Anglo-Saxon Manuscript Art and Power in 8th and 9th Century Southern England

Pablo Martín Crovetto*
Instituto Superior del Profesorado "Dr. Joaquín V. González"
Argentina

Resumen

Northumbria ha sido tradicionalmente el foco de estudio a la hora de caracterizar el escenario político de las islas británicas y su impacto en el arte durante el período anglosajón. Sin embargo, la dinámica de poder de los reinos situados al sur de río Humber vista a través del arte también merece ser explorada. Este trabajo trata la naturaleza de la identidad construida a través de manuscritos por parte de los estratos gobernantes en los reinos de Southumbria en los siglos VIII y IX. Claramente se pueden trazar conexiones entre ellos, sus ancestros insulares y germánicos, como así también las elites gobernantes continentales. El resultado de dicha conexión es la naturaleza altamente ecléctica del corpus de manuscritos que refleja una clara declaración de identidad en términos de poder y legitimidad.

Palabras clave: anglosajones, arte, manuscritos, Southambria, insular, poder, identidad.

Abstract

Northumbria has traditionally been the focus of scholarship in the depiction of the political scenario of the British Isles and its impact on art during the Anglo-Saxon period. However, the dynamics of power in the kingdoms located south to the river Humber reflected through art also deserves to be explored. This paper is concerned with the nature of the identity constructed through manuscripts by the ruling strata of the Southumbrian kingdoms in the 8th and 9th centuries. Connections between them and their Insular and Germanic ancestors, as well as continental ruling elites, can be clearly traced. The result of such connections is the highly eclectic nature of the corpus of manuscripts which reflects a clear statement of identity in terms of power and legitimacy.

Keywords: Anglo-Saxons, art, manuscripts, Southambria, insular, power, identity.

Introduction

The period of time covered by this paper witnessed the production of a considerable number of manuscripts. Many scholars would indeed, with reason, argue that these are 'some of the finest examples of Anglo-Saxon art' (Brown, 1996, p.16-17). The production of manuscripts implied economic power in itself for the costliness and long process of handwritten books could only be

afforded by few. A good illustration of this can be seen in the purchase of a travel book in the late 7th century in which the acquirer 'gave land that would have kept eight families for life' (Dodwell, 1982, p. 94). For Christianity the manuscript

> … has […] always been an essential element for it was in a manuscript […] that the divine word of God was revealed. In Christian art, Christ himself is portrayed with a book, and it was by books that Christianity was spread. (1982, p. 94)

Indeed, the production of a manuscript implied the existence of vast resources available. The artists involved in the process of the creation of a manuscript needed to be trained in a number of subjects. Mathematics was of essential use in order to be able to 'work out the number of words to the line and the page ahead of writing' (Brown, 2011, p. 135). It should be reminded that the scribe would write one bifolium at a time. This meant that the sheet of parchment was divided into two, but the pages where not necessarily adjacent, for which it was necessary to calculate the number of words per line and page beforehand. Mathematics was also necessary for its influence on design. The Golden Rule governs the page proportions and layout. Additionally, the artists or those that could have assisted them needed to be trained in chemistry for the specific creation of colors. Undoubtedly manuscripts themselves were a symbol of status and power, and as such many of them were meant to be displayed or given as gifts (Brown, 2011, p. 126). Access to them was restricted to an educated minority.

In different parts of Anglo-Saxon England manuscript culture achieved a great level of sophistication and variety which enable us today to make some distinctions between pieces of different times and places. Even though the production of manuscripts hereby discussed covers a relatively broad span of time, they could be said to be related stylistically south of the river Humber. This group is generally referred to as the *Tiberius* or *Canterbury*, 'taking the former name from a key member, a ninth century copy of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, the Tiberius Bede' (Brown, 1991, p. 195). It should be important to remember that within the period discussed Kent, among other territories, fell under the overlordship of Mercia. As Brown (1996, p.164) has very wisely suggested Mercia worked as a *Schriftprovinz*, an area that is drawn not from the traditional boundaries of a kingdom but rather, from the common peculiarities seen in the production of manuscripts. As such, Mercia could be understood as a 'Greater Mercia' (Brown, 1996, p.164) which embraced Kent and Wessex influencing their artistic production. It is therefore not surprising that manuscripts should display some similarities in their decorative schemes in order to send a similar message of power.

