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## Drawings in Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts Transcript

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## Drawings in Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts

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On 25<sup>th</sup> April 2010 Waldemar Januszczak opined in an article in the *Sunday Times*,

“There are no, or hardly any, such things as drawings of the Middle Ages because vellum was too smooth and too precious to allow for the free play of the artist’s hand upon it. In any case, since drawing is, at heart, a temptation to artistic freedom, the Middle Ages were temperamentally unsuited to it, while the Renaissance was not.”

Januszczak was admittedly writing in praise of the British Museum’s excellent 2010 exhibition *Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings*, but that does not excuse completely his attitude to drawing in the Middle Ages. He is not the first person to dismiss medieval drawings, or indeed to question their very existence. The view that drawing became important only during the 15<sup>th</sup> century goes back to the beginning of art historical exploration, and to this day, medieval drawings are rarely reproduced and thus little known. By looking at some of the drawings that survive in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts produced between the late 10<sup>th</sup> and mid 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, a period when the drawing technique was highly regarded and executed with considerable skill, I intend to question and reverse such opinion.

The late 10<sup>th</sup>-century in England was a period of relative stability, energetic monastic reform, sanctioned and encouraged by royal authority, and a consequent flowering of the arts. The most important and wealthy monasteries of the realm, particularly Christ Church Priory, and Saint Augustine’s Priory in Canterbury, Winchester, Bury St Edmunds and Glastonbury were centres of craftsmanship, where high quality metalwork, ivory carving, textiles and manuscripts were produced, largely for ecclesiastical use, but also, on occasion, for secular patrons. The majority of scribes and artists were monks, but there were some itinerant Anglo-Saxon artists, perhaps laymen, who worked for Continental monasteries; their fame may have prompted invitations from across the Channel.

Amongst the illustrated manuscripts produced between the early 10<sup>th</sup> and the mid 11<sup>th</sup> century in England, in the main scriptoria and lesser centres of manuscript production alike, an evident fondness for drawn illustrations, co-existed with an interest in fully painted work. This begs a question. How does one define drawing? The *Oxford English Reference Dictionary* offers a variety of definitions, “the art of representing by line”, “delineation without colour or with a single colour” and “the art of representing with pencils, pens, crayons etc.” I want to broaden this interpretation, to define drawing as an approach to illustration dominated by line, rather than colour; where highlights are supplied by the page surface, in a manuscript, the parchment, rather than the application of white or pale-toned pigment. This detail of a Last Judgement, an angel locking the door to the mouth of Hell, in a book known paradoxically as the *Liber Vitae* (Book of Life), made at Winchester c. 1031 to commemorate the faithful, departed members of the monastic communities there, demonstrates this definition (Plate 1).

Anglo-Saxon manuscripts contain drawings of different types. First there are quickly executed sketches or doodles, such as the figures, some of them incomplete, and fragments of knot-work patterns, on this otherwise blank sheet of parchment at the back of a volume of miscellaneous

texts, produced in the mid 10<sup>th</sup> century (Plate 2). The artist is trying out ideas; such drawings are experiments, never intended as finished compositions. Then there are unfinished drawings, which may well, although it is sometimes difficult to tell, have been under-drawings, destined to be obscured by the application of pigments and gilding. This may have been the case for this author portrait of Aldhelm (d. 709), Abbot of Malmesbury and later Bishop of Sherborne, penning *De virginitate (In Praise of Virginity)* for the nuns at Barking Abbey, Essex (Plate 3). A faint red chalk sketch is visible, partly redrawn in ink. Lastly, and from our point of view today, most importantly, there were finished drawings, illustrations meant to remain as drawings. Sometimes, as here in the full page frontispiece to the Canticles, Litany and Collects that come after the Psalms in the early 11<sup>th</sup>-century *Eadui Psalter*, drawing was combined with fully painted and gilded work within a single miniature (Plate 4). The seated figure of St Benedict on the left, and the artist-scribe, Eadui Basan (Eadui the Fat), a monk at Christ Church Priory, Canterbury, crouched beneath, embracing his right foot, are painted in rich pigments, enhanced with substantial areas of gilding; the monks who approach bearing gifts (to be considered further later), are drawn in brown ink and touched frugally with tints of colour. It is drawings from this latter category, finished drawings, which were produced in all the major monastic centres of Anglo-Saxon manuscript production, which will concern us today.

