Textiles, Gender, and Race in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Britain

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I, Millie Morag Horton-Insch, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

ABSTRACT

This thesis undertakes a detailed art historical analysis of some of the small corpus of textiles which survive from eleventh- and twelfth-century Britain, objects which have been significantly overlooked in previous scholarship. In doing so it has sought to demonstrate what textiles can *do* for the study of early medieval art, eleventh- and twelfth-century Britain more broadly, and art histories of textile objects. Textiles, it argues, are productive objects of study precisely because of those reasons for which they have historically been marginalized: their poor survival prompting more creative interpretations of the limited corpus, the assumption that they were the made by English women enabling the study of these objects to contextualise that intersectional identity pointed to by contemporaneous written sources, and their failure to conform to stylistic taxonomies contributing to broader efforts at reconfiguring those categories which have proved problematic in early medieval studies (namely: Anglo-Saxon).

This thesis does not seek to map gendered or racialised identities onto extant textiles, but instead describes how these objects may act as useful critical tools in assessing those sources which implicate them, and the intersectional gendered and racialised identity of the English woman with which they were associated, in the construction of that 'imagined' post-conquest England. Demonstrated to be fundamentally dislocatory objects, this thesis will propose that textiles resist the fixity of stylistic taxonomies, compress time and space, and implicate the bodies of wearers and viewers within phenomenological understandings of the material world. Textiles will therefore be shown to be an appropriate material through which to acknowledge the complexities of shifting categories of identity in conquest-era Britain and how they have subsequently been motivated in modern and contemporary identitarian politics.

IMPACT STATEMENT

This thesis has sought to redress the marginalisation of textiles from within art historical studies of early medieval Britain, by using textiles as the starting point for cross-media comparative visual analysis which references modern and contemporary art historical theories. In doing so, this thesis has additionally problematised many of the approaches and methods that have characterised art historical studies of this period and demonstrated the potential for art history to make a substantive contribution to the debates within the field of early medieval studies concerning taxonomies and terminology.

Parts of this thesis and the research which contributed to it were presented at conferences (both live and virtual) in the United Kingdom and Europe, including: the International Medieval Congress Leeds, the bi-annual conference for the International Society for the Study of Early Medieval England (formerly the International Society of Anglo-Saxonists), the Gender and Medieval Studies Conference, the Anglo-Norman Studies Battle Conference, the British Archaeological Association Postgraduate Conference, the Cambridge Graduate Early Medieval Seminar, and various forums in University College London. I have therefore benefitted from the input of audiences from a variety of fields: art history, early medieval studies, textiles studies, Anglo-Norman studies. This thesis makes an intervention in them all, demonstrates how they may enrich each other, and argues an art historical study of textiles can transcend these disciplinary boundaries.

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INTRODUCTION

Glued to a fabric board held beneath a large glass frame, sitting in a drawer in the library crammed underneath the eaves of Worcester Cathedral, lie the fragmentary remains of an eleventh-century Bishop's Stole (figure 1). These fragments fit awkwardly within the historiography of early medieval art history. They are too late to be included in studies of 'Anglo-Saxon' art, but too early to be resolutely 'Romanesque'. They represent an instance of that oft-overlooked medium: textile, assumed to have been made by women, denigrated as craft. They are in too poor a condition to photograph, or even to clearly make out their embroidered designs. They do not retain the material impressiveness of their glittering tenth-century counterparts, the Cuthbert Vestments (fig. 2). Nor have they attained the status of cultural epic awarded to the contemporaneous Bayeux Tapestry (fig. 3). However, if the Worcester vestments do not fit within the frames of existing historiography, they make a strong case for rethinking the frameworks within which early medieval art has been placed. An art historical reassessment of eleventh- and twelfth-century textiles therefore possesses the potential to disrupt some of the existing approaches to early medieval art in addition to exploring new means of understanding this material.

This thesis is not intended to act as a survey of extant eleventh- and twelfth-century textiles. It is not an art historical study of the full corpus of extant works, though it does use art historical methods to reassess the objects discussed. This thesis does not speculate on the contextual details of these works (the identity of their makers, the site of their production, the date at which they were made). Instead, rather than using written sources to contextualise textiles, it extends the conclusions drawn from an art historical study of textiles to contextualise contemporaneous written sources. The thesis thus has two aims.

The first aim of this thesis is to disrupt the taxonomical approaches which have defined much of the previous study of early medieval art. This thesis will problematise the

very categories, methodologies, and periodisations which have thus far rendered these objects marginal in studies of this period. Such an approach will argue for the relevance of these objects in some of the debates currently shaping the field of early medieval studies.

The second aim of this thesis is thus to demonstrate how the application of art historical theories to a study which centres textiles can demonstrate alternative means of understanding these objects. Approaches which extend beyond the application of taxonomical categories will demonstrate how textiles worked as phenomenological actors, mediatory agents, and embodiments of the religious and material paradoxes which are otherwise impossible to visualise. Furthermore, since much contemporary art historical theory is composed in reference to modern and contemporary works, this thesis will extend these methods to demonstrate how the discipline of art history may be enriched by early medieval works and vice versa.

Assembling a bibliography for a study of eleventh- and twelfth-century textiles is challenging, as the study of eleventh- or twelfth-century textiles does not exist as an established field of study, though there exist several relevant historiographies: studies of the Norman conquest, of Anglo-Saxon and Romanesque art and culture, gender studies, critical race studies, post-colonial studies, textile histories and so on. Each offer frameworks which have been or could be productively applied to the study of early medieval textiles. In places these fields and frameworks overlap or intersect. As textile works have never formed the subject of their own dedicated study, however, their potential to enrich each field and to draw productive connections between developments within each has not been fully realised. An examination of these historiographies within this introduction will summarise both the previous approaches which have defined current understanding of eleventh- and twelfth-century textiles, and the areas where a more substantive engagement with textiles may prove

constructive in furthering an understanding of these objects and the context in which they were produced.

TRAVERSING THE CONQUEST

The art historical significance of textiles in this period has been obscured by historiographical understandings of the 1066 Norman conquest. Indeed, art historical studies of early medieval British art are typically accounts of either 'Anglo-Saxon' or 'Norman Romanesque' art, so much so that 1066 forms either the end or beginning these surveys, often reflected in the titles of the works themselves: *Anglo-Saxon Art: From the Seventh Century to the Norman Conquest*; *English Romanesque Art 1066-1200*; or, *A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles Volume Three: Romanesque Manuscripts 1066-1190*.[1] Even in recent studies, attempts to complicate the historic divisions between 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'Romanesque' art have, as in those studies which preceded them, been limited to single chapters which either conclude accounts of 'Anglo-Saxon' art or introduce those of 'Romanesque' art.[2] Though attempts have been made by some scholars to explicitly problematise this division, the

[1] David Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Art: From the Seventh Century to the Norman Conquest* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1984); George Zarnecki, Janet Holt and Tristram Holland, eds, *English Romanesque Art 1066-1200* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1984); Claus Michael Kauffmann, *A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles, Volume Three: Romanesque Manuscripts 1066-1190* (London: Harvey Miller, 1975); Leslie Webster, *Anglo-Saxon Art: A New History* (London: British Museum 2012), which in its introduction defines the Anglo-Saxon period as stretching from the arrival of the earliest settlers in the fifth century, and concludes 'at least in a political sense' in 1066, 7.

[2] Charles Reginald Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art: A New Perspective* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982), has a concluding chapter entitled 'Anglo-Saxon Art and the Norman Conquest' (216-234); David Wilson's *Anglo-Saxon Art: From the Seventh Century to the Norman Conquest* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1984), makes some brief closing remarks on 'The Effect of the Norman Conquest', 210-211; Eric Fernie, in the opening chapter of *The Architecture of Norman England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), has a brief passage describing 'The Western European Context from the Fourth Century to the Eleventh' which briefly describes 'England before the Conquest', 14-18; Webster, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, contains a short passage, 'The Norman Conquest and After', though the latest (and only post-conquest) work she includes in her 'new history' of Anglo-Saxon art is the Bayeux Tapestry, 227-231; even in the most recent monographic study of Insular art – Michelle P. Brown, *Art of the Islands: Celtic, Pictish, Anglo-Saxon and Viking Visual Culture, c. 450-1050* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2016) – art made after 1050 is addressed only briefly in the conclusion of the final chapter, 'Art on the Eve of the Conquest', and the opening of the epilogue 'Enduring Influences', which addresses the use of early medieval Insular motifs from the Norman conquest until the present day, 203-210.

brevity of their address in these single chapters has typically only allowed for these issues to be referenced in a tangential manner, rather than forming the focus of any singular study.[3]

Evidence for the continued admiration for, and patronage of, textiles made by English women throughout the period of the conquest therefore leave these objects at odds with a narrative of cultural disruption. The chronicler William of Poitiers, for instance, singled out textile work as an art made by women within his eleventh-century *Gesta Guillelmi*, included in the description of a post-conquest victory parade in Normandy that culminated in a celebratory Easter service at the Abbey of the Holy Trinity in Féchamp: 'Anglicae nationis feminae multum acu et auri textura egregie, uiri in omni ualent artificio' ('The women of the English people are very skilled in needlework and weaving gold thread, and the men are outstanding in craftsmanship of all kinds').[4] This description of the victory parade comes towards the end of William of Poitiers' extant drafting, at a crucial moment after the conquest in which William the Conqueror is newly the ruler of two lands. In this, textiles appear to be a significant element in consolidating his position as a dual ruler: he is greeted with affection upon his return to Normandy and repays the affection of his Norman subjects with gifts of bullion and vestments (those made by the 'Anglicae nationis feminae').

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[3] Catherine Karkov, *The Art of Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2011), has a concluding chapter entitled 'Art and the Conquest', which is largely concerned with pre-conquest Viking incursions into Anglo-Saxon England, but which additionally explores the nature of English identity after the Norman conquest through the life and patronage of Queen Margaret (an exiled descendent of the House of Wessex who married king Malcolm II of Scotland) and 'postcolonial' efforts to link post-conquest monastic communities to the origins of England, 285; Webster's discussion of 'The Norman Conquest and After' in *Anglo-Saxon Art*, argues that Anglo-Saxon art made a contribution to the Norman Romanesque, and survived as an 'enduring strand of the English artistic tradition', 231; Brown claimed that after the conquest 'English scriptoria did not have to retool in a Continental fashion, and even after the 'Norman land-grab' and the installation of Norman nobles and clerics in positions of power, 'styles of decoration and script that had evolved over the centuries lingered still' in the scriptoria, as a major contribution to the development of the Romanesque (see: Brown, *Art of the Islands*, 206-7).

[4] R.H.C. Davis and Marjorie Chibnall, ed. and trans., *The Gesta Gvillelmi of William of Poitiers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 176-7. William of Poitiers, it should be noted, is an 'elusive' character in the historical record, however, it can be securely stated that he was born in Normandy, was well-born and well-educated, acted as chaplain to William the Conqueror, and likely composed the bulk of writing for the *Gesta Guillelmi* after 1071 (see: Davis and Chibnall, Introduction to *Gesta Guillelmi*, xv-xvii). Though the *Gesta* was never finished, William of Poitiers' writings have been described as a book of memoirs, more akin to the recollections of a 'Victorian statesman' through which he sought to justify William the Conqueror's succession to the throne (see: Davis and Chibnall, Introduction to *Gesta Guillelmi*, xix-xx).

He is described as pleased with the loyalty of his new English subjects, and with his wife Queen Matilda's governance of them while he returned to Normandy. In attending the Easter service at the Abbey of the Holy Trinity in Féchamp on his return to Normandy, William of Poitiers described how William's Norman subjects looked favourably on the beauty of the English men and women who accompanied him, and on his clothes, which were 'intextra atque crostata auro' ('woven and encrusted with gold') and of such skill that 'auaeque antea uiderant uilia aestimauere' (they considered whatever they had seen before to be of little worth').[5] Textiles, specifically the kind of gold-work described by William of Poitiers as the work of English women, are thus heavily implicated within William the Conqueror's establishment of himself as a king of both Normandy and England: it was the means by which he exhibited the material resources offered by the people of England to his subjects in Normandy, and the means by which he displayed his admiration of Insular crafts to the people of England, weaving the two together through his rule of both. By William of Poitiers' account, textiles furnished the crucial moment post-conquest in which Normandy and England became a dual nation.

Such is the evidence for the continued patronage of embroidery in this period that it has been claimed that needlework was the art least affected by the conquest, and the fortunes of its producers ('Anglo-Saxon women') the least likely to suffer change.[6] Two English women are frequently cited as evidence of this phenomenon: the embroideress, Leogyth, who served at the royal court both before and after the conquest, and Ælfgyth, to whom land was granted by the Sheriff of Buckinghamshire, in exchange for her teaching his daughter gold embroidery, both recorded in the Domesday Book and noted as evidence that

[5] *The Gesta Gvillelmi of William of Poitiers*, 180-1.
[6] Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, 70-2.

'some parents were particularly anxious for their daughters to acquire the highly esteemed craft of gold-embroidery'.[7]

There is little room for the acknowledgement of such continuity in studies which begin or terminate in 1066, and the work of these individuals would resist the application of 'Saxon' or 'Norman' as taxonomical categories. Accordingly, textiles (most usually the Bayeux Tapestry) typically form a footnote in art historical studies or are mentioned only fleetingly in the final chapter of studies of Anglo-Saxon art, or the opening chapter of studies of Romanesque art, and are usually discussed in a tone that implies a great degree of exceptionality.[8] This thesis seeks to understand how an art historical understanding of this period may be reshaped if these objects are excavated from the footnotes to instead form the focus of study.

Such an approach reflects recent interdisciplinary efforts which have sought to develop more nuanced narratives of eleventh-century Britain and to challenge the hegemony of the Norman conquest as *the* defining cultural moment of the century. In particular, this approach echoes attempts to recognize 'the wholly interconnected, European and Scandinavian, nature of eleventh-century England' which developed as the result not of a single conquest but rather as a period of significant cultural change precipitated by a number of 'conquests' (including that of the Danish King Cnut in 1016) and to acknowledge what has been described as the 'fundamentally hybrid and multiple identity' to 'English politics, society and culture'.[9]

[7] Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, 70-2 (citing: *Domesday Book* I, 149; and see V.C.H. Bucks, I, 258).
[8] Webster, *Anglo-Saxon Art: A New History* contains a short passage, 'The Norman Conquest and After', though the latest (and only post-Conquest) work she includes in her 'new history' of Anglo-Saxon art is the Bayeux Tapestry, 227-231.
[9] Laura Ashe, 'Preface' in *Conquests in Eleventh-Century England: 1016, 1066*, ed. by Laura Ashe and Emily Joan Ward (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2020), v-vi, v.

In the study of material objects this hybridity and multiplicity has been described as 'ambivalence'.[10] This is an understanding consistent with recent interpretations of contemporaneous literary culture.[11] Though evidence for the admiration of textiles made by English individuals in the post-conquest period meant that this media was not subject to twelfth-century 'silencing' that the English language was, textiles' persistence (and likely persistent influence) within material culture means that they also may not be neatly mapped onto a singular moment of cultural fissure around 1066. 1066 and the Norman conquest has been identified as a central pillar within conceptions of the early medieval past that have since informed modern conceptions of England and Englishness.[12] Textiles, the cultural significance of which appear to have traversed this central pillar, therefore provide a material means of assessing both the establishment of 'England' and the historiographic hegemony of the Norman conquest as a defining moment in both modern and medieval conceptions of Englishness. Indeed, M.A. Michael's essay, 'Creating Cultural Identity: *Opus Anglicanum* and its Place in the History of English Medieval Art' (2017), entertained the idea that Englishness was articulated through textile production. In it, Michael argued that during their 'golden age' (c. 1200-1400), English textiles were participants in a wider European cultural moment 'at a time when an appreciation of cultural identity as a transnational phenomenon emerged'.[13] This thesis asks what of the period which immediately precedes this and what

[10] Catherine Karkov defines ambivalence within early medieval objects as those which are 'seemingly saying one thing but [are] open to multiple and often diametrically opposed readings' (see: Catherine Karkov, 'Conquest and Material Culture' in *Conquests in Eleventh-Century England: 1016, 1066*, ed. by Laura Ashe and Emily Joan Ward (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2020), 183-205, 205).

[11] Elaine Treharne has outlined an understanding of English vernacular texts which present English as a 'political, intellectual, religious, and ideological tool through the two conquests and beyond', one which was able to challenge and resist twelfth-century 'silencing' (see: Elaine Treharne, *Living Through Conquest: The Politics of Early English, 1020-1220* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), ix and 164).

[12] The literary historian Mary Rambaran-Olm identified 1066 as one of the most 'recognizable dates in English history, as it describes the beginning of a new political, linguistic, and cultural era in England', which marked 'a pivotal point in England's Imperial narrative story' and is therefore 'useful as an orientation point for examining how England was established, re-examining the terminology used to describe the early English period, and reflecting on how the era was reimagined for the political agenda of justifying colonialism' (see: Mary Rambaran-Olm, 'On or About 1066', in *The Routledge Companion to Politics and Literature in English*, ed. by Matthew Stratton (Abingdon: Routledge, 2023), 161-171, 161-2).