Development

One of the unavoidable features of manuscripts during this time is the incorporation of classical motifs. The use of them shows how interested the *Southumbrian* kingdoms were in keeping with certain continental conventions, but also how they were used as a new statement of identity. Such identity is to be read in terms of power relations between Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and the conventions long accepted in continental Europe, where the imperial image was evoked through classical art. The adoption or rejection of certain standards implies an answer to the status quo. The Vespasian Psalter (fig. 1) and the Stockholm Codex Aureus (fig. 2) constitute a good illustration of how ideas of power could be displayed in these sumptuous objects. These are works of the first half of the eighth century, which correspond to the period of the Mercian ascendancy during the times of Æthelbald. These pieces of art with all the prestige associated to them stand as witnesses of how art was produced during the times of the ascendency. At a first glance, they both display a predominantly Romanizing style, namely in the presence of classical heavy figures, the circular arch bridges and the uncial capital script. This is explained by the idea that '[…] Antique

civilization was looked back to as having a peculiar attractiveness and prestige' since the early medieval period in England (Henderson, 1977, p. 18). Monumental architecture recreated in manuscripts is vast and reflective of an 'interest in classical visual values' (Henderson, 1977, p. 21), not only among the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, but in Europe. The Antique world offered an unparalleled sense of grandeur to those who posed themselves, to a greater or lesser extent, as the successors of the Roman Empire. It is therefore not surprising that constant elements of prestige reminiscent of the classical world should be included in the production of manuscripts.
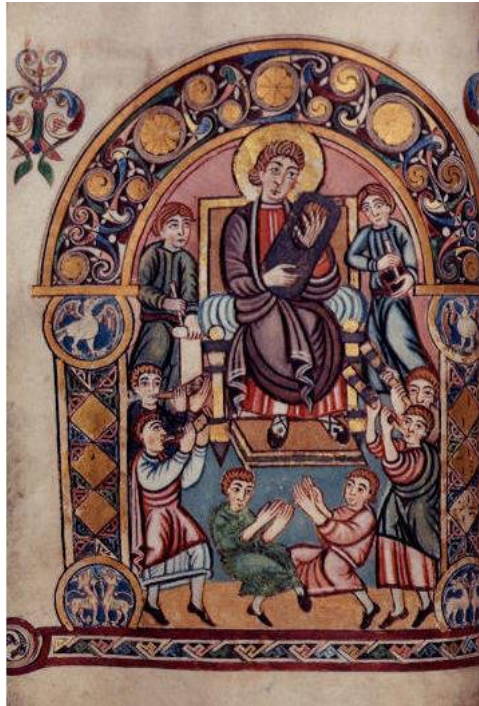

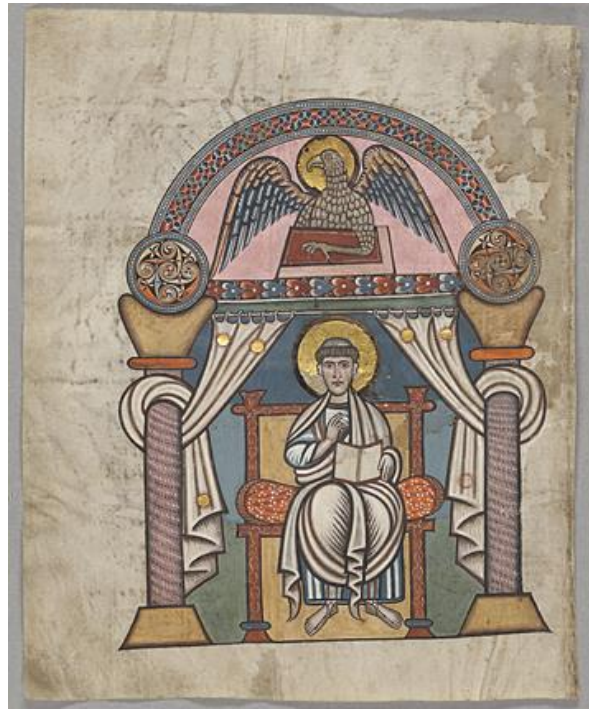*Figure 1.* The Vespasian Psalter: David the Psalmist with musicians, 8th c., Cotton Vespasian AI, f. 30v, The British Library, London. Retrieved May 2nd 2019 from: https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/TourPopupMax.asp?TourID=3

Figure 2. The Stockholm *Codex Aureus*: Portrait of St. John, 8th c., MS A. 135, fol. 150v, National Library of Sweden, Stockholm. Retrieved May 2nd 2019 from: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:12_-_000,w,150v.jpg

Nevertheless, a deeper look at manuscripts of the age offers the possibility of appreciating the absorption of Hiberno-Saxon artistic elements. This style integrates the artistic traditions of the Anglo-Saxons with those of the Hibernians or Irish, which are mainly manifested in the curvilinear abstract motifs. The Anglo-Saxons were influenced by Irish monks in the 7th century, mainly by the decorative motifs they used in manuscripts. Hiberno-Saxon art in manuscripts displays the potential of this fruitful interaction, where there appears to be an incorporation of Germanic motifs (Brown, 1996, p. 198) such as the Germanic animals, as can be seen in the Royal Prayer Book (fig. 3) and the Royal Bible (fig. 4).