A survey of surviving Anglo-Saxon drawings demonstrates a chronological development of technique, moving from the simplest to the more complex. The terminology used to distinguish between these various techniques is my own, devised to distinguish between a number of approaches that are often loosely categorized as “drawing” or “outline drawing”.

Outline drawings are the earliest and simplest type, executed in the same brown/black ink as the texts with which they are often intimately associated. Here, in the *St Dunstan's Classbook*, a three-quarter length, standing Christ, and kneeling figure of St Dunstan (d. 988), Abbot of Glastonbury and later Archbishop of Canterbury (which may, or may not have been added at slightly later date), have been drawn with deceptive simplicity in a dark brown ink (Plate 5). The considerable skill of the artist (possibly Dunstan), is revealed by the fluctuating thickness of line, achieved by varying the pressure exerted upon the nib of a quill pen. The silhouette of Christ and the nested V folds between his legs are emphasized by thick, emphatic strokes, the internal folds of drapery defined by more delicate, yet no less confident, lines. Drawing is an unforgiving technique of illustration in comparison with painting. A mediocre artist can disguise less than excellent draughtsmanship with alluring colours and gilded surfaces; a drawing lays everything bare.

Coloured Outline, a technique which lent sophistication to plain Outline was developed in the late 10<sup>th</sup> century, connected to the increasingly common practice of providing texts with multi-coloured rubrics, or titles. Inspired by the visual effect of this approach to text, artist began to use coloured outlines for their drawings, thereby both distinguishing them from the accompanying text and yet maintaining a visual link with it. Sometimes an entire figure was drawn in one colour, as in this standing beardless Christ, where the scribe left an irregular space in the midst of his text panel to accommodate the reddish purple figure (Plate 6). By c.970 when this personification of Vita (Life) was executed in the *Leofric Missal* at Glastonbury someone had realized that drawings could be lent further sophistication by combining a number of different colours within the outline of a single figure (Plate 7). Vita's head, hair, feet, hands and under-garment are drawn in red, whilst his crown and over-robe are outlined in blue. The scroll he holds, outlined in green, is inscribed with a list of propitious numbers for calculating a patient's

recovery or death, written in red, blue and green, the very same colours employed for the text elsewhere on the page. Every time the scribe/artist changed colour he had to put down one pen, or perhaps brush, and pick up another, but the aesthetic effect of this technique must have justified the time it consumed. Occasionally an artist failed to complete a Coloured Outline figure. At the bottom of the illustration to Psalm 14 (Psalm 15 in modern Bibles) in the *Harley Psalter*, made c. 1000 at Christ Church Priory, Canterbury, the legs, hand and profile, of a prone man, executed in red outlines float in space (Plates 8 and 8a). The text (the illustrations are derived from the text they accompany) makes no mention of a dismembered man, so we can surmise that the artist meant to return and provide this assortment of limbs with a blue, or perhaps green torso, and dark brown shoes, but for reasons now impossible to discern, perhaps from simple forgetfulness, never did so.

A sophisticated refinement of the Coloured Outline technique, Tinted Outline, was developed in the late 10<sup>th</sup>-century, demonstrated in the hand of one artist, whose work survives in books made in England and France, suggesting he was an itinerant professional, rather than a monk. The writhing sea-monster Cetus, one of the constellations from a copy of Cicero's Latin translation of the Greek astrological/astronomical treatise *Phaenomena* by Aratus of Soli, made at Fleury in the late 10<sup>th</sup> century (Plates 9 and 9a) illustrates the subtlety sensitivity of this technique. The brown ink outline of the writhing creature's coils, applied it appears with a brush, has been modulated, softened, and blended by dragging a brush, moistened with water and binding medium, along its edge, thereby diffusing the linearity of the silhouette and endowing it with the delicate illusion of three dimensional form. No other Anglo-Saxon drawings match the work of this anonymous hand, which will be seen again later in a book produced at Winchester.