[13] M.A. Michael, 'Creating Cultural Identity: *Opus Anglicanum* and its Place in the History of English Medieval Art', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 170 (2017), 30-60, 30.

may a better understanding of textiles do to further contextualise those sources which describe the 'English' as a cultural phenomenon in the critical moment of conquest.

The application of postcolonial theory to studies of eleventh-century England may not be considered to have disrupted the periodisation which has entrenched 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'Norman' as visual categories. However, it has significantly enriched understandings of this period to provide a more complex and critical assessment of the cultural landscape upon which the conquest occurred. Catherine Karkov, in the essay 'Postcolonial' (2012), demonstrated the possibilities within applying postcolonial theory to early medieval visual material.[14] Karkov is far from the only scholar working on early medieval materials to engage with postcolonial discourses. However, her inclusion of these discourses within visual analysis of early medieval objects holds significant relevance for a study of eleventh- and twelfth-century textiles.[15] The continuity in their production suggests that textiles made by, or associated with, English women may have acted, if not quite as a 'postcolonial monument', or as documents upon which moments of conquest and colonisation may be mapped (though this would be an appropriate reading of the Bayeux Tapestry), then as objects entangled within the postcolonial cultural hybridity of eleventh-century Britain. Homi Bhabha described how 'performance of differences' were essential in the authorisation of the 'cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation'.[16] William of Poitiers' account of the work of 'the women of the English people' in Féchamp after the

[14] Drawing on the work of postcolonial theorists Bruce Holsinger, Bill Ashcroft, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Karkov defined postcolonialism as 'the performance of a relationship between a colonizing power and a colonized subject that can either take the form of or be constructed and played out through language, territory, political and social institutions, and literary and material culture' (see: Catherine Karkov, 'Postcolonial' in *A Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Studies*, ed. by Jacqueline Stodnick and Renée R. Trilling (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 149-164, 149 (citing: Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffen, eds, *The Postcolonial Studies Reader* (London: Routledge, 2006); Bruce W. Holsinger, 'Medieval Studies, Postcolonial Studies, and the Genealogies of Critique', *Speculum*, 77 (2002), 1195-1227; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999))).

[15] Karkov traced the histories of colonialism in an analysis of the 'Anglo-Saxon Nunburnholme Cross' which charts the perceived work of generations of sculptors to produce 'a truly postcolonial monument' (see: Karkov, 'Postcolonial', 150).

[16] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 2004), 3.

conquest records textiles within one such performance: they are exhibited to the people of Normandy as evidence of the value of England, its people, and its material culture so that William the Conqueror's original Norman subjects may understand the achievement of what their king has acquired: a material wealth in which they now share.

APPROACHING *OPUS ANGLICANUM*

Textiles' resistance to the narrative of fissure between the 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'Romanesque' styles has undoubtedly contributed to their marginalisation in studies of early medieval art. However, this marginalisation has additionally been compounded by the neglect of textiles in art historical studies more broadly. Though medieval textiles have been the subject of some scholarly attention, detailed studies of early medieval textiles have largely been confined to singular studies of embroidery, emerging first from the interest in medieval embroidery galvanised by the Arts & Crafts movement in the nineteenth century, and renewing at each major exhibition of embroidery in subsequent years.

The most complete and authoritative study and catalogue remains *English Medieval Embroidery* (1938), the author, Grace Christie, herself an embroiderer, who was trained at the Regent Street Central School of Arts and Crafts during the period in which May Morris directed the school's embroidery classes.[17] Two exhibitions of English medieval embroideries, both entitled *Opus Anglicanum* and held at the Victoria & Albert Museum (the first in 1963, the second in 2016/17), precipitated the production of exhibition catalogues both of which acknowledge a considerable debt to Christie's original catalogue and contain

[17] Anna Grace Ida Christie, *English Medieval Embroidery* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938); Elizabeth Coatsworth, "'A formidable undertaking": Mrs. A.G.I. Christie and English Medieval Embroidery', in *Medieval Clothing and Textiles*, vol. 10, ed. by Robin Netherton and Gale R. Owen-Crocker (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2014), 165-194.

a large volume of the extant medieval embroideries produced in England.[18] Alexandra Lester-Makin's study, *The Lost Art of the Anglo-Saxon World* (2019), lists forty-three embroideries extant from early medieval Britain and Ireland, including objects which date from 450 to 1100.[19] This interdisciplinary study referenced documentary sources and associated archaeological evidence to contextualise its subjects and to understand their significance within the material culture of the early medieval period, and Lester-Makin, like Christie, is a scholar with a background in professional embroidery.[20] An art historical assessment of these objects has not yet been undertaken.

Elizabeth Coatsworth and Gale Owen-Crocker have written extensively on the broader category of medieval textiles.[21] Gale Owen-Crocker's particularly numerous collected essays on the subject of the Bayeux Tapestry evidence that Bayeux Tapestry studies arguably exist as a field in their own right, the Tapestry representing as it does such an extraordinary survival.[22] Far from promoting the study of textiles in this period more broadly, the Tapestry's exceptionality has afforded it something of a celebrity status in art historical

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[18] Clare Browne, Glyn Davies, Michael A. Michael and Michela Zöschg, eds, *English Medieval Embroidery: Opus Anglicanum* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 111; Donald King, *Opus Anglicanum: English Medieval Embroidery* (London: Arts Council, 1963), i.

[19] Alexandra Lester-Makin, *The Lost Art of the Anglo-Saxon World: The Sacred and Secular Power of Embroidery* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2019).

[20] Lester-Makin, *The Lost Art of the Anglo-Saxon World.*

[21] Perhaps their two most significant co-authored works on the subject of medieval textiles are a comprehensive and interdisciplinary collection of articles on textiles from across a thousand years of British history (see: Elizabeth Coatsworth and Gale Owen-Crocker, *Encyclopaedia of Medieval Dress and Textiles of the British Isles c. 450-1450* (Leiden: Brill, 2011)) and a publication of one hundred medieval garments which they found interesting, with a particular focus on those which had been repaired or recycled, including at least two works made in twelfth-century Britain (the Salzburg and Becket mitres) (see: Elizabeth Coatsworth and Gale Owen-Crocker, *Clothing the Past: Surviving Garments from Early Medieval to Early Modern Western Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), xi). Though these both take a long view of the medieval period Owen-Crocker's collection of essays on the Bayeux Tapestry (2012) considered how this work may enrich an understanding of the eleventh century more specifically, investigating it as a source which may inform on subjects as diverse as early medieval dress, birds, 'animal-headed posts', and gesture, in addition to reflecting on the objects' seams, stitches, inscriptions, and borders to consider how this may inform modern viewers on the makers of the Tapestry, in addition to identifying both a 'house style' and individual hands (see: Gale Owen-Crocker, *The Bayeux Tapestry: Collected Papers* (Farnham: Ashgate Variorum, 2012), xiv).

[22] Frank Stenton, ed., *The Bayeux Tapestry: A Comprehsive Survey* (London: Phaidon Press, 1957); David M. Wilson, *The Bayeux Tapestry* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1985); Lucien Musset, *The Bayeux Tapestry*, trans. by Richard Rex (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2005); Martin Kennedy Foys, Karen Eileen Overby and Dan Terkla, eds, *The Bayeux Tapestry: New Interpretations* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009); Michael J. Lewis, Gale R. Owen-Crocker and Dan Terkla, eds, *The Bayeux Tapestry: New Approaches. Proceedings of a Conference at the British Museum* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2011).

studies of the medieval past. Its privileged position has seemingly not advocated for the inclusion of other early medieval textiles; rather, it has eclipsed any other extant works and is considered a miraculous anomaly in an otherwise murky period. Similarly, its absence from both Christie's 1938 catalogue and subsequent exhibitions at the Victoria & Albert Museum (and by extension their catalogues) has widened this gulf still more, further isolating it from contemporaneous textiles and thereby reducing any sense of urgency that this category of media needs to be more substantively included in the art historical record or that conclusions drawn from studies of the Bayeux Tapestry may be extended to include other surviving textile works to which it may have been related, in order to construct a more thorough art historical understanding of these objects.

The broader marginalisation of embroidery in art histories has been a significant subject within feminist scholarship. Rozsika Parker's *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making on the Feminine*, published first in 1984 and precipitated by second wave feminism, argued that enduring associations between embroidery and femininity were a central tenet to women's exclusion from art history.[23] That early medieval textiles have suffered such denigration and categorisation as a lesser art was made explicit in twentieth-century studies of early medieval art in which it is included as a 'Minor Art'.[24] Though later scholars have been less explicit, the continued failure to include textiles more substantively within the art historical record points to its lingering categorisation as such a lesser craft. That this denigration was likely also related to associations between textile production and femininity may also be assumed – an association which will be more fully addressed later in this introduction.

[23] Parker described situation thus: 'When women paint, their work is categorised as homogenously feminine – but it is acknowledged to be art. When women embroider, it is seen not as art, but entirely as the expression of femininity. And, crucially, it is categorised as craft' (see: Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 4-5).
[24] David Talbot-Rice, *The Oxford English History of Art 871-1100* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952).

Recognition of the brilliance of *Opus Anglicanum* works has afforded medieval embroideries some attention within scholarship and museum exhibitions, which has gone some way to correcting their marginalisation. However, it has arguably also contributed to the demarcation of textile forms within the existing historiography. The studies cited thus far have largely made medieval *embroideries* their subject, thereby excluding other textile works and further marginalising them within the art historical studies of this period. Embroideries and weavings have rarely been considered together and more often form the subject of discrete studies. In addition to the studies of embroidery already summarised, Nancy Spies' survey of tablet-woven bands, *Ecclesiastical Pomp and Aristocratic Circumstance: A Thousand Years of Brocaded Tabletwoven Bands* (2000), catalogued extant tablet-woven bands from the sixth to sixteenth centuries and summarised these objects' inclusions in contemporaneous literary and visual sources.[25] This disconnect between weavings and embroidery has likely compounded the exclusion of textiles from art historical studies more broadly: they appear as specialist objects unrelated even to each other. This has perhaps been further complicated by the imprecision that exists across translations of textile terms in early medieval literary sources.

The field of textile studies has adopted a principally interdisciplinary approach, including both archaeological assessments of their physical state and a consideration of the historical context in which they were produced. There has been suggestion of alternative approaches, namely by Elizabeth Coatsworth who, in her survey of 'History of Anglo-Saxon Embroidery' (2005) included comparative study between textiles and works of other media which share 'iconography and style', examine 'the development of embroidery technique', and consider how embroidery had developed a sociological 'function' in the expression of

[25] Nancy Spies, *Ecclesiastical Pomp and Aristocratic Circumstance: One Thousand Years of Brocaded Tabletwoven Bands* (Jarrettsville: Arelate Studio, 2000).

wealth and status.[26] However, Coatsworth's primary focus on textiles (and often just embroideries) in 'Anglo-Saxon' England precludes an extension of her practice into the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The volume, *Dressing the Part: Textiles as Propaganda in the Middle Ages* (2014), edited by Kate Dimitrova and Margaret Goehring contains studies whose subject range in date and geographical origins to collectively explore how medieval textiles were 'used and invoked' in the construction of power, moving beyond their literal use to consider how textiles mediated the body and space, experience, identity, politics, and ritual.[27]

This thesis pursues some of these ideas, considering the cultural 'function' which co-existed with their practical function and reconsidering how 'style' as a category has informed understandings of textiles and other contemporaneous works.[28] However, it is a rare study which includes textiles substantively within a trans-medial visual analysis.[29] Within the study of early medieval textiles there therefore remains considerable potential for such an approach to be extended further to gain a more complete art historical understanding of both textiles and contemporaneous works of other media in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

This thesis makes comparisons with works of other media where they may further elucidate how textiles were understood in this period, to provide material and conceptual context to the textiles which are its primary subject. The centrality of textiles within material culture at this time were such that I could have drawn infinite comparisons between these embroideries, weavings, and contemporaneous works in alternative material. I have therefore included that comparative material which is the most generative in advancing the dual aims

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[26] Elizabeth Coatsworth, 'Stitches in Time: Establishing a History of Anglo-Saxon Embroidery', in *Medieval Clothing and Textiles* 1 (2005), ed. by Robin Netherton and Gale R. Owen-Crocker, 1-27, 24-5.
[27] Kate Dimitrova and Margaret Goehring, eds., *Dressing the Part: Textiles as Propaganda in the Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 7.
[28] However, Coatsworth's primary focus on textiles (and often just embroideries) in 'Anglo-Saxon' England (perhaps informed by the historiographical boundaries drawn between 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'Norman' arts summarised above) precludes an extension of her practice into the eleventh and twelfth centuries.
[29] See: Elizabeth Coatsworth, 'Design in the Past: Metalwork and Textile Influences on Pre-Conquest Sculpture in England' in *Aedificia nova: Studies in Honor of Rosemary Cramp*, ed. by Catherine E. Karkov and Helen Damico (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2008), 139-61, which represents a significant departure from the approaches to textiles in previous historiography which excluded textiles, viewing them as an isolated subject of study, or as derivative examples of visual phenomena which occurs in other media.

of the thesis: problematising the categories applied to these objects and demonstrating how they may be used as a critical tool to develop further approaches. I have sought across the chapters to reference comparative material which extends across media: the first chapter draws primarily from contemporaneous manuscripts to compare figural representation between embroideries and painted illuminations. Consequently, it is primarily concerned with those manuscripts, like the Liber Vitae (fig. 13), which are associated with the 'Winchester' school: manuscripts in which the figural imagery is most like that of contemporary textiles and has historically been associated with a broader taxonomy considered an expression of Englishness. The second chapter, which considers skeuomorphic references to textiles, draws greater comparison with wall paintings, with examples like those at St Botolph's in Hardham, Sussex (fig. 37) surviving as some of the most explicitly skeuomorphic representations of textiles in this period. The third chapter is primarily concerned with tablet-woven bands and thus draws comparison with a greater variety of media, to demonstrate how prominent bands of repeating pattern were within material culture at this time. In particular, this chapter references objects which, like the bands, use this motif to simultaneously demarcate boundaries and suggest a phenomenological capacity to transgress them also. This chapter consequently draws particular comparison with such mediatory objects as the Kilmichael-Glassary reliquary (fig. 92). The fourth chapter makes the most reference to stone sculpture (though works in other media are also included), as the three-dimensionality of these works allows for more sustained consideration of the physical and conceptual depth of textiles, particularly in their use of framing devices to create layered planes which encourage further phenomenological engagement: to imagine oneself *within* the objects. I therefore make particular comparison with fonts, such as that St Martin's font at Fincham, Norfolk (fig. 111), where arcaded framing is used in a fashion analogous to that of contemporaneous embroideries: to narrativize and situate the human body within its niches.

In addition to enriching an understanding of both the context and the art historical significance of early medieval textiles, such an approach also contributes to developments in contemporary textile studies. In the introduction to *Fray: Art + Textile Politics* (2017), Julia Bryan-Wilson offered a theory of textile as 'a transitive verb': 'textile politics is to *give texture* to politics, to refuse easy binaries, to acknowledge complications'.[30] Though the subject of Bryan-Wilson's study is contemporary textiles, extant embroideries and weavings from eleventh- and twelfth-century Britain, and the conditions around their production, similarly resist the application of easy binaries, notably the fissure between 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'Romanesque', pre- and post-conquest. A study of eleventh- and twelfth-century textiles thus has the potential not only to engage with contemporary theories surrounding textiles, but also to support and extend them considerably, beyond the bounds of the contemporary works which are usually their subject.

Some efforts have been made to bring historical textiles into studies of contemporary 'fiber art' of the kind which are the focus of Bryan-Wilson's study, in particular to consider textiles as a transformative site for 'identity construction'.[31] Though such studies still fail to substantively include medieval (and in particular *early* medieval) textiles, the notion that textiles may have a self-determining capacity for their makers surely has significant purchase to the study of textiles made around the period of the conquest.[32] An interpretation of the Bayeux Tapestry as an expression of trauma has, for instance, been suggested.[33] The

[30] Julia Bryan-Wilson, *Fray: Art + Textile Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 7.
[31] A 2021 collection of essays, *Stitching the Self: Identity and the Needle Arts*, edited by Johanna Amos and Lisa Binkley, sought to challenge the divisions which have caused textile objects to fall 'outside the scope of traditional art history, but by placing these works... on the same continuum as contemporary fiber art'. The essays within the volume address only textiles dating from 1850 to the present, the argument that needlework is 'transformative... a mechanism for exploration and identity construction... [in which] needlework provided a space for growth, (re)definition and salvation', and that through it 'individuals not only articulate facets of themselves, but alter their physical being, increasing skill and dexterity, they remake the self, as they allow the self to become manifest in the world' (see: Johanna Amos and Lisa Binkley, *Stitching the Self: Identity and the Needle Arts* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), 26-29 and 69).
[32] Amos and Binkley, *Stitching the Self*, 54, 69.
[33] Catherine Karkov offered a reading of the Bayeux Tapestry as an expression of 'the trauma of the years immediately following the conquest of 1066' and claimed that the silences, lack of either pro- or anti-Norman

expression of such a trauma in a medium in which the English people were considered especially skilled may therefore be productively explored within an understanding of textile art as the site of self-expression, a vehicle for agency. In considering such ideas this thesis will exhibit further how the study of eleventh- and twelfth-century textiles may contribute substantively to contemporary conversations about potential for textile art to act as such a site for meaning.

