in previous chapters. Here new and significant observations are recorded, and discussed in the light of scriptural exegesis, monastic and episcopal patronage, and the creative and interpretive skills of the artists.

Each chapter is prefaced by an introduction where recent contributions to the scholarship is acknowledged; these prefaces briefly outline the existing state of knowledge in the field, and the author's position in relation to it.

At the end of each chapter a summary of the information is presented; this is expanded in a short concluding chapter where the themes developed in the study are recapitulated and a range of findings presented.

CHAPTER ONE

THE SCRIPTORIUM

PREFACE

Opinion on the nature of the medieval scriptorium has been mixed because contemporary texts are ambiguous. For example, Reginald of Durham's description of the illuminator at work at Fountains Abbey in the published transcription is unclear about where he was working, and scholars have not agreed on the details. It is, however, generally understood that medieval scribes worked in the cloister, adjacent to the monastic church, although some scholars like Braunfels and Meyvaert have been unsure about this.

Where the best secular artists worked on giant illustrated books such as the Lambeth Bible is a much bigger question. The difference between elite professional artists and monks who worked as scribes and illuminators has been given little consideration in this regard. There is virtually no literature on the subject, and no information available about the specific needs of secular artists regarding space, materials and access. In discussions about the monastic scriptorium they are usually not mentioned, with the implication that they were somehow subsumed into the cloister or other communal space with the scribes; this study suggests that they would have been accommodated in an interior space or workshop appropriate to their requirements and status as craftsmen.

Macready and Thompson's 1986 book on patronage contains essays covering all areas of the arts from precious metalwork to wall painting, including the patronage and

donations of great figures such as Henry of Blois and Thomas Becket.¹ More recently Caskey has summarized the literature on donors and patrons during the period, but acknowledged that some things were still not clear due to lack of evidence.²

In the 2008 survey of Medieval art edited by Tim Ayers manuscripts and artifacts are placed securely within contexts of ecclesiastic history, patronage, and scriptural interpretation. Categories of Church patronage are discussed, evident in the various forms of gift-giving, but the lack of documentary evidence is stressed clearly.³ In the same volume Lindley discussed the training and status of medieval artists, and the rise of the lay professional, and Claire Donovan revisited the Winchester Bible.

Shepard's 2007 book on the Lambeth Bible has been useful on the textual relationships between the large English Bibles, and the importance of Jerome's prologues. This helped the author contextualize the work of Smalley, Leclercq and Carruthers on monastic reading, memory training and *lectio divina* during the period.

Some scholarly attention has recently been focused on how books were used.⁴ The work of Geddes, Rudy and Altvater in particular has helped clarify some points about the author's observations in this chapter.

Knowles's *The Monastic Order in England*, LeClercq's *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, and Smalley's *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* have proved invaluable sources of information on monasticism and monastic learning during the Middle Ages.

Such literature provides the contextual framework against which the illuminations were produced; the observations of the manuscript pages offered in the following chapters reflect and often confirm the exegetical, educational and cultural achievements of the monastic world. The recent scholarship on patronage has clarified many points

¹ Macready and Thompson, 1986.

² Caskey, 2006: 196-97.

³ Luxford, 2008: 83.

⁴ Reilly, 2006; Geddes, 2008; Gilmour, 2008; Rudy, 2010, and Altvater, 2011.

which have proved useful, and although patronage is not the main focus of this study, its importance is acknowledged throughout, and is discussed in more depth in the case studies in Chapter 6.

1:1 BOOKS, READING AND LEARNING

It is appropriate here to consider the evolution of monastic culture in twelfth-century England, because it was in the monastic scriptoria that scribes and artists produced the illuminated manuscripts so characteristic of the period. The complex changes and reforms which took place in Anglo-Norman England, initiated by invasion and conquest in 1066, have been well documented,⁵ so only a generalized account will be necessary; this will, nevertheless, serve to introduce the work of the artists who made and illustrated the various types of manuscript required for monastic use.

The leading personality in the reorganization of the English Church was the monk Lanfranc, who transferred from Caen, in Normandy, in 1070 to become archbishop of Canterbury. His was the greatest influence on English monasticism until his death in 1089.

There was no wholesale replacement of English abbots, but hundreds of Norman churchmen came to England to take part in Lanfranc's reforms, and some were appointed into vacant abbacies.⁶ Italians and Frenchmen were also involved; both Lanfranc and Anselm were Italian. Although the transition began in a gradual way, records show that between 1066 and 1135 over sixty abbots from the Continent were appointed into twenty of the most important English monasteries.⁷

In this way English houses were opened up to greater continental influence, and consequently intellectual and artistic life in post-Conquest England flourished and

⁵ Knowles, 1943:146-59; Knowles, 1950: 100-29; Knowles, 1951: vii-xv; Donovan, 1993: 8-15; Lawrence, 2001: 107-17.

⁶ Reilly, 2002: 294.

⁷ Knowles, 1950: 112.

played an innovative role within European monasticism.⁸ A culture based on books and learning developed, where *lectio divina* became central to life in the cloister and where the study and use of Latin was encouraged.⁹ For more than a century after the Conquest, therefore, Anglo-Norman monasteries developed into centres of literary and visual culture, when men in large numbers, including artisans and artists, joined the orders, and where many of the best minds in the country were “nurtured from childhood, or attracted later to the cloister.”¹⁰

Reading, writing, copying, interpreting, and illustrating texts was at the heart of this revived monastic activity. Demand grew for books of various types, for use in monastic churches, shrines, chapter-houses, and refectories, but not all books were for liturgical use; some were used in the cloister and school room. Some were large and brightly illuminated, highly visible for both public and private use, others were small and barely illuminated, for private study. Because reading, meditation and prayer were at the centre of monastic life as defined in Benedict’s Rule, it was important that correct texts could be found and copied.¹¹

First and foremost to be copied and read were the Scriptures, the Word of God, copied from Jerome’s translation of the Vulgate, the basic text for monks. Benedict had systemized the planned reading of its various books into an annual cycle:

The main texts of the daily liturgy and divine office, the psalms, lessons, gospels and epistles, which they recited and sang in choir, were drawn from the bible. Indeed, the culture of medieval monastic life was fundamentally biblical; the literary, musical and artistic life of the community was created through spiritual life, which was dominated by the bible.¹²

As early as the fifth century, Jerome had written of his preference for correct texts rather than books with purple pages and gold letters, “to have poor little leaves and not

⁸ Clanchy, 1993: 17.

⁹ Knowles, 1950: 125; Clanchy, 1993: 211-15.

¹⁰ Knowles, 1943: 148.

¹¹ Kauffmann, 2003: 74; Lindley, 2008: 149.

¹² Donovan, 1993: 8.

such beautiful books as correct ones”.¹³ Lanfranc attempted to ensure that all the important monastic churches in England were supplied with a Bible whose text agreed as nearly as possible with those of the Benedictine foundations of Normandy where he had been educated, but also those used in France and Italy.¹⁴ Abbots and bishops therefore reviewed and renewed their Bibles, and other books, to bring them into line with the best continental practice.¹⁵

In addition to readings from the Old and New Testaments during the annual cycle, other major liturgical books were required: psalters for the liturgical office, and Gospels for the Mass, but other texts were also important. Benedict’s Rule prescribed readings from the Church Fathers as well as the Scriptures:

The books to be read at the night office are those which have divine authority, both from the Old and the New Testaments, but also the commentaries on them that were written by recognized and orthodox catholic fathers.¹⁶

This encouraged the collection of commentaries written by early biblical scholars such as Augustine, Gregory, Jerome and Bede. Requests for accurate exemplars were frequent between monastic houses, and Lanfranc sent for copies of the works of Jerome and Ambrose, and Gregory’s *Moralia in Job*, most probably from Bec.¹⁷ Lanfranc’s administration, therefore, resulted in the foundation of a productive and influential scriptorium at Christ Church.¹⁸

Similar changes took place at St Augustine’s Priory in Canterbury when, in 1070, a new abbot, Scotland, arrived who had worked in the scriptorium of Mont St Michel. He

¹³ Jerome, Prologue to Job: ...*habere scidulas et non tam pulchros codices quam emendatos* (Weber, 1969: 732; trans. Edgecombe, 2007: <http://www.bombaxo.com/prologues.html>).

¹⁴ Knowles, 1950: 515.

¹⁵ Clanchy, 1993: 158.

¹⁶ *Regula 9: Codices autem legantur in Vigiliis divinae auctoritatis tam Veteris Testamenti quam Novi; sed et expositiones earum, quae a nominatis et orthodoxis catholicis Patribus factae sunt* (McCann, 1952: 50; trans. White, 2008: 28).

¹⁷ Lawrence, 1982: 106.

¹⁸ Lawrence, 1982: 109.

had been involved in the copying of manuscripts,¹⁹ and like Lanfranc he was influential in obtaining texts for his monastic library. At St Albans also, literally hundreds of exemplars were located and copied;²⁰ the new abbot, Paul of Caen, gave the house “twenty-eight notable books”, and in addition:

eight psalters, a collectar, an epistolar, a book containing the gospel pericopes for the year, two gospel books ornamented with gold, silver and gems, not to mention ordinals, customaries, missals, tropers, collectars...²¹

Later, after 1119, Abbot Geoffrey also spent lavishly on books, as well as coloured fabrics, bejewelled vestments, and precious liturgical metalwork for the newly completed monastic church.²² Geoffrey was probably responsible for how the St Albans Psalter was designed and illustrated.²³

St Albans and some other reformed monasteries such as Bury St Edmunds and Durham were pilgrimage sites containing saints’ shrines. The monks took advantage of this, and to increase the prestige of their houses they revamped ancient texts of saints’ lives in luxurious illustrated books. Such monasteries were in competition to increase the numbers of pilgrim visitors to their shrines in what was becoming an expensive rivalry.²⁴ This may have been the stimulus behind most of the illustrated saints’ lives.²⁵

Both Hahn and Abou-El-Haj have made detailed studies of pilgrimage sites and illustrated saints’ lives, and have raised questions about the patronage and purpose of such books. A spectacular manuscript of the type, discussed in more detail later in this study, is a Life of St Edmund made for the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds.²⁶ Its thirty-two fully coloured miniatures illustrate a late tenth-century *Passio* by Abbo of Fleury, and some miracle scenes from a later *De Miraculis* text, written by the Bury monk Hermann

¹⁹ Lawrence, 1982: 101.

²⁰ Gameson, 1999: 9.

²¹ Thomson, 1982 I: 13; Gameson, 1999: 7.

²² Thomson, 1982 I: 21-22.

²³ Hildesheim, St Godehard’s Church MS 1; Geddes, 2005: 14.

²⁴ Oakeshott, 1981: 3; Marner, 1994: 473; De Hamel, 2001: 80.

²⁵ Hahn, 1991:124.

²⁶ New York, Morgan Library MS M 736.

in about 1100, which was possibly updated between 1124 and 1137 under the patronage of Anselm.²⁷ In addition, there are twenty pages of lessons, offices of the saint, and antiphons, as befits a book for monastic liturgical use on the saint's feast day and public display on the altar.²⁸

The choice of imagery in the Life of St Edmund may have been driven by the abbey's disputes with king Henry I, and the bishop, Losinga.²⁹ The *De Miraculis* text is considered to be a piece of propaganda produced as a justification and defence of Bury's privileges and ancient rights:

In the case of Bury St Edmunds, the ideal saint-king was projected against the convent's recent adversaries: Norman bishops who wanted to establish their seats at Bury and demote the abbey to a priory, and King Henry I and his taxation schemes.³⁰

Alexander has suggested that this:

gives an insight into the preliminary decision process in the making of such cycles of pictures, for it suggests that the artist must have been instructed in what to represent and sometimes even in how to represent it.³¹

The scriptorium at Bury did not develop a distinctive school of book illumination until after 1121, during Anselm's abbacy.³² During this time two important artists were employed, the Alexis Master from St Albans, who illustrated the Life of St Edmund, and Master Hugo, the artist of the Bury Bible.³³ We know of the practical involvement of Hervey, sacrist at Bury, who organized the funding for the Bible, and arranged for Master Hugo to do the illuminations:

²⁷ Abou-El-Haj, 1983: 6.

²⁸ Wormald, 1952: 262; Parker McLachlan, 1970: 264; Thomson, 1972: 626.

²⁹ Abou-El-Haj, 1983: 1-6; Gransden, 1985: 9.

³⁰ Abou-El-Haj, 1994: 37.

³¹ Alexander, 1992: 84.

³² Kauffmann, 1966: 61.

³³ CCCC MS 2.

This Hervey, Prior Talbot's brother, underwrote the cost of writing a great bible for his brother the prior and arranged for it to be incomparably decorated by the hand of Master Hugh.³⁴

We know nothing of the prior Talbot's involvement in the Bible's design or function, even though it was made for him, or of his brother Hervey, or the abbot, Anselm.³⁵

However, they must have provided considerable theological guidance to the great artist who decorated the Bible, given the complexity of his illustrations.

Many classical texts were also copied and illustrated, and were considered by Leclercq to be one of the three principal literary sources in monastic culture, along with Scripture and patristic writings.³⁶ In the eleventh and twelfth centuries as many as sixty antique and late-antique authors were copied in Europe, including the works of many pagan writers.³⁷ These included grammars for the education of boys in the cloister, and texts on rhetoric and memory training, such as *Ad Herennium*. Cassiodorus had explained that the pagan classics should be used to aid students in their reading of the Scriptures.³⁸ Dodwell has discussed the influence of such classical texts, and how their imagery was often used in illumination.³⁹

Contemporary devotional texts were also copied and illustrated. The foremost example was Anselm's Prayers and Meditations, copied widely during his lifetime; illustrated versions may have been produced while he was alive. Copies were available at St Albans and the Alexis Master made a fully illustrated copy there.⁴⁰ This particular work was influential in promoting more effective and intense personal prayer.

³⁴ *Gesta Sacristarum: Iste Herueus, frater Taleboti prioris, omnes expensas inuenit fratri suo priori in scribenda magna bibliotheca, et manu magistri Hugonis incomparabiliter fecit depingi* (Arnold, 1890-96 vol. 2: 290; trans. Thomson, 2001: 25).

³⁵ For aspects of Anselm's patronage at Bury see Thomson, 1972: 220-23, and Thomson, 1975: 54-55.

³⁶ Leclercq, 1982: 71.

³⁷ Gameson, 1999: 26.

³⁸ Lawrence, 2001: 32-33.

³⁹ Dodwell, 1954: 61-66.

⁴⁰ Verdun, BM MS 70.

Biblical prologues, mostly those of Jerome, were collected enthusiastically by the monks at Bury, St Albans and Canterbury, and elsewhere; interpretation and the search for meaning became a cornerstone of the study of the Vulgate, and the prologues played a significant part in clarifying the meanings of Scripture.

Jerome's long letter to his friend Paulinus the Bishop of Nola, written in 394 and beginning *Frater Ambrosius*, was used as a general prologue in medieval Bibles, prefacing all other texts. Short excerpts of it were often used as prologues to individual books,⁴¹ and in larger bibles these were occasionally accompanied by their own initials. In the letter Jerome advised his friend Paulinus to study the Scriptures thoroughly, to become seeped in Scripture:

I beg of you, my dear brother, to live among these books, to meditate upon them, to know nothing else, to seek nothing else...⁴²

Jerome saw writing and scholarship as activities inseparable from this sacred reading and meditation,⁴³ and this was important for monastic scholarship from the earliest times.

Commentators from Bede to twelfth-century scholars such as Abelard, Hugh and Andrew of St Victor, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Peter Lombard were influenced by the patristic writings of Jerome, Augustine, and Gregory the Great, the major figures of the early patristic tradition.⁴⁴ Jerome's personal letters were especially influential.⁴⁵ Abelard quoted many times from them in his *Historia Calamitatum*, and in his letters to Heloise.⁴⁶ He called Jerome "the greatest doctor of the Church and glory of the monastic

⁴¹ Shepard, 2007: 72.

⁴² *Epistula ad Paulinum* 53 (Hilberg, 1910: 463; trans. Knight, 2009: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3001053.htm>).

⁴³ Smalley, 1964: 29.

⁴⁴ Smalley, 1964: 29; Leclercq, 1982: 71.

⁴⁵ Leclercq, 1982: 97.

⁴⁶ *Hist. Calamitatum* (trans. Radice, 1974): pp. 72, 73, 81, 90, 101, 105; Letter 4 to Heloise, etc.

profession, in exhorting us to love letters”.⁴⁷ Bernard and Peter the Venerable also quoted extensively from the interpretations of Jerome, Augustine, Gregory, Bede and other Church Fathers, and scholars such as Abelard, Peter Lombard and Hugh of St Victor made use of such texts in their own work.⁴⁸ This was reflected in the increasingly avid collection of such writings during the twelfth-century, especially Jerome’s, and their inclusion as interpretive tools in the giant twelfth-century Bibles.

The collection of texts was crucial to the monastic reading practice of *lectio divina*, which was advocated by Jerome, and enshrined in the Rule by Benedict; it has been described in detail by Smalley and Leclercq.⁴⁹ *Lectio divina* became a very active process for monks. It involved all the senses: looking at and reading the text, moving the lips and saying the words aloud, listening to the spoken words, and inwardly digesting—“hearing what is called ‘the voices of the pages’...an activity which, like chant and writing, requires the participation of the whole body and the whole mind”.⁵⁰

Leclercq explained the process in this way:

This repeated mastication of the divine words is sometimes described by use of the theme of spiritual nutrition. In this case the vocabulary is borrowed from eating, from digestion, and from the particular form of digestion belonging to ruminants. For this reason, reading and meditation are sometimes described by the very expressive word *ruminatio*.⁵¹

Also, as pointed out by O’Reilly, the interpretive techniques of the early fathers of the Church were inherited along with the Latin Vulgate,⁵² and in the *Confessionum*

Augustine endorsed personal interpretation:

Provided, therefore, that each of us tries as best he can to understand in the Holy Scriptures what the writer meant by them, what harm is there if a reader believes what you, the Light of all truthful minds, show him to be the

⁴⁷ Abelard, Letter 7 to Heloise: *Maximus Ecclesiae doctor et monasticae professionis honor Hieronimus qui nos ad amorem litterarum adhortans* (PL 178: 310, trans. Radice, 1974: 264).

⁴⁸ Donovan, 1993: 8.

⁴⁹ Smalley, 1964: 26-36; Leclercq, 1982: 15-17.

⁵⁰ Leclercq, 1982: 15.

⁵¹ Leclercq, 1982: 73.

⁵² O’Reilly, 2008: 176.

true meaning? It may not even be the meaning which the writer had in mind, and yet he too saw in them a true meaning, different though it may have been from this.⁵³

The intense, repetitive and meditative *ruminatio* encouraged a spiritual rather than a literal interpretation of the Scriptural text, through which “an allegorical or moral significance was extracted from persons, things, and events, referred to in both Old and New Testaments”.⁵⁴ To make this possible, *ruminatio* required what Leclercq called a “deep impregnation with words of Scripture”, which, he suggested, explains the important phenomenon of reminiscence, by which the mind was stimulated by the memories of words and phrases learned from Scripture.⁵⁵

The Psalms were the most important of all biblical texts for the monastic office, and because the monks had to say all the Psalms every week, they would have been memorized through repetition. Benedicta Ward has described how Bede made an abbreviated psalter for himself, as an aid to memory:

The tradition of the abbreviated psalter began with Bede as a memory-device, a reminder of the whole psalm, and also so that by the selected verses the heart could pray and direct itself to God in a way contained within the scriptures.⁵⁶

Godric of Finchale, the twelfth-century hermit, was portrayed learning to read the Psalms by Reginald of Durham:

Godric, he says, learned to listen, read and chant, learning, meditating and ruminating on the psalms. ‘Rumination’, the metaphor taken from a cow chewing cud, gives a sense of eating the text, absorbing it physically, of so placing it in the memory that it becomes part of the physical person, which was how Bede’s psalter was meant to be used.⁵⁷

Christina of Markyate was also described using a psalter in this way, for private meditation, with singing and chanting.⁵⁸ The Psalms were also used for private reading

⁵³ *Confess.* XII. 18 (Verheijen, 1981: 229-30; trans. Pine-coffin, 1961: 296).

⁵⁴ Lawrence, 2001: 140.

⁵⁵ Leclercq, 1982: 73.

⁵⁶ Ward, 1991: 22.

⁵⁷ Ward, 1991: 21.

⁵⁸ Talbot, 1998: 99.

and personal devotions outside the monastery, and to teach children to read. Stirnemann has suggested that the Copenhagen Psalter was made for a seven-year old Danish prince who was learning to read.⁵⁹ The book itself contains evidence for this; an alphabet immediately precedes the Lord's Prayer on folio 189v.

The giant Bibles were the most costly and time-consuming products of the scriptoria, and often took the best scribes and artists many years to complete. Emanating originally from Rome as a type,⁶⁰ they were usually very large and heavy, containing both Old and New Testaments in one or several volumes. The Calci Bible,⁶¹ begun in 1168 in Tuscany, contains written records of over sixty separate donations made for its manufacture, and the payments made to the various professional artists and scribes involved. The cost of its vellum was a quarter of the total.⁶² Although it is apparent that there were innumerable acts of patronage during the Middle Ages,⁶³ this is rare example of such recorded detail. Among the few other well-documented examples are the patronage of the twelfth-century abbots at St Albans,⁶⁴ and canon Philip of Lincoln's patronage of the Morgan Bestiary.⁶⁵

Artists were not only involved with monastic patrons and donors, but also with theological advisors.⁶⁶ The group of artists illustrating the Saint-Vaast Bible⁶⁷ were probably assisted by an expert theologian,⁶⁸ and began by consulting a group of available manuscript sources, which they then used "according to their personal tastes and the demands of the text they chose to illustrate".⁶⁹

⁵⁹ Copenhagen, Royal Library MS Thott 143. 2^o; Stirnemann, 1999: 69-74.

⁶⁰ De Hamel, 2005: 83.

⁶¹ Certosa Di Calci, Cod. 1.

⁶² Cahn, 1982: 225-26.

⁶³ Luxford, 2008: 83.

⁶⁴ Golding, 1986: 107-17.

⁶⁵ New York, Morgan Library MS M. 81; Muratova, 1986:118-44.

⁶⁶ Caskey, 2006: 199.

⁶⁷ Arras, BM MS 559.

⁶⁸ Reilly, 2006: 8.

⁶⁹ Reilly, 2006: 3.

Such Bibles were used in the choir, chapter house and refectory for public readings, usually read from and displayed on a lectern.⁷⁰ Shepard considered that the makers of the Lambeth Bible⁷¹ created an “ornament for their high altar”,⁷² while Udalricus, a monk from Swabia, wrote in *c.* 1080 that readings from the Bible took place not only in the church, but in the refectory, and the place marked so that the reading could be taken up from the same place the next day.⁷³

The earliest of these large Bibles with illustrations was the St-Vaast Bible, of the first half of the eleventh century, and one of several existing Flemish Bibles apparently designed for daily reading aloud in the reformed monasteries where they were produced. These Flemish Bibles lack the Gospels and psalter, suggesting that they were created specifically for the newly revived monastic practice of choir and refectory reading.⁷⁴

It remains a question as to where and how some of these very large and heavy Bibles were used. The readings throughout the year were specified in the Rule, and this was probably a universally accepted part of monastic life.⁷⁵ In the Dover Bible,⁷⁶ made in the late 1150s at Christ Church Canterbury,⁷⁷ on the first folio, and before Jerome’s prologue, there are detailed instructions on how the various parts of the Bible should be read throughout the Church year according to the rites of the Roman Church.⁷⁸

Reilly has argued about the Saint-Vaast Bible:

Simply because a manuscript was copied primarily to serve as a tool for liturgy or the monastic office does not prevent it containing a message intended for a wider clientele. The most lavish manuscript of any foundation

⁷⁰ Ayres, 1994: 126.

⁷¹ London, Lambeth Palace Library MS 3.

⁷² Shepard, 2007: 233.

⁷³ Cahn, 1982: 96; Kauffmann, 2003: 75.

⁷⁴ Reilly, 2006: 12.

⁷⁵ Cahn, 1982: 96.

⁷⁶ CCCC MS 3 and MS 4.

⁷⁷ Gilmour, 2008: 62.

⁷⁸ De Hamel, 2001: 73.

was undoubtedly displayed to all the important visitors who passed through its gates.⁷⁹

Likewise, Heslop has suggested that the Bury Bible was made for public readings in the refectory, where it needed to be visually impressive because it would have been seen by monks and visitors:

...it would occasionally be shown to visitors eminent enough to dine there rather than in the guest's accommodation ...this book needed to be instantly stunning and self-evidently sumptuous. Its audience was more likely to spend a short time wondering at the artifice than pondering sacred mysteries prompted by its imagery.⁸⁰

However, the earliest reference to the Bury Bible's use in the refectory dates from 1425, and it is not now possible to determine whether it was originally intended for this purpose, or whether it was only used there in the early-fifteenth century.⁸¹

Gilmour suggested that the large size of the Dover Bible, like all giant Bibles, was a consequence of its large script, which was very regular and suitable for reading at a lectern in a monastic church during the day or night; any smaller, and fluent reading would have been a challenge. In addition, he noted that the script was "accented for correct punctuation – a tradition dating back to Alcuin – which again suggests that it was intended for formal reading".⁸²

The Bodleian Auct. Bible,⁸³ probably begun in the 1140s, and illuminated at Winchester in the 1160s and 1170s, was possibly intended for reading in the refectory for during meals.⁸⁴ This is supported by a sentence in Adam of Eynsham's *Life of St Hugh of Lincoln*, from the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, which states that a Bible made at Winchester, and which was to be transferred to the Carthusian monastery at Witham, was for use in the monastic refectory:

⁷⁹ Reilly, 2006: 8.

⁸⁰ Heslop, 1988: 172.

⁸¹ Kauffmann, 1966: 63.

⁸² Gilmour, 2008: 54.

⁸³ Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Auct. E. infra 1 and 2; also known as St Hugh's Bible.

⁸⁴ Kauffmann, 2003: 74.

...the monks of St Swithun had recently made an excellent and correct bible with fine workmanship, which was to be read aloud while the brothers were eating at table.⁸⁵

Another large Bible was also made at Winchester, the Winchester Bible,⁸⁶ begun in 1160s, but reworked during the 1170s and 1180s and perhaps beyond;⁸⁷ the two Bibles may have been planned for different uses, as suggested by Thomson, who thought they were kept in different parts of the Church for that reason: the Auct. Bible in the refectory for the mealtime reading, while the more splendid Winchester Bible was for the high altar of the cathedral.⁸⁸

There is nevertheless evidence that some giant Bibles were carried back and forth between locations, especially after the reforms when refectory readings were reinstated into the weekly cycle. In an eleventh-century customary from Hirsau, there are instructions for the monk responsible to bring the Bible back to the refectory after reading to the servants, with help of the weekly reader if he needed it.⁸⁹ In Flanders the Saint-Vaast Bible was apparently used several times a day, and could usually be found “either in the choir or the refectory”.⁹⁰ The Winchester Bible, accented for reading aloud, may also have been used in several locations:

While it would have been moved from place to place, between the priory buildings and the Cathedral, if it truly belonged to the community (and not the bishop), its ‘home’ lectern may well have been in the chapter house, the community’s private space, where regular readings of scripture took place.⁹¹

There were various other ways such books could be used. In the Bury Bible the illuminated initials are for the most part ornamental, otherwise there is page after page of unadorned Vulgate text, and a collection of ancillary prologue texts which had

⁸⁵ *M. Vita S. Hug.* 13: ...*monachos sancti Swithuni egregiam recenti et decenti opere confecisse bibliothecam, in qua ad mensam edentium fratrum legi debuisset* (Douie and Farmer, 1961: 85-86; trans. Author).

⁸⁶ Winchester Cathedral Library MS 17.

⁸⁷ Kauffmann, 1984: 120-21; Oakeshott, 1981: 132-33.

⁸⁸ Thomson, 1982, I: 34.

⁸⁹ Reilly, 2006: 72.

⁹⁰ Reilly, 2006: 25.

⁹¹ Donovan, 1993: 11.

meaning only for the most literate of readers. Other monks may have used books in different ways: the novice learning to understand through reading and looking; the literate monk reading the Scriptures aloud in the refectory or elsewhere, and his fellow monks listening to the reading. Individuals or groups of learned monks might read and analyse difficult passages of Scripture, interpreting passages using Jerome's prologues and letters, and with the work of other commentators to hand.

The use of sermons in the cloister is well recorded at the great abbeys. At Cluny sermons took place twice a day; the first, in the cloister before work began, was usually about the book being read in the refectory, and the second, after the work was done, a reading and commentary by a superior on a topic from Scripture or patristic writing.⁹²

As well as the daily readings, the giant Bibles were about status, and the ambitions of monastic communities are reflected in the quality of the illuminations. Such books were clearly very costly, like the Bury Bible which was illuminated in lavish colour and gold. While the narrative miniatures or historiated initials in such books could be appreciated at many levels, including by the secular visitor who would have been impressed by the gold and colour, for the very literate monks they offered deeper meanings and sophisticated alternative readings of the Scriptural texts, even making them more comprehensible through novel visual interpretations.⁹³

In the twelfth-century, the monk Hugo of Fouilloy wrote an illustrated *Avarium*, or Book of Birds, which was later used in many bestiaries. Its imagery was designed to teach illiterate lay brothers,⁹⁴ but the "moral content" of his text was available for literate readers. He explained his approach when writing about the dove with wings covered in silver in Psalm 68:

It is my intention to paint a picture of the dove...In painting this picture I intend to improve the minds of ordinary people, in such a way that their soul

⁹² Leclercq, 1982: 167.

⁹³ Kessler, 2006: 163.

⁹⁴ Geddes, in 'What is a Bestiary?', Aberdeen Bestiary project at www.abdn.ac.uk.

will at least perceive physically things which it has difficulty in grasping mentally; that what they have difficulty comprehending with their ears, they will perceive with their eyes.⁹⁵

Also in the twelfth century Gerald of Wales famously described looking at the illuminated pages of an ancient gospel book he saw at Kildare on his travels in Ireland. After first looking rather casually and “not too closely”, he allowed his vision to ponder the beauty of the designs, and was drawn into their complexities: “look more keenly at it and you will penetrate to the very shrine of art. You will make out intricacies, so delicate and subtle...colours so fresh and vivid, that you might say that all this was the work of an angel, not of a man”.⁹⁶

As well as the communal readings in the church, chapter house and refectory, the Rule prescribed regular private reading every day by the monks, from books given out at the beginning of Lent.⁹⁷ These were meant to be read completely, and understood through private *ruminatio* and *meditatio*:

This was not done as it were from cover to cover, for information, but digested piece by piece, and between the pieces the implications of the text were pondered and used as a stimulus for prayer.⁹⁸

These occasions would have provided opportunities to consider any illuminations in detail; the reader was able to “recapitulate, to skim, check against the picture, and refer forwards”.⁹⁹ Even in the plainest un-illustrated books the coloured initials would have aided the memory of the readers by dividing and highlighting the text.

Examination reveals that many books were indeed well used when in their prime. The pages of the Bury Bible have become very discoloured at the bottom edges through much handling over the years, and the illuminations abraded through touching. Both volumes of the Dover Bible exhibit greasy finger marks punctuating the text, evidence

⁹⁵ ‘Translation and Transcription’ ff. 25v-26r, Aberdeen Bestiary project at www.abdn.ac.uk.

⁹⁶ Henderson, 1987: 195.

⁹⁷ *Regula* 48.

⁹⁸ Heslop, 1986: 7.

⁹⁹ Camille, 1985: 29.

of many repeated readings before they were deposited in the Parker Library during the sixteenth century. In the first volume, the folios most strongly marked in this way are those containing Genesis, Exodus, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. In the second volume Wisdom, Proverbs, Ecclesiasticus, Tobias, Maccabees, and Acts have all been finger-marked by readers.

These marks are not just the stains of general use; many are fingerprints made by readers who, while reading aloud from the volume at a lectern, repeatedly marked their places as they read by moving their fingers down the page from one section of text to another. This was done over and over again in the same places, year after year. The Lambeth Bible is also stained with greasy, yellowish finger marks made this way.

In the second volume of the Dover Bible, however, the folios containing the Psalms are generally clean and unmarked, and some seem hardly touched at all, such as the opening of 26v and 27r, for instance, where the vellum is white and colours clean and bright. This suggests that the volume was not used for the reading of the Psalms. The Gospels also are generally clean, with only slight finger marking, with the exception of John, which looks more used. The rest of the New Testament, including James and Acts are also well read and thumbbed.

Many other manuscripts have different types of marks or scratched indentations added by readers rather than scribes, which sometimes correspond with the beginnings and ends of liturgical readings. The various marks provide valuable clues to how the books were sometimes used,¹⁰⁰ and how readers interacted with the images. For example, in the Aberdeen Bestiary¹⁰¹ illuminated *c.* 1200, an unusual dark stain at the top of folio 34r suggests that it was very often gripped between fingers and thumb in the centre of the top edge, possibly in the left hand (Fig. 1). It was probably held facing

¹⁰⁰ De Hamel, 2001: 30.

¹⁰¹ Aberdeen University Library MS 24.

outwards towards a group of students to show them the image during a lesson.¹⁰² There are also finger marks in the lower outer corner of the opposite folio, where the book may have been held open and supported with the right hand as it was shown around the group. Using the book this way may have prompted discussions about the meanings of the image.

In the St Albans Psalter the paint surface of the Nativity, on page 21, was probably touched in a different way. A small area of the image, containing the crib, the Christ Child, the Virgin's knees and lower legs, and the adjacent background blue, seems to have been worn by regular devotional touching or perhaps kissing (Fig. 2). Immediately adjacent to this the coloured surfaces are bright and sharp. This calls to mind the private devotional reading practised by Christina of Markyate, to whom the Psalter probably belonged, reading and singing the Psalms "by day and night", and sitting with an open psalter on her lap.¹⁰³

Similarly, on folio 147v of the Bury Bible, the two figures of Hannah are worn by regular touching; in the upper register this was concentrated on her head and surrounding area (Fig. 73), and in the lower register, where she lies recumbent after the birth of Samuel (Fig. 72), the image was touched so frequently on the face and torso that much of the heavy opaque paint has been worn away revealing the vellum beneath. The paint on this folio is the most damaged in the Bible. Jan Altvater has noted other manuscripts where Hannah has been touched in a similar way:

The William de Brailes leaf in the Walters collection, ca. 1230-40, shows this clearly: the face of Hannah is abraded as she kneels abjectly before the altar and accepts the castigation of Eli.¹⁰⁴

Kathryn Rudy has discussed devotional or apotropaic touching in later Dutch manuscripts—especially prayer books of the fifteenth century

¹⁰² Geddes, in 'History' and 'Commentary', Aberdeen Bestiary Project at www.abdn.ac.uk.

¹⁰³ Talbot, 1998: 99.

¹⁰⁴ Altvater, 2011: 24-25.

used for personal prayer—and found that devotional kissing and rubbing was often directed at a particular image, or part of an image, or occasionally at a text:

These examples reveal how medieval people interacted with their books and reveal something of their habits and expectations, and ultimately, an aspect of medieval readers' emotional lives.¹⁰⁵

The Virgin and Christ at the Nativity were obviously objects of intense devotion, but also, it seems, was Hannah, who was understood by monastic audiences to represent the Church,¹⁰⁶ and was, by association, the bride of Christ. This transformation of Hannah from Old Testament wife into a symbol of the church can be explained by the interpretive exegesis developed through *lectio divina*. An enigmatic illustration of Elkanah, Hannah and Penninah in the Bury Bible is discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

1:2 THE ARTISTS

From the tenth century up to the twelfth, young monks were trained in various crafts, including illumination with colours and gold, in what was essentially a monastic apprentice system; most monastic craftsmen learned from an older master, through instruction and hands-on experience, and passed on their skills to younger monks in the same way.¹⁰⁷ However, the humility required of monk-craftsmen means that little is known about their lives and personal achievements, except in exceptional circumstances.¹⁰⁸

By the early twelfth century all tasks associated with book production, from preparing the vellum to binding the finished book, could be successfully accomplished by monks.¹⁰⁹ This is well documented in the many manuscript depictions of tonsured

¹⁰⁵ Rudy, 2010: *JHNA* 2: 1-2 (2010) www.jhna.org.

¹⁰⁶ Altvater, 2011: 7-8.

¹⁰⁷ Van Engen, 1980: 148; Alexander, 1992: 12.

¹⁰⁸ Dodwell, 1982: 50-52.

¹⁰⁹ Alexander, 1992: 12.

monks working as artists and scribes.¹¹⁰ Sometimes an artist is shown in secular dress, and this reflects the rise of the lay professional; while monks still dominated as scribes, gradually during the twelfth century illumination became the province of professional illuminators:¹¹¹

...in the twelfth century we begin to have considerable evidence of the existence of professional, paid illuminators who would, in the next century, come to predominate over monastic craftsmen.¹¹²

In an illustration on folio 241v of the second volume of the Dover Bible two professional artists, laymen by their dress, work together as a team, one painting while the other grinds and prepares the colours (Fig. 6). The image could be said to reflect medieval apprenticeship—the older master and younger trainee—but there is little information about how this type of collaboration worked amongst artists, and between laymen and monks, in any of the crafts with which they were involved.¹¹³

Evidence suggests that in the early twelfth-century laymen, like monks, could be both scribe and artist, and sometimes they collaborated with monks and secular clergy.¹¹⁴ It has been suggested, for example, that, although a single scribe wrote the text of the Bury Bible, and a “local monk” the rubrics and minor capitals,¹¹⁵ the artist who painted the illuminations, Master Hugo, was one of at least three other scribes who produced the display capitals.¹¹⁶

There is some written evidence that Anglo-Norman monks and artists such as these may have collected information about colours and pigments for their own use. This can be found in a late twelfth-century manuscript written at the Cistercian abbey of the

¹¹⁰ Alexander, 1992: 10-18.

¹¹¹ Lindley, 2008: 149.

¹¹² Alexander, 1978: 86.

¹¹³ Brooke, 1974: 111-12; Van Engen, 1980: 148n.

¹¹⁴ Alexander, 1992: 16.

¹¹⁵ Thomson, 1971: 55.

¹¹⁶ Heslop, 1998b: 176.

Blessed Virgin Mary at Rufford in Nottinghamshire.¹¹⁷ The monks there, writing in Anglo-Norman French, compiled a list of recipes for various colours, including vermilion, blue and green, and the use of binders such as glue size and egg.¹¹⁸

The most well-known twelfth-century craftsman is Theophilus. He was a Benedictine monk, and probably German,¹¹⁹ and known for his treatise in Latin on the arts and crafts, *De Diversis Artibus*,¹²⁰ which offers a “full and sincere an account by an artist of his own conceptions and ideals”.¹²¹ He has been identified tentatively as Roger of Helmarshausen, a renowned German metalworker.¹²² He was clearly a well-educated and thoughtful man, highly skilled and knowledgeable about the processes he used.¹²³

Theophilus captured some of the busy atmosphere of the monastic workshop in *De Diversis Artibus*, but his chapters on painting contain less technical detail than those on glassmaking and metalwork. Gage has suggested that Theophilus was not himself a painter,¹²⁴ and there is a clue concerning this in his treatise. As noted by Carruthers, all craft apprentices in the Middle Ages learned not only how to use their tools, but also how to make them for themselves: “Scribes prepared their parchments, made their pens, and mixed their inks; masons made their adzes, mallets, and files.”¹²⁵ She might have added that artists made their own brushes and mixed their own paints. Although Theophilus described in detail how to make various metalworking tools such as small beading files and ring-punches, and how to make the hog-bristle brushes used in metal work, he said virtually nothing about paint brushes or pens. Several times he refers to

¹¹⁷ London, BL MS Cotton Titus D.XXIV.

¹¹⁸ Hunt, 1995: 205-207.

¹¹⁹ Dodwell, 1961: xxxvi.

¹²⁰ Dodwell, 1961: xxxiii; White, 1964: 229.

¹²¹ Dodwell, 1961: x.

¹²² Dodwell, 1961: xxxiii-xliv; Van Engen, 1980: 161; Hunt, 1995: 204.

¹²³ White, 1964: 230.

¹²⁴ Gage, 1978: 119.

¹²⁵ Carruthers, 1998: 5.

applying glue, gold and colours with a small paintbrush— *cum pincello*—but not how to make one, so perhaps Gage was right.

Theophilus was one of the first commentators to stress the importance of craftsmanship and manual skills, in an age which had become rather snobbish about the mechanical arts;¹²⁶ in this he was aligned with scholars such as Rupert of Deutz and Hugh of St Victor.¹²⁷ In the *Didascalicon* Hugh had written in praise of craftsmen and their achievements:

Nor is it without cause that the proverb says: “Ingenious want hath mothered all the arts.” Want it is which has devised all that you see most excellent in the occupation of men. From this the infinite varieties of painting, weaving, carving, and founding have arisen, so that we look with wonder not at nature alone but at the artificer as well.¹²⁸

This reveals an interest in Exodus and the descriptions of the Tabernacle which was evident from the Anglo-Saxon period onwards; from Bede until the eleventh century churchmen “were imbued with Old Testament concepts”, and “particularly entranced by the exotic descriptions of the tabernacle”.¹²⁹ This interest in the Tabernacle can be discerned amongst twelfth-century artists and patrons such as Abbot Anselm at Bury, Henry of Blois at Winchester, and in France, Abbot Suger at St Denis,¹³⁰ who were dedicated to the beautification of their churches, involving the work of painters, goldsmiths, glaziers and metal workers. In his prologue to Book 3 of *De Diversis Artibus* Theophilus highlighted the skills of Bezaleel,¹³¹ the craftsman singled out by God in Exodus,¹³² who used his God-given gifts to design, construct and weave the various components of the Tabernacle, including the Arc of the Covenant.¹³³

¹²⁶ Van Engen, 1980: 155-56; Dodwell, 1982: 47.

¹²⁷ Van Engen, 1980: 156.

¹²⁸ *Didascalicon* 1. 9: PL 176: 748 (trans. Taylor, 1961: 56).

¹²⁹ Dodwell, 1982: 31-33.

¹³⁰ Van Engen, 1980: 163.

¹³¹ White, 1964: 229-30; Van Engen, 1980: 153-54, and 160.

¹³² Exodus 37: 2-5.

¹³³ Exodus 37: 1.

The text of Exodus was at the centre of the controversy about the use of art in monastic churches generated by Bernard's *Apologia*, which was probably written between 1125 and 1126.¹³⁴ The *Apologia* was widely read, having spread quickly throughout Europe,¹³⁵ and Theophilus may have been aware of it just a year after it was written.¹³⁶ The third prologue of *De Diversis Artibus* was probably a rebuttal of the *Apologia*:

Theophilus, in short, mustered every conceivable argument in defense of that to which he had devoted his own life and to which he was encouraging his readers to devote theirs.¹³⁷

Because he was a monk, aware of the need for anonymity and humility, and tied to monastic observances, it is impossible to tell how typical his ideas were amongst professional artists and artisans in England during the twelfth century; however, the attitudes and knowledge revealed in his writings are an indication of the levels of literacy and theological understanding that were possible. Indeed, how well a monk or ambitious professional artist could access and interpret scriptural texts and commentaries may have been crucial to his achieving some pre-eminence in his craft, and this may have been reliant on his ability to communicate and work with monastic theologians. The theological interest in biblical descriptions of the Tabernacle is reflected both in Chapter 5 and in two of the illuminations discussed in Chapter 6.

Although the manuscripts discussed in this study were almost certainly made in England, the artists were probably of various nationalities, as were their patrons in the monasteries and cathedrals. Many such men travelled widely; the Lambeth Master worked in France, before coming to Canterbury around the middle of the century, and Stirnemann noted the large number of other itinerant artists “marshalled from all over

¹³⁴ Van Engen, 1980: 159; Rudolph, 1988: 125.

¹³⁵ Norton, 2006: 1.

¹³⁶ White, 1964: 230.

¹³⁷ Van Engen, 1980: 158.

England” who worked in and around Paris during the 1160s.¹³⁸ This included an artist of the Hunterian Psalter,¹³⁹ who worked in France at the abbey of Saint-Victor,¹⁴⁰ and helped illuminate a manuscript of Peter Lombard’s *Sentences* before coming to England.¹⁴¹ It is also likely that at least one of the artists of the Winchester Bible worked in Spain, while the Simon Master worked both in France and at St Albans. Basilius, the artist who painted the prefatory miniatures in Queen Melisende’s Psalter,¹⁴² in Jerusalem, is generally believed to be an artist from Western Europe. So, whether English or not, many of the artists who worked in England had travelled abroad, and could just as easily have been incoming Frenchmen or Italians, or from further East. As Ayres has put it:

The work of the Simon master and the Lambeth Master demonstrates how difficult it is in these cases to establish stylistic priorities in terms of national identities, because we have individuals working on both sides of the Channel.¹⁴³

Rome was a common destination for abbots, bishops, legates, and parties of pilgrims, which must have included artists; northwest Europe was opened to Italo-Byzantine influence. In 1146 the archbishop-elect William of York broke his journey home from Rome to stay with his royal relatives in Sicily.¹⁴⁴ The work of the artists of the Dover and Winchester Bibles suggests that they also visited Sicily, or somewhere else within the Byzantine sphere of influence.

The small size and portability of books allowed their transfer from one place to another on journeys such as these. Books were needed as exemplars, as we have seen, and, in addition, the use by artists of notebooks, or model books also facilitated the migration of ideas. Although it is hard to estimate the importance of model books, it has

¹³⁸ Stirnemann, 1999: 76.

¹³⁹ Glasgow University Library MS Hunter 229 (U. 3. 2).

¹⁴⁰ Stirnemann, 2005: 162.

¹⁴¹ Troyes, BM MS 900.

¹⁴² London, BL Egerton MS 1139.

¹⁴³ Ayres, 1976: 138.

¹⁴⁴ Norton, 2006b: 118-20.

been shown that it was quite normal in the eleventh and twelfth centuries for artists to collect copies of visual images found on their journeys for use later in their own work.¹⁴⁵

On page 38 of the St Albans Psalter, the Alexis Master depicted some apostles removing or replacing invisible sandals (Fig. 3), and this suggests that he had made studies of the characteristic gestures from a Byzantine source similar to Melisende's Psalter, a slightly later book made in Jerusalem (Fig. 4), or the early twelfth-century wall paintings at Asinou, Cyprus (Fig. 47). He might have made his drawings on sheets of parchment like those now in a manuscript at Evreux,¹⁴⁶ containing five late-twelfth or early-thirteenth-century pages of figure studies for use in initials at the psalter divisions (Fig. 5); Alexander has suggested that iconography circulated freely in drawings of this type.¹⁴⁷

It is thought that Master Hugo, the artist of the Bury Bible experienced direct contact with Byzantine culture on his travels, where he was able to observe original Byzantine works closely, with opportunities to make copies.¹⁴⁸ This seems likely because his work suggests he understood much about Byzantine colour and painting methods, which are less likely to be recorded in any model books he might have owned or borrowed.¹⁴⁹ As suggested by Thomson, "he may have made sketches himself as aides-mémoires, but no more; he must have observed original works closely and appreciatively."¹⁵⁰ Heslop has pointed out Hugo's use of identical but reversed figures in the Bury Bible, which seem associated with tracings from a model book.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁵ Alexander, 1978: 25; Alexander, 1992: 85-90; Petzold, 1995: 34.

¹⁴⁶ Evreux, BM MS 4.

¹⁴⁷ Alexander, 1992: 97.

¹⁴⁸ Kauffmann, 1966: 73; Thomson, 2001: 43.

¹⁴⁹ Gage, 1978: 123 n19: "Very few of the surviving medieval model-books show any indications of colour".

¹⁵⁰ Thomson, 2001: 43.

¹⁵¹ Heslop, 1998b: 179; see below page 101-102.

It is generally agreed that professional artists such as these were multi-talented. For example, Master Hugo at Bury was probably a skilled sculptor, who carved an altar cross and designed and cast bronze doors for the church at Bury. He also possibly designed and painted the wall paintings in St Anselm's Chapel in the Cathedral at Canterbury. Both the Entangled Figures Master and the Amalakite Master at Winchester were interested in using and decorating gold, and may have had knowledge of metalworking techniques, and were certainly influenced by them.

It is usually evident when more than one artist worked on the illuminations of a manuscript; the Winchester Bible and Hunterian Psalter are good examples; several illuminators worked on the Hunterian Psalter and as far as was possible maintained some stylistic cohesion. It seems that sometimes artists actually worked on the same illuminations, as appears to be the case on some of the St Albans Psalter initials, and in the work of the early artists of the Saint-Vaast Bible, where two artists occasionally worked on the same miniatures.¹⁵²

It was often the case that one artist, a skilled draughtsman, drew the outlines of a design, and another applied the colour. Several artists appear to have worked on the Psalm initials in the St Albans Psalter, and sometimes they worked together in a kind of house style developed from that of the Alexis Master. The initials may have been planned under the supervision of the Alexis Master,¹⁵³ but this is not certain, and indeed there is very little sign of it.

Sometimes the artists who drew out the images left notes for the colourists in the margins or somewhere adjacent, sometimes within the illuminations themselves.¹⁵⁴

Petzold found about thirty manuscripts made in England between 1066 and 1200 which

¹⁵² Reilly, 2006: 26.

¹⁵³ Pächt, 1960: 157-162; Dodwell, 1993: 332.

¹⁵⁴ Alexander, 1992: 42-47.

had such notes, mostly containing the letters ‘a’, ‘r’ and ‘v’ for blue, red and green.¹⁵⁵ In the Aberdeen Bestiary, there are about ten remaining colour marks, provided for both initials and larger illustrations.¹⁵⁶

On folio 147v of the Bury Bible is what seems to be an unrecorded colour note in graphite or lead point, in the flame-like shapes just to the left of Hannah’s bed (Fig. 72). It is just visible through a thin wash of colour, in the only unfinished and transparent shape observed in the Bible (Fig. 74); it might be a ‘p’, or a Greek letter, perhaps a quickly scrawled ‘α’ or something similar. There is no sign of a second artistic personality in the Bury Bible, but this artist’s mark, recognized here for the first time, may indicate that Master Hugo had an assistant working with him.

Confusion about the under drawings sometimes resulted in odd bits of painting, and several initials in the St Albans Psalter exhibit the sort of misunderstanding which could occur when more than one artist was involved. An example of arm-and-hand confusion can be seen in the strangely contorted figure pointing in two directions in the initial to Psalm 131 (Fig. 7). In the Puiset Bible¹⁵⁷ different artists may have worked together on the same images. In the initial to Ecclesiastes, the figure to the right, possibly Job, has a right hand attached to his left arm, and holds the end of a scroll a bit awkwardly as a result.

1:3 THE WORKPLACE

As a space for writing, copying and illuminating, the scriptorium remains something of a mystery. It was the place of work for the scribes, artists and theologians of the monastic community, but it also has a less tangible meaning about scribes and the style of their productions. Scribes may have normally worked in the cloister, but a dry and

¹⁵⁵ Petzold, 1990: 16.

¹⁵⁶ Alexander, 1992: 45; Geddes, in ‘Codicology’, Aberdeen Bestiary Project at www.abdn.ac.uk.

¹⁵⁷ Durham, Cathedral Library MS A. II. 1.

well-lit space was necessary for the preparation and production of illuminations, with enough room to perform the various associated tasks, and where materials and tools could be used safely.

According to an idealised plan of the monastery of St Gall, drawn between 816 and 836, the scriptorium was in a ground-floor room on the eastern side of the north transept, below the library, and directly attached to the church.¹⁵⁸ It seems to have provided a generous space with seven writing desks.¹⁵⁹ There is no evidence that this was actually the case, but it indicates that an internal space was considered to be required by scribes. In England during the tenth century monks who usually worked in the cloister at Winchester and elsewhere, were apparently allowed to work indoors in a room with a fire during cold weather.¹⁶⁰

At Cluny the scriptorium seems to have been in the cloister, probably in the north walk next to the church, as shown in Conant's reconstruction of the monastery as it was in 1143.¹⁶¹ Braunfels was unsure:

One thing is curious: that the place for the scribes was in the exposed north arm of the cloister, with the book-cupboard in a nearby corner. Did these copyists really work in the open, looking out onto the columned court and the toing and froing of the monks?¹⁶²

Paul Meyvaert also had doubts, and suggested that book production, that is scribal copying and illuminating, “normally” took place elsewhere:

Because the cloister was the main place for reading, books were often kept there in chests or cupboards along the walls, particularly on the side of the church. It seems likewise that some writing went on in the claustrum, although the trained scribes involved in the production of books normally worked in a special room called the scriptorium.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁸ Braunfels, 1972: 43.

¹⁵⁹ Lawrence, 2001: 112.

¹⁶⁰ Knowles, 1950: 44.

¹⁶¹ Braunfels, 1972: 55.

¹⁶² Braunfels, 1972: 57-58.

¹⁶³ Meyvaert, 1973: 54.

The monastic cloister usually had four covered and arcaded walkways around a square courtyard, and was Mediterranean in origin; the first monastery to use such a structure, at Lorsch, was converted from a Roman-style villa.¹⁶⁴ During the medieval period it normally stood on the south side of the church, to secure as much sunlight as possible. This meant that the north walkway received enough direct light to make it suitable for reading, writing, and illuminating. This was possibly the case at Durham, where it is believed scribes used the north walk when copying texts.¹⁶⁵

Sometimes the cloister was placed to the north of the church as it was at Christ Church Canterbury, and at Chester where the scriptorium may have been adjacent to the monastic church in the south cloister walk. In northern Europe the north aspect would often have been cold and dark,¹⁶⁶ but it would have provided the scribes with a steady north light. During the 1130s a Belgian monk, Heinrich, worked as a scribe in an open cloister and recorded how he could not work on foggy days.¹⁶⁷ Conversely, to the monks working quietly as scribes or illuminators in a cool and shady spot at Cefalù, or the Augustinian abbey of Bellapais on Cyprus, the shaded cloister might have seemed like paradise.¹⁶⁸

Although such work may have been organised in the cloister, if it was too cold or too windy or raining, the chapterhouse or somewhere similar might have been used. At St Albans a special room was built;¹⁶⁹ indeed, it seems unlikely that the Alexis Master and his assistants would have worked so productively at St Albans without being protected from the elements in some way. Abbot Geoffrey, who may have hired the Alexis Master, enthusiastically encouraged book production at St Albans, and

¹⁶⁴ Carruthers, 1998: 272.

¹⁶⁵ Durham Cathedral Guide, 2009: 24.

¹⁶⁶ Knowles, 1950: 522.

¹⁶⁷ De Hamel, 2001: 82.

¹⁶⁸ On the cloister as paradise and “the garden of the Spouse” see Carruthers, 1998: 272-76.

¹⁶⁹ Knowles, 1950: 522.

“reorganized the finances allocated to the scriptorium” to enable him to employ three professional scribes.¹⁷⁰ He would surely have provided suitable working space for the artists.

It is even more unlikely that large and freshly painted illuminations would have been left to dry in an unglazed cloister in England. According to Reginald of Durham’s twelfth-century *Life of Godric* a violent rain storm at Fountain’s Abbey damaged some freshly painted leaves left to dry overnight. The brief account, extracted from its place in the miraculous events of a saint’s life, expresses the materiality of monastic art: respect for materials, the loving care and patience required in the production of illuminated folios, the repetitive but methodical application of colour, the rigorous observation of the monastic office around which the artist-monk had to work, and the anxiety about how the wind, rain and damp might affect the delicate work.

The story relates how the monks of Fountains borrowed a copy of the saint’s *Life* from their fellow monks at Durham in order to make their own copy. Durham’s copy was still unbound and undecorated, and they had it illuminated with bright colours to express their gratitude. Anne Lawrence has suggested that this work was carried out in the chapter house:

The prior, Nicholas, asked the cantor to do this, and Reginald then describes the monk working devotedly, spreading the folios out around him in the chapter house, which seems also to have been the place where he was doing his illuminating.¹⁷¹

Meyvaert, however, believed that Reginald described the work taking place in the cloister, where the leaves were later left to dry in its “nooks and corners”.¹⁷²

In fact, Reginald at first described the Cistercian monk working on the unbound leaves in the chapter house – *in capitulo*.¹⁷³ Just before the last liturgical office of the

¹⁷⁰ Thomson, 1982 I: 20-21.

¹⁷¹ Lawrence, 1986: 288.

¹⁷² Meyvaert, 1973: 57.

¹⁷³ *Libellus Godr.* (Stevenson, 1845): 466.

day, when no talking was allowed,¹⁷⁴ the monk received an urgent sign from another brother that he should go to Compline without delay. In obedience to the Rule whatever was being done was to be dropped at once and left unfinished,¹⁷⁵ and he stopped work and left it laid out to resume the next day. While he was gone there was an unexpected deluge of wind and rain which soaked the leaves, and blew them all around the cloister, that is *per claustrum circumquaque disperses*.¹⁷⁶ Then, on another page, the chapter house, not the cloister, is described as being thoroughly wet everywhere.¹⁷⁷ In a footnote the editor comments:

In Capitulo.] Excepting the initial letter, this word is erased in the text of the Bodleian MS., but the margin supplies the reading here adopted. The original reading appears to have been “in claustrum.”¹⁷⁸

There is, therefore, some doubt about whether the monk was working in the cloister or the chapter house, or both, in this transcription of the twelfth-century text.

To protect the monks and their work it may have been general practice to partition parts of the cloister, at least by the ninth century. Hildemar, a monk from Corbie, wrote a commentary on the Rule, in c. 850, and attempted to explain Benedict’s use of the word *claustra* in Chapter 4, ‘The Tools of Good Works’, which ends with a statement about the monastic space:

The workshop where we diligently work at all these tasks is the enclosure [*claustra*] of the monastery, in the stability of the community.¹⁷⁹

In explanation of these lines Hildemar wrote:

...what he [St Benedict] meant by *claustra* was the curtained-off parts where the monks are, i.e. between one portico and another.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁴ Lawrence, 2001: 114-15.

¹⁷⁵ Southern, 1970: 219: “The Rule leaves no doubt about the quality of obedience that is required: it is to be obedience ‘without delay’.”

¹⁷⁶ *Libellus Godr.* (Stevenson, 1845: 467; trans. Author).

¹⁷⁷ *Libellus Godr.*: ...*quia locus ille in capitulo circumquaque maduit, humorque pluvialis omnia suo rore conspersa pervasit* (Stevenson, 1845: 468; trans. Author).

¹⁷⁸ Stevenson, 1845: 468 n2.

¹⁷⁹ *Regula 4: Officina vero, ubi haec omnia diligenter operemur, claustra sunt monasterii et stabilitas in congregatione* (McCann, 1952: 32; trans. White, 2008: 18).

It seems reasonable to conclude that Hildemar was writing of his own experience, and that he was describing parts of a cloister at Corbie which had been partitioned with curtains, providing quiet working areas for the monks.

If the traditional view can be believed, scribes in England may normally have worked in the cloister, if protected from the wind in some way, to avoid cold and aching fingers. It is inconceivable, however, that elite professional artists of the twelfth-century would work in the cloister, except on the finest and warmest days. Making illuminations for giant Bibles and luxury psalters was not the same as what Knowles called “the picking out of initial and capital letters in gold or colours”,¹⁸¹ which scribes might have undertaken themselves.¹⁸²

By their very nature, the minority of manuscripts containing fully painted illuminations were often large and sumptuous, especially the Bibles, eating up far greater quantities of expensive materials than the average monastic book. Costly materials like gold leaf and rare pigments needed to be applied very carefully, and then allowed to dry. Colours and gold were applied slowly and methodically, one layer at a time, probably across several bi-folios at once, and this needed to be done out of the wind.¹⁸³ Artists often worked with assistants, and on large manuscripts this would have been a very active collaboration, moving around from one side of the table to another as they worked, applying first one colour to several bi-folios, then back to the first bi-folio to apply the second colour; this process has been described by Alexander, very usefully illustrated in colour with two or three unfinished manuscript pages.¹⁸⁴ In Reginald of Durham’s *Life of Godric*, already mentioned above, a similar scene is described: the

¹⁸⁰ *Exp. Reg.: Claustra enim dixit de illa curтина, ubi monachi sunt, i.e. quae est inter porticum et porticum* (Mittermüller, 1880: 183-84; trans. Braunfels, 1972: 237).

¹⁸¹ Knowles, 1950: 519.

¹⁸² Alexander, 1978: 7.

¹⁸³ De Hamel, 1992: 59.

¹⁸⁴ Alexander, 1992: 40-44.

monk-illuminator “surrounded on all sides by the individual leaves he was working on, spread out around him”.¹⁸⁵

If working on a major project artists would have needed safe and dry storage for powdered pigments, gold and gold leaf, flaked glue size, binders and fish glues, and for newly prepared bi-folios, in order to avoid undue cockling through exposure to damp; for model books and exemplars; for tools, brushes, pens, jugs and dishes; a small forge of some sort for boiling glue, and heating up binders and colours; and they needed to grind and mix their powdered colours safely, away from draughts. Gold, vellum, and pigments represented a very large investment on the part of the monks, and they would have been treated carefully.

All of these things required a space indoors that could be used at least on a semi-permanent basis, like a corner of the chapter house or vestibule, with good light, and where drying folios could be safely left overnight behind a closed door. Work could resume next day without having to pack away tools and materials.

What little documentary evidence there is about writing and illuminating in the cloister does not really relate to the production of large illuminations by professional artists for giant books like the Bury Bible. We must assume that in cold, damp Britain the most ambitious and successful artists, whether professional or not, worked mostly indoors, protected from the elements.

SUMMARY

The illumination of books was driven by the patronage of great men; it seems beyond doubt, for example, that the ideas of Abbot Geoffrey at St Albans and Abbot Anselm at Bury influenced the production of extensively illustrated books, and the influence of

¹⁸⁵ *Libellus Godr.* (Stevenson, 1845: 466; trans. Author).