Shadowed Outline was also invented in the late 10<sup>th</sup> century, a combination of the Outline and Coloured Outline techniques. This personification of Philosophy, from a c. 970 copy of Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, possibly made at St Augustine's Priory, Canterbury, demonstrates the principle (Plate 10). The brown ink outline that establishes the essentials of the statuesque woman has been reinforced and enhanced by a red line around the hemline and sleeves of her robe, and edging of her veil; in some places the coloured line sits directly on top of the brown ink, in other places it runs parallel to it, providing a shadow. As the style of Anglo-Saxon images developed from the delicate fluttery so-called "Winchester Style" that had characterized many images from the late 10<sup>th</sup> century onwards, and can be seen in this figure of Philosophy, towards a greater solidity of form in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the Shadowed Outline technique evolved too. The hunched figure of St Pachomius receiving the Easter Tables from an angel in the *Eadui Psalter* has been drawn in a brown ink line enriched and supplemented by insistent green strokes, which almost obscure the initial drawing (Plates 11 and 11a). By the 1060s when this full page frontispiece of the Crucifixion was executed for a Psalter produced at Winchester, the uniform width of red, blue and green lines overwhelm the brown ink drawing they closely shadow (Plate 12).

By the 1030s some draughtsmen began to experiment with extended coloured shadows, applying washes of dilute pigment to the brown ink bones of a composition thereby lending a soft sense of three-dimensionality. Such Partial Tinting can be seen in the athletic angel who locks the door of Hell in the Winchester *Liber Vitae* (Plates 13 and 13a). A soft smudge of green on his belly suggests the fall of light on a rounded surface.

The terms used to describe these different drawing techniques are my invention; they are

certainly not medieval. In fact there was no precise medieval vocabulary to distinguish between “drawing” and “painting”, even though it is sensible to presume that patrons and artists were well aware of the difference between them. In many instances the Latin verb “pingere”, to paint, is used indiscriminately to refer to drawings and paintings. Occasionally the phrase “fac tractus” is used, literally “to make a line”, but without enough consistency to claim that it was universally understood as a reference to drawing as opposed to painting. How should this lack of specific terminology be explained? Perhaps artists saw no necessity to differentiate between drawing and painting; Eadui Basan, for example, was as skilled in one technique as the other (Plate 14). This view may well have been reinforced by the fact the same materials seem to have been used for both techniques. Visual observation suggests this and close scrutiny, with a binocular microscope, confirms it. In Eadui’s frontispiece the same materials were used to colour both halves of the composition, but those on the drawn right hand side, which enhance the brown ink outline of the approaching monks, have been mixed with larger quantities of binding medium (probably gum or glair – clarified egg white) than those on the left hand painted side of the picture. This accounts for their paler, more translucent appearance. It is worth emphasising that the materials used to colour drawings were pigments, not inks. The indisputable visual link between writing and drawing has led many to define the materials used to colour drawings as inks; the physical evidence indicates that they are pigments.

The drawings cited so far should have convinced the most skeptical audience that drawing was a popular technique of illustration in a wide variety of sacred and profane Anglo-Saxon books. But how does one account for this enthusiasm? The influence of two, apparently disparate, traditions combined to foster its popularity. First, the well entrenched, persistent influence of the Celtic tradition of linear design, brought to northern England in the first half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century by Irish missionaries, and embraced enthusiastically thereafter, as seen in a carpet page from the early 8<sup>th</sup>-century *Lindisfarne Gospels*, made on the island monastery of Lindisfarne or Holy Island in Northumbria (Plate 15). Second the impact of 9<sup>th</sup>-century, Continental, models, such as the *Utrecht Psalter*, which arrived in England, perhaps as gifts, in the late 10<sup>th</sup> century (Plate 16). The lively, linear, illustrations in these books were admired, and reinforced and reinvigorated the preference for linear design previously instilled into English patrons and craftsmen.