Figure 3. The Royal Prayerbook: Prayers, detail of initial. 9th c., Royal MS 2 A.XX, fol. 17, British Library, London. Retrieved January 31st 2019 from:
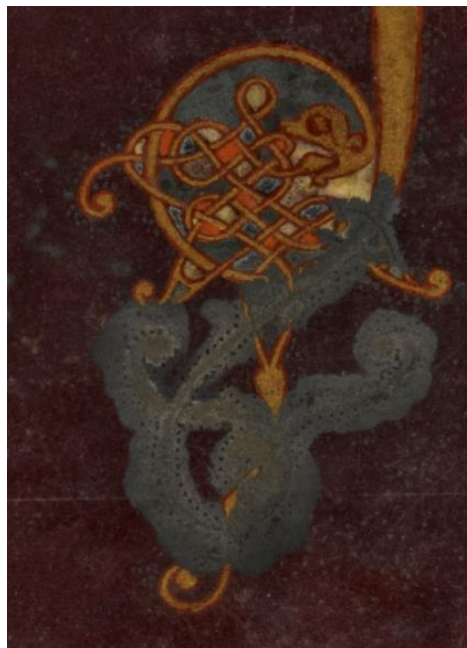http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=royal_ms_2_a_xx_fs001r

Figure 4. The Royal Bible: Detail of the decorated opening of St. Luke's Gospel, Royal MS I E. Vi, f.43.Extracted from: *The making of England* (p.218), by J. Backhouse & L. Webster (eds.), 1991, London.

This constitutes the 'most widespread and characteristic aspect of the art of the Mercian supremacy' (Webster, 2012, p. 138). These animals differ from the seventh century zoomorphic style in that they are 'quirky, playful animals that prance, bite and snap in initials and entwine in the columns of canon tables' (Webster, 2012, p. 139). Certainly these images bear an eastern, most probably Frankish, influence; however, 'their fondness for entwinements and oppositions of every kind […] look back to earlier Anglo-Saxon traditions' (Webster, 2012, p. 139), as can be seen in the Sutton Hoo Buckle (fig. 5) and the Sutton Hoo iron helmet (fig.6). Most certainly, the incorporation of interwoven Germanic animals was not a principle of Christian art, in the way Rome or Constantinople produced it (Henderson, 1977, p.60). The result is a work of equilibrium of highly

eclectic nature. What we might bewitnessing with the production of manuscripts outside Mercia, geographically speaking, is how the Mercian power still managed to cross these boundaries. The fact that artists from different places should resort to Mercian style, as well as to the classical world, is very telling of the position Mercia managed to obtain, as a political and cultural influence. As shown, animals in manuscripts of this time depict the fertile union of the Mercian zoomorphic tradition and the new influence coming from the Carolingian Empire, thus, embellishing the works of art with great power.

Figure 5. Great gold buckle Sutton Hoo ship burial, 7th c., AN35178001, British Museum, London. Retrieved April 28th 2019 from: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collectionimages/AN00035/AN00035178_001_l.jpg

Figure 6. The Sutton Hoo Helmet (Replica), 7th c., 1010.93, British Museum, London, Retrieved April 28th 2019 from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sutton_Hoo_helmet#/media/File:2004_sutton_hoo_01.JPG

Another aspect worth mentioning in the artistic construction of manuscripts is that of the knot work pattern. This pattern was also a fruit of the influence of the Irish style, which is commonly found to be painted in manuscripts, whereas its Saxon counterpart is more typical of metalwork. As many scholars have acknowledged, the Anglo-Saxon interlacing pattern is more than a mere decorative convention, it is rather 'a fundamental structural principle in Anglo-Saxon visual […] art' (Clarke, 2012, p. 12). In terms of technique, the Anglo-Saxon interlace can be said to be of high complexity. Decoration of such intricacy required specific divine geometry knowledge, mathematical skills and familiarity with principles as the Golden Rule (Brown, 2011, p. 107). Indeed the masterminds who created them must have been instructed not only in art but also in

science (Hull, 2003, p. 19). The fact that someone should have such level of education is very telling in a society in which most laymen were illiterate. The display of such knowledge put into practice could only be possessed by a selected part of society and it should not be surprising that the interlacing pattern therefore became a symbol of status.