Henry of Blois is clear in much fine metalwork and several great manuscripts made at Winchester.

At the major houses like St Albans the manuscripts were produced by monks who had all the required skills, but who were increasingly assisted by paid professional artists and scribes. Some books, like the Bury Bible, were expensively illuminated with lavish body colour and gold on virtually flawless vellum leaves which were carefully sourced and prepared beforehand by a skilled and meticulous artist of the very highest rank. It was surely produced in a secure, dry, warm and well lit space such as the chapter house, or somewhere similar.

Others like the Dover Bible are more utilitarian; it was made at the major centre of Canterbury for the use of another house, almost certainly at a lower cost and with less care than the Bury Bible. In the first volume certainly the materials were prepared poorly and inconsistently, and there are wide variations in paint thickness. Sometimes very thick heavy paint was used on thin, soft leaves, many of which became creased and crumpled. Much paint has flaked off over time, as indeed it was bound to do.

CHAPTER TWO

PAINT

PREFACE

Before beginning the description of the manuscript pages in this chapter, the work of Andreas Petzold must be acknowledged; until now, he is the only scholar to have studied English Romanesque manuscript painting as a subject in its own right.¹ He recorded the paint layers and colours in the St Albans Psalter miniatures, and having catalogued and numbered each colour, he tracked their usage across a small group of related manuscripts such as the illustrated Life of St Edmund. His observations on the application of paint and gold have provided a useful measure for the many observations made in the present study; indeed, the findings in this chapter are in broad agreement with his concerning the painting methods of the Alexis Master. Haney has cited Petzold as a colour authority in her study of the St Albans Psalter.²

Sandy Heslop has also written about the paint and colour of manuscripts with real sensitivity to the materials, allied to deep knowledge of texts and iconography.³ His work on the Bury Bible has been particularly valuable in confirming and balancing the observations in this study.

Other scholars have often written about the different ways paint was applied but mainly from a distance, and without thinking too much about its material properties, or differentiating the colour separately. No previous scholar, for example, seems to have

¹ Petzold, 1986.

² Haney, 2002:33-34.

³ See bibliography.

been close enough to all of the Four Psalter Leaves to note the two different painting techniques.

This chapter describes a closer examination of the surfaces in a wider range of illuminations than has been usual in a single study. The descriptions also offer an alternative material view of a wide range of illumination already examined in iconographic and textual studies: the physical dissimilarities between the Alexis Master's methods and Master Hugo's, for instance, are stressed, rather than the similarities, and Stirnemann's view on the relationship between the Hunterian and Copenhagen Psalters is questioned. For comparative purposes the St Edmund miniatures are considered as a product of St Albans, as they were made by St Albans artists, and could have been made there.

In 2003 Michelle Brown published the results of a scientific analysis of the colours and pigments in the Lindisfarne Gospels, which has significantly challenged previous scholarship on pigments. This seemed to be reason enough to avoid identifications of coloured pigments in this study.

2:1 ST ALBANS

English illumination in the first quarter of the twelfth century was at a crossroads, with one foot still firmly planted in Anglo-Norman techniques of line and wash, but it is clear that the best English and Anglo-Norman artists were embracing new ideas from across the Channel and beyond.⁴ One result was the increased use of opaque body colour, which Dodwell believed indicated the influence of Byzantine painting.⁵

Body colour is defined as paint with substance; it was often mixed with lead white to give it more body, rather like modern gouache. This substance or body is the

⁴ Ayres, 1974b: 193-223.

⁵ Dodwell, 1954: 103.

characteristic which distinguishes body colour from coloured washes. Its thickness can be discerned on the surface of the vellum, unlike thin washes of colour which soak in.

Signs of the increasing use of body colour can be seen in Norman manuscripts before they appeared in England,⁶ and especially those made at Mont St Michel, such as the Morgan Sacramentary,⁷ made c. 1060 (Fig. 275); the artist used opaque body colour, opaque white and rich colours, ascribed by Dodwell to “underlying Ottonian influences” which “impart...a more Romanesque quality to the work”.⁸

The increased use of body colour can also be seen at Winchester during the late eleventh century. For example, the glossed psalter Arundel 60,⁹ first written and illustrated in about 1080,¹⁰ contains illustrations in line and wash. However, additional texts containing collects and prayers were added during the late eleventh century, or even during the first quarter of the twelfth, in a later Norman scribal style. These possibly include folios 47-52,¹¹ which contain a Crucifixion on folio 52v (Fig. 8), and a large full-page Psalm initial opposite, on folio 53r, both by a “different and probably later hand”,¹² and perhaps also a Norman one. The paint is applied in quite dense and opaque body colour, and mixed with some white, which gives it a characteristically smooth, flat finish; the colours of the Crucifixion are mainly cool ones: a lilac-purple and crimson enliven the dominant blues, with small intense touches of a warmer red in the frame and areas of green in the four roundels at the corners. The lively outlines characteristic of earlier Winchester work were replaced by flat, filled shapes with firm, clear contours and thick outlines.¹³

⁶ Petzold, 1986: 108.

⁷ New York, Morgan Library MS M. 641.

⁸ Dodwell, 1993: 192-93.

⁹ London, BL Arundel MS 60.

¹⁰ Kauffmann, 1982: 88.

¹¹ BL Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts at www.bl.uk, Arundel 60 detailed record.

¹² Wormald, 1952: 66.

¹³ Kauffmann, 1984: 88.

This use of paint has generally been seen to herald the Romanesque style in England. However, the image was not made with a full palette of colour; there are no complementary oranges or yellows, and the image works on the eye in the traditional way—dark forms, against a very pale vellum surface, except for the superb, chiselled figure of Christ, off-white against blue.

Similarly, Norman influence can also be seen at Canterbury in the increasing use of strong dense colour in historiated initials, as in the *Passionale* made at St Augustine's between 1100 and 1120 (Fig. 9),¹⁴ and the Bodleian *Anselmus* (Fig. 10),¹⁵ made at Christ Church c. 1120.¹⁶ Paintings such as these were essentially line and wash, though with quite intensely saturated colour, and this older technique continued to have a place even with the gradual introduction of body colour.

However, during the first quarter of the twelfth century an influential style of manuscript painting developed at St Albans, which involved not only the use of opaque body colour but an almost full range of colours. The artist apparently responsible for introducing this innovation into England was the Alexis Master, although it has been suggested that he was “simply a major exponent of this new style, whose work has happened to survive, rather than its innovator.”¹⁷ Only the Bury Bible, made several years later in the mid-1130s, stands comparison, and according to Thomson, both manuscripts “exhibit an entirely new style of decoration, already at an assured and confident stage of development”.¹⁸

The Alexis Master can be seen as typical of a growing number of professional artists who were highly skilled in a variety of techniques. In the St Albans Psalter he painted forty full-page miniatures in bright, intense body colour; three framed drawings

¹⁴ London, BL Arundel MS 91.

¹⁵ Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 271.

¹⁶ Heslop, 1984: 200.

¹⁷ Petzold, 1995: 31.

¹⁸ Thomson, 1972: 211.

of exceptional quality in brown line and glowing transparent colour washes, illustrating the Emmaus story (Fig. 11); and a smaller coloured line drawing illustrating the Alexis story (Fig. 267). These illustrate adjacent texts, sometimes sharing the same space on the page. In this single manuscript therefore there are several different illustrative techniques by the same artist.

He also designed, drew out and made the major contribution to the painting of thirty-two fully painted miniatures in the illustrated Life of St Edmund for the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds, mentioned above, and fourteen fully painted miniatures and many painted initials in a copy of Anselm's Prayers and Meditations. So not only was he adept with different techniques, he illustrated different types of texts, including the Gospels, a saint's life mostly written in the tenth century, and a late eleventh-century text of personal prayers and devotions by an author he could quite easily have known. Opinion is still divided on the nature of the Alexis Master's involvement in some of these illuminations.

Three colours dominate the St Albans Psalter miniatures, blue, purple and green, with the luxurious blue often being the most eye-catching, but ochres and reds are also prominent. In the background panels the colours are transparent and saturated, while in the clothing of the figures some are paler and slightly tinted and highlighted with white (Fig. 12).

The foreground colours were sometimes mixed before being used, enabling the artist to make various pastel shades including pale blue, mauve, grey and ochre. Although sometimes laid on quite thinly, they were evenly applied and look very smooth. Petzold discussed the admixtures of these colours in some detail, and suggested that this may have been because, apart from the green, they were mixed with a thin

solution of beaten egg white, known as glair, and small amounts of white, which increased their opacity and made the paint smoother and easier to apply.¹⁹

Petzold also suggested that some of what he called the “laying in colours” of garments, that is the flat base colours, before any shadows and highlights were painted, may have been applied more than once, because they were very dense.²⁰ Generally, however, in both the Psalter and Edmund’s *libellus*, the foreground colours were mixed before being applied to avoid having to use layers of washes, and while some of the colours are indeed very dense, close examination was unable to confirm that any had been applied twice, but they may have been. However, some garment colours in the Edmund miniatures have a smooth, fully opaque matt finish reminiscent of modern gouache, mixed with white and glair which, once dry, formed a relatively waterproof coating more easily over-painted; these were clearly laid on smoothly in one coat. The surfaces in the Psalter do not have such a dense matt surface generally, and the slightly more transparent paint seems more thinly applied and tinted less with white. A similar dense and opaque paint surface was noticed however on the Four Psalter Leaves,²¹ made a few years later at Canterbury.

When the opaque or semi-opaque layer of base colour was dry, the modelling of the shadows was painted with transparent colour, usually in the same colour, but not always, in a more saturated form, and often in two or more layers. Somewhat surprisingly, in the *libellus* these second colour layers were sometimes manipulated and blended on the surface while still wet. The modelling can appear soft and naturalistic where it was done with a damp brush, or thinned with a little water when required, as in Hinguar the Dane’s blue hose on (Fig. 13).

¹⁹ Petzold, 1986: 152-63.

²⁰ Petzold, 1986: 152.

²¹ London, BL Add. MS 37472 (1); London, V&A MS 661 (816-1894); New York, Morgan Library, MS M. 521; New York, Morgan Library, MS M. 724.

This was done occasionally even while the base colour itself was still wet. Petzold thought that wet modelling occurred in the Psalter in the unusual green robes of the Virgin in the Nativity and at the Presentation (Fig. 14): “in two cases the green shadow colour has clearly been blended into the yellow laying-in colour”.²² However, the technique was probably used less in the Psalter; it is certainly not as obvious as it is in the *libellus*, because a more careful, methodical, and less hurried approach to the work seems to have been adopted.

Nonetheless, this technique may have been more common than was once believed. Theophilus instructed his readers to lighten a colour with white and “blend in with water”,²³ possibly describing how a wet brush should be used to blend the two still-damp colours.²⁴

The shadow colours, therefore, were usually applied in washes of varying saturation, and sometimes applied more than once and blended wet without waiting for the first colour to dry. It is also possible to see second touches of a colour added for emphasis, or simply as a correction, or to darken an overly bright highlight, especially in the Edmund miniatures, such as on the green tunic of one of the arrested men (Fig. 15).

In the Psalter miniatures the colour blue seems to have been reserved for the clothing of heavenly or priestly figures, as pointed out by Petzold,²⁵ and the artist avoided using it to any great extent in other figures.²⁶ This may have caused him to be quite inventive in mixing the variety of other colours required for their garments. An example of this is the variety of cool lilacs, grey-mauves and warmer red-mauves, usually but not always tinted with white; two slightly different lilac-mauves are visible

²² Petzold, 1986: 152 n34.

²³ *De Div. Art. I. 6: cum aqua lavabis* (ed. and trans. Dodwell, 1961: 7).

²⁴ Hawthorne and Smith, 1963: 18 n1.

²⁵ Petzold, 1986: 157.

²⁶ See below, section 5:4 The Symbolism of Colour.

in the garments of the apostles at the Washing of the Feet, and the tunics cast to the ground in the Entry into Jerusalem (Fig. 16). They are quite deliberately mixed, made from folium, a naturally reddish purple whose redness or blueness could be modified by additives,²⁷ thereby providing the artist with various hues between red and blue.

Interesting mixtures or variations of other colours such as red, grey and brown can frequently be seen, such as the unusual pale brown of the donkey in the Entry into Jerusalem, clearly pre-mixed before application. Similar mixed tints of lilac, grey and mauve can be seen in Edmund's *libellus*, though the colour there is generally redder and brighter overall, with more green, ochre, and orange, mostly mixed with a little white.

This use of invented colour mixtures, which can also be seen in other contemporary illuminations, and especially in the Four Psalter Leaves and the great English Bibles, seems to contradict Thompson's generalization that amongst medieval painters there was a preference for "frank, definite colours",²⁸ and that artists in general disliked complicated mixtures, preferring single pigments.²⁹

On the contrary, the best of them in the mid-twelfth century were inventive with their colour mixtures. While it is true that transparent washes were often used one over another to create shades of colour, as stressed by Gage,³⁰ other colours were pre-mixed before application. This seems to confirm the practice described by Theophilus, who made frequent references to mixed colours in *De Diversis Artibus*, and suggested that they could be mixed fairly freely, following his instructions, whether to be used on walls, panels or in books.³¹ Gage, though, was not convinced of how typical this was,

²⁷ Dodwell, 1961: 10 n2; Petzold, 1986: 159-60; Brown, 2003: 281.

²⁸ Thompson, 1956: 89.

²⁹ Thompson, 1956: 174.

³⁰ Gage, 1978: 119.

³¹ *De Div. Art. I. 32: Omnes mixturas colorum, si indigueris ad pingendas imagines, compone in libro supra* (ed. and trans. Dodwell, 1961: 30).

and suggested that because Theophilus was not a painter himself he seems to have had “a more relaxed attitude to mixture”.³²

Although the two miniature cycles are known for the use of opaque body colour, in both there are areas where the vellum was only delicately tinted with transparent washes of weak colour. In the *libellus* some parts were left virtually bare; the heads, faces, hands, arms and legs of many figures are strongly drawn with a fine brown outline, which was apparently meant to be seen, and not to be overdrawn in black, while the flesh is modelled in either very thin washes of mauve, green and red, highlighted with white, or like the faces, sometimes in stronger more opaque dabs of the same colours. This is very clear on folio 19v where the pen-drawn outlines and flat areas of tinted vellum of the hanged men contrast strongly with the rich opaque reds and blues of the fabrics (Fig. 17); it can be seen in the bare legged figures of the Danes, such as Edmund’s murderers on folio 14v, where thin washes model the forms of heads and legs without obscuring the vellum (Fig. 18).

The surfaces in the Psalter miniatures were more carefully painted and the application of body colour was more consistent throughout, but in figures such as Adam and Eve (Fig. 19), and the figures in the Carrying of the Cross and at the Deposition, the main colour of the naked flesh is essentially that of the vellum, sometimes tinted with a thin milky white, with very delicate tints of red and green in the heads and around the muscles of the torsos, buttocks, thighs and arms, and extensive, delicately scumbled white highlights across virtually all the forms. They are all fairly transparent, and suffer from show-through, except where the opaque white lies on the surface, but even so are not as completely transparent as the hanged men in Edmund’s *libellus*.

In all the Psalter miniatures the coloured forms are outlined very sensitively in black on their outer contours only, and hardly ever inside the coloured shapes. The

³² Gage, 1978: 119.

outline was probably not always the last thing to be done, because it was sometimes softened or reduced to nothing by being over-painted with colour or gold, as it was also in the Edmund miniatures, and was never a complete outline anyway. It is only visible where it was needed: in the Fall, for example, Adam and Eve are bound by a very fine black outline on their outer edge, which is only very obvious around their legs and feet, but is lost where the figures stand out against the blue background (Fig. 19). Petzold stressed how distinct the black outline was:

All the garments and objects are outlined with a distinct black contour, which assists in giving an appearance of solidity to them. This distinct, black contour is a hallmark of Romanesque illumination. It may be seen in late Ottonian and Anglo-Norman illumination.³³

However, the outline is not always this distinct, and in some areas no outline is visible at all, usually as a result of a second coat of background blue encroaching on to it, or sometimes another colour. The impression is of minimal outline, subtle and impressionistic, and it is the coloured shapes that define the forms, one colour against another, rather than the outline. Pächt described this phenomenon:

an object, or any shape, is differentiated from its environment merely by the contrast of their respective colours, that is by purely colouristic means. The constituent elements of the pictorial composition are now not linear configurations, but coloured areas which are set against each other... Although the figures in the St Albans Psalter are not colour silhouettes, but have heavily drawn contours, it is still the colour expanse of the figure interior, the coloured inlay, as it were, and not the outlines themselves that really matter in the compositional structure.³⁴

The handling of the paint in the *libellus* miniatures is loose and confident, and in the best work it is very skilfully applied, apparently with little hesitation. In most of the folios the colours are handled expertly, with eye-catching harmonies of red and green and blue and orange. In fact it is noticeable that more colours were used on the most carefully painted miniatures, as on folio 22r (Fig. 20) where the dying man sits up in

³³ Petzold, 1986: 155.

³⁴ Pächt, 1960: 116-17.

bed and announces the death of King Sweyn of Denmark, or in the scenes from folios 12r to 14v, where Edmund is captured, tortured and killed.

Many of the faces, but not all, are shaded subtly in red, green and white, with eager expressions and small focused eyes, especially where the brown line drawings of the Alexis Master have not been obscured by black outline or touches of opaque colour, while the modelling of legs, knees, calves and thighs in various colours is quite naturalistic, looking soft and rounded. Sometimes the artist carefully emphasized a shape or form here and there with a fine black line, as in the miniature on folio 22r (Fig. 21), but the richly coloured shapes need few outlines, other than the brown under drawings which are often visible; where there are darker outlines they are often brown or purple. And sometimes the artist created linear emphasis with the colours he was using to apply shadows to the forms. The outlines were occasionally left incomplete, as they are in the Psalter miniatures, and here and there they are missing altogether, where they have been painted over with the colour of the garments or gold, as noted by Thomson.³⁵ This creates soft, painterly edges to the forms, emphasizing the volume of the form rather than flattening it.

However, the paint is sometimes carelessly applied, and Petzold pointed out some examples where he thought the application was much coarser than in the Psalter miniatures.³⁶ In this he followed Thomson who, in attempting to show that a second artist was responsible for the colour, stated:

The colourist was unsure of himself; his attempts to model faces, by applying splotches of red and green, vary from face to face and from miniature to miniature, often producing very unsatisfactory results.³⁷

As might be expected in such a long cycle of miniatures, there are variations in technique, but as Thomson suggested, there is also some very bad painting.

³⁵ Thomson, 1982, I: 26.

³⁶ Petzold, 1986: 235.

³⁷ Thomson, 1982, I: 26.

On the eight miniatures on the two middle bi-folios of the third quire, folios 16r to 17v and 20r to 21v, much of the painting was certainly done by someone other than the Alexis Master: the modelling is generally less painterly and more slapdash, the figures look flatter due to the very insensitive and crudely drawn black outline, and most heads have eyes with large black pupils. For example, in two of the scenes with Egelwin the monk the painting is very poor indeed; in the second of these, Egelwin crossing the bridge, it is startlingly bad (Fig. 22). The colour of the monk's black habit is very weakly laid in with only perfunctory linear folds indicated on the arms and upper body; below his waist there are no folds, just a thin and patchy grey filling the shape of the robe, with some white highlight around the hem. On folio 21r the colours of the tunics of the two attendants are flat and badly outlined, and their eyes are unfocused and staring, the whites and pupils no longer where the Alexis Master drew them.

For some reason these two bi-folios were left in the hands of a much less accomplished painter. This may have been due to the normal collaboration of an assistant, when folios and quires were distributed among artists to speed up production, which almost certainly happened in other manuscripts, or it may have been caused by some disruption in production. The touch of this second artist is probably visible here and there on other folios also. These contrast with the miniatures of the robbers trying to break into the church, their arrest before the bishop (Fig. 23), and their execution by hanging (Fig. 17). Close examination suggests that the Alexis Master himself painted these.

This very discernable difference in quality in eight of the miniatures has caused some scholars to presume that the Alexis Master did not paint any of them; however, it is extremely doubtful that anyone other than the Alexis Master painted both the regal portrait of Edmund in the *libellus* (Figs 24 and 327) and the risen Christ and Christ in the Dream of St Martin in the St Albans Psalter (Figs 25-26). Identical personal

mannerisms, such as the finely chiselled nose, arched brows, small tight mouth, and narrow shoulders are amongst the most obvious; the angular opening of the garments at the neck, a distinctive characteristic of his frontal figures and probably ultimately derived from mosaics at Ravenna,³⁸ make it virtually certain that he painted both.

It is appropriate now to discuss the colours used in the backgrounds of the Alexis Master's miniatures. The blue, green and purple used are saturated and transparent; they look grainy in the Psalter, but smoother and more dense in the *libellus*, though the green is quite often blotchy rather than grainy because it was mixed with white.³⁹ None of the three colours in the *libellus* exactly matches those in the Psalter. In both manuscripts the blue was painted in two coats; in the *libellus* this can be seen between the legs of the hanged men, and in the Psalter the deep blue behind Adam and Eve, where the edge between the two coats can be seen near the tree on the right (Fig. 28).

The purple and green in the backgrounds were also sometimes painted in two careful layers, to improve coverage and smoothness. This is especially noticeable with the purple. At the top of the Magdalen miniature on page 51, the artist carefully painted the left-hand section of the purple background with a second coat, but forgot to continue it into the other areas, which remained pale and grainy (Figs 29-30). This may have been because in the left-hand panel a second coat was needed to neutralize the show-through from the reverse. The purple is deep and smooth on all three other miniatures on this bi-folio, and elsewhere. In a few small, localised areas the artist also reworked his purple with a second quite dark layer to disguise or blot out the bad show-through of green or gold from the reverse. Such a repair can be seen in the Return from Egypt where an area of purple was laid into the archway behind James (Fig. 31), and in the Descent from the Cross behind the female figure in red (Fig. 32). There are other

³⁸ See the portrait of Justinian at San Vitale (Fig. 252), and the many saints and martyrs in Sant' Appolinare Nuovo (Figs 281 and 316).

³⁹ Petzold, 1986: 228.

examples of this kind of correction here and there, and this suggests that the artist was concerned about the problem of show-through while still working on the miniatures.

Petzold noticed that the purple was sometimes very strong:

The purple folium in the background appears to have been applied in a highly concentrated state because it is extremely dark. Its tone is not always even; this is probably due to the extreme instability of the pigment.⁴⁰

The purple is in fact often quite pale, laid on in a quite transparent wash; however, where it is very dark it seems to have been applied in more than one coat, first thinly, then more thickly. This may have become a common practice with strong and saturated colours, to achieve smoothness of coverage and avoid graininess when used on vellum. Theophilus advised that all colours should be applied twice on vellum, “at first very thinly then more thickly; on initials but once”.⁴¹

In several of the Psalter miniatures there are, here and there, small areas of wear in the blue backgrounds, revealing the pale vellum beneath, but in six others it has worn away quite badly. Petzold believed this to be natural abrasion, but considered the possibility that the blue had been scraped off.⁴²

However, there is a more plausible albeit more complex reason, which has also been considered by Peter Kidd.⁴³ Five of the miniatures are on the flesh sides of their respective bi-folios, and four of them, the Expulsion and the Return from Egypt on pages 18 and 31, and the Annunciation and Massacre of the Innocents on pages 30 and 19, actually face each other, flesh side to flesh side, on the first and second bi-folios of quire two. The fifth flesh-side miniature is on page 35, the Third Temptation of Christ. As Haney has observed, there are clear differences between the hair and flesh sides of the bi-folios in the Psalter: “The flesh sides are smooth, shiny and show marks from the

⁴⁰ Petzold, 1986: 144.

⁴¹ *De Div. Art.* I. xxxii: *Omnes colores bis ponendi sunt in libro, in primis tenuissime, diende spissius; in litteris vero semel* (ed. and trans. Dodwell, 1961: 30).

⁴² Petzold, 1986: 331.

⁴³ Kidd, 2008: 74.

knife throughout.”⁴⁴ It is possible that the blue paint may not have gripped the shiny surfaces as it did the rougher hair side, a problem that may have been exacerbated by the fact that four of the images faced each other. The flaking of colour was a common problem in Byzantine miniatures where the practice of polishing the vellum to achieve a smooth and shiny finish resulted in a lack of texture for the paint to adhere to,⁴⁵ and this may have been a similar case in the Psalter. This kind of wear perhaps led to the later use of silk curtains or veils to protect the surfaces in the Psalter.⁴⁶ Only one of the miniatures with a badly worn blue background is on a hair side, the Nativity on page 21, which is worn because it was touched a great deal, as noted in the previous chapter.

An additional factor may lie behind the losses in the Psalter: the four miniatures which face each other are very early in the prefatory cycle, on only the first and second bi-folios, and could have been amongst the first to be painted. It is possible that the saturated blue suffered from some unresolved problem of adhesion that for some reason did not affect the green and purple or the foreground colours, which were mixed with white or other additive. It is probably significant that the pattern created by the losses of blue on the central panel on page 18 clearly follows the criss-cross shapes of the tree on its reverse, page 17, the Fall, which is a hair side (Figs 33-34). Furthermore, the blue losses on page 19, a flesh side, follow the areas where gold has been applied on its reverse, the Visitation, a hair side (Figs 35-36). Likewise, the losses on page 31, a flesh side, mirror the position of the gold on its reverse in the Baptism, a hair side (Figs 37-38). Overall these losses of blue indicate that they may have been caused by some change in the condition of the vellum brought about by the materials applied to the other side of the folios. Perhaps the new method of painting in gold and rich colours was somehow unsuited for use on both sides of vellum which is only of medium thickness.

⁴⁴ Haney, 1995: 1 n3.

⁴⁵ Demus, 1967: 5.

⁴⁶ See below 4:3 Silk Curtains.

These unexpected technical problems, and the repairs made to reduce the related effects of show-through, suggest that either the Alexis Master was still inexperienced in working with a full palette of body colour and gold in this particular way, or that the Psalter miniatures were very innovative and he was still developing the techniques, which were not as fully resolved as they appear. But if the early miniatures suffered in this way, he seems to have corrected the problem fairly quickly. From page 20, the Visitation, his blues are generally undamaged, whether on hair side or flesh, and many are very dense and sumptuous because they were painted in two or more careful coats; thus the thicker second coat seems to have solved the problem on most of the miniatures. In the Edmund manuscript any similar problems were avoided with the use of folios of doubled vellum, pasted together before the painting of the miniatures began. This is not to say that the Edmund miniatures were made later than those in the St Albans Psalter.

Another St Albans manuscript originally designed with miniatures and initials in full colour is the Verdun Anselm,⁴⁷ the text of which was copied by a scribe whose work is evident in other St Albans books.⁴⁸ Up to sixteen folios were removed at some time, and only a single full-page miniature and twenty-five initials now remain in the manuscript.

The illustrations were almost certainly designed and painted by the Alexis Master,⁴⁹ but the extent of his involvement has been debated. Thomson has suggested that he painted the miniature of Christ with St Peter, on folio 68v, but that an assistant painted the initials.⁵⁰ There are no manuscripts containing other initials in body colour by the

⁴⁷ Pächt, 1956: 74; Thomson, 1982, I: 26.

⁴⁸ Thomson, 1982, I: 26 and 124.

⁴⁹ Pächt, 1956: 75 and 78.

⁵⁰ Thomson, 1982, I: 124.

artist on which to base a comparison, except perhaps the Hereford Gospels,⁵¹ but as

Pächt pointed out:

The initials in this manuscript, all painted in body colour, are the closest approximation to the Master's style in ornament we can get in the extant material.⁵²

A purely decorative initial accompanied each miniature (Fig. 39). Where there was no miniature the initials were inhabited with figures and animals, usually struggling with each other.

All the plant forms and figures have the stylistic ingredients of the Alexis Master's personal touch; this is evident in the intent facial expressions with the small, focused, intelligent eyes, the shape and size of the hands and the way they join the wrists, the precise musculature of the arms and calves, the soft fleshy buttocks and inner thighs, and the long torso and rib-cage with the two or three curved creases at the stomach, all beautifully modelled in soft red painterly lines and white highlights. The initials on folios 29v and 42v, where naked men struggle to free themselves from dragons, are typical (Figs 40 and 42).

Comparison with other work from St Albans reveals the same mannerisms: some frontal figures of Christ in the St Albans Psalter, and one of Edmund crowned in the *libellus* (Figs 24-26) have the same narrow shoulders and angular, sharp-cornered opening of the tunic at the neck as the tonsured priest on folio 45v of the Verdun manuscript (Fig. 27). In the miniature of Edmund being beaten on folio 12v of the *libellus*, the legs of the Danes are so well observed and skilfully painted that their soft, fat thighs seem to ripple like those in the Anselm (Fig. 41). In the St Albans Psalter the figures of Adam and Eve in the Fall (Fig. 28) and Christ at the Baptism, also have the tiny right-handed curl at the navel identical to that of the little figure on folio 42v of the Anselm (Fig. 42).

⁵¹ Hereford Cathedral Library MS O. I. 8; Thomson, 1982: 124.

⁵² Pächt, 1960: 156 n1.

One initial has an uncommon and sophisticated touch which suggests that the artist was aware of Byzantine colour techniques, such as those preserved in wall paintings at the Church of Our Lady at Asinou, Cyprus.⁵³ A man in a blue tunic struggles with a large dog in the initial ‘A’ at the beginning of Anselm’s Meditation on Human Redemption (Fig. 43). The dog is painted in a thin, flat red wash, shaded with a bright saturated red and highlighted with white, except for its two far-side legs which are painted in a cool slightly bluish mauve, probably made by overlaying a delicate blue wash onto the red, setting them back slightly into shadow. This sophisticated use of a different and cooler colour to create a spatial recession of form is very unusual; the same effect, even more strongly developed, can be seen in some illuminations of the slightly later Bury Bible, as described below.

Despite their fully resolved technique, wonderful draughtsmanship and the perfectly controlled refinement of colour, the Verdun Anselm initials have become rather marginalised on the edge of the Alexis Master’s oeuvre.

2:2 BURY ST EDMUNDS

The St Albans Psalter miniatures were very innovative, yet they retained something of earlier technique and style, and there is a sense of continuity in the midst of innovation. The illuminations in the Bury Bible, on the other hand, seem quite alien and disconnected, in a style and technique very unlike anything current in England, and painted on stiff leaves of doubled and patched vellum.

Master Hugo appears to have been the only artist to have worked on the illuminations.⁵⁴ However, the author’s discovery of an artist’s mark in an illumination on folio 147v of the Bury Bible, mentioned above, suggests he may have had an assistant colourist (Fig. 74). Apart from this unnoticed mark, there are no signs of other

⁵³ See below pp. 98-99.

⁵⁴ Heslop, 1998b: 176.

hands in the Bible; Hugo's personal mannerisms are evident on every illuminated folio, and the high quality is maintained throughout, with complete stylistic integrity.

The whole manuscript seems fully resolved, with no evidence of experiment, and no sense of any change of mind in response to unforeseen difficulties. The areas of doubled vellum are carefully planned,⁵⁵ and there are, it seems, no disruptions, collaborations, or unfinished, restarted, or over-painted areas in the illuminations, unlike those in the work of the Alexis Master. In an age when artists often worked together in identifiable groups within scriptoria, the impression is that Hugo worked alone.

Furthermore, there is no evidence of his touch elsewhere during or after his time at Bury, despite documentary evidence from Bury which states that Hugo produced bronze doors, a bell, and a carved cross.⁵⁶ This contrasts sharply with the output of the other major artists of the mid-twelfth century, including the Alexis Master, the Entangled Figures Master, the Lambeth Master, the Apocrypha Master, the Master of the Leaping Figures, the Corpus 4 Master, and Heslop's 'Principal Illuminator' of the Eadwine Psalter, all of whom left traces in more than one manuscript. Later in the century, the Morgan Master and the Simon Master also worked on a number of manuscripts, as did several artists who worked in the north of England during the 1160s and 1170s. Only the painting of St Paul and the Viper at Canterbury Cathedral might be considered his work on stylistic grounds,⁵⁷ but this is debatable.

Moreover, Hugo's direct influence anywhere is also hard to identify. There is no evidence that he was influential in any dominant way in the scriptorium at Bury, and it probably returned to mediocrity after his period of activity;⁵⁸ nor is there evidence that his work had any great regional impact, unlike at St Albans and Winchester, where stylistic borrowings from one artist to another are strongly evident regionally, nationally

⁵⁵ Heslop, 1998b: 173.

⁵⁶ Thomson, 2001: 29-35.

⁵⁷ Thomson, 2001: 32.

⁵⁸ Thomson, 2001: 45.

and also internationally. Even taking into account the probability of great losses at Bury and elsewhere during the Dissolution, it is unusual that there is virtually no evidence that any followers or assistants continued using his methods.⁵⁹

Nonetheless, his illuminations seem to have heralded at least one stylistic development which for a while became very dominant in painting and sculpture. Apart from the colour, which he partly derived from St Albans, the most immediately eye-catching stylistic characteristic is the use of damp-fold modelling in the figures, a convention which imitates the way damp fabric clings to the surface of the form beneath. This style and its influence has been fully explored elsewhere, by several scholars,⁶⁰ so here it will be described only briefly.

The earliest use of a fully-formed damp-fold convention in England was in manuscripts similar to the Bodleian *Anselmus*, made at Canterbury (Fig. 10), which used rather flattening two-dimensional tear drop shapes, with nested 'V' folds, to indicate the form beneath.⁶¹ In Hugo's work the ridged pipe folds follow the curves of the forms, occasionally even seeming to disappear around the back of a thigh or shoulder, enhancing the solidity and volume of the figures so that they appear to exist in the round.⁶² This effect is especially visible in the large figures of Moses and Aaron (Fig. 44), and on garments worn by Job's sons (Fig. 45). It is this feature that came to be so popular in England,⁶³ though in other hands it often lost its three-dimensional properties and became pattern.

Generally recognized to be of Byzantine origin, and described by de Hamel as "startlingly new Byzantine draperies",⁶⁴ damp folds were probably derived from fresco

⁵⁹ Thomson, 2001: 44-47.

⁶⁰ Kauffmann, 1966: 75-76; Cahn, 1982: 259; Thomson, 2001: 42-44.

⁶¹ Kauffmann, 1975: 25.

⁶² Heslop, 1988: 171-72.

⁶³ Zarnecki, 1957: 7; Kauffmann, 1966: 76.

⁶⁴ Binski and Panayotova, 2005: 83.

cycles similar to those in the churches at Asinou on Cyprus,⁶⁵ and Ohrid in Macedonia.

Demus saw Hugo's work as evidence of the influence from such Byzantine picture cycles:

...some of the best paintings done in the Northwest, for instance the miniatures of the Bury Bible, of about the middle of the century, seem to have been inspired by models of the Asinou kind or are at least astonishing parallels in interpretation of metropolitan prototypes.⁶⁶

It is also possible that Master Hugo might have felt their influence closer to home, at Augsburg perhaps, or the Mosan area of Flanders, where the influence of Byzantine art has been detected.⁶⁷

However, it was at Cluny in Burgundy that Byzantine stylistic developments seem to have taken root most firmly,⁶⁸ in what Ayres described as "the Italo-Byzantine wave current at Cluny around 1100".⁶⁹ The Cluny Lectionary (Fig. 46), which was made probably no later than *c.* 1110,⁷⁰ contains a Pentecost scene which is stylistically very close to the early twelfth-century wall paintings in the Church of Our Lady at Asinou, Cyprus (Fig. 47); in both, the draperies flow down the thighs from the stomach in very similar long triple folds or pleats which curve beneath and around the knees in an oval shape. They are so alike it suggests that they were influenced by the same, or similar, contemporary models.

Even earlier than this, Byzantine manuscripts exhibited similar shapes of drapery folds, in various forms, as in the garments worn by the angel at the Adoration of the Magi, in the late tenth-century Menologium of Basil II (Fig. 48).⁷¹ The garment draperies in the Basilica of St Sophia at Ohrid, painted on the choir vault between 1040 and 1045 (Fig. 49), are also very close. They were of a type current in Constantinople at

⁶⁵ Kitzinger, 1966: 38; Oakeshott, 1972: 79.

⁶⁶ Demus, 1970 : 172.

⁶⁷ Zarnecki, 1957: 8; Dodwell, 1959: 9; Parker McLachlan, 1986: 247.

⁶⁸ Koehler, 1941: 74, and 74 n10; Wixom, 1969: 131-35.

⁶⁹ Ayres, 1974b: 196.

⁷⁰ Paris, BN MS nouv. acq. lat. 2246.

⁷¹ Rome, Vatican Library Vat. gr. 1613

the time, and may have been the work of artists from the Byzantine capital.⁷² The vault contains standing figures of apostles who wear robes that drape across their bodies in strong formulaic damp folds, of a kind similar to those used by the artist of the Pentecost miniature in the Cluny Lectionary. The influence seems so direct that it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the Cluny artist had seen paintings such as those at Asinou or Ohrid. This could have been the source of Hugo's damp-fold style,⁷³ particularly if he had access to contemporary model books or manuscripts such as the Menologium of Basil II. Hugo's patron at Bury, Abbot Anselm, had been a papal legate and abbot of a monastery in Rome, and there is evidence that he liked to travel. It is probable that he had carried books with him from Rome to Bury, some of which might have been of Byzantine origin:

Surviving Bury work of this period reflects considerable continental influence and much of this may be due to gifts brought back by abbot Anselm from his many trips abroad, or to the influence of such trips on travelling companions from the abbey.⁷⁴

However, the monumentality of the large miniatures and the density of Hugo's paint, and the amount of white he used, suggests that he had seen Byzantine wall paintings at first hand, as well as manuscripts,⁷⁵ and possibly Italo-Byzantine mosaics.⁷⁶

A second stylistic mannerism employed by Hugo further strengthens the direct link with the Byzantine frescoes at Asinou and Ohrid. In the large prefatory miniature for Deuteronomy the dark skinned man with the crutch has box-like drapery folds on the forearm of his tunic (Fig. 50), as does the bear-keeper on folio 220r (Fig. 51). One of Job's sons dressed in a green tunic also has rectangular box-like highlights at his wrist (Fig. 52), as does the prophet Micah (Fig. 53). This unusual mannerism, which contrasts

⁷² Chatzidakis and Grabar, 1965: 17-18.

⁷³ Kauffmann, 1975: 25.

⁷⁴ Parker McLachlan, 1986: 12.

⁷⁵ Kauffmann, 1959: 13; Demus, 1970: 172; Parker McLachlan, 1986: 199-200; Thomson, 2001: 42; Binski and Panayatova, 2005: 83.

⁷⁶ Rickert, 1954: 85; Thomson, 2001: 43-44.

strongly with Hugo's concern for the curved roundness of forms, is possibly unique so early in England. Similar box-like highlights do, however, occasionally appear later, in the work of the Corpus 4 Master in the second volume of the Dover Bible, and also in the work of the Master of the Genesis Initial in the Winchester Bible, although here they are more extensively used as highlights rather than associated only with sleeves. Ayres has described these square patterns as "cloisonné folds" in his discussions of the influence of twelfth-century Sicilian mosaics at Winchester during the 1170s.⁷⁷ Similar square folds are visible in the Souvigny Bible,⁷⁸ made in France towards the end of the twelfth century. Their use in the Bury Bible thus seems very early, and innovative.

The earliest of the mosaics in Norman Sicily, which came to be of such influence later in the century, were of course unavailable to Master Hugo if the date usually given for his work in the Bible is accepted. However the square patterning of folds was also a common feature of Byzantine wall painting, possibly a stylistic borrowing reflecting the more mechanical application of shapes made with tesserae in earlier mosaics. At Asinou straight edged drapery folds are commonly used on the arms and at the wrists of the figures, and can be seen in the sleeve of St Tychikos (Figs 54-55), and the two apostles following Christ at the Entry into Jerusalem (Fig. 56). The convention can also be seen in the draperies worn by the apostles and angels at Ohrid (Fig. 57).

Similarly, the white square folds used in Christ's raised forearm in the Church of Sant' Angelo in Formis (Figs 58-59) seem to be closely mimicked by the square folds in the Bury Bible (Fig. 60). Probably dating from the second half of the eleventh century, the decoration of Sant' Angelo, near Capua in central Italy, about thirty miles from the abbey of Monte Cassino, is considered to show the strongest influence of Byzantine work in the whole of Italy.⁷⁹ Abbot Anselm of Bury had previously been abbot of the

⁷⁷ Ayres, 1974c: 216-20.

⁷⁸ Moulins, BM MS 1.

⁷⁹ Ainaud, 1963: 9; Dodwell, 1971: 131-34.

dual Greek and Latin monastery of St Saba in Rome, and had contact with other Greek and Latin monasteries in southern Italy.⁸⁰ It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that Master Hugo was part of his entourage before coming to England, and that he was well acquainted with frescoes such as those at Sant' Angelo in Formis.

Nevertheless, there has been general agreement that Master Hugo was influenced by the Alexis Master's strong bright colour, and this may indeed may have been the major influence on Hugo after his arrival in England, but one which did not disrupt the processes and techniques he used, and in some ways emphasizes the differences. As has been demonstrated, the Alexis Master, having carefully drawn his outlines, deliberately used the colour of the vellum itself to represent the colour of the flesh of legs, faces, and arms, only lightly tinting his outline drawings with thin washes of colour. In the Bury Bible miniatures, however, faces and other pale areas of flesh are painted in opaque, smoothly modelled tints of whitened, creamy ochre, which generally block out the colour of the vellum beneath, as noted by Heslop:

Unlike most earlier Romanesque paint there is no hint either of the granularity of crushed minerals nor the transparency of washes which allows something of the whiteness of the page to show through.⁸¹

This is, therefore, an indication of a different attitude to the materials, at odds with the outline and transparent washes used by the Alexis Master. If Hugo was well acquainted with the St Edmunds miniatures he chose not to use this particular painting technique.

Although the Alexis Master used opaque white in small or even tiny amounts as highlights on garments and faces, in the grey hair of some figures, and in the linear patterning of fabrics or frames, none of it gleams like the much bigger white shapes of Hugo's miniatures, where scrolls, hair, and garments stand out vividly against the other colours (Figs 72-73). The generous use of thick opaque white is another telling difference between the paintings of the two masters. Another is the smooth application

⁸⁰ Boase, 1953: 110.

⁸¹ Heslop, 1998b: 177.

of the paint, even in the large areas of saturated colour, with little of the loose painterly brushwork or grainy surfaces sometimes apparent in the work of the Alexis Master. Indeed, all the colours in the Bury Bible are laid on in similar smooth, dense layers, with virtually no sense of transparency, excepting the colours used to build up shadows on the garments, where looser brushwork is visible in the wetter and more transparent paint which allows the base colour to show through.

This seems to relate to techniques used in wall painting. During the eleventh and early-twelfth centuries Byzantine wall painters began reducing the application of paint in garments to three separately applied tones of a single colour, avoiding the time consuming task of blending the edges, as observed by Winfield at Asinou Church:

The effect appears in a garment which has, as always, a single over-all ground tone, but of which certain areas are elaborated only with lighter tones and white, while others are elaborated only with darker tones and black.⁸²

This effect can be seen in the figure of Christ in Majesty in the frontispiece to Ezekiel (Fig. 60), and in several other places. Christ's blue tunic is shaded with a saturated wash of the same colour, and white highlights scumbled lightly across the surface and on top of that opaque white decorative shapes.⁸³ In contrast the deep flat blue of Christ's lower robe, from his waist to his calves, was over-painted with black creases and nested 'V' folds which drape across the figure beneath, and fall in folds between the thighs; there are some very delicate paler blue highlights across this blue robe, which are barely visible, but no white highlights. The blue robe is quite startling because of the severe black shadows with no intermediate tone; it is painted in a simple variation of the Byzantine three-tone system.

⁸² Winfield, 1968: 125.

⁸³ Petzold, 1986: 142.

If, during his formative years as a painter, Hugo travelled to Italy, Cyprus or the Holy Land, as has been suggested,⁸⁴ he would have learned how to model colour in this way. He might have seen not only wall paintings but also Byzantine manuscripts like the volume of Homilies on the Virgin by James the Monk,⁸⁵ which has been dated to the 1140s,⁸⁶ and therefore almost contemporary with the Bury Bible. Otto Demus used a detail of a group of figures from one of its miniatures to illustrate the typical Byzantine three-tone method (Fig. 61):

This feature emerged first in technique and modelling, when the continuous gradation or the illusionistic color patch technique of Hellenistic painting was supplanted by a three or four tone system in which a medium tone is modified by one or two darker and one or two lighter shades, all quite distinct and not merging into each other...⁸⁷

Another Eastern manuscript whose miniatures share this colour convention is Queen Melisende's Psalter, a small luxury manuscript made in the scriptorium of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. The method of modelling the tonal values of the various blues is very similar to the miniatures in the Greek Homilies and the Bury Ezekiel figure; the method is most apparent in the Presentation in the Temple (Fig. 62). The blue tunics of Joseph and Mary are painted in what might be called a medium blue, Joseph's lightened with white highlights, and Mary's darkened with black in the shadows, and no white highlights. As in the Bury miniature, this economy of method creates two very different-looking blues: one pale, the other dark and rich. The similarities of technique are plain to see, and shows that Basilus must have been subject to similar stylistic trends as Master Hugo. The Psalter was probably made for the Queen's personal use, perhaps as early as 1135, and certainly sometime before her

⁸⁴ Thomson, 2001: 43; Binski and Panayatova, 2005: 83.

⁸⁵ Rome, Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana Cod. MS gr. 1162.

⁸⁶ Anderson, 1991: 85.

⁸⁷ Demus, 1970: 12.

husband Fulk died in 1143.⁸⁸ It is therefore almost exactly contemporary with the Bury Bible.

Another variation of tonal separation used in the Bury Bible is very similar if not identical to that used in the three-tone system of the Asinou frescoes. Winfield and Hawkins discussed the technique in some detail in their account of the wall paintings, and described how the artist at Asinou used a system of three tones of one colour, plus black and white, not only to create the impression of different colours, but tonal and spatial differences:

he was aware of the fact that light colors give an impression of nearness to the eye, whereas darker colors are recessive. This is exemplified in garments where the painter had at his disposal three tones of a single color, plus black and white, but used the darker tones plus black lines and occasional grey high lights in the recessed areas, and the middle and lighter tones plus white high lights for the forward areas.⁸⁹

Hugo used this technique in some figures in his Bible, differentiating between areas of garments in shadow and those areas with light falling on to them. An example can be seen in the Ezekiel miniature, where the figure of a winged man representing St Matthew's evangelist symbol wears mauve robes over his blue inner tunic (Fig. 63). He holds his book in a covered hand, and below his arms is a shadowed area with a deeper tone of the same colour and black lines, and no white highlights, representing a recessed area of the robe appearing from behind the figure. Against this dark shape the edges of the garment are highlighted with a fine white line to throw them into relief. The same effect is seen in the figure of the prophet Ezekiel, below the figure of Christ, where below his right arm is a recessed area of green robe, again shaded with a richer tone of the green and with no highlights (Fig. 64). The technique is also visible in the figures of Amos and Micah; Micah in particular illustrates the technique very well (Fig. 65); there are two shapes where the purple-brown cloak passes behind the yellow tunic, and

⁸⁸ Folda, 1995: 154-55.

⁸⁹ Winfield and Hawkins, 1967: 265.

another between the legs. Inside these shapes creases are drawn with black lines, and the dark shapes contrast strongly with the highlighted areas next to them. This is not a hit-and-miss process, and there is no spontaneous softening of the edges between the two areas, which are deliberately kept separate. It was planned and carefully painted in a formulaic way that could have been learned by Hugo in the Byzantine East. As noted above, the Alexis Master very occasionally did something similar (the Verdun red dog).

Master Hugo himself did not use the technique on every miniature; it is not used on the figure of the prophet Isaiah on folio 220v, nor on any of the other large miniatures, like the figure of Elkanah on folio 147v, where all parts of all garments share the same frontal brightness, even where they recede and ought to be in shadow, as Sandy Heslop noticed:

Colour was a great concern, for rather than modelling forms strongly in highlight and shadow, which would have broken up and obscured the intense hues of his palette, Hugo tended to use only a small amount of muted lighting and shading.⁹⁰

It is interesting that such closely similar methods developed for both wall painting and manuscript illumination in the East during this period. Methods used in fresco, like the three-tone method, came to be utilised in illumination and may have been significant for the development of the full-colour palette which became so dominant in the work of the Alexis Master and Master Hugo. The use of colours mixed with white, and therefore opaque, meant that they could no longer function transparently, layer on layer, to vary the tones.⁹¹ This led to the use of opaque layers in the three-tone method, where pale colours could be used over darker base colours, extremely difficult to do with transparent washes.

However, as Winfield pointed out, there were a few colours which could be used transparently, but which needed undercoats:

⁹⁰ Heslop, 1988: 171.

⁹¹ Winfield, 1968: 127.

The only general exceptions to this are the colours azurite, ultramarine and green, painted in a translucent medium over black to form the undifferentiated backgrounds of most Byzantine wall paintings.⁹²

The use of a black or dark undercoat beneath blue was, therefore, a well developed wall-painting technique by the twelfth century, mentioned by Theophilus who instructs painters that *veneda*, a colour composed of black and lime, should always be used as an undercoat beneath blue and green.⁹³ This enabled artists to give to blue a richness of tone without using too much of it, and “to avoid the necessity of applying many coats of color, for the blue was an expensive pigment.”⁹⁴

Some book illuminators in England were also probably involved in wall painting, and seem to have been adept at the varying techniques; at least one of the artists who illuminated the Dover Bible at Canterbury appears to have worked on the wall paintings in the crypt at Canterbury Cathedral during his tenure in the scriptorium,⁹⁵ and artists from Winchester, perhaps the Morgan Master himself, worked on wall paintings in the Cathedral at Winchester,⁹⁶ and in the chapter house at Sigena in Spain later in the century.⁹⁷ While it may have been unusual for wall painters also to be illuminators, as David Park has suggested,⁹⁸ it clearly did happen: certainly illuminators could be wall painters.

Master Hugo has been associated with the wall painting of St Paul and the Viper in the Anselm Chapel at Canterbury Cathedral (Fig. 66), part of a much larger original scheme which may have been produced under the patronage and guidance of Thomas Becket during the early 1160s.⁹⁹ Thomson felt it to be “almost inconceivable” that the

⁹² Winfield, 1968: 127.

⁹³ *De Div. Art.* I. xvi: *Sub lazur et sub menesc et sub viridi ponatur veneda* (ed. and trans. Dodwell, 1961: 16).

⁹⁴ Winfield, 1968: 130.

⁹⁵ Flynn, 1979: 188-90.

⁹⁶ Ayres, 1974c: 213.

⁹⁷ Oakeshott, 1972: 104-105.

⁹⁸ Park, 1980: 49.

⁹⁹ Nilgen, 1986: 149-50.

artist could be anyone other than Hugo.¹⁰⁰ The painting is roughly four feet square and is about twenty-five feet above floor level; even at that distance the similarities with the Bury Bible illuminations are clear: the pipe folds, the attempts at modelling the rounded forms, the frilly clouds, and the square panel behind; most telling is the distinctive pose of the figure, bent at a right-angle with stiff, almost straight legs, very like some figures in the Bible.

The Canterbury Paul seems very reliant on the pose of the bent figure of St Paul at the foot of the Virgin's bed in Asinou Church,¹⁰¹ Cyprus, even down to the portrait head (Fig. 67); it is so close it suggests that drawings were made from the Asinou exemplar or something very similar, and retained for later use. Boase thought that the mosaic of the blinded Paul falling to the ground, in the Capella Palatina at Palermo (Fig. 68), was reflected in the Canterbury painting, and claimed that "the same pose is similarly treated".¹⁰² This is a view that seems to lie at the heart of most comparisons made since then; however, the two figures are not really very alike either in pose or style. The figure at Palermo is clearly falling forward, with both arms outstretched to ease his fall in a characteristic way, with the head held upright; at Canterbury the figure bends at the waist, the right arm stretches out while the left forms a rather awkward counterweight. The head peers forward at exactly the same angle as Paul's head at Asinou, and indeed the complete silhouettes of the two figures are very similar. Furthermore they share colours, and a softness of drapery folds that are not in evidence at Palermo.

Heslop has pointed out that Hugo must have used a model book when making the illuminations, where the tell-tale repetition of the same poses and heads can be seen, but he has also shown that some figures appear in mirror image, such as the seated

¹⁰⁰ Thomson, 2001: 32.

¹⁰¹ Oakeshott, 1972: 78.

¹⁰² Boase, 1953: 164.

figures with arm raised on folios 70r and 94r.¹⁰³ Pouncing would have enabled this reversed transfer of the image, as would tracing over with a hard point.¹⁰⁴ What seems to confirm this is that both figures are also identical in scale (Fig. 69), and a reversed tracing of one fits almost exactly over the other.

Such a book of figure studies may have been available when Anselm's Chapel was being painted at Canterbury, because the figure of Paul is strongly reflected in the bent figure of Hannah in the Bury Bible, when reversed (Fig. 70); both have slightly bent, but stiff, front legs, and their shoulders, hips, extended right arms and front legs form very similar silhouettes. The figure of Amos (Fig. 71) is also very like the Canterbury figure, and although seated upright, his arms and sleeves are virtually identical, drawn and painted with the same mannerisms; the way the robe drapes over the left arm and curves down behind the leg is especially reminiscent of the shapes and angles of the St Paul figure.

Because of the perceived differences in modelling,¹⁰⁵ doubt has been cast on whether Hugo was the artist or not. However, the head and face are in fact very like those in the Bury Bible, the difference probably only one of technique, and especially the lack of crisp black outline. Certainly the small tight mouth, the straight nose, and the shape of the ear are very like the features in Hugo's figures in the Bible. Because no second volume of the Bible exists, there are no Pauline illustrations upon which to base a better comparison.

The main differences between the two also need to be mentioned: no figure in the Bible wears a white tunic shaded with blue, and the rectangular panels in the backgrounds are invariably green, unlike the blue panel in the St Paul painting; and there is no sense of a dark undercoat beneath the blue panel and green edging.

¹⁰³ Heslop, 1998b: 179.

¹⁰⁴ Alexander, 1992: 38-39.

¹⁰⁵ Thomson, 2001: 32.

Although stylistic considerations indicate that Hugo was the artist of the St Paul wall painting, if the chapel was decorated between 1160 and 1163, as has been suggested,¹⁰⁶ the gap of thirty years seems to make it less likely. If Hugo was between twenty and thirty years of age when working on the Bible he would have been nearly sixty when undertaking the ambitious decoration of Anselm's chapel, working on a large scale, up and down ladders and scaffold, to say nothing of fading eyesight. He could have been very fit of course—in middle age but in his artistic maturity,¹⁰⁷ but if he did design this large programme of wall decoration it is likely that assistants worked with him, under his direction.

It seems that Hugo was the first artist in England to use a dark undercoat for blues and greens in his illuminations, and this technique might be explained by knowledge of wall painting. It has been noted that the Alexis Master sometimes used two or more layers of colour, and the technique became common amongst later painters, as encouraged by Theophilus, but the deliberate use of differently coloured undercoat was unusual. The use of undercoats may relate to cost, as suggested by Winfield.¹⁰⁸ Spike Bucklow has also considered the cost of blue pigments, and has observed the use of the cheaper azurite as an undercoat beneath ultramarine blue (*lapis lazuli*) in manuscripts of the early fourteenth century.¹⁰⁹

Heslop commented on the remarkably smooth and dense colour, and evenness of the surfaces in the Bury Bible,¹¹⁰ where there is virtually no grainy transparency so evident in the St Albans Psalter:

The pigments are of a previously unrivalled purity and refinement and the paint is applied with such evenness and subtlety of blending that brushmarks are practically invisible.

¹⁰⁶ Nilgen, 1980: 363.

¹⁰⁷ Thomson, 1975: 57-58.

¹⁰⁸ See above p. 100.

¹⁰⁹ Bucklow, 2007: 207-208.

¹¹⁰ Heslop, 1998b: 171-72.

Generally the background blues and greens look physically thicker and more opaque than in the St Albans Psalter, and were applied in two or three layers at least. The tonality of the colour might be explained by the use of a dark undercoat beneath the blue backgrounds and possibly the green panels.

Evidence for this can be seen in those miniatures that have been damaged or rubbed. On the frontispiece to I Samuel (I Kings) the blue of the background has been badly rubbed in several places near the figures of Elkanah, Hannah and Penninah, and what appears to be a grey undercoat is visible. For example, above the figure of Hannah in the lower register (Fig. 72), there are one or two areas where the top coat is worn away, revealing a layer of darker, greyer blue. It is also possible here and there in this area of the miniature to see the edge of the topcoat of blue against the slightly darker and duller coat beneath. Likewise, there are some rubbed marks around Hannah's head and Penninah's arm in the upper register (Fig. 73); where the blue of Penninah's robe is badly rubbed across her arm, the bare vellum is exposed because there was no undercoat, but immediately adjacent to this, where the blue of the background has been rubbed and worn in the same way, a dark grey-blue layer is exposed.¹¹¹

In the huge *Frater Ambrosius* initial, the blues seem to be painted in two layers, as might be expected, but what appears to be the paler blue of the vine scroll may have white mixed with it. Here and there, in the darker blue of the background, brush strokes can be seen where the second darker coat has been applied. At the top of the page there is what appears to be water damage (Fig. 75); the folio has cockled slightly and the colours look slightly smeared, as though rubbed or patted dry. In places the colour is worn thin, revealing a dark grey undercoat beneath the blue of the blossoms.

¹¹¹ The illustrations used here (from Thomson, 2001) exaggerate this effect.

In England, somewhat later, the Morgan Master made similar use of undercoat on the Morgan Leaf (Fig. 76),¹¹² prior to laying on a new colour; a grey undercoat can also be seen on folio 93r of the Souvigny Bible (Fig. 77), where Samuel's robe is unfinished and the grey undercoat is visible beneath the few touches of red-ochre topcoat.

From this it can be seen that the miniatures of Master Hugo are not as closely related to the work of the Alexis Master as has been supposed. There is no sense that they are part of an Anglo-Norman tradition, not the faintest hint of reliance on line and wash, and no sense of the vellum influencing the tonality; rather the opposite is true, there is a new density and smoothness of heavy opaque colour, with most illuminations painted onto doubled or patched vellum, a practice already established at Bury in the miniatures of the Life of St Edmund, and which signified the changing role of the vellum support. A reason for the differences is that Hugo was an incomer of some sort, whose work was modified by his acquaintance with the prevailing colour trends he saw in the Edmund miniature cycle at Bury.

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The use of a brighter palette of body colour soon spread to other centres of manuscript production. At Canterbury the reaction seems to have been a fairly quick but slightly awkward transition from what had been a long established tradition of line and wash to full acceptance of the more fashionable techniques.

The transition is reflected most clearly in the Eadwine Psalter,¹¹³ probably made in the 1150s,¹¹⁴ where both line and wash and opaque body colour were used in the illuminations. Coloured line was used for the narrative illustrations at the head of each Psalm; these are full of narrative detail and literal textual references, and stylistically

¹¹² New York, Morgan Library MS 619.

¹¹³ Cambridge, Trinity College Library MS R. 17. 1.

¹¹⁴ Gibson, 1992: 209.

and iconographically based upon the illustrations in the Utrecht Psalter,¹¹⁵ a Carolingian manuscript which had been at Canterbury since about 1000. Unlike Utrecht, the artists drew most of their heads in profile, under the influence of the Alexis Master.¹¹⁶ Contrasting with these line drawings there are large fully painted ornamental initials, in opaque body colour, at the beginning of the tri-partite Psalms and various other ancillary texts.

The final copy of the Utrecht Psalter, now in Paris,¹¹⁷ with miniatures and Psalm illustrations painted in full body colour against gold backgrounds, sees the material transition complete. It was made between 1190-1200 at Canterbury, but left unfinished until the fourteenth century.¹¹⁸

The Four Psalter Leaves,¹¹⁹ closely associated with the Eadwine Psalter, were designed and first decorated sometime during the second quarter of the twelfth century; four have survived, but possibly there were others, now lost. All four Leaves were illuminated on both sides with large full-page illustrations, each of which was divided into compartments, usually twelve or more, separated by narrow coloured frames, and totalling 150 compartments in all (Fig. 78). They were filled with Old and New Testament scenes, without any text or captions, including some unusual and even rare ones, whose iconography has been very thoroughly explored.¹²⁰

The first artist did not complete the drawings, leaving blank the lower half of the recto and all the verso of the last of the Four Leaves (V&A 661), and some time later a second artist completed the cycle of illuminations, from the Carrying of the Cross to the Deposition on the recto (Fig. 79), where the two similar drawing styles can be seen

¹¹⁵ Utrecht, Universiteitsbibliotheek, MS 32.

¹¹⁶ Dodwell, 1954: 45.

¹¹⁷ Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS lat. 8846.

¹¹⁸ Kauffmann, 1984: 126.

¹¹⁹ For shelf marks see above, p. 77 n17.

¹²⁰ Dodwell, 1954: 98-102; Heslop, 1992: 29-34; Henderson, 1992: 35-42; Munns, 2009: 115-26.

together, and up to the final Pentecost scene on the verso. In the most recent published research, John Munns has discerned a more complex distribution of stylistic differences, and has suggested that “at least three distinct hands” were engaged on the Leaves.¹²¹

The Four Leaves have been dated to *c.* 1155-60 by their association with the Eadwine Psalter.¹²² However, as there is no hard evidence to suggest which manuscript the leaves were originally designed for, nor any other dating evidence, it is impossible to say when the artists drew them, or how long the gap was between their contributions.