WOMEN'S WORK?

The Subversive Stitch sought (by Parker's own admission) to right the neglect of women's contributions to art through the examination of women's associations with textile production.[34] Within this, Parker identified 'The Victorian imposition of their feminine ideal on to mediaeval embroidery' as foundational to the enduring associations between embroidery and femininity.[35] In the third chapter of *The Subversive Stitch*, Parker referenced evidence from across the European Middle Ages, including evidence for women working in textile production around the time of the Norman conquest, as evidence of women's contributions to the craft and in order to counter assertions made by 'Victorian historians' that later *Opus Anglicanum* works were produced by men.[36] The implications of the continued production of embroideries throughout the period of the conquest, for the immediate cultural context in which they were produced, is therefore not fully explored by Parker, whose study is instead concerned with establishing a broader cultural understanding of the treatment of embroidery throughout the history of art. It therefore remains to consider how the continued production of works by English women in the eleventh and twelfth centuries

bias, and ambiguity in the Tapestry's presentation form 'an objective historical narrative' which may, Karkov argued, 'be understood as cryptic and/or traumatized' (see: Karkov, 'Conquest and Material Culture', 204).
[34] Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, xi.
[35] Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, 40.
[36] Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, 44-45.

may inform an understanding of the visual ambiguity identified as 'ambivalence' in the characterisation of eleventh-century material culture.[37] Other scholarly efforts to acknowledge medieval textiles have similarly reflected on the relationship between embroidery and femininity, and have taken a long view of textile production in Europe throughout the medieval period and therefore do not consider the specific context of eleventh- and twelfth-century Britain for the textile objects which survive from them.[38]

Though Parker's assertion, that the association between femininity and embroidery contributed to the exclusion of textiles, undoubtedly explains the marginalisation of textiles from art historical studies of early medieval Britain, it does not follow that to include any extant textiles would be to reverse the neglect of women's contributions or shed light on the lives of women at this time. Nevertheless, early medieval textiles have been assumed to be the work of women.[39] Indeed, the renowned reputation of English needlewomen is often cited as (circular) evidence that the Bayeux Tapestry could only have been made in England.[40] Such certainty is the result of the overextension of a handful of sources which name women textile-workers and/or imply links between women and/or femininity and the production of textile works. However, some sources also describe men's involvement in the production of textiles.

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[37] Karkov, 'Conquest and Material Culture', 205.

[38] Jane Schulenburg's 2009 surveyed evidence for the involvement of women in the production of medieval textiles and evaluated how they contributed to the sanctity of ecclesiastical spaces and rituals. Though Schulenburg acknowledged the origins of this sanctity in early medieval ('Anglo-Saxon') England, her overarching conclusion that 'In stitching the sacred, these women made major contributions to the physical fabric and ceremonial life of the church', though it may be convincingly applied to early medieval Britain, does not address the implications of this conclusion within the specific context of eleventh- and twelfth-century Britain. Instead, Schulenburg seeks to insert this evidence and these objects into a broader understanding of textile production in the Middle Ages (see: Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg, 'Holy Women and the Needle Arts: Piety, Devotion, and Stitching the Sacred, ca. 500-1150' in *Negotiating Community and Difference in Medieval Europe: Gender, Power, Patronage, and the Authority of Religion in Latin Christendom*, ed. by Katherine Allen Smith and Scott Wells (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009), 83-110, 87).

[39] Though David Wilson acknowledged, in his 1984 analysis of the Bayeux Tapestry, that there was mention in surviving historical sources of male embroiderers, his subsequent conclusion that the Tapestry was made by women is nevertheless excessively certain: 'But need the Tapestry have been made by nuns, or even by women? The answer is, probably by women, but not necessarily nuns' (see: Wilson, *The Bayeux Tapestry*, 212).

[40] Charles Reginald Dodwell, *The Pictorial Arts of the West 800-1200* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 11; Musset, *The Bayeux Tapestry*, 22.

These sources are familiar to and oft-cited by scholars of medieval textiles:

(1) The Old English proverb preserved in the list of Maxims in the tenth-century Exeter book that states simply that 'Fæmne æt hyre bordan geriseð' ('a women's place is at her embroidery').[41]

(2) The (often considered anomalous) mention of a man's skill at embroidery, that of the tenth-century bishop St Dunstan, included in the *Chronicle of Glastonbury*.[42]

(3) William of Poitiers' afore mentioned singling out of textile work as an art made by women in his *Gesta Guillelmi*.[43]

(4) The references to textile workers with Old English women's names included in the Domesday book.[44]

(5) The description in the twelfth-century *Liber Eliensis* of a number of Ely's embroideries which had been made by church*men*.[45]

(6) The description of Queen Edith (d. 1075), wife of Edward the Confessor (d. 1066) in the eleventh-century *Vita Ædwardi Regis*, which praised her embroidery alongside her reading, writing, and multilingualism: 'Edeiha…que uersu et prosa celebris et eximia et opera et pictura altera erat Minerua' ('In the art of the spinning and embroidery she was, as they say, another Minerva').[46]

(7) The chronicler William of Malmesbury's description within the twelfth-century *Gesta Regum Anglorum* of the skill of the daughters of the English king Edward the Elder (d. 924), who he claimed were raised with a significant focus on acquiring skills in

[41] Schulenburg, 'Holy Women and the Needle Arts', 101 (citing: G.P. Krapp and E.V.K. Dobbie, eds, *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, vol. III (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931-53), 159).
[42] Schulenburg, 'Holy Women and the Needle Arts', 100-101 (citing: J.P. Carley, ed., and D. Townsend, trans., *The Chronicle of Glastonbury Abbey* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1985), ch. 61, 117).
[43] *The Gesta Gvillelmi of William of Poitiers*, 176-7.
[44] Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, 227, 229; Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, 70-2 (citing: *Domesday Book* I, 149. See also V.C.H. Bucks, I, 258).
[45] Schulenburg, 'Holy Women and the Needle Arts', 100-101 (citing: E.O. Blake, ed., *Liber Eliensis* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1962), 358).
[46] Schulenburg, 'Holy Women and the Needle Arts', 99, 101 (citing: *The Life of King Edward Who Rests at Westminster, Attributed to a Monk of St Bertin*, ed. by Frank Barlow (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 23).

needlework: 'Filias suas ita instituerat ut litteris omnes in infantia maxime uacarent, mox etiam colum et acum exercere consuecerent, ut his artibus pudice impubem uirginitatem transigerent' ('all the daughters had been brought up to devote most time in their childhood to letters, and thereafter to acquire further skill with distaff and needle, that which the support of these arts they might pass their girlhood in chastity').[47]

Women's religious houses were also frequently the site of textile production throughout the medieval period.[48]

In some of these sources, notably William of Malmesbury's description of Edward the Elder's daughters, there is a clear relation between their identity as women and personal characteristics which in an early medieval context were deemed feminine ideals (in that case, chastity). Scholars have drawn on these sources to support not only the assumed gender identity of the makers of extant embroiderers, but also to argue that an enduring association between femininity and textiles production existed, and by extension a mutually affirmative association between femininity and performed womanhood.[49] However, the corpus, which is comparatively scant, is not without its own degree of ambiguity and contradiction. Only

[47] Stephanie Hollis, 'Wilton as a Centre of Learning' in *Writing the Wilton Women: Goscelin's Legend of Edith and Liber confortatorius*, ed. by Stephanie Hollis (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 307-349, 328 (citing: William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum*, ed. by R.A.B. Mynors and trans. by R.M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998-9), 200).

[48] Eileen Power, *English Medieval Nunneries, c. 1275 to 1535* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), 255-258; Sarah Foot, *Veiled Women II: Female Religious Communities in England, 871-1066* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 228-230.

[49] In a 2014 study of 'Embroidery and Gift-Giving among Anglo-Saxon Women', Laura Michele Diener argued that 'despite the compelling possibility of embroidery occurring in male monasteries, its cultural associations were exclusively feminine' (see: Laura Michele Diener, 'Sealed with a Stitch: Embroidery and Gift-Giving among Anglo-Saxon Women', *Medieval Prosopography*, 29 (2014), 1-22, 19); Ruth Mazo Karras shared this assessment for her study of medieval weaving, in which she claimed that even after men came to dominate weaving, textile work broadly 'remained a symbol of feminine virtue' (see: Ruth Mazo Karras, '"This Skill in a Woman is By No Means to Be Despised": Weaving and the Gender Division of Labor in the Middle Ages' in *Medieval Fabrications: Dress, Textiles, Clothwork, and Other Cultural Imaginings*, ed. by E. Janes Burns (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 89-105, 89); Schulenburg too observed that praise of women's embroidery skills was often related to feminine ideals which 'reinforced other acts of gendered saintly behaviour such as virginity, industry, and generosity' (see: Schulenburg, 'Holy Women and the Needle Arts', 101).

the following may be claimed with certainty: some writers associate textile production with women and/or femininity, some textiles were made by women, and some women made textiles, but so too did some men. Some writers associate textiles with femininity, femininity with women, and the three together in a mutually reinforcing expression of identity. However, there is no guarantee that these objects, individuals, or identities were universally interpreted this way in early medieval England. They certainly cannot be now.

Modern theorists have sought to critically examine the assumed relationship between womanhood and femininity, and to consider how certain actions, performances, or performatives may have formed such associations and made manifest these gendered identities. Contemporary studies in gender have described performativity as an essential element of the construction of gendered identities. Judith Butler undermined the idea that 'woman' existed as a single identity essential to an individual and suggested that the category was instead a cultural construction formed through ritualised repetition – a process Butler describes as performative, in the sense that these repeated acts constitute the very identity that they claim to reveal.[50] The potential for textile work to act as such a gender performative has been observed.[51] In particular, the construction of large-scale textile works (like the Bayeux Tapestry), Berlo argued, 'performs gender'.[52] If one considers the 'women of the English people' described by William of Poitiers, however, then the Tapestry's construction may indeed represent a performance through which its makers were able to locate

[50] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York and London: Routledge, 1999), 4-5.
[51] In an essay on needlework as 'the Production of Alternate Discourses of Power' (2009), Heather Pristash, Inez Schaechterle, and Sue Carter Wood described the 'process of gendering through the needle' which begins in childhood in modern America (see: Heather Pristash, Inez Schaechterle, and Sue Carter Wood, 'The Needle as the Pen: Intentionality, Needlework, and the Production of Alternate Discourses of Power' in *Women and the Material Culture of Needlwork and Textiles, 1750-1950*, ed. By Maureen Daly Goggin and Beth Fowles Tobin (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 13-30, 17).
[52] Janet Berlo, 'Suturing my Soul: In Pursuit of the Broderie de Bayeux' in *Stitching the Self: Identity and the Needle Arts*, eds. By Johanna Amos and Lisa Brinkley (London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2020), 375-425, 408.

themselves or articulate their position (and perhaps their gendered identity) in the cultural flux of a multiply conquered land.

Gender therefore remains significant in art historical assessments of extant works. Sara Ahmed, in her 2014 study *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, described how emotions and feelings may 'stick' to objects: 'Such objects become sticky, or saturated with affect, as sites of personal and social tension'.[53] Sticking, Ahmed explains, 'is dependent on past histories of association that often 'work' through concealment'.[54] Though Ahmed illustrated these ideas with close readings of texts, the notion that certain ideas or concepts may 'stick' to objects because of histories of association or generations of affect may be instructive here: subsequent centuries of association between textile work and womanhood, as summarised by Parker, have interpreted the limited textual evidence in such a way that gender as a category does not just 'stick' to extant early medieval textiles but *clings* to them.

This thesis makes no advances on the likely identities of the makers of any surviving eleventh- or twelfth-century textiles. Nor does it suggest how or where gender may be visibly located in these objects or posit that these works reveal anything about the lives of women in Britain at this time – such an approach risks reinforcing some of the gendered assumptions surrounding textile production which have contributed to their exclusion from studies of early medieval art. At various points this thesis will review the textual evidence summarised above, particularly that of William of Poitiers, to consider how the conclusions drawn through art historical reassessments of surviving textiles may provide further context for the descriptions of textile production which do employ gendered terms. It will consider the possibility (if not the likelihood) that these objects were the result of a performative gendering but will contextualise this possibility within what has been learned about textiles:

[53] Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 11.
[54] Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 13.

their capacity to prompt phenomenological viewing experiences, their interstitiality, their gestures to memory, their allusions to alternative media, and their invocation of the divine. It will ask what *this* understanding of textiles may tell us about 'the women of the English people' described by William of Poitiers as the makers of these objects.

'THE WOMEN OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE'

Though William of Poitiers' description of the work of 'the women of the English people' is most often cited in studies of medieval textiles to support the assumption that it was mainly women who produced textiles, what his account perhaps even more crucially reveals is the existence of a colonised intersectional identity, which in some contexts appears to have been racialised and/or related to the production of textiles.[55] Roland Betancourt's 2020 study of intersectionality in medieval Byzantium in particular suggested the potential for categories of identity to be both enmeshed and life-altering within medieval contexts, a notion with significant potential for framing those sources which describe the lives of

[55] Intersectionality, as first defined by the Kimberlé Crenshaw in her essay, 'Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex' (1989), is understood not as a 'totalizing theory of identity', but rather as a study of how 'the intersections of race and gender' expose the need to consider 'multiple grounds of identity when considering how the social world is constructed' (see: Kimberlé Crenshaw, 'Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color', *Stanford Law Review* 43.6 (July 1991), 1241-1299, 1244-5). The subject of Crenshaw's study of intersectionality was the manner in which race and gender intersected in 'shaping structural, political, and representational aspects of violence against women of color' (see: Crenshaw, 'Mapping the Margins', 1244); however, its potential for such an approach to inform studies of the medieval period has also been demonstrated: the historic failure of medieval studies to consider intersectional identities (even in studies of gender) and the need to adopt more intersectional approaches was argued by Samantha Katz Seal and Nicole Nolan Sidhu in the 2019 introduction to a special issue of the journal postmedieval on the subject of feminist intersectionality. Indeed the consideration of intersectionality has in more recent scholarship emerged as a productive means of framing studies of the medieval past (see: Samantha Katz Seal and Nicole Nolan Sidhu, 'Feminist Intersectionality: Centering the margins in 21st-century medieval studies', *postmedieval: a journal of medieval cultural studies* 10.3 (2019), 272-278). And in the introduction to *Byzantine Intersectionality* (2020), the art historian Roland Betancourt claimed that he sought to provide 'a glimpse into the intersectionality of identity in the medieval world, exploring how these various categories overlap with one another – not as distinct identities but as enmeshed conditions that radically alter the lives of figures (see: Roland Betancourt, *Byzantine Intersectionality: Sexuality, Gender, and Race in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2020), 2).

English women living in England after the Norman conquest, and which may further contextualise those sources which associate textile production with those English women.[56]

Acknowledgement of the perceived Englishness and womanhood inherent within textile production therefore places textiles at the material intersection in which womanhood and Englishness meet, embodying the complex performatives and material associations by which these identities were articulated and the nuances of broader culture made manifest. The potential for extant textiles to be positioned thus has not yet been fully realised in art historical studies which find them inconsistent with entrenched historiographical frameworks.

Understanding 'the women of the English people' as an identity which represents the intersection of gendered and racialised categories depends, however, on an understanding of 'English' as a racial category. There is little consensus between and within medieval and modern definitions of race.[57] Acknowledging race-making within both medieval and modern contexts is therefore significantly complicated by the lack of precision surrounding many of the terms applied. Race and ethnicity have, for instance, often been used as synonyms in studies of the medieval past.[58] The essential work of disentangling the effects of this has only recently begun to be recognised as it is increasingly acknowledged that the 'rhetorical elision' between ethnicity and race has concealed mainstream pan-European white nationalism and revisionist histories.[59]

The definitions of race articulated by medieval sources, and scholars of the medieval past, have ranged significantly, from 'body-centred' biological phenomena to socio-cultural

[56] Betancourt, *Byzantine Intersectionality*, 1-17.
[57] Robert Bartlett, 'Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31.1 (Winter 2001), 39-56, 39.
[58] Bartlett acknowledged using the two terms as synonyms, in deference of the fact that medieval and modern terminology surrounding the subject is so complex (see: Bartlett, 'Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity', 42).
[59] Wan-Chuan Kao, 'Identitarian Politics, Precarious Sovereignty', *postmedieval: a journal of medieval cultural studies* 11.4 (2020), 371-383.

constructs.[60] Plurality is therefore the defining factor in medieval constructions of race. In a study of *The Invention of Race in the Middle Ages* (2018), Geraldine Heng argued that (especially in the case of religious race formation) the biological and socio-cultural should be seen as interconnected rather than mutually exclusive.[61] Race, by Heng's own definition thus consists of 'strategic essentialisms…posited and assigned through a variety of practices and pressures, so as to construct a hierarchy of peoples for differential treatment'.[62] This thesis accepts Heng's understanding in both of the dual instances of race-making explored within it: those contained in eleventh- and twelfth-century literary sources, and those contained in subsequent scholarship.