For the remainder of the lecture I would like to explore, in more detail, why drawing was selected in preference to painting in a selection of Anglo-Saxon books. The presumption that drawing was viewed as a cheap, quick alternative to full paint and gilding continues to be asserted, and, in part, this is justified. Drawings often did take less time to execute than paintings and, since they made use of relatively little pigment, and were rarely gilded, they could be cheaper than paintings. But was the choice always dictated by a wish to speed up production and reduce the cost of a book? In some instances constraints of time and money were clearly influential. Even a glance at the frontispiece of David and his musicians opposite the opening of Psalm 1 in the mid 11<sup>th</sup>-century *Winchcombe Psalter* suggests that this was not a luxury production (Plate 17). The parchment is of low quality, note the hole that intrudes into the left hand side of the composition, and the illustration animated but untidy and lacking refinement. The fact that this is a drawing, executed in brown ink, embellished with frugal touches of colour, confirms the impression that this book is a relatively low quality production. Winchcombe Abbey was not an Anglo-Saxon monastic house famed for the production of books, manuscript production there may have been sporadic and a continuous supply of high quality parchment therefore unavailable.

Drawing was also an economical means of producing long cycles of complex illustrations, where



the prospect of executing the same number of pictures in full paint may have proved prohibitively expensive and time consuming. Such thinking may have influenced the creation of this copy of the *Caedmon Genesis*, a metrical paraphrase of biblical narrative in the vernacular, including the poem *On Genesis*, erroneously ascribed to the 7<sup>th</sup>-century poet Caedmon of Whitby, produced c. 1000 at Christ Church Priory, Canterbury. The book has over fifty illustrations, all of them drawings, like this one, of Satan's messenger leaving Hell (Plate 18).

With similar pragmatism, drawing was often selected for complex pictorial diagrams, since it provided the clarity necessary for the reader to grasp the meaning of the composition. The Paschal Hand and two flanking figures in the *Leofric Missal* were executed, c. 970, in the Coloured Outline technique, thereby enabling the viewer to read easily the dates on the outstretched fingers of the hand, written in the same colours as the outlines of the illustration (Plate 19). If the hand and figures had been fully painted the dates would have stood out less clearly, and this would have been undesirable since they constitute the central message of the composition.

A further page from the *Caedmon Genesis*, demonstrates another practical reason for employing drawing, to convey a hierarchy of importance either between elements within a single composition or, between illustrations within one volume. A number of Anglo-Saxon drawings emphasise people, or objects, of significance by the use of full paint and gilding. In this instance the authority of the Creator, over His creation, has been conveyed by singling Him out with full paint; everything else, Adam, Eve, the animals and the Garden of Eden are drawn in Outline (Plate 20). The *Benedictional of St Ethelwold*, a liturgical book of blessings or benedictions read by a bishop at the celebration of a Eucharist, made for the personal use of Bishop Ethelwold of Winchester (r. 963-84), contains numerous richly painted and gilded illustrations which contrast starkly with the relative restraint of the final image in the book (Plates 21 and 21a). A bishop, presumably Ethelwold, stands in his cathedral in front of an altar prepared for a Mass, reciting a benediction from the very book in which the illustration occurs. The building and congregation are drawn in rust-red outline, but the ciborium, furnished altar, bishop and his book are fully painted and gilded, reminding the viewer of their holy, consecrated, significance in comparison with everything else. The pigments employed and the style of painting match precisely those found earlier in the book; this is not an unfinished illustration that was selectively painted at a later date.

In the full page frontispiece in the *Eadui Psalter*, two figures are similarly emphasised with full paint and gold: St Benedict, author of the Rule that he presents; and Eadui, the scribe-artist who includes himself in the saint's aura of holiness, and implores Benedict to pray for him (Plate 22). Amongst the crowd of drawn monks that press forward from the right, two items are singled out for special emphasis in full paint and gold, a dome-topped box and a book, both linked, by implication, to Benedict; a reliquary and copy of the Rule perhaps. The same convention occurs in the frontispiece of the Winchester *Liber Vitae* (Plate 23 and 23a). The golden altar cross presented by King Cnut (d. 1035) and Queen Emma-Aelfgifu (d. 1052) to the High Altar of Hyde Abbey, Winchester is painted red, green and yellow (the same pigments used for the accompanying inscriptions), thereby signalling its significance amidst the monochrome Outline figures in the earthly realm, and linking it ingeniously to the painted books held by the Virgin Mary and Christ in Heaven.