One of the Four Leaves, Morgan 724 (Fig. 80), shares at least four scenes with wall paintings in St Gabriel’s Chapel, in Canterbury Cathedral. These include infancy scenes of John the Baptist and the Nativity of Christ, and are sufficiently closely related to suggest that the artists who painted the walls used the leaf, or its model, as a source.¹²³ The wall paintings were thought to have been made between 1120 and 1130,¹²⁴ but have been dated to 1143-50 by Flynn,¹²⁵ and to about 1155-60 by Kahn, on architectural evidence.¹²⁶ Furthermore, the Leaves distantly reflect the miniatures in the Gospels of St Augustine,¹²⁷ which had probably been at Canterbury since the late seventh or early eighth century.¹²⁸ It has been suggested that there is a link of some sort between the two because the Gospel book contains a full-page miniature drawn in line and wash and divided into twelve small scenes (Fig. 81).¹²⁹

As was appropriate for the thin vellum of the Four Leaves, the small images were delicately and sensitively drawn in a brown outline, and tinted with light washes of blue, green and ochre, and the same three colours counter-changed in the backgrounds.

¹²¹ Munns, 2009: 116.

¹²² Munns, 2009: 115.

¹²³ Flynn, 1979: 186-88.

¹²⁴ Park, 1980: 59 n66.

¹²⁵ Flynn, 1979: 190.

¹²⁶ Kahn, 1973: 229.

¹²⁷ CCCC MS 286.

¹²⁸ Kauffmann, 2003: 225; Binski and Panyotova, 2005: 47.

¹²⁹ Heslop, 1992: 29.

This can be seen on the verso of the British Library Leaf in a scene of the foxes and nesting birds (Fig. 82), which is painted in pale colour washes over a clear brown outline.

However, some time later a second campaign of painting was undertaken on all four Leaves using layers of opaque body colour. The original confident line drawings of the foxes and birds in brown ink with thin colour washes contrast strongly with the opaque colours and newly applied outlines which can be seen in the robes of Christ and the apostles below. The colour range of all the Leaves was changed in this way, with the use of opaque blues, pinks and lilacs, grey, pale red-orange, brilliant reds, deep blues, and opaque whites. Consequently their surfaces have a strange hybrid appearance where areas of thin transparent colour, mainly green and ochre, stain the surface of the vellum, and whose original outlines are clear, adjacent to opaque colours that seem to lie on top of the surface, with new black outlines painted on top.¹³⁰

This later work seems to have been done in stages beginning with the flat opaque base colours. In these areas the pale vellum ground ceased to have any visual function, and nor did the original brown outlines, which were covered by the new paint. When the base colours were dry, details of drapery folds and creases were added in pencil, to indicate where the newly designed top colours should be. Unpainted pencil lines can be seen in the pink robes of the two apostles, behind Christ in the scene below the foxes and birds (Fig. 82).

The figures of two female attendants at the Visitation on the verso of Morgan 724 make another good before-and-after comparison (Fig. 83). Three of the four figures were substantially repainted, while the figure of the attendant standing on the left holding the

¹³⁰ Heslop, 1992: 27, has commented that the Leaves are painted in two styles, which are usually thought of as being the work of different artists. Although he used the word “painted”, it is clear that here he was referring to the drawing styles of the two artists, visible together on the recto of V&A 661, and not to the two different painting campaigns.

curtain remains as originally drawn. It is the only figure on this folio that is completely unaltered, and no part of it is obscured by later paint, apart from the curtain she holds (Fig. 84). In contrast, the figure on the right has completely disappeared beneath a flat, opaque mauve-pink silhouette with no indications of folds or modelling, but with a very strong, thick black outline (Fig. 85). This does not seem to have been done by the original artist himself.

On some scenes of Morgan 724 details of costumes, draperies and additional figures were also lightly drawn in pencil or graphite on top of the new opaque colour layer, and sometimes remained unpainted. On the verso is a scene depicting the birth of John the Baptist. The large semi-circular arch, which represents the building interior, has been repainted with the same flat, dull pink as other areas. Onto this surface the artist drew curving lines in pencil to represent a curtain, like the drapes in the Visitation scene, but they were never painted. In the scene of Christ's Nativity in the bottom right corner of the leaf (Fig. 86), the same pink has been used again to represent an interior space. Drawn onto this surface in pencil is a nimbed angel hovering above Christ with a circular form in each hand, like orbs (Fig. 87). This forgotten angel was never painted, and remains barely visible, if not invisible, in reproduction. Details of architecture were also altered; for example, on the recto of Morgan 724, crenellated battlements were added to the flat top of the city wall and painted white, and one of the Israelite tents was repainted in opaque green. Much of this work remained unfinished, and throughout all four of the Leaves many pencil drawn details are visible.

Elsewhere on the verso of Morgan 724, some figures in the Tree of Jesse were almost completely repainted in pink, bright red, blue, and white, and the artist took the opportunity to alter or modernize their costumes as he repainted (Fig. 88). Two figures were originally dressed in tunics with a central opening at the neck, and with a decorative band around the shoulders and down the front of the chest, suggestive of

priestly tunics (Fig. 89); on top of these were painted opaque pink cloaks, which sweep diagonally across the torsos and fasten at the right shoulder; these were then outlined in black. The original tunics are visible here because the brown under-drawings are visible beneath the new paint.

On the recto of the British Library Leaf, in the scene of the Jews before Herod (Fig. 90), the robes of one of the Jews and one of the Magi were painted with flat opaque grey, and the artist carefully drew the damp folds and other drapery details in pencil on top, ready for the colourist, but they were never painted. Similarly, on the recto of V&A 661, in the scenes of Christ in the Hall of Judgement and the Crown of Thorns (Fig. 91), there are several high priests wearing robes, some repainted opaquely, some in original ochre wash, whose lower edges are decorated with simple angular borders, drawn in pencil (Fig. 92).

It has been argued that the Four Leaves were intended eventually as a prefatory cycle for the Eadwine Psalter,¹³¹ also made at Canterbury. The main artist of the Eadwine Psalter has been christened the Principal Illuminator because he drew a large majority of the narrative Psalm illustrations.¹³² It has been suggested that this artist was probably a lay professional who was “not linked to previous work in the scriptorium”.¹³³ However, this is an error, as he was also the main draughtsman of the Four Psalter Leaves, which were probably made at Canterbury several years before the Psalter.¹³⁴ In addition, as indicated below, Heslop has also shown that the artist was probably also responsible for designing and painting the richly coloured Psalm initials in the Psalter.¹³⁵ He was therefore very involved with the scriptorium over many years, whether a layman or not.

¹³¹ Heslop, 1992: 26-28.

¹³² Heslop, 1992: 45-47.

¹³³ Lindley, 2008: 150.

¹³⁴ Kauffmann, 1984: dates the Leaves to *c.* 1140 (p. 111) and the Eadwine Psalter to *c.* 1150-60 (p. 119); Munns, 2009, dates both to *c.* 1155-60.

¹³⁵ Heslop, 1992: 27.

The Psalm illustrations were the first element of the Eadwine page layout to be completed; the text was written next, most probably *c.* 1150-60 because the Latin commentary to the *Gallicanum* text can be quite accurately dated. Lastly the major and minor initials were painted in full body colour, and decorated with gold, both of which occasionally overlap the text.¹³⁶

It was probably also around this time that the opaque repainting of the Four Leaves was undertaken, by the same artist who painted the Eadwine Psalter initials, because the painting technique and range of colours are so similar, as can be seen in the close similarity between the coloured frames of the Four Leaves and the decoration of the Psalter initials:

...the colour scheme of the Four Leaves is very close to that of the (Eadwine) Psalter. The pigments themselves are indistinguishable in hue, tone, texture and thickness, and so too is the gold.¹³⁷

Whether it was the Principal Illuminator himself who did this, or someone else, it is impossible to tell, although he probably drew out the Psalter initials; Heslop compared a figure of a lion-slayer in the Eadwine initial on folio 230v with the figure from the Suicide of Herod on the verso of the British Library Psalter Leaf,¹³⁸ and makes a very good comparison of facial and figure types, which almost puts it beyond doubt that they were drawn by the same artist.

Having been originally drawn in a fine descriptive brown outline and tinted with colour, perhaps in the 1140s, the Leaves probably looked out of date when their close association with the Eadwine Psalter began. The same group of artists who painted the Eadwine initials may have decided to complete the drawings on the verso of the V&A Leaf, and modernize the Leaves in the new painting style. But the fashionable detail required in the repainting, such as damp-fold draperies and nested V-folds, must have

¹³⁶ Gibson, 1986: 74 and 76 n15.

¹³⁷ Heslop, 1992: 27. See also figs 25c and 25d in that book.

¹³⁸ Heslop, 1992: figs 16b and 16c.

been difficult to complete due to the tiny scale; what in the hands of Master Hugo was essentially a monumental style of painting, derived from fresco cycles, must have been very difficult to apply given the very small figures in each of the individual scenes on the Leaves.

What is indisputable is that all Four Leaves were over-painted using opaque paint, perhaps during the 1150s or shortly after, when the damp-fold drapery convention had probably already reached Canterbury.¹³⁹ The Leaves therefore reflect the changes that were taking place during the period, typified by the use of a full range of strong opaque colours and damp-fold modelling, but it seems that they were, for some reason left unfinished. That two quite distinct techniques of painting were used on the Leaves—the original line and wash and a second layer of opaque body colour added later—appears not to have been acknowledged before now.

It is now appropriate to consider other manuscripts from Canterbury, beginning with the Lambeth Bible, which has been dated by Dodwell to between 1145 and 1155,¹⁴⁰ to 1154 by De Hamel,¹⁴¹ and by Shepard to between 1150 and 1175;¹⁴² it is therefore very close in date to the Four Leaves and the Eadwine Psalter. Like the Bury Bible, there appears to have been little disruption in its production, other than being left incomplete.

The two monastic communities at Canterbury were at the forefront of the reforms which took place after the Conquest, and both had active scriptoria in the twelfth century. Dorothy Shepard and others have suggested that the Lambeth Bible was made at St Augustine's Abbey,¹⁴³ where there was something of a tradition in narrative

¹³⁹ Zarnecki, 1957: 7.

¹⁴⁰ Dodwell, 1993: 352.

¹⁴¹ De Hamel, 'The Giant Bibles of Twelfth-Century England', open lecture at the University of Leeds, 16th October 2012.

¹⁴² Shepard, 2007: 227.

¹⁴³ Boase, 1953: 165-66; Dodwell, 1959: 15-16; Kauffmann, 1984: 115; Shepard, 2007: 233.

illustration,¹⁴⁴ with links to the Utrecht Psalter and Ælfric's Hexateuch.¹⁴⁵ However, it has not been possible to ascertain precisely where it was made, or who commissioned it, because of lack of documentary evidence.¹⁴⁶ Most recently de Hamel has linked it with Faversham Abbey and the patronage of King Stephen, at whose death in 1154 he believes it was left incomplete.¹⁴⁷

The Lambeth Bible can be seen to continue a tradition of narrative illustration at St Augustine's. The *Passionale* made there, Arundel MS 91, from the first quarter of the century (Fig. 9), contains Anglo-Norman historiated initials of a rare type,¹⁴⁸ using similar narrative and design skills to those used in the Lambeth Bible. Another St Augustine's manuscript, Harley 105,¹⁴⁹ made sometime during the mid-twelfth century,¹⁵⁰ contains some initials very close in style to the decoration of the Lambeth Bible, including the use of gold backgrounds (Fig. 93).

The large size of the Lambeth Bible is startling. It is a huge and thick book which would certainly have caused problems if it needed moving from the church to the refectory and back again on a daily basis. The very large illuminations, on the other hand, are decorated with coloured line and wash drawings containing the finest and most minute details it is possible to imagine being drawn with a pen.

The manuscript exhibits a very sophisticated use of paint, gold, colour and line, which seems to be free of problems or faults, apart from the usual levels of show-through. The artist used paint layers of varied thickness, ranging from the most delicate and fully transparent washes, to dense, saturated colour, almost opaque in its richness,

¹⁴⁴ Lawrence, 1982: 105.

¹⁴⁵ London, BL Cotton MS Claudius B. IV.

¹⁴⁶ Dodwell, 1959: 13; De Hamel, 2010: 41.

¹⁴⁷ Christopher de Hamel, Lambeth Palace lecture, 19th June 2010, and '*The Giant Bibles of Twelfth-Century England*', open lecture at the University of Leeds, 16th October 2012.

¹⁴⁸ Kauffmann, 1984: 92.

¹⁴⁹ London, BL Harley MS 105.

¹⁵⁰ Dodwell, 1959: 52.

including deep layered blues and reds, and occasionally green. Some garments of very pale ochre and white, and other fabrics like tablecloths, are painted with very dense whitened body colour, thick and completely opaque, like the whites in the Bury Bible. Heads and hands are often modelled quite naturalistically in contrast to the areas of linear patterning. Moreover, the artist's use of fields of gold leaf in background shapes was, it seems, quite new to England. All in all, he knew how to handle his materials, in both traditional and new ways, and was very much in control of his technique.

The figures and foregrounds are normally lightly washed with pale colour, and the delineating damp folds and other shadows applied in darker tones of the same colour. Sometimes the base colours were over-laid with contrasting colours; in the Ruth miniature (Fig. 94), Moab's blue bed cover is shaded with dark green and crimson, and decorated with small bright red circles and fine white arabesque curls. The use of green and crimson together to make shadows in draperies is quite common in the Bible, but rather unusual elsewhere. The background blue behind the reapers and Ruth is deep, saturated and smooth, applied in at least two coats.

Outlines are also often strengthened or overdrawn with coloured line, such as the ears of wheat beautifully drawn in red near the reapers in the left hand panel of the Ruth miniature. The thin washes enabled the artist to draw details in extremely fine line, either above or beneath the colour. The clothing of many figures has surface patterning of the finest linear decoration in various opaque colours; in the Ruth miniature red lines are drawn on white, and red and white lines on blue; the pale green robe of Naomi, Ruth's mother-in-law, is decorated with thin red lines drawn in curving tendrils or arabesques (Fig. 95). Everywhere the garments are delineated with pipe folds and patterns of nested 'V' folds, which, although superficially similar to those of Master Hugo, in the hands of the Lambeth artist became linear patterns which duplicated themselves energetically but sometimes aimlessly, across the two-dimensional forms,

which they tend to flatten. However, the artist's confident and direct drawing technique exhibits a sure touch, and a razor-sharp sensitivity to good shape and bad shape, and the linear patterns are beautifully drawn.

As well as the gleaming gold leaf backgrounds, the illustrations to Ruth are interesting for another reason. In Kauffmann's table of Old Testament iconography of 1975,¹⁵¹ it is apparent that amongst the eight English Romanesque bibles surveyed, only the Lambeth Bible has detailed narrative illustrations to the book of Ruth, while six of the remaining seven Bibles have decorative initials only; the eighth, the Puiset Bible, has a loss at this point. Even in the Laud Bible, so richly illustrated, there is a decorative initial to the book of Ruth, where every other Old Testament book begins with a large historiated initial. The Lambeth artist for some reason broke with tradition and supplied Ruth with six illustrated episodes in total, illustrating significant incidents from the book, when there are none in comparable English Bibles.

While it seems clear that the Lambeth Bible was not made in the same scriptorium as the Bury Bible, it has been generally agreed that there are close stylistic similarities, and scholars have endeavoured to reconstruct the nature of the relationship, usually by comparisons of drapery style.¹⁵² Shepard suggested that Master Hugo may have been one of the Lambeth Master's teachers, because they shared stylistic tendencies.¹⁵³ This might be stretching credibility too far as the manuscripts share less than Shepard supposed. The considerable technical differences described here are probably of greater significance than the similarities in the damp-fold mannerisms that were already becoming something of a national style by the time the Lambeth Bible was produced. In any case, whatever comparisons are made, the art of the Lambeth Bible seems rooted in

¹⁵¹ Kauffmann, 1975: 40-41.

¹⁵² Kauffmann, 2002: 1.

¹⁵³ Shepard, 2007: 39.

the Anglo-Norman technique of line and wash, while that of the Bury Bible emphatically is not.

The Lambeth Bible was not the only giant Bible produced in Canterbury around the mid-century. The Dover Bible was made at Christ Church between 1140 and 1160,¹⁵⁴ probably for the use of its dependent house of St Martin's Priory at Dover.¹⁵⁵ Cahn believed its production was linked somehow to the foundation of St Martin's in 1160,¹⁵⁶ and indeed Gilmour has more recently suggested that it was made for the consecration of the Priory in October 1160.¹⁵⁷ Different artists illuminated the two volumes, perhaps the same men who worked on the wall paintings in St Gabriel's Chapel in the Cathedral of Christ Church *c.* 1155.

The pigments used in the Bible are known to be unstable, probably due to insufficient use of binders such as glair or gum Arabic,¹⁵⁸ and many of the rubrications in both volumes have worn very badly, offsetting onto opposite folios, and looking, in the most extreme cases, like soft dusty chalk or pastel colours rather than coloured washes of paint.

It has been suggested that the artist of the first volume worked "under strong Byzantine influence".¹⁵⁹ Indeed, his drawing style, and perhaps also his painting technique, seems to reflect strongly Byzantine wall paintings such as those at Asinou, and the mosaics at Palermo.¹⁶⁰ He may even have travelled to the Mediterranean area, because the garments in some of his figures (Fig. 96) drape and wrap in similar ways to

¹⁵⁴ Dodwell, 1954: 122.

¹⁵⁵ Dodwell, 1954: 48.

¹⁵⁶ Cahn, 1982: 259.

¹⁵⁷ Gilmour, 2008: 62.

¹⁵⁸ Melvin Jefferson, chief conservator of the Cambridge Colleges Conservation Consortium, pers. comm.

¹⁵⁹ Kauffmann, 1975: 98.

¹⁶⁰ Dodwell, 1954: 92-95.

those at Asinou and in the Cappella Palatina (Fig. 97), where the mosaics are dated to 1143 by a contemporary inscription.

The pale, sharp colours of the artist also reflect those used in the Palatina mosaics, especially the preponderance of green, although the colours are generally richer than in the mosaics, with more red and green harmonies; most are applied as heavy washes, sometimes with small amounts of white added, creating clear, bright pastel shades of purple-mauve, blue, red, green, ochre, and scarlet-orange; there is also a basic grey probably mixed from black and white. The pale green body colour used to infill the backgrounds of the initials is usually very thick.

The modelling of the tones was achieved by over-painting the base colours with opaque white highlights, softening the edges of the shapes by blending them, then applying shadows and strengthening outlines with washes of the base colour; this gives some weight to the figures. The method can be seen clearly on the green tunic of Nahum, and ochre lining of his robe (Fig. 98); the white outlines are visible and the shapes are hard-edged and not as blended as they are in the mauve of his outer robes. The deep pleats or ruffles at the lower edges of many tunics are also modelled in this way (Fig. 99), hanging vertical at the ankles in the distinctive curved or kinked manner of the mosaics at Palemo and Monreale (Fig. 100).¹⁶¹ Some garments are shaded with contrasting colours, such as crimson over blue, a colour convention used by the Alexis and Lambeth Masters.

Kauffmann has described the figures as weighty, with draperies “solidly modelled by damp folds made up of nested Vs and circles”.¹⁶² However, while the circular shapes were used on the rounded forms such as shoulders, knees and hips, and decorative linear ‘V’ shapes in flatter, larger areas of drapery, this is articulated in a rather formulaic way and can hardly be described as damp-fold drapery. The abbreviated shapes sometimes

¹⁶¹ Dodwell, 1954: 93.

¹⁶² Kauffmann, 1975: 98.

sit flatly on the form quite meaninglessly, and do little to create volume; they are probably a linear mannerism derived originally from the angularity of the modelling in some Sicilian mosaics, and similar can occasionally be seen in Continental manuscripts. Dodwell called this “restless patterning” and concluded that: “this linear emphasis does deprive the figure [Nahum] of some of its substantiality and weight”.¹⁶³

Compared to the refined and often delicate surfaces of the Lambeth Bible, or those used by his colleague in the second volume of the Dover Bible, the paint layers are often crude and thick; some colours, blue and green especially, are used very thickly in a dry impasto, mixed with white, and lie very proud of the vellum surface; sometimes it appears to have dried too quickly causing it to shrink, crackling into a very rough crazy-paving texture. Various colours have flaked off quite badly here and there, including areas of the bright red, blue and purple.

The initial to I Samuel (I Kings) is a typical example (Fig. 101): a thick, coarse and chalky opaque green, mixed with a good deal of white, frames the figures of David and Goliath; this has made the upper part of the initial noticeably heavy as the page is turned. The green has flaked off here and there, and the thin blue in the panel behind the figures is very worn and blotchy, much worse than any of the blues in the St Albans Psalter; indeed some effort may have been made to deliberately remove most of it. The folio is quite grubby from medieval usage, and some parts of the illumination may have been rubbed, but the weight of the thick gold and paint on the thin vellum has contributed to the damage.

The artist of the second volume of the Dover Bible has been described as a “distinguished draughtsman” by Heslop, who christened him the Corpus 4 Master.¹⁶⁴ He was probably an itinerant professional artist,¹⁶⁵ and it seems likely that he worked on the

¹⁶³ Dodwell, 1954: 93; also Plates 62 and 63.

¹⁶⁴ Heslop, 1992: 47.

¹⁶⁵ Dodwell, 1993: 352.

wall paintings in St Gabriel's Chapel at Christ Church; this may be reflected in what could be a self portrait in the Bible (Fig. 6). He also worked in the Eadwine Psalter, where his illustrative skills as a draughtsman are apparent in only one drawing, illustrating Psalm 4.

Unlike his fellow illuminator in the first volume, his stylistic antecedents seem to have originated in Western Europe, specifically the art of the Flanders region, which was still very Romanesque in character, and whose influence was very important at Canterbury up to the 1130s.¹⁶⁶

His high level of skill is visible throughout: both his use of line and the smooth colour layers exhibit his fine workmanship. There is no sense of fragility or vulnerability in his work, as could be sensed about the paint surfaces in volume one. His creativity is evident in the vivacious images full of movement, variety of pose, quirky iconography, pattern, and occasional rich colour combinations.

A particularly clean and undamaged initial is that to Chronicles (Fig. 102), where the busts of seven bearded men are drawn in very fine detail; the faces are modelled in milky opaque white, with green-grey shadows, and the artist took great care with the hair and beards, giving each man a distinctive style. This approach to heads is typical, and in another, the initial to the Gospel of John, the face and neck of the Evangelist are painted in a greyish opaque pink, this time modelled with red and green shadows (Fig. 103).

The paint is applied in thinner layers than in the first volume, but is generally uniform and flat, and often quite dense. The artist seems to have worked freely and confidently; his draperies contain sharp and angular nested oval shapes and 'V' folds, much of it quite painterly and soft when looked at closely, not as hard and metallic as reproductions suggest. Control of the variations in opacity allowed him to paint both

¹⁶⁶ Dodwell, 1954: 58.

dark on light and light on dark, fully at home with thin layers of body colour without resorting to impasto. In several initials his light under drawings are visible, in grey pencil or red line, and it is possible to see where he occasionally ignored these by painting different shapes over, as in the lining of Paul's cloak on folio 245r, where vertical folds were changed to broadly painted 'V' folds at a more diagonal angle (Fig. 104). The same two types of folds are also evident in the wall paintings in St Gabriel's Chapel in the Cathedral.

Although his technique is more appropriate or suitable to the thin vellum than that in the first volume, some of his thinner and more delicately applied blue backgrounds have become worn, and others perhaps removed. M. R. James, followed by Dodwell, suggested that several initials seem to have had their blue backgrounds scraped off,¹⁶⁷ but there are no obvious scrape marks or scratches, and examination suggests instead that the colour was taken off with a damp brush.

Evidence for this method of removal can be seen more clearly in volume one where blue was also removed from several initials. It seems someone, perhaps an assistant, began removing the blue with a wet brush from the large decorative initial to Leviticus in the area close to the lion's back leg (Fig. 105), where a drop of water was applied to loosen the paint before removal on the brush. Here the process was only partially completed, but in many other initials hardly a trace of blue remains. Blue was probably removed in this way from the panel behind David and Goliath on folio 115v, although this also looks worn because of the thin, creased vellum. It was removed with a wet brush from the initial to the Song of Songs, in volume two, where a few tiny remnants of blue remain at the edges of the outside oval panel, from where it was removed (Fig. 106); it was very carefully done, and the panel looks clean and white, revealing some

¹⁶⁷ James, 1912: 12-14.

fillets drawn in pencil swinging from Solomon's crown. In Solomon's tunic and cushion the blue remains dense, unworn and obviously durable. This is also the case in the initial to II Kings in volume one, where the blue remains sound and dense. The blue was probably removed very carefully for use elsewhere because it was such an expensive colour. Bucklow has shown that, at times during the Middle Ages, even azurite blue could be up to thirty times more expensive than lead white.¹⁶⁸ Ultramarine, made from *lapis lazuli*, would have been even more expensive; it was a prerequisite for luxury manuscripts, along with gold, and worth recycling when the need arose.

2:4 THE NORTH

Consideration can now be given to manuscripts from the North of England. Amongst extant illuminations from the middle of the period those in the Hunterian and Copenhagen Psalters are outstanding. Patricia Stirnemann has suggested that they were written and illuminated during the 1160s at an Augustinian house such as York or Lincoln in the north of England.¹⁶⁹ Moreover, she described the two Psalters as "sister manuscripts", but while confident that the Copenhagen Psalter was made for a member of the Danish royal family, in time for his coronation in 1170, she was unsure for whom the Hunterian Psalter was made. However, she claimed that textual and stylistic evidence indicated that the books were made at the same time and in the same scriptorium,¹⁷⁰ and perhaps made for similar reasons:

I feel fairly confident that the Hunterian Psalter was also commissioned for the coronation day, for another member of the Danish royal family, although I cannot offer any direct evidence other than the close relations between the books.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ Bucklow, 2005: 207.

¹⁶⁹ Stirnemann, 1999: 67.

¹⁷⁰ Stirnemann, 1999: 67 and 76.

¹⁷¹ Stirnemann, 1999: 76.

If they were made at the same time, in the same place, and for similar reasons, it might be expected that the colour palettes would be similar to each other but they are not; indeed there are considerable differences, especially in the miniatures.

The style of the Hunterian Psalter is cohesive,¹⁷² despite the involvement of several artists, and the same colours are used in the miniatures and calendar pages, but a softer and more neutral palette was employed in the Psalm initials. The initials are generally very fine, but some, to the prayers and canticles towards the end of the Psalter, are amateurish. The colours include a greyish pink, pale opaque blue tinted with white, crimson, pale green, ochre, and gold leaf, which replaced the coloured background panels seen in earlier manuscripts; the whites are opaque. They also used an unusual bright orange in the calendar initials, roundels and in the full-page miniatures, and occasionally in the Psalm initials; it is a true orange, not ochre as in the Bury Bible and St Albans Psalter. The colours are usually shaded with themselves, and while the tonal modelling of garments is generally strongly contrasted, they sometimes appear flat because of a lack of tonal separation between base colour and shadows.

The crimson was used in the miniatures and calendar pages, but less so in the Psalm initials; it alternates with a pale blue, sometimes counter-changing, in the backgrounds of the calendar scenes and roundels (Fig. 108). It is saturated and transparent, laid on in two coats, crimson over a scarlet red, and its shade varies slightly throughout.

The palette, therefore, contains bright, flat Romanesque colours, but also others that might be called transitional, such as grey, terracotta, and the type of dull pink already noticed on the Four Leaves. It is notable that no purple or violet was used anywhere in the illuminations, but there are several variations of a cool bluish grey, probably mixed from black and white, and shaded with blue or other colours; examples include the robe worn by Abraham (Fig. 109), the figure of Satan in the Third Temptation of Christ and

¹⁷² Stirnemann, 1999: 69.

figures in the Raising of Lazarus. Variants of the grey were used throughout the miniatures, including in the garments of the Virgin and Christ. The terracotta, possibly mixed from several colours plus white, is dull opaque greyish pink, sometimes used as a very thin wash. Variants of this colour became very popular from about the 1170s; it was also used by artists of the Winchester Bible, and became common in early Gothic manuscripts up to the mid-thirteenth century.

The artist of the Copenhagen Psalter miniatures used a different range of colours including two purples, one a crimson-purple, which he used in panels against the gold, as on folio 10v behind the Magi (Fig. 110), and another that was quite violet in hue, which can be seen in the billowing folds of the landscape in the same miniature; neither of these colours was used in the Hunterian Psalter. In addition, he used strong bright hues of red, blue, green, ochre, and bluish grey, highlighted with decorative linear arabesques in a bright opaque white and other colours (Fig. 111); the colours are generally deep and saturated, with no sense that opaque white was added, although to a limited degree it must have been. Figures are set against rectangular panels of purple or blue framed with gold, or panels of gold framed with colour. The deep crimson and bright orange of the Hunterian Psalter, and the more modern transitional colours such as pale grey and terracotta pink were not used.

These are very great differences in colour for two manuscripts that were supposedly made at the same time in the same scriptorium. The differences can be summarized as follows:

<u>Hunterian Psalter:</u>	<u>Copenhagen Psalter:</u>
1. Fully painted historiated initials and illustrative roundels on the calendar pages.	No illustrations on calendar pages.
2. No purple or violet.	Purple and violet.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 3. True orange. | No true orange. |
| 4. Transitional colours: pale grey, terracotta, and grey-pink. | No transitional colours. |
| 5. No decorative highlights. | Decorative arabesque highlights in opaque white and colours. |
| 6. Incised patterns in gold behind the miniatures, with one exception. | Plain unpatterned gold behind miniatures apart from some lightly incised ornament in Christ's mandorla, and some incised patterns in the background of the Beatus Initial, by the same artist as the Hunterian patterns. |
| 7. No coloured panels against gold, with one exception, Satan against a red panel. | Coloured panels set against gold, or gold panels set against colour. |

Despite the fact that the main Hunterian artist also worked on the Copenhagen Psalter, the fundamental differences highlighted by this comparison suggest that the skills of different groups of artists were used in the making of the two manuscripts, and that it is therefore more likely that they were made separately rather than together in the same scriptorium, or at the very least that the miniature cycles were made independent of each other, despite their similar date.

Another psalter made perhaps slightly later in the north of England, is the Gough Psalter,¹⁷³ which has been associated with Durham, although its calendar is missing. It has been variously dated: to 1170-83,¹⁷⁴ to “a few decades earlier” than *c.*1200,¹⁷⁵ and to *c.*1200.¹⁷⁶ Unusually, the miniatures are on the recto of the folios, and the text on the verso, and the text is therefore sometimes visible even through the thin gold leaf, which was laid directly on the vellum, slightly embossing the gold when the leaf was polished.

¹⁷³ Oxford, Bodleian Library Gough Liturg. 2.

¹⁷⁴ Kauffmann, 1975: 120.

¹⁷⁵ Marks and Morgan, 1981: 40.

¹⁷⁶ Pächt and Alexander, 1973: 29.

The vellum leaves look and feel too soft and flexible for the weight of paint, and this possibly contributed to the wear and damage sustained by the paint surfaces and the gold, in what must have been a very beautiful book when first made.

Its miniatures are linked iconographically to those in the Copenhagen Psalter, also produced in the North; they share thirteen scenes, which are very close compositionally,¹⁷⁷ and like the miniatures the Copenhagen Psalter, the imagery is set against gold backgrounds. The colours that remain are for the most part sombre and neutral, but sometimes discordant, dominated as they are by a strident orange-red that seems to have survived better than some other more neutral colours such as bluish grey and dull pink. It is possible here and there to see fine under-drawings in bright red outline, a technique also found in the late twelfth-century Yates Thompson Life of St Cuthbert from Durham.¹⁷⁸ The faces are modelled with a brownish ochre-pink. The figures in the miniatures are large and fill the spaces, often nearly the full height of the image, sometimes touching, or crossing or moving behind the frames. The same effect is evident in the tightly filled initials. In most miniatures at least one of the figures steps forward onto the frame (Fig. 114). There is consequently much less open space behind the figures, which is one of the major differences between these paintings and those in the Hunterian and Copenhagen Psalters.

The execution of the paintings has been described as crude, and sometimes rustic in appearance,¹⁷⁹ and it is true that in comparison to other work of this date, some of the figures appear lumpy and awkward, with large bulbous faces. Sometimes the intelligent eyes of the red under-drawings are visible, and on folio 24r the red dots in the pupils of Christ's eyes gaze down at Satan, in focus and with a meaningful expression (Fig. 112), and where the top colour has worn away, the remnant of an eye with a black pupil can

¹⁷⁷ Kauffmann, 1975: 121.

¹⁷⁸ London, BL Yates Thompson MS 26.

¹⁷⁹ Kauffmann, 1975: 120.

be seen carelessly put in next to the original one in red. The heads with the jowly faces and flat or dished cheekbones, revealed especially in the under-drawings, have stylistic affinities to those in the Ingeborg Psalter of c. 1195.¹⁸⁰

The figures in the Visitation (Fig. 113) and especially in the Flagellation (Fig. 114), appear to be painted in a much more refined and skilful way than the others in the cycle, and are probably by a different hand. Not only are the heads more sensitive, with expressive eyes, and the figures lighter and more animated, the draperies are softer and rounder, and gathered into vertical folds, loosely crumpled where they tuck into the belt, a convention which is most usually seen in slightly later manuscripts. The garments of virtually all other figures in the Psalter are modelled in rather formulaic parallel bands, derived from the striped bandage folds typical of earlier line and wash techniques. The two miniatures also stand apart from the others because, unlike every other image in the cycle, the images and gold panels have thick blue frames, although the blue was removed at some time from the Flagellation. In any case it is hard to believe that the painter of these two miniatures is the same person who painted the figures with large oval faces set at strange, stiff angles in the Ascension on folio 30r (Fig. 115).

A third very talented artist painted a single miniature in the Gough Psalter, David and his musicians on folio 32r (Fig. 116), using a different range of colours. It may be that the main artist designed the image because the shadowy red under-drawing of King David's unpainted face is similar in style to the other miniatures; if so, the third artist redrew the whole image. Each of the seven figures is dressed in tunic and robe in different combinations of red, blue, pale reddish ochre, and very pale linen colour; the figures are set against gold panels, which in the four corners are surrounded by a frame of red. There is strong green shading in the faces. The draperies are roundly modelled in softly crumpled fabrics, and, on the blue, highlighted in thin white strokes which

¹⁸⁰ Chantilly, Musée Condé MS. 9.

intuitively follow the folds where the artist thought the light might fall (Fig. 117). A fine black outline of varying thickness enhances the roundness of the forms. The relaxed poses and gestures of the figures are beautifully observed, including an elegantly balanced juggler intently watching his clubs as they tumble through the air (Fig. 118). The way the fabric folds are modelled has some definite affinity with the work of the Amalekite Master in the two Winchester Bibles.

This artist undoubtedly also painted the miniatures in the Yates Thompson Life of St Cuthbert, which was probably produced during the 1180s,¹⁸¹ or 1190s in the Durham scriptorium.¹⁸² Several points of comparison confirm that the same man painted both, despite the differences in scale, format, and colour of facial shading. Firstly, in many of the very small Cuthbert images the figures are set against flat rectangular panels of gold in front of plain backgrounds of blue or red (Fig. 119), and the four figures at the corners of the David miniature, such as the bell ringer, are framed in colour and gold in exactly this way (Fig. 120). David and the two standing figures are set against upright panels of gold. The same drawing mannerisms are apparent in the heads and poses of the figures in the Cuthbert, and in the naturalistic draperies of the four crouching figures, highlighted with white, and their distinctive profiles—compare the heads on folios 11r and 61r of the Cuthbert (Figs 121-122), with that at the top right of the David miniature (Fig. 123). Most distinctive and unusual are the hairstyles: the servant on folio 54r of Cuthbert (Fig. 124) and the musician with a stringed instrument in the Psalter (Fig. 125) are virtually identical, revealing the same hand at work.

Although Pächt and Alexander illustrate the miniature in their catalogue of English manuscripts in the Bodleian, they make no textual reference to it,¹⁸³ and while scholars have generally acknowledged that the same man painted the initials in a late twelfth-

¹⁸¹ Marner, 2001: 39.

¹⁸² Marks and Morgan, 1981: 40; Kauffmann, 1984: 131.

¹⁸³ Pächt and Alexander, 1973: 29, and Plate xxvi.

century manuscript of the Sermons of Maurice de Sully (Fig. 126),¹⁸⁴ they have not recognized him as the artist of the David miniature in the Gough Psalter.¹⁸⁵ The identification of the artist in this study strengthens the Durham connection for the Gough Psalter.

2:5 WINCHESTER

The scriptoria at St Albans, Bury and Canterbury were extremely successful during the second quarter of the twelfth century, benefiting from the Anglo-Norman monastic reforms and the growing need for illustrated liturgical books. At Winchester however, which had flourished during earlier reforms in the tenth and eleventh centuries, the scriptorium was virtually non-existent, and it was not until the 1150s, during the episcopate of Henri of Blois, that it began to produce books of any quality.¹⁸⁶ The earliest of these was possibly the Winchester Psalter,¹⁸⁷ generally dated to *c.* 1150,¹⁸⁸ and before 1161;¹⁸⁹ it exhibits drapery folds which place it within the stylistic sphere of the Bury Bible, although, with its lightly tinted surfaces and no remaining opaque colour layers other than some backgrounds, it is of a technically different type. It has been described as “perhaps the first major work to have been made in Winchester after the Conquest”.¹⁹⁰ Its structure has been very disrupted, and it is difficult to tell how it might have looked originally.

¹⁸⁴ Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Douce 270.

¹⁸⁵ Pächt and Alexander, 1973: 24 and 29; Baker, 1978: 21; Marks and Morgan, 1981: 40.

¹⁸⁶ Oakeshott, 1981: 133.

¹⁸⁷ London, BL Cotton MS Nero C. IV.

¹⁸⁸ Kauffmann, 1975: 105; Kauffmann, 1984: 118.

¹⁸⁹ Haney, 1986: 70.

¹⁹⁰ Oakeshott, 1981: 133.

Slightly later, two great Bibles were made at Winchester; they have been fully described and analysed many times elsewhere.¹⁹¹ The first, the Auct. Bible, is in two volumes,¹⁹² each the work of a different artist; stylistically the second volume seems somewhat later than the first. The text of the first volume was probably begun between 1140 and 1150,¹⁹³ but it has been suggested that the illuminations were produced from “the first years of the decade 1160-70, or even earlier”.¹⁹⁴ Further work in both volumes was completed between 1160 and 1180.¹⁹⁵

Both volumes have been rebound rather tightly, making it difficult to examine the illuminations which are near the gutter. The very large and rather thin vellum leaves are of a consistent quality throughout, and despite some having become cockled, especially in the first volume, they behave well when being turned. They are stained by the touch of many fingers marking places in the text, but are cleaner than folios in the Dover Bible, which must reflect better preparation or quality, or less use.

Large decorative initials are used to introduce each book. There are no narrative scenes or frontispieces such as those in the Bury and Lambeth Bibles, although occasionally in the first volume the foliage scrolls of the initials are inhabited by figures. Their artist is known as the Entangled Figures Master for this reason. A second artist, now known as the Brilliant Pupil, assisted him by painting two initials in heavier colour, ornamented with tiny white rings, dots, hatchings, brackets, and other motifs. A third artist produced the very different initials in volume two.

The Entangled Figures Master was probably a professional artist, and seems to have had a long career.¹⁹⁶ He may have had knowledge of the St Albans scriptorium, and was

¹⁹¹ Ayres, 1974c; Ayres, 1976; Oakeshott, 1981; Ayres, 1983; Kauffman, 1984; Donovan, 1993; Donovan, 2008.

¹⁹² Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Auct. Infra. E. 1 and 2.

¹⁹³ Thomson, 1982, I: 35.

¹⁹⁴ Oakeshott, 1981: 114.

¹⁹⁵ Kauffmann, 1984: 120.

¹⁹⁶ Kauffmann, 2003: 119.

possibly taught there;¹⁹⁷ he was certainly influenced by the Alexis Master.¹⁹⁸ Indeed, Oakeshott believed he worked on the first volume of the Auct. Bible at St Albans,¹⁹⁹ but this has been questioned by Thomson.²⁰⁰

He had previously illustrated the Shaftesbury Psalter, in *c.* 1130-40, and attempted to emulate the rich colour of the St Albans Psalter miniatures using intense saturated washes (Fig. 128). Dodwell suggested he “probably copied” some images from the St Albans manuscript,²⁰¹ the inference being that he must have spent some time at St Albans. His Shaftesbury miniatures are nevertheless more traditional in maintaining the use of curving bands of striped colour to model the figures, as he did in his Bible initials, and horizontal bands of transparent colour in the backgrounds of the miniatures, rather than panels. They were, like the Lambeth and Auct. Bible illuminations, very skilfully painted in washes of various density, often working the wet paint to blend it on the surface. Its colours are generally richer than those in the Lambeth Bible, and there is some strong show-through, especially from the greens. The artist may also have illuminated the Le Mans Pliny,²⁰² whose main scribal hand is considered to be English;²⁰³ this was possibly made at Glastonbury, according to the latest research.²⁰⁴

The Entangled Figures Master was clearly a highly skilled master draughtsman, confident in his drawing ability. The initials in the Auct. Bible are characterized by a freely drawn line, and although he used mainly black for the outline, many linear flourishes and patterns within the shapes are drawn with the same colours used to infill the shapes. There are many examples, and typical is the initial to Job (Fig. 129), where

¹⁹⁷ Oakeshott, 1981: 114b.

¹⁹⁸ Thomson, 1982, I: 34; Dodwell, 1993: 333.

¹⁹⁹ Oakeshott, 1981: 99 and 106.

²⁰⁰ Thomson, 1982, I: 33-35.

²⁰¹ Dodwell, 1954: 45 and 46 n1.

²⁰² Le Mans, BM MS 263.

²⁰³ Thomson, 1982: 135 n76; Dodwell, 1993: 362.

²⁰⁴ De Hamel, ‘The Giant Bibles of Twelfth-Century England’, open lecture at the University of Leeds, 16th October 2012.

many hatchings, swirls, surface textures, and decorative motifs are drawn in fine pen lines of bright red, ochre, green, blue and white, with paint which must have been as thin and wet as ink. He often decorated the gold in a similar way by incising into it with a finely pointed tool, to which he sometimes applied colour, including opaque white, thereby unifying his designs in a highly unusual and original manner.²⁰⁵

Generally the colouring is sombre and neutral, based on greyish ochre and green, enlivened with areas of bright blue, red and gold, and often relying on the pale vellum as a tone, with opaque white used for surface highlights. The paint is applied in washes of varying density and saturation, and, while the blues are often deep and opaque other colours are usually transparent, such as the clear flat washes of ochre often used in the backgrounds. Some initials are more brightly coloured with greater areas of gold, such as the Hosea initial (Fig. 130), where the vellum is hardly visible amongst the deep blues, strong reds and gold. This more densely painted initial feels heavy and floppy as the page is turned. Folio 264, however, turns like a piece of flat card because two large back-to-back initials to Daniel stiffen the page. There is strong show-through from most of the colours throughout the volume, but especially green, red and gold.

The second volume of the Auct. Bible contains one historiated initial on the Beatus page, and twenty-two decorative initials, by an artist who probably also worked in the Winchester Bible at roughly the same time. He was identified as the Amalekite Master by Oakeshott,²⁰⁶ who described the illuminated initials as “almost wholly *sui generis*”,²⁰⁷ meaning that they were original work wholly in his hand, whereas in the Winchester Bible he painted initials designed and begun by another artist. He was very Byzantine in his outlook, which is apparent in all his large Psalm initials, but especially so in the two figures of David on the Beatus page (Fig. 131), where there is a strong whiff of the

²⁰⁵ See Chapter 3.

²⁰⁶ Oakeshott, 1981: 66.

²⁰⁷ Oakeshott, 1981: 104.

hard, glossy surface of mosaics; in addition the foliate forms of the other initials are symmetrical and formalised, designed with rule and compass with geometric precision, causing them to look hard and metallic in comparison to the expressive drawings of the Entangled Figures Master. He used opaque body colour rather than washes, and his colours are stronger and less transparent than those in the first volume, with very crisply painted edges. On folio 44r (Fig. 132), the distinctive colours of the scrolls and foliage, such as red-purple or mauve, a pale opaque blue, and a green that is almost turquoise, are set against richly coloured and gilded backgrounds with little tonal contrast between the two. Oakeshott described them thus: “decoratively they are superb, and are masterpieces of craftsmanship”.²⁰⁸ They are indeed clearly the work of a highly skilled artist and wonderful colourist, but their technical perfection reveals little of his personality. One of his Psalm initials is discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

According to scholars the illumination of the Morgan Leaf is the work of two artists, the Apocrypha Master and the Morgan Master.²⁰⁹ They are representative of the two groups of artists who worked on the Winchester Bible, and on this single large leaf their different drawing styles and colours were spectacularly combined in a way that encapsulates the changes that took place in the Winchester scriptorium under the patronage of the bishop, Henry of Blois.²¹⁰ Their work also reflects the changes that were happening more widely in English illumination during the period.

The Winchester Bible, to which the Leaf belonged, was made in two phases involving several artists, and occupied them for at least twenty years.²¹¹ The first group included two artists known as the Apocrypha Master and the Leaping Figures Master, who had “migrated to Winchester sometime after they had worked on the St Albans

²⁰⁸ Oakeshott, 1981: 106.

²⁰⁹ Ayres, 1974c: 203; Oakeshott, 1981: 59; Kauffmann, 1984: 122; Donovan, 1993: 38.

²¹⁰ Donovan, 2008: 68

²¹¹ Kauffmann, 1984: 120.

copy of Terence's plays," and whose work on the Bible is suffused with St Albans influence.²¹² Their work was probably carried out during the 1160s, but left incomplete.²¹³

The Morgan Master and the second group of artists took over the illuminations in about 1170,²¹⁴ and introduced a newer style strongly influenced by the mid-twelfth-century flowering of Byzantine art in Sicily; some of them were probably familiar with the mosaics of the Capella Palatina in Palermo, and the cathedral of Cefalù.²¹⁵ Their arrival was summarized by Donovan:

Where the early style draws on the essentially English style of manuscript illumination, the group of travelling artists who descended on Winchester possibly as early as 1170 to complete the work, brought an unmistakable breath of foreign air – Byzantine and inspired by large-scale wall decoration.²¹⁶

This seems likely, given the contemporary Byzantinisms in the Dover Bible made at Canterbury, but Ayres has suggested that the Morgan Master was not active on the Bible until the early 1180s, based on his belief that it was the Winchester Bible and not the Auct. Bible that was given to St Hugh at Witham by Henry II.²¹⁷ He further suggested that it was the mosaics of Monreale, probably begun in the late 1170s and completed during the 1180s,²¹⁸ which informed the Morgan Master's work on the Bible, rather than the earlier decoration at Palermo and Cefalù.²¹⁹

It was once believed that the Morgan Leaf had never been part of the Bible,²²⁰ but Donovan has shown that it was probably once bound opposite the initial to I Samuel on

²¹² Ayres, 1974c: 221-22.

²¹³ Oakeshott, 1981: 114; Donovan, 1993: 42.

²¹⁴ Kauffmann, 1984: 121; Donovan, 1993: 31.

²¹⁵ Oakeshott, 1981: 113.

²¹⁶ Donovan, 1993: 31.

²¹⁷ Ayres, 1974c: 217-19.

²¹⁸ Dodwell, 1993: 373.

²¹⁹ Ayres, 1974c: 219-20.

²²⁰ Oakeshott, 1981: 58.

folio 88r, as a frontispiece to the Books of Kings.²²¹ The recto (Fig. 133) contains various scenes concerning the story of Hannah, Samuel and Saul, while the verso illustrates the story of David, Saul and the death of Absalom.

Oakeshott showed that the Apocrypha Master designed the images on the Leaf, but was not clear on how much of the painting he actually did, and described the Leaf as “eventually” painted by the Master of the Morgan Leaf.²²² Ayres thought that the painting was finished by the Morgan Master, but in an imitative way on the recto:

...there is an attempt here to emulate the burnt-yellow colouring so characteristic for the Apocrypha Master. It seems as if the Morgan Master, in finishing this design by the other miniaturist, has also adapted his palette to that of the Apocrypha Master's illuminations.²²³

This seems unlikely on the evidence; although both artists contributed to the painting of the Leaf, most colours on the recto are the Apocrypha Master's, as correctly pointed out by Heslop,²²⁴ and later by Donovan:

The Apocrypha Master applied gold, and on the recto, he set down the colours - the malachite green and bright orange, the pale fawn and the blue of the bed hangings. The rosette-like modelling of the folds of fabric between Samuel's feet and on Eli's orange bedding is his work also.²²⁵

Although Donovan believed he only painted the recto, examination confirms that the Apocrypha Master painted both sides of the Leaf, although not necessarily to completion. Neither were they fully transformed by the Morgan Master, who left the recto in a more unfinished state than the verso.

On the recto therefore the colours of the garments, curtains, bed covers and other draperies, including the golden borders, have generally remained as they were originally painted, including the yellow ochre delineated with bright red, as used earlier in the St Albans Psalter and Bury Bible. The division of each panel into two scenes and four

²²¹ Donovan, 1993: 5 and 33.

²²² Oakeshott, 1981: 59.

²²³ Ayres, 1980: 22.

²²⁴ Heslop, 1982: 128.

²²⁵ Donovan, 1993: 38.

arcades with separate colours is probably unchanged, and some of the original areas of green, orange, scarlet, pale terracotta pinks, two different blues are visible, some saturated, some mixed with white. The same colours are used elsewhere in the Bible.

The original greens look thin and worn and washed off, as though carefully removed prior to repainting, although rough handling over a long period may have damaged some of the greens, particularly in the frame. In the second scene at the lower left, Hannah before Eli (Fig. 134), the green is still quite heavy around the hands of Eli and Hannah, and worn thin elsewhere, either because of poor adhesion, or because it was removed carefully by an assistant who dared not get his damp brush too close to the tiny fingers while loosening the paint. The original red under-drawings are visible in quite a few places through this green. There are small remnants of the original black outline of the Apocrypha Master here and there on the green garments throughout the recto, indicating that it was at one time more fully painted, and that much of the colour was stripped off in preparation for the new colours which the Morgan Master wished to apply. Unlike the blues in the Dover Bible, the green was not removed for recycling, but simply because it was not wanted as part of the new colour scheme.

Visible mannerisms of the Apocrypha Master include the crease or “nick” visible in the under-drawing of Hannah’s knee, the double-hook creases on the thighs, the pleats, and the trademark hip-notch, all discussed by Ayres and Oakeshott in their analyses of the Leaf.²²⁶ However, neither noticed or mentioned an anomaly, which, contrary to the accepted view, suggests that a third hand worked on the recto of the Leaf. This can be seen most clearly in the middle register, where the young Samuel stands arms akimbo before the recumbent Eli (Fig. 135). He wears a bright orange tunic, drawn in the style of the Apocrypha Master, onto which bright red folds have been drawn with a thin brush or nib, including two loosely drawn round oval shapes in double lines,

²²⁶ Oakeshott, 1945: 19; Ayres, 1980: 20-2; Oakeshott, 1981: 59.

representing the shape of the upper chest, and a similar shape defining the stomach; this same mannerism is apparent on the blue tunic of the sleeping Samuel in the scene to the right, when he is called by God. Above, God's blue tunic also has double parallel lines on the upper torso and down the sleeve. There are more of these lines on Hannah's red robe at the bottom left.

This particular way of delineating the folds of the upper torso is not normally visible in any tunics drawn or painted by the Apocrypha Master, either in the Bible or the St Albans Terence; he generally used curved lines which arc upwards from the waist or hip area and never downwards from the shoulders; this can be seen in the drawing of King Antiochus (Fig. 136), and the two figures at the base of the Ezra initial in the Winchester Bible, (Fig. 137), and in his drawings in the St Albans Terence, (Figs 138-139). It is however, a very strong identifier of the Master of the Leaping Figures, who used it on virtually every figure he designed in the Bible. It can be seen in many of his initials, including the tunics worn in the unpainted initial to the Epistle to Philemon (Fig. 140), and in the Exodus initial (Fig. 141), where the comparison is especially clear. It may be that this artist briefly worked as a colourist with the Apocrypha Master, applying a layer of shadow lines onto the flat base colours, or perhaps at a later stage began to rework the design of his colleague, although according to Oakeshott he never did this anywhere in the Bible.²²⁷

Nevertheless, it is impossible to differentiate with complete accuracy the colours of each artist on the recto. It appears that the Morgan Master's repainting began with the modelling of the heads and hands, and here the colours, aquiline noses and green shading of the Morgan Master are recognizable, although more broadly painted and less smoothly blended than on the verso. In the lower right of the recto, in the scenes with

²²⁷ Oakeshott, 1981: 116, Table II.

Saul and Samuel (Fig. 328), as elsewhere, all the heads seem to have been repainted in this way, with green under-painting in the shadows.

The grey cloak of Saul, at the extreme lower right, is one of the Morgan Master's colours, and the way it is modelled is in strong contrast to the blue tunic and yellow robe of the adjacent figure of Samuel, painted by the Apocrypha Master. Apart from this change few other obvious alterations can be seen on the recto.

Unlike the recto, the verso was changed radically, with dense, opaque paint and bold colour (Fig. 142). There is hardly a trace of the Apocrypha Master's colour or drapery folds. Probably only a few areas of green and the gold edgings to garments in the lower register are his. His double panels were painted out and transformed into single background shapes painted in bright flat red, and containing square panels of counter-changing blue and deep terracotta or red-ochre.

As mentioned above, in the upper register, the Morgan Master began reworking the unfinished miniature of David slaying Goliath, begun by the other artist, by painting a dark transparent grey over an unwanted green panel, prior to repainting (Fig. 143). The fringes of the original bright green can be seen around the edges of the fairly roughly applied grey, which was clearly not meant to be a finished colour. The final colour, which was never applied, was in all probability to be the same deep terracotta as in the other counter-changing panels.

The almost total lack of green on the verso of the Leaf probably means several green shapes were painted over in this way; the various colours of the under-painting exposed elsewhere on the leaf indicate that he made general use of this technique when repainting with completely new colours. The grey put on over the unwanted green on the verso is a reminder of Theophilus's advice about using two coats of colour, and to

wall painters about using dark grey, or *veneda*, as an undercoat beneath blue and green.²²⁸

Virtually the whole folio was over-painted in this way, and many of the original colours in the figures and elsewhere were replaced with blue, a deep brick-red, a strong yellow ochre, a plain neutral grey, and various shades of very pale greyish ochre as worn by the young David and Saul. Like the terracotta panels, most of these other colours were mixed to the artist's preference; only a few details like the soldier's green shield, a few areas of frame, and the green horse, remained as they were originally.

SUMMARY

The use of a full palette of body colour and gold introduced at St Albans revitalized illumination. It enabled artists to increase the scale and monumentality of their illuminations to satisfy the demand for larger and more luxurious books. Artists from St Albans took their skills to other centres: the Alexis Master himself painted a cycle of illustrations for Bury St Edmunds, and later, two other St Albans artists produced significant work at Winchester.

When the working practices of Master Hugo are compared with those of the Alexis Master, clear differences in planning, preparation and application of paint and colour become apparent. These make it very easy to believe that Hugo came to Bury from somewhere like Italy, where his technique had been formed.

The Four Psalter Leaves, originally painted in line and wash, were repainted with bright, opaque body-colour in the new style. Progress was so rapid that on the Morgan Leaf and in the Winchester Bible some miniatures and initials painted as late as the 1160s were repainted and modernized in the 1170s and 1180s. The alterations

²²⁸ See above, p. 100 n93.

sometimes provide good evidence of working methods: on the Four Leaves many new details were drawn in pencil but left unpainted.

Big differences in quality of technique are often apparent within a single manuscript, usually when more than one artist collaborated in some way, as in the Edmund miniatures of the Alexis Master, and in the initials of the prayers and canticles towards the end of the Hunterian Psalter. However, sometimes a single artist varied his style to fit narrative requirements, as the Alexis Master did, and perhaps others like the artist of the Copenhagen Psalter.²²⁹ This has caused some confusion amongst art historians.

²²⁹ Heslop, 1990: 140.

CHAPTER THREE

GOLD

PREFACE

General descriptions of the processes involved in using gold paint and gold leaf can be found in many publications, such as those by Clemens and Graham, and D. V.

Thompson;¹ these provide details of materials, preparation and application. De Hamel has also usefully outlined how artists used gold throughout the medieval period, and highlighted some of its physical characteristics encountered by artist when using gold in manuscripts.²

The most significant and most detailed contributions on the gilding of twelfth-century English illuminations have been made by Frinta, Oakeshott, Pächt and Whitley.³ Oakeshott described how gold was used and decorated in the two Winchester Bibles, and suggested a strong link to Byzantine mosaics, as did Pächt.⁴ This study challenges some of Oakeshott's conclusions.

Whitley's short general survey, *The Gilded Page*, is useful, but because it is heavily reliant on manuscripts in the British Library it is incomplete in its descriptions of how gold was used and how it was decorated in the twelfth century. Also, while several times highlighting the use of gesso and simple punched-dot decoration in the Winchester Bible as though it were revolutionary, she makes no mention of the important and very innovative decorated gold leaf in the earlier Auct. Bible.

¹ Thompson, 1956; Clemens and Graham, 2007.

² De Hamel, 2001.

³ Frinta, 1975; Oakeshott, 1981; Pächt, 1986; Whitley, 2000.

⁴ Oakeshott, 1981: 39; Pächt, 1986: 141.

Frinta's short study outlined the development of punchmarks in manuscript gold, relating their use in the late twelfth century to the introduction of gesso grounds; she also emphasized their relationship with metalworking techniques, especially in the thirteenth century.

Surprisingly, Alexander says nothing about the materiality of gold, gesso, or the processes used, in his book on illuminators' methods.⁵ The main difficulty encountered when examining gold paint and gold leaf, prior to the development of gesso grounds, lies in the precise identification of the type of gold, and the techniques used, which caused even Walter Oakeshott problems.

It has indeed been difficult occasionally to be absolutely sure through visual examination about the exact methods used, and it must be acknowledged that some things are still uncertain. Nevertheless, this chapter presents a description of the gilding of many of the most important twelfth-century English manuscripts, based on first-hand examination, and this has revealed some misunderstandings in the previous scholarship.

The chapter also stresses the debt owed by artists to the decorative techniques used in fine metalwork. Indeed, it appears that this was a major influence, particularly at Winchester, a point re-emphasized in one of the case studies in Chapter 6.

3:1 GOLD PAINT

The appearance of gold on the page underwent considerable change during the period 1125 to the 1160s. The lumpy and granular appearance of gold paint, while acceptable previously for decorative lettering against purple-stained folios, became unacceptable to artists who wanted smoothly burnished and highly reflective surfaces; they grew adept at mixing and applying their powdered gold so that it looked flat and smooth, like gold leaf; this meant it could be polished to a greater degree. This is apparent in a mid-

⁵ Alexander, 1992.

century manuscript such as the Dover Bible. The significant development, however, was the gradual replacement of gold paint with gold leaf, and the use of gesso grounds support to support it.

Another change was the decoration of gold surfaces with incised or scored markings, and occasionally simple impressed decoration. This was probably influenced by the decorative techniques used on precious metals by goldsmiths in both the secular and ecclesiastic spheres. English artists seem to have been at the forefront of these developments, or at least very responsive to external influences.

Throughout the medieval period powdered gold was mixed with a hot thin glue of some sort, like fish glue or parchment size,⁶ and applied with a pen usually, or brush, probably while still warm, and usually after the other colours.⁷ This had to be done with some care because if the glue was too thick it could have flowed less well as it cooled. In early manuscripts like the Vespasian Psalter the gold paint was often applied directly to the vellum, while gold leaf was laid on to a thin coat of colourless glair or size to hold it in place.⁸

By the twelfth century gold was generally painted on to a flat undercoat of red paint, perhaps mixed with glair,⁹ which it was thought enhanced the richness of the colour of the gold. This combination of gold over red can be seen in several places in the Bury Bible, for example in the frame at the top of the miniature to Numbers (Fig. 144). In the second volume of the Dover Bible quite a strong red undercoat is often visible through the damaged gold, for instance on folio 134v (Fig. 145).

In the St Albans Psalter miniatures the gold in the frames was laid over a very thin and transparent red-ochre ground, described by Petzold as “a dilute orange substance”.¹⁰

⁶ *De Div. Art.* I. 31 (Dodwell, 1961: 29).

⁷ Clemens and Graham, 2007: 33.

⁸ Whitley, 2000: 51.

⁹ *De Div. Art.* I. 29 (Dodwell, 1961: 28).

¹⁰ Petzold, 1986: 164.

Where the gold shows through on the reverse, it looks yellow, with hardly a hint of red. The crossed nimbus of Christ in the Flagellation was outlined with red but not gilded, presumably in error (Fig. 146). This suggests that in the miniatures themselves, but not in the frames where there was a red undercoat, the gold was applied directly on to the vellum, perhaps onto a thin layer of glair or glue size,¹¹ and might even indicate that the original plan was to use gold leaf rather than gold paint. On the Third Temptation page several items of Satan's treasure were painted over in blue and green; they do not seem to have been outlined in red, or stained with glue, so were probably deliberately left ungolded.

In the Lambeth Bible the inner border or margin of the Ezekiel miniature was prepared for its gold leaf with a coat of glue or glair, but the gold was never applied, leaving the greyish colour of the adhesive exposed to view (Fig. 147). This was also the case on the Morgan Leaf where much of the gold paint has worn away revealing vellum slightly stained with glue size or glair, but with no colour.

The colour used beneath the gold was not always red. Yellow ochre was sometimes used, as in the St Edmund miniatures, where it is quite strong and imitates the gold, and in the early initials of the first volume of the Dover Bible where the fine painted gold is laid onto a very pale ochre ground, or in the case of the Minor Prophets onto a plain vellum ground. In the Alexis Master's illuminations in the Verdun Anselm, all the gold paint was laid on to a very strong saturated green wash, which is often visible through the blotchy and very granular gold paint. In a tenth-century gospel lectionary from Prüm,¹² within the sphere of the Echternach school,¹³ the gold was also painted on top of a green undercoat, and outlined in red. The show through of the green and gold is clear

¹¹ Thompson, 1956: 29.