That something of the 'construction of hierarchies of human difference' understood by Heng as race-making occurred within the establishment of 'English' both before and after the conquest is therefore important in framing this thesis. In addition to those early medieval sources already cited which appear to define the conquest along racial lines, there is at least one source which additionally implicates textiles in such race-making: William of Poitiers' description of the textiles made by those skilled 'women of the English people' appears in a lengthier description of the spoils included in the post-conquest victory parade in Normandy, within which were also included a number of 'crinigeros alumnos plagae Aquilonalis' ('long-haired sons of the Northern lands').[63] Incidentally, hair was one was one of the 'cultural cues' cited by Heng as constituent in race-making between groups which

[60] Geraldine Heng, in her study of *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages* (2018), summarised the range of understandings of race which exist among scholars of the medieval past, from race as a 'body-centred' biological phenomenon to a socio-cultural construct (see: Heng, *The Invention of Race in the Middle Ages*, 27); Bartlett similarly acknowledged that: 'Medieval terminology may have allowed a biological or genetic construal of race, but it also allowed a picture of races as changing cultural communities, often in competition, often forming and reforming, overflowing and cutting across political boundaries, providing identities and claims for their members' (see: Bartlett, 'Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity', 53-4).

[61] 'Nature and the sociocultural should not…be seen as bifurcated spheres in medieval race-formation: they often crisscross' (see: Heng, *The Invention of Race in the Middle Ages*, 27).

[62] Heng, *The Invention of Race in the Middle Ages*, 3.

[63] *The Gesta Gvillelmi of William of Poitiers*, 179-181.

lacked clear physiognomic differences.[64] Pauline Stafford too noted that hair could signal racialised identities within post-conquest England, and also in observed that Englishness was also gendered in some written sources, articulations of difference between the English and Normans which comply with Heng's understanding of the construction of race, suggesting that such intersectional identities as 'English women' were implicated in both gendered and racialised categories.[65] Nevertheless, there exists no single definition of Englishness or Normanness at which one may point to securely claim that they were universally understood as racial identities, though even if this were possible it would still elude Heng's understanding that race 'has not singular or stable referent' and is instead 'a structural relationship for the articulation and management of human differences'.[66]

Race is still, however, a relevant category in this thesis and in the study of eleventh- and twelfth-century textiles more broadly. Throughout the four years in which I wrote this thesis, how Englishness was understood in the eleventh and twelfth century, and how Englishness in this period has been subsequently understood has been a significant area of reassessment in the field of early medieval studies. The use of racialising terminology which has been 'freely employed and little discussed' in early medieval art histories since the 1930s

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[64] Karkov, *The Art of Anglo-Saxon England*, 11, 247.

[65] Stafford interpreted Henry I's ritual hair shearing at Easter 1105 in the church at Carentan, Normandy as an assertion of his position 'as the true son of his Norman father; his men as true Normans, heirs of the conquest generation; all as true men', an interpretation in which Stafford additionally implicated a textile, the Bayeux Tapestry, speculating that: 'Our Latin sources may give us only an echo or at best a filtered version of the language of defeat and victory. The artists of the Bayeux Tapestry may have captured some of the crudeness of that and of the gendered insult it involved. The Tapestry certainly distinguishes the Norman, shaven-headed behind and without facial hair, from the longer-haired and moustachioed English' (see: Stafford, 'The Meaning of Hair in the Anglo-Norman World', 165 and 169); Stafford additionally observed that in the years after 1066 'questions of national identity were sharp, and defined in terms of masculine gender' and that Englishness could be used as a 'powerfully gendered' insult, as in the twelfth-century historian William of Malmesbury's claim that Henry I and his wife, Edith/Matilda, were known by some as 'Godric' and 'Godgifu' (Old English names) (see: Pauline Stafford, 'The Meaning of Hair in the Anglo-Norman World: Masculinity, Reform, and National Identity' in *Saints, Scholars, and Politicians: Gender as a Tool in Medieval Studies* (Festschrift in Honour of Anneke Mulder-Bakker on the Occasion of her Sixty-Fifth Birthday), ed. by Mathilde van Dijk and Renée Nip (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 153-172, 169-170; As Edith/Matilda was a descendent of the pre-1066 English royal line, Stafford interpreted this insult as a reference to the 'significance of women and marriage in the transfer of claims' after 1066: 'Henry [was] presented as Anglicized, by inference less than Norman and uxorious: he had taken his wife's identity. His masculinity was questioned on all counts.' (See: Stafford, 'The Meaning of Hair in the Anglo-Norman World', 170-1 (citing: William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum* I, 716)).

[66] Heng, *The Invention of Race in the Middle Ages*, 19.

has increasingly been recognised, as has its the historical limitations and subsequent appropriations by alt-right white supremacists.[67] Consequently, the use of terms such as 'Anglo-Saxon' have been increasingly contested.[68] Therefore, even though only a small selection of sources appear to racialise Englishness in the period of the conquest, and a smaller number still implicate textiles within this, subsequent historigraphies have significantly racialised early medieval artworks. The first chapter of this thesis will engage with these questions further to consider the use of racialised taxonomies and how they may

[67] David Wallace, 'Medieval Studies in Troubled Times: The 1930s', *Speculum* 95.1 (January 2020), 1-35, 1; Mary Rambaran-Olm has identified 1066 and the conflation between 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'Pre-Conquest' as an essential component in the race-making of modern-day white nationalism (see: In particular, Rambaran-Olm observed the significance of this division within the construction of whiteness: 'During British (and later, American) imperialism and colonization, the racial meaning of "Anglo-Saxon" became the most dominant usage of the term. Rather than anodyne reference to pre-conquest England, this white supremacist movement in Euro-America has used the term "Anglo-Saxon" to justify racial violence and colonial genocide for at least 200 years. The racial meaning throughout the English-speaking world has deepened and come to be associated crudely with whiteness' (see: Rambaran-Olm, 'On or About 1066', 166); the art historical uses (and abuses) of 'Anglo-Saxon' have also been explicitly acknowledged in Karkov's recent study, *Imagining Anglo-Saxon England: Utopia, Heterotopia, Dystopia* (2020), in which Karkov described the 'retrotopia' of 'an imagined purity of an "Anglo-Saxon" past' propagated by modern nationalist and racist groups (see: Catherine Karkov, *Imagining Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2020), 197).

[68] Donna Beth Ellard sought to problematise the term 'Anglo-Saxonist', and summarised the historic duality of its meaning as both a person who studies 'Old English language, literature, and culture', and someone who expresses an affinity for white nationalism (see: Donna Beth Ellard, '*OED*. "Anglo-Saxonist, noun": Professional Scholar or Anonymous Person', in *Anglo-Saxon(ist) Pasts, PostSaxon Futures*, ed. by Donna Beth Ellard (Santa Barbara: Punctum Books, 2019), 19-60, 20); In an effort to distance itself from these associations, the International Society of Anglo-Saxonists (ISAS) voted to change its name to International Society for the Study of Early Medieval England (ISSEME), after the public resignation of Mary Rambaran-Olm from its governing body in 2019. Rambaran-Olm claimed that the society's encouragement of white supremacists was typified by its earlier refusal to change its name (see: Hannah Natanson, "'It's all white people": Allegations of White Supremacy are Tearing Apart a Prestigious Medieval Studies Group' , *The Washington Post,* 19 September 2019, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2019/09/19/its-all-white-people-allegations-white-supremacy-are-tearing-apart-prestigious-medieval-studies-group/> [accessed 6 October 2020]; *International Society for the Study of Early Medieval England*, <https://www.isasweb.net/> [accessed 10 October 2020]); Furthermore, within the opening essay of the special 2020 anniversary edition of the journal *postmedieval*, entitled 'Race, Revulsion, and Revolution', Rambaran-Olm, M. Breann Leake and Micah James Goodrich argued that the exclusion of Black, Indigenous, and people of colour (BIPOC) scholars in the field of medieval studies has contributed to ongoing racism and associations with white supremacy (see: Mary Rambaran-Olm, M. Breann Leake and Micah James Goodrich, 'Medieval Studies: The Stakes of the Field', *postmedieval: a journal of medieval cultural studies* 11.4 (2020), 356-370); In response to the ISAS/ISSEME name change, the archaeologist John Hines composed an open letter, 'The Responsible Use of the Term 'Anglo-Saxon", which expressed 'dismay and profound concern' for the implications of 'the convulsion in the former International Society of Anglo-Saxonists (ISAS)' and summarised the case for its continued use as a precise and valid mode of expression. The letter was signed by seventy academics (see: John Hines, *The Responsible Use of the Term "Anglo-Saxon"* (3 January 2020) <http://www.fmass.eu/uploads/pdf/responsible_use_of%20the%20term%20_Anglo-Saxon.pdf> [accessed 1 June 2023]); The ISSEME's new name is, naturally, not without its shortcomings, not least its sole geographical focus on England. In part as a response, a group of scholars founded IONA ('Islands of the North Atlantic'), a professional organisation of early medieval scholars for those 'who do not perceive our field to be limited by periodization or by place' in an attempt to 'denationalize and decolonize the field' (see: *IONA: Islands of the North Atlantic*, <https://www.ionaassociation.org/> [accessed 10 October 2020]).

contextualise the 'Winchester' taxonomy which is significant in studies of art made in early medieval Britain.

ENGLAND, BRITAIN, AND IRELAND

The word 'Britain' has been retained in the title of this thesis despite the fact that almost every textile produced in eleventh- and twelfth-century Britain is believed to have been produced in England. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that England maintained a monopoly on textile production in the British Islands and Ireland at this time. An embroidered fragment dating to either the very late ninth or early tenth century was excavated from a crannóg in Llan-gors Lake near Brecon, thereby hinting at the potential vitality of textile production in early medieval Wales.[69] Jenifer Ní Ghrádaigh has summarised the textual evidence for women's involvement in the patronage and production of art in early medieval art in Ireland, including mentions in hagiographical texts and martyrologies of women producing shrouds and vestments.[70] Scotland suffered a particularly iconoclastic Reformation and therefore has comparatively little extant medieval material. However, the ninth-century Galloway Hoard, which was discovered and excavated in 2014, contains textiles and materials which gesture to far-reaching cultural connections, including objects originating from Asia.[71] Furthermore, Margaret (the sister of Edgar Ætheling) was, however, amongst the English nobles who fled to Scotland following the conquest, where she married King Malcolm III of Scotland and was recorded as having introduced to the Scottish court

[69] Hero Granger-Taylor and Frances Pritchard, 'A Fine Quality Insular Embroidery from Llan-gors Crannóg, near Brecon' in *Pattern and Purpose in Insular Art: Proceedings of the Fourth International Museum & Gallery, Cardiff, 3-6 September 1998*, ed. by, Mark Redknap, Nancy Edwards, Susan Youngs, Alan Lane and Jeremy Knight (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2001), 91-100.

[70] Jenifer Ní Ghrádaigh, 'Mere Embroiderers? Women and Art in Early Medieval Ireland' in *Reassessing the Roles of Women as 'Makers' of Medieval Art and Architecture*, ed. by Therese Martin (Boston: Brill, 2012), 93-128.

[71] In particular, a silver-gilt decorated vessel which is ornamented with Zoroastrian imagery associated with Sasanian imperial iconography (modern-day Iran, though it is assumed to be a later derivative it is nevertheless considered of Central Asian origin) was found wrapped in textile and to contain metalwork wrapped in textile 'bundles' (see: Martin Goldberg, 'The Galloway Hoard' in *The Viking Age in Scotland: Studies in Scottish Scandinavian Archaeology*, ed. by Tome Horne, Elizabeth Pierce, Rachel Barrowman (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2023), 262-275). However, it should be noted that though Galloway lies in the boundaries of modern-day Scotland, it was within the early medieval kingdom of Northumbria.

the embroidery techniques that she had learned in England.[72] Also, the Norman conquest did not occur in England alone: Wales, Ireland, and Scotland (to significantly varying degrees) were forced to acknowledge the influence of the Normans, either by an extension of the conquest which forced subjugation to Norman rule, or an uneasy accord accompanied by some cultural consistencies.[73] Moreover, 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'Romanesque' have certainly been applied to works made outside of England in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, implying consistencies in the visual arts across these areas during this period.[74] Michelle Brown's study, *Art of the Islands* (2016), was significant in extending the typical scope of art historical studies of early medieval art to include the visual culture of 'Celtic, Pictish, Anglo-Saxon, and Viking' peoples across the 'archipelago of islands composed of mainland Britain, Ireland, Scotland and Man' between 450-1066.[75] In this Brown acknowledged the simultaneous 'development of distinctive regional identities' and the 'coagulation of collective cultural and historical imperatives and responses'.[76] The complexities of how these nations interacted and intersected, both within the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and within subsequent historiographies, therefore make it impossible to discuss English textiles without acknowledging the broader Insular context in which they were produced, even if almost no comparative textiles from this broader context survive.

[72] Turgot, Bishop of St. Andrews, *The Life of St. Margaret Queen of Scotland* (Dunfermline: St Margaret's Catholic Church, 1980), 8.
[73] Rebecca Thomas, 'The View from Wales: Anglo-Welsh Relations in the Time of England's Conquests' in *Conquests in Eleventh-Century England*, ed. by Laura Ashe and Emily Joan Ward (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2020), 287-306; R.R. Davies, *Domination and Conquest: The Experience of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales 1100-1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
[74] Virginia Glenn, *Romanesque and Gothic: Decorative Metalwork and Ivory Carvings in the Museum of Scotland* (Edinburgh: National Museums of Scotland Publishing, 2003); Adriàn Maldonado, *Crucible of Nations: Scotland from Viking Age to Medieval Kingdom* (Edinburgh: National Museums of Scotland, 2021); Murdo Macdonald, *Scottish Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000), 32.
[75] Brown, *Art of the Islands.*
[76] Brown, *Art of the Islands*, 1.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Textiles offer no easy solutions to the questions posed in previous histories, the discourse around the most appropriate terminology by which to describe the early medieval past, or the ambiguities surrounding those identities which are referenced in extant sources. This thesis never intended to present textiles as such. Instead, art historical methods are employed to frame these objects in order to demonstrate what eleventh- and twelfth-century textiles could do for early medieval viewers, and what they may yet do for contemporary scholars in early medieval studies, art history, and textile studies. Textiles will be presented as fundamentally dislocatory objects which resist literal fixity, simple conceptual understanding, and subsequent taxonomical categorisation.

The first chapter of this thesis considers how textiles and the bodies they often clothed were conceptually entangled. It will examine how stylised representations of the human form on extant vestments allowed both wearers and viewers to phenomenologically position their own bodies. This chapter offers this interpretation as an alternative understanding of the figural stylisation which has previously been considered as characteristic of the 'Winchester' visual style, in addition to problematising this taxonomy: an oft cited but rarely defined visual category which has, it will be argued, often been conflated to imply a sense of united ethno-racial Englishness in early medieval visual art. The first chapter of this thesis will additionally contextualise 'Winchester' within the broader web of taxonomies which have characterised art historical studies of early medieval art made around the Norman Conquest.

In its second chapter, this thesis establishes the centrality of textiles in the material culture of early medieval Britain by comparing extant textiles to contemporaneous wall paintings which contain skeuomorphic or quasi-skeuomorphic references to textiles. This chapter will also consider how the relationship between these objects underscores textiles'

ability to depict some of the paradoxes of in/visibility central to both medieval Christianity and the understandings of English womanhood which acquired additional political significance during the period of the conquest.

The problematisation of those taxonomies applied to early medieval art is extended in the third chapter which considers how these categories, in addition to the category of 'ornament', have contributed to a (mis)understanding of the tablet-woven bands which bordered textiles as 'ornamental' or decorative elements with vaguely described 'Oriental' patterns. Such approaches have, this chapter will argue, obscured these objects' potential to act as repositories for memory: moving between objects and referencing repeated, timeless visual motifs.

The fourth chapter continues this meditation on notions of framing. Acknowledging the shared framing devices which appear to 'float' across media, this chapter will posit the inherent textility of frames and the inherent 'frameness' of textiles to argue that textiles were essential to the articulation of phenomenological principles in early medieval visual and material culture. Textiles, it shall be argued, were fundamentally mediatory objects, gesturing always to something beyond themselves and the objects, bodies, and buildings that they clothed.