Full colour and gilding were typically used to pinpoint significant people or objects in what were otherwise drawings, but one surviving example reverses this principle. The page opposite the

opening of St John's Gospel in the *Grimbald Gospels*, a deluxe liturgical book, written and probably illustrated by Eadui Basan, c. 1020, has John seated writing his Gospel, surrounded by a Last Judgement that inhabits the frame (Plates 24 and 24a). Every tiny angelic, royal and ecclesiastical figure is embellished with metal leaf and full paint, their faces and hands painted with white pigment, except for a huddle of minute naked souls, borne aloft reverentially by two angels, in the roundel beneath St John's toes, waiting to be judged by Christ, who presides in the central roundel at the top. These souls are the only details of the entire composition drawn in red outline, their flesh coloured by the parchment of the page, rather than white pigment. Could this be an oversight? Was this detail left unfinished? Perhaps, but it seems more likely that this is an ingenious way of indicating, by the juxtaposition of painting and drawing, the humility of these anonymous souls.

The use of a hierarchy of technique was extended, in some books, to indicate the relative importance of different sections or texts. Typically, fully painted frontispieces herald the opening of the most important text or section, whilst drawn frontispieces preface texts of lesser significance. For example, in the composite volume, made at Christ Church Priory Canterbury in the mid 11<sup>th</sup> century (badly damaged by fire in the Cotton Library fire of 1731), the primacy of the Rule of St Benedict is clear marked by the fully painted miniature that prefaces it, showing Benedict presenting his Rule to a group of monks (Plate 25). In the same volume, the *Regularis Concordia* text, (currently at the beginning of the book, but originally bound after the Rule, which now succeeds it), composed in 970 to provide supplementary guidelines to Benedict's Rule and celebrate its adoption by the English Church, is given a drawn frontispiece indicating to the user of the book that it was secondary to Benedict's Rule in terms of importance (Plate 26). King Edgar (d. 975) flanked by Archbishop Dunstan (d. 988) and Bishop Ethelwold (d. 984) sit above a limber monk, entwined in a scroll signalling the assent of the English Church to Benedictine Rule (Plate). Similarly in the mid 11<sup>th</sup>-century *Tiberius Psalter*, produced in Winchester (another Cotton collection manuscript that was badly burned in 1731), the prefatory cycle of sixteen full-page Davidic and Christological illustrations, such as the Harrowing of Hell (Plate 27), which come at the beginning of the book, are Shadowed Outline drawings. This informs the owner of the volume that they are prefatory material, subsidiary to the biblical text that follows. The Psalter opens with a fully painted frontispiece of David and his musicians, where even the blank ground behind the figures is covered in opaque white pigment (Plate 28).

The employment of a hierarchy of technique occurs only in Anglo-Saxon books; Continental patrons and book producers devised no comparable system. The popularity of drawing in England, may have meant that the juxtaposition of drawing and painting, to signal the relative importance, or humility, of objects, people, or sections of text was intelligible to audiences. On the Continent where the tradition of drawing was more intermittent this visual code may not have been as effective.

The reasons proposed so far for the choice of drawing rather than painting have all been dictated by pragmatic considerations. Some patrons, or craftsmen, were motivated by more positive attitudes when they rejected full paint in favour of drawing.

Sometimes they did this to replicate faithfully, highly regarded models. This can be seen in the *Harley Psalter*, the earliest of three copies executed at Christ Church Priory, Canterbury, of the *Utrecht Psalter*, made c. 830 near Reims, which arrived in Canterbury in the late 10<sup>th</sup> century. The *Harley Psalter* illustration for Psalm 103 (Plate 29) (Psalm 104 in modern Bibles), is stylistically and iconographically (give or take a tree or two), a faithful copy of the illustration for