¹² Manchester, John Rylands Library MS 7.

¹³ Dodwell, 1971: 74.

on the reverse of folio 68v. This use of green might in a small way confirm a link between Echternach and St Albans, as has been suggested.¹⁴

Most of the gold in the St Albans Psalter miniatures was applied as a paint to decorate hems and borders of garments, halos, hats, crowns, chairs, thrones and architecture. It was quite roughly applied on some folios, as can be seen on the halos of the apostles and Christ in the Entry into Jerusalem, where it has squeezed out from under the brush and beyond its boundary lines.

On page 37 of the St Albans Psalter, Christ wears a robe of quite thickly painted and polished gold (Fig. 148), a garment with Anglo-Saxon antecedents rather than Ottonian.¹⁵ Petzold described it as an “embossed golden mantle”,¹⁶ and more recently Kidd has described it as having an “impressed” design.¹⁷ Kidd also noticed a similar technique in Christ’s halo, and on page 50, the halo of the angel. At first glance it seems that painted lines can be seen beneath the gold of the robe, as though the gold was laid over a previously painted design. However this is not the case, and a close examination of both robe and halo shows in fact that the marks are remnants of detailing in black lines which were drawn on to the thick and slightly uneven gold, but did not stick; the marks Petzold and Kidd described as “embossed” and “impressed” are, therefore, the slight indentations in the soft gold made by the scoring of the pen where the black lines were drawn, and from where ink has worn away, leaving slightly incised traces on the surface. The way the ink has worn away is characteristic of thin paint resisted by a polished metallic surface, and two or three black lines remain on the surface of the robe to suggest how it looked originally. Similar wear can also be seen on later twelfth-century manuscripts like the Dover Bible, where the black paint or ink often looks like it has chipped or flaked off in places.

¹⁴ Swarzenski, 1963: 83.

¹⁵ Petzold, 1986: 164.

¹⁶ Petzold, 1986: 164.

¹⁷ Kidd, 2008: 74.

This use of painted gold by the Alexis Master was part of an English tradition which seems to have developed through the experiments of artists in the later Anglo-Saxon period,¹⁸ in manuscripts such as the Missal of Robert of Jumièges,¹⁹ and the Benedictional of St Æthelwold.²⁰ An inscription in the book, in golden lettering, gives some insight into the process of the patronage which created it: “A bishop, the great Aethelwold, whom the Lord had made patron of Winchester, ordered a certain monk subject to him to write the present book”.²¹ The type of image required was also described:

He commanded also to be made in this book many frames well adorned and filled with various figures decorated with numerous beautiful colours and with gold... Let all who look upon this book pray always that after the term of the flesh I may abide in heaven—Godeman the scribe, as a suppliant, earnestly asks this.²²

Drawing in black line onto gold has a long history, and can be seen in many important Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, where pale ochre was also used to highlight and sharpen edges. During the second quarter of the eighth century black interlace patterns were drawn on to some of the gilded page headings in the *Vespasian Psalter*,²³ such as on folio 93v (Fig. 149). In the later Benedictional of St Æthelwold all details in the gold are delineated in black line, with the occasional pale ochre highlight, such as on Christ’s tunic in the Entry into Jerusalem on folio 45v; on folio 90v (Fig. 150), St Ætheldryth wears a gold-painted veil, highly burnished, on which the folds have been painted in black and brown lines, some of which have subsequently worn away.

An almost exactly similar example of missing paint is visible in *Eadui Psalter* of about 1020,²⁴ in an historiated initial showing David killing Goliath (Fig. 151). David is

¹⁸ Alexander, 1975: 148.

¹⁹ Rouen, BM MS Y. 7.

²⁰ London, BL Add. MS 49598.

²¹ Wormald, 1959: 7.

²² Wormald, 1959: 8.

²³ London, BL Cotton MS Vespasian A. I.

²⁴ London, BL MS Arundel 155.

dressed in a short tunic wholly painted in rather thick and lumpy powdered gold, and the details of folds and sleeve are drawn in black line, with some faint yellow ochre highlights, on top of the gold paint. Much of the black paint has worn off in the same way as in the St Albans Psalter miniature, leaving only shadowy remnants. Another example can be seen on folio 133r, where St Benedict wears a robe in painted gold, fastened at the chest (Fig. 152). Some under-drawing is visible on the gold, representing folds and fall of drapery, which has been overdrawn in lines of black paint or ink, and in a number of places the black paint has come away. This seems to confirm that here at least the Alexis Master was working within a long English tradition, whatever other elements of his visual language may have come from abroad. Very finely ground gold paint was used in the Bury Bible a few years later; it was very smoothly and evenly applied throughout, with much more care than in either the Psalter miniatures or Psalm initials, and suffering very little subsequent damage.

Like the Alexis Master, Hugo generally used gold for the hems of tunics and edges of robes and cloaks of figures in both the miniatures and some initials, a practice continued with gold leaf at Canterbury and Winchester. Such gold trimmings, borders and hems may have had theological significance during the period. The multi-coloured and gold-decorated wedding gown worn by the queen mother at Ahab's wedding to Jezebel, is described in Psalm 44:

The daughters of kings have delighted thee in thy glory. The queen stood on thy right hand, in gilded clothing; surrounded with variety. Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thy ear: and forget thy people and thy father's house. And the king shall greatly desire thy beauty; for he is the Lord thy God, and him they shall adore...All the glory of the king's daughter is within in golden borders, clothed round about with varieties.²⁵

²⁵ Psalm 44:10-15: *filiae regum in honore tuo adstitit regina a dextris tuis in vestitu deaurato circumdata varietate audi filia et vide et inclina aurum tuum et obliviscere populum tuum et domum patris tui et concupiscet rex decorem tuum quoniam ipse est dominus tuus et adorabunt eum...omnis gloria ejus filiae regis ab intus in fimbriis aureis circumamicta varietatibus* (Versio Gallicana).

The English monk Aelred, abbot of Rievaulx, discussed the symbolism of the Psalm in a letter to his sister, written in about 1160,²⁶ and used the description of the queen's garments as an analogy for a spiritual dress "of many virtues", which she should wear as a female recluse married to Christ:

And, if you add golden hems to the garment of many virtues that you have made, your husband will look upon you with the greatest love.²⁷

Furthermore, the gold edging symbolized charity to Aelred, that is the love of God and neighbour:

Charity is like a border that is attached to the edge of your splendid spiritual garment. This wedding garment, which is made of various virtues, must be trimmed, of course, with golden borders; it will be edged all around by the brightness of charity, which binds all virtues into one, sharing its own beauty with them all, and making one out of many.²⁸

However, by the time Aelred was writing this in the early 1160s, such use of gold was becoming rather old fashioned in manuscript illumination. No gold was used in this manner in the Lambeth Bible, and only minimally used on garments in one miniature, the Betrayal, in the Gough Psalter; hardly a figure in the Hunterian Psalter has garments decorated this way, and there are none at all in the miniatures of the Copenhagen Psalter, both painted in the late 1160s. It is probably no coincidence therefore, that in all four manuscripts the images were set against gilded backgrounds. The transition can be seen clearly in the Winchester Bible and the Morgan Leaf where the earlier artists decorated garment hems and borders with gold (Fig. 153), while the later artists used it in frames and the backgrounds of their initials (Fig. 154), and very rarely anywhere else.

²⁶ Webb and Walker, 1957: 9.

²⁷ *De Inst. Incl.* 25: ...*cui si fimbrias aureas addas, vestem polymitam, in qua te Sponsus cum summa delectatione conspiciat texuisti* (Talbot, 1971: 657; trans. Walker and Webb, 1957: 24-25; modified by Author).

²⁸ *De Inst. Incl.* 26-27: *Adhaesio ista caritas, quasi spiritalis ornatus finis et fimbria. Vestis quippe nuptialis ex virtutum varietate context, oportet ut fimbriis aureis, id est caritatis splendoribus ambiatur, quae omnes virtutes contineat, et constringat in unum* (Talbot, 1971: 659; trans. Walker and Webb, 1957: 27; modified by Author).

3:2 GOLD LEAF

Much less gold was required to make gold leaf than when it was ground and powdered for use as paint. Leaf therefore had economic advantages, even though to prepare it may have required the services of a skilled artisan.²⁹ This meant of course that it was not only a good deal cheaper to use leaf for gilding,³⁰ but that the page became much lighter because leaf was so thin,³¹ even though it was probably thicker and heavier than modern leaf.³² Gold leaf could, therefore, be used more economically in covering larger areas.

Painted gold and gold leaf were both used in the Lindisfarne Gospels,³³ sometimes on the same page,³⁴ and slightly later at Canterbury they were used together on the illuminations of the *Codex Aureus* of Canterbury³⁵ and the Vespasian Psalter.³⁶ This was, therefore, not an unknown technique in England, and during the twelfth century it is not unusual to see both gold paint and gold leaf in the same manuscript, sometimes on the same page, as noted by de Hamel,³⁷ and even possibly overlaying each other as the artists sought to finish off or tidy up their illuminations. Such practices may possibly have been quite normal, but as yet not enough is known about how gold was used to be certain.

This may have been the case in both volumes of the Dover Bible where the richness and opacity of the surface seems to have been of some importance generally to the artists, especially in the first volume. The gold does not look as if it was built up in layers of leaf then burnished to a flat shine, as might be expected. Rather it appears that thin leaf was laid flat, sometimes over outlines already drawn, then painted over with

²⁹ Thompson, 1956: 202; De Hamel, 1992: 57.

³⁰ De Hamel, 1992: 57.

³¹ De Hamel, 1992: 57.

³² Thompson, 1956: 195.

³³ London, BL Cotton MS Nero D. IV.

³⁴ Brown, 2003: 286.

³⁵ Stockholm, Kunliga Biblioteket MS A. 135.

³⁶ Whitley, 2000: 51.

³⁷ De Hamel, 1992: 57.

touches of powdered gold to fill the gaps and solidify the surface of the tiny shapes; or perhaps the other way around, as it looks in the initial to Amos in the first volume, where pieces of burnished leaf occasionally seem to be visible above a layer of thin gold paint, overlapping each other. This technique is rather baffling and remains an open question requiring further investigation.

From the mid-twelfth century gold leaf began to replace gold paint in miniatures and initials. In the St Albans Psalter, as mentioned above, gold paint and gold leaf were used on both, and each of the three or four painters seems to have had his own approach. In the initials the painted gold is sometimes thick and granular, applied lavishly and often untidily, with messy edges here and there, when compared to that in the miniatures. Generally the gold shows through yellow, but occasionally, as on page 245, the gold shows through darker and greasier (Fig. 155) this probably has more to do with the amount of glue or size used in the gold rather than with the gold itself. In the initial to Psalm 112 (Fig. 156), very small pieces of leaf, all roughly the same length and width, can be seen in the frame; in the initial to Psalm 108 (Fig. 157), the pieces of leaf look as they did when they were first put down, their sharp edges very clear and without the tiny gaps filled in, or other pieces laid on top. A wash of pale ochre or a layer of glue size is visible between the pieces. These two initials are by the hand known as Artist 2, and there are others like them to be seen in quire 17. In the initials painted and gilded by a different artist in quire 11, that is from page 173 to 192, directional brushstrokes seem to be frequently visible in the thick gold, one over another, even in the thick outer borders framing the letter forms; in other places the square edges of leaf can be seen, as though laid under the gold paint, as for example in the initial to Psalm 54 (Fig. 158). It seems that this artist used both gold paint and leaf. His identity is not certain: examination of the whole quire reveals that it is more richly painted than the other Psalm quires, and more highly finished with very small

characteristic mannerisms evident in the profile heads and faces, including sculptured hair, which fits the heads differently, and a curiously absent upper-lip, which do not seem to be present in the work of the other artists.³⁸ Whether this is simply a more refined technique being tried in quire eleven for some reason, perhaps as an exemplar, or an unacknowledged member of the St Albans team, is not yet known.

In the gold borders of the frames of the Psalter miniatures it is possible to see many straight cut edges and joints where small cut pieces of leaf were laid down, all of a very regular size (Figs 159-163), and with a base of glue size usually visible. So although the Alexis Master used finely ground gold paint for the decoration of the garments, halos and thrones, he certainly used gold leaf for the frames, and occasionally for halos, where in one or two places it is possible to see pieces of leaf (Figs 25-26). It is sometimes very hard to tell the difference as both were burnished and polished after application, a process which flattened and smoothed the gold.

Petzold mistakenly thought that all the gold in the Psalter, including that in the frames, was gold paint,³⁹ an error Haney borrowed from him.⁴⁰ He did, however, point out correctly that gold leaf was used in Edmund's *libellus*, where many individual pieces of leaf are visible in garment borders (Fig. 302) and especially in the frames, even more so than in the Psalter miniatures. This is very clear on folio 22v, which depicts Edmund's Apotheosis (Figs 24 and 327). It is beyond doubt that the Alexis Master used both types of gold in his picture cycles.

The gold leaf in the outer frames of the Psalter miniatures has two interesting characteristics. First, it does not quite glint or shine as strongly as the rest of the gold, and second, it is of a deeper, less yellow colour than the inner frames. This probably

³⁸ See St Albans Psalter pp. 180, 183, and 189.

³⁹ Petzold, 1986: 164 and 234.

⁴⁰ Haney, 2002: 33.

indicates that the inner and outer gold frames were done at different times with different batches of gold, perhaps intentionally, to make the outer frames redder.

In the Lambeth Bible gold leaf is used throughout, laid flat onto a wash of pale ochre. In the *Frater Ambrosius* initial, the edges of the tiny pieces of leaf are visible in places, and particularly at the joints. The leaf is crinkled and cracked, not granular. The gold shows through on the reverse as a deep and greasy yellowish grey. In the Genesis initial the individual pieces of leaf are visible in the top two roundels (Fig. 164), and in the gaps a deep ochre coating of glue shows through between the pieces; it is smooth and fine, in much better condition than the *Frater Ambrosius*, but has a slight granular surface, picked up from the vellum. At the bottom edge of the frame of the full-page miniature to Daniel the gilding seems to have been left unfinished (Fig. 165); the crisp, squarely cut ends of the leaf are visible against the deep red ochre that was applied as a substitute or repair. In many initials the different colours of leaf are visible, some slightly paler, some redder, some smoother. In the initial to the prologue to Kings some pieces are very red in comparison to the usual colour.

Gold leaf was also used at Winchester, though perhaps not exclusively. In the first volume of the Auct. Bible the leaf was laid flat onto the vellum before any colour was applied, as can be seen on the unfinished initial on folio 104v (Fig. 166), and in some others where the blue background was painted over the gold, it is possible to see that some parts of it are creased and crinkled, not yet burnished flat. Oakeshott admitted to being “greatly puzzled” by the techniques used for applying gold in this volume, and seemed to hint that he thought it was gold paint, commenting especially about the large Hosea initial (Fig. 195):

The gold for Hosea for instance, used for the whole initial itself, the rest of the decoration being its filling, is smooth, almost like leaf gold – elsewhere it is often in rough flakes with a kind of craquelure.⁴¹

⁴¹ Oakeshott, 1981: 99 n1.

The Hosea initial is certainly made from layers of gold leaf, lightly burnished though not highly polished; it is thin, and no individual pieces of leaf were noticed. The initial is sixteen lines deep, almost half a column in length, and feels heavy as the thin and floppy page is turned.

The other initials in the volume were also made with leaf, rather than paint, and elsewhere the small individual pieces of leaf are occasionally visible, as in the upright and curved lower half of the initial to Job (Fig. 199). In some initials such as this, the leaf is cracked or crackled in a way that is characteristic of leaf but not paint (Fig. 167); in others the leaf is quite roughly crinkled or creased, and rubbed flat, but not burnished smooth. Gold leaf laid flat onto the vellum was clearly this artist's preferred method, and he also used gold leaf in his illuminations in the Shaftesbury Psalter, where it looks very even, smooth and flat.

In the second volume, the gold leaf is used extensively in the backgrounds of the initials, and appears thicker and more brightly polished. The gold seems to have been laid directly onto the vellum, as noted by Oakeshott,⁴² over a dark reddish ochre colour, and it sometimes shows through as a dark and greasy grey-ochre. On the unfinished initial to Wisdom, on folio 83r, the separate pieces of gold leaf can be seen, occasionally overlapping painted areas, and not yet edged with a black outline. Sometimes the leaf appears to be stuck to the colours at its edges, indicating that it was applied after the paint; this is visible on folio 23r, on the upper edges of the eagle's wings and on part of the curling blossom (Fig. 330).

Some small areas of gold in these initials may have been applied as paint; for example, on the initials on folios 51r and 67r some small corrections are slightly different in colour to the adjacent leaf, and, although the gold paint is very finely ground and smooth, they reflect the light differently. Black outlines were added to these little

⁴² Oakeshott, 1981: 66.

painted touches, but it was not done everywhere. On the initial on 67v, a few small dots of what was probably painted gold were also added as decoration to the blue and crimson blossoms.

Examination suggests that the artist deliberately alternated the colour of the gold in the pairs of Psalm initials; on folios 23r, 44r and 51r, at the major psalter divisions, the left-hand initial is yellow gold, while that on the right is much redder (Fig. 168). On some initials straight edges of redder gold are visible against the layer of yellow gold beneath, and these appear to be the edges of colour washes applied by brush.

The two initials on folio 23r are at the top of their columns of text, and the upper part of the page feels heavy and rather independent in its movement as it is turned; indeed the large page needs to be turned with some care. In fact the Psalms pages may not have been heavily used; although punctuated with finger marks, especially in the outer borders, they are in clean and bright condition and the initials are pristine. The remarkable gold of one the initials in this volume is discussed further in Chapter 6.

In about 1180 a small single volume Bible was made at St Albans,⁴³ using gold leaf decoration throughout; this is now sometimes known as Abbot Simon's Bible.⁴⁴ In this book the gold leaf was generally laid onto smooth red gesso grounds, and highly burnished, but in some small initials it was laid flat onto the vellum. It appears that the artist used two colours of gold in several of his initials, the first of which is the initial 'H' to Exodus on folio 18r, an initial only about an inch and a quarter square (Fig. 169). The gold initial letter is set against a square blue ground, and its inner panel looks at first glance to be of redder gold, outlined in black. Oakeshott believed that two distinct colours of gold leaf were used, which he described as a "brilliant use of a redder, and a yellower, gold in the same initial deliberately contrasted".⁴⁵ In fact this is not the case,

⁴³ Cahn, 1982: 259-60.

⁴⁴ CCCC MS 48.

⁴⁵ Oakeshott, 1981: 37.

rather the yellow gold has been tinted with a very transparent red-brown wash to form an inner panel within the letterform, then outlined in black. The gold in some other initials has also been coloured this way,⁴⁶ and here and there the edges of the tiny brushstrokes are visible, as in the large 'P' on folio 258v (Fig. 170). In the tiniest initial thus treated, the 'N' to Jerome's prologue to the catholic epistles, which is barely an inch high (Fig. 171), the red colour is applied in tiny single touches of the brush, just visible, in a black diaper pattern across the bar of the 'N'. This particular way of painting on gold was not new; Whitley noted that on many of the initials in the *Vespasian Psalter* washes, or glazes as she called them, of blue and red were added to areas of the gold leaf to enliven the surface.⁴⁷ In the *Dover Bible* a pale grey, ochre or pale red highlighting line was put on along one side of many gold shapes before the final black outline; and as noted, an artist at *Winchester* used a very similar method of tinting gold in the *Auct. Bible*.

Observations suggest that both types of gold were used in the second volume of *Dover Bible*, but because both leaf and paint were laid flat onto the same slightly granular layer of red paint, the difference between them is not always obvious. On first impression some of the leaf looks like paint, and only with the aid of a jeweller's glass was the use of leaf confirmed. It is possible that this artist sometimes applied a layer of gold leaf first, then, after the colour but before the black outlining, applied a layer of gold paint; this does however need to be verified.

In the large initial 'P' to Paul's letter to the Galatians (Fig. 172), thin leaf is laid on to the slightly granular red ground causing the leaf to take on the texture of the surface beneath, and it looks quite grainy, rather like gold paint. But the straight-cut edges of virtually every tiny piece of leaf are clearly visible to the naked eye in this initial, much more obviously than in any other initial in the Bible (Figs 173-174). It is very thin in

⁴⁶ Folios 18r, 26v, 90r, 204v, 242v, 244r, 258v, 259v, 260r, 262r, 262v, and 263v.

⁴⁷ Whitley, 2000: 51.

places, not burnished much, rather cracked, and has not been finally outlined, but glitters brightly. The impression here is that the gilding was left incomplete after only one layer of thin gold leaf, and before any final outlining was done.

Conversely, the two initials on folios 97v and 242v seem to be heavily gilded with flat painted gold rather than leaf. On 97v the gold paint is very sound but slightly granular, and where it is worn, red undercoat can be seen (Fig. 175); and on 242v the flat gold could at first be thought to be leaf, but under the magnifier it has the granularity of paint (Fig. 176). It seems therefore that this artist, the Corpus 4 Master, used both leaf and powdered gold, sometimes perhaps on the same initial.

To observe these mixed techniques in the St Albans Psalter and the Dover Bible was quite surprising, and it is understandable how Oakeshott could have been puzzled by the gilding in the Auct. Bible.

Even in the slightly later illuminations of the giant Laud Bible,⁴⁸ a luxurious book in terms of scale, colour and gold, and probably decorated during the 1160s, the gold leaf in the backgrounds of its large historiated initials was laid flat onto a colourless ground. The outlines of small individual pieces of gold leaf about half an inch across are apparent throughout the manuscript, perhaps where the burnishing was not thorough enough, and these occasionally form a visible patchwork of gold shapes overlaid on top of each other to form a thick layer prior to polishing. Sometimes gaps between pieces are visible. Here and there it is possible to see how the colour of the gold leaf could vary; in the Deuteronomy initial a little piece of redder gold can be seen at the top left corner of the gold background (Fig. 177).

On folio 5v the Genesis initial has six roundels with thick gold leaf backgrounds. The gold shows through as a strong yellow on the reverse, and some of this show-

⁴⁸ Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Laud Misc. 752.

through actually glints where individual grains of gold have been somehow pushed through the vellum, presumably via pores in the skin, because of over-eager burnishing. Several other initials, have been affected in this way. In some initials the directional striations from the heavy burnishing are very apparent.

3:3 GESSO

The coloured surface onto which gold leaf was applied, usually red or ochre, often prevented the creation of a highly polished and reflective surface because the slight granularity of the paint or even the surface of the vellum itself, was impressed into the gold, sometimes causing the leaf to look rough and granular itself. This was true also of the raised lines on the surface made during the ruling of lines for text with a stylus on the reverse.⁴⁹ Such irregularities made coloured surfaces, gold paint and leaf prone to rubbing and wear from the opposite pages. In addition the show-through from the gold and coloured ground, and especially from the glue or glair used as an adhesive, interfered with how the folios on the reverse looked. Examples are very common: in the St Albans Psalter the show-through from colours, gold and glue was quite bad in the Psalm quires. The initial to Psalm 89, for example (Fig. 178), shows through very badly on page 253 (Fig. 179). Such issues contributed to the introduction of gesso grounds from the 1160s in the generation of manuscripts that included the Winchester Bible, the Hunterian Psalter, and Abbot Simon's Bible.

However, very little is known about how the use of gesso was introduced into England in the twelfth century. Oakeshott believed that its use was developed at Winchester through experimentation;⁵⁰ this may have been as a result of seeing how it was used in panel paintings on wood, perhaps in Sicily, which may also account for the simple punched decoration in the later initials in the Bible. In some initials of the

⁴⁹ Whitley, 2001: 47.

⁵⁰ Oakeshott, 1981: 39.

Winchester Bible the gesso was white but later a red colorant was added,⁵¹ presumably because traditionally in manuscripts both gold paint and leaf had been laid onto a red or similarly coloured base.

The gesso could be made very smooth and flawless, which enabled artists to produce more brightly polished and reflective gold leaf; the younger artists of the second group who came to Winchester to work on the Winchester Bible used gold leaf of the best quality, and it was “laid on lavishly” over the carefully prepared gesso ground.⁵² Otto Pächt saw a relationship between Byzantine mosaic gold and the use of polished gold leaf in Western manuscripts:

The new gold-leaf made it possible to achieve the full gold brilliance at one time generally associated with the gold of Byzantine domes, apses and wall-decoration.⁵³

A possibly even earlier use of gesso can be found in the backgrounds of the Hunterian Psalter miniatures and initials. The pale brick-red gesso is quite flat but clearly thicker than even the thickest of paint; this can be seen in places where it has crumbled from the surface leaving holes through which the vellum is visible (Fig. 226). In the roundels of the calendar pages and many of the initials the gesso is raised somewhat and its curvature is visible, and the gold catches the light in such a way as to show the bevel at its edge. The gold of the Psalm initials is generally in a much better condition than on the calendar pages and miniatures, and seems thicker and more highly polished.

Some manuscripts were undoubtedly more luxurious than others. Even in later manuscripts such as the Gough Psalter, minimal layers of thin gold leaf were still laid flat onto the vellum, without the gesso base, whereas, as Mojmír Frinta has pointed out,

⁵¹ Oakeshott, 1981: 39.

⁵² Oakeshott, 1981: 3.

⁵³ Pächt, 1986: 141.

“relatively thick foil” was used over gesso in the Ingeborg Psalter, probably made for a queen.⁵⁴

3:4 FIELDS OF GOLD

In the Bury Bible initial to Hosea (Fig. 180), there are four ovoid shapes which are completely filled with very finely ground gold paint. The red underlay can be seen here and there tinting the gold. Using gold to infill whole shapes, rather than to decorate the borders of garments or frames, is quite unusual at this date, and appears to be quite innovative. The gold is decorated with a diaper pattern in black line, an early example of the type of diaper pattern later seen on the gold in manuscripts both from England and elsewhere; another example can be seen in a miniature of John the Evangelist on one of the Avesnes leaves, painted by the Lambeth Master in France *c.* 1146 (Fig. 181).

In the West the earliest recorded use of polished painted gold backgrounds as distinct from the linear decoration of frames and the borders of garments, was by the Gregory Master in the Ste-Chapelle Gospels of *c.* 984,⁵⁵ where figures of the evangelists and Christ in Majesty were set against panelled fields of gold. Slightly later a group of books from Reichenau were also decorated with gold backgrounds, such as the Pericopes Book of Henry II (Fig. 182).⁵⁶ Somewhat closer in date are some manuscripts produced in Salzburg during the second half of the eleventh century, such as the Morgan Lectionaries MS G. 44, made about 1050 (Fig. 183), and MS M. 780, made between 1070 and 1090 (Fig. 184).⁵⁷ This use of gold for backgrounds is one of the major differences between Ottonian work and that of the Alexis Master at St Albans.

⁵⁴ Frinta, 1975: 251.

⁵⁵ Paris, BM, MS lat. 8851; see Mayr-Harting, 1991(Part 2): 75.

⁵⁶ Munich, Bayerisches Staatsbibliothek Clm. 4452.

⁵⁷ New York, Morgan Library MS M. 780.

A more distant technical and stylistic source for gold backgrounds was probably tenth-century Byzantine illumination.⁵⁸ A Greek New Testament made at Constantinople during the tenth century,⁵⁹ has typical brightly polished gold backgrounds behind the evangelist figures, such as St Luke (Fig. 185).

Queen Melisende's Psalter, an eastern manuscript with a Latin text, has featureless fields of gold in the backgrounds (Fig. 186), and solid, naturalistically painted figures float against them in the same way as the Bury Bible miniatures are detached from their painted backgrounds; although filled with light and shade themselves, they cast no shadows onto the backgrounds against which they are depicted. A slightly later manuscript from the scriptorium of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, a Latin Gospel book, dating from about the 1160s,⁶⁰ also has solidly painted figures against empty gold backgrounds (Fig. 187).

The leaf from the gospel book at Avesnes (Fig. 181), shows St John seated writing against a gold background and this seems to be the earliest depiction of such a Byzantine type by an artist who also worked in England. The artist, the Lambeth Master, may have seen gold backgrounds in Ottonian or even Byzantine manuscripts while in France during his stay in the 1140s. Back in England after 1147 he worked on the Lambeth Bible illuminations at Canterbury, and introduced brightly polished gold leaf backgrounds into his designs, such as in the Tree of Jesse and Ruth miniatures (Fig. 188). It might be that this was his greatest technical innovation, in a manuscript that was for the most part traditional in both style and technique.

Another early English use of gold as background is in the initial to Paul's epistle to the Ephesians in the second volume of the Dover Bible (Fig. 189). It is the only initial in the two-volume Bible with such a large expanse of polished gold in its background,

⁵⁸ Petzold, 1986: 151.

⁵⁹ London, BL Add. MS 28815.

⁶⁰ Rome, Bibl. Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. lat. 5974; see Folda, 1995: 337.

and it is tempting to believe the artist became aware of the Lambeth Master's new use of gold leaf a short distance away at St Augustine's. The round body of the 'P' is filled with a field of plain gold behind the figure of Paul. The rather rough and granular gold paint has been smoothly applied and brightly polished so that on first impression it seems to be thick gold leaf, but there are what appear to be smoothing brushstrokes visible near Paul's head (probably not burnishing marks). Furthermore, it was applied after the colours, and it appears that a large blob of gold paint fell from the brush on to the upright of the initial and was quickly wiped off, leaving a pale and slightly creamy, glittery stain on the surface, and a darker mark on the reverse where its glue or glair stained the colours and vellum. As this artist is also known to have used gold leaf in other New Testament initials, it may be that for this unusually large area of gold he decided to use paint, or perhaps both.

3:5 INCISED GOLD

The broader fields of gold encouraged artists to decorate the surface with engraved or incised patterns or images; this probably originated in Byzantine art of the tenth century. Amongst the earliest extant examples is a Greek Gospel manuscript now in the Biblioteca Estense in Modena (Fig. 190).⁶¹ Containing very sophisticated evangelist portraits it was possibly produced at a court scriptorium in Constantinople. On folio 11v, behind a framed portrait of a seated St Matthew, is a background of burnished gold which Whitley has suggested is gold leaf.⁶² Drawings of church buildings and architectural motifs are incised freehand into the gold above the evangelist, and a series of decorative arches and panels behind him, some of which contains dots impressed with a blunt tool. Where the gold is worn quite a strong brick red is visible beneath, similar to that used in some later Western manuscripts. Another very similar example is

⁶¹ Modena, Biblioteca Estense Cod. Gr. 1.

⁶² Whitley, 2000: 164.

a tenth-century Byzantine manuscript now in the Bodleian Library,⁶³ whose illumination was described by Pächt:

In certain 10th-century examples we observe the survival of the illusionistic style of Late Antique art in the broad painterly treatment of the form... and above all in the architectural settings formed by Hellenistic porticos which are sometimes only engraved on the gold ground in delicate lines and remind us of the vistas of 'Pompeian' landscape painting.⁶⁴

Behind the seated St Matthew is a scored or incised drawing of porticos and other architectural features (Fig. 191). Another example, from a tenth-century Greek gospel book,⁶⁵ shows the figure of John the Evangelist seated at his desk; behind him is a polished gold background with incised images of buildings and a round tower (Fig. 192).

On folio 245v of the Bury Bible, a soldier wears a golden helmet which is scored with cross-hatched decoration; this seems to be the only example in the Bible. On the other hand, the Entangled Figures Master used incised decoration in gold as a major part of his decorative language, and if he was working on the first volume of the Auct. Bible as early as the 1140s, as suggested by Thomson,⁶⁶ he was probably amongst the first artists in England to do so. His work is characterized by a confident freehand drawing style dominated by line and decorative linear detail. The backgrounds of his initials are generally filled with coloured washes of varying strength, and these and the vine scrolls, blossoms and creatures within the initials are decorated with an astonishing variety of ring and dot patterns, foliate and organic forms, hatching, cross-hatching, and ribbons or strips of diaper pattern, all drawn freehand in various colours (Fig. 193). The same repertoire of decorative motifs and patterns is used in the smaller arabesque initials (Fig. 194), and also on the gold leaf, where freely drawn organic motifs, abstract ring and dot patterns, and geometric lozenge shapes were incised with a fine point. Blue or white

⁶³ Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Cromwell 16.

⁶⁴ Pächt, 1952: 4.

⁶⁵ Rome, Biblioteca Vaticana MS Vat. gr. 364.

⁶⁶ Thomson, 1982, I: 35.

touches of paint were added to the details of some of the shapes to enhance the ornamentation further, perhaps in imitation of coloured enamels on metalwork.

The most spectacular example is the decorated gold of the Hosea initial (Fig. 195). Oakeshott believed that the gold in this initial, and in others, was marked with a punch ornament made with a tool that had “a small metal head with a recessed design, like a bookbinder’s tool”.⁶⁷ Examination was unable to confirm that such a punch was used on the thin and flat gold leaf; also, as both Frinta and Whitley pointed out, artists as a general rule did not make use of gold tooling of this sort in manuscript illumination until the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and only with gold on gesso.⁶⁸

Many other shallow marks were observed (Fig. 196), some of which were impressed dots made with a simple single pointed tool, or dots within rings. The tiny rings, often in groups of three, appear to have been drawn carefully with great patience; they are irregular, and although these and other motifs were repeated often, observation suggests they were drawn freehand with a point rather than made with a ring punch; certainly none caught the light as punched marks might have done, even on thin, flat leaf. The artist used the same ring motif, drawn in thin white paint and a fine pen, to decorate his colours, so it would seem a normal thing for him to do on the gold.

Other initials whose broad areas of gold were decorated in this way include the Daniel prologue initial (Figs 197-198), and the initial ‘H’ to Jerome’s translation of Job from the Septuagint (Fig. 199), where, amongst the rings, dots and crosses, lightly drawn lozenge shapes decorated with curved trefoils at each corner can be seen in the long upright of the initial (Fig. 200).

Many small lobed crosses, made of four dots joined by fine lines, can be seen incised into the gold of many initials (Figs 201-202). Like the three-ring motif, white

⁶⁷ Oakeshott, 1981: 39.

⁶⁸ Frinta, 1975, 252-53; Whitley, 2000: 165.

versions of the cross were used on the coloured parts of the initials. The incised crosses are the most regular and punch-like motif of all those used in the Bible.

Simple crosses such as these can be seen on the metalwork of the period. Described as “lobed quatrefoils” by Neil Stratford, they were “a leitmotif of English Romanesque metalwork”.⁶⁹ Some were engraved on the handle of one of the mid-twelfth-century Iona Spoons (Fig. 203), now in Edinburgh.⁷⁰ Other recognizable motifs are also evident on the spoon: the crosses are set into a long diaper ribbon or panel, engraved into its handle, and this framed diaper strip is very similar to those used in initials in the Bible, especially those to Haggai (Fig. 204), and Zachariah (Fig. 205), both nearly a full column in length, and of similar shape to the spoon handle (Fig. 206). The same motifs can be seen painted in coloured inks on a text initial to II Samuel (II Kings) (Figs 207-208). In the second volume of the Dover Bible the long thin initial to Esther has a very similar pattern in crimson and scarlet, with a bright blue quatrefoil motif (Fig. 209).

A small English silver flask made between 1120 and 1150, now at St-Maurice d’Agaune, is decorated with designs inlaid with niello (Fig. 210), including dragons, plant scroll, basic tri-foliolate forms, cross-hatched petals, rings and dots (Fig. 211), very similar to those used in the Auct. Bible. Stratford has described the decoration of the flask as typical of English art:

...these flowers are tri-foliolate, breaking out of a central clasp or button. The dragons belong to the world of English pen-initials, particularly in Canterbury and Rochester manuscripts of *c.* 1120, where the bodies of the beasts are often decorated with the same hatched and dotted patterns...Even the little ‘key’ or meander patterns on the neck of the bottle have close parallels in English manuscript borders of this period.⁷¹

It seems reasonable to assume that the Entangled Figures Master, who was so interested in surface decoration, was aware of such metalworking techniques, and inspired by them. If, as Oakeshott suggested, he was trained at, or worked at, St Albans he might

⁶⁹ Stratford, 1986: 30.

⁷⁰ Stratford, 1986: 30.

⁷¹ Stratford, 1986: 31.

easily have developed an interest in engraving and other decorative processes because there was a noted goldsmith's workshop at the abbey during the twelfth century;⁷² indeed, by the third quarter of the century it was the "premier abbey in England for the production of fine metalwork".⁷³ One contemporary goldsmith was Master John, working for Abbott Simon after 1167, was prominent enough to be described by Matthew Paris as *aurifaber incomparabilis*,⁷⁴ and who famously made the cover of St Alban's shrine in silver and gold, decorated with gemstones.⁷⁵

However, it is also recorded that in 1148 the most numerous group of craftsmen holding properties in Winchester were goldsmiths,⁷⁶ many of whom may have been encouraged to set up their businesses close to the cathedral by the bishop, Henry of Blois.⁷⁷ Most of their trade was probably in the production and sale of jewellery, and perhaps cutting dies for seals, and other fine metalwork for the bishop's courtly circle;⁷⁸ while he was working at Winchester the artist would certainly have had opportunity to observe their decorative techniques. Also, he would have been aware of the creative achievements of metalworkers and goldsmiths in the cathedral itself, driven by the lavish patronage of bishop Henry,⁷⁹ who generously supported a "long list of monks and scribes and artists and craftsmen and masons".⁸⁰ At Bury, when work was restarted on the canopy for St Edmund's shrine, the monastery church rang loud to the sound of goldsmiths hammering on sheets of silver and gold,⁸¹ so other interested artists would hardly have been able to ignore the new metalwork and its decoration.

⁷² Campbell, 1991: 120.

⁷³ Geddes, 1986: 262.

⁷⁴ Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: Nicholas of St Albans, <http://www.oxforddnb.com>.

⁷⁵ Thomson, 1982, I: 51-52; Roberts, 1993: 114-15.

⁷⁶ Campbell, 1991: 146.

⁷⁷ Riall, 1994: 19.

⁷⁸ Biddle and Keene, 1976: 439.

⁷⁹ Donovan, 1993: 13-15.

⁸⁰ Brooke, 1986: 5.

⁸¹ *Cronica* (ed. and trans. Butler, 1949: 97).

The innovative way gold was used in the Auct. Bible is in contrast to the very minimal use of incised decoration in both the Lambeth Bible and the two volumes of the Dover Bible, made at Canterbury. In Lambeth it is hardly worth mentioning, just a few incised rings on the *Desiderii Mei* initial, and lines of dots, some in zig-zag pattern, on the bar of the initial 'E' to III Kings (Fig. 212), and in the king's crown and right hand upright of the 'V' forming the throne in the Isaiah initial (Fig. 213). Occasionally the artist decorated the gold with very small coloured rings, as on the initial to Deuteronomy on folio 88r.

In the Dover Bible the gold is generally undecorated, but in the first volume a few initials to the books of the Minor Prophets have simple hatched patterns scored onto panels of gold in the uprights of the letters. On the Zephaniah initial (Figs 214-215) the triangles of gold in the uprights of the initial 'V' are carefully scored with a cross-hatched pattern that catches the light dramatically because it was done with a broad pointed tool on the thick gold; it was done carefully with the aid of a straight edge and the gold was not torn or ripped. Other initials decorated this way include Nahum (Fig. 216), Micah (Figs 217-218), and Habakkuk. In the long letter 'I' of Zachariah, the four gold panels are cross-hatched, and the central roundel has radiating lines.

It seems likely that all the incised hatching and cross-hatching were part of the original decoration; the gold is bright and shiny on the initials, which are themselves in good condition. The use of incised hatching and cross-hatching was common on metalwork at the time the Dover Bible was being produced; the cross-hatched triangles replicate exactly the incised decoration around the foot of Archbishop Hubert Walter's chalice (Figs 219 and 220), possibly made in England *c.* 1160,⁸² and closely dated to the Dover Bible.

⁸² Stratford, 1982: 90.

There is virtually no incised gold in volume two; however, it contains two initials where the images on the gold, drawn with pen and black ink, seem to imitate very closely the decoration of metalwork, as pointed out by Dodwell,⁸³ and especially the effect of niello inlay. The initial 'C' to II Chronicles has an oval shape of flat smooth gold at its centre, like a metal plate of brass fixed onto the surface (Fig. 175), and which has what look like imitation pin heads as though it were nailed on to a wooden support, like the panels of a reliquary. It was carefully decorated in black ink with a symmetric plant form and blossom which looks hard and metallic against the gold. The surface does not appear to be scored.

As already noted, niello was probably in general use in twelfth-century England to decorate a wide range of secular objects, as well as articles made for the church. When polished and clean the niello of engraved designs look black against the silver, very like the black on gold in this Dover Bible initial. The initial has affinities with the Cologne precentor's staff for example (Fig. 332), and when the initial is rotated (Fig. 221), the similarities with the niello decoration of a late twelfth-century bowl of a cup made in England, or perhaps Scandinavia,⁸⁴ are clear (Fig. 222).

In the initial to the second epistle of St John (Fig. 176), a gilded scroll with complex blossoms fills the background behind the body of the blue initial 'S'. It is formed with dense and smooth gold which could almost be gold leaf rather than paint, but was applied after the colour, and under the magnifier looks slightly grainy. The gold is highlighted with a dull, pale grey-ochre line here and there. The pen-work decoration this time seems to be deliberately scored, and in places with very little ink on the thin pen. Much of the remaining black ink has since worn off, creating the impression that the artist saw something interesting happening with the incised lines made in the gold

⁸³ Dodwell, 1954: 57.

⁸⁴ <http://www.metmuseum.org>.

with a dry pen, similar in some ways to the freely hatched forms in the first volume of the Auct. Bible.

Apart from these examples, the only incised decoration observed in the second volume of the Dover Bible was on folio 134r, in the initial to Judith, where the gold panels of the right-hand upright have been decorated with a pattern of rings, drawn freehand very carefully with a sharp point (Figs 223-224).

In the extensive backgrounds of the miniatures of the Hunterian Psalter gold leaf was laid onto a prepared gesso ground which stands slightly proud of the page surface. The gold was then burnished to a bright finish and decorative patterns inscribed with a thin pointed tool:

The incised backgrounds of burnished gold leaf over gesso are the earliest English manifestations of this decorative technique. A complicated procedure copied from Continental work, the incised patterns are different on each page.⁸⁵

Both the gesso and gold of the miniatures were somewhat damaged in this process when the tool accidentally scratched through the surface, and consequently much of the visible damage follows the pattern of the incised lines. Damage has occurred on most folios, and the pink of the gesso is often visible where the point has scored through the gold leaf. Examples are the initial and roundel on folio 3v, where the pink gesso is visible through the scratched gold leaf (Figs 225-226). On the gold of the miniatures each incised pattern is different, and is drawn freehand, though with careful control (Figs 227-228). The diaper and checkerboard patterns, and others with straight lines, were made using a straight edge, but not measured carefully, so the spacing is irregular as befits the light creative delicacy of the drawing. The miniatures were originally glued back-to-back to stiffen the support, but were separated at some time, and there may be some missing. The damage due to the scoring of the pattern is visible on folio 9v (Fig.

⁸⁵ Book of the Month Page, May 2007, Hunterian Museum, University of Glasgow: <http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk/exhibns/month/may2007.html>.

229), as is some later vandalism, but the splitting of the folios may have contributed to the damage. The gold in the Psalm initials is decorated in the same way (Fig. 230), but is much less damaged generally, and looks solid and stable (Fig. 231).

As noted above, the main artist of the Psalter, Stirnemann's "itinerant artist", also worked in France where he was responsible for the illuminations in a number of books, including a copy of Peter Lombard's *Sentences*; it contains a portrait of the author writing, with freehand patterns on gold leaf behind (Fig. 232), with incised patterns very characteristic of his work in England (Fig. 233). The manuscript is dated by colophon to 1158, made at Saint-Victor in Paris.⁸⁶ He may also have been responsible for the incised decoration of the gold in the *Beatus* initial of the Copenhagen Psalter (Fig. 234).

Two other northern psalters, the Gough Psalter mentioned previously, and Douce 293,⁸⁷ a psalter now in the Bodleian, contain only minimal decoration in the form of simple punched dots in their *Beatus* initials (Fig. 235); in the Gough Psalter, the star at the Nativity is stippled with punched dots and the crib with a line of small rings. In Douce 293, lines, dots and rings in white paint are also used on the gold. The *Laud Bible* also contains very minimal decoration in the form of punched dots on the 'H' of *Genesis*; there may be others not noticed.

The gold leaf in the *Winchester Bible* has been described by Donovan as "burnished, tooled and engraved",⁸⁸ but she did not specify where these decorative techniques might be observed; incised or engraved lines are not visible even in the best of reproductions. However, the gold leaf backgrounds of the later initials, laid onto gesso, are often decorated with lines of single punched dots around the edges; also, clusters of individually punched dots, in twos, threes and fours, are scattered thinly over

⁸⁶ Stirnemann, 1999: 71.

⁸⁷ Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Douce 293.

⁸⁸ Donovan, 2008: 68.

the surfaces (Fig. 236). Punched marks of this type were better suited to gold on gesso than flat gold on vellum, because greater depth could be achieved.

It has been thought that such punched decoration in gesso and gold in French and English manuscripts of the late twelfth century might indicate Byzantine influence;⁸⁹ such techniques might easily have been seen in Italy, on gessoed panel paintings. While this is probably true, at Winchester it seems also likely that the technique of punching the gold with dots was borrowed very directly from goldsmiths.

SUMMARY

The artists of Insular manuscripts tended to use gold minimally.⁹⁰ However, in later Anglo-Saxon manuscripts like the *Benedictional of St Æthelwold*, made at Winchester, gold was used extensively, and became an important element of decoration in English manuscripts, and continued to be so throughout the twelfth century.

It was noted that artists in several instances seemed to have used painted gold and gold leaf on the same illuminations. This may have been a more common method than previously believed, but further investigation is required to confirm how widespread the practice was, and whether the two types of gold were indeed used one above the other, as this author suspects.

To satisfy the desire for more highly reflective gold surfaces, gold leaf came to replace the more granular gold paint. Small pieces, usually about one inch in length for larger spaces, and some often less than half an inch, were laid in two or three layers, like a patchwork quilt, with the subsequent layers covering the gaps. If the leaf was thin it often looked grainy when burnished, due to the surface beneath, and in some manuscripts there was hardly any difference between painted gold and leaf. Also, the use of gold, glue and glair on the best white vellum often resulted in dark and greasy

⁸⁹ Frinta, 1975: 252.

⁹⁰ Alexander, 1975: 148.

show-through that was not only unsightly, but often interfered with imagery and text on the reverse of folios.

To counteract these effects artists introduced the use of slightly raised and opaque gesso grounds, which could be smoothed to a flawless finish before the gold was applied. Once laid onto the gesso, the leaf was highly polished to achieve as reflective a surface as possible. This was more efficient in two ways: it enabled the best craftsmen to use fewer layers of thinner gold to greater effect, and also prevented staining and show-through.

During the twelfth century Winchester reclaimed its place as the most innovative of centres, where artists developed new ways to apply and decorate gold, encouraged by the patronage of the bishop.⁹¹ This was probably driven to some extent by the artists' knowledge of mosaic gold, and decorative techniques used by goldsmiths in and around the cathedral. The two great Winchester Bibles exemplify the advances made. However, it should not be forgotten that at least one of the artists of the Hunterian Psalter, working in the north of England, was also using decorated gold on gesso in a new way.

There were physical and visual consequences of this inventive activity. Gesso enhanced the beauty of gold, but also added weight, and was not very flexible. Because manuscript pages became increasingly large, both paint and gold were at risk of damage due to the natural flexibility of the vellum. This caused artists to think about how best to support their illuminations, and this led in some cases to the use of heavier and thicker vellum leaves, an ancient method, or doubled and patched leaves for the illuminated pages. These issues are discussed in the next chapter.

⁹¹ See below pp. 276-77.

CHAPTER FOUR

VELLUM

PREFACE

The use of doubled vellum leaves and patches has received only passing comment in the scholarship, with few explanations offered about their function. Alexander usefully listed the manuscripts, up to the fifteenth century, which had been found to have patches,¹ and hinted in explanation that the main reason for their use was the artists' concern for the quality of the surface.² Heslop suggested that the artist and scribe carefully planned the use of patches in the Bury Bible to avoid disruption in their work,³ but Thomson believed that the avoidance of show-through was the main reason.⁴

Although she did not mention the use of vellum patches, Kathleen Whitely seems to be alone in stressing the importance of structural stability:

The materials that comprised the book had to be durable and sufficiently rigid to support the gilding and illustration without having the gold, ink and paint flaking off.⁵

The following chapter adds to the current literature by emphasizing in a clearer way the delicate inter-dependency of paint, gold and vellum, and by highlighting the growing importance of the vellum support during a period when the weight of paint, gesso and gold, used on increasingly large illuminations, threatened the stability of the materials. The use of fine silk curtains, placed over the images to protect the colours and

¹ Alexander, 1992: 158 n12.

² Alexander, 1992: 35.

³ See below, pp. 181-82.

⁴ Thomson, 2001: 26.

⁵ Whitely, 2000: 3.

gold, is discussed in the light of comments made by Alexander, and more recently by Geddes, Sciacca, and Kidd.⁶

4:1 LEAVES

M. R. James (1912) noted that the vellum used in the Gospels of St Augustine was of very unequal quality, and that “ink has disappeared in a good many places from the thinner sheets”.⁷ This observation highlights the critical relationship between the vellum and the media used on its surface, a relationship which seems to have caused some concern to artists during the twelfth century. Thin vellum was of little use in the large, lavishly illuminated books made during the period, and some artists turned their attention to how their paintings might be better supported.

Although documentary evidence for the function of doubled leaves is unavailable, their use seems to be directly related to the fully coloured painting style seen at St Albans and elsewhere. It has been shown that while working on the St Albans Psalter miniatures the Alexis Master encountered problems: the gold and saturated washes of colour tended to soak into the surface of the vellum and stain it, seeping through to the reverse. In a similar way, the greasy binders and glues, like egg white and glue size used with colours and gold, showed through as dark stains if used too enthusiastically. These effects were to some degree unavoidable in Anglo-Norman line and wash illumination, but acceptable because the materials were generally used delicately and minimally, but with the full palette of strong colours used by the Alexis Master they were more disruptive. In *c.* 1130 the miniatures in the Life of St Edmund were painted on doubled vellum by the Alexis Master, and it is possible to infer from this that he chose to use doubled vellum to prevent any similar problems.

⁶ Alexander, 1992; Geddes, 2003; Sciacca, 2007; Kidd, 2008.

⁷ James, 1912: 53.

However, another technical implication was that opaque body colour remained on the surface of the vellum to a greater degree than thin washes of colour, which tended to soak in. Consequently the thicker paint was subject to the tendency of vellum surfaces to flex, which might cause it to crack and flake when being stretched or compressed as the pages were turned during repeated use. Artists came to realise that doubled leaves would not only prevent or reduce the effects of show-through, but would stiffen the support for the thicker and less flexible body colour and gold. This seems a reasonable supposition considering that some of the materials used for the illuminations were more precious and expensive than the vellum itself, and of greater rarity.⁸

The leaves of the Winchester Psalter miniatures are fairly thin,⁹ and were probably originally doubled by being glued back to back.¹⁰ They were peeled apart in the nineteenth century, and are now glued onto vellum frames as thirty-eight single leaf rectos. Although the painting style of the miniatures is linear, dependent upon its line rather than colour, there is evidence of opaque paint on many leaves,¹¹ suggesting that possibly the intention was, at some time, to use more opaque colour than is evident today.

The stability of the surface was even more important when extensive areas of gesso and gold leaf were used. The leaves of the Hunterian Psalter, made of heavy calf vellum,¹² may also originally have been doubled, and later separated in the same way as those in the Winchester Psalter. The split bi-folios are now bound so that the miniatures are sometimes seen singly, sometimes in openings. The sequence begins with folios 7v and 8r, which are followed by the blank stripped folios 8v and 9r, whose surfaces are fairly rough, with characteristic furrowed areas of glue still visible. As a result of this

⁸ Oakeshott, 1981: 3.

⁹ Haney, 1986: 1.

¹⁰ Witzling, 1978: 30.

¹¹ Haney, 1986: 12-13, and 132.

¹² Gardham, Book of the Month Page, May 2007, Hunterian Museum, University of Glasgow: <http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk/exhibns/month/may2007.html>.

process some miniatures may have been lost, and the original sequence of scenes is not known; some of the leaves have reacted so badly to being separated they have become permanently curved due to the different tensions on their surfaces. The paint, gesso and gold on the surface of folio 7v, for example has been stretched on the curved convex surface, and the gesso has crumbled here and there (Fig. 237), evidence of the precarious nature of the relationship between the media and vellum surface. None of the leaves is now as stiff and flat as those in the Bury Bible or the Morgan St Edmund, but certainly would have been before being peeled apart.

Another solution was to use thicker leaves for illuminations. In the psalter Douce 293 (Fig. 127), sixteen prefatory miniatures were painted back-to-back on stiff very thick vellum leaves much thicker and stiffer than the other folios, while the calendar leaves for example, are noticeably very thin, with obvious show-through of green and red from the coloured lettering. In the same way, Morgan MS M. 44, painted at Limoges or Corbie in about 1175 and probably once part of a psalter (Fig. 238), has thirty full-page miniatures with heavy burnished gold backgrounds painted back-to-back on sixteen folios of “heavy vellum”.¹³

In the twelfth-century *Imago Mundi*,¹⁴ now in the Parker Library, the map on page 2 is painted on the verso of a doubled leaf; damage at the top left corner reveals two thin leaves pasted together (Fig. 239). This doubled folio is quite stiff and unbending, and also grubby. Interestingly another leaf, paginated 65/66, which has a large miniature of two crowned female figures, in opaque body colour on page 66, is a thick single leaf, not doubled, with only very minimal show-through on its reverse. Many of the quires have thicker outer bi-folios, and the three full-page miniatures are painted on the thicker folios at the beginning of quires.

¹³ MS M. 44 Corsair manuscript description, p. 1: <http://utu.morganlibrary.org/>.

¹⁴ CCCC MS 66.

The use of thick or doubled vellum has a long history, beginning much earlier than the mid-twelfth century, and is always associated with manuscripts illuminated in rich, painterly colour and/or areas of gold. In a Gospel manuscript made by the Gregory Master, probably after 996 at Trier,¹⁵ the illuminations were painted in a mixture of rich saturated washes, painted gold and opaque body-colour. Folios 16 and 17 containing a full-page decorated letter, *Liber Generationis* (Fig. 240), and a list of ancestors' names framed in gold and green, are noticeably thicker and browner than the surrounding text leaves, which are white, soft, and very thin and floppy; these are also transparent and suffer from red show-through from the rubrications. The inner bi-folio containing folios 60 and 61, which are heavy with large gold lettering within coloured rectangles, is thicker than those carrying only text. Throughout the manuscript the outer bi-folios of each quire are also thicker than the inner bi-folios, except those that are heavily decorated. Another Rylands manuscript, the gospel lectionary produced at Prüm, is also structured in this way throughout. It seems on this evidence that Ottonian illuminators knew how to use the vellum leaves intelligently to support their work.

As well as the lack of documentary evidence for the use of vellum, contemporary sources say virtually nothing about its acquisition by English monastic houses. A letter exists from Herbert Losinga, Bishop of Norwich, to a certain Prior Hugh, probably at Thetford, begging for a supply of vellum and ink,¹⁶ and in the history of the Bury sacrists, the *Gesta Sacristarum*, a short text regarding Master Hugo and vellum has fascinated art historians:

*...qui cum non invenit in partibus nostris pelles vitulinas, in Scotie partibus parchamena comparavit.*¹⁷

This drew comment first from M. R. James:

¹⁵ Manchester, John Rylands Library MS lat. 98; Alexander, 1978: 62.

¹⁶ Gameson, 1999: 9 n48.

¹⁷ *Gesta Sacristarum* (Arnold, 1890-96 vol. 2: 290).

This passage seems to refer specially to the illuminating of the Bible in question. I interpret it thus: the latter not finding vellum to suit him in our district procured parchment from Ireland. Clearly there cannot have been any difficulty in getting good vellum to write upon in England. But the special vellum required by the painter was a superior and rarer article.¹⁸

D. V. Thompson has discussed why preferences for one type of vellum over another might be justified, describing how parchment from one area might be oilier or fattier, or whiter or smoother than parchment from somewhere else, and how it might relate to regional conditions such as the type of meat consumed by the local population.¹⁹ These varying characteristics might go some way towards explaining Hugo's choice of vellum.

Other scholars have followed James in their translations, such as Rodney Thomson:

As Hugh was unable to find any suitable vellum in these parts, he bought parchment in Scotland.²⁰

However, Christopher De Hamel has recently pointed out that Suffolk was an area of sheep farming, and that the skins of sheep would have been too small for a giant Bible. The artist therefore sent to Scotland for larger calfskins.²¹ This idea is supported by a more literal reading of the Latin text which uses the words *pelles vitulinas*, that is "calf skins":

When he [Hugh, the artist] had been unable to find any calf skins in these parts, he gathered together parchment from parts of Scotland.²²

This suggests that it was not the quality of the vellum that was the problem, but the availability of skins of the required size. This may finally explain why there was a shortage of suitable vellum in East Suffolk for the making of a large Bible.

There is evidence that other artists and monks searched far and wide for the right vellum. The twelfth-century canons of San Isidoro in Spain, are known to have looked

¹⁸ James, 1912: 3.

¹⁹ Thompson, 1956: 26-30.

²⁰ Thomson, 2001: 25.

²¹ De Hamel, 'The Giant Bibles of Twelfth-Century England', open lecture at the University of Leeds, 16th October 2012.

²² *Gesta Sacristarum* (Arnold, 1890-96 vol. 2: 290; trans. Author).

abroad to locate a supply for the León Bible, and sent a representative to France to organize the purchase.²³ In the thirteenth century the master of the monastery school at Chora in Constantinople was so concerned to get the best vellum from which to make his manuscripts that he was also prepared to search abroad. In about 1295 he wrote to a supplier in the Asian part of the empire about the need for clean vellum leaves of consistent thickness:

These must be fine, lest we in some way assemble a pot-bellied codex from a few thick leaves, but so that from many finer leaves we might make a better polished codex, as it were.²⁴

He goes on to say that the vellum should not be coated with egg white because this makes the inks of the script vulnerable if the leaves get wet or damp. He was concerned not only about having vellum of uniform thickness, but also with clean, untreated surfaces. Twelfth-century Byzantine artists appear to have been aware of the benefits of thicker vellum if used in the right place; a Greek gospel book of the late-twelfth century, in the Rylands Library,²⁵ contains portraits of the Evangelists and their symbols, which are painted on much thicker parchment than the rest of the book.²⁶

Overall, the technical problems of avoiding show-through and ensuring the permanent adherence of heavy paint and gold to the page, must have been a major concern to the artists and scribes of large English books like the great Bibles made at Bury, Canterbury and Winchester, particularly if it was intended that they should be read regularly in the chapterhouse or elsewhere, and perhaps handled in public during church ceremonial.²⁷

The leaves of such books were so large that the paint and gesso were at risk of cracking during regular and repeated use. To avoid this, the designers of the Bury Bible

²³ Cahn, 1982: 235.

²⁴ Abt and Fusco, 1989: 62.

²⁵ Manchester, John Rylands Library, MS Gr. 13.

²⁶ Alexander, 1976: 17.

²⁷ Donovan, 1993: 11.

carefully pre-planned the disposition of doubled and patched vellum throughout the volume, before any painting was done, and it is almost certain that the twelve miniatures and eighteen large initials were painted onto the patches after they were glued in,²⁸ although Cahn believed that they were painted onto the patches prior to being pasted in.²⁹

Scholars have nevertheless suggested that an aesthetic reason lay behind Hugo's decision to use patches in this way, relating to the quality of surface he wanted to paint on.³⁰ While of course this may be the case, there is no discernable difference between the vellum used for the text and that used for illuminations;³¹ it thus remains likely that it was probably the overall quality and of the sheets and the stiffer support they provided that concerned him.

The extant doubled leaves are not only thick, they are also very stiff and unbending, in great contrast to the soft and supple single leaves of text, most of which naturally flop and bend as they are turned. It was also observed that the folios onto which the larger patches of vellum were glued, or doubled, were thicker than the average leaf. For example the lower two thirds of folio 32v is blank where a pasted miniature has been peeled away, and the leaf looks and feels thicker than average, even taking into account that a dry residue of glue may remain, stiffening it.

Several large initials and miniatures were painted on pieces of vellum as large as the original leaf, and pasted as close to the spine of the gatherings as possible, some even into the gutter, stiffening the vellum in the critical area, and reducing surface flexing when the page was turned.³²

²⁸ Heslop, 1998b: 173.

²⁹ Cahn, 1982: 242.

³⁰ Parker McLachlan, 1981: 105; De Hamel, 1986: 86 and 89; Thomson, 2001: 26.

³¹ Heslop, 1998b: 173.

³² Thomson, 2001: 6. See ff. 1v, 7r, 70r, 94r, and 147v.

This is certainly the case with folio 70, containing the miniature to Numbers, which is so stiff and inflexible that it hardly bends at all as it is turned, and virtually stands upright without support like a piece of stiff card. Another reason may also account for this. It has been suggested that Hugo was aware of wall painting techniques from time spent in Cyprus or Greece; perhaps he also knew something about panel painting. Small portable icons were often painted on thin wooden panels, and many were smaller than his large monumental paintings in the Bible. If he did travel, he must have come across icons of this type; he may even have been a panel painter himself, and the stiffened folios on which he painted in the Bury Bible could reflect this experience. As noted above, knowledge of panel painting might also account for the use of gesso grounds and gold leaf a few years later at Winchester.