Apart from the technical requirements that the creation of interlacing patterns had, they were also an attempt to enhance a 'three-dimensional effect' (Coatsworth & Pinder, 2003, p. 160). This becomes an aspect of importance in a context when European artists would not fully develop perspective until the Renaissance (Andersen, 2007, p. 13). The interlacing pattern, thus, should be seen as an attempt to be able to cope with such incapacity. The use of interlacing patterns is by no means restricted to art produced south of the river Humber. Indeed a quick glance at the Lindisfarne Gospels will suffice to prove this. However, it is also true that south of the river Humber interlace patterns were of particular interest and took their own form of development.

In the field of manuscripts within the period here discussed, interlace patterns appear mainly in two forms. One of them is deprived of iconography. As shown in the Vespasian Psalter (fig. 1), the Codex Aureus (fig. 2), the Tiberius Bede (fig. 7) and some parts of the Barberini Gospels (fig. 8), among others, interlace could very well appear in a plain form. As can be seen, in these works, interlace patterns do not interact with the rest of the iconographic composition. However, this was not always the case.

Figure 7. The Tiberius Bede: Detail of opening of the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 9th c., MS C. ii, f. 5b, British Library, London. Retrieved June 3rd 2018 from: https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/bedes-ecclesiastical-history-of-the-english-people

Figure 8. The Barberini Gospels: The incipit to John, 8th c., MS 570, f. 125r, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Rome. Retrieved March 17th 2018 from: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:BarberiniGospelsFol125rinciptJohn.jpg

A second way in which the interlacing pattern manifests itself is as part of intertwined or interlaced animals. Manuscripts that very well showthis include the Codex Bigotianus (fig. 9), the Barberini Gospels (fig. 4) and the Royal Bible (fig.7). The different uses account for the plasticity of this technique, which is of importance in understanding how it could be used in many different contexts and media. Regardless of the pattern the artist chose to develop, there seems to be a connection between the use of interlace pattern and the intention to exalt certain images of manuscripts. In other words, the use of the interlace pattern in manuscripts seems to work in association with religious power.
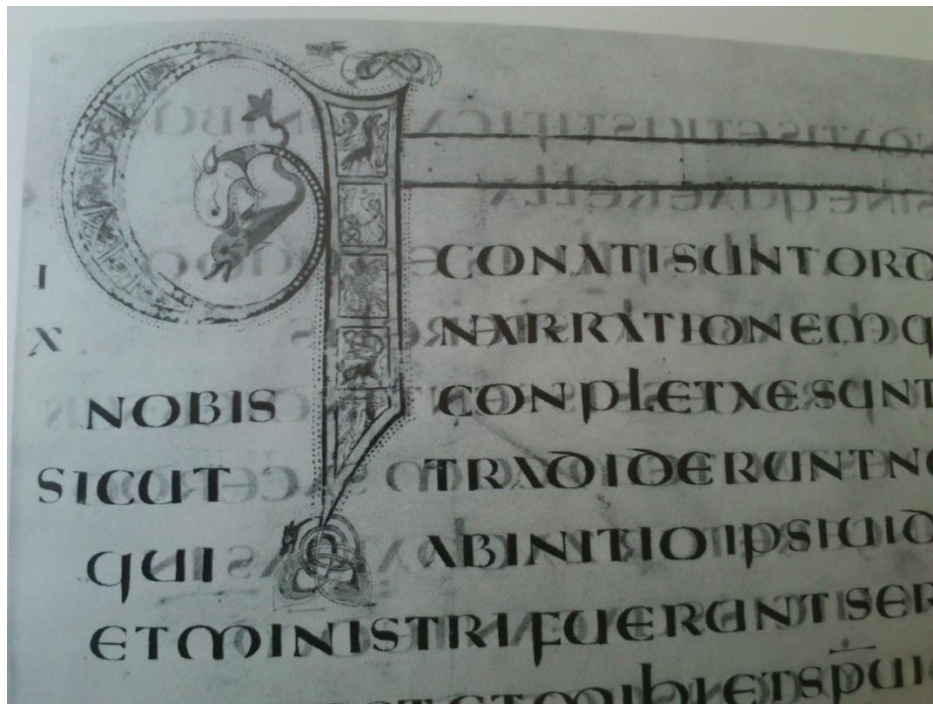
Figure 9. The Codex Bigotianus: Decorated opening of St. Luke's Gospel, 8th c, MS lat. 281, f. 137, Bibliotèque Nationale, Paris. Extracted from: *The making of England* (p. 201), by J. Backhouse & L. Webster (eds.), 1991, London.