Psalm 103 in the *Utrecht Psalter* (Plate 30). It also retains the drawing technique of the original, but with an important difference, colour has been introduced; the *Harley Psalter* illustration is a Coloured Outline drawing, whereas the *Utrecht Psalter* illustrations are monochrome. The producers of the early 11<sup>th</sup>-century copy maintain the overall aesthetic of the original, but bring it up to date by employing a recently invented drawing technique. They were less faithful to the text and the script of the *Utrecht Psalter*, neither of which were copied, suggesting that the main fascination of the 9<sup>th</sup>-century book lay in its illustrations

A number of the *Harley Psalter* illustrations were left unfinished in the early 11<sup>th</sup>-century campaign of production. In the mid 12<sup>th</sup>-century, another group of Canterbury artists were tasked with completing them, and they faithfully retained the Coloured Outline technique used by their Anglo-Saxon predecessors, even though by the 1150s, the popularity of drawing was in abeyance in England, replaced by a preference for heavily painted and lavishly gilded illustrations. Such consistency indicates a sincere reverence for the past.

Reverence for the even more distant past is demonstrated in the long-lived tradition of drawn illustrations in texts known to possess links with Antiquity, however hazily those connections were understood by Anglo-Saxon patrons and manuscript producers. This can be seen in illustrated copies of the *Psychomachia*, composed in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century, by a Spanish author Prudentius. The allegorical text focuses on the struggle between Christianity and Paganism, symbolized by the battle between female personifications of the Virtues and Vices. The majority of surviving copies of the *Psychomachia* are illustrated with drawings rather than paintings, as in these two Anglo-Saxon examples, produced in the late 10<sup>th</sup> century, and later copies maintain this convention (Plates 31 and 32). The same tradition operates in illustrated copies of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC Roman author Terence's *Comedies*, a text which, unlike Prudentius' *Psychomachia* may well have been first illustrated in roll, rather than codex, or book, format (the codex gradually replaced the roll as the main method of storing text and illustrations during the first and second centuries AD). Surviving evidence suggests that roll illustrations were commonly drawings rather than paintings, a choice dictated by technical considerations. The pigment of a fully painted illustration cracked and flaked when a roll was rolled and unrolled, whereas a line drawing, coloured with washes of colour remained intact. When texts first illustrated in roll format were copied into codices they often retained drawn illustrations and this tradition persisted long after rolls ceased to be made. Perhaps Anglo-Saxon copyists were aware of an oral tradition regarding principles of Antique illustration that encouraged them to preserve them. Perhaps they were also aware that drawing was much admired in Antiquity and this knowledge reinforced their wish to maintain the traditions of a period they viewed with interest and admiration. Pliny, in his *Historia Naturalis* (Natural History), composed 77-79 AD, a text available in many medieval English monastic book collections, voices an appreciation of drawing that can be traced back to the works of Aristotle in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. Pliny bemoans the fact that many of his contemporaries no longer appreciate the importance of line, preferring instead the cheap thrill of flashy colours that often disguise the weakness of the artist.

Is it possible to show, beyond doubt, that some patrons chose drawing because they positively preferred its aesthetic effects to those of full paint and gilding? The *Ramsey Psalter*, probably made at Winchester in the late 10<sup>th</sup> century, for Oswald, bishop of Worcester and then archbishop of York (d. 992), is perhaps the book that proves this most effectively (Plates 33 and 34). This deluxe Psalter that you saw in my first lecture, is embellished with costly gold paint, and illustrated by the artist who travelled to Fleury to work on the *Phaenomena* manuscript