In about 1200, the Aberdeen Bestiary, a manuscript probably made in the north of England, was decorated with quite small but very luxurious illustrations in body colour, pink gesso, and gold leaf (Fig. 1). Some of the images in the Bestiary were pricked so that they could be traced onto other leaves using the pouncing method; as noted by Geddes, this was “a convenient way to duplicate images in a scriptorium where many similar copies of a book were required”.³³ The pricking was normally done at the drawing stage, in order to avoid damage to any images planned to be painted on the reverse. Two folios were designed to be doubled, folios 3 and 56, both of which had been pricked on the rectos for pouncing. The first, folio 3 with the Creation of Eve on the recto and Christ in Majesty on the verso, was doubled probably to support and protect the sumptuously rich and heavy full-page miniature of Christ, with its large expanses of heavy paint, gesso and gold; the pricking was hidden when the leaves were pasted together. For some reason however, the two leaves of folio 3 were not glued together, leaving the folios 3v and 4r blank.

³³ Geddes, in ‘Codicology’, Aberdeen Bestiary Project at www.abdn.ac.uk.

The same two images in the Creation cycle in the Ashmole Bestiary,³⁴ seen as a sister manuscript to the Aberdeen Bestiary, on folio 7, were also designed to be glued together, indicative of a similar concern about the damage to larger and more heavily painted full-page images, and suggestive of mutual planned workshop practice; indeed, like the two images in the Aberdeen Bestiary, they were also left separated and blank.

Doubling of the leaves was unusual; the vast majority of illuminations in the Lambeth, Auct., and Laud Bibles are on normal, single sheet folios, with no patches, and have survived perfectly well. However, in the Dover Bible, because of the variable quality of the generally thin and floppy vellum, the heavily illuminated surfaces are cracked and flaked in places, especially in the first volume, and have not lasted so well as those in the much more heavily painted Bury Bible. There is some attempt to use thicker leaves for the outer bi-folios of gatherings, but it is not consistent, and some heavy illuminations are on thin vellum while some text pages are quite thick. There is much show through in both volumes, especially from the small red and green initials in the text and rubrications.

The Winchester Bible also has no doubled vellum or patches, even though there is rich opaque colour and gold leaf on gesso grounds. The makers must have been satisfied that the thickness of the vellum was sufficient; it was of very good quality, “remarkably even and smooth in texture for pages so big”.³⁵

4:2 PATCHES

The use of vellum patches already had a long history. The Carolingian artists who worked on the very large San Paolo Bible,³⁶ made at Rheims in about 900, used vellum patches to support their illuminations and avoid the problems associated with rich

³⁴ Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 1511.

³⁵ Donovan, 1993: 5.

³⁶ Rome, San Paolo Fuori le Mura MS f. 1. m. 337.

colour on large leaves. Beckwith suggested that twenty-four full-page miniatures (Fig. 342) and the large initials and incipits of this manuscript were painted on patches before being pasted in.³⁷ However, it should be noted here that not all patches were applied for this reason. An example is the small patch on page 285 of the St Albans Psalter, which was probably stuck over an erased initial simply to provide a clean and even surface for the new illumination.³⁸ In other books many patches were applied to cover holes in the vellum, or for repair like the small patch on folio 322r of the Bury Bible.

The Mostyn Gospels,³⁹ made in England and dated to *c.* 1120-30, were written on “heavy vellum” leaves,⁴⁰ and contain four large miniatures of the Evangelists, seated upon their symbols (Fig. 241), each painted on a patch of vellum. Kauffmann described the Luke miniature as “one of four such Evangelist portraits in the manuscript, all of them painted on separate sheets of vellum and pasted on”.⁴¹ The leaves are about the same size as those of the Alexis Master in the St Albans Psalter and the Morgan Life of Edmund, and roughly contemporary in date. The paint surfaces of such quite small books were less at risk of cracking because the leaves were less inclined to bend under their own weight; nevertheless they could be doubled if necessary to stiffen them as well as to avoid show-through. In the Bury Bible, so large and so expansively illuminated, localised patches were used in conjunction with doubled leaves.

It should be remembered that Master Hugo probably knew of the doubled vellum leaves of the St Edmund miniatures; he may have used this knowledge to plan that most of the large initials in the Bible not painted on patches were on leaves which were already doubled by having miniatures on separate pieces pasted to the other side.⁴² This sophistication of technique is a sign that some artists not only knew about the

³⁷ Beckwith, 1964: 52.

³⁸ Kidd, 2008: 104-106.

³⁹ New York, Morgan Library MS M. 777.

⁴⁰ MS M. 777 Corsair manuscript description, p. 1, at <http://utu.morganlibrary.org/>.

⁴¹ Kauffmann, 1984: 97.

⁴² Thomson, 2001: 6.

importance of stiffening the page, but also took it into account at the planning stage, locating patches functionally and economically. Heslop has suggested that this was done quite deliberately to aid both the illuminator and the scribe:

It may well be, then, that in the case of the Bury Bible both pre-planning and pasting were strategies designed to enable the illuminator to work through much of the book at his own speed without disrupting or interrupting the work of the scribe.⁴³

However, this seems to be a small return for such a major investment of time, skill and material, and the long-term preservation of the manuscript was probably the true purpose.

Not only was the doubling of the vellum well planned, it was also accomplished in a skilful, and subtle manner. The edges of the patched initial 'D' to Jerome's prologue to the Pentateuch, on folio 5v, are hardly discernable and might easily be missed if not looked for (Fig. 242). The patch is thin and the edges have been chamfered and smoothed before any paint or gold was applied.

In the Lambeth Bible two full-page miniatures were painted on patches virtually the same size as the folios onto which they were pasted: the very large full-page Genesis miniature on folio 6r, and the Isaiah miniature on folio 198r. The Genesis miniature is back-to-back with the long Genesis initial on the verso of folio 6, where the slightly loose and ragged edges of the two pieces are more apparent on the verso, to the left of the Genesis initial. The doubled leaf of folio 6 is therefore very stiff. There is some show-through from the greens in the initial onto the lower right of the miniature, despite the doubled leaves.

Dodwell, followed by Shepard, thought that the two miniatures had been painted on detached leaves before they were pasted onto the blank side of the relevant folios of text.⁴⁴ Shepard cited the pricking as evidence for this:

⁴³ Heslop, 1998b: 173.

⁴⁴ Dodwell, 1959: 20 and 26; Shepard, 2007: 28.

The pricking holes for ruling to aid copying of the text on the reverse of these miniatures do not appear on the miniatures themselves. This serves as confirmation that the pictures were painted on separate sheets before being pasted onto the folio.⁴⁵

However, this only confirms that the leaves were pasted together after the pricking; it does not demonstrate that the miniatures were painted before they were attached. In fact it is much more likely that the miniatures were painted after the patches were pasted in, which seems to have been already part of the established practice at Bury St Edmunds and St Albans for a decade or so before the Lambeth Bible was made. It is inconceivable, for instance, that the St Edmund miniatures were painted before the leaves were glued together; such a process would have negated the original purpose of preserving the media on the surface. Alexander has pointed out how difficult it is to control damp parchment “and consequently on the technical skill needed to insert such pieces of parchment”.⁴⁶ The pasting in of large painted patches would therefore threaten the stability of any text already written and images already painted by reintroducing moisture, in the form of glue, to dry folios.⁴⁷ The scale of the Lambeth Bible patches would have made it an awkward task at the best of times, and potentially one of great difficulty, to be avoided if possible.

Towards the end of the century it was still current practice to double the vellum with patches, and in the large Lothian Bible made after 1200 at St Albans or perhaps Oxford,⁴⁸ many initials both small and large were painted on patches that were thinner and smoother than the vellum used in the manuscript itself.⁴⁹ An attempt was made at some point to remove the patched initial to Ezra from folio 131v, but it tore badly as it was pulled off (Fig. 243).

⁴⁵ Shepard, 2007: 237 n25.

⁴⁶ Alexander, 1992: 158 n12.

⁴⁷ Heslop, 1998b: 173.

⁴⁸ New York, Morgan Library MS M. 791.

⁴⁹ MS M. 791 Corsair manuscript description, p. 5: <http://utu.morganlibrary.org/>.

The small Yates Thompson illustrated Life of St Cuthbert produced late in the century at Durham was painted with scenes in opaque body colour against background panels of gold, and each of the fifty miniatures was painted on a patch of pasted vellum, in an arrangement that included individual miniatures dispersed throughout the body of the text. On folio 9r a miniature has been peeled off from the scene of the Angel and Cuthbert's Knee, leaving behind some of the gold leaf frame, and the rear of the Angel's horse where it had been painted protruding into the left-hand border of the page (Fig. 244).

Abbot Simon's Bible, from St Albans, has a large initial 'I' to Genesis which runs from top to bottom of the outer column, of three, almost to the edges of the leaf (Fig. 245). It is painted onto a carefully-shaped patch of vellum, in opaque transitional colours such as deep pastel shades of brick red, greyish blue, dark blue, pale ochre and grey, and with quite opaque flesh colours; the bright burnished gold is on a deep brick red gesso, though some smaller shapes may be laid flat to the vellum, as they are elsewhere in the manuscript. The initial feels heavy, but is stiff on the page and seems very stable. Show-through of green, red and probably glair, and the opaque shape of the patch can be seen on the reverse (Fig. 246).

4:3 SILK CURTAINS

Body-colour and gold were vulnerable, and artists made adjustments of various kinds to prevent damage. However, the owners or users of some books found another way of protecting the illuminations: they attached small curtains or veils of soft silk to the manuscript pages, covering the images to prevent abrasion. As noted by Kidd:

There was little risk of damage when the decoration consisted only of ink and thin colour washes, however, which is why curtains were not needed in either the calendar or the Alexis Quire of the Albani Psalter, and sewing-holes are not evident in those two quires.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Kidd, 2008: 75.

Keeping painted surfaces apart this way also prevented colours off-setting onto the opposite pages when the books were closed; perhaps it also prevented tacky areas of paint or painted gold sticking to each other.

Spanish and Byzantine silks were used as drapes, veils and covers for liturgical objects, altars, tombs and relics within churches.⁵¹ Such fabrics also had an important place in devotional practice and liturgical performance, and were sometimes used to cover and protect precious books.⁵² It is possible therefore, that, in addition to providing protection to the illuminations, small pieces of silk used to cover images were also associated with devotional acts of veiling and revealing. Some readers may have made personal choices about which images to cover in this way, as is apparent in the St Albans Psalter:

Whoever sewed them on made a conscious selection of images which were considered especially important. Some curtains were neatly stitched to the blank margins but in many cases the stitches are immediately adjacent to the initial, pricking through the text itself. This indicates that the sewer valued the pictures far above the text because in these examples the text would be hard to read.⁵³

Such curtains were common in luxury illuminated manuscripts until at least the thirteenth century, and especially in books used for both public and private devotional purposes, like psalters.⁵⁴ Although they survive in many medieval manuscripts from different regions,⁵⁵ it has been suggested that their use was most extensive in thirteenth-century Germany.⁵⁶ They were possibly part of the original fabric of many manuscripts,⁵⁷ and Sciacca mentions specifically the scriptorium at Weingarten, where

⁵¹ Dodwell, 1982: 149-57.

⁵² Sciacca, 2007: 161-63.

⁵³ Geddes, 'Codicology' at www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/: 2003.

⁵⁴ Sciacca, 2007: 190.

⁵⁵ Alexander, 1992: 164 n18.

⁵⁶ Sciacca, 2007: 181.

⁵⁷ Sciacca, 2007: 169.

such curtains were regularly provided in new books.⁵⁸ Whether this was a routine procedure or by request is not known. An important example is the Morgan Gradual and Sacramentary MS M. 711,⁵⁹ made at Weingarten c. 1225-50, where many silk curtains remain in place, in various bright colours including blue, yellow, crimson and pink (Fig. 247).

While most of the curtains in other manuscripts have been lost or removed, evidence for their presence can be seen in stitch marks and the remains of threads which held them in place. Amongst manuscripts made in twelfth-century England, stitch marks are evident in the Landsdowne, Hunterian and Gough Psalters,⁶⁰ as well as in the St Albans Psalter; these are all richly painted manuscripts containing miniatures and initials, and two of them have large expanses of background gold. There are also stitch holes for curtains across the tops of the Four Psalter Leaves, and in the Eadwine Psalter above the illustrations to Psalm 1 on folio 5v, and the portrait of the scribe Eadwine on folio 283v. Similarities in location and type of stitching holes is one of the reasons for associating the Four Psalter Leaves so closely with the Eadwine Psalter.⁶¹ Many of these curtains may have been sewn in shortly after the manuscripts were made, but this is not certain; it has been suggested that in the St Albans Psalter the curtains were replaced at least once, and that the first set probably dated from the twelfth century.⁶²

In the Verdun Anselm, also made at St Albans, small clusters of stitch holes are visible to the left of at least nine of the initials painted in the outer columns of verso folios (Fig. 43). Those on the rectos have no such holes, but the folios have been very severely cropped at the top, occasionally decapitating the illuminated initials, so any

⁵⁸ Sciacca, 2007: 169 n12.

⁵⁹ New York, Morgan Library MS M. 711.

⁶⁰ Heslop, 1992a: 28.

⁶¹ Heslop, 1992a: 28.

⁶² Kidd, 2008: 75.

stitch holes there may have been cropped off. The full-page miniature on folio 68v has a line of stitch holes in the top border, so was also protected in this way at some time.

In the later medieval period silk veils were probably gradually replaced by paper ones. The initial on folio 1v of the Verdun Anselm is protected today by what looks like a modern paper curtain, stuck down in the gutter to the left of the initial. In the Lambeth Bible the initial to the *Desiderii Mei* prologue, on folio 4v, is also protected by a very thin paper curtain which has become very compressed and flat, apparently undisturbed for some considerable time. It has served its purpose, for the coloured surfaces of the initial are pristine, and look so fresh they might have been painted yesterday. Peter Kidd has noted the modern use of paper in the St Albans Psalter, where traces remain on many leaves.⁶³

SUMMARY

Artists became aware that the vellum was affecting the way the materials behaved, and that thin vellum was not suitable for the new style of painting with body colour. There were times when the materials interacted strangely with each other—paint affected by gold or binders laid on its reverse, greasy show through, grains of gold passing through the pores of the vellum, and flaking paint. However, artists became aware of the problems associated with body colour and how it reacted with other materials; owners of books also saw the dangers of tacky paint surfaces which might offset onto each other and began using pieces of silk to veil the images and prevent damage.

The use of doubled vellum was introduced by St Albans artists to support the heavier media, evident today in Edmund's *libellus*. Patches were also introduced, as in the Mostyn Gospels; sometimes they were used for repair or repainting rather than for a

⁶³ Kidd, 2008: 146 n86.

structural reason. Other manuscripts, such as the Winchester Bible, did not use patches or doubled vellum, probably because of the quality of the original parchment.

Not only did such methods reduce the effects of show-through, but more importantly it provided a stiffer and more stable support. The Bury Bible is the most notable example of how and why this was done. Its monumental illuminations are heavily layered, rich in colour and gold, and supported on unbending doubled vellum and patches, and are for the most part still perfectly preserved despite heavy use by readers.⁶⁴

Artists and scribes were capable of deciding where a patch or a doubled leaf should be placed,⁶⁵ and in the Bury Bible such preparation of the leaves was meticulous: the edges of patches are chamfered smooth, doubled folios are full size and edge-to-edge, and bound into the gutters, and took into account the coloured lettering next to the illuminations.⁶⁶ It is probably no coincidence that the Bury Bible, with its very large and monumental illuminations, and the most extensive surface area of dense opaque paint and gold of any extant manuscript made during the period, has more patches and doubled vellum than any other.

⁶⁴ Thomson, 2001: 3.

⁶⁵ Heslop, 1998b: 173.

⁶⁶ Heslop, 1998b: 174.

CHAPTER FIVE

COLOUR

PREFACE

John Gage has written several studies on the perception of colour across cultures and periods, as expressed in contemporary writings.¹ His view that the medieval conception of colour was based on tonal value, or brightness, rather than hue, has been quite influential. More recently Pastoureau has provided a useful though very general introduction to the colour blue, with social, cultural and liturgical conceptions of the colour.² As the colour blue is of particular focus in this study, it is worth briefly mentioning one important area of difference between the views presented here, and those of these two authors.

Gage and Pastoureau have argued that blue was something of a non-colour during the early Middle Ages. According to Gage, the perception of colours was fluid and unstable, and only light and dark tonalities provided fixed points: “there can be no doubt” he wrote, “that, for the early Middle Ages, blue was seen as essentially akin to darkness”.³ He judged that any symbolism or iconography based on colour was therefore unlikely.⁴ This medieval view of the colour, he wrote, continued until the development of blue stained glass, first at St Denis in the 1140s, then later at Chartres. He believed that the replacement of purple by blue as the signifier or emblem of Heaven, was linked to blue’s use in stained glass.⁵ For Pastoureau also, the change in

¹ Gage, 1978, 1993 and 1999.

² Pastoureau, 2001.

³ Gage, 1999: 73.

⁴ Gage, 1978: 107.

⁵ Gage, 1999: 73.

blue's status was due to its importance as the colour of "celestial and divine light" at St Denis.⁶

However, it will be shown in this chapter that illuminators at St Albans in England were using a clear, bright blue as a heavenly colour about fifteen or twenty years before it was used in the windows at St Denis, and that this heavenly symbolism was derived from the long-standing colour symbolism established in patristic and monastic exegesis, including Jerome's very early discussions of blue, and other colours of the Tabernacle and vestments, in his letter to Fabiola. This letter was influential throughout the medieval period from Bede onwards, and it should not be surprising, therefore, that the colours of the Tabernacle—blue, purple, white (linen) and scarlet—are seen so frequently in both Anglo-Saxon and Romanesque illumination.

While there seem to be many linguistic studies into the use of medieval colour words, research into how and why colour was used in painting has been in general quite rare.⁷ The work of Bolman and James,⁸ under the influence of Gage, has been described as "borrowing heavily from the methodologies of anthropology, archaeology, literature, and linguistics".⁹ Like Gage, they both suggested that tonal value, and the effects of light, were more significant to medieval artists and viewers than colour or hue.

Pulliam has recently suggested that there has there been little modern appreciation of the colour used in Insular manuscripts.¹⁰ She has therefore begun a wide study on colour in Insular art,¹¹ beginning with a thorough analysis of colour meanings on several pages of the Book of Kells. In particular she has attempted to incorporate colour into a study of the iconography of two illuminated pages in the Book of Kells.¹² This is an aim

⁶ Pastoureau, 2001: 44.

⁷ Gage, 1978: 105-107.

⁸ James, 1996; Bolman, 1999.

⁹ Pulliam, 2011: 59-60.

¹⁰ Pulliam, 2011: 59-60.

¹¹ Pulliam, 2011: 60.

¹² Pulliam, 2011: 61.

of the present study, regarding twelfth-century illumination, and her work has helped confirm the approach taken here.

Twelfth-century colour has also been rather disregarded, with a marked reluctance on the part of scholars to discuss its significance as an iconographic or symbolic language. Only Petzold has explored the cultural contexts of twelfth-century colour—religious, social, economic and symbolic—using a small sample of manuscripts associated with the scriptorium at St Albans.¹³ He was also influenced by Gage and linguistics, citing classical texts and Anglo-Saxon colour terminology which stressed “brightness rather than the hue”.¹⁴ He did not discuss the relationship of colour to patristic commentaries; instead he made stylistic comparisons, mostly with Ottonian and German illuminations which have helped to form an iconography of colour, but with only a very minimal reference to twelfth-century texts, which he acknowledged.¹⁵ He later wrote a short general discussion the significance of colours as attributes when applied to individual biblical characters, such as St John the Evangelist.¹⁶ No research since has attempted to develop his work any further, until now.

When other scholars have analysed the iconography of illuminations they have often ignored colour, apart from simple descriptions of hue. For example, Hahn, Abou-El-Haj and Carrasco have each described in detail the iconography of illustrated saints’ lives,¹⁷ including the Life of St Edmund, but, in general, colour has not formed part of the discussions. Nevertheless, their discussions of iconography have been helpful to the author, and in the chapter on colour which follows, the hagiographic iconography they have described in the text of Edmund’s Life and the symbolism of colour in its illustrations are found to be derived from the same patristic texts, and therefore support

¹³ Petzold, 1986.

¹⁴ Petzold, 1986: 274-76.

¹⁵ Petzold, 1986: 277.

¹⁶ Petzold, 1990.

¹⁷ Abou-El-Haj, 1983 and 1994; Carrasco, 1990 and 1999; Hahn, 1991 and 2001.

and confirm each other. This close relationship between the iconography of text and the symbolism of colour is described below.

The work of Carruthers,¹⁸ on memory training in the twelfth century, has also provided a valuable context against which to consider the work of the Alexis Master. It is suggested in this chapter that he may have used colour mnemonically, and that this was symptomatic of the unique didactic atmosphere at St Albans.

In this chapter information is presented in a way which highlights the important relationship between colour and Scriptural and patristic texts. This challenges the earlier general disregard of colour in the literature. The chapter begins with a discussion of colours named in the Vulgate.

5:1 COLOUR IN THE VULGATE

Having considered the materials and their use, it is appropriate at this point to reflect on how and why the use of colour might have contributed to the development of twelfth-century illumination. This must begin with texts.

In virtually every way manuscript illumination of the period was dependent on texts. Subject matter and iconography were derived from texts; the placement and type of initial amplified or augmented the text; and layers of meaning were usually extracted from biblical texts either directly or indirectly through various types of commentary. Therefore the question should be asked whether colours and their meanings were in any way derived from the same sources.

To address this question, it is important first to examine the colour words used in the Vulgate text, the most basic primary source for readers, artists and theologians of the period; this will help to determine not only what these words meant originally, but also what they later came to mean to the artists and patrons of the twelfth century.

¹⁸ Carruthers, 1990, 1993, and 1998.

Four colours are mentioned on numerous occasions in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers, where they describe the colours of fabrics, curtains, veils, wrappings and coverings of the Tabernacle, as well as the vestments of the high priests; they are: *hyacinthus*, *purpura*, *coccum*, and *byssus*, and they are often mentioned together, and in association with gold, *aurum*. Occasionally they are used elsewhere in both the Old and New Testaments. Scriptural exegesis confirmed the meanings of these colour words, and, due to the theological interpretations of Jerome and later commentators, the colours themselves gained some degree of symbolic value.

The first colour, *hyacinthus*, is most commonly described as blue, like the blue of the sky;¹⁹ the second, *purpura*, generally as a red-purple; the third, *coccum*, as scarlet, sometimes described as twice-dyed, or double-dipped. The fourth colour word, *byssus*, seems to represent a fine woven linen, or perhaps cotton, of a very pale off-white or white. On a few occasions the adjective *lineus* describes the fabric as ‘of linen’. Another word often seen alongside these is *ruber*, that is ‘of red colour’, used either with *hyacinthus* or *ianthinus*, meaning ‘violet’, to describe the colours of the two outer protective coverings of the Tabernacle. *Ianthinus* has a relatively limited use in some Pentateuchs,²⁰ and then occurring only in Exodus and Numbers, and once in Ezekiel.

In published versions of the Vulgate, descriptions employing these words begin in Exodus 25: 3-5:

*aurum et argentum et aes hyacinthum et purpuram coccumque bis tinctum et byssum pilos caprarum et pelles arietum rubricatas pelles ianthinas et ligna sethim.*²¹

Most of the colour words have caused few difficulties to later translators, but *hyacinthus* and *ianthinus* have proved problematic when translated into English. *Hyacinthus*

¹⁹ Leclercq, 1982: 78.

²⁰ *Index Codicum et Editionum pro Vetere Testamento*.

²¹ Douay-Rheims: Gold, and silver, and brass, Violet and purple, and scarlet twice dyed, and fine linen, and goats’ hair, And rams’ skins dyed red, and violet skins, and setim wood.

appears over seventy times in the Vulgate, mostly in Exodus; the adjective *hyacinthina* (of blue) was used by Jerome to translate the Greek word *uakinqina* (ὕακίνθινα), or *huakinthina*, from the Septuagint, which itself replicated the colour word *tekeleth* in the Hebrew Bible. *Tekeleth* was commonly understood to mean ‘blue’, and is now acknowledged to be a permanent, unfading, and indelible blue,²² made from a dye sourced from marine creatures of the murex type.²³

Jerome must have been convinced *hyacinthus* was a good translation, derived as it was from the blue colour of the hyacinth flower; indeed throughout the medieval period it was used and understood as ‘blue’. Only when first translated into English did it cause difficulty, and this allows a useful glimpse into the processes used to arrive at a satisfactory text.

In the original Douay English translation of the Old Testament, produced in the early-seventeenth century, *hyacinthus* was not translated into English; instead the word ‘hyacinth’ was used throughout, apart from the book of Esther, where the term ‘hyacinthine colour’ was used.²⁴ On only two occasions, when describing the colour of wounds, was ‘blew’ or ‘blewnesse’ used. However, in the Challoner revision of 1752, ‘hyacinth’ was replaced virtually everywhere by the word ‘violet’, apart from a very few occasions when the word ‘blue’ was used. This presumably led to the modern translation of *hyacinthini* as ‘of violet’ rather than ‘of blue’ in Colgrave and Mynors’s edition of Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History*, cited by Dodwell,²⁵ and in Sherley-Price’s translation.²⁶ This was despite Bede, and other commentators like Augustine and Isidore, as noted below, believing that *hyacinthus* meant blue.

²² Haupt, 1914: 299.

²³ Dalley, 2000: 4.

²⁴ Esther 1:6 and 8:15.

²⁵ Dodwell, 1982: 36.

²⁶ Sherley-Price, 1990: 44.

Of course, we are not quite sure why this was the case, or how ‘hyacinth’ and ‘violet’ were perceived as colours by Challoner in 1752; even so, this usage seems to fly in the face of earlier custom and practice. The problem here is that word *ianthinus* is also given its original meaning ‘violet’ by translators. It was used in this way by Pliny in his *Natural History* to mean ‘violet’ or ‘blue-violet’, derived from the Greek word *ion* (ἴον), the name of a wild large-petalled variety of the Violet flower. Pliny also used it to describe violet-coloured cloths or fabrics.²⁷

It is thus virtually certain that if Jerome used the word *ianthinus*, he knew it meant violet or violet-purple, rather than blue; indeed, in two of his letters Jerome describes the colour of the Violet flower as purple, that is *purpura violae*,²⁸ so was well aware of the difference between ‘blue’ and colours of a purple/violet hue. Regrettably he did not confirm the colour of the outer skin of the Tabernacle in either his prologue to the books of Kings, where he writes of skins but not their colour, or in his letter to Fabiola, where he discusses the four colours but mentions only the red skins, *pelles rubras*, of the inner cover.²⁹ It seems unlikely, therefore, that Jerome actually used the word *ianthinus* himself to describe the colour of the skins.

The translators of the original 1609 Douay version of the Old Testament must have used a copy of the Vulgate with *ianthinus* rather than *hyacinthus*, because they used the word ‘ianthin’ to describe the colour of the skins. An example of this translation, using both hyacinth for ‘blue’ and ianthin for ‘violet’, reads:

hyacinth and purple, and scarlet twise died, and silke, the haire of goates
and rammes skinnes died redde, and ianthin skinnes.³⁰

²⁷ *Nat. Hist.* XXI. 14 n3: *ianthina vestis* (Brotier, 1826: 3224-25; trans. Bostock and Riley, 1855: 317).

²⁸ *Epistula ad Heliodorum* 60 (Hilberg, 1910: 565; trans. Wright, 1933: 293), and *Epistula ad Rusticum* 125 (Hilberg, 1918: 120; trans. Wright, 1933: 401).

²⁹ *Epistula ad Fabiolam* 64 (Hilberg, 1910: 596; trans. Ferrante: <http://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/letter/364.html>).

³⁰ Douay, 1609, Exodus 35: 23.

In Challoner's 1752 revision, however, the words *hyacinthus* and *ianthinus* were both translated as violet, presumably because the translators understood them to be the same colour:

If any man had violet, and purple, and scarlet twice dyed, fine linen and goats' hair, ramskins dyed red, and violet coloured skins.

How the blue of *hyacinthus*, well-established as the colour of the blue sky, became violet in Douay-Rheims is almost inexplicable; however there is possibly a reason why the classical Latin word *ianthinus*, meaning violet, came to be used by some translators despite the centuries of exegesis which had already determined that the skins were blue (the skins became blue again in the *KJB*).

The answer probably lies in the Hebrew texts and their Greek translations. In the Septuagint the Greek word *uakinqon*, or *huakinthinon*, for 'blue', is not only used to describe the colour of the blue fabrics of the Tabernacle, but also the colour of the final covering of skins, and it might be expected that the Vulgate translators would follow suit and describe the skins as blue, using *hyacinthus*, but in some translations this was not the case.

The corresponding word in the Hebrew Bible is *tahaš*, which probably denotes some kind of animal skin and perhaps its colour, although its rather obscure meaning has been a matter of debate. The search for a Hebrew source resulted in Martin Luther's translation of *tahaš* as *Dachsfelle*, or "badger skin" in his first German translation of the Vulgate in 1543, perhaps as a result of biblical scholars believing the German word *Dachs* was derived from the Hebrew *tahaš*.³¹ This late-medieval German scholarship led to the later English translations "badger skin" in the King James Bible, and "porpoise skin" in the New American Standard Bible, neither of which has been

³¹ Dalley, 2000: 1-2.

universally accepted.³² In various published modern English translations of the original Hebrew Shemot (Pentateuch), *tahaš* has been translated various ways; for example:

Every person who had sky-blue wool, dark red wool, crimson wool, fine linen, goats' wool, reddened rams' skins or blue processed hides, brought these items".³³

And:

And every man with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and red skins of rams, and badgers' skins, brought them.³⁴

However, Stephanie Dalley has argued that *tahaš* originally referred to some kind of decorated leather, perhaps finely beaded, and generally deep blue or turquoise in colour.³⁵ What is apparent, therefore, is that *tahaš* was strongly associated with processed skins, or leather, and perhaps coloured blue; it was later translated as *dermata huakinthina* (δέρματα ὑακίνθινα) in the Greek Septuagint, that is 'blue skins', and as either *pelles hyacinthinas* or *pelles ianthinus* in early versions of the Vulgate.

This helps to explain the Latin translation of *hyacinthus* and *ianthinus*: their meaning seems to depend on their context. *Hyacinthus* is used to describe the colours of fabrics such as linen, silk and wool, as well as skins and leather, and also the colours of garments such as robes and tunics; *ianthinus*, however, is only ever used to describe skins or leather, and in the single reference in Ezekiel it describes the colour of shoes which were presumably made of leather: *et calciavi te ianthino*.³⁶ Therefore, when it is used in the Vulgate, the colour word *ianthinus* is only associated with leather or skins, and not with any other fabrics or contexts; it is never used as the general colour word for 'violet'. From this it can be inferred that it may have been understood by the early translators to refer as much to the material as the colour, and may have been used to get

³² Dalley, 2000: 1-5.

³³ <http://www.bible.ort.org/books/intro1>.

³⁴ <http://www.sacred-texts.com/bib/index.htm>.

³⁵ Dalley, 2000: 17; an interesting discussion of *tahaš* with references is also available at the Wikipedia free encyclopedia: www.thefullwiki.org/Tachash.

³⁶ Ezekiel 16:10.

close to the original meaning of the Hebrew word *tahaš*, while at the same time investing it with a blue colour, perhaps different to the blue of *hyacinthus*, but possibly the same.

Thus, in the earlier Greek version, and possibly the Hebrew Bible, and in some, but not all versions of the Vulgate, the final covering of skins is ‘blue’ rather than ‘violet’. This explains the early exegesis of Isidore of Seville, in the *Quaestiones in Vetus Testamentum*, written before 636, who discussed the various offerings to the Tabernacle using the phrase *pelles arietum rubricatas, et pelles hyacinthinis*, meaning red goatskins and blue skins.³⁷

About a hundred years later in Anglo-Saxon Northumbria, Bede also clearly believed the outer covering to be blue. In Exodus 26:14 of the modern Latin Vulgate, the skins are described as *ianthinis pellibus*, but in his *De Tabernaculo*, written c. 721-25, Bede quoted from the Vulgate verse he was using before interpreting it: *aliud operimentum de hyacinthinis pellibus*, that is “another cover of blue-coloured skins”,³⁸ so there can be little doubt about the text he was using. He then explained the significance of the skin and its colour:

Surely blue is the colour of heaven, and skin is the characteristic mark of a dead animal. And what is signified by blue-coloured skins, except the virtue of those who in a certain manner live a pure heavenly life on earth by putting to death all the allures of carnal concupiscence?³⁹

Later in the same chapter he interpreted the position of the blue skins used as the final covering over the Tabernacle:

³⁷ *Quaest. in Vetus Test.* 56; (PL 83: 316; trans. Author).

³⁸ *De Tab.* II. 4, (Hurst, 1969: 58; trans. Holder, 1994: 64).

³⁹ *De Tab.* II. 4: *Hyacinthus namque caelestis est coloris, pellis vero mortui animantis pars et indicium est; et quid per pelles hyacinthinis nisi virtus exprimitur illorum qui mortificatis ad purum cunctis concupiscentiae carnalis illecebris caelestem quodam modo in terris vitam gerunt* (Hurst, 1969: 58; trans. Holder, 1994: 64).

Therefore the blue-coloured skins deservedly hold the highest place in the house of God, and the heavenly colour is assigned the position near to heaven...⁴⁰

The exegesis of Isidore and Bede is quite clear. Their copies of the Vulgate differed in this instance from modern versions derived from the *Divina Bibliotheca* in Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, which invariably use the word *ianthinus*.⁴¹ This begs the question: which text of Exodus were Isidore and Bede using? In Bede's case, the answer is fairly simple. It is well known that Benedict Biscop, the founder of Bede's monastery at Monkwearmouth and Jarrow, visited Rome several times during the late seventh century and brought back copies of the Scriptures to Northumbria. Amongst these were volumes of Jerome's Vulgate text which had possibly been collected and edited by Cassiodorus at his monastery near Naples and which are generally thought to be very close to Jerome's final revision of the Vulgate.⁴² Other texts were also acquired: on his trip to Rome in 679-80 Benedict was accompanied by Ceolfrith, the prior at Wearmouth,⁴³ who purchased a large pandect of the old pre-Vulgate Latin translation, which may have been the *Codex Grandior* of Cassiodorus. This provided the model for the three large pandects Ceolfrith ordered to be made after he became abbot of the two houses, but using Jerome's corrected Vulgate text instead of the old Latin.⁴⁴ All three were probably completed by the year 716,⁴⁵ when Ceolfrith decided to retire to Rome,

⁴⁰ *De Tab. II. 4: Merito ergo pelles hyacinthinae supremum in domo Dei locum tenent colorque caelestis proximam caelo sedem sortitus est...* (Hurst, 1969: 58; trans. Holder, 1994: 65).

⁴¹ *Divina Bibliotheca*, PL 28; The Clementine Vulgate, *Biblia Sacra Vulgatae Editionis Sixti Quinti Pontificis Maximi iussu recognita atque edita*; The Stuttgart Vulgate, *Biblia Sacra Vulgata or Biblia Sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem*; see also the *Index Codicum et Editionum pro Vetere Testamento*.

⁴² De Hamel, 2001: 33.

⁴³ Meyvaert, 1996: 832.

⁴⁴ Meyvaert, 1996: 836.

⁴⁵ Marsden, 1998: 66.

and took with him one of the pandects, which he had had made for the Pope, the *Codex Amiatinus*.⁴⁶

It has been suggested that the Vulgate texts of the remaining two pandects were “under regular scrutiny” by Bede, during their production and after completion;⁴⁷ indeed he may have been involved with the preparation and selection of the various texts used,⁴⁸ and perhaps also with the design of the *Codex Amiatinus* itself, where his own hand may be visible in places.⁴⁹ It is virtually certain therefore that he was thoroughly acquainted with their texts even before Ceolfrith left for Rome. Most of his exegesis was written during the 720s and 730s,⁵⁰ including *De Tabernaculo*, after years of study of *Amiatinus* and the two pandects, and similar examination of the related writings of early Christian commentators.

The other two pandects are lost, apart from a few leaves in the British Library,⁵¹ but the same text remains in the *Codex Amiatinus* and this is considered to be one of the purest and best copies of Jerome’s Vulgate.⁵² It uses *hyacinthus* throughout to describe the skins, rather than *ianthinus*, confirming that Bede’s interpretation was based on a text where the colour was ‘blue’ rather than ‘violet’. The *Codex Amiatinus* is designated *sigla A* in the *index codicum et editionum*, and most manuscript versions of the Vulgate use this text or similar.⁵³

The translators of the seventeenth-century English Douay version however, used a different source, one which used *ianthinas* to describe the skins. This must have been a Pentateuch because they used a different Latin text from which they translated the colour of the shoes in Ezekiel as ‘hyacinth’ rather than ‘ianthin’:

⁴⁶ Florence, Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Cod. Amiatino 1.

⁴⁷ Marsden, 1998: 72.

⁴⁸ Marsden, 1998: 67.

⁴⁹ Wood, 1995: 30 n163; Meyvaert, 1996: 842; Ramirez, 2009: 1.

⁵⁰ Marsden, 1998: 72.

⁵¹ Meyvaert, 1996: 838.

⁵² De Hamel, 2001: 33.

⁵³ *Index Codicum et Editionum pro Vetere Testamento*.

And I clothed thee with divers colours, & shod thee with hyacinth: and I girded thee with silke, and clothed thee with fine garments.⁵⁴

In the later Challoner revision, however, this was translated into English as: “and shod thee in violet coloured shoes”.

The most complete example of such a text is the late sixth-century or early seventh-century Ashburnham Pentateuch.⁵⁵ It is a copy of the Vulgate text, but differs from the *Codex Amiatinus* in that it uses *ianthinus* to describe the colour of the second cover of skins: it is designated *sigla G* in the *index codicum et editionum*. Both its text and illuminations have caused scholars to suggest that it had a closer relationship with Hebrew sources than was usual; it contains details from Jewish commentaries on Hebrew scripture not normally found in the Vulgate,⁵⁶ and, on folio 2r, a detailed illustration in colour of the Tabernacle/Torah-shrine, with the titles of its five volumes in Latinised Hebrew text.⁵⁷ The later use of the word *ianthinus* might reflect this.

The Ashburnham Pentateuch was probably in eastern France from the eighth century, and was owned by the Abbey of St Martin of Tours from some time in the ninth,⁵⁸ when its text was used as one of several sources in the production of Tours Bibles.⁵⁹ The earliest complete pandect of Jerome’s Vulgate known to have been made at Tours is an early ninth-century Bible, Cod. Sang. 75, now at St Gall and which probably dates from Alcuin’s time as abbot.⁶⁰ It uses *ianthinus* throughout when describing the colour of the skins, except the shoes in Ezekiel, which has *hiachintino*, which again strongly suggests the use of a Pentateuch as a source for Exodus and Numbers but a different text for the rest of the Old Testament. Generally the text of this volume is very thoroughly and carefully corrected; the errors and missing letters were

⁵⁴ Ezechiel 16: 10; Douay, 1609.

⁵⁵ Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS nouv. acq. lat. 2334.

⁵⁶ Walther and Wolf, 2005: 66.

⁵⁷ Roth, 1953: 34-36.

⁵⁸ Walther and Wolf, 2005: 66.

⁵⁹ McKitterick, 1994: 63.

⁶⁰ St Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 75; McKitterick, 1994: 71.

indicated with a small mark, and the correcting scribe wrote the interlinear corrections above each word. On virtually every page where the colour words occur, however, the errors have been excised, and where *hyacinthus* had been written by the original scribe the corrector had it changed to *ianthinus*, that is from ‘blue’ to ‘violet’.

Several of these corrections can be seen on page 97, where the many repetitions of the same colour words in adjacent verses caused the scribe to leave out a whole verse, Numbers 4:11. After marking where it should have been in the text, the corrector wrote it out in full in the lower border beneath the column of text, in a very fine and clear miniscule script (Fig. 248): *hiacinctino vestimento... operimentum hiantinarum pellium*, that is: “a cloth of blue...a cover of violet skins”. In this particular Bible therefore, one that is a copy of Jerome’s Vulgate perhaps made under the jurisdiction of Alcuin himself, the inter-linear corrections and the added verse show that violet skins were preferred at Tours. The inference is that during the early ninth century the influence of the Ashburnham Pentateuch was strong at Tours.

For over fifty years after the death of Alcuin, Tours Bibles continued to be copied and exported across Europe, providing an influential and lasting standard of design and clarity of script. However, in a Bible dated to about 850-860 from St Gall, Cod. Sang. 77,⁶¹ written in a standard Tours Caroline miniscule in double columns, there was evidently a change in source texts, and the skins became blue rather than violet; and where the colour word *ianthinus* had been written by the original scribe, the corrector changed it to *hyacinthus*. For example, on page 168, in Exodus 25: 4-5, the correction was made in paler ink to read *yacinctinas* (Fig. 249); the excised word is just visible beneath while the longer correction extends slightly into the central margin between the two columns. Elsewhere, on pages 193, 195, 245 and 246, the correcting scribe has inserted the letters ‘cy’ or ‘cyn’ above the words *iantina* and *hiantinarum*, between the

⁶¹ St Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 77.

letters ‘a’ and ‘n’, to transform the meaning from ‘violet’ to ‘blue’; five such corrections can be seen on page 246 alone.

Despite the attention given to systematic copying of ‘correct’ texts at Tours, and careful correction to achieve accuracy,⁶² it seems that in the case of the colour words at least, preferences changed over time until meanings became standardized; by the middle of the twelfth century in England this was reflected in the texts of the Bury and Dover Bibles which read ‘blue skins’. In these manuscripts the words meaning ‘blue’ and ‘blue skins’ were usually spelled the same way, with only occasional variations. In Exodus 35: 23, for example, in the Bury Bible, *hy_acinctum* (with a gap or long ligature) is used on folio 51r for *hyacinthum*, and *hyacinctinas* for the *ianthinas* of modern published Vulgates; in the Dover Bible *yacinctum* is used for *hyacinthum*, and *yacinthinas* instead of *ianthinas* on folio 38v. In Abbot Simon’s Bible of c.1180, from St Albans, on folio 25r the same word is used both times, as it is throughout Exodus and Numbers: *iacinctum* for *hyacinthum*, and *iacinctinas* for *ianthinas*. In all three Bibles there is no longer any sense of a separate context or different colour in the description of the shoes in Ezekiel 16: 10, and no association in any way with leather, as the Hebrew word *tahaš* may have had. The Bury Bible uses *iacinctino* on folio 287v, Dover uses *iacincto* on folio 227v, and MS 48 uses *iacintino* on folio 124v, all meaning ‘blue’.

This may have been a Europe-wide preference during the twelfth century. In the *Codex Gigas*,⁶³ a giant Bible produced in Bohemia, the coloured skins of Exodus 25: 5, on folio 9v, are described as *pelles iacinctinas*, and the leather shoes in Ezekiel, on folio 47r, are described as *calciavi te iacincto*, thus using the same words meaning ‘blue’ as the slightly earlier English Bibles.

In the twelfth-century exegesis of Peter Comestor in the *Historia Scholastica*, written before 1178, the dominance of blue is confirmed. In Chapter 45, entitled *De*

⁶² Ganz, 1994: 58.

⁶³ Stockholm, Kungliga Biblioteket, MS. A. 148.

tabernaculo faciendo, he discussed the offerings made by the people of Israel to the Tabernacle, using *hyacinthinus* rather than *ianthinus*:

...gold certainly, and silver, and brass, blue, and purple, scarlet twice dyed that is wool/hair of blue, purple, and scarlet colour, and linen, which is a delicate type of Egyptian flax, and white; also hair of goats, and red rams' skins...and blue skins, and setim wood.⁶⁴

In Chapter 57, he interpreted the meaning of the coverings of the Tabernacle, as described in Exodus,⁶⁵ and used the phrase: “a cover of blue rams' skins was placed over the top”.⁶⁶ Thus, in the twelfth century, the skins covering the Tabernacle were believed to be red and blue, rather than red and violet, just as they were for Isidore and Bede centuries earlier.

Considering this medieval preference, and the weight of exegesis across the centuries, it is interesting to speculate on how the much rarer *pelles ianthinus* of the Ashburnham Pentateuch became the preferred translation in Migne's *Divina Bibliotheca* and modern published versions derived from it, rather than the *dermata huakinthina* of the Septuagint and *pelles hyacinthinus* of the *Codex Amiatinus*. As with the Douay-Rheims “badger skins”, it may simply be that the preferred source was one closer to the original Hebrew.

The *Nova Vulgata*, the official Latin version of the Catholic Church, first published in 1979 and authorized by the Vatican in 2001, uses the word *delphini* to describe the skins, as, for example, in Exodus 25: 5, *pellesque delphini*, which is “and of dolphin

⁶⁴ *Hist. Sch. Liber Exodi 45: ...aurum scilicet, et argentum, et aes, hyacinthum, et purpuram, coccumque bis tinctum, id est setam hyacinthini, purpurei, coccinei coloris, et byssum quod est genus lini Aegyptii molle, et candidum, pilos quoque caprarum, et pelles arietum rubricatas...et pelles hyacinthinus et ligna setim* (PL 198: 1169; trans. Author).

⁶⁵ Exodus 26: 14: *facies et operimentum aliud tecto de pellibus arietum rubricatis et super hoc rursum aliud operimentum de ianthinis pellibus.*

⁶⁶ *Hist. Sch. Liber Exodi 57: ...quoque operimentum in eundem modum erat superpositum de pellibus arietum hyacinthinis* (PL 198: 1178-79; trans. Author).

skins”; and Ezekiel 16: 10, *et calceavi te calceis corii delphini*, meaning “shoes of dolphin skin”.⁶⁷

Next to *hyacinthus* and *ianthinus* the other colour words in the Vulgate generally have clearly defined meanings established during the classical period. *Coccum*, for instance, translated as scarlet, is the most common word for a red colour in the Vulgate. Other words for red are *rubra*, *vermiculus* (translated as crimson in Douay-Rheims), and *rufus* (red or ruddy). The word *sinopide* is apparently used only once, and in antiquity was described as a kind of superior red ochre found only in Sinope, but which in the Middle Ages came to mean any red ochre.⁶⁸ Three types of red are mentioned in one verse in Isaiah, *coccum*, *ruber* and *vermiculus*, which helps our understanding of the meaning of *rubra*:

And then come, and accuse me, saith the Lord: if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow: and if they be red as crimson, they shall be white as wool.⁶⁹

White is the most commonly named colour in the Vulgate, in the form of *albus* or *candidus*. Although the two words appear to be interchangeable occasionally, *albus* generally means a matt or dull white, not shining, used for hair, complexion and ordinary garments, while *candidus* more often denotes a glistening, dazzling white, often used for special clothing.

The word *viridis* is used on numerous occasions to describe the green colour of trees, orchards, grass and herbs, but in no other context. *Carpasini*, in Esther 1:6, is translated as green in Douay-Rheims. Other colours such as yellow, grey, and grey-haired, are present minimally. There are no colour words to describe subtle colours like mauve or magenta in the Vulgate.

⁶⁷ http://www.vatican.va/archive/bible/nova_vulgata/documents/nova-vulgata_vetus-testamentum_lt.html.

⁶⁸ Thompson, 1956: 98.

⁶⁹ Isaiah 1: 18: *et venite et arguite me dicit Dominus si fuerint peccata vestra ut coccinum quasi nix dealbabuntur et si fuerint rubra quasi vermiculus velut lana erunt.*

Although any word to describe a yellow colour is virtually non-existent in the Vulgate, the word for gold—*aurum* (or *aureus*, golden)—is used hundreds of times, especially in the Old Testament. In Exodus it is used to describe the many fittings of the Tabernacle: the altar, vessels, candelstubs and candlestick, which are often made of the purest gold—*de auro purissimo*. It was interwoven with the coloured threads to create the fabric for the vestments of the Levite high priests.

In *De Diversis Artibus* Theophilus used seven colour words found in the Vulgate: *albus* and *candidus* (both for white), *flavus* (yellow), *purpura* (purple), *ruber* and *rufus* (red) and *viridis* (green), and they generally match their meanings in the Vulgate. Other words he used relate more to the type of pigments used, rather than descriptions of colour, and he generally used these words whether describing panel, manuscript or glass painting. He used *prasinus* for green earth, and *minium* to describe red-lead, and *carmin* and *cenobrium* for vermilion, for example.⁷⁰

His main word for blue is *lazur*, but there are one or two others derived from the juice of berries; and for violet, *violaticum*. Both are of uncertain physical composition, although *lazur* may have been a blue made from *lapis lazuli*, and *violaticum* from a more complex mixture of various pigments.⁷¹

Although Theophilus does not use the words *ianthinus* or *hyacinthus*, in the twelfth century *hyacinthus* certainly still had meaning, in various guises such as *iacintus* and *iacinctus*, as we have seen in the three great English bibles, and generally meaning ‘blue’ or ‘cloth of blue’.⁷² Overall, therefore, it is clear that commentators like Isidore of Seville, Bede and, later, Peter Comestor looked to find significance in the colours of the Tabernacle, and they thought about the meanings of the colours and their importance within an overall programme of iconography. Their commentaries entered refurbished

⁷⁰ Dodwell, 1961: 10 etc.

⁷¹ Hawthorne and Smith, 1963: 15.

⁷² *RMLW*, 231.

monastic libraries throughout England and Europe during the late-eleventh and twelfth centuries; indeed, the commentaries of “orthodox catholic fathers” were, according to the Benedictine Rule, to be read at Matins alongside the Old and New Testaments.⁷³

Whether there is any evidence that artists thought about their colours in the same way, in relation to the Scriptures, has yet to be determined. Evidence suggests that the best artists were intelligent, successful and productive men, like Master Hugo and the Lambeth Master, who were capable of understanding the texts they were illustrating, whether reliant on learned monks, or literate themselves, like Theophilus.

5:2 PICTORIAL COLOUR

With this in mind, it is now possible to turn to consider how the technical skills and theological knowledge of the artists might have been applied in the visual interpretation of texts such as the Vulgate, and of the many biblical commentaries available by the twelfth century.

It has been generally accepted that the Alexis Master was influenced by an eleventh-century Ottonian manuscript such as the lavishly coloured *Codex Aureus* of Echternach, with its variety of background colours. In 1960 Otto Pächt discussed the Ottonian antecedents of the colour palette used at St Albans, and also outlined the differences:

The main difference between the Ottonian and the St Albans colour scheme lies in the absence in the latter of golden backgrounds on the one hand, and in the inclusion of brighter shades of green, red (vermilion) and yellow on the other. In some of the St Albans miniatures a definite tendency towards strong blue-red contrasts with green as a mediating colour cannot be overlooked.⁷⁴

However, Ayres hinted that the influence of painting in the English-ruled Angevin lands was important:

⁷³ *Regula* 9 (trans. White, 2008: 28).

⁷⁴ Pächt, 1960: 116.

We shall not investigate the complex problem of the sources of the Alexis Master, but nevertheless, I wonder if English artists could have remained unaware of the accomplishments of the 'Angevin school' across the Channel.⁷⁵

This is an interesting idea when it is noted that the strong reds and greens of the Edmund miniature cycle are also apparent in the illustrations in the Life of Radegund at Poitiers.⁷⁶ It might even be a possibility that the development of the new approach to colour at St Albans was first encouraged by the monastic patrons at Bury in Edmund's *libellus*; perhaps, therefore, the genesis of the new style should be looked for in earlier pictorial narratives of saints' lives.

Nor should the direct influence of Italo-Byzantine colour be discounted. In the first prologue of his handbook, written as a guide for young artists, Theophilus mentioned the expertise or renown of various regions of the world, such as the Russian skill in enamels, Arabian cast and repoussé work, French window glass, and German metalwork: but first and foremost he wrote of the pre-eminence of Byzantine colours; readers of his book could, he suggested, find information on "whatever kinds and blends of various colours Greece possesses",⁷⁷ as though they were generally recognized to be more numerous and of a superior quality than those from elsewhere.

Although the use of thicker body-colour had already developed generally in Anglo-Norman and Angevin illumination, it seems that the Alexis Master was the first manuscript painter of the Anglo-Norman period to understand and properly employ a full-colour palette. His colours are highly decorative in their arrangements, and visually sumptuous, but they also functioned by simulating the rich variety of colours of the natural world, and in the man-made world of the church, monastery and town.⁷⁸ The

⁷⁵ Ayres, 1974: 210.

⁷⁶ Poitiers, BM MS 250.

⁷⁷ *De Div. Art.* Prologue I: *quicquid in diversorum colorum generibus et mixturis habet Graecia* (ed. and trans. Dodwell, 1961: 4).

⁷⁸ See Geddes, 2008: 161-64 for aspects of reality in the St Albans Psalter.

colours offered a third dimension to the flat, painted pages, and each opening would have invited pleasurable rumination as the colours passed before the eyes.

As an introduction to the broader language of colour, it is important here to discuss some pictorial qualities of colour evident in the Alexis Master's paintings, and the ways it worked, and still works, for both artists and viewers. Colour, or hue, is central to the discussion, because it is at the core of the visual language used by the artists themselves; however, as pointed out in the preface, some scholars have in the past questioned the validity of this approach, and have preferred to believe that tonal value, or brightness and darkness, was more important.

Colours have particular and exact qualities of redness, or blueness, or greenness and so on, which is called the hue; that is the hue is the quality of redness, or blueness or greenness. A red can be an orange-red or a crimson-red. It can tend towards purple or yellow. A blue can be a green-blue or a purple-blue. This is how each colour is recognized, but they do not function alone, or separately. Each hue or colour relates to other colours through various contrasts—some are lighter in tone (value) than others, some are warmer than others; some are contrasted in two ways, both lighter and warmer than others or darker and warmer, and so on.

It is these contrasts which gives colours their pictorial power. Tonally, yellow is the lightest, and blue-purple is the darkest, so these two hues have the strongest light-dark contrast. Light and dark tonal contrasts are important pictorially because they are quickly perceived and understood.

These tonal characteristics of colour were discussed by Bolman in her work on the colour of Beatus manuscripts, where she suggested that tonal value was generally of more significance than hue. However, Itten had already suggested that the colours yellow, red, blue and green in the Apocalypse of St Sever,⁷⁹ which Bolman discussed,

⁷⁹ Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS lat. 8878.

were used because of their contrasts of colour, and not tonal value;⁸⁰ likewise, Alexander was sure that in the carpet pages of the Lindisfarne Gospels the artist manipulated colour separations by contrasts of colour and hue, and not by their lighter and darker tonal values: "...one has only to see how relatively dead the pages look in a black and white reproduction to realize that the distinction is one of hue".⁸¹

Nevertheless, Bolman underpinned her arguments with Gage's suggestion that the medieval view of colour was a tonal (value) one, rather than hue-based, and believed that her analysis of colour confirmed this.⁸² She did, however, appear oddly surprised by what she found while pursuing her research:

On the basis of this evidence, we can readily hypothesize a value scale in which white, red, yellow, and orange made up the light end. Less securely, we can suggest that black, brown, and blue made up the dark end.⁸³

Despite this strangely obvious conclusion, most of her interesting discussion was about colour and hue, not tonal value.

One of the ways artists controlled the tonal value of colour was to thin it down with water; the most delicate washes of the deepest purple could therefore appear pale mauve or pink against the vellum. Conversely, to darken any colour, layers of saturated washes could be applied. Although some hues are naturally dark and others pale, generally the more saturated a colour, any colour, the darker it becomes in tone, and the more dilute it is the paler it becomes. This includes black, which becomes greyer and paler as it is diluted; white, on the other hand, becomes brighter and whiter the more opaquely it is used. Throughout the Middle Ages most texts were written in dark or black ink against very pale parchment, and most linear illustrative work was done in dark line, against a lighter ground. However, the use of opaque colours by artists allowed artists to paint both dark against light and, more importantly, light against dark.

⁸⁰ Itten, 1961: 38.

⁸¹ Alexander, 1975: 147.

⁸² Bolman, 1999: 30.

⁸³ Bolman, 1999: 26.

Colours also have temperature, or warmth and coolness; for example, orange appears warm, and blue cold. A bright red-orange is the warmest, and blue is the coldest. Generally the colours yellow, yellow-orange, orange, red-orange, red and red-purple are referred to as warm, and blue-green, blue, blue-violet and violet, as cold. Contrasts of temperature and tonal value can be lessened or enhanced by the addition of white to tint the colours. Opacity of colour can also be increased by the addition of white. The Alexis Master and later artists of the period used this warm-cold contrast to advantage.

Another important quality of individual colours is the complementary contrast with other colours. The most obvious complementary pairings are red and green, blue and orange, and yellow and violet; these are the three primary colours and their secondary mixtures; but every colour has its complementary. This can be understood as absence of colour—there is no red in green and no green in red, violet is an absence of yellow and yellow is an absence of violet; blue is an absence of orange, orange is an absence of blue, and so on. This can be seen best on a modern colour wheel where complementary colours are exactly opposite each other, and by definition they are opposites that have the power to neutralise each other when mixed by the artist:

Two such colours make a strange pair. They are opposite, but they require each other. They incite each other to maximum vividness when adjacent; and they annihilate each other, to grey-black, when mixed—like fire and water.⁸⁴

Itten's "maximum vividness" simply means that red, for example, always looks reddest when set against its complementary green, and vice versa.

Evidence that twelfth-century churchmen understood the power of such contrasts is to be found in a letter written by Bernard of Clairvaux to Abbot Suger in c.1127, in which he discussed the differences between good and evil, and the improvements made by Suger in the observances at St Denis. Using a basic colour analogy, which he seems

⁸⁴ Itten, 1961: 78.

to have borrowed from St Augustine,⁸⁵ he described how contrasts between opposites worked, and how beauty contrasts with ugliness, and how good things showed to advantage when compared to bad or evil things:

We recognize like things by comparing them with like, but contrary things compared either please or displease the more. Place black against white, and the comparison will show up each colour the better. So, when ugly things are set against beautiful things, the beautiful seem more beautiful and the ugly seem more ugly.⁸⁶

Such effects of contrast can be seen in the numerous red-green, blue-red and purple-gold contrasts in Romanesque manuscript illuminations, especially those from early in the period. The warm ochres and reds of the St Albans Psalter miniatures are the more striking for being set against cooler and darker blue and green, as on page 52 where Thomas is dressed in a bright red robe set against the pale green of the fabrics behind, and Christ is framed by the scarlet lining of his cloak against the blue behind (Fig. 250). Such complementary contrasts work powerfully even when the colours are tinted with white, as can be seen in the Bury and Dover Bibles.

Complex complementary colour conventions were probably first developed by artists working in mosaic. In Ravenna in the fifth and sixth centuries, mosaicists produced many different effects with complementary colours. In the Church of San Vitale, the Empress Theodora's ladies-in-waiting are a harmony of red and green, tempered by the neutrality of several different grey colours (Fig. 251). In the head of the Emperor Justinian, delicate warm and cool lilacs, and pale bluish-greys and greens, are played off against smaller accents of bright red and orange, replicating the fall of light onto translucent skin (Fig. 252). The artist had clearly observed and understood how a

⁸⁵ Augustine, Letter 29 to Alypius: "I remarked the beauty of the day was enhanced by comparison with the night and that a white colour was more pleasing alongside of a black" (trans. Baxter, 1980: 89).

⁸⁶ Bernard, Letter 78 (Scott James 80) to Abbot Suger: *Similia ex similibus innotescunt, sed ex contrariis contraria aut placent amplius, aut displicent. Junge nigra candidis, et mutua collatione in proprio quaeque colore distinctius enitescunt. Sic foeda admota pulchris, pulchriora reddunt, magis foeda redduntur* (Leclercq and Rochais, 1974: 204; trans. Scott James, 1998: 113; modified by Author).

warm coloured light could be reflected back into darker and cooler shadows, and used this knowledge to model the head without interior outlines, using colour to model the fall of light on the form. John Gage has observed that random scatterings of red *tesserae* were often used to warm up areas of flesh,⁸⁷ and Andre Grabar highlighted such red flecks in his beautiful description of colour in the two imperial figure groups at San Vitale:

This curious scene is sublimated by the magic power of art; by a profusion of colours, by glints of gold and pools of darkness, by flecks of vermilion, emerald green and white, by daring juxtapositions of exquisitely delicate hues (pearl-grey, dull purple, violet-tinged white) which, proliferating everywhere, transform the orderly array of figures into a carnival of colour, a glittering haze of broken lights.⁸⁸

Likewise, the plain exterior of the slightly earlier Mausoleum of Galla Placidia in Ravenna (Fig. 253) hides an interior completely covered in mosaic decoration, described by Itten:

The mausoleum of Galla Placidia is dominated by a remarkable coloured atmosphere of gray light. This effect is produced by bathing the blue mosaic walls of the interior in an orange light, filtered through narrow windows of orange-tinted alabaster. Orange and blue are complementary colors, the mixing of which yields gray. As the visitor moves about the shrine, he receives different quantities of light which is alternately accented blue and orange, the walls reflecting these colors at ever-changing angles.⁸⁹

Further, it has been suggested that the artists deliberately used the windows in the mausoleum to manipulate and control the fall of light onto coloured surfaces.⁹⁰ The light became an additional element of their visual language, capable of modifying and enlivening their colour. It should be noted that these writers are describing colours and the power of colour, and sometimes the effects of light on the colours, but not their tonal values.

⁸⁷ Gage, 1993: 50.

⁸⁸ Grabar, 1953: 68.

⁸⁹ Itten, 1961: 13.

⁹⁰ Gage, 1993: 46.