A particularly interesting example where this might be found is in the Miniature of St. Matthew in the Codex Aureus of Stockholm or Canterbury, as it is also known (fig.2). Here we can see the representation of the Evangelist as the author of the following book. As in many of the representations of the Evangelists, one can easily perceive a clear intention to associate the image of the Saint with the idea of authority or earned power to support the words of the Evangelist. The open curtains sample this as they indicate that the Saint had uncovered the word of Christ (Monk, 2014, p.2), 'a relatively common feature of many later Coptic [productions]' (Brown, 2011, p.120). Coptic art originated among the Greek- and Egyptian-speaking Christian communities in Egypt. It is believed the British Isles were influenced indirectly by Coptic art and its traditions via southern Gaul, where the Lérins foundation may have trained St. Patrick. Through missions, the influence of such traditions expanded to Northumbria and some of its productions, in turn, reached Mercia (Brown, 2011, p. 116). Additionally, there are a number of elements that closely link this image with that of the *Majestas Domini.* The Saint, in vestures proper of a Roman office-holder, is sitting on a throne in a Christomemic style. Interestingly enough, the throne is decorated with an interlacing pattern. Given that the Miniature shows elements that aim at the exaltation of the Evangelist's power, it seems logical that the choice of a decorative pattern for the throne, a symbol of 'authority, power and majesty' (Ryken, et al., 1998, p.868), should be of –at least- equal importance. This way, the authority that springs from the throne is further reinforced by the presence of the knot work, which takes the beholder from the very foundation of the throne all the way up.

The case of the depiction of King David in the Vespasian Psalter (fig. 1) could be paralleled to that of St. Matthew's (Netzer, 1994, p.98). King David is certainly a biblical image anyone would associate with power and authority. Not only is he the King of the Israelites; he is also a giant killer and, most importantly, 'an ancestor and […] a type of Christ' (Ryken, et al., 1998, p. 195). King David's kingship appears to be further represented by the imperial arch. Even though the presence

of such arch is typical of the Mediterranean tradition (Brown, 1991, p. 198), it is of relevance to notice that the pillars supporting it are basically made up of knotwork. This is by no means to be understood as a coincidence. The interlace pattern could have been used in isolation as is the case of the oriental-style plant motifs. The importance of combining Romanizing with local styles to signal power and status in manuscripts is indeed acknowledged by Brown (2011, p. 103). The power pillars have as the foundations of the arch is very graphical on one level but on another also very evocative of Christ's promise to make faithful Christians 'a pillar in the temple of God' (Ryken, et al. 1998, p. 646).

The use of interlace patterns sending a similar message can also be seen in the opening of St. Luke's Gospel in the Royal Bible (fig. 10). Here, a conjugation of imperial power is achieved by a number of elements, such as 'a spacious arcade reminiscent of Caroligian Court School works […], Christ Pantocrator (or the evangelist in his human guise)' (Brown, 1991, p. 217). In this scene interlace can also be appreciated as a support and additional element of the power the image displays.


Figure 10. The Royal Bible: Decorated opening of St. Luke's Gospel, Royal MS I E. Vi, f.43.Extracted from: *The making of England* (p. 218), by J. Backhouse & L. Webster (eds.), 1991, London.

A further illustration of how interlace patterns were used to connote power is exhibited in the decorated opening of St. John's Gospel within the Barberini Gospels (fig. 8). Close attention to the design of knot work of the Miniature of St. Matthew in the Codex Aureus (fig.2) directly connects it with the Opening of Saint John's Gospel. Apart from being similar in terms of the pigment applied, they also bear a similarity in the way the pattern is displayed as regards its shape and

rhythm. The interlace in this particular case is used to exalt not a concrete tangible object, but words. This is of much relevance given that Saint John is strongly connected with words, being not only acknowledged as the author of his own Gospel but also of the Apocalypse. The intention of the artist behind the interlacing pattern becomes clearer when we read the Saint's decorated words: *In principio erat verbum et verbum eratapum apud? Deum et verbum erat Deus* (In the beginning there was the word and the word was with God, and the word was God). If we are to follow Saint John's words, very much as probably the artist of this opening did, then it becomes evident that the motif is in no way a mere decoration. It seems as if the artist shared with us his belief that the series of interlacing patterns are parts of words, and as such, of God. Needless to say, God is almighty and he is at the top of the pyramid in the religious belief system of Christianity. There seems to be no other way in which the interlacing pattern could be more elevated and associated with an image of power and authority. As has been shown, the interlacing pattern acts as a fundamental element in the construction of powerful images in manuscripts.