shown earlier in this session. The status of the patron, and the superlative quality of materials used in the book – note the fine quality of the parchment and the extensive use of gold ink - might lead one to expect fully painted and gilded illustration, as chosen for Bishop Ethelwold's Benedictional, a book of equally high status. But the *Ramsey Psalter* demonstrates great restraint. It contains only one illustration, a full-page frontispiece of the Crucifixion, which stands opposite the Beatus initial at the opening of Psalm 1. The subject spells out visually that the Old Testament Psalter, replete with prophecies about the coming Messiah, is linked inextricably to the Gospel message of the New Testament. Technically this illustration is of the highest quality, but it is a drawing, rather than a fully painted miniature. The figures are executed in the Tinted Outline technique, fluid washes of dilute colour convey with brilliance the emotionally subdued scene. The quivering, rucked folds of the Virgin Mary's garments accentuate the fragility of her hunched form and communicate eloquently the intensity of her grief (Plate 35). St John's fluttering garment gives life to his exultant gesture as he gazes devotedly up at Christ, whilst penning his testimony onto the unfurled scroll held in the palm of his raised left hand. There is no doubt that Christ, in the midst of the two bystanders, is dead; His head slumps upon his shoulder, His eyes are closed and the wound in His right side is clearly visible. But he is a calm, magisterial figure, made all the more powerfully human by the absence of full colour and flashy gilding. It is worth remembering that this figure was produced at the time when Western theologians were beginning to countenance the depiction of the dead Christ, rather than the alert, triumphant Saviour, who had occupied the Cross in Western Europe since the earliest extant depictions of the scene in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Why did Oswald choose a drawn frontispiece for his luxury Psalter? The exquisite quality of this drawing makes it unlikely that it was because he was trying to save time or money. I suggest he was one of perhaps a small, but significant, group of Anglo-Saxon connoisseurs, who appreciated and championed drawing. They appreciated the beauty of line over and above the brash pleasure of solid colour and understood the subtle emotional qualities it conveyed. Perhaps they even felt that the subdued appearance of a drawing best expressed the aesthetic modesty desirable from a high ranking ecclesiastic.

The *Ramsey Psalter* is not the only high-status book which employs drawn frontispieces in this way; Oswald was not alone in his fascination for and appreciation of drawing. But the surviving evidence does indicate that drawing was something prized most highly by a well educated minority. The majority preferred the immediate gratification offered by bright colour and gold, rather than being prepared to invest time in closely observing and analyzing a drawing, skills necessary to fully appreciate such work. Such reactions are not limited to the past. To a visitor fascinated by drawing, it was noticeable at the recent exhibition of Royal Manuscripts at the British Library that the most brightly painted and gilded books attracted the most attention. And at the Leonardo da Vinci exhibition at the National Gallery crowds clustered around the paintings. Much smaller numbers of people spent time with his drawings, and yet, I would argue, it is Leonardo's drawings that proclaim his genius most clearly.

I hope that this lecture has convinced those who might have doubted it, that drawing was a much appreciated technique of illustration in Anglo-Saxon England, harnessed for various reasons in a variety of ways. Anglo-Saxon drawings were definitely not always the poor cousins of fully-painted miniatures, and if time was less finite I would show you that this fascination with line persisted in England into the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

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**List of Plates**

(Measurements refer to overall dimensions of each book when closed)