Somewhat later in England, Reginald of Durham described the use of complementary colours in a text written *c.* 1175, which is understood to have been based upon an eyewitness account of the translation of the remains of St Cuthbert into the new cathedral in 1104; it provides more evidence of later medieval interest in colour in its description of one of Cuthbert's garments:⁹¹

The most subtle figures of flowers and little beasts, very minute in both workmanship and design, are interwoven in this fabric. For decorative beauty its appearance is varied by contrasted sprinklings of rather uncertain colour that proves to be yellow. The charm of this variation comes out most beautifully in the purple cloth, and fresh contrasts are produced by the play of scattered spots. The random infusion of yellow colour seems to have been laid down drop by drop; by virtue of this yellow the reddish tonality in the purple is made to shine with more vigour and brilliance.⁹²

In the St Albans Psalter a few garments are painted in colours which make use of this type of complementary contrast, and some echo the description of Cuthbert's Byzantine silk, although not with the purple-yellow contrast; these include Herod's bright scarlet robe with blue pattern (Fig. 254) and Martin's bed cover (Fig. 311). Other garments are very occasionally painted with what Petzold called "changeant" colours, which usually involved laying a warm red wash over a cold blue ground colour, as in the apostle's cloak on folio 52 (Fig. 255).

In the Edmund miniature cycle, the complementary contrasts are much more extensive, and garments worn by Edmund and his bishops exhibit blue-orange and red-green contrasts (Fig. 256), while on folio 12v the artist also contrasted the purple silk of Edmund's tunic with the yellow gold (Fig. 257). In the second volume of the Dover

⁹¹ Schapiro, 1947: 11; Heslop, 1998a: 136.

⁹² *Libellus Cuthb.: In qua fabrica intextilis est subtilissima et tam florem quam bestiolearum inserta effigies, opere simul ac discretione minutissima. Cuius speciam, ob decoris pulcritudinem, frequenti varietatis respersione immutat color alius, qui creditur et probatur esse citrinus. Quae gratia perpulcre in panno purpureo emicat, et respergentibus maculis intermixtum diversitatis quaedam nova moderamina format. Haec coloris citrini infusio respersa, utpote guttatim insidere, dinoscitur; cuius virtute vel decore purpurae subrufa species vehementius atque plecarius relucere compellitur* (Raine, 1845: 87; trans. Schapiro, 1947: 12); see also Dodwell, 1982: 147-49, on the material of Cuthbert's dalmatic, and the effects of reflected light.

Bible a bright opaque red is used next to an opaque pale blue, such as in Solomon's silk tunic (Fig. 258), or St Luke's robe (Fig. 259). All these brightly patterned fabrics may reflect knowledge of the colours used in Byzantine silks,⁹³ as well as manuscripts such as the Sermons of St John Chrysostom (Fig. 260), made at Constantinople between 1078 and 1081.⁹⁴

Such colour contrasts, therefore, work pictorially on the eye, either individually or in an integrated way. In full-colour painting, like that of the Alexis Master, they often function together. The warm-cold contrast can be very versatile, strongly expressing differences in distance. It can be used pictorially because generally to the human eye the further away an object is, the cooler its colour looks:

Cold-warm contrast, then, contains elements suggesting nearness and distance. It is an important medium of representation for plastic and perspective effects.⁹⁵

Thus in miniatures and initials, lightly toned and warmer figures are often placed against cooler and darker background colours, providing a light-against-dark contrast, and also a warm against cool contrast; the warm reds come forward to the surface of the page, while the cold blues recede, simulating distance or depth.

In the St Edmund miniatures, reds, oranges and bright mauves are used for garments in this way, reds in the foreground, cooler blues behind. They direct the eye to the significant figures or moment or gestures in the narrative, as in the group of English men, dressed in various shades of red, who find the body of Edmund on folio 15r (Fig. 261). Red is used in a similar way in the St Albans Psalter miniatures, but more sparingly.⁹⁶

Heslop has described how Master Hugo established the authority of Moses in the Bury Bible by the use of colour contrasts. On folio 94r Moses is taller than the other

⁹³ Petzold, 1986: 166.

⁹⁴ Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS Coislin 79; Grabar, 1953: 178.

⁹⁵ Itten, 1961: 65.

⁹⁶ See pages 22, 23, 42, 43, 47, 48, 50, 51, 52 and 53.

figures and placed at the centre of the group (Fig. 262), apart from his brother Aaron, but the artist also used visual contrasts to isolate Moses from the other figures; he is dressed in red and purple, colours which stand out lighter and warmer than the blue and green behind. Aaron, on the other hand, although enlarged in keeping with the requirements of the composition, is clothed in green and blue and therefore blends into the background rather more.⁹⁷

In the Lambeth Bible, where for the most part the pale colours are subordinate to line, the colour is generally less informative than this. However, the artist did use colour occasionally to spotlight a figure; in the lower left corner of the miniature to Ruth on folio 130r, for example, Ruth's bright opaque red robe is silhouetted against an equally strong blue, and prevents her from being too peripheral in a complex arrangement of figures mostly dressed in pale mauve (Fig. 263).

Red is often used as a sign in this way, a simple technique which artists used almost instinctively to make their images more easily understood and remembered. This is discussed below. Techniques used in the monastic schoolroom, which may have influenced how colour was used, are also discussed.

5:3 MNEMONIC COLOUR

The mnemonic value of colour was established in an instruction from God in the book of Numbers:

The Lord also said to Moses: speak to the children of Israel, and thou shalt tell them to make to themselves fringes in the corners of their garments, putting in them ribands of blue: that when they shall see them, they may remember all the commandments of the Lord, and not follow their own thoughts and eyes going astray after divers things, but rather being mindful of the precepts of the Lord, may do them and be holy to their God.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Heslop, 1990: 138.

⁹⁸ Numbers 15: 37-40.

In this passage, blue—*vittas hyacinthinas*—functions symbolically by association with God, but also as a mnemonic sign, to remind the people of God’s commandments—*recordentur omnium mandatorum Domini*. It was, therefore, a scriptural example to readers and artists of how colour could be used to purpose: in this case as a reminder of God’s words.

The mnemonic repetition of forms and colour was sometimes used in narrative illustration, and is most apparent when a character or group of characters looks the same each time. This had long been a visual technique from earliest Christian times, and in large illustrated Carolingian bibles such as the Bible of San Paolo, where the figures of Moses are identical to each other in form and colour (Fig. 342), but also in English manuscripts such as the Benedictional of St Æthelwold.

In the work of the Alexis Master especially there is a relationship between the simultaneous appearance of two or more representations of the same figure or motif and the exact and systematic repetition of colour. For example, the colours of the clothing worn by the Magdalen, at each of her three appearances after the Crucifixion, are carefully repeated. All four Gospels tell of Mary’s visit to the sepulchre of Christ where she finds the tomb empty; this event is at the centre of a short sequence of images in the Psalter which begins on page 47 where Mary is shown at the Descent from the Cross (Fig. 264). On pages 50 and 51, in two scenes which form a single narrative sequence across the opening, the angel tells her that Christ has risen and she then goes to tell the Apostles the news (Fig. 265). In all three scenes she is nimbed, and wears the same blue inner tunic, visible at the sleeves, a mauve outer tunic, a blue wimple, and a bright, deep red robe or cloak with a green lining. Kidd noted that the red colour in the miniature cycle was used to “emphasize Mary Magdalen”,⁹⁹ but such a carefully repeated use of colour probably had some further meaning.

⁹⁹ Kidd, 2008: 74.

Magdalena Carrasco has explained why the two images on pages 50 and 51 were placed together:

The Magdalen's authority to speak derives from her distinctive role as witness to the event. This is suggested in the Psalter by the juxtaposition, on facing pages, of the Women at the Sepulchre and the Magdalen addressing the apostles. The theme of witness, by sight, touch, or by a dream or spiritual vision, is of central concern in the Psalter, discernable in the immediately adjacent scenes of the Doubting Thomas and the legend of St. Martin, as well as in the later Emmaus cycle.¹⁰⁰

It appears therefore that the careful use of repeating colours was to ensure that the viewer understood it was the same woman at each event.

Alexander has suggested that this type of repetition was especially important for images where the artist had illusionistic or naturalistic pretensions:

Consistency is the important factor here. For example, if the same person is represented in consecutive scenes the colour of his hair or of his clothes should remain the same.¹⁰¹

And as he pointed out, the important point generally was that objects should retain their colours, as they did in the real world, even if they were not naturalistic, so that they were later recognizable.

Similar precision of colour was used in the two representations of St Martin and his cloak (Fig. 266), where Martin wears a green tunic each time, and where the artist mixed an unusual and eye-catching pale grey for his cloak. This made it obvious that it was the same cloak shared by Martin and Christ.

In an analysis of the late eleventh-century illustrated life of St Radegund Carrasco suggested that the repetition of locations, events and objects emphasised the "the literal historical truth of Radegund's life",¹⁰² and reinforced parallels with the lives of other saints, and with Christ. She wrote: "repetition is a significant and self-conscious stylistic

¹⁰⁰ Carrasco, 1999: 70.

¹⁰¹ Alexander, 1975: 146.

¹⁰² Carrasco, 1990: 417.

device, one that operates on a verbal as well as a visual level".¹⁰³ She did not, however, include colour in her discussion, despite the rich colour of the Radegund illustrations.

Another example from the Psalter is the Alexis drawing, which illustrates three consecutive departure scenes from the story of Alexis in one narrative image (Fig. 267). Each scene is separated from the others within architectural structures. The whole drawing is like a stage set whose architectural elements face the viewer frontally, with characters interacting with the spaces and doorway, one of whom exits to the right. The coloured garments of the two main characters are repeated exactly, and the wealthy life Alexis gives up is evoked not only by his sword and the furnishings and fabrics of the house, but also by his cloak's luxurious lining of white furs, a visual symbol of wealth. The intention is to move the eye of the viewer to the right, to simulate the movement of departure, but the eye settles first on the young bride at centre stage, providing an opportunity for a moment's contemplation on her predicament and its implications. After moving further to the right, following the figure of Alexis through the door and into the boat, it then stops at the boatman who faces inward and turns the viewer's gaze back to the young couple; the hand of God also points back into the image. The boatman is an end-stop which prevents the eyes moving beyond the page; moreover, the boatman's oar, or rudder, which the eye naturally follows, points down to the text, where the same mnemonic impulse is evident in the use of alternating lines of red and blue lettering to make the words more memorable.¹⁰⁴

This approach, where the reader is the viewer of a play-like narrative, has been linked to liturgical drama,¹⁰⁵ and it may reflect Abbot Geoffrey's interests while at St

¹⁰³ Carrasco, 1990: 417.

¹⁰⁴ Geddes, 2008: 184.

¹⁰⁵ Pächt, 1962: 33-59.

Albans. Thomson recorded his propensity for “the dramatic possibilities of the liturgy”,¹⁰⁶ and Geddes noted that:

...several key aspects of Geoffrey’s background and personality inform the contents and appearance of the St Albans Psalter. His interests in teaching and drama are apparent. The psalter is notable for its didactic layout and its theatrical appearance, both in the contents of many scenes and in the dynamic postures and gestures of the characters.¹⁰⁷

Earlier in his career Geoffrey had been a teacher, and he may have encouraged the artist in his careful disposition of colours within this didactic layout.

This approach may have to do with another monastic teaching method; as an abbot and teacher Geoffrey would also have encouraged the study of mnemonic theory and memory training, which were important within the cloister during the twelfth century.¹⁰⁸

Lectio divina and *meditatio* required regular reading of the Scriptures and various other texts, as we have seen, often with total memorization: “...inscribing the sacred text first in the body and then in the soul”.¹⁰⁹

In twelfth-century Paris, Hugh of St Victor advised his students to find abbreviated mnemonic devices:

Lay hold of the source and you have the whole thing. I say this because the memory of man is dull and likes brevity, and, if it is dissipated upon many things, it has less to bestow on each of them. We ought, therefore, in all we learn, to gather brief and dependable abstracts to be stored in the little chest of the memory, so that later on, when need arises, we can derive everything from them. These one must often turn over in the mind and regurgitate from the stomach of one’s memory to taste them, lest by long inattention to them, they disappear.¹¹⁰

To Hugh and his contemporaries in England, training the memory was a very important but normal activity, “because it structured the way medieval writers set out their thoughts”.¹¹¹ Reading, learning, meditation and writing were therefore concerned with

¹⁰⁶ Thomson, 1982 I: 21.

¹⁰⁷ Geddes, 2005: 14.

¹⁰⁸ Carruthers, 1993: 893.

¹⁰⁹ Lewis, 1991: 4.

¹¹⁰ *Didascalicon* 3. 11: PL 176: 773 (trans. Taylor, 1961: 94).

¹¹¹ Clanchy, 1993: 173.

memory: “To speak, to think, to remember, are the three necessary phases of the same activity.”¹¹²

Mnemonic theory was known at twelfth-century St Albans from Cicero’s *Rhetorica de Inventione* and *Ad Herennium*, copies of which were made there during the first quarter of the century,¹¹³ copied by a St Albans hand in a small volume designed for use in teaching, and the evidence suggests the volume was indeed used.¹¹⁴ It was kept in the library at St Albans,¹¹⁵ and is now in the British Library.¹¹⁶

Ad Herennium may have influenced the design of the St Albans Psalter:¹¹⁷ Geddes has suggested that the teaching methods found in Pseudo-Cicero’s text are reflected in the Psalter initials, with their busy figures prompting the reader by pointing at the red rubrics:

The design of these initials is particularly helpful and encouraging for a reader: they serve as an exemplar of the most up-to-date teaching methods in the twelfth century. These deal, in part, with training the memory accurately. *Ad Herennium* recommends that information be set, mentally, in familiar backgrounds, to aid recall.¹¹⁸

Some images were deemed better than others in aiding memorization:

in normal cases some images are strong and sharp [*firmae et acres*] and suitable for awakening recollection, and others so weak and feeble [*inbecillae et infirmae*] as hardly to succeed in stimulating memory...¹¹⁹

Pseudo-Cicero therefore proposed that mental images of the real world should be used, stressing the value of contrast:

Let art, then, imitate nature, find what she desires, and follow as she directs... We ought, then, to set up images of a kind that can adhere longest in the memory. And we shall do so if we establish likenesses as striking as possible; if we set up images that are not many or vague, but doing something; if we assign to them exceptional beauty or singular ugliness; if

¹¹² Leclercq, 1982: 16.

¹¹³ Thomson, 1982, I: 93; Gameson, 1999: 107.

¹¹⁴ Thomson, 1982, I: 19.

¹¹⁵ Thomson, 1982, I: 93.

¹¹⁶ London, BL Harley 2624.

¹¹⁷ Geddes, 2008: 168.

¹¹⁸ Geddes, 2008: 183-84.

¹¹⁹ *Ad Herennium* III. 21 (trans. Caplan, 1954: 219).

we dress some of them with crowns or purple cloaks, for example, so that the likeness may be more distinct to us...¹²⁰

These words and phrases are so visual that it strongly suggests the author was thinking of the effects of painted images while writing his text. Consequently it is understandable how such passages could, in turn, influence the development of illustration during a time when *Ad Herennium* was being carefully studied. It has already been pointed out above that in many illuminations colours were used in contrasting and eye-catching ways: warm and pale colours set against cool green or blue, making the foreground figures and forms more memorable. Light-dark contrasts and complementary-colour contrasts had similar effects. Their use may also reflect mnemonic theory: “Artists’ images had to be both arresting and clearly organized if they were to be stored away properly.”¹²¹

In his *De Arca Noe Mystica*, Hugh of St Victor explained his ideas on memory using the analogy of coloured manuscript pages, and line drawings and diagrams, with many descriptive phrases derived from the visual arts, including the words *depingere* (draw) and *pingo* (I paint).¹²² The canon tables found in many Gospel books exemplify the diagrammatic and mnemonic tabular layouts of the kind that Hugh discussed. His writings were collected and copied at St Albans; *De Arca Noe Mystica* and the *Didascalicon* can be found in a mid-twelfth-century volume made there,¹²³ and now in the Bodleian.¹²⁴

When considered in this light, the Magdalen, Alexis and Martin images described above make even more sense. Moreover, the Magi scenes in the Psalter also contain some carefully contrived mnemonic colour. In the opening of pages 24 and 25 two consecutive scenes form a short but complete narrative sequence, where a careful

¹²⁰ *Ad Herennium* III. 22 (trans. Caplan, 1954: 221).

¹²¹ Camille, 1996: 83.

¹²² Carruthers, 1993: 890.

¹²³ Thomson, 1982 I: 107-108.

¹²⁴ Oxford, Bodleian Library Laud misc. 370.

repetition of colours and individual portrait heads were used (Fig. 268). Apart from the legs of the two older Magi, who are at the rear in both scenes, the two representations of each man's clothing exactly match in colour, because each man appears twice, and all are visible simultaneously. The young Magus, for example, is dressed both times in the same blue tunic, bright red cloak, green hose, and grey hat or crown.

The bright orange-ochre cloak of the elderly Magus, which flutters out behind him in parallel pleats denoting movement, and the flanks of his blue horse provide directional impetus from left to right as they move from page 24 across to page 25, and disappear through the open doorway into the Adoration scene; this illustrates their journey and arrival. The orange-ochre cloak is therefore visible three times in the sequence, which works with the blue horse, itself visible twice, to draw the reader smoothly into the Adoration space before meeting the large end-stop of the Virgin and Child facing left. The mnemonic colour is reinforced not only by repetition of the drawn Magi portraits, but also by their positions relative to each other; in both scenes the young Magus is on the right and leads the group, with the middle-aged Magus in the middle, as he is in all five depictions of the Magi in the Psalter.

This opening could almost be an illustration made to clarify the following passage of *Ad Herennium*:

The artificial memory includes backgrounds and images...for example a house, an intercolumnar space, a recess, and arch, or the like. An image is, as it were, a figure, mark, or portrait of the object we wish to remember, for example, if we wish to recall a horse, a lion, or an eagle, we must place its image in a definite background.¹²⁵

As might be expected, repetition of colour was also used in Edmund's *libellus*; for example, the Danish messenger, visible twice in the opening of folios 10v and 11r, and again on 11v, has a carefully repeated red tunic, blue collar, pale grey-mauve socks and

¹²⁵ *Ad Herennium* III. 16 (trans. Caplan, 1954: 209).

black shoes (Figs 269-271), colour precision which probably reflected his importance in Abbo's *Passio*.

In the Lambeth Bible, Walter Cahn noted the "insistent reiteration" of the six repeated images of Nebuchadnezzar on folio 285v (Fig. 300), which provides narrative connections between the episodes within the complex and busy structure of the miniature.¹²⁶ The king's identity is established by the carefully drawn portrait heads, hair, crown, and by the repeated colours of his tunic and cloak. Several figures on other folios repeat their colours; Moses in the upper register of the Numbers miniature, the two Ezechiels in the initial on 258v, and in the miniature on 258r. Others do not match, most notably and inexplicably the two adjacent figures of Abraham on the Genesis miniature.

Similarly on the recto of the Morgan Leaf the colours of garments worn by the three figures of Hannah are not repeated precisely, nor are those of Samuel and Eli, apart from their long blue tunics and Hannah's green outer robe (Fig. 133). These images were painted by the Apocrypha Master who had a close association with St Albans; he either did not see any necessity for duplicating the colours exactly, or his colours were altered in some way.

In addition to the characteristics discussed above, some colours gained symbolic significance and needed to be repeated in similar fashion. Petzold saw symbolic meanings in some colours when applied to individual biblical characters, such as St John the Evangelist who he suggested was often depicted wearing red and green garments. "In its ubiquitousness this convention assumes the function of an attribute which assists in identifying the apostle."¹²⁷

There is no doubt he was right in this; as already noted, the Magdalen was depicted wearing a red cloak or robe, and a similar repeated usage of green garments can be seen

¹²⁶ Cahn, 1982: 195.

¹²⁷ Petzold, 1999: 126.

in depictions of St Peter, as noted by Gage;¹²⁸ examples can be seen in the Verdun Anselm and the Bodleian Anselm. Such colours became attributes, like palm leaves and halos, with mnemonic function, but they were also signs of something else, with other meanings. As Augustine declared:

For a sign is a thing which, over and above the impression it makes on the senses, causes something else to come into the mind as a consequence of itself.¹²⁹

Although, like Jerome, he was thinking of the meanings of words and textual or scriptural references, he also acknowledged that there were other types of sign, including visual ones which could be recognized by the eyes:

Of the signs, then, by which men communicate their thoughts to one another, some relate to the sense of sight, some to that of hearing, a very few to the other senses.¹³⁰

The visual symbolism of the gold or red halo/nimbus, of whatever period, is so ubiquitous that its significance is universally understood, while its abstract pictorial form, circular and perfect, illustrates well what Augustine meant by a sign.¹³¹

Peter Kidd has also suggested that some colours had some significance beyond pictorial decoration, but was cautious about speculation:

Colour-symbolism is a complex subject about which it is dangerous to speculate, but it is clear that some colours had particular meanings in some contexts in twelfth-century art.¹³²

Therefore, with this note of caution in mind, the symbolism of colour in twelfth-century England can now be explored.

¹²⁸ Gage, 1978: 108.

¹²⁹ *De Doc. Chr.* II. 1: *Signum est enim res, praeter speciem quam ingerit sensibus, aliud aliquid ex se faciens in cogitationem venire* (PL 34: 35; trans. Knight, 2009: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/12022.htm>).

¹³⁰ *De Doc. Chr.* II. 3: *Signorum igitur quibus inter se humines sua sensa communicant, quaedam pertinent ad oculorum sensum, pleraque ad aurium, paucissima ad caeterus sensus* (PL 34: 37; trans. Knight, 2009: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/12022.htm>).

¹³¹ Innocent III, Letter 1 to King Richard I: ...roundness betokens eternity, which is without beginning or end (trans. Cheney and Semple, 1953: 2).

¹³² Kidd, 2008: 74.

5:4 THE SYMBOLISM OF COLOUR

Having considered the colours of the Tabernacle in the Vulgate, and the visual characteristics of the colour palette used by artists, the investigation of their symbolic attributes must begin with Jerome's Exodus text. As already noted, this provided the main source about colour upon which all later interpretations were based; and although twelfth-century perceptions of colour words in the Vulgate are impossible to quantify with any exactitude, we can at least be sure that the Latin words we read today are those discussed by artists and their patrons.¹³³ The four colours of the Tabernacle, *hyacinthus*, *purpura*, *coccum*, and *byssus*, therefore, form a natural starting point.

During the first century the Hebrew historian Flavius Josephus wrote in Greek about the four colours in his *Antiquitates Judicae*, where he compared the colours of the curtains and other fabrics, including the vestments of the priests, to the four elements: linen with the earth; blue the air; scarlet with fire; and purple with the sea. He suggested that gold represented the splendour of God "by which all things are enlightened".¹³⁴

Jerome was well acquainted with the work of Josephus; he wrote a chapter about him in his *De Viris Illustribus*, and also mentioned Josephus's views on Hebrew life in a letter to Eustochium.¹³⁵ He speculated on the meanings of the four colours, in a very similar manner to Josephus, in letters to friends, several of which became very influential. In a letter to Fabiola he wrote:

The four colours refer to the four elements of which all things consist—fine linen is connected to the earth, since it comes from the earth; purple with the sea since it is dyed with snails from it; blue with the air because of the similarity of colour; and scarlet with fire...¹³⁶

¹³³ De Hamel, 2001: 64.

¹³⁴ *Antiquitates* 3. 7. 183 (trans. Whiston, 2006: 112).

¹³⁵ *Epistula ad Eustochium* 22 (trans. Wright, 1933: 141-43).

¹³⁶ *Epistula ad Fabiolam* 64: *Quatuor colores ad quatuor elementa referunt, ex quibus universa subsistunt—byssus terrae deputatur, quia ex terra gignitur, purpura mari, quia ex eus cocleolis tinguitur, hyacinthus aeri propter coloris similitudinem, coccus igni...* (Hilberg, 1910: 605; trans. Ferrante: <http://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/letter/364.html>).

In the seventh century Gregory the Great commented on the meaning of the four colours interwoven in the ephod of the Hebrew priesthood:

The ephod is also rightly ordered to be made of gold, blue, purple, twice dyed scarlet and fine twined linen, that it may be shown by how great diversity of virtues the priest ought to be distinguished.¹³⁷

In Anglo-Saxon Northumbria, Bede, who knew the work of Josephus through a Latin translation of the *Antiquitates*,¹³⁸ also ruminated about the meanings of the four colours of the Tabernacle curtains:

...the four just characteristics of the elect are expressed in these four colours of the curtains: in fine linen, the purified flesh that is shining with chastity; in blue, the mind that is desiring things above; in purple, the flesh that is subject to afflictions; in scarlet twice dyed, the mind that in the midst of afflictions is shining with the love of God and neighbour.¹³⁹

Leclercq noted that such comments were made in keeping with common interpretations of colour symbolism:

It is natural then to find them, with very slight variations, in all the patristic and medieval commentators. Many of them, besides, had already been proposed, at least summarily, by Origen.¹⁴⁰

Anglo-Saxon and Insular artists were probably aware of such meanings, and may have incorporated them into their illuminations. The colours of the Temple structure on folio 202v of the Book of Kells, for example, seem to be derived from the four colours used to describe the Tabernacle.¹⁴¹ Also, Christ is generally dressed in blue and purple throughout, indicating that the colours had gained some symbolic significance. In a detailed iconographic analysis of folios 7v and 8r, Pulliam's description of how the

¹³⁷ *Regulae Past.* II. 3: *Quod recte etiam supernumerale ex auro hyacintho, purpura, bis tincto cocco, et torta fieri bysso praecipitur, ut quanta sacerdos clarescere virtutum diversitate debeat demonstratur* (PL 77: 29; trans. Knight, 2009: www.newadvent.org/fathers/36012.htm; modified by Author).

¹³⁸ Holder, 1994: xvi; Henderson, 1999: 127.

¹³⁹ *De Tab.* II. 2: *...quattuor cortinarum coloribus quattuor justificationes exprimuntur electorum: in bysso retorta caro castitate renitens, in hyacintha mens superna desiderans, in purpura caro passionibus subiacens, in cocco bis tincto mens inter passiones Dei et proximi dilectione praeifulgens* (Hurst, 1969: 46; trans. Holder, 1994: 50).

¹⁴⁰ Leclercq, 1982: 78-79.

¹⁴¹ Pulliam, 2011: 66.

colours may have been used seems entirely reasonable in the light of ancient exegesis. For example, she suggested the artists varied the colours of the tri-dot patterns according to which garments they decorated: the white dots on the Virgin's purple robe, conspicuous and thickly painted, might be signs of the Virgin's purity, and her breast milk, which could be interpreted as representing: "...the Church inviting her children to drink from her teachings and sacraments".¹⁴² Christ's robe, decorated with red tri-dots, might be interpreted as the garment sprinkled with blood, from Revelation 19: 13.¹⁴³

Pulliam has also noted correctly that the perception of blue as a celestial colour was derived from commentators such as Gregory the Great and Bede.¹⁴⁴ As Leclercq pointed out:

Sometimes the symbolism is so simple that the whole tradition has to accept it. The hyacinth, for example, is blue; the ancient naturalists cited by Bede had all recorded this fact. But blue is the colour of the sky, and so the hyacinth will stand for celestial life.¹⁴⁵

Such symbolic meanings are discussed separately below, beginning with blue.

BLUE

In his letter to Paulinus, which achieved very high status as the *Frater Ambrosius* prologue in many Vulgate Bibles, Jerome drew attention to the symbolism of the coloured vestments described in Leviticus: "the description of Aaron's vestments, and all the regulations connected with the Levites are symbols of things heavenly".¹⁴⁶ This in turn highlighted the heavenly symbolism of Aaron's blue tunic mentioned in Leviticus 8: 7 and worn beneath the ephod. It is described in Exodus 28: 31 as the *tunicam totam hyacinthinam*.

¹⁴² Pulliam, 2011: 66-68.

¹⁴³ Pulliam, 2011: 65.

¹⁴⁴ Pulliam, 2011: 65.

¹⁴⁵ Leclercq, 1982: 78.

¹⁴⁶ *Epistula ad Paulinum* 53: ...*et vestes Aaron et totus ordo Leviticus spirant caelestia sacramenta* (Hilberg, 1910: 454-55; trans. Knight, 2009: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3001053.htm>).

Close examination of the colours used by the Alexis Master at St Albans suggests that he was influenced by such texts during the second and third decades of the twelfth century, one of his trademarks being the ankle length *tunicam totam hyacinthinam* worn as a kind of uniform by Christ, apostles and angels (Fig. 272). This was noted previously by Petzold, who wrote that blue: “tends to be reserved for the tunics of apostles, angels, Christ and holy personages in general” in the St Albans Psalter.¹⁴⁷ A count of the figures confirms that every apostle, angel and figure of Christ in the Psalter miniatures wears the blue tunic, with the remarkable exceptions of one apostle and one angel.

Before discussing the textual sources of the Alexis Master, the visual sources for his use of colour should be considered; however they are not very clear. In the eleventh-century Benedictional of St Æthelwold from Winchester the apostles wear garments variously coloured in tints of brick red, white, ochre, mauve, grey, and blue (Fig. 273). Likewise, in the early-twelfth-century *Passionale* Arundel 91 from Canterbury, the saints wear a variety of tunic colours (Fig. 274).

It might be supposed that the immediate origin of the blue tunic was therefore a continental one, but the evidence is mixed. In the Morgan Sacramentary, made at St Michel, Normandy, c. 1060, the apostles and other heavenly figures wear tunics in a variety of strong colours; in the Assumption (Fig. 275), the angels wear blue tunics, shaded with green, and the Virgin wears a bright scarlet-orange tunic and white robes, but with pale blue sleeves of a tight inner tunic just visible, similar to that worn by the Magdalen in the St Albans Psalter.

The late eleventh-century Gospel Lectionary made in Salzburg, Morgan M. 780, also has apostles and angels who wear various colours, with shades of green, red, purple, ochre, and blue (Figs 184 and 276); however, five out of seven figures of Christ

¹⁴⁷ Petzold, 1986: 157.

wear pale blue tunics with scarlet robes. In another Gospel lectionary, made c.1100 in southern Germany,¹⁴⁸ Christ wears a very pale blue tunic and purple robe at the Ascension, but the apostles and angels wear tunics of pale blue, red-brown, yellow ochre, purple, and pink (Fig. 277).

Further east, the use of the long blue tunic as a heavenly identifier had developed by the middle of the eleventh century, and in the Transfiguration at St Sophia in Ohrid, figures of the apostles and angels were all painted wearing the same blue tunics, like a uniform (Fig. 278). In the early-twelfth-century wall paintings of the monastery church of Asinou, pale blue tunics alternate with pale red (Fig. 296).

Demus has suggested that, in the first half of the twelfth century, illuminators of the court scriptorium in Constantinople felt the influence of Western artists, and had developed a similar colour language. There was:

a new efflorescence of colour...possibly attributable to certain influences from the West, with which the Comnenian dynasty was at that time in fairly close contact...¹⁴⁹

The *Codex Ebnerianus*,¹⁵⁰ a Greek New Testament painted at Constantinople in the early-twelfth century,¹⁵¹ was considered by Demus to be one of the most richly coloured examples. The figures are mainly author portraits of the Evangelists (Fig. 280), with scenes from the life of Christ in small lunettes above, and miniatures of James, Peter, John, Jude and Paul, with scenes from their lives also in lunettes. In total, eighteen of thirty-three figures wear blue or bluish grey tunics, twelve wear white, and three figures of God or Christ wear purple, all three colours of some theological significance.

¹⁴⁸ London, BL Egerton MS 809.

¹⁴⁹ Demus, 1967: 9.

¹⁵⁰ Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Auct. T. Infra 1.10.

¹⁵¹ Pächt, 1952: 7.

At the abbey of Cluny in Burgundy, stylistic developments occurred which are of well-attested Byzantine origin,¹⁵² and in the Pentecost miniature of the Cluny Lectionary of about 1110 (Fig. 46), Christ and the apostles wear pale greyish-blue tunics similar to those in the *Codex Ebnerianus*.

The blue tunic has been described as a leitmotif of Ottonian painting by Petzold.¹⁵³ However, the most influential of Ottonian manuscripts, designed and painted in part by the Gregory Master, the *Codex Egberti*,¹⁵⁴ made during the late tenth century, contains figures of Christ and the apostles clearly dressed in long white tunics. Examples of white togas, robes and tunics can also be seen in many earlier wall paintings and mosaics, especially in Rome and Ravenna (Fig. 281), and in early manuscripts.¹⁵⁵ Petzold acknowledged this classical source, suggesting as an example the mosaics in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia.¹⁵⁶

In the paintings of the Gregory Master himself, there seems to be no hint of blue in the shadows, and his intention was evidently to depict white tunics (Fig. 282), but in later Ottonian manuscripts, especially in those of the Liuthar group of luxurious books made at Reichenau, the white became a pale blue, as can be seen in the illuminations of the Pericopes Book of Henry II, probably produced between 1000 and 1012 (Fig. 283).¹⁵⁷ One of the major differences between the tunics in the Liuthar books and those in the St Albans Psalter miniatures is that secular figures sometimes wear long blue tunics indistinguishable from those worn by angels and saintly figures. Examples can be seen on folios 149v and 150r of the Pericopes Book of Henry II.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵² Koehler, 1941: 61-87; Wixom, 1969: 131-35; Dodwell, 1993: 216-218; see above pp. 92-93.

¹⁵³ Petzold, 1986: 152 n34.

¹⁵⁴ Trier, Stadtbibliothek, cod. 24.

¹⁵⁵ See the symbolism of white below.

¹⁵⁶ Petzold, 1986: 157.

¹⁵⁷ Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 4452.

¹⁵⁸ Mayer-Harting, 1999, Part one: colour plates 24 and 25.

It is important to note that no figure in the Psalter miniatures other than Christ, his apostles, and angels wears the *tunicam totam hyacinthum*. It is always worn with bare feet, a relationship derived from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke where Christ instructs the disciples to go and preach without shoes.¹⁵⁹ Christ also went barefooted, as Jerome explains in his letter to Eustochium: “For the Lord could not Himself possess what He had forbidden to His servants.”¹⁶⁰ This was a fairly well established iconography in the West, as can be seen in many Western manuscripts, but less so in Byzantine painting where the apostles and angels usually wear sandals.

Christ appears twenty-four times in the Psalter miniatures, and on each occasion he is barefooted and wears the same blue tunic (Fig. 284). In addition, the Christ Child wears blue swaddling clothes at the Nativity; the body of the dead Christ wears a blue loincloth at the Descent from the Cross; while at the Entombment the body is wrapped in a blue transparent shroud, which is seen again discarded at the opened tomb. All Fifty apostles and twenty-one angels are depicted bare-footed and wearing the *tunicam totam hyacinthinam*, apart from two. The figures in the Emmaus sequence, painted in line and wash, are dressed the same way, in the same colour. In addition, for some reason the tunic held for Christ by an angel at his Baptism is green rather than blue (Fig. 347); however the angel to the left does hold a blue garment. The green of the tunic is a special colour in the Psalter, used only three times; it is a yellow-green, also worn by the Virgin at the Nativity and the Presentation (Figs 2 and 14).

In the miniatures of Edmund’s *libellus* the fully dressed figure of Edmund appears ten times, in garments of various colours, but only in the Apotheosis does he wear the blue *tunicam talarem* of a saint (Fig. 327). The Alexis Master also painted fourteen full-page miniatures in the volume of Anselm’s Prayers and Meditations now at Verdun;

¹⁵⁹ Matthew 10: 10; Luke 10: 4.

¹⁶⁰ *Epistula ad Eustochium* 22: *Nec enim potuerat habere dominus, quod prohibuerat in servis* (Hilberg, 1910: 170; trans. Wright, 1933: 95).

only one remains, illustrating Christ giving the keys of Heaven to Peter, and both figures are nimbed and wear the long blue tunic (Fig. 285).

The care he took to maintain the consistency of the colour blue throughout his miniatures, especially in close association with the tunic, very strongly suggests it was used deliberately as a symbolic attribute of heavenly and saintly figures.

The key text for our understanding of the blue garment is found in Exodus, when God instructs Moses to make vestments for Aaron and the other Levite high priests, including a “completely blue tunic”.¹⁶¹ Jerome later interpreted the description of the vestments in the letter to Fabiola, where he explained the meanings of both the materials and colours of the priestly garments. He stated that the long blue tunic is worn only by the high priests of the Tabernacle: “a long tunic, all blue, having sleeves sewn of the same color”,¹⁶² which perfectly describes the completely blue full-length garment always worn by Christ, apostles and angels in the St Albans Psalter.

Gregory the Great developed this interpretation further; he described the blue used in the ephod:

Thus in the priest’s robe before all things gold glitters, to show that he should shine forth principally in the understanding of wisdom. And with it blue, which is resplendent with aerial colour, is conjoined to show that through all that he penetrates with his understanding he should rise above earthly favours to the love of celestial things.¹⁶³

Isidore of Seville and Bede followed him closely in this. Isidore wrote: “By means of blue the hope of future privileges of heaven is indicated.”¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ Exodus 28: 31: *facies et tunicam superumeralis totam hyacinthinam.*

¹⁶² *Epistula ad Fabiolam* 64: ...*tunica talaris, tota hyacinthina, ex lateribus eiusdem coloris adsutas habens manicas* (Hilberg, 1910: 600; trans. Ferrante, 2012: <http://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/letter/364.html>).

¹⁶³ *Regulae Past.* II. 3: *In sacerdotis quippe habitu ante omnia aurem fulget, ut in eo inellectus sapientiae principaliter emicet. Cui hyacinthus, qui aureo colore resplendet adjungitur, ut per omne quod intelligendo penetrat non ad favores infimos sed ad amorem caelestium surgat* (PL 77: 29; trans. Knight, 2009: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/36012.htm>).

¹⁶⁴ *Quaest. in Vetus Test.* 56: *Porro per hyacinthum spes caelestium praemiorum ostenditur* (PL 83: 316; trans. Author).

Bede's commentary *De Tabernaculo* was the first text to be entirely concerned with the Tabernacle as it was described in Exodus.¹⁶⁵ Bede had various sources, including a Latin translation of the *Antiquitates* of Josephus, Jerome's Letter 64 to Fabiola, Gregory's *Regulae Pastoralis Liber*, and a copy of Pliny's *Naturalis Historia*,¹⁶⁶ but probably not Isidore's *Quaestiones*.¹⁶⁷

In Chapter 6 he discussed the tunic of the ephod from Exodus 28: 31, describing it thus: "the outer tunic was all of blue, with nothing of any other colour being allowed at all".¹⁶⁸ He then explained that this reached to the feet or ankles to signify that all parts of the priest "should be covered from head to foot with the grace of virtues as though they were most resplendent with the colour of the sky".¹⁶⁹ These passages clearly link the Latin word *hyacinthus* with heaven, and with the blue of the sky, *aether*, so there can be little doubt about the colour being described, or its meaning.

Bede also discussed the long tunic in the *Explanatio Apocalypseos*, a chapter-by-chapter commentary on the Revelation of St John. He mentioned the figure of a man clothed down to the feet, that is *vestitum podere*,¹⁷⁰ in Revelation 1:13, and described the garment as a priestly vestment, linking it directly to Christ:

‘Poderis’, which is called in Latin ‘tunica talaris’ and is a sacerdotal vestment, shows the priesthood of Christ, who offered Himself for us, as a victim to the Father, upon the altar of the cross.¹⁷¹

The exegesis of Jerome and Gregory is confirmed by these references in Isidore and Bede; it is clear that the word *hyacinthus*, used by Jerome so frequently in Exodus and

¹⁶⁵ Holder, 1994: xv.

¹⁶⁶ Holder, 1994: xvi.

¹⁶⁷ Holder, 1994: 191.

¹⁶⁸ *De Tab.* III. 6: ...*exterior vero tunica tota hyacinthina nil omnino coloris alterius admittens* (Hurst, 1969: 109; trans. Holder, 1994: 125).

¹⁶⁹ *De Tab.* III. 6: ...*sed omne quod ageret quasi aetherio colore speciosissimum universa membra eius a capite usque ad pedes gratia virtutum contacta esse debere* (Hurst, 1969: 109; trans. Holder, 1994: 126).

¹⁷⁰ Holder, 1994: 126 n2: "Podere, from the Greek, meaning 'reaching to the feet'".

¹⁷¹ *Exp. Apoc.* I. 1: *Poderis, quae latine tunica talaris dicitur et est vestis sacerdotalis, Christi sacerdotium ostendit, quo se pro nobis in altari crucis obtulit hostiam patri* (Gryson, 2001: 245; trans. Marshall, 1878: 15; modified by Author).

elsewhere, was understood to mean ‘blue’, and the long blue tunic signified membership of a heavenly priesthood.

The works of Bede were widely read in the twelfth century, and his writings on the Tabernacle were especially popular among twelfth-century readers.¹⁷² His influence was immense, and his works multiplied and spread throughout England and the West.¹⁷³ The large number of surviving manuscript copies of *De Tabernaculo* are evidence of this popularity; at least one copy was made at St Albans during the early twelfth-century,¹⁷⁴ as noted in Chapter 1, written in part by Thomson’s Scribe A, and now at Oxford.¹⁷⁵ Gameson lists ten existing Anglo-Norman copies from English houses including St Albans, Salisbury, Durham, Evesham and Canterbury.¹⁷⁶ Lost copies are mentioned in other library catalogues of the period: “so we know that this text continued to inform, instruct, and console Christian readers eager to understand the mysteries of the sacred page”.¹⁷⁷ Smalley summed up Bede’s influence:

Bede affected medieval scholarship in two ways; he made a wide range of authors readily accessible and he set an example of eager curiosity in their use. He had St Jerome’s ardour for *lectio divina*, disciplined by the Benedictine Rule.¹⁷⁸

Bede was read and studied at the monastic school of Saint Victor near Paris in the early twelfth century; there the influential scholar Hugh of Saint Victor, some time before 1114, wrote that the colour *hyacinthus* “signifies the hope of heaven because it demonstrates the colour of heaven and of the pure sky”.¹⁷⁹

The writings of Hugh were collected at St Albans; Simon, abbot of St Albans between 1167 and 1183, corresponded with the Abbey of Saint Victor to ask whether he

¹⁷² Henderson, 1980: 18.

¹⁷³ Knowles, 1943: 149.

¹⁷⁴ Thomson, 1982: 23; Gameson, 1999: 142.

¹⁷⁵ Oxford, Christ Church 115.

¹⁷⁶ Gameson, 1999: 165.

¹⁷⁷ Holder, 1994: xxii.

¹⁷⁸ Smalley, 1964: 36.

¹⁷⁹ *Sermones 5: Hyacinthina spem caelestium designat, eo quod colorem caeli et aeris purioris in se demonstrat* (PL 177: 912; trans. Author).

could send a copyist to France to make copies of any of Hugh's texts still missing from the St Albans library.¹⁸⁰ During the 1130s the monks at Bury had also been acquiring and copying the works of recent and contemporary authors.¹⁸¹ It can be assumed therefore that monastic theologians and artists were aware of the textual symbolism of colour established by earlier exegesis, and were still discussing it.

If the interpretations of Jerome, Gregory, Bede and twelfth-century scholars like Hugh of St Victor encouraged the Alexis Master to assign meaning or value to the blue tunics worn by Christ and his companions, then, just as importantly, they can also be seen to explain why many figures in the miniatures do not wear blue garments, just as the *tunica tota hyacinthina* was not worn by ordinary Israelites. The four men and a woman with Christ in Simon the Pharisee's house (Fig. 286), and the crowd of men with Pilate (Fig. 287), are typical of the almost complete lack of blue in the clothing of secular figures. This must have been intentional and emphasizes the significance of the blue used elsewhere; it has been pointed out that the figures in the Pilate miniature represent the Jews,¹⁸² guilty of involvement in Christ's death, and none wears a long *tunicam hyacinthinam*, and there is virtually no blue in any other garments.

In addition one apostle at the Ascension of Christ does not wear a blue tunic (Fig. 272), and given the systematic use of the colour it is hard to believe that this was not also deliberate, although at the moment reasons are difficult to find.

The minimal use of blue in garments is also reflected in the miniatures of the Alexis Master's other extant prefatory cycle, depicting the life, martyrdom and miracles of Edmund. Here there are very few heavenly or saintly figures, rather the opposite, and consequently few blue garments. This phenomenon is explained by Jerome's comment

¹⁸⁰ De Hamel, 1994: 86.

¹⁸¹ Thomson, 1972: 630.

¹⁸² Geddes, 2005: 49.

in his letter to Fabiola that the blue garment could not be worn by everybody, and was suitable only for those ascending to higher things:

we are clothed in the blue vestment and we begin to ascend from earthly things to high things. This blue tunic... is proper to the high priest, signifying that the highest causes are not open to all, but to the greater and the perfect.¹⁸³

The many medieval textual references to the significance of the colour blue and the priestly *tunicam talarem* available in the scriptorium and library at St Albans, provide ample testimony for the theological basis of the Alexis Master's use of blue as a priestly colour. However, although the *tunicam talarem* was, like the halo, part of the common iconographic language of the Middle Ages, the evidence suggests that it was not always blue, either before the Alexis Master or after him.

A comparison with manuscripts made after his work in the St Albans Psalter confirms this. In the Shaftesbury Psalter, dated to c. 1130-40,¹⁸⁴ three miniatures are so like their counterparts in the St Albans Psalter that it has been claimed that the artist must have seen and studied them at St Albans;¹⁸⁵ indeed this is an unavoidable conclusion (Fig. 288). Every visible apostle wears a blue *tunicam talarem* after the St Albans model, and three women also. However, thirteen other figures including several angels, wear a variety of colours.

As already noted,¹⁸⁶ there were two artists who were probably working at St Albans in about 1150, who later worked on the Winchester Bible, after c. 1155.¹⁸⁷ They are the Apocrypha Master and Leaping Figures Master, and their work in the Bible strongly reflects the influence of St Albans. In their finished initials, those not over-painted by

¹⁸³ *Epistula ad Fabiolam* 64: ...*induimur hyacinthino vestimento et incipimus de terrenis ad alta conscendere. Haec ipsa hyacinthina tunica ... est proprie pontificis, significans rationem sublimium non patere omnibus, sed majoribus atque perfectis* (Hilberg, 1910: 610; trans. Ferrante, 2012:

<http://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/letter/364.html>).

¹⁸⁴ Kauffmann, 2003: 118.

¹⁸⁵ Kauffman, 2003: 139; Geddes, 2005: 66.

¹⁸⁶ See above, pp. 132-33.

¹⁸⁷ Kauffmann, 1984: 121.

later artists, they used blue in a similar way to the Alexis Master, that is apart from a few minor pictorial exceptions, secular figures generally do not wear blue garments, except soldiers who wear blue mail shirts. Examples can be seen in initials by the Leaping Figures Master; the Exodus initial on folio 21v, where none of the four figures wears blue; folio 232r, in the double initial to Psalm 51, where of six out of seven figures wear no blue at all; and the initial to the Song of Songs where *Sponsa et Sponsus*, dressed as earthly king and queen, sit against a deep blue ground, and where the only blue visible is in the groom's inner tunic sleeves (Fig. 290). The initial to Hosea by the Apocrypha Master exhibits the same very limited use of blue, but Hosea himself is bare-footed, nimbed and wears a *tunicam totam hyacinthinam* (Fig. 291). This artist also dressed the figures of Cyrus and Ezra in long blue tunics on folio 342r. Thus, both artists reserved blue mainly for the long tunic, and only very minimally in other garments.

The Apocrypha Master also designed and painted the double-sided frontispiece to the books of Kings, the Morgan Leaf, and it is likely that the Leaping Figures Master also worked briefly on the recto. It later underwent a stylistic transformation at the hands of the Morgan Master, and this offers an opportunity to compare and assess the contributions the artists made to the colours at different times, and how they reflect the changes that were occurring towards the end of the period.

On the recto the colours are essentially those of the Apocrypha Master, as pointed out by Donovan,¹⁸⁸ with heads and hands painted by the Morgan Master. Three registers are divided into arcaded panels, separated from each other by counter-changing colours of green, blue, brick red and grey (Fig. 133). The overall effect is dominated by the complementary relationships between various shades of blue and orange, and red and green, reflecting the influence of St Albans.

¹⁸⁸ Donovan, 1993: 38.

The figures are dressed in garments of various colours, but as might be expected several figures wear the *tunicam hyacinthinam*: it is worn by Hannah and the infant Samuel, the two nimbed figures of Samuel in the two adjacent scenes with Saul, the two figures of Eli the priest, who wears shoes and vestments, and the sleeping Samuel and God in his dream also wear blue tunics.

On the verso, however, the Morgan Master reworked the colours considerably, and there are no blue tunics (Fig. 142). He virtually eliminated the greens and introduced softer and more natural colours for the garments, based on variations of ochre, grey and pale terracotta or red-ochre. The double panels were painted out and transformed for the most part into simplified and less fussy single blue and terracotta squares, which counter-change against a flat, bright red background in the external scenes, and beneath rooftops signifying interior spaces in the middle register. Samuel here, anointing the young David (Fig. 292), is nimbed and bare-footed, but he no longer wears a blue *tunicam*, but instead one of linen-ochre colour, beneath another tunic of red with a decorated hem. Significantly, his outer robe or cloak is a voluminous all-in-one garment of intense blue, which hangs more naturally than the fabrics of the earlier painters. This blue robe was an innovation in England; not a single heavenly figure or apostle in the St Albans miniatures wears such a blue outer robe, and nor do their robes drape so naturalistically, but there are several in the Winchester Bible. There are no priestly blue tunics on the verso, so it appears therefore that the Morgan Master and his associates had a new attitude to colour and coloured garments which probably reflected a growing naturalism influenced by developments in secular clothing rather than Scriptural sources.

Other artists were less concerned to follow the example set at St Albans. In the Bury Bible blue is used generously everywhere, in backgrounds and garments, where it is regularly interspersed with red, ochre, green and mauve. Of the heavenly bare-footed

figures, only Moses on folio 70r, Aaron on folio 94r, and Christ in the Ezekiel miniature wear the long blue tunic, so its systematic use was not thought to be necessary. Christ also wears the tight white linen tunic beneath the blue one (Fig. 289), described in Exodus 28: 4 as *lineam strictam*, that is a close-fitting or straight linen garment with tight sleeves which Aaron the high priest wore beneath the *tunicam hyacinthinam*. This tight white linen tunic is not worn by any of the male figures in the St Albans Psalter miniatures, and provides another example of Hugo's independence from the influence of St Albans.

In the Lambeth Bible fifty figures are barefooted; most of these are nimbed and thirty-two of them wear the *tunicam totam hyacinthinam*, such as the prophet Ezechiel (Fig. 293), and the rest green, mauve, ochre or white. Of twelve angels visible in the Genesis miniature seven wear blue tunics, though in three different shades of blue; the five others wear pale ochre, white or green.

In the Dover Bible, only eight figures out of sixty-three wear the *tunicam totam hyacinthinam*, including all four depictions of Christ and the evangelist Matthew; the rest, especially in volume one, wear various pale but bright colours; Isaiah, for example, wears a bright green tunic and bright red robe (Fig. 294).

Only six out of eighteen male figures wear blue tunics in the Bodleian Anselm,¹⁸⁹ coloured with washes for the most part; of the others seven wear green, and five wear pale ochre. On folio 186v, the tunics are of various colours, and the two figures of Christ wear very pale ochre and green (Fig. 295).

This English use of blue tunics is hardly overwhelming, and it appears that the colour blue was not a universally accepted iconographic requirement. The *tunica talaris* remained the traditional vestment of apostles, saints and angels whether coloured blue, white or ochre. This may have reflected the growing Italo-Byzantine influence from

¹⁸⁹ Oxford, Bodleian Library Auct. D. 2. 6.

Sicily; this is evident in tunics painted by the artist of the first volume of the Dover Bible, who has been described as very Byzantine in his outlook.¹⁹⁰ His tunics and other garments in bright, pastel colours, such as mauve, green, and pale crimson and scarlet, reflect both the mosaics, and the paintings at Asinou where pale, whitened tints of blue, green and red alternate in the garments of apostles and angels, but where Christ always wears a tunic of dark grey-blue (Fig. 296).

There appears to be little doubt therefore, that as the influence of Sicilian mosaics increased, the influence of the Alexis Master's colour waned. However, it is apparent that the more closely associated in some way a manuscript was with St Albans, the stronger the colour dependency, such as in the Shaftesbury Psalter, the Morgan Leaf, and the early initials of the Winchester Bible, where the tunics of the heavenly priesthood were usually blue.

During the late 1130s or early 1140s, blue tunics were used systematically in the New Testament cycle of miniatures in Queen Melisende's Psalter, made at Jerusalem in about 1143 (Figs 62 and 279). Eight out of thirteen figures of Christ wear blue, and on the other five occasions, purple or pale ochre; however all 133 male apostles, saints and angels wear long blue tunics beneath their outer robes, a deliberate and meaningful combination of garment and colour. Liz James has suggested that in Byzantine art there was little "explicit symbolism" attached to colours, at least until the thirteenth century,¹⁹¹ and therefore this use of the blue *tunicam talarem* in Melisende's Psalter may have originated in the West rather than the Byzantine East.

The manuscript is something of a hybrid, and the derivation of its colour palette has been questioned; it has a Latin text with a prefatory miniature cycle—both Western features—but is, for the most part, Byzantine in style and iconography. The artist, Basilius, is believed to have strong links to the West, despite his Greek name. There is

¹⁹⁰ Dodwell, 1993: 354.

¹⁹¹ James, 1996: 105-106.

good evidence that, after the success of the First Crusade and the establishment of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, artists from France, Germany and England travelled to the Holy Land to visit the holy sites and work in the various artistic centres.¹⁹² Basilius may have been one of them.

In his discussion of the dynastic politics of the Kingdom, Folda explained how Basilius was influenced by Western sources, including English manuscripts:

...Basil was able to draw on current English codices that he then synthesized into the impressive introductory miniatures of the Psalter. The result is a series of images of the life of Christ combining Byzantine and Western-style iconography in a strongly Byzantine-looking ensemble that reveals its unmistakable Western Romanesque traits, in some cases only after careful analysis.¹⁹³

Buchthal stressed the differences between the best Byzantine manuscripts and their Western equivalents, and was quite derogatory about what he considered to be Western influence on the colour used in Melisende's Psalter:

There is hardly a shade which does not also occur in the related Byzantine manuscripts. But Basilius's colours are richer and fuller; and their warm effect is constantly marred by the juxtaposition of clashing tones. Their interaction is unpleasantly vivid, and indeed almost barbaric, and the general effect is heavy and somewhat clumsy, very different from the transparence and lucidity of the best Byzantine work. This, too, invites comparison with western illumination of the period.¹⁹⁴

It seems likely therefore that the strong colours used in Melisende's Psalter were derived from English manuscripts; the artist was susceptible not only to the same visual and stylistic trends as English artists, but could have been influenced directly by the rich palette and the symbolism of the blue *tunicam talarem* used in the St Albans Psalter fifteen or twenty years before.

¹⁹² Klein, 1998: 35.

¹⁹³ Folda, 1995: 155.

¹⁹⁴ Buchthal, 1957: 9.

Another blue colour sign was the background panel, derived from patristic sources like Bede's declaration in *De Tabernaculo*: "surely blue is the colour of heaven".¹⁹⁵ The blue panel, often rectangular or square, became a kind of heavenly location reserved for saintly and heavenly figures, and was used in manuscript illumination, wall painting, glass and mosaics of the period. By the 1120s it had become a fully formed convention in the miniature cycles of the Alexis Master, years before its similar use in French glass. Amongst many examples in the St Albans Psalter is a small initial to Psalm 105, where a white vertical line divides the space in two (Fig. 299); to the left a group of monks and a female figure stand against a verdant, earthly green. The female figure reaches out to Christ on the right, who stands within a blue panel decorated with white star-like shapes.

The blue panel became a very common international visual sign well into the thirteenth century, perhaps most famously in the later twelfth-century stained glass at St Denis, at Chartres, and at Canterbury: "where blue signifies divine light or provides a background color against which sacred figures are depicted".¹⁹⁶ A typical example can be seen in a panel of twelfth-century glass from Troyes (Fig. 307), where Christ stands against a panel of blue.

A spectacular example of massed blue panels can be seen in St Michael's Church at Hildesheim, where a fully-painted Tree of Jesse runs the full length of the wooden ceiling, containing images of David, Solomon, and the antecedents of Christ, with Christ enthroned at the east end (Fig. 297). Forty-two portraits of Christ's ancestors are shown in roundels, twenty standing prophets and angels are depicted in rectangular panels, and various other heavenly personifications in ten others. The four evangelists

¹⁹⁵ *De Tab.* II. 4: *Hyacinthus namque caelestis est coloris* (Hurst, 1969: 58; trans. Holder, 1994: 64).

¹⁹⁶ Pastoureau, 2001 41.

and their symbols occupy square panels at the corners; in total there are 112 figures, and behind 110 of them are blue panels; these are symbolic of their saintly or heavenly qualities and their association with Christ, and symbolizing the realm of Heaven itself. The two remaining figures, Adam and Eve in Paradise, stand against the only red panel on the ceiling (Fig. 298).

Master Hugo did not follow this convention in the Bury Bible, but instead situated his figures against green panels; this is strange given that he must have known the Edmund miniatures where square blue panels are used very dramatically. His use of green panels was not his only unexpected use of colour, and may simply be a reflection of different visual preferences.

At Canterbury during the 1150s, the artist of the first volume of the Dover Bible alternated blue and green panels behind the figures of the Minor Prophets in what appears to be a traditional counter-change of pictorial colour, such as that seen in the ochre-blue-green backgrounds of the Four Psalter Leaves. In the Lambeth Bible, blue is the dominant background colour, sometimes counter-changing with gold and green, as in the Daniel miniature (Fig. 300). Separate blue panels occur on folio 6r, in the lower register of the Genesis miniature. Panels of blue, purple and gold can be seen in the Copenhagen Psalter miniatures, but in no apparent pattern.

The significance of the blue tunic as a garment of the heavenly priesthood lessened, as exemplified in the lack of blue tunics on the ceiling of St Michael's Church at Hildesheim (Fig. 297). Instead blue became a colour of power in the earthly realm. Petzold has suggested that developments in trade, fashion, technology and language may have been significant in this, particularly the importance of technological changes in the dying industry and the ability to produce "high-quality, saturated blue cloth".¹⁹⁷ He has pointed out that the French kings at the end of the twelfth century used saturated

¹⁹⁷ Petzold, 1986: 127.

blue for coronation robes in preference to the earlier crimson. He cites Christ's blue garments depicted in the Ingeborg Psalter, made in the thirteenth century for Princess Ingeborg, wife of the French king Philip Augustus, which may have reflected an association between celestial and worldly kingship.¹⁹⁸ At about the same time, blue was disregarded as an official liturgical colour by the future Pope Innocent III, possibly because the association with the vestments of the Jewish high priests was too strong.¹⁹⁹

SCARLET

The second colour word used by Jerome in Exodus is *coccum* (scarlet), the most commonly mentioned red in the Vulgate. As we have seen, bright warm reds have strong pictorial value. Kauffmann has pointed out that earlier artists had sometimes tentatively used red to differentiate between figures and to signify importance. For instance, in the Bodleian manuscript Junius II,²⁰⁰ of the second quarter of the eleventh century, one of the artists used red to endow some figures with symbolic significance: "In a few scenes, it is the most important figure, usually God himself, who is picked out in red, leaving the lesser ones in brown."²⁰¹ In a similar way red hats were given to figures in the St Albans Psalter to draw attention to them, such as Simon the Pharisee on page 36; Herod on page 23; Joseph of Arimathea and another man, perhaps Nicodemus, at the Descent from the Cross and the Entombment (Fig. 301). The artist used the red hats to catch the eye due to their bright warm colour, and consequently to impart some visual and Christological significance to the figures.

In the Edmund miniatures the three Anglo-Saxon leaders dividing the nation on folio 8r also wear bright red hats to signify their importance, as does Hinguar the Dane on folios 10v, 11v, and 12r. Bright reds are generally concentrated in the clothes of the

¹⁹⁸ Petzold, 1986: 128.

¹⁹⁹ Pavey, 1951: 63.

²⁰⁰ Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Junius II.

²⁰¹ Kauffmann, 2003: 37-49.

main figures including, for example, the leaders of the English on folio 8r who wear bright red tunics or robes, and red hats (Fig. 302), and the leader of the English group who find the body of Edmund on folios 15v and 16r (Fig. 261).

In addition to its powerful pictorial effects, bright red also has symbolic significance in relation to martyrdom, and bright reds and various shades of mauve-pink are used on virtually every page of the Edmund miniatures, mostly in the garments of the Danes, reflecting the theme of martyrdom. Here, however, the Danes, although dressed in red, are not signified as martyrs, but rather as sinners, because scarlet (*coccum*) was not only the colour of the blood of martyrdom, but also of sin, most famously exemplified by the Harlot of the Apocalypse:

And I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was clothed round about with purple and scarlet, and gilt with gold and precious stones and pearls...²⁰²

John's account continues with his vision of "the woman drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus."²⁰³ Clearly, therefore, red could signify both sin and martyrdom. The Danes sent to murder Edmund in the *libellus* are invariably dressed in red or reddish tunics, and the main culprits are usually in bright red, like the archer (Fig. 303), and the man beheading Edmund (Fig. 304); their bright red tunics stand out strongly against the deep blue background.

Hahn has explained the reasons for the use of colourful ornamentation in illustrated saints' lives:

...the illustrated *libelli* are generally sumptuous in design and materials. Such ornamentation was intended in part to dazzle the laity, who might not recognize the saint without a "glorious" vestment, but also to honor the saint by cloaking the account of his or her life in splendour.²⁰⁴

²⁰² Revelation 17: 3-4: *et vidi mulierem sedentem super bestiam coccineam plenam nominibus blasphemiae habentem capita septem et cornua decem et mulier erat circumdata purpura et coccino et inaurata auro et lapide pretioso et margaritis.*

²⁰³ Revelation 17: 6: *et vidi mulierem ebriam de sanguine sanctorum et de sanguine martyrum Iesu.*

²⁰⁴ Hahn, 2001: 19.