The extent to which this phenomenological capacity has been obscured by reproductions of early medieval textiles, and the processes and principles of visual reproduction which have shaped the study of early medieval art more broadly, will be addressed in the fifth and final chapter of the thesis. Reflecting on the encounters which informed this thesis, it will be argued that these methods of reproduction have obfuscated textiles' fundamentally affective capacities.

CHAPTER 1
LOCATING 'WINCHESTER' IN EMBROIDERED BODIES

Many of the textiles which survive from eleventh- and twelfth-century England are objects which were worn. A study which seeks, as this thesis does, to consider what textiles could do, must therefore begin by considering bodies. Bodies were themselves common within extant embroidered imagery from this period and the first chapter of this thesis has two principal concerns: the distinctive figural stylisation in early medieval textiles made in England, and the principle means by which this stylisation has thus far been understood, through the application of 'Winchester' as a stylistic taxonomy. A comparison between extant early medieval embroideries and a selection of 'Winchester' manuscripts allows consideration of how the racialised origins of this stylistic framework have continually re-racialised these objects and caused art historians to overlook their significance in enabling wearers to embody some of the most profound aspects of early medieval Christian faith.

There is no easy way to articulate or describe the stylisation that is the subject of this chapter. Attempts to describe this stylisation in previous scholarship, as will be argued in this chapter, resort to geographical specificity, racialised language, or language which reinforces normative body standards by implying that these embroidered figures deviate from them. There is no simple solution to this problem and I have as yet been unable to formulate a language around this imagery with which I am wholly satisfied. I have used 'abstract' in this chapter (and others) to signal when I am referring to that stylisation which appears within early medieval figural embroideries, and which is implicated in art historical definitions of 'Winchester'.

'Abstract' is not intended to imply that these bodies are not still immediately conceivable representations of bodies. Instead, abstract is intended to suggest that the representation of the human form within early medieval embroideries made in England deviates significantly enough from how one would *expect* a human body to be portrayed (were realism the primary aim of the artist), rather than to imply the existence of any normative bodies and a deviation there from. Embroidered early medieval bodies do lack a certain degree of anatomical plausibility (in many cases the heads are wider the shoulders), but they are still recognisably bodies: they do not depict them but they do represent them, sign them, and signal to the existence of bodies as a visual and ontological category. In the introduction to a collection of art historical studies on the subject of *Abstraction within Medieval Art* (2021), Elina Gertsman argued that within medieval art abstraction was seen 'not as the opposite of figuration but as its integral aspect'.[1] The figural stylisation within early medieval embroideries embodies this understanding of abstraction, as a way of representing the human form, whereby certain elements of realism are denied for specific affect but nevertheless consciously engage with the human form that they clothe.

'WINCHESTER', A SCHOOL OR A STYLE?

Though the tenth-century embroidered Cuthbert vestments (fig. 1) are prominent amongst the items described as 'Winchester' by generations of scholars, the general marginalisation of textiles in art historical studies of this period has obscured the potential significance of embroidered objects in shaping an understanding of the visual phenomenon

[1] Elina Gertsman, 'Preface: Withdrawal and Presence' in *Abstraction in Medieval Art: Beyond the Ornament*, ed. by Elina Gertsman (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021), 17-29, 19.

described as 'Winchester'.[2] Positioning embroideries as central within our understanding of this period therefore provides an exciting means of re-examining the 'Winchester' taxonomy.

Any attempt to include textiles within a broader understanding of visual culture in eleventh- and twelfth-century Britain both challenges and is challenged by the enduring application of the 'Winchester' taxonomy to a perceived English style in early medieval art. 'Winchester' has often been invoked by art historians in the study of visual material from the tenth to twelfth centuries, to describe both a scriptorium presumed to be stylistically consistent, and a broader 'style' applied to objects diverse in medium and appearance.[3] Its use therefore typifies the iconographic approaches which have underpinned the application of taxonomies to art of this period: in this case (as later in the thesis) 'iconographic

[2] Most recently the Cuthbert vestments were deemed 'Winchester' by Alexandra Lester-Makin, who described them thus: 'This artistic form is known as the Winchester Style, which gives us a geographical region for production' (see: Alexandra Lester-Makin, 'Embroidery and its Early Medieval Audience: A Case Study of Sensory Engagement', *World Archaeology* 52 (2020), 298-312, 302-3). To support this claim Lester-Makin referenced Christopher Hohler and Robert Freyhan's studies of the vestments, from within Christopher Battiscombe's 1956 volume of studies of the relics of St Cuthbert, in which Freyhan concluded that 'We have traced the style of the Durham [Cuthbert] embroideries from the East and followed the modification of its ornament from "Winchester"' (see: Freyhan, 'The Place of the Stole and Maniple in Anglo-Saxon Art of the Tenth Century' in *The Relics of St Cuthbert*, ed. by C.F. Battiscombe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), 409-432, 409 and 431)); Lester-Makin also some of the foliage within the Cuthbert vestments was 'characteristic of the Winchester style', and that the Milan embroidery, though less 'rigid' than those embroidered on the Cuthbert vestments, included foliate designs which made be compares to those on the dedication page of Bede's *Life of St Cuthbert*, which Lester-Makin described as 'an example of early period Winchester' (see: Lester-Makin, *The Lost Art of the Anglo-Saxon World*, 95); in the same study Lester-Makin cited Dominic Tweddle and Mildred Budny's comparisons between the ninth-century Maaseik embroideries and 'similar motifs found on southern English artwork of the late 8th to early 9th centuries', which led the authors to suggest that the embroideries had also been produced in Winchester (see: Lester-Makin, *The Lost Art of the Anglo-Saxon World*, 89 (citing: Mildred Budny and Dominic Tweddle, 'The Maaseik Embroideries', *Anglo-Saxon England* 13 (1984), 65-69, 78-84)); David Talbot-Rice additionally noted that 'Both this acanthus and the treatment of some of the costumes seem to herald the light flutterings of the Winchester illuminations' (see: Talbot-Rice, *English Art 871-1100*, 244); Richard Gameson considered the acanthus within the New Minster Charter a credible 'descendant of the foliage used on the stole and maniple of St Cuthbert, and on the various formally related and hence presumed contemporary works' (see: Richard Gameson, *The Role of Art in the Late Anglo-Saxon Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 200).

[3] Robert Deshman described the 'so-called 'Winchester Style" thus: 'a name which is often loosely applied to the general style of Anglo-Saxon art during the second half of the tenth century and the eleventh' (see: Robert Deshman, 'The Leofric Missal and Tenth-Century English Art', *Anglo-Saxon England* 6 (December 1977), 145-173, 173); Jane Kershaw similarly claimed that 'The 'Winchester' style refers to the art produced under the influence of monastic reform in Anglo-Saxon England from the mid-tenth to eleventh centuries. Although chiefly used to describe a distinct type of illuminated manuscript, the term can also refer to ornamentation adorning contemporary stone and ivory carvings and metalwork' (see: Jane Kershaw, 'The Distribution of the 'Winchester' Style in Late Saxon England: Metalwork Finds from the Danelaw', in *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History,* ed. by Sally Crawford and Helena Hamerow (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2008), 254-269, 254.

approaches' describe the isolation of certain visual elements of iconography which are considered visual evidence of stylistic taxonomies. Though this use of 'Winchester' persists in contemporary scholarship, those applying the term have often noted its vagueness or inadequacy.[4] However, there has yet been no singular study of 'Winchester' or a sustained attempt to reassess its use.

Comparing the extant corpus of embroideries to Winchester manuscripts may allow the taxonomy to be considered afresh. Similarities between the two media may decentre the Winchester scriptorium. Divergences may simultaneously challenge the notion of a singular English style and reveal the extraordinary ability of embroiderers to manipulate the popular visual principles of the time to particular effect in the specific medium in which they worked. Such observations do not affirm the 'Winchester' taxonomy, or even the existence of a unifying English style, but instead assert the essential relevance of textiles and their makers to art historical studies of this period.

In seeking to understand the historiographical position of 'Winchester', it is first important to distinguish between the Winchester *School* and the rather more nebulous Winchester *Style* (though in much scholarship the two are often conflated). The tenth-century New Minster Charter has been described by Michelle Brown (2007) as 'the first fully fledged example of what is known as the "Winchester School"'.[5] A 'school' in this context refers to a number of manuscripts credibly believed to have been produced in the city of Winchester, which by the eleventh century had acquired a dual political and religious significance, following the energetic Benedictine reform of its minster in the tenth century under the supervision of King Edgar and Bishop Æthelwold.[6] It was a centre of both secular and religious governance, and we may be sure that at least some extant manuscripts attributed to

[4] Francis Wormald, *The Benedictional of St Ethelwold* (London: Faber and Faber, 1959), 15; Kershaw, 'The Distribution of the 'Winchester' Style in Late Saxon England', 224-5.
[5] Michelle Brown, *Manuscripts from the Anglo-Saxon Age* (London: British Library, 2007), 88.
[6] Brown, *Manuscripts from the Anglo-Saxon Age*, 88.

the school were produced in the city.[7] However, there remains enough diversity between these manuscripts, and sufficient similarities with books made in other centres, that the exact nature (or even likelihood) of a visually coherent 'school' of manuscript painting is still somewhat contested.[8]

Art historical applications of 'Winchester' as a broader style have since exceeded descriptions of this small collection of manuscripts to describe as 'Winchester' objects as disparate in medium, appearance, and date as a tenth-century metal strap-end excavated from Kirkcudbrightshire in Scotland (fig. 4), the late tenth-century embroidered Cuthbert vestments (fig. 2), and the twelfth-century illuminated Psalter of Henry of Blois (fig. 5).[9] This delineation is explicitly articulated in the conclusion to Robert Freyhan's study of the Cuthbert vestments (1956), in which he enigmatically references the vestments' enhancement of 'The importance of the Winchester school – in its literal meaning without inverted commas'.[10] An understanding of Winchester as both a specific school and (in 'inverted commas') as a style has endured through successive generations of scholarship, in which the city and style remain conflated.[11] Talbot-Rice was more explicit in outlining the

[7] Jane Chedzy, 'Manuscript Production in Medieval Winchester', *Reading Medieval Studies* 29 (2003), 1-18 (1); Karkov, *The Art of Anglo-Saxon England*, 114 and 289-291.
[8] Wormald, *The Benedictional of St Ethelwold* , 15; Kershaw, 'The Distribution of the 'Winchester' Style in Late Saxon England:', 224-5; Walter Oakeshott questions the validity of a 'Winchester School', claiming that unlike at Durham, it is difficult to talk confidently of a 'Winchester School' as 'In the Winchester Bible alone… the styles are vary various; and one of the earlier styles is associated with St Albans' (see: Walter Oakeshott, *Sigena: Romanesque Paintings in Spain and the Artists of the Winchester Bible* (London: Harvey Miller & Medcalf, 1972), 131).
[9] Adrián Maldonado, 'The first millennials: finding the forgotten 11th century in Scotland', National Museums Scotland, 16 October 2018 <https://blog.nms.ac.uk/2018/10/16/the-first-millennials-finding-the-forgotten-11th-century-in-scotland/> 16 October 2018 [accessed: 5 July 2022]; Lester-Makin, 'Embroidery and its Early Medieval audience', 302-3. Francis Wormald, *The Winchester Psalter* (London: Harvey Miller & Medcalf, 1973).
[10] Freyhan, 'Place of the Stole and Maniple', 431.
[11] Robert Deshman sought to evaluate the 'contribution of Winchester to the 'Winchester Style'', thereby drawing a similar delineation between the manuscripts made in the city and a broader style that extended beyond works produced in the city to include the 'general style of Anglo-Saxon art' (see: Deshman, 'The Leofric Missal and Tenth-Century English Art', 173); Lester-Makin described the Cuthbert vestments as 'Winchester style, which gives us a geographical region for production' (see: Lester-Makin, 'Embroidery and its Early Medieval Audience', 302-3, citing Freyhan and Hohler's claim that 'We have traced the style of the Durham [Cuthbert] embroideries from the East and followed the modification of its ornament from 'Winchester' (see: Freyhan 'Place of the Stole and Maniple', 431).

extension of 'Winchester' to an all-encompassing taxonomy, stating that 'soon after 960 a universal style predominated which, for the sake of convenience, has usually been termed that of Winchester. It is, however, nowadays far from generally admitted that all of the manuscripts in which Winchester characteristics are present were actually produced at that place'.[12] This approach is characteristic of the search for broad stylistic commonalities and continuities that characterised much of post-war scholarship, particularly in early medieval art history.[13] Indeed, tenth- and eleventh-century English drawing was included prominently within Meyer Schapiro's essay on the subject of 'Style' (1953), a period which he described as 'a time of great accomplishment, when England was a leader in European art', and which in later editions was illustrated with an illumination from a product of the Winchester scriptorium: the tenth-century Benedictional of St Æthelwold (though Schapiro did acknowledge the variety of styles between media, particularly a divergence between drawing and architecture, during this time).[14]

The use of 'Winchester' in even recent scholarship may be characterised by a slippage between 'Winchester' and 'Englishness' which, in addition to the style's presumed Carolingian origins, has continued to define art historical understandings of this period. Francis Wormald's claim that Carolingian illuminations were 'the foundation of the new English style' (1952), and that the origins of the Winchester manuscripts' style in Carolingian manuscripts was 'unquestionable', was based in large part on the 'fluttering' draperies which gave the appearance of liveliness and vivacity within the figures depicted.[15] In particular, Wormald compared the drapery between the tenth-century depiction of 'St Dunstan Prostrate before Christ' within Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct F.4.32 (fig. 6) and that

[12] Talbot-Rice, *English Art 871-1100*, 181.
[13] *Anglo-Saxon Styles*, ed. by Catherine Karkov and George Hardin Brown, (New York: State University of New York Press, 2012), 1.
[14] Meyer Schapiro, 'Style', in *Anthropology Today: An Encyclopaedic Inventory*, ed. by Alfred L. Kroeber (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1953), 287-311 (295).
[15] Wormald, *English Drawings of the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries*, 24-5.

within the group of 'Carolingian MSS. Associated with the Gospels of Ada (a supposed sister of Charlemagne) now at Trier' (fig. 7).[16] Textiles, too, informed Wormald's argument that this new style was had a Carolingian influence: Wormald drew parallels between the 'Carolingian leaf-work' of the Cuthbert vestments ('another great work of art from Winchester') and the Junius manuscript to argue that this ornament was known to 'Winchester artists' by the reign of Edward the Elder.[17] Freyhan additionally acknowledged the historical parallels drawn between the Winchester School and Carolingian protypes, though considered these parallels more convincing in the Cuthbert vestments that in manuscripts ascribed to 'Winchester':

> The ornamental framework in Edgar's charter and in its successors of the Winchester school has hitherto been thought to be due to Carolingian sources, in analogy to the proven Carolingian influence in figure style and composition, although no convincing protype has ever been pointed out. But coming from the Durham embroideries [Cuthbert vestments] the affinity is striking.[18]

The perceived influence of Carolingian visual sources was echoed in later studies; in a study of the Benedictional of St Æthelwold (1995), Robert Deshman summarised the historiography which had preceded the study and described 'the acknowledged role of the Carolingian and earlier Anglo-Saxon styles', observing that 'many have recognized that ornament from the Carolingian Franco-Saxon school was a major ingredient of the Benedictional' (albeit whilst arguing that other sources of influence, such as 'indigenous English traditions' and 'Eastern influence' also played a role).[19]

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[16] Wormald, *English Drawings of the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries*, 25.
[17] Francis Wormald, 'The 'Winchester School' before St Æthelwold' in *England before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources presented to Dorothy Whitelock*, ed. by Peter Clemoes and Kathleen Hughes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 305-313 (306-7).
[18] Freyhan, 'Place of the Stole and Maniple', 426.
[19] Robert Deshman, *The Benedictional of Æthelwold* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 4-5 (citing: George Frederic Warner and Henry Austin Wilson, *The Benedictional of St Æthelwold* (Oxford: Roxburghe Club, 1910); Otto Homburger, *Die Anfänge der Malschule von Winchester im X. Jahrhundert*, Studien über christliche Denkmäler, n.s. 13 (Leipzig 1912); Otto Homburger, "L'Art carolingien de Metz et l' école de Winchester', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 6th ser., 62 (1963), 35-46; Elżbieta Temple, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts, 900-1066* (London: Harvey Miller, 1967)). Deshman accepts 'the acknowledged role of Carolingian and earlier Anglo-Saxons styles' but considers them 'not entirely adequate to explain the origins of the Benedictional's figural style', seeking further potential sources of influence (see: Deshman, *The Benedictional of Æthelwold*, 5).