1. London, British Library, Stowe MS 944, *Liber Vitae* Winchester, New Minster, c. 1031, fol. 7, detail of the Last Judgement (255 x 150 mm)
2. Oxford, St John's College, MS 28, miscellaneous texts, mid 10<sup>th</sup> century, fol. 81v, two male figures, an angel and knot-work patterns (328 x 237 mm)
3. London, British Library, MS Royal 7.D.XXII, Aldhelm, *De Virginitate*, Winchester (?), early to late 10<sup>th</sup> century, fol. 85v, Aldhelm seated writing (170 x 120 mm)
4. London, British Library, Arundel MS 155, *Eadui Psalter*, Canterbury, Christ Church, 1012-23, fol. 133, St Benedict presenting a group of monks with his Rule (292 x 170 mm)
5. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. F. 4.32, *St Dunstan's Classbook*, probably Glastonbury, mid 10th century, fol.1, Christ adored by St Dunstan (245 x 179 mm)
6. As for Plate 2, fol. 2, Christ holding a cross-topped staff and book
7. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 579, *Leofric Missal*, Glastonbury, c. 970, fol. 49v, Vita (195 x 145 mm)
8. London, British Library, Harley MS 603, c. 1000, *Harley Psalter*, Christ Church Priory, Canterbury, fol. 8, Psalm 14 (380 x 309 mm)
- 8a. Detail of Plate 8
9. London, BL, Harley MS 2506, *Phaenomena* of Aratus of Soli, written at Fleury, c. 975-1000, fol. 42 (293 x 212 mm)
- 9a. Detail of Plate 13, Cetus, the sea monster
10. Cambridge, Trinity College Library, MS 0.3.7, *Consolation of Philosophy*, Boethius, Canterbury, St Augustine's (?), c. 970, fol. 1, Philosophy (292 x 227 mm)
11. *Eadui Psalter* (see Plate 4), fol. 9v, Easter Tables, St Pachomius receiving the Easter tables from an angel
- 11a. Detail of Plate 11
12. London, British Library, Arundel MS 60, Psalter, Winchester, c. 1060 and later additions, fol. 12v, Crucifixion (306 x 192 mm)
13. *Liber Vitae* (see Plate 1), fol. 7, Last Judgement (255 x 150 mm)
- 13a. Detail of Plate 13
14. *Eadui Psalter* (see Plate 4), fol. 133, St Benedict presenting his Rule to monks
15. London, British Library, Cotton MS Nero D.iv, *Lindisfarne Gospels*, Lindisfarne, or Holy Island, 698-721, fol. 26v, St Matthew Carpet page (340 x 250 mm)
16. Utrecht, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit MS 32, *Utrecht Psalter*, Hautvillers, near Reims, 820-35, fol. 13, illustration for Psalm 22 (332 x 259 mm)
17. Cambridge, University Library MS Ff.1.23, *Winchcombe Psalter*, Winchcombe Abbey, c. 1030-50, fol. 4v, David and his musicians (270 x 160 mm)
18. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Junius 11, *Caedmon Genesis*, Canterbury, Christ Church, c. 1000, p. 20, Satan's messenger leaving Hell (318 x 195 mm)
19. *Leofric Missal* (see Plate 7), fol. 49, Paschal Hand
20. *Caedmon Genesis* (see Plate 18), p. 11, Creator with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden
21. London, British Library, Add. MS 49598, *Benedictional of St Ethelwold*, Winchester, Old Minster, c. 971-84, fol. 118v, bishop reading a benediction to his congregation (293 x 225 mm)
- 21a. Detail of Plate 21
22. *Eadui Psalter* (see Plate 4), fol. 133, St Benedict presents a copy of his Rule
23. *Liber Vitae* (see Plate 1), fol. 6, King Cnut and Queen Emma- Aelfgifu present a gold altar cross to Hyde Abbey
- 23a. Detail of Plate 23

24. London, British Library, Add. MS 34890, *Grimbald Gospels*, probably Canterbury, Christ Church and Winchester, c. 1020, fols. 114v-115, opening of St John's Gospel (320 x 245 mm)
- 24a. As for Plate 24, detail of roundel at base of the frame containing saved souls held in a cloth
25. London, British Library, Cotton MS Tiberius A. iii, *Regularis Concordia* etc., Canterbury, Christ Church, c. 1050, fol. 2v, King Edgar between Archbishop Dunstan and Bishop Ethelwold, above a monk representing the English Church (240 x 177 mm)
26. As for Plate 25, fol. 117v, St Benedict presenting his Rule to a group of monks
27. London, British Library, Cotton MS Tiberius C.vi, *Tiberius Psalter*, Winchester, c. 1050, fol. 14, Harrowing of Hell (248 x 146 mm)
28. As for Plate 27, fol. 30v, David and his musicians
29. *Harley Psalter* (see Plate 8) fol. 51v, detail, illustration for Psalm 103
30. *Utrecht Psalter* (see Plate 15), fol. 59v, detail, illustration for Psalm 103
31. London, British Library, Cotton MS Cleopatra C.viii, *Psychomachia*, Prudentius, Canterbury, Christ Church, late 10<sup>th</sup> century, Hope offers a sword to Humility; Humility beheads Pride (215 x 135 mm)
32. London, Add. MS 24199, Prudentius, *Psychomachia*, Southern England, late 10<sup>th</sup> century, fol. 18, Luxuria tempting young men to desert the battlefield for a life of debauchery (320 x 240 mm)
33. London, BL, Harley MS 2904, *Ramsey Psalter*, Winchester, c. 975-1000, fol. 3v, Crucifixion (285 x 242 mm)
34. As for Plate 33, fol. 4, Beatus, Psalm 1
35. Detail of Plate 33, fol. 3v, detail of the Virgin