One of the many impressive aspects of Southumbrian manuscript art can be seen in the use of masks. Although masks are quite peculiar and not abundant in manuscripts of the age, in the case of Southumbrian manuscript art, there seems to be enough evidence to acknowledge them as an element of identity and of power to express such identity. In Hodder's terms thiswould be 'an expression of resistance' to the status quo (Hodder, p.395). These masks, which 'bring the pages […] to life' (Karkov, 2009, p. 212), appear for instance in some folios of the Royal Bible (figs. 11 & 12) and the Book of Cerne (fig. 13). What is interesting about these masks is their plasticity. Seemingly it was possible for them to be used in a variety of ways and they could be adapted to different patterns. The Royal Bible features them as part of the classical architectural representation (fig. 11), together with Mercian animal art and in combination with vine scrollwork (fig. 12). In the case of the Book of Cerne (fig. 14) we see again how masks are combined with the architectural representation of the arch fusing the continental classical with the local, but with a peculiar interlace pattern as well.
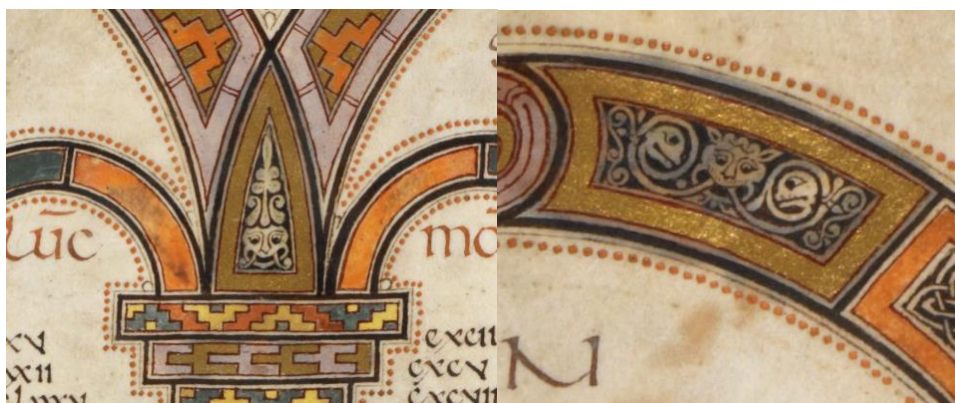
Figures 11 & 12. Details of the Royal Bible, 9th c., Royal MS I E.vi, fol.4v, British Library, London. Retrieved June 3rd 2018 from: http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=royal_ms_1_e_vi_fs001ar
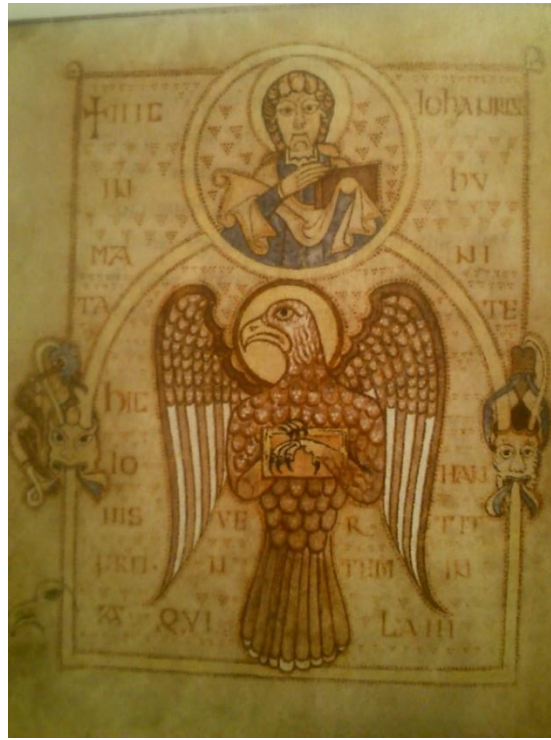
Figure 13. The Book of Cerne, 9th c. MS Ll. 1. 10, fol. 31v, University Library, Cambridge. Extracted from *The book of Cerne: Prayer, patronage and power in ninth-century England* (p. 190), by M.P. Brown, 1996, London: The British Library.

The origin of these masks seems to be obscure, so scholars differ on this topic. Some of them (Budny, 1985) argue that this inspiration may have come from Charlemagne's court. While others (Brown, 1996, p. 128) offer various possible origins for this pattern including insular sources, the Mediterranean and Egypt. Even though the origin remains unknown, it is true that these masks remind us of the use of masks in Early Anglo-Saxon art (fig. 14). What we may be witnessing in the development of these masks is a new accomplishment of forms already well established in the insular culture. A further important aspect of the use of masks is that it may have been an expression of identity and power during the time of production, but also, these masks seem to have been a source of inspiration for later generations that understood this powerful vocabulary. A look at the Ramsey Psalter (fig. 15) from the 11th century displays a combination of elements that must have been inspired in powerful and influential works like the Royal Bible and the Book of Cerne among others. This becomes evident in the use of the interlacing pattern and of a head mask of similar basic characteristics as the ones discussed above. Although the use of masks was not extensive to all of the Southumbrian manuscripts that survived, it seems reasonable to understand them as a powerful expression of an identity that may also have been a source of later inspiration.