Writing some four decades after Talbot-Rice, Deshman similarly acknowledged the rather 'elastic' application of Winchester to 'cover much of later Anglo-Saxon art', claiming simply that 'the Winchester scriptorium invented the Winchester style' (1995).[20] A similarly elastic understanding was implied by Karkov, in her study of *The Art of Anglo-Saxon England* (2011), in which she cited the 'Southern phenomenon' observed by Richard Bailey in his study of tenth- and eleventh-century architectural sculpture (1996), the most notable examples of which are identified by Karkov as clustered 'around the city of Winchester, capital of reform'.[21] Karkov not only explicitly linked this phenomenon to the scriptorium at Winchester, but also extended it so as to imply a broader consistency; she argued that the drapery of the carved angel at St Michael and All Angels church in Winterbourne Steepleton, Dorset (fig. 8), was associated with the 'stylistic innovations of reform-period manuscript illumination', possessing visual consistencies going 'back to the [ninth-century] Lichfield (fig. 9), [eighth-century] Breedon (fig. 10) and [eighth-century] Ruthwell (fig. 11) angels with their fluttering draperies'.[22] The origins of these sculptures represent disparate dates and locales. Indeed comparisons may also be drawn with the eighth-century 'Pictish Masterpiece', the St Andrew's Sarcophagus, in which a representation of Daniel wrestling a lion on the sculpted relief scheme is clothed in drapery which possesses an analogously agitated hem (fig. 12).[23]

There exists no clearly articulated consensus as to the degree of movement within draperies which would constitute such a 'fluttering' to the extent that it may be considered

[20] Deshman, *The Benedictional of Æthelwold*, 215, 247.
[21] Karkov, *The Art of Anglo-Saxon England*, 84.
[22] Karkov, *The Art of Anglo-Saxon England*, 83-4 (Karkov cites Richard Bailey without a direct citation, though one may presume it a reference to Bailey's claims that 'southern English sculpture *was* different from that of the north' even prior to Alfred's Reform movement, and that this 'art of this pre-Reform-movement period already anticipates much of what was to happen later. The late-ninth-century wall painting discovered in the foundations of Winchester's New Minster (dating to 903), the Cuthbert stole and maniples (909-16), the English additions to the *Æthelstan Psalter* (924-39), and the presentation scene in the *Vita Cuthberti* (937) – all show a studied classicism and an awareness of contemporary continental artistic ideals that are in complete contrast to the Anglo-Scandinavian aesthetic of the contemporary north' (see: Bailey, *England's Earliest Sculptors*, 96-7).
[23] The many potential models and diverse sources of influence on this object are discussed in depth in the essays contained within: Sally M. Foster ed., *The St Andrew's Sarcophagus: A Pictish Masterpiece and its International Connections* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998).

evidence of these 'stylistic innovations', no metric by which these observations may be measured. The sculpted angels cited by Karkov are all dressed in stylised draperies which appear to be composed of cloth that clings dramatically to the figures. However, the extent to which they may be considered 'fluttering' is debatable: they betray a greater sense of movement than those draperies embroidered on the figures upon the Cuthbert vestments (fig. 2), but possess none of the agitated hems depicted in the *Liber Vitae* (fig. 13). Such a distinction is therefore subjective, though nonetheless crucial in Karkov's implication of 'Winchester' within a broader conception of Englishness, one with perceived (but ultimately contestable) visual characteristics which endured across centuries and reached across England.

The conflation between Winchester and Englishness has also historically permitted a reading which possesses some of the same essentialism which underlies the historical applications of 'Anglo-Saxon' summarised in the introduction of this thesis: an art historical category which has historically been applied works, to imply that a group of people in a specific location produced a coherent visual style, one subsequently conflated into a constituent element of a homogenised identity essential to their makers. Talbot-Rice, for instance, credited the 'full glory' of the style with 'the English spirit behind it'.[24] Later, Deshman echoed this essentialist understanding, in his study of the Benedictional of St Æthelwold (and the influence of Byzantine art therein), in which he posited that an intrinsic, embodied Englishness had contributed to the development of the style:

> This Eastern style was all the more appealing because it also contained abstract features that facilitated its adaptation to the traditional Insular taste for line, pattern, and movement… Later Anglo-Saxon miniaturists gave an increasingly free rein to their native fondness for dynamic two-dimensional pattern… Continental models, these foreign styles were more completely transformed in the Benedictional than in any previous Anglo-Saxon work into an indigenous, ornamentalized idiom.[25]

[24] Talbot-Rice, *English Art 871-1100*, 244.
[25] Deshman, *The Benedictional of Æthelwold*, 232.

This embodied 'taste' used by Deshman to explain the 'indigenous…idiom' he perceived in early medieval art in England is characteristic of art histories which seek to understand visual objects primarily through biologically-centred stylistic taxonomies that could credibly be described as race-making, though Deshman does not explicitly describe his approach as racialising or as a commentary on any race.

Such an approach is not unique to early medieval art history. Indeed, the art historian Jaś Elsner has identified the desire to determine 'styles' by grouping sets of objects as a 'key reflex' in the study of 'style art history' and described the inherent potential for such 'styles' to underpin essentialist interpretations of art. Noting that 'the grouping reflex may be taken to lead not to people but to place, defining objects by provenance and implicitly labelling their artists according to ethnicity and race', Elsner cited the overt Aryan and Nordic principles that reshaped the canon thus in pre-war German art history.[26] 'Winchester' is not consistently framed as an explicitly ethnic or racial phenomenon in many studies which use it as a stylistic taxonomy. However, descriptions such as Deshman's, which contain a slippage between something embodied ('taste') with a coherent visual language essential to a group (an 'indigenous…idiom'), is to at least some extent consistent with Heng's definition of medieval race-making as 'strategic essentialisms…posited and assigned through a variety of practices and pressures, so as to construct a hierarchy of peoples for differential treatment'.[27] In at least one instance the stylisation within a 'Winchester' object is framed in racial terms as Talbot-Rice observed the Byzantine 'racial type' of the figures as a means of describing the distinctive figural stylisation embroidered on the Cuthbert vestments.[28] However, in these art histories more broadly, subjective characteristics have been observed

[26] Jaś Elsner, 'Style' in *Critical Terms for Art History*, ed. Robert Nelson and Richard Schiff (London and Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 98-109 (101 and 103).
[27] Heng, *The Invention of Race in the Middle Ages*, 3.
[28] Talbot Rice, *English Art 871-1100*, 244

to construct if not a hierarchical category of peoples, then at least a taxonomy for the classification of art based on essentialised principles.

Though 'Winchester' has not always been explicitly framed as a racial category, the application of it as described above has arguably enabled the continued use of explicitly racist language in studies that observe 'Winchester' as a stylistic visual phenomenon. In 1973 Wormald characterised the stylisation of a figure within a 'Winchester' object by noting the 'huge golly-wog like figure' depicted eating a child in the illumination of the Massacre of the Innocents in the Winchester Psalter (fig. 14).[29] Debra Strickland has written extensively on the elision between representations of monstrosity and racialised 'otherness' in medieval art, particularly in the context of 'Anglo-Saxon England'.[30] To find an elision present in a representation of the Massacre of the Innocents in a twelfth-century English book is therefore not surprising. However, Wormald does not frame his observation of racialisation in this image with the same critical terms used by Strickland. The invocation of 'racial types' and incitement of racist caricatures within discussion of these objects must be understood in the context of the application of 'Winchester' as an English visual idiom in the same studies. A taxonomy which implies the existence of a style deemed to be to some extent inherently English creates a framework in which ethno-racial essentialism may be read into visual objects, and in which bodies may be significantly othered. The categories become self-reinforcing: an embodied Englishness underpins the existence of a 'style', the expression of which forces one to conclude that such an essentialised 'Englishness' and thus a racialised English people must have existed. Wormald is correct in identifying that the figure in the Winchester Psalter miniature is significantly othered, as Talbot-Rice is correct in identifying the distinctive figural stylisation within the Cuthbert vestments. However, the racialising and

[29] Wormald, *The Winchester Psalter*, 79.
[30] Debra Higgs Strickland, 'Monstrosity and Race in the Late Middle Ages' in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous*, ed. by Asa Simon Mittman and Peter J. Dendle (Brookfield: Routledge, 2012), 365-386.

racist language which precipitates and is perpetuated by the 'Winchester' taxonomy can no longer be considered an acceptable means by which to understand these visual attributes.

The idea of a united visual *vernacular*, implied by the 'Insular taste' and 'indigenous, ornamentalized idiom' described by Deshman or the 'Anglo-Saxon idiom' implied by Talbot-Rice, may also be problematised. In linguistic terms, the notion of a 'vernacular' has recently been described by Shyama Rajendran as a means of reifying and institutionalising a 'standard language', concurrent with emergence of 'monolingualism' and 'nationalism' in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[31] Indeed, Elaine Treharne has located the 'emerging sense of English identity' in linguistic histories of the English language which emerged in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: 'the creation of an understanding of "England" that was essentially post-conquest, and that everything that went before that landmark was something other, partly because the Norman government ceased to use English shortly after coming to power'.[32] Furthermore, within the history of the English language, Rajendran argues, this has 'historically been used to racialise, devalue, demean and exterminate peoples and cultures'.[33] Though the focus of Rajendran's study is Middle English language, one may extend her argument to the presumed 'visual vernacular' implied by the application of 'Winchester'. Existing understandings of 'Winchester', as has already been argued, may be regarded as similarly racialising, implying that a 'taste', style, and approach to imagery existed which was essential to 'Anglo-Saxon' manuscript artists and which metabolised imagery imported from Byzantine and Carolingian styles. Such an understanding is consistent with Rajendran's claim that the 'vernacular' functions within the 'colonial regime of knowledge production', placing 'the West' (or this case Winchester, and thus 'Anglo-Saxon' England)

[31] Deshman, *The Benedictional of Æthelwold*, 232; Talbot-Rice, *English Art 871-1100*, 244; Shyama Rajendran, 'Undoing "The Vernacular": Dismantling Structures of Raciolinguistic Supremacy', *Literature Compass* 16.9-10 (September-October 2019), 1-13, 1.
[32] Treharne, *Living Through Conquest*, 3 (citing: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso Books, 1991), 201; Krishan Jumar, *The Making of English National Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 39-59).
[33] Rajendran, 'Undoing "The Vernacular"', 5.

as the 'legitimate centre of knowledge'.[34] In the case of a visual vernacular this is complicated by the fact that Winchester *did* occupy a central position in the development of a linguistic idiom, both in early medieval England and in the subsequent historiography. 'West Saxon' language, it has been claimed, became the 'standardized' if not 'Standard' language 'throughout the Anglo-Saxon period, and well into the twelfth century'.[35] The West Saxon dialect, Karkov has argued, was promoted by Alfred from his court at Winchester, alongside the development of square minuscule script, thereby allowing Alfred to position himself as 'the father of a new English national grammatical structure'.[36] There is no doubt that the histories of language in this period have informed art historical readings which have assumed both the existence of a visual vernacular and the centrality of Winchester therein. However, the potential for any vernacular (linguistic or visual) to uphold a monolingual nationalism, as described by Rajendran and Treharne, creates an urgent need to reassess Winchester, and the stylistic characteristics with which it is associated, to question the legitimacy of such a visual idiom in early medieval material culture.

Indeed, in implying that any sense of united visual Englishness existed, scholars themselves appear to project the Alfredian hope for an 'England united in learning and language', based at the court at Winchester, which Karkov has more recently described as 'a planned social utopia'.[37] Such a utopia, Karkov has argued, was imagined and based both on a past that did not exist, and a future that did not yet exist: 'The movement of both his [Alfred the Great's] thoughts and his writing is from a place – his court at Winchester at the end of the ninth century – to a no-place, the imaginary realm of the past and a future world that could be'.[38] The use of 'Winchester' as a seeming shorthand for art made in England

[34] Rajendran, 'Undoing "The Vernacular"', 5.
[35] Elaine Treharne, *Living Through the Conquest*, 148 (citing: Jeremy Smith, *An Art Historical Study of English: Function, Form and Change* (London: Routledge, 1996), 66).
[36] Karkov, *Imagining Anglo-Saxon England*, 43 (citing: Martin Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture: 'Grammatica' and Literary Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1994), 416-7).
[37] Karkov, *Imagining Anglo-Saxon England*, 14.
[38] Karkov, *Imagining Anglo-Saxon England*, 14.

before the conquest, or art perceived to possess visual characteristics consistent with those before the conquest, may be understood as a continuation of Alfred's cultural project, projecting the fictionality of such a 'united England' into contemporary readings of early medieval art made in Britain. Such an acknowledgement of stylistic continuity may at first appear at odds with the binaries drawn between 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'Romanesque' arts, described earlier in this thesis. However, the identification of any type of 'English' art may also be considered to have underpinned this broader taxonomical approach: it is only because of the belief in a hegemonic 'English' style in the first place that it might be perceived to have been supplanted or altered by incoming cultural forces. Indeed, in his study of the acanthus motif in 'Romanesque Sculpture', Zarnecki explained visual consistencies in sculpture across Britain in this period by citing 'Winchester': 'The popularity of Winchester art survived the Norman conquest of England and the Normans themselves were deeply affected by it.'[39]

The centrality of 'Winchester' within conceptions of vernacular Englishness is therefore also implicated in postcolonial readings of this period. Treharne has described English in the post-conquest period as 'a living literary language for the writing of formal material' which nevertheless possessed the 'potential for exclusion', capable of expressing 'the resilience of English that resonated culturally… one might regard some of the books and texts produced from c.1100 to c.1200 as politically charged.'[40] The extent to which visual images that express a Winchester style may be understood as a similar act of resistance must therefore be critically assessed. Attempting to seek a corresponding visual vernacular may too be considered politically charged; however, one must be cautious about transposing linguistic categories onto visual objects and therein forming the diagnostic visual taxonomies which may uphold essentialised readings of this material. Textiles are not text. 'Winchester'

[39] George Zarnecki, *Studies in Romanesque Sculpture* (London: The Dorian Press, 1979), II 2.
[40] Treharne, *Living Through Conquest*, 148.

and its use as a taxonomy are thus heavily weighted with that 'sediment' of race described by Ahmed, swirling around and sticking to those objects classified as consistent with its style.[41] Textiles are entangled within this taxonomy, and therefore have a significant stake in understanding eleventh- and twelfth-century Englishness and how it has subsequently been motivated in modern conceptions of Englishness.

'WINCHESTER' IN CONTEXT

The use of 'Winchester' outlined in this chapter should not be viewed apart from a longer and broader historiography, which has sought to understand early medieval objects through ill-defined, racialised taxonomies. Just as gender has clung to the study of textiles, so race has clung to art historical assessments of early medieval objects, and the study of the early medieval past more broadly. Indeed, Sara Ahmed's essay, 'Race as sedimented history' (2015), reflected on the long and continuing history of race-making: 'Race exceeds race. A sedimented history: many particles swirling around; particles settling down.'[42] Any scholar of early medieval Britain is forced to contend with a significant sediment: previous studies of eleventh- and twelfth-century art have mapped the conquest onto extant objects by applying 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'Romanesque' as taxonomical categories, the distinctions between which often appear to be underpinned by a belief in a fundamental difference between the 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'Norman' people, based on assumptions that two such groups existed, were distinct, essential, and which affected the appearance of their artistic output.

Studies of early medieval art in this period exemplify such approaches: in a study of *English Romanesque Architecture* (1934), Alfred Clapham credited the 'completeness of the change [in architectural style after the conquest]' to both the 'lack of vitality in the native art'

[41] Sara Ahmed, 'Race as sedimented history', *postmedieval: a journal of medieval cultural studies* 6 (2015), 94-97, 96.
[42] Ahmed, 'Race as sedimented history', 96.

and the 'strength and cohesion of its supplanter', explaining that 'the Saxon spirit was an uncreative one' in contrast to the 'temporal and spiritual power' which produced the 'homogenous and nearly universal culture' of the Normans, alluding to some essential difference between the two groups.[43] Though Clapham is not explicit in understanding this contrast within a racialised framework, the notion of a 'Saxon spirit' gestures towards a biologically-essentialist understanding of a 'Saxon' race and the artistic output with which it was associated. Later studies are more explicit, as in David Talbot Rice's *The Oxford English History of Art 871-1100* (1952). Though unusual in its span of dates from the ninth century to beyond 1066, Talbot Rice nevertheless still perceived a difference between 'Late Anglo-Saxon' and 'Early Norman' sculptural and architectural styles as the result of a biological phenomenon, citing the 'prevalence of Norse blood in one and of Latin blood in the other area'.[44] It may be assumed that the racial anxieties caused by mass post-war immigration to Britain informed Talbot Rice's views, as Clapham's had been similarly coloured, though later studies also echo these narratives.[45]

Even where explicitly racialised language is not used to frame early medieval material, the prevailing characteristic of much scholarship is nevertheless largely connoisseurial: based on essentialised taxonomies from which such elements as an 'English love of ornament' and

[43] A.W. Clapham, *English Romanesque Architecture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), 1-2.
[44] Talbot Rice, *English Art 871-1100*, 73.
[45] In his 1982 study, *Anglo-Saxon Art: A New Perspective*, Charles Dodwell contrasted the taste of 'Anglo-Saxons' and 'Normans' by citing the twelfth-century chronicler William of Malmesbury's claim that the Normans preferred frugal living in large buildings to the Anglo-Saxon preference for extravagance in smaller ones (see: Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, 232 (citing: William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum*, 96). And as late as 1992, George Zarnecki, a leading figure in the study of Romanesque art, understood elements of the Romanesque as an extension of the characteristics perceived to have been shared by the 'Norman' people, namely a taste for 'well-balanced hierarchy' perceived as present in both their feudal system and in their art (see: George Zarnecki, *English Romanesque Art 1066-1200*, 15-16). Zarnecki repeats the comment in the introduction to his *Further Studies in Romanesque Sculpture*, in which he claimed that 'Romanesque art is closely linked with the emergence of feudalism and religious reform' and 'there is some similarity between the structure of the feudal and ecclesiastical systems during this period and Romanesque buildings' (see: George Zarnecki, *Further Studies in Romanesque Sculpture* (London: Pindar, 1992), 2).