But clearly there was more to it than this. Throughout all the martyrdom scenes the tall and saintly figure of Edmund, gazing up to heaven, is dressed in a tunic of green, perhaps signifying everlasting life, and is contrasted with the violent movement, short stature, cruel facial expressions and the red garments of his murderers. Interestingly, Carrasco has suggested that by using a traditional hagiographic iconography of contrasts the artist and his patron emphasized images of power, sin, and redemption throughout the Edmund picture cycle:

The artist translates these abstractions into pictorial narrative, vividly depicting a series of dualities—the armed of the world opposed to the unarmed, the proud to the humble, and the sinful to the redeemed.²⁰⁵

No doubt she was correct in this; however, she did not mention how these dualities were clothed in powerful, vivid contrasting colours—red for sin, green for redemption and everlasting life, and, in the backgrounds, the blue promise of Heaven. It appears from this that the colours had become part of the hagiographic iconography she has described.

At this point it is appropriate to discuss not only the use of reds in the Edmund miniature cycle, but also the minimal use of blue in the garments of its main figures, and how the use of the colours might be related to the blue garments in the St Albans Psalter miniatures.

On folio 15v the headless corpse of the martyred Edmund lies on the ground dressed in a long blue loincloth, like Christ's in the Psalter, and on folio 18r his body is wrapped in a blue shroud as he is lowered into his tomb, also in imitation of Christ. These are the only occasions when Edmund wears blue clothes, apart from blue hose, until the final coronation miniature on folio 22v when he wears a blue tunic beneath his robes to signify his sainthood. Other than this, only two angels and the two bishops at Edmund's coronation as king on folio 8v, and the bishop on folio 11r, wear the blue

²⁰⁵ Carrasco, 1991: 128.

tunic. Two or three Saxon leaders on folio 8r wear short secular tunics of blue, but no other figures who are important to the narrative.

Of a total of over 250 figures depicted, only about ten minor figures wear short secular tunics or cloaks of blue, and these are often partly hidden, or at the edges of the images. Blue is also used in small details like axes, swords, the leaves of trees, or architectural details, and about fifteen tiny mounted soldiers on folio 7v wear blue chain mail shirts. Other blue details are glimpsed in the background through gaps in the crowds of figures. This use of blue was purely a pictorial one, simply to provide some variety amongst many other colours; certainly the details picked out in blue in this way should not be associated with the full-length blue tunics used to denote heavenly and saintly figures. Nevertheless, blue was used both pictorially and symbolically by the Alexis Master, and it should be emphasized that the meanings of colours were not absolute; context would often determine their significance or meaning, or lack of it, as suggested by Bolman in her discussion of Beatus manuscripts.²⁰⁶

The colour in the *libellus*, therefore, is generally redder and brighter than in the St Albans Psalter, with polished gold contrasting with purple reds and with greens and blues in the backgrounds; hues such as orange, brick red, green, ochre, and pinkish mauve replace the dominant blue, purple, and ochre of the Psalter. The visual impression made on the viewer is consequently very different.

The reason for this probably lies in the subject matter. The two prefatory cycles are very different in their function and meaning: the one a very prestigious New Testament cycle illustrating the drama of the Gospels with heavy liturgical solemnity derived from a thousand years of exegesis, the other an illustrated life of a more recent saint and martyr who lived in a violent secular world of militaristic kingship, invasion, murder, and martyrdom. It is likely that their colours reflect and communicate this difference.

²⁰⁶ Bolman, 1999: 27.

George Zarnecki and Otto Pächt believed that the Alexis Master painted both miniature cycles.²⁰⁷ Pächt suggested that “a more dramatized treatment of the narrative” was responsible for some of the stylistic differences.²⁰⁸ This is almost certainly correct; the figures in the *libellus* are much more animated, with more extreme movements than in the Psalter miniatures; the gestures of the invading Danes are more dynamic and expressive, reflecting their aggressive intentions; and the figures are often larger within a very similar image size.²⁰⁹ The foreground and background colours are generally contrasted more strongly, with vibrant contrasts of glowing reds and greens, and purple-reds and gold, which combined with the expressive gestures for high visibility from a distance.

These differences in colour and narrative approach have caused some other scholars to suggest that the miniature cycles were the work of different artists.²¹⁰ A few have suggested quite reasonably that the Edmund miniatures were designed and drawn by the Alexis Master, but painted by someone else.²¹¹ There is an understandable reason for this view. The evidence suggests that the Alexis Master worked alone on the St Albans miniatures; the work is of a very high quality throughout, and of a greater consistency of finish than in the *libellus*, where the more usual work-a-day practice of shared labour is evident on certain folios, and where the painting by another hand is very poor in comparison to the master's.²¹² Dodwell saw that some of the Edmund miniatures were less well finished, but did not mention or discern the separate work of a second hand on the two bi-folios in the third quire; he believed instead, that because the colours are

²⁰⁷ Zarnecki, 1971: 189; Pächt, 1960: 142; Pächt, 1962: 22.

²⁰⁸ Pächt, 1960: 142 n1.

²⁰⁹ Morgan MS 736 195mm x 115mm; St Albans Psalter 185mm x 141 mm.

²¹⁰ Rickert, 1954: 80; Parker McLachlan, 1969: 85; Parker McLachlan, 1977: 273; Geddes, 2005: 65.

²¹¹ Thomson, 1982, I: 26; Dodwell, 1993: 332.

²¹² See above, p. 83.

brighter generally, another artist painted the miniatures.²¹³ Observations suggest that this is almost certainly a mistake, and therefore, as the colour seems to represent two different narrative modes, as well as the contributions of an assistant, it may no longer be necessary to discuss the possibility that the prefatory cycles were made by two different artists.

The use of bright red to symbolize sin can be seen at Hildesheim in the Tree of Jesse ceiling at St Michael's Church, where Adam and Eve occupy the only red panel amongst over 100 blue ones, representing their original sin in an earthly paradise (Fig. 298). In the Second Temptation of Christ in the Hunterian Psalter, the upper register is divided equally in two; to the left sits Christ in a golden heavenly realm, while Satan and his worldly treasures are set against a bright red panel, the only coloured background in the entire prefatory cycle (Fig. 305). In the Gough Psalter, also from the north of England, a similar division of the space is to be found in the First Temptation, with Christ against gold leaf and Satan against a red panel (Fig. 306).

Interestingly, a similar colour practice developed in contemporary stained glass. It has been suggested by Marks that there are some general stylistic similarities between these northern English psalters and some twelfth-century stained glass at York Minster.²¹⁴ He also mentioned their similarity to some remnant panels of glass made before 1188 for Troyes Cathedral,²¹⁵ although he did not mention colour in this comparison. For example, in the V&A museum there are two Temptation scenes in coloured glass of *c.* 1170-80, probably from Troyes, which are possibly among the ones meant by Marks. In the First Temptation, Satan, with his stones, stands against a bright red background while Christ is set against blue (Fig. 307); this is very reminiscent of the Gough Psalter image in its composition. In the Second Temptation (Fig. 308), Satan

²¹³ Dodwell, 1993: 332.

²¹⁴ Marks, 1993: 115-17.

²¹⁵ Marks, 1993: 115.

physically lifts Christ out of the blue panel into the red panel, and towards the Temple and its rooftops. These images strongly suggest that by the second half of the twelfth century the red panel had become part of Satan's iconography, and was used by artists as part of a common language, across disciplines.

Bright red could be considered in yet another light; the book of Joshua tells of a harlot named Rahab, in the city of Jericho, who gave aid to two of Joshua's spies who had secretly entered the city.²¹⁶ Later, she helped them escape down a scarlet rope, and was herself protected by this sign, which was left in a window, when the city was later sacked by the Israelites. Jerome interpreted the significance of the scarlet rope in a letter, and stated that the colour scarlet signified:

the warmth of wisdom when it is fired by reading in God's Book: it contains a mystical reference to Our Lord's blood, but it also indicates the fervour of wisdom...The harlot Rahab also, who typifies the Church, fastened a scarlet cord to her window in mystical reference to His bloodshedding, so that she might be saved from Jericho's downfall.²¹⁷

This theme of salvation and scarlet might also be illustrated in an image in the initial to Psalm 106 in the St Albans Psalter (Fig. 309): the nimbed figure of Christ is depicted rescuing the people by drawing them to him with bright red cords, in response to the lines:

And they cried to the Lord in their tribulation: and he delivered them out of their distresses. And he led them into the right way...²¹⁸

Rahab is also mentioned in the New Testament book of James,²¹⁹ and in the *Codex Ebnerianus* she is depicted with James, and other personifications, as a bare-headed young woman robed in bright red, over a pale blue-grey tunic (Fig. 310), similar to

²¹⁶ Joshua 2: 1-3.

²¹⁷ *Epistula ad Nepotianum* 52: ...*coccinea... ut significet calere sapientiam et divina lectione fervere; quod, licet dominici sanguinis indicet sacramentum, tamen et fervorem osendit sapientiae... Et Raab meretrix in typo ecclesiae resticulam, mysteria sanguinis continentem, ut Hiericho pereunte salvaretur, appendit* (Hilberg, 1910: 419; trans. Wright, 1933: 197).

²¹⁸ Psalm 106: 6-7.

²¹⁹ James 2: 25.

depictions of the other harlot figure, Mary Magdalen, who also wears a bright red robe to identify her in several scenes in the St Albans Psalter.

Bright red was not only symbolic of sin or the blood of the martyrs, however; it also had meaning as a sign of *caritas*, that is charity or love, especially for the priesthood. Gregory the Great explained the meaning of the twice-dipped scarlet in the ephod:

...all excellences of virtue should be adorned with charity in the eyes of the judge within; and that whatever glitters before men may be lighted up in sight of the hidden arbiter with the flame of inward love. And, further, this charity, since it consists in love at once of God and of our neighbour, has, as it were, the luster of a double dye.²²⁰

Bede followed Gregory almost word for word, in his description of the ephod,²²¹ and then explained the meaning of the scarlet colour of the Tabernacle curtains:

Scarlet, because it has the appearance of fire, is rightly compared to the most ardent love of the saints ... This is twice dyed, as it were, when it is inflamed with the love of God and neighbour, when we love the former with all our heart, all our soul, and all our strength, and the latter as ourselves.²²²

This characteristic is evident in the St Albans Psalter, where St Martin, while still a soldier, shares his cloak with a beggar in an act of charity and donation (Fig. 266). In the upper register of the miniature he later sleeps and dreams of Christ, who wears his cloak. Martin lies beneath a bright red cover that is decorated with an all-over pattern of small blue circles, some of which contain white crosses (Fig. 311). The red bed cover, and its circled crosses, is almost identical in colour and pattern to the long red tunic worn by Edmund on folios 8v, 9r, and 12r of the *libellus*, where the saintly king is crowned, then shown distributing coins marked with a cross, to pilgrims, the poor, and

²²⁰ *Regulae Past.* II. 3 (PL 77: 29; trans. Knight, 2009: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/36012.htm>).

²²¹ *De Tab.* III. 3 (Hurst, 1969: 99; trans. Holder, 1994: 114).

²²² *De Tab.* II. 2 (Hurst, 1969: 46; trans. Holder, 1994: 50).

the deformed (Fig. 312), before being dragged off in an act of self-sacrifice and martyrdom.²²³ The red fabrics signify the act of charity.

Hahn has suggested that images containing depictions of the diseased and the poor “represent a visual hagiographic *topos* of charity”;²²⁴ however, although she compared the two images of Edmund and Martin, and pointed out that the coins are marked with a cross,²²⁵ she did not discuss the red fabrics, patterned with crosses. The bright red is important in these two depictions of charity by the Alexis Master, and is loaded with the same symbolism of *caritas* in both; it represents the biblical twice-dyed scarlet, symbolic of the double love of God and neighbour, and the blood shed by Christ and the martyrs. The monks at St Albans would have understood this because, as noted above, they had at least one early twelfth-century copy of *De Tabernaculo* which contained Bede’s descriptions of the colour.²²⁶

During the twelfth century the colour also came to signify charity in the practice of the liturgy when Lothar of Segni, the future Pope Innocent III, suggested it should be worn at the feast of the Cross. During the 1190s, before he became pope in 1198, Lothar wrote the *De Sacrosancti Altaris Mysterio* in which he prescribed that in the feasts of martyrs and apostles red was to be worn in the vestments of the mass, because it symbolized blood and the Pentecostal fire. This was the first tract written on liturgical colour and in it he described the symbolism of the four main colours designated for general liturgical use.²²⁷

He began by reminding the reader about the four colours used in Exodus to describe the fabrics of the Tabernacle and Aaron’s vestments: “In truth there were

²²³ Hahn, 1991: 124; For a detailed discussion on the theme of charity in Edmund’s *libellus* see Hahn, 1991: 119-139; and for St Martin and the theme of charity in the St Albans Psalter, Haney, 1997: 145-174.

²²⁴ Hahn, 1991, 122.

²²⁵ Hahn, 1991:120.

²²⁶ Thomson, 1982: 23 and 112; Gameson, 1999: 142.

²²⁷ Gage, 1978: 107; Pastoureau, 2001: 39-40.

garments woven from four precious colours: purple, scarlet, linen, and blue.”²²⁸ Then, in Chapter 65 he explained that, because there were four colours named in Exodus there were also four liturgical colours, but which significantly did not include blue:

There are indeed four principal colours by which, according to their qualities, the Roman Church distinguishes the sacred vestments of the days: white, red, black and green. For in [the books of] the law four colours were chosen for garments: linen, and purple, blue and scarlet.²²⁹

He then discussed the scriptural context and meanings of each liturgical colour in turn, and when they should be worn, including red:

Red is to be used for garments in the solemn services of the apostles and martyrs, on account of the blood of passion which they have shed before Christ... In the feast of the Cross, from where Christ shed his own blood before us... In Pentecost, because of the Holy Spirit, the heat in tongues of fire appeared over the Apostles.²³⁰

Such liturgical functions show that colours had developed symbolic meaning based on centuries of exegesis, and it is clear that bright red (whether *rubeus* or *coccum*) had considerable symbolic significance as a sign of martyrdom. Abbo, in his tenth-century *Passio Sancti Edmundi*, described the thin red line on Edmund’s neck as signifying martyrdom with the phrase *signum martyrii rubet*, meaning ‘the sign of martyrdom is red’, and *in modum fili coccinei*, ‘like a scarlet-coloured thread’.²³¹ The Alexis Master carefully illustrated this red line in the *libellus* (Fig. 313).

²²⁸ *De Sacrosancti I. 32: Contexta vero erant indumenta de quatuor pretiosis coloribus: purpura, cocco, bysso, hyacintho* (PL 217: 786; trans. Author).

²²⁹ *De Sacrosancti I. 65: Quatuor autem sunt principales colores, quibus secundum proprietates dierum sacras vestes Ecclesia Romana distinguit, albus, rubeus, niger et viridis. Nam et in legalibus indumentis quatuor colores faisse leguntur (Exod. xxviii): byssus et purpura, hyacinthus et coccus* (PL 217: 799; trans. Author).

²³⁰ *De Sacrosancti I. 65: Rubeus autem utendum est indumentis in solemnitatibus apostolorum et martyrum, propter sanguinem passionis, quem pro Christo fuderunt... In festo crucis, de qua Christus pro nobis sanguinem suum fudit... In Pentecoste, propter sancti Spiritus fervorem qui super apostolos in linguis igneis apparuit* (PL 217: 801; trans. Author).

²³¹ *Passio Edm.* Winterbottom, 1972: 82; Gransden, 1985: 5; (trans. Author).

WHITE

Apart from blue and scarlet, white is the most significant colour in the Vulgate and the most commonly named, and is closely associated with linen, or *byssum*; for Jerome and the Church it came to signify baptism, rebirth and everlasting life. The most obvious example is in the New Testament when Christ becomes transfigured in a transition from an earthly to a Heavenly state of being, a rebirth which had significance for the rite of baptism, and described first in Matthew:

And he was transfigured before them. And his face did shine as the sun: and his garments became white as snow.²³²

Here the word *alba* is used, but in Mark the word *candida* is preferred:

And his garments became shining and exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller upon earth can make white.²³³

Gregory the Great developed the idea of purification further:

For fine linen (*byssus*) springs from the earth with glittering show: and what is designated by fine linen but bodily chastity shining white in the comeliness of purity?²³⁴

In another reference to a transition, John described the bridal vestments of white linen as symbolizing the saints:

...for the marriage of the Lamb is come: and his wife hath prepared herself. And it is granted to her that she should clothe herself with fine linen, glittering and white – for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.²³⁵

In *De Tabernaculo* Bede referred to this passage and commented that:

Linen therefore ...designates bodies that are gleaming with the beauty of chastity...and come to the beauty of a purity that is worthy of God, diligent

²³² Matthew 17: 2: *et transfiguratus est ante eos et resplenduit facies eius sicut sol vestimenta autem eius facta sunt alba sicut nix.*

²³³ Mark 9:2: *et vestimenta eius facta sunt splendentia candida nimis velut nix qualia fullo super terram non potest candida facere.*

²³⁴ *Regulae Past. II. 3: De terra et enim byssus nitenti specie oritur. Et quid per byssum nisi candens decore munditiae corporalis castitas designatur?* (PL 77: 30; trans. Knight, 2009: www.newadvent.org/fathers/36012.htm).

²³⁵ Revelation 19: 7-8: *...quia venerunt nuptiae agni et uxor eius praeparavit se et datum est illi ut cooperiat se byssinum splendens candidum byssinum enim iustificationes sunt sanctorum.*

in fasts and vigils, in prayers and reading, and in the practice of patience and humility.²³⁶

Jerome, on the other hand, in his letter to Fabiola, associated this symbolism with baptism:

...we shall be clothed in the linen robe, which has nothing of death in it, but is all white so that rising from baptism we can gird our loins in truth and all the deformity of our former sins will be hidden.²³⁷

To him and later commentators the whiteness of fine linen represented a transition to Christian purity through baptism. The heavenly congregation of saints, angels and apostles, and those living the everlasting life through the purification of baptism, wore white linen garments, described in Revelation: “the armies that are in heaven followed him on white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.”²³⁸ And, as described later by Bede:

The antiquity and eternity of majesty are represented by whiteness ...because of the innumerable multitude enrobed in white, and the elect, who come forth from heaven, glistening like snow.²³⁹

This belief caused the emperor Constantine the Great, when close to death, to dress himself in white linen after his baptism, following which he slept in a bed of purest white fabrics, and refused to wear the royal purple again.²⁴⁰

The idea that white linen is symbolic of everlasting life may have originated in classical texts, and clearly had a long history in ritual contexts.²⁴¹ It was in this well-

²³⁶ *De Tab. II. 2: Byssus ergo... corpora designat castitatis nitida decore... atque ad decorum Deo dignae puritatis sollerti ieiuniorum et vigiliarum orationum et lectionis patientiae et humilitatis instantia perveniunt* (Hurst, 1969: 45; trans. Holder, 1994: 49).

²³⁷ *Epistula ad Fabiolam 64: ... induemur veste linea nihil in se mortis habente, sed tota candida, ut de baptismo consurgentes cingamus lumbos in veritate et tota pristinorum peccatorum turpitudine celetur* (Hilberg, 1910: 610; trans. Ferrante: <http://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/letter/364.html>).

²³⁸ Revelation 19: 14: *et exercitus qui sunt in caelo sequebantur eum in equis albis vestiti byssinum album mundum.*

²³⁹ *Exp. Apoc. I. 1: Antiquitas et immortalitas maiestatis ... candor ostenditur ... propter dealbatorum innumerabilem turbam et electorum e caelo datorum instar nivis effulgent* (Gryson, 2001: 245; trans. Marshall, 1878: 15; modified by Author).

²⁴⁰ Quasten, 1942: 209.

²⁴¹ Quasten, 1942: 212.

established tradition therefore that Innocent III echoed the exegesis of Jerome and the other commentators in explaining the selection of white as a liturgical colour for vestments in the late twelfth century:

White therefore is to be used for garments in the feasts of the confessors and the virgins on account of [their] wholeness and innocence. For they have been made of shining white, they are his Nazaraei [holy ones], and they walk with him always in white. They are his virgins, and they follow the lamb wherever he goes.²⁴²

Certainly early illustrations of heavenly and saintly figures wearing the white *tunicam talarem* abound, and it will suffice to mention just a few. For the constant flow of visitors to Rome, amongst the most accessible examples were the fifth-century mosaics in the nave of Santa Maria Maggiore (Fig. 314). At Ravenna, visitors could marvel at the late fifth or early sixth-century mosaics in the Basilica of Sant' Apollinare Nuovo, with its lines of standing saints and angels all in white, on either side of the nave (Figs 315-316). Similarly in the Church of San Vitale amongst the sixth-century mosaics, the four evangelists, prophets, angels and various saints wear white robes over white tunics, often with coloured shadows, but sometimes with very little trace of colour other than various neutral greys (Fig. 317). These seem to have been based not only on scriptural texts describing the purity of white linen garments, but also on the white toga of classical author portraits, such as those seen on folios 3v, 9r, 14r, of the Roman Vergil,²⁴³ (Fig. 318) a manuscript produced towards the end of the fifth century in Rome.²⁴⁴

In the earliest of Christian manuscripts many figures are dressed in white. In the late sixth- or early seventh-century Ashburnham Pentateuch figures, such as the barefooted Moses and high priests at the Tabernacle (Fig. 319), wear the white *tunicam*

²⁴² *De Sacrosancti I. 65: Albis indumentis igitur utendum est in festivitatibus confessorum et virginum, propter integritatem et innocentiam. Nam candidi facti sunt Nazarei eius, et ambulant semper cum eo in albis* (PL 217: 800; trans. Author).

²⁴³ Rome, Vatican Library Vat. lat. 3867.

²⁴⁴ Wright, 2001: 5.

talarem; the figures in shorter white tunics, who also stand near the Tabernacle on this folio may represent the newly baptized congregation.²⁴⁵ The very classical and naturalistic four evangelists in the Vienna Coronation Gospels of c. 800 wear opaque white tunics and robes (Fig. 320).²⁴⁶

The apostles and Christ on folios 125r and 129r of the late sixth-century Gospels of St Augustine are dressed in white tunics; St Luke on folio 129v wears a tunic and robe in two different shades of white (Fig. 321), like the figures in the mosaics at Ravenna. This is not bare vellum, but deliberately applied opaque colour. All twenty-three depictions of Christ wear white or off-white tunics, but are differentiated from the other figures by the purple robe he wears each time.

In the late tenth-century Winchester Foundation Charter of King Edgar four rather refined angels with fillets in their hair wear the uniform of white tunics and ochre robes (Fig. 322); likewise in the Benedictional of St Æthelwold, amongst the apparently random pictorial colouring of garments, it is apparent that a large majority of the angels wear white tunics and purple-grey robes, in a rather uniform way (Fig. 323). This suggests that direct Italo-Byzantine sources were used while these particular figures were being painted, perhaps middle-Byzantine manuscripts,²⁴⁷ or a model book whose illuminations were derived from an exemplar such as the Santa Maria Maggiore mosaics and wall paintings, or the angels in the San Vitale mosaics at Ravenna. Regardless of the ultimate source, the angels in white were, to the artist, beings who, like the elect, lived in the kingdom of Heaven rather than in the earthly realm.

Against this background, it is noticeable that white garments of any sort in the St Albans Psalter are conspicuous by their absence. This is hardly surprising given the wholehearted use of blue in depicting the priesthood of Christ, apostles and angels.

²⁴⁵ Verkerk, 2004: 100.

²⁴⁶ Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Schatzkammer Inv. XIII 18.

²⁴⁷ Deshman, 1974: 198; Alexander, 1975: 151.

Perhaps only the cloak shared by St Martin and Christ is meant to illustrate the scriptural white linen worn by the heavenly congregation (Fig. 324). It is a very unusual colour in the repertoire of the Alexis Master, a warm, very pale grey which hints at the transition from soldier to membership of the saintly elect in Heaven.

Likewise, in the Shaftesbury Psalter all the relevant figures wear blue, so there is no white. The Bury Bible miniatures are also devoid of long white tunics, although on folio 147v, Hugo depicts Eli the high priest wearing a white linen tunic beneath his other garments, visible at the wrists and, as prescribed by Bede, hanging down to the feet.²⁴⁸ A few other figures, including the recumbent Hannah, wear the tight inner white tunic, visible at the wrists.²⁴⁹

In the Lambeth Bible however, where the tunics are mostly blue but where other colours do occur, the tunics and robes of several significant figures are painted with a thick and smooth opaque white, mixed from white and a little ochre, and usually delineated with thin and transparent yellow ochre, with darker and sharper shadows of ochre or green in the creases. In a manuscript where the artist generally painted with washes of various densities and saturation, a special effort was made with this opaque colour; it is used for the tunic which the three figures of God wear in the Genesis initial, but elsewhere does not seem to be used in any systematic way. It is used in the long tunics of Abraham, Jacob and angels in the Genesis miniature, although only the angels here are nimbed and barefooted, and in the robes and tunics of several figures in the Tree of Jesse miniature. The Jesse Tree itself is also painted with opaque white. In the lower register of the Ezekiel miniature, the artist used the same opaque white for the hooded garment of the “one man in the midst of them clothed with linen”,²⁵⁰ barefooted and marking the foreheads of the people with the Thau (Fig. 325).

²⁴⁸ Holder, 1994: 112.

²⁴⁹ On folios 147v, 328v, and 344v, and Christ on folio 281v.

²⁵⁰ Ezechiel 9: 2: *...vir quoque unus in medio eorum vestitus lineis.*

Towards the end of the Romanesque period, c. 1180, the Simon Master, who had worked at St Albans years earlier, painted a Tree of Jesse in the Capuchins' Bible,²⁵¹ while working in France. There are twenty-one nimbed and barefooted figures including one angel, and more than half wear white tunics (Fig. 326). The colour is similar to that in the Lambeth Bible; namely a very pale off-white, shaded with ochre, and sometimes with green. Two other figures wear grey tunics, two wear blue and two wear red; all the outer robes are terracotta pink or deep blue. The colours worn by figures on the left of the stem exactly mirror the colours on the right, in matching pairs.

During the early twelfth century the symbolism of the colour white impacted directly on monasticism when the new order of Cistercian monks dressed themselves in white tunics and cowls, and were well aware of its symbolic significance:

...white monks by name and white also in vesture. For their name arose from the fact that, as the angels might be, they were clothed in undyed wool spun and woven from the pure fleece of the sheep. So named and garbed and gathered together like flocks of sea-gulls, they shine as they walk with the whiteness of snow.²⁵²

Here we might also remember Bernard of Clairvaux's metaphorical sideways swipe at Abbot Suger, a Benedictine monk, about the contrast between white and black in a letter of c. 1127, already mentioned above.²⁵³

PURPLE

The fourth significant biblical colour, *purpura* (purple), was used over sixty times in the Vulgate, each time in a context of luxury or wealth, or royal fabrics and garments, often associated with blue; for instance, Mordechai wears royal garments of blue, and “a golden crown on his head, and clothed with a cloak of silk and purple”.²⁵⁴

²⁵¹ Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS lat. 16746.

²⁵² *Vita Ailredi* 5 (Powicke, 1950: 10).

²⁵³ Bernard, Letter 78 (Scott James 80) to Abbot Suger.

²⁵⁴ Esther 8:15: ...*coronam auream portans capite et amictus pallio serico atque purpureo*.

During the classical period the word *purpura* had fluid colour meaning, but within a related range of crimson to violet, as Dodwell pointed out:

...classical writers used *purpureus* in a very broad sense: to indicate the brown tones of a flower, the redness of the lips, or of a blush: various shades of violet: and every hue between.²⁵⁵

As well, fabrics described as *purpura* were not necessarily purple; the way the dye was produced might result in “blacks, leaden blues, violets and reds”.²⁵⁶ Bolman seemed surprised that the adjective *purpureus* could be used to describe colours of a red, purple and blue hue,²⁵⁷ as if she saw no natural connection between them; to artists of any generation purple is a mixture of blue and red, and might be bluish, or it might be reddish, with variations in between. With the addition of white, or when used in very dilute washes, lilacs or mauves result, as the Alexis Master and Master Hugo showed.

Dodwell also discussed the perceptions of the colour word *purpura* during the Anglo-Saxon period, when he believed it began to lose its colour meaning, and took on other visual characteristics:

In brief, before the Middle Ages had begun, the Latin word for purple was losing its colour content and coming to indicate the glow, or gleam, of light.²⁵⁸

However, while its meaning might vary from place to place, or in different visual media, or with light reflected from it or shining through it, it remained an obvious royal colour, its meaning constant through the Middle Ages, when robes and shoes of purple were worn by kings and emperors, and who used books whose pages were coloured purple. In the Byzantine east, especially under the Macedonian emperors, purple became such a symbol of royal power that private citizens were forbidden to trade in purple cloth.²⁵⁹ This royal signifier was used in a cruel and mocking way in the New

²⁵⁵ Dodwell, 1982: 146.

²⁵⁶ Dodwell, 1982: 146-48.

²⁵⁷ Bolman, 1999: 24.

²⁵⁸ Dodwell, 1982: 146.

²⁵⁹ Dodwell, 1982: 146.

Testament, when Christ was mocked as king of the Jews, and dressed in a purple garment and a crown of thorns by the soldiers.²⁶⁰

Despite the association of purple with secular royal power, or perhaps because of it, its regal connotations meant that purple became a symbol of the heavenly kingdom. In a letter to Rusticus Jerome described the purple colour of the Violet flower as signifying “the sure promise of the kingdom [of Heaven]”.²⁶¹ Bede made reference to this royal symbolism when he wrote that the priest “should always be courageous against the onslaughts of vices with the purple of a heavenly kingdom”.²⁶²

In the twelfth century Hugh of St Victor stated that “purple signifies royal dignity”,²⁶³ and that, at the Assumption, the Virgin was dressed in purple as the Queen of Heaven—*regina caeli*.²⁶⁴ At the end of the century, Innocent III described the regal connotation of purple in a similar way, in the vestments of a bishop:

The authority of the high priest [bishop] is signified by the purple dignity of a king, for he ought to proceed on a path of kingship, not turning to the right or deviating to the left.²⁶⁵

As a bishop in seventh-century Northumbria St Cuthbert did indeed wear purple vestments, that is *panno purpureo*, and the tunic and dalmatic he wore at his burial, rediscovered at his translation to the new cathedral at Durham in 1104, were described by Reginald of Durham:

He was clad in tunic and dalmatic, in the manner of Christian bishops. The style of both of these, with their precious purple colour and varied weave, is most beautiful and admirable. The dalmatic, which as the outer robe is the

²⁶⁰ Mark 15: 17; John 19: 2-5.

²⁶¹ *Epistula ad Rusticum* 125: ...*quid violae purpura promittat in regno* (Hilberg, 1918: 120; trans. Wright, 1933: 401).

²⁶² *De Tab.* III. 4: ...*semper regni caelestis purpura adversus vitiorum bella magnanimus* (Hurst, 1969: 100-101; trans. Holder, 1994: 115-16).

²⁶³ *Sermones* 46: *Bene ergo purpura regalem significat dignitatem* (PL 177: 1025; trans. Author); description noted previously by Petzold, 19866: 272.

²⁶⁴ *Sermones* 46: PL 177: 1025; trans. Author).

²⁶⁵ *De Sacrosancti* I. 32: *Per purpuram regiae dignitatis significatur pontificalis potestas quae via regia debet incedere, ne declinet ad dextram vel deviet ad sinistram* (PL 217: 786; trans. Author).

more visible, offers a reddish purple tone, quite unknown in our time even to connoisseurs.²⁶⁶

This episcopal purple confirms the medieval view that “the bishop was a prince of the King of Heaven”.²⁶⁷

Pulliam has stressed a different association of purple, with the colour of blood, and speculated that when worn with garments of blue by Christ in the Book of Kells, it referred to a coming together of heaven and earth in Christ.²⁶⁸ Gage stated that to Bede the amethyst, a purple stone, represented Heaven.²⁶⁹ Both writers here ignored the well-established royal symbolism, and Gage’s observation is not quite accurate enough: the purple colour of the amethyst was representative of Heaven as a royal kingdom, the ‘Kingdom of Heaven’ rather than of Heaven itself, as Bede explained:

The amethyst is purple, mixed with a violet colour, and as it were the bloom of the rose, and it emits gently certain small flames. But there appears also to be something in its purple which is not altogether fiery, like red wine. So, then, the beautiful tint of the purple designates the condition of the heavenly kingdom, but that of the rose and violet, the lowly modesty and precious death of the saints...²⁷⁰

The use of purple on the Chi-rho page of the Lindisfarne Gospels was, therefore, “appropriate to the narration of the coming of the King of kings”.²⁷¹ These are fine distinctions which exhibit how subtle the changing symbolism of purple had become, at least in the exegesis of the patristic commentators.

Christ generally wears a purple robe over his tunics in the St Albans Psalter, and the Virgin is depicted eleven times, and wears a purple robe in eight of them, including all four appearances from the Deposition onwards. In the last miniature of the Edmund

²⁶⁶ *Libellus Cuthb.: Christianorum more pontificum, post hac tunica et dalmatica indutus est; quarum utrarumque genus ex precioso purpura colore et textili varietate satis venustum et perrnirabile est. Nempe dalmatica, quae superius evidentius apparet, subrufi coloris purpuram, satis hoc tempore incognitam, cunctis experientioris viris scientiae praebet* (Raine, 1835: 87; trans. Schapiro, 1977: 12).

²⁶⁷ Leclercq, 1982: 162.

²⁶⁸ Pulliam, 2011: 65.

²⁶⁹ Gage, 1978: 110; Gage, 1999: 73.

²⁷⁰ *Exp. Apoc. III. 21* (Gryson, 2001: 245; trans. Marshall, 1878: 160).

²⁷¹ Brown, 2003: 335.

cycle, three of the four colours of the Tabernacle, God's colours, are worn by the martyr-king Edmund; he wears the priestly blue tunic of a saint, the red tunic of a martyr, and the purple cloak of a king (Fig. 327).

GREEN

Although green was not one of the colours of the Tabernacle, it was used extensively throughout the Vulgate to describe the colour and fruitfulness of trees, grasses, herbs and fruit, and this association with growth and rebirth gave it a special meaning. The book of Job states the characteristics associated with the colour:

A tree hath hope: if it be cut, it groweth green again, and the boughs thereof sprout. If its roots be old in the earth, and its stock be dead in the dust: At the scent of water, it shall spring, and bring forth leaves, as when it was first planted.²⁷²

Certainly, throughout the medieval period, and into the twelfth century and beyond, the colour green gained significance as a sign of hope and renewal, most evident in the many medieval depictions of the green living cross, such as in the Genesis initial of the Winchester Bible (Fig. 236). Although described by Hugh of St Victor as the most beautiful of all colours,²⁷³ the younger artists who illuminated the Winchester Bible preferred to use green as little as possible, especially in garments, but apparently could not avoid using the powerful symbolism of hope in the cross.

To Bede the green of the emerald represented faith and the hope for everlasting life.

He wrote:

The emerald is of so exceedingly deep a green as to surpass all the green herbs, leaves, and gems...Accordingly, it represents souls always flourishing in faith...which strive the more to conceive in their mind by hope the unfading and eternal inheritance which is reserved in heaven.²⁷⁴

²⁷² Job 14: 7-9.

²⁷³ *Didascalicon* 7: *Postremo super omne pulchrum viride* (PL 176: 821; trans. Author); see also Petzold, 1999: 131.

²⁷⁴ *Exp. Apoc.* III. 21 (Gryson, 2001: 537; trans. Marshall, 1878: 151).

This reflected a scriptural emphasis on everlasting life through the constancy of faith, as described in I Peter:

...an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that cannot fade, reserved in heaven for you, Who, by the power of God, are kept by faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.²⁷⁵

This was also the meaning understood in the late twelfth century. Innocent III, in a letter to King Richard of England written in the first year of his papacy, stated that “the emerald’s greenness betokens faith”.²⁷⁶

Green was adopted as one of the four liturgical colours, but Innocent seems to have regarded it as the least important, and his descriptive summary of the colour is the shortest in the *De Sacrosancti*, while his interpretation is based on a single passage from the Song of Songs:

Thy plants are a paradise of pomegranates with the fruits of the orchard.
Cypress with spikenard. Spikenard and saffron, sweet cane and cinnamon,
with all the trees of Libanus, myrrh and aloes with all the chief perfumes.²⁷⁷

Although this focused on the fruitfulness of the fields and orchards as mentioned in the Vulgate, and reflected medieval interpretations of hope, rebirth and everlasting life, it appears that Innocent considered green to be quite a neutral colour. He advised that green was not to be used at the great feasts during Advent and Lent, but was to be worn throughout the year on days which had no special significance:

It remains therefore that on the days of ordinary festivals, garments of green are to be worn, because the colour green is in the middle between white and black and red.²⁷⁸

Somewhat earlier in twelfth-century England, in the four martyrdom scenes in the Life of St Edmund, the captured king Edmund wears the same colours repeated each time, including a green outer tunic, while his captors and murderers wear various bright

²⁷⁵ I Peter 1: 4-5.

²⁷⁶ Innocent III, Letter 1 to King Richard (Cheney and Semple, 1953: 2).

²⁷⁷ Song of Songs 4: 13-14.

²⁷⁸ *De Sacrosancti* I. 32: *Restat ergo, quod diebus ferialibus et communibus, viridibus sit indumentis utendum, quia viridis color medius est inter albedinem et nigredinem et ruborem* (PL 217: 802; trans. Author).

shades of red (Figs 303-304). His torture and murder are enacted against rectangular panels of deep blue. These colours served to remind the viewer of the saint's spilt blood, the sins of his murderers, his martyrdom, his faithfulness, and his reward of everlasting life in Heaven.

BLACK

Finally, the colour black was not mentioned in Exodus, nor was it used elsewhere in the Vulgate to any great extent, beyond references to sheep, or black horses. In the Song of Songs it is used to signify beauty: *nigra sum sed formosa filiae Hierusalem*.²⁷⁹ In the Apocalypse, at the opening of the sixth seal, the sun becomes “black as sackcloth”—*et sol factus est niger tamquam saccus cilicinus*²⁸⁰—which is perhaps the origin of its use in the liturgy for garments on days of penance and mourning.²⁸¹ Regarding this, Innocent III wrote: “Black however is used in garments on days of affliction and abstinence, for sinners and the dead.”²⁸² He then quoted an example from the Gospels:

A voice in Rama was heard, lamentation and great mourning; Rachel bewailing her children, and would not be comforted...²⁸³

SUMMARY

The colour or hue of blue (*hyacinthus*) was described as the colour of the sky by early commentators; this was repeated by Bede, Isidore of Seville and Hugh of St Victor, amongst others. This is evidence that biblical scholars from Jerome onwards saw and understood blue as a colour, not as a tonal value. No doubt there were occasions when it was described or expressed as tonal value in the source texts, in the way white is

²⁷⁹ Song of Songs 1: 4: I am black but beautiful O ye daughters of Jerusalem.

²⁸⁰ Revelation 6:12.

²⁸¹ Gage, 1978: 107.

²⁸² *De Sacrosancti I. 65: Nigris autem indumentis utendum est in die afflictionis et abstinentiae, pro peccatis et pro defunctis* (PL 217: 802; trans. Author).

²⁸³ Matthew 2: 12.

sometimes described as shining or glittering. The emphasis placed on darkness and brightness, such as in Anglo-Saxon descriptions,²⁸⁴ exemplifies the importance of the fall of light onto glittering and reflective surfaces, but there is no evidence that such descriptions had any great meaning for artists in twelfth-century England, where a visual language based on the symbolism of the colours of the Tabernacle was developed; indeed it seems unlikely that they were of any major influence given the weight of biblical exegesis in Latin.

Rather, the more vivid and brilliant a colour was, the more likely it was to be described as radiant or shining, as the purple of Cuthbert's dalmatic was described: "the reddish tonality in the purple is made to shine with more vigour and brilliance".²⁸⁵ It should be noted here that it is the reddish-purple which is of interest, not the shininess.

As noted above, all colours have tonal value which can be important pictorially. While hue remains constant, tonal value is variable, and even the darkest colours can be manipulated by artists to look pale, whether thinned, or lightened with white, or back-lit as fabrics; this often releases and enhances their colour.

The full-colour palette proved itself useful in a number of ways, most notably as an effective pictorial tool, but also as a useful memorizing tool when the availability of the richer colour coincided with monastic interest in mnemonic theory. Classical texts and the work of Hugh of St Victor seem to have been influential on mnemonic page design.

As well, it has been shown that the correct symbolic interpretation of colours in the Vulgate, and especially in descriptions of the Tabernacle, was important to Jerome and later commentators. Accordingly monks and artists in the twelfth century had a variety of source texts from which to derive colour information, much of it on the colour blue, but also on other colours.

²⁸⁴ Petzold, 1986: 276.

²⁸⁵ See above p. 214.

The work of the Alexis Master strongly reflects some of the commonly held interpretations of colour found in such texts; his colour symbolism may therefore have been a result of reading in the library at St Albans rather than a stylistic borrowing from Byzantine art; indeed, the influence was probably in the other direction, as the colours of Melisende's Psalter indicate.

The meanings of colours varied according to their context, and were not fixed or absolute. Bright red for example had pictorial and mnemonic value because its warm colour was eye-catching, especially against cooler backgrounds, but its context determined whether it symbolized sin, martyrdom, or love (*caritas*). Blue and white seem to have alternated as the colour of tunics for heavenly and saintly figures, until the eleventh and twelfth centuries, when blue began to dominate.

Theophilus explained how to mix many and various colours, but said nothing of their meanings, apart from some general comments about the value of art; nor does there seem to be even one contemporary text or letter which describes why an artist selected which colours to use, or what symbolic meanings he might have read into them.

In the late twelfth century four colours were prescribed for use in liturgical vestments according to the rites of the Roman Church: red (*rubeus*), white (*albus*), black (*niger*), and green (*viridis*), and the choice was related to their Scriptural symbolism. The major colours and their symbolic meanings as detected in this study are listed in the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

TEXTS

PREFACE

The penultimate chapter contains case studies about individual illuminations. These address some of the points raised in the previous chapters by focusing more closely on the materiality, technique or colour used, and how this relates to the texts they illustrate. The first case study reinforces the arguments made about the significance of colour in Chapter 5; the author suggests that the symbolic language of colour which developed at St Albans spread to other monastic centres, and is evident on the Morgan Leaf made at Winchester. This is contrary to most previous assumptions about colour and colour symbolism.

In the second case study a spectacular gilded Psalm initial in the Auct. Bible is examined for the very unusual way its gold was decorated. Previously unrecorded, this beautiful initial emphasizes how little is understood about gilding in twelfth-century English manuscripts.

The third example describes an initial in the Laud Bible which contains a strange and apparently unique illustration of the Tabernacle; its oddness lies in its imagery rather than technique, and this is explored through its relationship to the text it illustrates, and other source texts.

The fourth case study questions established opinion about the Elkanah miniature in the Bury Bible, and presents new evidence about its dense theological meaning and obscure imagery. It explores how *ruminatio* and what Leclercq called ‘reminiscence’

were influential in the design of the illustration, and provides a new interpretation of the image.

The fifth illustration, the full-page frontispiece to the book of Numbers in the Bury Bible, has an obscured meaning due to a later inability to read the twelfth-century signs. Medieval graffiti on the image indicates that even fourteenth-century eyes were no longer able to look at it with complete understanding. It is an example of imagery which has been found difficult to decipher without the necessary clues, and consequently has been misinterpreted by scholars. The case study supplies the correct interpretation.

The final case study is about a tiny illustration of a man chasing a hare in a roundel of the very large *Frater Ambrosius* initial in the Bury Bible. It is an appropriate one to finish on because it provides a reminder that although professional artists were skilled craftsmen they were not necessarily literate, and required guidance when illustrating Scripture. Its textual source, it appears, is recognized here for the first time.

6:1 THE TRANSITION OF SAUL

On the recto of the Morgan Leaf is a short sequence of illustrations about Samuel and Saul, one of which depicts Saul's transition from one state of being to another, as described in the Vulgate. It is an example of what might be termed a lost language of colour, explored in the previous chapter but still only partially perceived, which became part of an iconographic language used to illustrate episodes from Scripture and saints' lives. Colour symbolism was crucial in this, indeed, it might now be possible to say that for the literate reader colour signs had replaced some of the textual signs.

Based on the text of I Samuel, the symbolism of the colour blue in the illustration probably had its origins in Jerome's *Epistula* 64 to Fabiola, while its visual sources are to be found in the work of the Alexis Master.

The illustrations tell the story of Hannah, Samuel and Saul (Fig. 133), and, on the verso of the Leaf, that of David, Saul and the death of Absalom (Fig. 142). These images form a narrative cycle illustrating the main episodes of the text, and were designed and painted by the Apocrypha Master, although considerably altered on the verso by a later artist. His touch is most evident on the recto where his drawing style and bright opaque colours reflect the St Albans tradition of the Alexis Master. What is more, the illustrations suggest that the *tunicam hyacinthinam* had as much special meaning for the Apocrypha Master as it did for the Alexis Master, which might be further evidence, if not confirmation, that he was trained at St Albans.¹ Not only do the two Samuels in the image wear the blue tunic, but he also made use of its heavenly associations to illustrate the change in Saul's status when anointed by Samuel (Fig. 328).

The story begins when Saul, out looking for his father's lost animals with his servant, seeks out Samuel to ask for advice. The Vulgate describes their meeting: as Samuel sees Saul approach, God speaks to him: "Behold the man, of whom I spoke to thee, this man shall reign over my people."² On the left of the illustration Saul approaches Samuel and speaks to him, gesturing with pointed finger; he is very tall, as mentioned in the Vulgate, and dressed in rich secular costume of short tunic, blue hose, long fur-lined cloak fastened with a brooch, and boots. His servant stands behind. Then, to the right, Saul is shown seated while others remain standing, a typical visual stratagem of royal representation,³ and Samuel anoints him with oil:

And Samuel took a little vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said: Behold, the Lord hath anointed thee...⁴

Then, Samuel says to Saul:

¹ Donovan, 2008: 68.

² I Samuel 9: 17-18.

³ Hahn, 2001: 222.

⁴ I Samuel 10: 1.

And the Spirit of the Lord shall come upon thee and thou... shalt be changed into another man.⁵

The Vulgate text is clear: *et insiliet in te spiritus Domini... et mutaberis in virum alium*—“you shall be changed into another man”. The transformation is illustrated in the double scene, where on the right the seated and apparently bare-footed Saul now wears an outer tunic patterned with circles and crosses, and beneath it a *tunicam totam hyacinthinam*. He has become a priestly figure, consecrated and elevated to holy kingship. The symbolism of the blue tunic was used to depict his transition from ordinary mortal to membership of the priesthood of Christ, emphasizing what Hahn has called the “quasi-clerical” role of the anointed king who had become part of the Church.⁶

Moreover, the symbolism of Saul’s anointing and transformation from ordinary man to one who was destined to be king would have been understood by educated twelfth-century viewers, and especially by those of royal blood. It was to Winchester Cathedral in 1153 that bishop Henry of Blois brought King Stephen and Henry of Anjou, the future King Henry II, to ratify a treaty which ended the Anarchy.⁷ The royal succession was re-established, and when Stephen died in 1154, Henry II came to the throne, and questions about who should reign over the kingdom were settled. The illustrations on the Leaf were probably begun soon after, in about 1155-60.⁸

6:2 A GILDED PSALM INITIAL

In the first volume of the Auct. Bible there are several large initials at the main psalter divisions (Figs 132 and 329), which were probably made by the Amalekite Master.

Apart from the Beatus initial (Fig. 131), they are entirely decorative and very

⁵ I Samuel 10: 6.

⁶ See Hahn, 2001: 218-24, for a discussion of the “quasi-clerical role” of English kings and their vestments.

⁷ Poole, 1955: 165.

⁸ Kauffmann, 1984: 120-22; Donovan, 1993: 3; Donovan, 2008: 68.

symmetrical, with geometric structure behind the foliate shapes, designed with the aid of a compass; they are highly finished in flatly painted body colour with crisp, hard edges. The colours of their foliage, especially the blues and greens, are almost fluorescent in their intensity. The fields of plain gold leaf were laid flat onto the backgrounds of the initials, and burnished and polished, and the gold of the right-hand initials tinted red. The gold remains highly polished and reflective, and with the sharp clarity of the adjacent painted colours, is very redolent of the glittering gold of Byzantine mosaics:

It was not until the twelfth century that book-illuminators achieved the gold effect of the lead-enriched potash glass of Byzantine mosaics by the application of extremely thin, highly polished plate-metal gold, that is gold-leaf.⁹

The left-hand initial on folio 23r is a letter 'Q' at the beginning of Psalm 51, and contains a large double-headed eagle with wings spread, painted in ochre, green, blue and white (Fig. 330). Behind the eagle the gold leaf has been decorated with a tiny diaper pattern of diagonal lines about one eighth of an inch apart, with a cluster of four dots in each lozenge shape.

Remarkably, it seems that after the initial was gilded, and after the gold was burnished and polished to a high shine, the leaf was turned over and the diaper pattern carefully scored on the reverse, through the already-written Psalm text, so that the pattern of lines and dots was pushed out in low relief in the gold on the front of the initial, in the manner of repoussé work. If this had been done before burnishing, the slightly protruding design would have been flattened and the effect nullified.

The lines were scored using a straight edge and a small pointed tool which tore the surface of the reverse very slightly, and scratched the black lettering where it passed through the text, but did not pierce the vellum or gold. The clusters of four dots were done in the same way, impressed into the reverse of the design, and protruding on the

⁹ Pächt, 1986: 140.

front. They are very tiny, but some were more heavily pressed than others and are visible with a magnifier. The artist probably used the show-through from the gold and glue as a guide, because only those squares containing gold were marked with dots in this way. The clusters of dots are rather irregular and do not repeat exactly as they would if impressed with a complex tool, but were apparently carefully made using a single very small rounded point.

Even though the repoussé technique, if it can be called that when used on vellum, is very light and delicate, the visual rewards are spectacular when the light strikes the gold, and gleams and glints from the raised surfaces of the diaper pattern much more dramatically than if the front surface of the gold had been incised, as it had been in the first volume of the Bible.

The technique is used only on this single initial, and, apart from being tinted with a red wash, virtually no other gold in the volume is decorated at all; the exception being the Beatus initial, where David's crown is decorated with tiny punched dots made with a small point.

The same artist also produced several initials in the Winchester Bible, but there he laid his gold onto gesso and the repoussé technique could not be used. The artist clearly appreciated that raised lines and dots caught and reflected the light better than incised lines, and must have known such effects from the glitter of gold coins, mosaic gold, or the work of goldsmiths; indeed his method seems derived from the metalwork technique of repoussé, where designs were created in thin metal sheets by hammering or impressing forms from the reverse, to create images in low relief on the front surface.

Similar techniques were also used in the decoration of leatherwork, where incising, punching and embossing were amongst the most common processes used. The artist of the initial may have been acquainted with similar techniques used in the decoration of

book covers, where dampened leather was often embossed by impressing forms onto the reverse with special tools.¹⁰

It has already been noted above that some manuscript decoration seems to have been derived from metalwork techniques. During the Anglo-Saxon period in England it was a common phenomenon that the various crafts shared a common vocabulary of surface design and colour.¹¹ Henderson has described illuminations in the Book of Durrow which closely imitate colours and gold of cloisonné decoration in Anglo-Saxon metalwork such as the Sutton Hoo shoulder clasps.¹²

There were many jewellers and goldsmiths based in Winchester at this time, and the Amalekite Master would have known that he shared some common skills with them. Alexander Neckam, an Englishman who grew up in St Albans during the second half of the twelfth century and who later lived in Paris, described some of the skills required by goldsmiths:

The goldsmith should be as skilled in the work of the quill (*opus plumiale*: engraving or drawing) as in carving, and in casting as *repoussé*-work. His apprentice should have a tablet either waxed or covered in whiting or clay, for portraying little flowers and drawing in various ways.¹³

The unusual decoration of the gold in the initial is not only reminiscent of the surfaces of fine metalwork; the eagle set within the circular shape of the letter 'Q' is similar to some medieval brooches. Its design was perhaps derived from brooches like the eleventh-century one which belonged to the Empress Gisela, and now at Mainz (Fig. 331), which has badly dented repoussé decoration on the eagle's body. The circular symmetry of the initial and the sharp, small-scale delicacy of its colour and gold reinforce the brooch-like impression.

¹⁰ Cherry, 1991: 304.

¹¹ Dodwell, 1982: 24-43.

¹² Henderson, 1987: 32.

¹³ Campbell, 1991:121, citing *De Nominibus Utensilium*, written by Neckam, possibly based on his own personal observations.

Another more or less contemporary example of metalwork is the Cologne precentor's staff (Fig. 332), dated to 1178; the knop is of nielloed silver, engraved with birds in oval foliage scrolls, one of which is an eagle with wings spread against a cross-hatched background (Fig. 333); this heavy cross-hatching behind the motifs is reminiscent of the Auct. Bible initial. The makers of the English nielloed bottle discussed above also made much use of cross-hatching (Figs 210-211), as did the man who engraved Archbishop Walter's chalice (Fig. 220). Although the staff appears to be the product of a Limoge metalworker, it is possible that an English craftsman made the nielloed knop either in England,¹⁴ or perhaps in the Angevin region of France.¹⁵

Another example of metalwork is the small enamelled copper plaque, part of a related group now in New York, about three and a half inches long, made in Cologne for a reliquary shrine. Dated *c.* 1185;¹⁶ it depicts an eagle with wings spread against a blue background (Fig. 334). It is probable that the bishop of Winchester, Henry of Blois, employed craftsmen from the continent who were involved in similar work at his cathedral, or at Glastonbury, including the production of the well-known Henry of Blois plaques (Fig. 335), possibly made in England by a Mosan goldsmith.¹⁷

The Church in twelfth-century England was a major employer of goldsmiths. Chalices, plates and cruets were required for the Mass, as well as crosses, reliquaries, shrines, crosiers and other liturgical objects, and Bishop Henry of Blois was amongst the greatest of customers. He had been educated at Cluny "at a time of intense artistic activity connected with the completion of new abbey church",¹⁸ and later he spent lavish amounts from his own personal wealth at both Glastonbury and Winchester to initiate

¹⁴ Swarzenski, 1974: 77.

¹⁵ Stratford, 1982: 234.

¹⁶ www.metmuseum.org.

¹⁷ Stratford, 1984: 262.

¹⁸ Zarnecki, 1984: 159.

various building and decorative projects.¹⁹ His cathedral at Winchester was decorated with:

...the most precious and varied works of art, from the fonts which still remain to illuminations and enamels and masterpieces of the goldsmith's art which have almost entirely disappeared.²⁰

In the Winchester Annals for 1167 sixty-three of these items are mentioned in the posthumous list of gifts he left to the cathedral, including chalices of silver and gold, shrines, a frontal panel for the high altar that was covered in gold, precious stones and enamels, a casket overlaid with stamped gold and enamels,²¹ and a large gold and jewelled reliquary cross, set with over 200 precious stones and 22 relics which had been consecrated by bishop Henry himself,²² and given to the Cathedral in *c.* 1162.²³ It is hard to imagine from these descriptions that the illuminators working on the large Bibles could be indifferent to the products of skilled metalworkers so obviously visible in the Cathedral.

The products of the scriptorium, including the two great Bibles and the Winchester Psalter, were almost certainly also made at Henry's request; he probably assembled the artists "specifically for their artistic prowess",²⁴ and may in fact have taken some interest in the illuminations, even overseeing the activities of the scriptorium.²⁵ The Psalm initial could be seen as an indirect result of his involvement.

Although material processes used in other media were possibly influential in the making of the Psalm initial, its double-headed design has a Byzantine origin, and confirms the Italo/Byzantine interests of the artist. It may also reveal some personal preferences of Henry of Blois, whose admiration and enthusiasm for Byzantine art were

¹⁹ See Caskey, 2006: 193-204 for hierarchies of patronage in twelfth-century Europe.

²⁰ Knowles, 1950: 289.

²¹ Riall, 1994: 27.

²² Stratford, 1983: 31.

²³ Campbell, 1991: 154.

²⁴ Donovan, 2008: 68.

²⁵ Riall, 1994: 19.

probably developed on his travels abroad.²⁶ The double-headed eagle was the emblem of the Byzantine Empire, and if the artist had travelled into the East he would soon have become aware of the eagle's significance as a public monument. An eleventh-century marble wall-slab in Sophia, carved with the double-headed eagle of Byzantium (Fig. 336) is typical of a type still occasionally to be seen above portals in the city walls of Istanbul and elsewhere.²⁷

The double-headed eagle was eventually adopted as the emblem of the Holy Roman Empire and regarded as symbolic of the Western and Eastern parts of the Empire.²⁸ Although the design became widespread around Winchester and Hampshire during the thirteenth century, used on floor tiles such as those at Hyde Abbey just outside the city (Fig. 337), no tiles with the design existed before *c.* 1240.²⁹ It appears therefore that the design of the Auct. Bible eagle was a rare early use of the double-headed type.

Byzantine objects may have circulated in Winchester. Two Byzantine seals were found during excavations in Winchester in 1963, which had been attached to a document issued at Constantinople, and this discovery suggests that there was direct and official communication with Greek centres in the East.³⁰ One is a lead seal of Sophronius II, patriarch of Jerusalem made in the late Saxon or early Norman period (Fig. 338). Found with them were two eleventh-century Byzantine copper coins, suggesting that there were definite links between Winchester and the Holy Land during the late Saxon and early Norman periods, probably in the form of official visits and pilgrimages.³¹

²⁶ Donovan, 1993: 15.

²⁷ Milton, 1996: 49.

²⁸ Scott-Giles, 1954: 76.

²⁹ Christopher Norton, pers. comm. 2012.

³⁰ Deshman, 1974: 195; Dodwell, 1982: 154.

³¹ Biddle, 1976: 462.

Regardless of such technical and stylistic considerations, it should be remembered that the initial decorates the opening words of Psalm 51, and it is important to ascertain whether it relates to the words of the Psalm. Two rather unusual elements of the design are the eagle's very long tongues, which are perhaps a reference to the "deceitful tongue", that is *linguam delosam*, which is mentioned in the first few lines of the Psalm, referring to Doag's deceitful whispering campaign against the young Psalmist David; the lines are closely adjacent to the initial, often an important consideration in the choice of imagery:³²

All the day long thy tongue hath devised injustice: as a sharp razor, thou hast wrought deceit. Thou hast loved malice more than goodness: and iniquity rather than to speak righteousness. Thou hast loved all the words of ruin, O deceitful tongue.³³

In the St Albans Psalter initial to Psalm 51, the artist illustrated malice rather than deceit,³⁴ and depicted several figures in an historiated initial illustrating the line: "You have loved malice more than goodness." In the Auct. initial the eagle's two heads look in opposite directions, symbolic of Doag's deceit, and contrasting malice with goodness and iniquity with righteousness.

Oakeshott thought that the origins of the Auct. Psalm initials were difficult to identify, but acknowledged that: "the initials are at least a reminder that originality appears among medieval as well as among later artists".³⁵ He made no comment on the gold except to say that no gesso was used. The method used to decorate the gold of the initial therefore does not seem to have been described or discussed anywhere else previously. Although its diaper pattern is echoed in some of the incised decoration in the contemporary Hunterian Psalter, its remarkable repoussé gold is a unique example of the technique amongst the manuscripts considered in this study; it is apparently

³² Heslop, 1986: 2.

³³ Psalm 51: 4-6 (Gallican).

³⁴ Geddes, 2005: 98.

³⁵ Oakeshott, 1981: 68.

unprecedented in English illumination, and stands out as a hidden gem of creative thinking and exquisite skill.

6:3 THE SKINS OF THE TABERNACLE

In Chapter 5 it was noted how some colours of the Tabernacle could change, depending which Vulgate texts were used. Although by the twelfth century the colours had become standardised in the texts of giant English Bibles, the word *pellis/pelles* (skin/skins) came under scrutiny as scholars searched beyond Jerome's Latin Vulgate for the ancient textual sources.

Henderson has described the covering of the Tabernacle in the *Codex Amiatinus* diagram as "badger skins".³⁶ This seems surprising because, although described thus in the *KJB*,³⁷ such a description is not used in the Vulgate, and would probably have been an alien concept to the monks of early eighth-century Jarrow where the *Codex* was copied and illustrated. It is, rather, based on later medieval interpretations of the Hebrew text of Exodus. Nevertheless, Henderson's description focuses attention on an issue that is exemplified quite dramatically by the historiated initial to I Samuel (I Kings) in the Laud Bible (Fig. 339).

The text of I Samuel describes how Elkanah and his wives Hannah and Penninah, and Penninah's children, offered up a sacrifice at the Temple of Shiloh, after which they ate portions of the sacrificial meal. Elkanah's wife Hannah was childless, and longed for a child of her own; she prayed at the Temple, and later gave birth to Samuel, and several other children.

In Romanesque Bibles the text of I Samuel was usually introduced with an historiated initial 'F' depicting Elkanah and his two wives, and occasionally children and food, as in the Rochester Bible (Fig. 340). However, in the Laud Bible Hannah is

³⁶ Henderson, 1999: 79.

³⁷ *KJB*, Exodus 25: 5: And rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins.

depicted praying at the entrance to the temple, as described in the text,³⁸ and God blesses her from above (Fig. 341). The structure is more like the tent of the Tabernacle than the Temple, although inside it contains an arcaded shrine-like building with a red tiled roof. The tent itself is made from curtains of blue, green and pale purple supported on poles with golden finials; surmounting these is a covering made from a patchwork of hairy animal skins complete with their fleeces, with tails and heads, tiny ears and eyeholes; they are coloured blue, pale purple or mauve, and very pale red-ochre.