Figure 14. Chessel Down brooch. 6th c., 1867,0729.5, British Museum, London. Retrieved May 10th 2018 from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Isle_of_Wight_square-headed_brooch.jpg38

Figure 15. The Ramsey Psalter: detail of decorated initial B. 11thc., Harley MS 2904, fol. 4v, British Library, London. Retrieved March 10th 2018 from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Ramsey_Psalter,_BL_Harley_Ms_2904,_Initial_B,_folio_4.jpg

Of special interest in the composition of an image reflecting power in manuscripts is how many of them seemed to be connected to metalwork. The art of illumination became a common practice in Europe throughout time. However, different peoples at different times chose to resort

to the art of illumination in different ways (Bradley, 1905). The Anglo-Saxons welcomed and favored the use of gold in manuscripts. Although it is out of question that gold constitutes a symbol of power and wealth in itself, Anglo-Saxon 'pleasure in gold did not simply spring from knowledge of its costliness' (Dodwell, 1982, p.33). The Anglo-Saxons seemed to be particularly interested in the effects of brightness and shadow that gold managed to create. Such interest emerges in different sources, not just illuminated manuscripts. In *Beowulf*, forinstance 'a sword is poetically described as a battle light (beadoleoma, l. 1523)' (Dodwell, 1982, p. 33.). In the case of Southern England, there seems to have been a particular interest in gilding (Brown, 2011, p.149). Gilding occupies a central place, for example in the Stockholm Codex Aureus.

However, Anglo-Saxon taste does not seem to be confined to the element of gold. It is apparent that appreciation of metalwork in general must have been a characteristic of Anglo-Saxon taste. Following this line of thought, it seems logical that the Anglo-Saxons should aim to produce manuscripts reminiscent of metalwork in order to make them look more powerful and majestic. It is evident that the technique of illumination suited this aim perfectly. Furthermore, the connection with metalwork could be emphasized by the use of dots, which consists of an application of pigment surrounding letters or letter frames. This technique, in both its patterns, can be well seen in the Stockholm Codex Aurus, and in the unfinished Codex Bigotianius which was meant 'to shine with gold leaf' (Brown, 1992, p. 201). As Calkings (1979, p. 216) explains thanks to words under this pattern, manuscripts become artifacts of metalwork, for the way in which the light is captured, enhancing a three dimensional quality. This resource provides the piece of art with a sense of power that takes us back to Rome. Parallels between the use of dots in the Book of Cerne (fig. 13), the Barberini Gospels (fig. 8) and elite metalwork of the ancient Romans are evident (fig. 16). The evocation of *romanitas*on the part of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms was frequent since their origins (Archibald, et al., 1997, pp. 210-211).

Figure 16. Gilt silver helmet of a Roman officer. 4th c, k 1911/4.15, Dutch National Museum of Antiquity, Deurne. Retrieved April 6th 2018 from https://www.rmo.nl/collectie/topstukken/verguld-zilveren-ruiterhelm-peelhelm/

The connection between manuscript and metalwork production was so strong that in fact there seems to be enough evidence to assert that at least some of the insular monks were skilled metalworkers too (Brown, 2011, p.143). It is worth noting that during the times of the Mercian ascendency the supplies of gold were in decline (Webster, 2012, p. 128). On the one hand, this helps understand the value that using gold implied during these times. On the other, this information sheds some light on the choice of decorative patterns. If we are to follow the idea that manuscript decoration of the time was strongly connected with metalwork (Brown, 1996, p.124), it seems reasonable to think that artists at the time would have attempted to express this connection even if gold was not available to them. To such purpose the use of dots seems to have been particularly useful. Although most certainly the effect of the use of red dots was barely comparable to that of golden dots, it is fascinating to see how artists coped with the lack (or limited availability) of gold and still managed to create a three dimensional quality in manuscripts, making them reminiscent of metalwork. The Strickland Brooch (fig. 17) constitutes a good example of how dots were used in patterns. These appear to be connected to the use of dots in the book of Cerne (fig. 13) in the creation of frames. Otherexamples displaying the same pattern include the Royal Bible (fig. 4) and the Barberini Gospels (fig. 8). Seemingly, the connection between manuscripts and metalwork enhanced by the use of gold and dots could be acknowledged to constitute an element of great importance in the overall construction of a manuscript as a powerful piece of art.