'Romanesque tendencies in…strong outlines and angular patterning', are identified.[46] George Zarnecki, was however, clear about his view that artistic production in this period was informed by racial difference, noting as crucial context in his *Further Studies of Romanesque Sculpture* (1992), that the marriage in 1100 of Henry I to Edith/Matilda (the sister of the King of Scots and daughter of the Edith who had fled from England to Scotland at the time of the Norman conquest) was 'an 'intermarriage of the two races [England and Norman]'.[47] This intermarriage, Zarnecki posited, signalled the increasing influence of the English after the conquest and thus the 'pride in their English past must have helped the survival of many Anglo-Saxon artistic traditions during the twelfth century', thereby underscoring his view that there existed two distinct races after the conquest whose existence and racial differences can be mapped onto extant works from this period.[48] Art historical studies of eleventh- and twelfth-century Britain which use 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'Norman' as stylistic taxonomies have therefore continually been constituent in race-making.

The use of these terms as taxonomical categories has been significant in forming that 'sediment' which has clung to early medieval objects. Even those more recent studies which have sought to be more critically rigorous in the use of these terms are still, to some extent, entangled with these racialised histories. At the time of its publication, *The Art of Anglo-Saxon England* (2011), by Karkov represented the most significant departure from historical applications of 'Anglo-Saxon' as she sought to map the ways in which 'Anglo-Saxon' art both contributed to, and documented, the construction of a distinct culture or nation.[49] However, even in this study, which explicitly acknowledged the limitations of 'Anglo-Saxon'

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[46] Zarnecki, *English Romanesque Art 1066-1200*, 23; Jonathan Alexander, 'Manuscripts' in *English Romanesque Art 1066-1200*, ed. by George Zarnecki, Janet Holt and Tristram Holland (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1984), 82-133, 86.
[47] Zarnecki, *Further Studies in Romanesque Sculpture*, 7.
[48] Zarnecki, *Further Studies in Romanesque Sculpture*, 7.
[49] Karkov, *The Art of Anglo-Saxon England*, 1 and 6-7. Specifically, Karkov sought to apply postcolonial critical theory to 'deal directly with problems of labelling, terminology and classification in order to highlight the dynamic, political active, indeed hybrid nature of Anglo-Saxon art'(see: Karkov, *The Art of Anglo-Saxon England*, 6-7).

in art historical studies of this period, claims are still made to an 'Anglo-Saxon taste' or an 'Anglo-Saxon love of glittering surfaces, reddish tones and light reflections'.[50] Such an approach, though not explicitly describing ethno-racial visual or material phenomena, nevertheless suggests an essentialised and embodied understanding of 'Anglo-Saxon' as a stylistic taxonomy, in noting an essentialised 'taste' as underlying an apparent visual style. This approach perpetuated the potential for 'Anglo-Saxon' to be understood as something essential, or as an ethnicity or race which shaped artistic output. This further underscores that which has already been acknowledged: 'The ethnic paradigm has had remarkable staying power especially in art historical discourses concerning the early medieval period'.[51] It is perhaps because of this remarkable staying power that there has been some reluctance to entirely let go of the terminology associated with these taxonomies: namely 'Anglo-Saxon'.

'WINCHESTER' AND TEXTILES

An approach which centres textiles within the study of visual culture in this period is well-placed to reassess the Winchester taxonomy. Not only has one of the best preserved early medieval textiles (the tenth-century Cuthbert vestments) been often labelled as 'Winchester', but the perceived stylistic consistencies between these textiles and other contemporaneous 'Winchester' works have also been cited by scholars to affirm the existence of the broader 'Winchester' phenomenon.[52] A more sustained comparative visual

[50] Karkov acknowledged that 'Anglo-Saxon' 'tells us nothing about the ethnicity, gender or social status of artists or patrons, nor about the religious, political or cultural circumstances of artistic production and reception' (see: Karkov, *The Art of Anglo-Saxon England*, 4). Instead Karkov sought to apply postcolonial critical theory to 'deal directly with problems of labelling, terminology and classification in order to highlight the dynamic, political active, indeed hybrid nature of Anglo-Saxon art' (see: 6-7). Though Karkov acknowledged that describing art as either 'Anglo-Saxon' or 'English' was 'problematic at best' she continued to use both terms to refer to the art made between c. 500 and c. 1100 in the areas governed by the 'Anglo-Saxons' as 'a matter of both convenience and necessity' (see: 247).

[51] Lawrence Nees, 'Ethnic and Primitive Paradigms in the Study of Early Medieval Art' in *Paradigms and Methods in Early Medieval Studies*, ed. by Ceclia Chazelle and Felice Lifshitz (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 41-60, 42.

[52] Freyhan claimed that the vestments' seeming associations with Winchester 'enhanced' the importance of the school ('it's literal meaning without inverted commas')(see: Freyhan, 'Place of the Stole and Maniple',

analysis of early medieval textiles and 'Winchester' objects reveals both consistencies and divergences which significantly destabilise the Winchester taxonomy, and the idea of an English idiom or vernacular more broadly.

That there exist some visual consistencies between manuscripts made in Winchester and the broader corpus of early medieval embroideries cannot be refuted. Indeed, when one considers the general paucity of surviving material from this period (and the paucity of textiles in particular), it is remarkable that items survive which display such a striking cross-media consistency. The depiction of the woman Ælfgyva, embroidered on the Bayeux Tapestry (fig. 15), for instance, displays so similar an approach to the construction of draped clothes as those of the Virgo and Virgin Mary (figs. 16 and 17) in a contemporaneous 'Winchester' Psalter (MS Arundel 60) that they could credibly be based on the same model.[53]

In all three examples any anatomical reality is obscured by stylised draped clothing from which only the feet, hands, and head protrude. The careful modelling of the drapes is suggestive of copious layers of rich fabric, rather than any bodily mass or shape. The gestures made by the hands are identical (albeit inverted in the depiction of Virgo in London, British Library, MS Arundel 60, fig. 17), though the feet are placed at varying degrees across the three examples, and the fabric covering the head of the embroidered example lacks the protruding folds of the illuminated versions. Nevertheless, the rich folds of textile are conveyed in the embroidered iteration, perhaps even more so as, in addition to the drapes' split stitched outlines, the drapes are infilled with laid couching. This labour-intensive method of stitching lays horizontal rows of thread, which are then secured by smaller holding

431); and Wormald drew parallels between the 'Carolingian leaf-work' in the vestments ('another great work of art from Winchester') and the Junius manuscript to argue that this ornament was known to 'Winchester artists' by the reign of Edward the Elder (see: Wormald, 'The 'Winchester School' before St Æthelwold', 306-7).

[53] Gameson noted the repetition of the same figure as the Virgo and the Virgin Mary within MS Arundel 60, as evidence of 'the tendency of individual artists to repeat favourite figure types' (see: Gameson, *The Role of Art in the Late Anglo-Saxon Church*, 82).

stitches, to powerfully convey a sense of rich textility layered upon the ground fabric.[54] In this instance such stitching acts as an almost self-referential evocation of the layers of fabric which can only be depicted by the outlines of the exaggerated folds in the manuscript illuminations.

Tellingly, Ælfgyva, the Virgo, and the Virgin Mary also appear, in their related poses and costumes, to possess significant consistencies with a miniature of St Etheldreda from the earlier tenth-century Benedictional of Æthelwold, made a century or so earlier (fig. 18), which is considered to be the first manuscript that may be definitively described as 'Winchester' in style.[55] Most strikingly, St Etheldreda is articulated with an identical pose as those in the later objects: one arm is folded in towards her, her hand held at her midriff, whilst the other is extended away but only just protruding from underneath the many layers of her rich garments. Unlike in the embroidered depiction of Ælfgyva, Etheldreda's pose is not merely gestural, but practical, as she holds both a book (clasped to her body) and a frond of lilies (held outwards). The retention of this characteristic pose in later examples, without such props, suggests a creative adaptation of earlier motifs in both illuminations and embroideries. However, it is not clear that 'Winchester' remains the most helpful framework for interpreting these visual consistencies. Describing the depiction of Ælfgyva as in the 'Winchester' style, for instance, would be to centre a specific geography and moment in time, and (if historic antecedents are acknowledged) to perceive a racialised sense of Englishness inherent to this imagery. Furthermore, owing to the historic assumption that this consistency

[54] Owen-Crocker estimated that to cover the surface of the scene in the Bayeux Tapestry in which Harold was offered the crown, with the laid couching used on the Cuthbert Vestments, would have taken a single embroiderer over a week (see: Gale Owen-Crocker, 'Fur, Feathers, Skin, Fibre, Wood: Representational Techniques in the Bayeux Tapestry' in *The Bayeux Tapestry: Collected Papers*, ed. by Gale Owen-Crocker (London: Routledge, 2023) (previously unpublished, read as a paper at the Medieval Congress in Kalamazoo, May 2009), 133-150, III 3.

[55] Wormald described the Benedictional as standing 'at the head of a long line of magnificent illuminated MSS. made in Southern England in the century between the accession of St Ethelwold to the see of Winchester and the Battle of Hastings' (see: Wormald, *The Benedictional of St Ethelwold*, 15).

originated in manuscript illuminations, to frame these similarities within 'Winchester' would be to imply that embroiderers were merely copyists.

What may instead be determined is that these commonalities in representation merely suggest the impossibility of determining the direction of visual exchange between media, and instead exhibit the porous boundaries between materials. That individuals such as the tenth-century Bishop of Worcester, St Dunstan, worked across media (including textile design) is well-acknowledged, so such consistencies are hardly surprising.[56] Indeed, the repetition of motifs across even the limited amount of extant material from this period has been acknowledged as clear evidence of imagery repeating across media.[57] However, even recent studies which explicitly identify shared working practices have reasserted that textile-makers were the presumed copyists in any visual exchange: Gale Owen-Crocker and Maggie Kneen have made compelling observations which suggest that curved templates were used in the design of the Bayeux Tapestry to duplicate visual elements shared by manuscripts in the 'Canterbury libraries' (including 'techniques in manuscripts originating at Mont Saint-Michel as well as St Augustine's and Christ Church'). Nevertheless, they conclude:

> The St Augustine's, Christ Church, and Mont Saint-Michel communities were monastic and male. The Bayeux artists took much of their inspiration and impetus from the rich collections of illustrated manuscripts in the famed Canterbury libraries… Anyone with detailed knowledge of the Canterbury libraries was almost certainly male, and so were the artists of eleventh-century Canterbury and Mont-Saint Michel. Whatever the roles of women at earlier and later stages of the making of the Tapestry may have been, the initial drawing work and the wielding of the templates in laying out the cartoon were probably carried out by men.[58]

This need not have been the case. Indeed, the account of St Dunstan's multi-media 'workshop' in the *Chronicle of Glastonbury* mentioned in the introduction to this thesis suggests no such delineation or strict hierarchy between media. Moreover, the primacy of textiles within visual culture, which is more thoroughly summarised in the next chapter, certainly

[56] *The Chronicle of Glastonbury Abbey*, 117.
[57] Gameson, *The Role of Art in the Late Anglo-Saxon Church*, 118.
[58] Kneen and Owen-Crocker, 'The Use of Curved Templates in the Drawing of the Bayeux Tapestry', 65.

does not position embroidery as the lesser art. Indeed, if one had to presume (and to do so remains largely guesswork), it is entirely possible that those people involved in illuminating manuscripts may have produced templates from textile designs, or at the very least shared them.

RECOGNISING DIFFERENCE: MORE 'WINCHESTER' THAN WINCHESTER?

Though there exist some stark consistencies in extant works, the reflex to taxonomise has perhaps sought similarity at the cost of overlooking crucial differences between media, particularly in the representation of human form. Observing the elements of figural representation which diverge from 'Winchester', and which are unique to textiles, may further suggest the possible primacy of textiles in early medieval visual culture, and disrupt the visual hegemony implied by previous histories.

Any attempt to assess the extent to which textiles are consistent with the 'Winchester' style is, however, significantly challenged by the lack of clear consensus as to what visual characteristics constitute 'Winchester'. Where attempts have been made to articulate these, scholars most commonly refer to either figural forms or foliate ornament, often omitting description of specific elements in favour of a general sense of stylistic cohesion, or a 'certain affinity'.[59] Wormald was atypically detailed in describing the 'characteristic narrow shoulders, staring eyes and long faces with a wig-like hair arrangement', which he perceived in the Cuthbert vestments; three tenth-century manuscripts, namely the psalter Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Junius 27 and the *Old English Bede* (both in the Bodleian Library), and the *Tollemache Orosius*, British Library, Add. 47967; and a fragment of wall painting found in the

[59] Freyhan in noting the similarities between the miniature of St Etheldreda in the Benedictional of St Æthelwold and the prophets on the Cuthbert vestments (see: 'Place of the Stole and Maniple', 432).

foundations of the New Minster at Winchester.[60] In comparing the Benedictional of St Æthelwold to 'Anglo-Saxon antecedents', Deshman rather more vaguely observed 'similarities in face and drapery as well as in the firmly drawn lines sensitively varied in value to suggest plasticity'.[61]

It may be noted that surviving embroideries from the eleventh and twelfth centuries possess the visual characteristics described by Wormald even more pronouncedly than those on the Cuthbert vestments. If one compares, for instance, the Cuthbert vestments (fig. 2) to the eleventh- or twelfth-century Worcester vestments (figs. 1, 19, and 23), then the slender frames, round eyes, and stiff hair that Wormald identified in the early expressions of 'Winchester' are even more pronounced in the later embroidered work. One would, for instance, sooner describe the embroidered representation of St Peter, under an embroidered arcade on a fragmentary twelfth-century alb apparel in the collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum (figs. 20 and 49a), as 'Winchester' (by Wormald's standards) than the St Peter depicted in the miniature of Christ's Ascension in the contemporaneous twelfth-century Winchester Psalter (fig. 21); the embroidered St Peter is even more slender, the eyes even more round, and hair even more formalised.[62] The same may be observed when the embroidered St Peter is compared to an earlier 'Winchester' depiction of St Peter in the miniature of King Cnut and Queen Emma presenting a cross at the altar of the New Minster in the *Liber Vitae*, c. 1031 (fig. 22), beside which the embroidered depiction appears more severe in its stylisation.

The severity of the figural stylisation on the Victoria & Albert Museum apparel (figs. 20 and 49a) is matched only in other contemporaneous embroideries: the eleventh- or twelfth-century Worcester vestments feature similarly abstractedly elongated figures, their

[60] Wormald, 'The "'Winchester School'" before St Æthelwold', 307-8.
[61] Deshman, *The Benedictional of Æthelwold*, 225.
[62] A fragment from the same apparel is preserved in the collections of the Museum für Angewandte Kunst in Vienna, Austria (fig. 49b).

vitality instead expressed through their eyes and energetic gestures (figs. 19 and 23). Almost all that survives of a significantly degraded embroidered figure attached to a twelfth-century band, also in the Victoria & Albert Museum (fig. 24) is the outline of such an abstractedly slender figure and a pair of completely round eyes, alluding to the importance of these elements as the basis of the design of figural embroideries, upon which additional details would then be embroidered. The same may also be observed of a twelfth-century mitre obliquely associated with Thomas Becket (fig. 25), which features an embroidered figure about which little may be observed beyond the abstract slightness of the body and the notably 'wig-like' hair. The visual evidence considered thus, the embroidered figures appear to present almost distilled expressions of Wormald's 'Winchester', not so much resembling human forms as representing them through a highly stylised set of features, therefore appearing more 'Winchester' than the Winchester manuscript illuminations themselves.