This contrasts with earlier depictions of the Tabernacle, which usually have coverings of plain or patterned fabrics; the colour blue is common, or a variation of blue, but sometimes other colours such as purple and scarlet are used. They are generally smooth and un-textured such as those in the Ashburnham Pentateuch, with bluish-grey roof (Fig. 319), or the Bible of San Paolo Fuori le Mura, with, it seems, all the colours mentioned in Exodus, and with some embroidered decoration (Fig. 342), and the Lambeth Bible with a blue covering (Fig. 343).

Such an unusual illustration of hairy skins raises an issue of translation and interpretation during the twelfth century; its immediate source may have been Jerome's prologue to the books of Samuel and Kings where he refers to the materials of the Tabernacle, including the covering of goats' hair and skins, as described in Exodus. The first covering was a woven fabric of goats' hair:

Thou shalt make also eleven curtains of goats' hair [*saga cilicina undecim*], to cover the top of the tabernacle.³⁹

Over this was a final covering of two layers of skins; one dyed red and the other blue, or red and violet in some Pentateuchs and the Douay-Rheims version:

Thou shalt make also another cover to the roof of rams' skins dyed red [*rubricatis*]: and over that again another cover of violet coloured [*ianthinis*] skins.⁴⁰

³⁸ I Samuel 1:10.

³⁹ Exodus 26: 7: *facies et saga cilicina undecim ad operiendum tectum tabernaculi*.

Although Jerome's description here, as elsewhere, is similar to, and probably derived from, those in the *Antiquitates Judicae* by Josephus, in which the curtains are described as "woven of hair",⁴¹ it is, nevertheless, important to clarify the meaning of Jerome's words: *pellis* (skins), *pilos caprarum* (hair of she-goats), and *saga cilicina undecim* (eleven curtains of goats' hair).

First, the words *saga cilicina* refer to fabrics of fairly coarse woollen cloth, woven from goats' hair yarn (*pilos caprarum*) which had been spun by the Israelite women:

The skilful women also gave such things as they had spun, violet, purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, And goats' hair, giving all of their own accord.⁴²

Historically such woven fabrics were used to make garments such as military cloaks, and sack-cloth; the word *sagum* usually denotes a rough woollen robe or cloak, as it did throughout the medieval period,⁴³ while *cilicium* was often used to denote sack cloth or a hair shirt worn for mourning as in Genesis 37—*indutus est cilicio*,⁴⁴ or for penance as in Psalm 68 of Jerome's *Romanum* and *Gallican* versions of the Psalms—*vestimentum meum cilicium*.⁴⁵

After the Israelite women had donated their yarn it was woven into lengths of fabric to make the curtains,⁴⁶ hence Jerome's use of the term *saga cilicina undecim*, meaning 'eleven curtains of goats-hair wool'; these were used as an inner covering of the Tabernacle. Over these fabrics were two outer layers of red and blue skins. However, the meaning of the word 'skins' has been less clear, and commentators searched for its

⁴⁰ Exodus 26: 14: *facies et operimentum aliud tecto de pellibus arietum rubricatis et super hoc rursum aliud operimentum de ianthinis pellibus.*

⁴¹ Whiston, 2006: 106.

⁴² Exodus 35: 25-26: *sed et mulieres doctae dederunt quae neverant hyacinthum purpuram et vermiculum ac byssum et pilos caprarum sponte propria cuncta tribuentes.*

⁴³ *RMLW*: 86.

⁴⁴ Genesis 37: 34: And tearing his garments, he put on sackcloth, mourning for his son a long time.

⁴⁵ Psalm 68: 12: And I made haircloth my garment; see *Vita Ailredi* 57 for *cilicium* as an animal skin with "rough hairs unremoved" (trans. Powicke, 1950: 62 n2).

⁴⁶ Exodus 35: 34-35.

true meaning in Hebrew texts of the Pentateuch which used the obscure word *tahas* for skins.

Although Jerome, Bede, Isidore of Seville, and later Peter Comestor were satisfied that the skins were blue, they did not clarify the meaning of the word for skins, *pelles*, probably because they took its meaning for granted. A question therefore presents itself: what precisely did Jerome mean by *pellis/pelles*, and how was this perceived in twelfth-century England?

Jerome used the Greek Septuagint translation of early Hebrew biblical texts as a source, but he also consulted and translated original Hebrew sources, including Josephus. In Exodus 26 of the Septuagint the Greek writers used two different words for the ‘skins’ covering the Tabernacle. In verse 7 they are described as “skins with hair on”, that is *δέρρεις τριχίνας* (*derris trichinas*), meaning undressed hides:

And thou shalt make for a covering of the tabernacle skins with the hair on, thou shalt make them eleven skins.⁴⁷

However, in Exodus 26: 14 the word used for the skins is *δέρματα* (*dermata*):

And thou shalt make for a covering of the tabernacle rams’ skins dyed red, and blue skins as coverings above.⁴⁸

Jerome did not use the phrase “skins with hair on” in his own translation, using instead the meaning of the second verse, that is “blue skins”. There was a good reason for his choice—he knew Josephus’s description of the outer fabrics:

There were also other curtains made of skins above these, which afforded covering and protection to those that were woven both in hot weather and when it rained. And great was the surprise of those who viewed these curtains at a distance, for they seemed not at all to differ from the color of the sky. But those that were made of hair and of skins, reached down in the

⁴⁷ Septuagint, Exodus 26:7: *καὶ ποιήσεις δέρρεις τριχίνας σκέπην ἐπὶ τῆς σκηνῆς, ἕνδεκα δέρρεις ποιήσεις αὐτάς* (trans. online at www.ellopus.net).

⁴⁸ Septuagint, Exodus 26:14: *καὶ ποιήσεις κατακάλυμμα τῆ σκηνῆ δέρματα κριῶν ἡρυθροδανομένα, καὶ ἐπικαλύμματα δέρματα ὑακίνθινα ἐπάνωθεν* (trans. online at www.ellopus.net).

same manner as did the veil at the gates, and kept off the heat of the sun, and what injury the rains might do.⁴⁹

In this passage Josephus used yet another Greek word for skins, the genitive plural noun *διφθερῶν* (*dipherôn*) meaning ‘of prepared hides’, ‘of tanned skins’, or ‘of pieces of leather’,⁵⁰ and the words *χρῶαν* (*chrōan*) ‘colour’, and *οὐρανόν* (*ouranón*), ‘heaven/sky’, which translate as “colour of the sky”. The noun *διφθέρα* (*diphthera*), ‘prepared hides/skins’, is derived from the verb *δέψω* (*depsō*) meaning to soften, or to work or knead a thing till it is soft, as in the sense of tanning leather.⁵¹ The lexicon definition of the word is as follows:

διφθέρα;

I. *a prepared hide, tanned skin, piece of leather*; opp. to *δέρις* (*an undressed hide*); used for writing-material in ancient times, before the use of papyrus.

II. *a leathern garment* such as peasants wore; 2. *a wallet, bag*; 3. in pl. *skins used as tents*.⁵²

It is noteworthy that Josephus described how people were surprised by the blue colour of the skins—the “colour of the sky”—so we can, with justification, imagine the outer covering of the Tabernacle as made of tanned skins—whether of she-goats, rams or badgers—and which were blue and hairless.

It is not surprising therefore that Jerome described the colours and fabrics of the Tabernacle as he did. He understood the skins to be prepared or processed leather, and, using the phrase *pelles hyacinthinas*, he described them as blue. He was acquainted with Josephus’s *Antiquitates* text describing how the skins protected the Tabernacle from the heat of the sun and the rain, which was derived from Isaiah in the Septuagint and

⁴⁹ *Antiquitates* 3. 6. 132: ἄλλαι δ’ ἐπάνω τούτων ἐκ διφθερῶν κατεσκευασμένοι ὑπερήσαν σκέπη καὶ βοήθεια ταῖς ὑφантаῖς ἐν τε τοῖς καύμασι καὶ ὅποτε ὑετὸς εἴη γεγενημένοι. πολλὴ δ’ ἐκπληξίς ἐλάμβανε τοὺς πόρρωθεν θεωμένους: τὴν γὰρ χρῶαν τοῖς κατὰ τὸν οὐρανὸν συμβαίνουσιν οὐδὲν ἐδόκουν διαφέρειν (Niese, 1892, at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>; trans. Whiston, 2006: 107).

⁵⁰ Liddell and Scott, 1940, at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>.

⁵¹ Liddell and Scott, 1940, at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>.

⁵² Liddell and Scott, 1940, at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>.

Hebrew Bible. Jerome used it in his own translation of Isaiah,⁵³ and in his prologue to Kings.

The definition of *pellis* in Lewis and Short supports this interpretation:⁵⁴

Pellis is, f;

I. *Skin; surface; also a skin, hide* (of a beast), whether on the body or taken off; *a felt, pelt* etc.

II. Transf. A. *Leather*; B. *A garment, article of clothing* made of skin; C. *A tent* for soldiers (because it was covered with skins); usually in the phrase *sub pellibus, in the camp*; D. *Parchment*; E. *A drum*.

Therefore, while it may also have had wider meanings, the word *pelles* was used during the classical and the early Christian periods to describe tanned or prepared leather, and this must have been Jerome's meaning and later commentators' understanding. At Bury in the twelfth century, for example, the words *pelles vitulinas* (calf skins) were used in the *Gesta Sacristarum* to describe the parchment that was to be used for the Bury Bible and its illustrations.

The text of the Laud Bible was probably written in France, and the volume bound in a French scriptorium.⁵⁵ Kauffmann, Cahn and Sheppard have suggested that the unusual subject matter used in many of its initials links it more closely to Bibles from the Continent rather than English ones.⁵⁶ However, most of the large historiated initials, including that for I Samuel, were painted between 1165 and 1170 by an artist who had worked in England,⁵⁷ with stylistic links to manuscripts produced in the Gloucester area.⁵⁸

In conclusion, it is reasonable to suppose that the artist of the Laud Bible based his illustration of the Tabernacle on the description of the "skins with hair on" in the

⁵³ Isaiah 4: 6: And there shall be a tabernacle for a shade in the daytime from the heat, and for a security and covert from the whirlwind, and from rain (*et tabernaculum erit in umbraculum diei ab aestu et in securitatem et absconsionem a turbine et a pluvia*).

⁵⁴ Lewis and Short, 1879, at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>.

⁵⁵ Sheppard, 1984: 285-86.

⁵⁶ Kauffmann, 1975: 124; Cahn, 1982: 262; Sheppard, 1984: 287.

⁵⁷ Sheppard, 1984: 284.

⁵⁸ Cahn, 1982: 262; Sheppard, 1984: 285.

Septuagint, and that the words *pelles hyacinthinas* in the Vulgate describe processed leather skins dyed blue, as mentioned by Josephus in his *Antiquitates*.

6:4 ELKANAH'S GIFTS

Another unusual illustration introduces the text of I Samuel in the Bury Bible, and, like the Laud initial, it contains a strange image of fabrics or skins; this may reflect a mutual interest in the same textual sources, especially Jerome's prologue to the books of Kings and its references to the Scriptures.

Michael Kauffmann, who has produced an accumulation of research on the Bury Bible and the Hannah image over several decades has made the major contributions to the discussion of its meaning. However, his basic assumption that Elkanah is offering garments to his wives has remained unchanged throughout, and virtually every other scholar who has worked on the Bible since his original article of 1966 has repeated this suggestion. More recently Fran Altvater has discussed the medieval images of Hannah from a feminist point of view, and also assumed that Elkanah was giving clothing.⁵⁹ This assumption is challenged below.

The initial 'F' to I Samuel in the Bury Bible is a decorative one, filled with a vine scroll inhabited by two lions and two lionesses (Fig. 344). The Hannah episodes are illustrated instead on a large, full-page frontispiece (Fig. 345), on folio 147v, opposite the initial. The upper register contains a puzzling illustration showing Elkanah giving a piece of fabric to each of his wives Hannah and Penninah, in an image that is as eye-catching as that of Hannah and the Tabernacle in the Laud Bible, but which is very much more obscure in meaning. Its esoteric design was undoubtedly developed through the process of *ruminatio*, a process which was essential in revealing the meaning of texts, and by the theological exegesis of monastic scholars, both important in providing

⁵⁹ Altvater, 2011: 1.

the artists with original subject matter. The Bury Bible's combination of literal narrative illustration and layers of exegetical interpretation is fairly typical of methods used in Romanesque Bibles.⁶⁰

The image ostensibly illustrates the text of I Samuel, 1: 3-5, which reads:

And this man went up out of his city upon the appointed days, to adore and to offer sacrifice to the Lord of hosts in Silo. And the two sons of Heli, Ophni and Phinees, were there priests of the Lord. Now the day came, and Elcana offered sacrifice, and gave to Phenenna, his wife, and to all her sons and daughters, portions: But to Anna he gave one portion with sorrow, because he loved Anna. And the Lord had shut up her womb.

Thus, every year Elkanah went to Shiloh to sacrifice an animal in the Temple, and as custom dictated this was followed by a sacrificial meal where portions of food from the sacrifice were given out to members of the family.⁶¹ This was self-evident to early commentators because there are very clear references to the meal in I Samuel, and biblical scholarship offers no other explanation from either Jewish or Christian sources. Sharing portions of the sacrificial animal was “a gift to God and an act of communal worship”.⁶²

Why Master Hugo illustrated Elkanah giving pieces of fabric to his wives has remained unclear. What were the fabrics meant to be? In the first definitive description of the Bible in 1912, M. R. James described them as robes, and they have been perceived as robes, or garments, since then.⁶³ In 1953 Boase described Elkanah “distributing clothes”, but made no comment about the strangeness of the image.⁶⁴ In 1966 Kauffmann stated that “it is impossible to say from where Master Hugo obtained the idea of rendering the ‘portions’ of the text as robes”, and suggested that the very rare image was not of Western derivation but “falls clearly into the Byzantine orbit”.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Kauffmann, 2003: 104.

⁶¹ Kauffmann, 1996: 281; Kauffmann, 2003: 94.

⁶² Kauffmann, 1996: 281.

⁶³ James, 1912: 3.

⁶⁴ Boase, 1953: 163.

⁶⁵ Kauffmann, 1966: 69.

Parker McLachlan described the scene merely as Elkanah giving his wives garments in shades of lilac.⁶⁶ Following these scholars Thurlby, in 1981, referred to the scene as “Elkanah distributing clothes to his wives”,⁶⁷ while Walter Cahn wrote:

In the upper part of the panel, Elkanah is giving “portions” to his wives Hannah and Penninah—curiously not shares of the meat of sacrifice, as the Bible specifies, but halves of a robe or other garment.⁶⁸

In this last case, however, to call the fabrics “halves of a robe” is an elaboration too far; they are clearly two differently coloured items, one of crimson and the other a violet-purple.

In his 1996 article ‘Elkanah’s Gift’, written thirty years after his original paper on the Bible, Kauffmann suggested that the image was related to what he called “the central importance of the gift economy in the early and high Middle Ages, and the significant role of clothing as the standard personal gift”.⁶⁹ However, mitigating against this argument is the Scriptural antipathy to the secular excesses in clothing which is implied in gift giving; this was expressed in the advice to wives about their personal adornment in I Peter, which suggested that adornment should:

not be the outward plaiting of the hair, or the wearing of gold, or the putting on of apparel, but...the incorruptibility of a quiet and a meek spirit which is rich in the sight of God.⁷⁰

In the twelfth century Peter Abelard drew attention to this, and to contemporary monastic attitudes on the subject, in a letter to Heloise:

Costly clothes, which Scripture utterly condemns, must be absolutely banned. The Lord warns us especially against them, and condemns the pride in them of the rich man who was damned, while by contrast he commends the humility of John.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Parker McLachlan, 1986: 206.

⁶⁷ Thurlby, 1981: 382.

⁶⁸ Cahn, 1982: 164.

⁶⁹ Kauffmann, 1996: 283.

⁷⁰ I Peter 3: 3: ... *quarum sit non extrinsecus capillaturae aut circumdatio auri aut indumenti vestimentorum cultus sed qui... in incorruptibilitate quieti et modesti spiritus quod est in conspectu Dei locuples.*

⁷¹ Abelard, Letter 7 to Heloise: *Pretiosae vestes, quas omnino Scriptura damnat, summopere fugiantur. De quibus nos praecipue Dominus dehortans et damnate divitis*

Kauffmann’s gift-giving idea is, however, an interesting one, especially in light of established traditions of ecclesiastical gift-giving during the Middle Ages, when unmade fabrics were sometimes given to the church as gifts, from the Anglo-Saxon period onwards.⁷² Often described as coverings and usually of Byzantine or Spanish silk, or fine embroidered linen, these precious coverings of fine cloth were “used in the wealthiest religious centres of England for vestments, hangings, altar-covers, or tomb-coverings.”⁷³ By the later Middle Ages it had become quite normal and conventional for English kings, for example, to give such gifts of fine fabrics to the church.⁷⁴

Nevertheless, despite the scriptural abhorrence for excessive secular clothing, especially for women, which was still prevalent in monastic communities in Europe—it was, after all, monks who paid for and planned the Bury Bible and its illuminations—scholars have generally agreed that Elkanah is giving pieces of clothing to his wives, and even as recently as 2011 the image was described as a “presentation of clothing”.⁷⁵

What evidence is there to support this suggestion? Two very different texts may have been of great influence at Bury St Edmunds during the making of the Bury Bible, both providing clues to understanding Hugo’s illustration. The first has already been considered by several scholars, and supports the clothing theory. It is a commentary on I Samuel, *Quaestiones Hebraicae in librum I Samuelis*, written c. 820 by Pseudo-Jerome, a Hebrew scholar who had converted to Christianity.⁷⁶ He interpreted the word *partes* to mean gifts of clothing—*partes vestes intelligentur*—given by Jewish men to wives and children at festivals, rather than as food:

superbiam deiis accusat, et Joannis humilitatem econtrario commendat (PL 178: 299-300, trans. Radice, 1974: 248).

⁷² Dodwell, 1982: 149-57.

⁷³ Dodwell, 1982: 169.

⁷⁴ Laxford, 2008: 88.

⁷⁵ Altvater, 2011: 2.

⁷⁶ Saltman, 1975: 12.

Here portions are understood as clothes, which in a similar manner were distributed to wives and children and servants of the family at the three festivals.⁷⁷

Beryl Smalley was probably the first to connect Pseudo-Jerome with the Elkanah miniature.⁷⁸ Her attention was drawn to the possibility through her study of Andrew of St Victor, a twelfth-century commentator who had discussed the interpretation in his own commentary on the books of Kings.⁷⁹ Her description of the image is fulsome, describing Elkanah giving a beautiful robe or garment — “une belle robe” — to each of his wives,⁸⁰ and she suggested that, because the nature of the *partes* was not absolutely specified in the biblical text, the Bury artist, or the monk who oversaw his work, may have believed that a husband was obliged to offer beautiful fabrics — “belles étoffes” — to his wives, especially when visiting the Lord’s temple on the occasion of a festival.⁸¹

Saltman also implied that the *Quaestiones* was known at Bury during the first half of the twelfth century, but failed to explain why or how this was the case, settling instead on Smalley’s opinion of the work:

the baneful influence of Pseudo-Jerome (this time disguised as Jerome) affected the artistic representation of scripture in the twelfth century, with a picture of Elkanah distributing clothes.⁸²

In 1993 Dodwell also described the fabrics as robes, and wrote citing Smalley, that the image “derives specifically from Western commentaries on the Vulgate text”,⁸³ by which he presumably meant Pseudo-Jerome’s *Quaestiones*. Likewise, by 2003

Kauffmann believed that the miniature was “clearly based” on Pseudo-Jerome’s

⁷⁷ *Quaestiones: Hae ‘partes’ vestes intelligentur, quae in eisdem tribus festivitibus, juxta morem illius gentis, uxoribus ac liberis et famulis tribuentur* (Saltman, 1975: 67; trans. Author).

⁷⁸ Kauffmann, 2003: 296 n91.

⁷⁹ Smalley, 1968: 278.

⁸⁰ Smalley, 1968: 278.

⁸¹ Smalley, 1968: 278: L’artiste de Bury — ou le moine qui a dirigé son travail — a pu penser qu’un mari se doit d’offrir de belles étoffes à ses femmes, surtout lorsqu’il s’agit de visiter le temple du Seigneur à l’occasion d’une fête (trans. Sarah Lawson, University of Bristol, pers. comm. 2011).

⁸² Saltman, 1975: 29, and 29 n106.

⁸³ Dodwell, 1993: 344 and 433 n189.

commentary, or something like it,⁸⁴ even though the monks of Bury St Edmunds are not known to have had a copy.⁸⁵

The view of the fabrics as clothing therefore is well embedded in the scholarship and has remained unquestioned. However, the interpretation of Pseudo-Jerome is contrary to both Jewish exegesis and the biblical use of the word *pars/partes*.⁸⁶ Gregory the Great made no mention of such an interpretation in his sixth-century commentary on the books of Kings, nor did Bede in his *In Samuelem Prophetam* or *In Libros Regum Quaestionum XXX*. The ninth-century commentator Rabanus Maurus, who probably knew the *Quaestiones*, chose to ignore it.⁸⁷ Angelomus, also in the ninth century, preferred the usual biblical version of portions as part of the sacrifice made in the Temple, but mentioned Pseudo-Jerome's interpretation as an alternative: "...in the opinion of the Jews, 'garments' is the preferred understanding."⁸⁸

Pseudo-Jerome probably based his *vestes* idea on much later Jewish traditions of gift giving, perhaps remembering being given new clothes for the holidays himself, as a child.⁸⁹ It has been suggested that he may also have been influenced by Hannah's gift of a coat to Samuel when he was a child, described in I Samuel:⁹⁰

And his mother made him a little coat, which she brought to him on the appointed days, when she went up with her husband, to offer the solemn sacrifice.⁹¹

Although Pseudo-Jerome's *Quaestiones* circulated widely in the Middle Ages, and became quite popular for a time as a work of Jerome, his *partes/vestes* interpretation was discounted by some scholars even as early as the ninth century. In the mid-twelfth

⁸⁴ Kauffmann, 2003: 104.

⁸⁵ Thomson, 2001: 37 n4.

⁸⁶ Saltman, 1975: 21.

⁸⁷ Saltman, 1975: 29.

⁸⁸ *Enarrationes* I. 1: *Quaquam opinio Iudaeorum, vestes intelligi velit* (PL 115: 250; trans. Author).

⁸⁹ Saltman, 1975: 21.

⁹⁰ Kauffmann, 1996: 282 n14.

⁹¹ I Samuel 2: 19.

century both Andrew of St Victor and Peter Comestor disregarded the interpretation. Andrew had been a student of Hugh of St Victor, with a particular interest in the Hebrew Bible and its literal or historical meaning, and as acknowledged by Smalley, chose to disregard Pseudo-Jerome's interpretation in favour of the more obvious biblical meaning:⁹²

They [Hebrews] thought portions, which, it is said, Helcana had given to his wives, sons and daughters, to be certain garments to be worn for religious festivals: in truth however it seems that portions of food are spoken of, following what is said elsewhere in Scripture...⁹³

Peter Comestor, also commenting on the books of Samuel, wrote:

Whenever Elkanah sacrificed, he gave to Pennina and her sons and daughters portions. However, to Hanna, sadly, he gave only one portion. Certain people believe the word 'portion' here to mean new clothes which he gave to his wives and children on feast days. But it should be understood more to mean that they were receiving portions of the sacrifice made as offerings, just as the holy Levites distributed to others.⁹⁴

Although Thomson did not find any evidence of the *Quaestiones* in his survey of the twelfth-century library at Bury,⁹⁵ it had been available at Canterbury, possibly by the 1120s, amongst a collection of writings on the Old Testament by Jerome.⁹⁶ Copies were made at Christ Church and Rochester Priory,⁹⁷ perhaps before 1125.⁹⁸ It is therefore possible that it was known at Bury during Hugo's time.

⁹² Smalley, 1968: 278: Cette interprétation est signalée par André qui préfère admettre cependant que les portions, plutôt que des étoffes, étaient les viands du repas sacrificiel (trans. Sarah Lawson, University of Bristol, pers. comm. 2011).

⁹³ *Exp. Hyst.* I Kings I. 5: *Partes quas dicitur Helcana uxoris et filiis et filiabus dedisse putant quidam vestes esse quas in sollemnitatibus mutabant. Verisimilius tamen videtur quod de partibus cyborum Scriptura loquatur, secundum quod alibi dicitur...* (van Liere, 1996: 8; trans. Author).

⁹⁴ *Hist. Sch. Liber I Regum 3: Cumque immolasset Elcana, dedit Phenennae, et filiis et filiabus ejus partes, Annae autem dedit partem unam tristis. Quidam putant hoc dictum esse de vestibus novis, quas distribuebat uxoris et liberis in die festo. Sed magis putandum est esse dictum de partibus sacrificiorum, quae contingebant offerentes, quas tanquam sanctas Levitae caeteris distribuebant* (PL 198: 1297; trans. Author).

⁹⁵ Thomson, 1972: 617-45.

⁹⁶ Gameson, 1999: 74.

⁹⁷ Cambridge, Trinity College MS B. 2. 34 and Cambridge, Trinity College MS O. 4. 7.

⁹⁸ Webber, 2005: 88-9.

The interpretation in the *Quaestiones* was taken up in the *Glossa Ordinaria*, also under the name of Jerome.⁹⁹ Glosses, like the prologues, had been accumulating in medieval Bibles since the Carolingian period,¹⁰⁰ and took the form of explanatory materials which varied from Bible to Bible. Compilation of the *Glossa Ordinaria* began in northern France during the early twelfth century. It was based on patristic sources, as well as writings of dubious provenance like Pseudo-Jerome,¹⁰¹ and it became the standard commentary on the Vulgate in Western Europe.¹⁰²

The Gloss began to be influential from about the first quarter of the twelfth century, but was particularly so during the later twelfth century; in England copies of glossed books of the Bible were “prominent around the mid-century”,¹⁰³ and certainly available by the 1170s.¹⁰⁴ Thomson could find no evidence that the Gloss to Samuel and Kings was at Bury earlier than the second half of the century, and it was only after about 1156 during the abbacy of Hugh that the monks there began to build up a complete set of glossed biblical books.¹⁰⁵

It has been assumed, however, by at least one scholar that the monks at Bury had access to a copy during the 1130s,¹⁰⁶ and although it seems unlikely, there is a slight possibility that the Gloss to Samuel and Kings could have been available while the Bible was being made.¹⁰⁷ If so, Pseudo-Jerome’s interpretation might have been considered an interesting idea by whoever was overseeing the iconography of the large miniatures at Bury. It is possible, therefore, that it played some part as a source for the

⁹⁹ Thomson, 2001: 37 n4.

¹⁰⁰ Smalley, 1964: 63.

¹⁰¹ Smalley, 1964: ix.

¹⁰² Shepard, 2007: 105.

¹⁰³ Lawrence, 2003: 119.

¹⁰⁴ Shepard, 2007: 8.

¹⁰⁵ Thomson, 1972: 636, and 636 n120.

¹⁰⁶ Kauffmann, 1996: 283.

¹⁰⁷ Rodney Thomson, 2010, pers. comm.

illustration despite evidence that twelfth-century theologians did not believe Pseudo-Jerome's *partes/vestes* theory.

However there is a problem with the *partes/vestes* interpretation which has hitherto escaped notice: during the eleventh and twelfth centuries it was normal for artists to illustrate garments accurately and naturalistically. In the Bury New Testament leaves, which may have been at Bury while Hugo was there, a man holds a tunic at the Entry into Jerusalem (Fig. 346). Elsewhere, in the Baptism of Christ and Entry into Jerusalem scenes in the St Albans Psalter (Fig. 347), and in the later Copenhagen Psalter (Fig. 348), the garments held by angels and onlookers are clearly tunics, with sleeves and embroidered decoration. There are similar in the Winchester and Queen Melisende Psalters. In Old Testament illustrations to II Kings (III Kings), Elijah is often seen passing his tunic to Elisha, and in the earliest extant depiction, in the eleventh-century St Vaast Bible, the robe thrown by Elijah maintains its pleated-cloak shape, wider at the bottom than at the top, as it flies through the air. In the Winchester Bible the tunics of Elijah are unmistakably garments with sleeves, and openings at the neck (Fig. 349). Sometimes robes or cloaks were depicted fastened at the neck with brooches, as in the Morgan Lectionary (Fig. 350); in the Dover Bible Elijah's green cloak, with an ochre lining, is fastened at the neck with a shoulder clasp or brooch (Fig. 351), and Martin's cloak in the St Albans Psalter has a lining of green, and also seems to be fastened at the neck (Fig. 352). In the Laud Bible, Tobit gives a long-sleeved tunic to a naked man who is about to slip it over his head (Fig. 353), and in the Hunterian Psalter miniature of the Temptation of Christ, three fur-lined cloaks are depicted as part of the treasure hoard (Fig. 354). In a final example, in the Burgos Bible,¹⁰⁸ God gives a long tunic made of

¹⁰⁸ Burgos, Biblioteca Provincial MS 846.

animal skins or furs to Eve at the Expulsion (Fig. 355), in a very rare illustration of a garment being given to a woman.¹⁰⁹

It is thus more than likely that if Master Hugo had meant to depict garments he would have designed something similar to any of these. However, his fabrics are anonymous and shapeless (Fig. 356): they have no sleeves or openings, no embroidered decoration, no gold edging or coloured linings, and no brooches or other fastenings. The absence of these features strongly suggests that they do not represent garments: they are gifts of some sort, but the question remains; what were they meant to be?

To address this question, it is appropriate to consider a text which has not yet been examined in relation to the Elkanah miniature: namely Jerome's prologue to the books of Samuel and Kings, the *prologus galeatus*, which is preserved in the Bury Bible itself immediately preceding the illustration in the same quire, as well as in the Rochester, Dover and Lambeth Bibles, and in the Laud Bible as we have seen. The text was originally written as a letter by Jerome to his friends Paula and Eustochium in c. 391, and referred to by Jerome as "a helmeted introduction" because of the controversial nature of his new translation from the Hebrew, and his rejection of some books from the biblical canon. Although he was confident that he had correctly differentiated canonical books from the apocryphal, he was careful not to denigrate the earlier translators of the Septuagint.

He excused his approach by comparing himself and the earlier translators to the Israelites who freely gave what they could to build the Tabernacle of God, and he modestly compared his own translation of the books of Kings to the more humble gifts brought by the Israelites:

I implore you, reader, that you might not consider my work a rebuke of the ancients. Each one offers to the Tabernacle of God what he is able. Some offer gold and silver and precious stones; others, linen and purple, scarlet and blue. It will go well with us, if we offer the skins and hair of goats. For

¹⁰⁹ Cahn, 1982: 180.

the Apostle still judges our more contemptible parts more necessary. From which the whole beauty of the Tabernacle and the individual parts, a distinction of the present and future Church, is covered with skins and goat-hair coverings, and the heat of the sun and the harmful rain are kept off by those things which are of lesser value.¹¹⁰

Jerome refers here first to his own translation of Exodus when God instructs Moses about the materials to be used in the making of the Tabernacle,¹¹¹ and in the next sentence relates this to Paul's first letter to the Corinthians and his comments on the body of the Church; this is then followed by a reference to a verse in Isaiah on the heat of the sun and the harmful rain.¹¹² Together, these references are the source for Hugo's illustration.

The significant phrase in the prologue is: *nobiscum bene agetur, si obtulerimus pelles et caprarum pilos*, meaning "it shall go well with us if we offer skins and goats' hair". This refers to the two fabrics made from goats' hair and rams' skins which God ordered to be made as a protective cover for the Tabernacle and its precious contents, which included the Ark of the Covenant; it was to these ordinary but vital fabrics that Jerome compared his own contributions to the Scriptures. The first was a woollen fabric, woven from goats' hair, while the two others were made from processed rams' skins, one dyed red and the other blue.

The second reference in the prologue draws attention to I Corinthians, in which Paul compared the different parts of the human body to the church and to the body of Christ:

For as the body is one and hath many members; and all the members of the body, whereas they are many, yet are one body: So also is Christ.¹¹³

As Jerome noted, Paul stated that "those that seem to be the more feeble members of the body are more necessary,"¹¹⁴ in order that "there might be no schism in the body: but the

¹¹⁰ *Prologus Galeatus*, preface to Samuel and Kings (Weber, 1969: 365; trans. Edgecombe, 2007: www.bombaxo.com/prologues.html: modified by Author).

¹¹¹ Exodus 25: 1-8.

¹¹² Isaiah 4: 6; see above p. 284 n54.

¹¹³ I Corinthians 12:12.

members might be mutually careful one for another.”¹¹⁵ In this way Paul wished that every man could be celibate for Christ, but understood this was not possible. Because all men and women are different, like the different parts the Church, he acknowledged the value of marriage: “But for fear of fornication, let every man have his own wife: and let every woman have her own husband.”¹¹⁶

In his *prologus galeatus*, therefore, Jerome linked the structure and coverings of the Tabernacle to Paul’s descriptions of the parts of the Church. He described how the covering of skins and goat’s wool curtains protected “the beauty of the Tabernacle and each individual thing, a distinction of the present and future Church”.¹¹⁷

Jerome also referred to I Corinthians in a letter to Gaudentius, and made two comments about skins. First, he suggested, like Paul, that it was better for a man to remain a virgin and avoid the “garments of skins”¹¹⁸—*tunicas pellicias*—which God gave to Adam and Eve at the expulsion from paradise, and which represented their sin.¹¹⁹ However, in the second, Jerome described marriage as “having a wife and covered with the skin of matrimony”,¹²⁰ a reference, perhaps, to the way skins covered and protected the Tabernacle.

Augustine also discussed marriage in terms of body unity and the unity of the Church, and described it as one of the sacraments of the Church:

...the Sacrament of marriage...signifies the unity of us all made subject to God, which shall be hereafter in one Heavenly City.¹²¹

¹¹⁴ I Corinthians 12: 22.

¹¹⁵ I Corinthians 12: 25.

¹¹⁶ I Corinthians 7: 2.

¹¹⁷ *Prologus Galeatus* (Weber, 1969: 365; trans. Edgecombe, 2007: www.bombaxo.com/prologues.html; modified by Author).

¹¹⁸ *Epistula ad Gaudentium* 128 (Hilberg, 1918: 158; trans. Wright, 1933: 471).

¹¹⁹ Genesis 3: 21.

¹²⁰ *Epistula ad Gaudentium* 128: *habens uxorem et matrimonio pelle circumdatus* (Hilberg, 1918: 158; trans. Wright, 1933: 473).

¹²¹ *De Bono Conjugali* 21 (Pl: 40: 388; trans. Knight, 2009: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1309.htm>)).

Like Jerome, Augustine cited I Corinthians 12, and directly associated the body of the Church with Christ and with Hannah:

...the whole body with its head is one Christ. Hannah, the mother of Samuel, the holy and much-praised man, has prophesied these things, in which, indeed, the change of the ancient priesthood was then figured and is now fulfilled, since she that had many children is waxed feeble, that the barren who has born seven might have the new priesthood in Christ.¹²²

Marriage, therefore, was one of the holy sacraments of the Church, instituted by God.

As Peter Lombard suggested, quoting Augustine's *De Bono Conjugali*, 21, this was the case whether there were children in the marriage or not:

And yet the marriage is no less holy on that account because, as Augustine says, "in nuptials, the holiness of the sacrament is worth more than the fecundity of the womb." Marriage is also a sign of the spiritual joining and the love of souls, by which partners ought to unite themselves.¹²³

This calls to mind Elkanah's words to the weeping Hannah, in I Samuel:

Anna, why weepest thou? and why dost thou not eat? and why dost thou afflict thy heart? Am not I better to thee than ten children?¹²⁴

Paul, Jerome and Augustine were in effect writing about the marriage of Christ to the Church; by the twelfth century Elkanah was understood to represent Christ, Hannah the Church, and Penninah, Synagogue,¹²⁵ and this is reflected in images such as Elkanah and his wives in the Bury Bible:

These compositions use model forms which gloss the characters as Christ, Church and Synagogue to create monastic models, radical abstractions of prayer, and constructions of marriage. The image of Hannah becomes the image of the Church and a paragon of a good wife.¹²⁶

Thus in the *prologus galeatus*, immediately after making a reference to the skins and cloth that protected the Tabernacle (the Church), Jerome made a connection with the 'skin of matrimony' which protected the sacrament of marriage, using sources from

¹²² *De Civ. Dei* 17.4 (trans. Knight, 2009: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1201.htm>; modified by Author).

¹²³ *Sententium IV*. 26. 6 (trans. Silano, 2010: 160-70).

¹²⁴ I Samuel 1: 8.

¹²⁵ Altvater, 2011: 7-8.

¹²⁶ Altvater, 2011: 1.

the Old and New Testaments. This would have made sense to the monks making and designing the Bible; Leclercq has explained how meditative reading, *ruminatio*, was able to develop such connections:

It occupies and engages the whole person in whom the Scripture takes root, later on to bear fruit. It is this deep impregnation with the words of Scripture that explains the extremely important phenomenon of reminiscence whereby the verbal echoes so excite the memory that a mere allusion will spontaneously evoke whole quotations and, in turn, a scriptural phrase will suggest quite naturally allusions elsewhere in the sacred books...quotations by means of the “hook-words” group themselves together in their minds and under their pen, like variations on the same theme.¹²⁷

This interpretive process was influenced by classical rhetorical techniques which used wordplay and etymology; it encouraged the linking together of scriptural passages which shared a key word or image.¹²⁸ Such techniques were known at Bury through copies of Cicero’s *Rhetorica de Inventione* and *Ad Herennium*; indeed there was “a special interest in rhetoric at Bury” which may have begun with Abbot Anselm.¹²⁹

What caught the attention of Master Hugo and his advisors in this process of *ruminatio* seems to have been the meaning of Jerome’s words which promised good fortune in the future—“it shall go well with us if we offer skins and goats’ hair”—and it appears that they used this as the basis of the illustration for their new Bible. Hugo’s painting, therefore, depicts Elkanah offering coloured fabrics or skins to his wives, in a symbolic representation of the coverings of the Tabernacle.

In both the text of Exodus and Jerome’s prologue the colours of the various fabrics of the Tabernacle are described as scarlet, purple, red and blue. In Hugo’s miniature the colours are still clear and bright, although a little rubbed (Fig. 356). The piece of fabric Elkanah gives to Penninah, at the rear, is a mauve-crimson, shaded in a more saturated wash of the same colour, and highlighted with white. It looks crimson red in comparison to the scarlet of Elkanah’s cloak. To Hannah, bowing at the front in a

¹²⁷ Leclercq, 1982: 73-74.

¹²⁸ O’Reilly, 2008: 176.

¹²⁹ Thomson, 1972: 639.

startlingly memorable yellow-ochre garment,¹³⁰ he gives a fabric of purple, made from a greyish lilac shaded with a wash of the mauve-crimson which reddens it, and highlighted with pale lilac lines between the dark mauve creases. It looks purple or deep mauve against the other colours.

Both red and purple had strong symbolic meaning in the right context; it might be significant therefore that the red fabric is being given to Penninah, Synagogue, and the regal purple to Hannah, who symbolized the Church, and was seen as the bride of Christ, the King of Kings.¹³¹

Because all the painted surfaces in the Bible are very smooth and uniform in density and texture, it is impossible to tell which types of fabric the artist has depicted. They could represent coloured pieces of linen or woven wool, or processed skins, which were all given as gifts to the Tabernacle. They perhaps look more like cloth than leather, but goat skins could be soft and supple when tanned;¹³² in addition the skins were described as red in Exodus, not scarlet. In any case, it is entirely possible that the fabrics simply illustrated Jerome's phrase "skins and hair of goats", and that it was the two colours which were significant.

Regardless of this, both Josephus and Jerome had stressed the protective function of the fabrics. This was reinforced by an additional layer of meaning about the protection provided for the sanctity of marriage, and, by association, Hannah and the Church, by the 'skin of matrimony'. The monks at Bury may have regarded the fabrics as protective symbols, and symbols of good fortune for their community, especially given their reading of Jerome and Augustine. Indeed, having given the fabrics to his wives, things

¹³⁰ James, 1912: 5; James's identification of the bowing figure in yellow as Hannah is not certain; the female figure in blue in the upper register, Penninah, is identical to the figure of Hannah, also in blue, praying in the lower register, and could in fact be Hannah (Fig. 345).

¹³¹ I Timothy, 6: 15; Revelation, 17: 14.

¹³² [Wikipedia.org/wiki/Goatskin_\(material\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goatskin_(material)).

went well for Elkanah and his family, and the childless Hannah later gave birth to Samuel and several other children.

At a time when artists and their advisors were interested in using novel and unconventional imagery for their Old Testament illuminations it is apparent that somebody at Bury had studied the works of Jerome and was aware of the symbolic possibilities of the *prologus galeatus*, which, through *ruminatio* and reminiscence, redirected the artist to Exodus and the fabrics and colours of the Tabernacle, to Isaiah and the protection the fabrics offered against the elements, and to Paul's comments in I Corinthians on marriage and the Church. Carruthers saw this monastic memory, or "holy recollection", as "a construction machine for invention",¹³³ and it resulted in Hugo's transformation of the gifts of fabrics to the Tabernacle into Elkanah's gifts to his wives.

6:5 A QUESTION OF IDENTITY

The miniature on page 51 of the St Albans Psalter depicts a very rare scene,¹³⁴ probably carefully selected by the patrons (Fig. 357), where Mary Magdalen speaks to the apostles immediately after Christ had appeared to her. She stands separately to the left inside an earthly-green rectangular panel, the rich red of her robe set against the slightly darker complementary green. While the apostles listen intently, she points and speaks directly to the apostle at the front of the group; this figure is Peter, the only apostle named individually when the angel speaks to Mary Magdalen at the empty sepulchre: "go and tell his disciples and Peter that He goes before you into Galilee".¹³⁵ His

¹³³ Carruthers, 1998: 81.

¹³⁴ Carrasco, 1999: 69, suggests that the image of the Magdalen speaking to the apostles on page 51 is "so rare as to be almost unique"; also Pächt, 1962: 46: "None but the most extensive Byzantine Gospel cycles include this scene and it is Byzantine influence that must partly be made responsible for its appearance in the St Albans manuscript."

¹³⁵ Mark 16: 7: ... *sed ite et dicite discipulis eius et Petro quia praecedit vos in Galilaeam ibi eum videbitis sicut dixit vobis.*

importance is signified in several ways: he is closest to her, he wears bright red and ochre robes which stand out against the cooler blues, mauves and greens adjacent to him, by his hand gesture towards Mary, and by his full-face portrait, turned almost frontally, towards the viewer, which contrasts with the pure profiles of the other figures. Peter is the only figure in the whole New Testament cycle shown full-faced, other than the Virgin and Christ himself; this may have been because he had been identified by name in the text, and the artist, in order to communicate this, made a visual equivalent to aid the understanding of the reader.

Although Peter was identified in this way, confirmation of his identity was only possible if the text or its content was known and understood by the reader, as a result of reading or listening to the text. In some narrative illustrations the identity of characters is not so obvious, resulting in both medieval and modern confusion, particularly if the twelfth-century signs have ceased to have any meaning, or are misunderstood.

An example can be seen in the full-page miniature to Numbers in the Bury Bible, which is divided into two registers (Fig. 358). In the upper register (Fig. 359), the two priestly figures of Moses and Aaron are set against green rectangles and a deep solid blue background and sit looking across at each other and pointing down to the lower register. In his description of 1912 M. R. James referred to them as Father and Son,¹³⁶ but they clearly represent Moses, who holds the tablets of the Law, and Aaron who holds the rod. Aaron is shown dark-haired and quite young, despite being described as eighty-three years of age in Exodus 7:7, while Moses, described as aged eighty, is white-haired. They are bare-footed and nimbed. Moses wears a long blue tunic and one-piece purple-mauve robe with gold edging, Aaron wears an ochre tunic, shaded with red and highlighted with white, with a mauve robe above, and green sleeves showing

¹³⁶ James, 1912: 5.

beneath the ochre tunic. These colour combinations do not repeat elsewhere in the Bible.

In the lower register, (Fig. 360), a group of Israelite leaders stand to the right, and the two men at the front of the group are counting their people, who stand on the left. Who these two figures were meant to be has caused some discussion; James described the scene and identified them with some confidence:

On L. a group of six men face R.; one leans on an axe, one sits on the ground. They are the people or the spies. On R. Moses (not nimbed or horned) addresses them: behind him is Aaron and a group of six or seven elders. Aaron is older (blue-haired).¹³⁷

Although named as Moses and Aaron by James, the difficulty in pinpointing Hugo's source texts for the image has caused mis-identification, and fourteenth and fifteenth-century graffiti on the illumination suggests that later medieval readers were confused about who the figures were meant to be.¹³⁸

Nonetheless, more recently Thomson has reiterated the identification of the two main figures as Moses and Aaron:

Below, Aaron and Moses number the Children of Israel (Num. 1: 1-3). The episode is rendered as an unspecific teaching-and-learning scene. On the right are Moses, Aaron and other leaders of the Israelites, Aaron shown as the principal expounder because he was more eloquent than his brother (Exod. 4: 14). Both figures are unnimbed; Aaron's cloak is lined with furs.¹³⁹

However, without the priestly *tunicam talarem*, halo, and bare feet, the two figures are unlikely to represent Moses and Aaron, who are already present in the image, albeit separate and elevated in the upper register, but overseeing the event. It is also unlikely at this time that an artist such as Master Hugo would have painted characters visible more than once on the same page in different guises and with different hair. They are also visible in the frontispiece to Deuteronomy, where Moses, who appears twice, and

¹³⁷ James, 1912: 5.

¹³⁸ James, 1912: 5; Parker McLachlan, 1986: 200-201.

¹³⁹ Thomson, 2001: 48.

Aaron are again depicted barefooted, in long tunics and nimbed in gold, carrying their attributes (Fig. 361). The two men in the lower register of the Numbers miniature wear boots and are dressed more richly than the other figures, with layered tunics and long robes fastened by brooches; one wears a cloak lined with white fur, as noted by Thomson. This common sign of worldly status in medieval painting begs further investigation.

Fur-lined robes indicate secular wealth and power, and there are many other examples in illustrations of the period, none of which are ambiguous. For example, in the Dover Bible Joshua and Caleph wear ermine tunics in the initial to Judges on folio 102v. In volume two, King Solomon is splendidly attired in robes of coloured silk and a long tunic made of white fur (Fig. 107), and on folio 44r he wears a long blue tunic, shoes, and a fur-lined robe. On the Morgan Leaf, the figures of Saul, David and Absalom and their courtiers also wear fur-lined cloaks (Fig. 362). In the Lambeth Bible, Nebuchadnezzar is the only figure clad in a fur-lined cloak in the Daniel miniature. These examples illustrate the contrast between the bare-footed poverty of Christ and the apostles, who had nothing, and the wealth of kings and princes and other secular figures.

Such ostentation in dress, as already noted, angered monastic observers during the Anglo-Norman period.¹⁴⁰ Furs were such luxury items that in the Third Temptation of Christ in the Hunterian Psalter the artist depicted Satan attempting to bribe Christ with three fur-lined cloaks (Fig. 354). They were described by Greenland as “bolts of fine cloth and fur”,¹⁴¹ but are clearly cloaks. In the St Albans Psalter, the fur-lined cloak of Alexis identifies him as a wealthy young man from a secular world, and symbolizes what he is about to give up in turning to a religious life. Likewise, Christina of Markyate, who was closely associated with the abbey of St Albans, was the daughter of

¹⁴⁰ Dodwell, 1982: 223.

¹⁴¹ Greenland, 1996: 34.

a wealthy family and normally wore silk dresses and luxurious furs.¹⁴² Like Christ in the Hunterian Psalter she was offered high status fabrics as a bribe, “silken garments and precious ornaments of all kinds”,¹⁴³ but she refused them, and instead took to wearing rough garments on becoming an anchoress; and as was pointed out above, Saul was symbolically transformed on being anointed by Samuel, on the Morgan Leaf, and it was signified by his change of clothes, including the loss of his fur-lined cloak (Fig. 328).

Partly as a result of reading the Rule, monks were generally not interested in the world and its fashions: “they had been taught by the theologian and moralist that the more luxurious forms of secular dress emanated from sin”.¹⁴⁴ In his letters St Bernard often discussed such issues and the difficult choices made by young men when joining monastic communities, and in his letter to Fulk, who had left the Augustinian order and later became an archdeacon, he contrasted life outside the cloister and life within:

It is granted to you therefore that if you serve the altar well you should live from it, but not in luxury, and not in pride. You cannot provide yourself from the altar with golden trappings for your horse, inlaid chairs, silvered spurs, and every sort of multi-coloured furs for your gloves and collars. In fact what you take from the altar in excess of necessary food and simple dress, is not yours, and it is robbery and sacrilege.¹⁴⁵

The *Apologia* of St Bernard is famous for its description of monastic excess, and in Chapter 6, in a warning to other Cistercians about self-righteous piety and false modesty, he referred to furs by contrasting them, rather sarcastically, to the monastic tunic and cowl:

¹⁴² Life of Christina of Markyate (trans. Talbot, 1959: 93).

¹⁴³ Life of Christina of Markyate (trans. Talbot, 1959: 45).

¹⁴⁴ Dodwell, 1982: 171.

¹⁴⁵ Bernard, Letter 2 to Fulk: *Conceditur ergo tibi, ut, si bene desevis, de altario vivas, non autem ut de altario luxurieris, ut de altario superbias, ut inde compares tibi frena aurea, sellas depictas, calcaria deargentata, varia griseaque pellicea a collo et manibus ornatu purpureo diversificata. Denique quidquid praeter necessarium victum ac simplicem vestitum de alterio retines, tuum non est: rapina est, sacrilegium est* (Leclercq and Rochais, 1974: 21; trans. Scott James, 1998: 17; modified by Author).

Proud in our tunics, we abhor furs, yet is it not better that humility is wrapped in furs than pride is clothed in a tunic?¹⁴⁶

In a later chapter, on the subject of costly garments worn by monks, he wrote:

The empty heart inflicts upon the body the sign of its emptiness, and exterior excess is an indication of interior emptiness. Soft garments reveal a softness of soul. Such pains would not be taken with the adornment of the body if the soul had not been previously neglected, unadorned with virtues.¹⁴⁷

Here we should also remember Abelard's statement to Heloise, already mentioned:

"Costly clothes, which Scripture utterly condemns, must be absolutely banned."¹⁴⁸ If

Bernard's and Abelard's comments are a reflection of contemporary attitudes within the cloister, such costly trappings as fur-lined robes make it almost certain that the two figures in the Bury Bible represent, not Moses and Aaron, but the secular leaders of the tribes, the *principes tribuum*,¹⁴⁹ and *nobilissimi principes multitudinis*, "the most noble princes of the multitude".¹⁵⁰

6:6 A MAN AND A HARE

The final case study concerns a comment made by Jerome on the abilities of craftsmen, and an illustration related to it in the Bury Bible. In the *Frater Ambrosius* initial (Fig. 363) is a small illustration of a man with a wooden peg-leg and a pair of shears chasing a hare (Fig. 364). The image may have been based on a now-lost classical text of the

¹⁴⁶ *Apologia* 6: *Tunicati et elati abhorremus pellicias, tamquam melior non sit pellibus involuta humilitas, quam tunicata superbia* (Leclercq and Rochais, 1963: 92; trans. Conrad, 1990: 255; modified by Author).

¹⁴⁷ *Apologia* 10: *Vanum cor vanitatis notam ingerit corpori, et exterior superfluitas interioris vanitatis indicium est. Mollia indumenta animi mollitiem indicant. Non tanto curaretur corporis cultis, nisi prius neglecta fuisset mens inculta virtutibus* (Leclercq and Rochais, 1963: 102; trans. Conrad, 1990: 275; modified by Author).

¹⁴⁸ See above, p. 288.

¹⁴⁹ Numbers 1: 4.

¹⁵⁰ Numbers 1: 16.

sort collected in monasteries, used for translation exercises¹⁵¹ and the teaching of allegory.¹⁵² Aesop’s proverb about the donkey and the lyre is a well-known example:

A donkey saw a lyre lying in a field. He approached the instrument, and as he tried to strum it with his hoof, the strings resounded at his touch. ‘What a beautiful thing,’ said the donkey, but completely inappropriate, since I don’t know anything about music. If only someone better equipped than myself had found it, my ears would have been delighted by heavenly melodies!’ So it is that talents often go to waste because of some misfortune.¹⁵³

Jerome made reference to this proverb in a letter to Marcella, and described the impossibility of pleasing some of his critics about his new translations—“it is idle to play the lyre for an ass”¹⁵⁴—so he saw it as a comment on reading without understanding. Boethius used the proverb to describe the figure of Philosophy explaining some point to him:

‘Do you understand this,’ she went on, ‘and have my words penetrated your mind?—or are you like the proverbial donkey, deaf to the lyre?’¹⁵⁵

In the twelfth century Abelard referred to it when he wrote to Heloise on the subject of literacy, and reminded her of what Benedict had written in the Rule:

‘At the beginning of Lent all the monks shall receive a book each from the library, which they shall read through consecutively’; what could be more absurd than for them to give time to reading if they do not take pains to understand?...for a reader who holds a book but cannot do what the book was intended for is like an ass sitting before a lyre.¹⁵⁶

The man trying to shave the hare also illustrates an absurd impossibility. Its use was probably prompted by a passage in the *Frater Ambrosius* prologue itself, where Jerome discussed the importance of guidance when reading and interpreting biblical texts, and stated: “in the holy scriptures you can make no progress unless you have a

¹⁵¹ Camille, 1992: 20.

¹⁵² Leclercq, 1982: 117-19.

¹⁵³ Aesop, *The Donkey and the Lyre* (Perry, 1952: 598; trans. Gibbs, 2002: 188).

¹⁵⁴ *Epistula 27 ad Marcellam* (Hilberg, 1910: 224; trans. Knight, 2009: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3001027.htm>).

¹⁵⁵ *Phil. Cons. I. 4: Sentisne, inquit, haec atque animo illabuntur tuo an ὄνος λυρας?* [*onos luras*—that is, *asinus lyrae*] (Bieler, 1957: 6; trans. Watts, 1969: 9).

¹⁵⁶ Abelard, Letter 7 to Heloise (PL 178: 310, trans. Radice, 1974: 263).

guide to show you the way”. He then commented on the difficulties craftsmen had in completing their tasks without proper instruction:

I will pass to the less important crafts which require manual dexterity more than mental ability. Husbandmen, masons, carpenters, workers in wood and metal, wool-dressers and fullers, as well as those artisans who make furniture and cheap utensils, cannot attain the ends they seek without instruction from qualified persons.¹⁵⁷

Ostensibly, therefore, the painting of the man and hare was a visual allusion to a classical proverb, in the same way Jerome, Boethius and Abelard made literary references to the donkey and the lyre, and for a similar reason; but it also illustrated Jerome’s prologue text by humorously portraying the ineptitude of an artisan trying to do something beyond his powers because he had received no proper instructions or guidance.

On another level, the little painting was a metaphor used to illustrate the difficulty of trying to ‘catch’ or ‘get hold of’ the elusive meaning of a text,¹⁵⁸ which was Jerome’s big theme in the *Frater Ambrosius* prologue, and an appropriate subject for an artist attempting to find original illustrations for a great Bible.

SUMMARY

In this study it has been clearly shown for the first time that the Alexis Master used colours symbolically. Moreover, it is now evident that his ideas had spread: a sophisticated use of blue was observed on the Morgan Leaf, where it was used to illustrate an episode of spiritual transition in a Scriptural narrative. This may be a discovery of interest to art historians genuinely interested in medieval colour.

The successful illustration of texts was dependent on the patronage and skills of educated monks—abbots, bishops, obedientiaries, theologians—as well as artists; for

¹⁵⁷ *Epistula 53 ad Paulinum* (Hilberg, 1910: 452; trans. Knight, 2009: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3001053.htm>).

¹⁵⁸ Camille, 1992: 20.

instance, the influence of bishop Henri of Blois can be discerned in the beautifully gilded Psalm initial in the Auct. Bible. The decoration of the gold was probably derived from the work of goldsmiths employed by Henry, but may also reflect knowledge of the embossing techniques used by bookbinders. The initial is also evidence of growing Byzantine influence at Winchester.

The books of Exodus and Leviticus were especially significant to artists and theologians. They provided a rich source for speculation and interpretation amongst commentators, and visual resources for artists. Their importance is evident in attitudes expressed in the writings of Theophilus, the *Apologia* of Bernard of Clairvaux, and the popularity of Bede's *De Tabernaculo*. The images of the Tabernacle in the Laud Bible and Elkanah and his wives in the Bury Bible were ultimately derived from meditation on such texts. For the monastic orders, *meditatio* meant prayer and meditation on the words of Scripture and the contemplation of Heaven; Theophilus felt that meditation on images could also "lift the soul to a foretaste of Paradise or remind it of Christ's passion".¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁹ White, 1980: 152.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSIONS

The new discussion about the colour words used in the Vulgate, and their symbolic meanings, provides for the first time a sound basis upon which to build a discussion of colour in manuscript illumination. Exegesis by the patristic fathers and later commentators on the symbolism of colour enabled the artists and their advisors to employ colour as part of a wider iconographic language. The study provides evidence that centuries of exegesis is indeed strongly reflected in the work of the Alexis Master and other artists. These close links between Scriptural and patristic texts and colour, and between hagiographic iconography and colour, appear to have been at their strongest by the middle decades of the twelfth century. The blue tunic as the uniform of the priesthood of Christ certainly reached its apogee as part of an iconographic language by the 1160s, when the Apocrypha and Leaping Figures Masters were working on the Winchester Bible. Thereafter, as Petzold showed, attitudes to colour began to alter, driven by changes in secular use of the colour blue.

By examining the illuminations in this way it has been possible to present an unexpected new discovery about how the colour blue was used on the Morgan Leaf to illustrate the transition of Saul. It has also made it possible to infer that the use of colour in England had some influence in the Byzantine East.

The symbolic and liturgical meanings of the major colours are listed here, so far as they are now understood to have been perceived up to the late twelfth century:

- blue for Heaven, heavenly aspiration and the promise of Heaven, and for a heavenly *locus* on earth; for tunics which denote the ‘priesthood of Christ’, worn by saints, angels, apostles and martyrs.
- red for Christ’s blood, martyrdom, sin, and the *locus* of Satan; for the blood shed by the apostles and martyrs; used in liturgical garments at the feasts of the Cross and Pentecost.
- white for purity of baptism, tunics and garments of angels and the elect in heaven; used on liturgical garments at the feasts of the confessors and virgins.
- black for mourning, shame of sin, penance and abstinence; used for liturgical garments on days of affliction and abstinence, at feasts for sinners and the dead.
- green for faith; for rebirth, the living cross, and for redemption and everlasting life; used for liturgical garments throughout the year except the feasts of Lent and Advent.
- purple for sacrifice, for blood; for the bishop in the path of the king, and for the Kingdom of Heaven.
- scarlet, double-dipped for the double love of God and neighbour (*caritas*), and for the ardent love of the saints; for Christ’s blood; for the warmth and fervour of wisdom, for salvation, and faith.

In addition, the study presents an original analysis of the Elkanah image in the Bury Bible, which has so puzzled scholars in the past that, apart from Kauffmann, they have avoided engaging with its complex iconography. It proposes that Elkanah is offering a piece of coloured fabric or soft leather to each of his wives, illustrating a range of related ideas first expressed by Jerome in the prologue to Kings, and developed by the monks at Bury through *ruminatio*.

Some issues in the identification of hands are addressed; it is suggested that the artist who painted the initials in quire eleven of the St Albans Psalter may be a previously unidentified artist of some quality. Also, and contrary to established opinion, it is suggested for the first time that the Leaping Figures Master worked on the Morgan Leaf, where his touch is probably visible on the recto. The artist of the David the Musician page in the Gough Psalter is identified as the artist who also illustrated the late twelfth-century Life of St Cuthbert, connecting the Gough Psalter more firmly with the Durham scriptorium.

The study also offers evidence of the changes in working practice, most notably in a new analysis of the paint surfaces of the Four Psalter Leaves, where there are unpainted details in pencil drawn onto opaque colour. This raises questions about how and why the Leaves were made, and about their original date of production.

The use of gold in the period has been little studied, and here it was noted that some of the scholarship contains misunderstandings. It establishes that both gold paint and gold leaf were used in the St Albans Psalter, contrary to opinions expressed in the scholarship, and even used together on the same illuminations. This may have been a practice more widespread than previously thought, during what was a transitional and innovative period in the use of gold.

The study establishes that the Entangled Figures Master used gold leaf throughout the first volume of the Auct. Bible, rather than gold paint, as previously believed. Indeed, it shows that the artists at Winchester were very innovative in the way they used gold leaf and how they decorated it. The two great Winchester bibles exemplify the advances made in the use and decoration of gold leaf during the period; in particular the fluent incised decoration in the first volume of the Auct. Bible which seems so indebted to decorative techniques used on metalwork, and the very unusual and perhaps unique

repoussé technique used with gold leaf in the second volume, for which a new analysis is provided.

A new and coherent explanation is offered for why doubled and patched vellum leaves were used during the period: not merely to prevent show-through, but primarily to support the precious materials used by stiffening the page.

What further research is indicated? The breakthrough observations about colour provide an incentive for further close reading of twelfth-century colour. A wider study of coloured illustrations might reveal further details of how colour was used; this probably could now be achieved by a thorough scrutiny of the growing number of online manuscript collections.

Further work is required on gilding techniques in England. The close relationship with fine metalwork is already apparent, as is the influence of Byzantine mosaics, but a major re-evaluation is needed to establish the position of manuscript gilding within the wider context of European religious art.

An analysis of the materiality of the Psalm initials in the St Albans Psalter—gold, colour, paint and drawing styles—might reveal more information about the hands involved, and about the meanings of the images.

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