Figure 13. Strickland Brooch. 9th c., M&LA 1949, 7-2, I, British Museum, London. Retrieved March 20th 2018 from https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_image_gallery.aspx?partid=1&assetid=80685001&objectid=94633

Conclusion

Evidently the production of manuscripts implied an act of power in medieval Europe, for books were the result of costly work and knowledge. The tradition of manuscript production –and most importantly- decoration was not only welcomed among the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms but also

vastly developed. In its variety of form and ornament, the corpus of manuscript production south of the Humber in the 8th and 9th centuries is remarkable for its homogeneity in style and motifs. This paper proposes that such consistency was manifested along two major lines which share an intimate connection with power and legitimacy.

The first one echoed continental Europe by making reference to imperial styles of Antiquity, as a source of authority and legitimacy. This is reflected in the use of classical motifs such as heavy figures, circular arch bridges and monumental architecture. The use of capital uncial in manuscripts is also to be read along this line. Undoubtedly this antique component constituted an element of importance in the tradition of manuscript production and decoration, for its unequivocal association –in terms of power- with continental Europe and, ultimately, Rome.

A second line of development can be traced in the variety of Hiberno-Saxontraditions revived through the works hereby dealt with. This can be seen, for instance, in the development of interwoven Germanic animals and the interlace pattern. These were many times fused with Christian elements and symbols, creating a formidable effect in the union of different longstanding traditions. Of particular interest is the use of masks in manuscripts, which evokes early Anglo-Saxon metalwork. Further connections between metalwork and manuscripts can be seen in the palette of colors used, as well as in the application of dots in order to enhance the viewer in a three-dimensional effect.

Both lines of development are reflected in different degrees from piece to piece. This paper has shown that the Southumbrian kingdoms were in contact with continental traditions and welcomed them, while at the same time adjusting them in order to express their own identity and power. As a result, the appropriation of continental motifs stands hand in hand with a local style, which goes to prove that the extant corpus is not the result of mere adoption, but rather a conscious adaptation that reflected a prevailing Hiberno-Saxon culture.

Bibliography

Andersen, K. (2007). *The Geometry of an Art: the history of the mathematical theory of perspective from Alberti to Monge.* Aarhus: Springer.

Archibald, M. *et al* (1997). *Heirs of Rome: the shaping of Britain AD 400-900.* In L. Webster & M. Brown (Eds.), *The transformation of the Roman world* (pp. 208-212). California: University of California Press.

Bradley, J. W. (1905). *Illuminated manuscripts.* Retrieved from http://gutenberg.org

Brown, M. P. (1991). *The Mercian Supremacy: Manuscripts.* In L. Webster & J. Backhouse (Eds.), *The making of England: Anglo-Saxon art and culture AD 600-900* (pp. 195-220). London: British Museum Press.

Brown, M. P. (1996). *The Book of Cerne: prayer, patronage and power in ninth century England.* London: The British Library.

Brown, M. P. (2011a). *The Lindisfarne gospels and the early medieval world.* London: The British Library.

Brown, M. P. (2011b). *Southumbrian book culture.* In C. Hourihane (Ed.), *Insular and Anglo-Saxon: Art and thought in the Early Medieval period.* New Hampshire: Princeton University Press.

Budny, M. O. (1985). *London, British Library MS. Royal 1.E.VI: the anatomy of an Anglo-Saxon Bible fragment.* Unpublished Ph.D. thesis: University of London.

Calkings, R. G. (1979). *Monuments of medieval art.* New York: Cornell University Press.

Clarke, C. A. (2012). *Writing power in Anglo-Saxon England: texts, hierarchies, economies.* Cambridge: D. S. Brewer.

Coatsworth, E. & Pinder, M. (2002). *The art of the Anglo-Saxon Goldsmith: Fine metalwork in Anglo-Saxon England: its practice and practitioners.* Oxford: The Boydell Press.

Dodwell, C. R. (1982). *Anglo-Saxon art: a new perspective.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Henderson, G. (1977). *Early medieval (second edition).* New York: Penguin books.

Monk, C. J. (2014). *Behind the curtains, under the covers, inside the tent: textile items and narrative strategies in Anglo-Saxon Old Testament art.* In R. Netherton & G. R. Owen-Crocker (Eds.) *Medieval clothing and textiles* (pp. 1-24). Woodbrige: The Boydell Press.

Netzer, N. (1994). *Cultural interplay in the eighth century: the Trier Gospels and the making of a scriptorium at Eternach.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Karkov, C. E. (2009). *Manuscript art.* In G. R. Owen-Crocker (Ed.), *Working with Anglo-Saxon manuscripts* (pp. 205-251). Exeter: University of Exeter Press.

Ryken, L., Wilhoit, J. C. & Longman III, T. (Eds.). (1998). *Dictionary of biblical imagery.* USA: InterVarsity Press.

Webster, L. (2012). *Anglo-Saxon art: A new history.* New York: Conrnell University Press.