Though the distillation or heightened abstraction of the human form in the embroidered figures may at first glance appear a significant diversion from painted depictions of the human form, it need not be interpreted as naivete on the part of the embroiderers, nor as evidence of a 'racial type', or an essentialised Englishness inherent in 'Winchester'. The starkly stylised embroidered figures still possess the same fundamental principles of design as in manuscripts also described as 'Winchester'. In neither medium is an attempt made to realistically articulate the human body. Rather energy and movement are conveyed by the gestural hands or feet, which are sized to appear abstracted in that they create a vitality complemented by the staring expressive faces. Indeed, in adopting this comparatively more austere stylisation, embroiderers may actually be demonstrating a sophisticated understanding of the material in which they worked, and the environment and audience into which they would be received.

UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENCE / UNDERSTANDING TEXTILES

Evidence that embroiderers possessed an understanding of both the illusory techniques in 'Winchester' manuscripts and the specific potential of their own medium may be perceived particularly in the treatment of drapery. That the drapery appears comparatively muted in embroidered representations has already been noted in relation to the depiction of Ælfgyva within the Bayeux Tapestry, and the Virgo and Virgin Mary in MS Arundel 60. More broadly, extant figural embroideries do not appear to possess the exaggerated fluttering draperies that have been associated with 'Winchester' manuscripts, such as those in the *Liber Vitae* in which a throng of figures appear to hum with the energy expressed by the assembled crowd (fig. 13).[63] The embroidered figures, such of those of the Victoria & Albert Museum apparel (fig. 20), figure attached to a band (fig. 24) and the Becket mitre (fig. 25) are comparatively rigid, in particular in the depiction of drapery. Where the embroidered drapes hang largely straight against the body, those in the *Liber Vitae* are particularly agitated at the hems as though to evoke a sudden gust of wind. The embroidered figures nevertheless possess an analogous vitality inherent to their material. In his study of the *Benedictional of St Ethelwold* (1959), Wormald observed that:

> the figures themselves have very little solidity in them. Their vitality is gained not from their integral firmness of form, but from the kaleidoscope of light and dark lines which plays over the surface of the drapery. Even such a figure as that of St Etheldreda, which at first sight seems to have a certain weight, shows nothing of the bodily structure beneath her splendid garments. Her life comes from the flickering folds of her cloak and from her long-fingered hands which stretch out with the sensitiveness of antennae.[64]

[63] Talbot-Rice noted 'the graceful fluttering of the draperies' in the Benedictional of St Æthelwold, which he considered 'the most complete and perfect example of the so-called Winchester School' (see: Talbot-Rice, *English Art 871-1100*, 175); Deshman has described 'the fluttering hems' as 'the most striking feature of the Anglo-Saxon Style' (see: Deshman, *The Benedictional of St Æthelwold*, 228); Wormald similarly described 'the extreme vivacity of the figure drawings, with their lively movements, and the jagged, fluttering folds' as 'characteristic' of Winchester illuminations (see: Wormald, *English Drawings of the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries*, 52).

[64] Wormald, *The Benedictional of St Ethelwold*, 13-14.

Though the 'fluttering' draperies were credited by Wormald with imbuing the figures with a 'kaleidoscopic' effect, it was likely that the metallic threads and more plastic nature of precious embroidered vestments illuminated the more austerely stylised embroidered figures with a similarly 'kaleidoscopic' effect, enriching the objects with a parallel dynamism. Even in their present, and significantly degraded, state this enlivening effect may be observed. The Worcester vestments, for instance, though fragmentary, darkened in colour, and contained beneath glass, retain small amounts of gilded thread that glimmer sufficiently under the light so as to prompt the viewer to consider how, in their original state, the figures embroidered on the vestments would have appeared animated when worn. This would then surely have been further emphasised by the inherent portability of these embroidered objects. By virtue of their design, books were encountered by perhaps one viewer at a time in a moment of stasis, as opposed to vestments, which would have been worn and moved around a congregation.[65] The importance of vestments within the rituals of the church may inform an interpretation of this imagery further. Mauren Miller's study of *Clothing the Clergy: Virtue and Power in Medieval Europe* (2014), is chiefly an account of how vestments changed across this period of time, however, Miller additionally described the significance of vestments in the formation of ecclesiastical power structures at this time:

> the medieval clergy developed…a language of clothing claiming holiness and power. Its origins are complex, but driving forces were a desire to make the clergy virtuous in order to channel God's grace to his people, the involvement of bishops in royal governance as an aspect of their pastoral care, and the association of elite status and political authority with precious attire.[66]

The transformative power of vestments, analogous to relic wrappings, is explored in more depth in the second chapter of this thesis. However, Miller's argument that vestments existed as part of the 'language of power' by which the clergy embodied God's presence to their congregations is instructive in understanding these embroidered images. The presence of an

[65] Lester-Makin, *The Lost Art of the Anglo-Saxon World*, 6.
[66] Maureen C. Miller, *Clothing the Clergy: Virtue and Power in Medieval Europe c. 800 – 1200* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2014), 3.

abstracted body, on an object which itself enshrined a human body, may be understood as a visually sophisticated means of allowing the wearer themselves to embody the various saintly or prophesying characters embroidered on the material. The embroideries do not depict bodies but represent and signify the bodies of holy figures and divine characters. Their embroidered bodies contain no recognisable or identifiable features which render them distinct. Instead, the body of its wearer may be projected through it, their movements enlivening the glittering threads of the represented figure to capture the imagination of, and presumably divinely inspire, viewers and wearers.

As has already been described, the stylisation embroidered on these garments has been explained in previous studies by consistency with 'racial types', 'Winchester', and more vaguely expressed visual taxonomies associated (to varying degrees) with Englishness. Medieval art, and Romanesque art in particular, has often been framed in the same paradigms as those used to describe non-Western art, the two often described as 'primitive'.[67] To characterise figural stylisation thus would, of course, be indefensible in a contemporary study. However, its application in art historical studies of the early twentieth century which compare African and Romanesque art has been recognised to have generated some productive ideas. A key element of nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholarship of Romanesque art was the adoption of a chiefly iconographic approach in which 'stylistic distinctions were discussed as regional characteristics; inquiry into form had not occurred at all' by the 1920s and 30s.[68] Risham Majeed has described how 'primitive' was mobilised as a visual category in Meyer Schapiro's studies of Romanesque art, to develop an alternative

[67] Risham Majeed, in her study of Meyer Schapiro's writings on African and Romanesque art, summarised how the two were approached in analogous ways and both defined as 'primitive' (see: Risham Majeed, 'Meyer Schapiro's early writings on African and Romanesque art', *Res* 71/71 (2019), 295-311, 295-6). The 2017 exhibition, *Romanesque-Picasso*, held at the Museu Nacional D'Art de Catalunya, sought to draw visual parallels between Romanesque art and the work of Pablo Picasso. The exhibition was structured around three different themes, one of which was 'Primitivism' (see: Juan José Lahuerta and Emilia Philippot, *Romanesque-Picasso* (Paris: Tenov Books, 2016)).

[68] Majeed, 'Meyer Schapiro's early writings on African and Romanesque art', 296.

means of engaging with Romanesque art, informed by his understanding of African art.[69] In his writings, Majeed argues, Schapiro 'elucidates the adjustable nature of the term "primitive", which at once connotes antecedence and prevalence and is used to diminish as well as elevate'.[70] Consequently, his essay, 'Style' (1953), is a 'forceful argument for historical contingency, proposing an inclusive approach…eschewing the notion of a universal aesthetic standard', reversing the idea that what is beautiful and realistic is necessarily was is good in art – an idea which had 'buttressed the racially inflected theories used to assess the style of different periods'.[71] Similarly, Majeed argued, in Roger Fry's 'The Art of the Bushmen' (1910), comparisons between African and archaic Greek art transform 'primitive' into an 'ontological category', perceived to 'transcend both temporality and geography'.[72] As such, while 'primitive' is not a helpful category for eleventh- and twelfth-century textiles, understanding imagery as existing within an 'ontological category' which looks beyond a single aesthetic standard is. In the opening paragraphs of this chapter the stylisation perceived within eleventh- and twelfth-century textiles was framed as 'abstract', accepting a definition which was not in conflict with figuration, but which was the 'internal aspect' of figuration – an expression of what was perceived as fundamental to the subject.

These bodies, in what they lack in bodily reality, are able to more clearly engage with the body's 'internal aspect' – in this case the *literal* internal aspect: the very human body it clothed. In clothing the figure thus, the stylisation of the figures must be understood as such an 'ontological category' of the kind identified by Majeed in Fry's writings on primitivism, in which the very nature of one's being was revealed by the stylisation, the abstraction, of the manner in which the human form had been depicted. Moreover, the emphasis on gesture,

[69] Majeed, 'Meyer Schapiro's early writings on African and Romanesque art', 295-311.
[70] Majeed, 'Meyer Schapiro's early writings on African and Romanesque art', 305.
[71] Majeed, 'Meyer Schapiro's early writings on African and Romanesque art', 308 (referencing: Schapiro, 'Style').
[72] Majeed, 'Meyer Schapiro's early writings on African and Romanesque art', 304 (referencing: Roger Fry, 'The Art of the Bushmen' (1910) in *Primitivism and Twentieth-Century Art: A Documentary History*, ed. by Jack Flam and Miriam Deutch (Berkeley: California Press, 2003), 41-6, 41).

expression, and the mind (implied by the heads, whose diameter exceeds that of the shoulders) may further articulate the ritual of the Eucharist, performed by the wearer of the vestments, in which movement, gesture, and overt references to the body (namely the miraculous transformation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ) sanctify objects so that they may embody Christ's physical presence, even in the absence of his body.

Further evidence that the stylisation of embroidered figures ought not to be interpreted as naivete may also be found in the manipulation of stitches. In her comprehensive catalogue of English medieval embroideries (1938), Christie noted of the Victoria & Albert Museum alb apparel (figs. 20 and 49a):

> the treatment of the faces is somewhat curious. Hair, eyebrows, nose, mouth and beard are couched horizontally in gold thread, but the forehead and cheeks are filled in with vertical silk lines; the neck and the eyeballs, also in silk, the lines of the filling are again horizontal, a treatment that seems to be an attempt to express the modelling of the face.[73]

Far from being a mere 'attempt' at modelling, however, such stitching demonstrates an impressive manipulation of material and understanding of representation (fig. 26). It is difficult to convey in words and photographic reproductions the delicateness of this work and the skill required for its making; even in its significantly degraded state, the alb's minute stitches are remarkable. As the light catches the specks of extant gilding, one can easily imagine how, in its original state, the alternating direction of the stitches would have substantially enlivened the Apostles depicted.

Parallels may be drawn to the facial modelling in contemporaneous 'Winchester' books; the faces in MS Arundel 60, like that of St John flanking Christ on the cross on folio 12v (fig. 27), are given definition by faint red markings around the nose, and under the eyes, eyebrows, hair line, and chin. These markings are highly effective in granting a sense of weight to these painted faces, and it is evident that in their stitching, embroiderers too

[73] Christie, *English Medieval Embroidery*, 66.

understood the profound effect of such an approach. One may imagine that, in their original condition, the embroidered faces perhaps even superseded the modelling of those in manuscript paintings, the technicality of the stitches lending further weight and dynamism to those depicted. Floating somewhere between painted and sculptural representational methods, their movement and interplay with the light added further definition to the articulated faces.

This approach was new to neither embroideries nor manuscript paintings: in the Benedictional of St Æthelwold the faces have extensive red markings to model their faces (fig. 28) and in the early tenth-century Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Junius 27 (fig. 29), the faces of those contained within the manuscript's illuminated initials have white markings to define their facial features. Indeed, a direct comparison of the embroidered heads on the twelfth-century apparel in the Victoria & Albert Museum and that in the initials in MS Junius 27 demonstrates a startling consistency in facial modelling for two objects of different media made at least a century apart. The white markings highlight the eyebrows and noses of the faces in the illuminated initials, creating a sense of depth to the face analogous of the embroidered equivalent in which a continuous row of horizontal stitches similarly emphasises the connected eyebrows and nose and in so doing creates a sense of definition.

It is clear, therefore, that embroiderers possessed all the sophisticated means of representation of their manuscript painting contemporaries. Indeed, since the 'fluttering' draperies of earlier 'Winchester' books became more muted in later manuscripts, the comparatively even more austere embroideries may have led such visual developments.[74] This interpretation therefore provides significant context for the sources which describe the

[74] Wormald observed that in later manuscripts (MSS. Tiberius C. VI and Tiberius A. III), 'the flying drapery of the king's cloak and the curtain certainly have affinities with pre-Conquest drawings; but the treatment of the folds on the thighs is much less schematic, and looks forward to certain twelfth-century developments', thought he concedes that the 'vivacious line' remains in English drawings throughout the whole of the middle ages (see: Wormald, *English Drawings of the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries*, 57).

contributions of English women, or individuals with Old English women's names, to the continuation of textile traditions across the period of the conquest. To return to Bryan-Wilson's understanding of contemporary textile art as a 'transitive verb', so that 'textile politics is to *give texture* to politics, to refuse easy binaries, to acknowledge complications', these eleventh- and twelfth-century textiles may too be said to give texture to the politics of the conquest and to subsequent identifications of a unifying visual Englishness perceived to centre on 'Winchester'.[75] The astounding phenomenological capacity of these vestments, expressed through textile worker's sophisticated manipulation of the media, not only corroborates those sources which claim that 'the women of the English people' were 'skilled in needlework and weaving gold thread', but is also suggestive of the primacy of the contributions of those textile makers described as English women in accounts of the material culture of early medieval Britain. In teaching gold embroidery to a new, Norman, generation of textile-workers, women such as Leogyth and Ælfgyth provided significant texture to post-conquest England – significantly undermining those historiographical boundaries which would imply a decisive break between 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'Romanesque' styles. Though 'Winchester', as it has been understood within historiography, also implies a degree of visual continuity, an analysis of consistencies in figural stylisation across this period which centres textiles, again textures an interpretation which would seek to understand this consistency as evidence of a unified visual Englishness with its basis in manuscript culture alone. Whether they arose first from textiles or not, this form of stylisation has significant affect in textiles, underscoring the essential position of textile makers in the expression of material principles central to the articulation of the Christian faith and ontological understandings of one's place in the world. The cultural importance of textile makers may therefore be assumed,

[75] Bryan-Wilson, *Fray: Art + Textile Politics*, 7.

contextualising that intersectional identity often implicated in the production of textiles in this period: English women.

To return to Betancourt's understanding of intersectionality as describing moments when identities become 'enmeshed and life-altering', conceptual parallels may be drawn between textiles and the English women with which some sources associated them.[76] Embroidered bodies and the bodies they adorned were seemingly enmeshed within material paradigms which were truly life altering within ecclesiastical contexts: articulating the intercessory authority of their clerical wearers by allowing them to embody the figures embroidered on their vestments. English women after the conquest too were implicated within a life-altering paradigm that depended on enmeshment. Their Englishness and womanhood formed an intersectional and colonised identity which in the context of textile production acquired significant capital, drawing admiration from the colonising forces, and significant furnishings therefore in the post-conquest 'imagined' England. It does not necessarily follow, however, that these objects were 'post-colonial monuments'.[77] Moments of colonial interaction cannot be traced across these objects, nor located within them. However, their capacity for enmeshment is significant in situating the contributions of those 'women of the English people' described by William of Poitiers. Gold embroidery upon vestments appears to have possessed an ontological potential which situates this intersectional identity not as marginal, but as central to the articulation of some of the material paradigms which were central to the Christian faith in early medieval Britain across the period of the conquest.

[76] Betancourt, *Byzantine Intersectionality*, 2.
[77] Karkov described the Nunburnholme cross as such (see: Karkov, 'Postcolonial', 150).

IF NOT 'WINCHESTER', THEN WHAT?

It therefore remains to consider what, if any, application 'Winchester' may have and whether it is in any way a useful framework in which to consider the visual relationship between textiles and manuscript painting, or visual consistencies more broadly in this period. Some scholars have suggested alternative frameworks to describe the consistencies observed across media in this period. Talbot-Rice proposed that a 'Channel' school may aptly describe the consistency across some surviving manuscripts in this period, noting that a number of manuscripts 'of Winchester type' were produced in northern France.[78] He suggested that this must have been the work of 'Frenchmen who had seen Winchester books or by English men who had settled abroad', alluding to an altogether more nebulous understanding of a visual 'vernacular', which may be transmitted across borders.[79] However, it is one that nevertheless still fails to consider embroideries. Talbot-Rice's insistence, for instance, that the twelfth-century Préaux Gospels must have been made outside England because its 'emaciated figures' diverge from those in English 'Winchester' manuscripts, demonstrates a lack of familiarity with the even greater emaciation in contemporaneous embroideries made in England.[80] Karkov's reprisal of Bailey's 'Southern phenomenon' in sculpture is similarly suggestive of the visual consistency implied by 'Winchester', since, even though it lacks the geographical specificity of Winchester, it nevertheless suggests that a broader style existed which originated in a single region.

Beyond the issues relating specifically to 'Winchester' as a taxonomy, the continued relevance of 'style' itself in the study of early medieval art may also be questioned. In the introduction to a collection of essays on the subject of *Anglo-Saxon Styles* (2003), Karkov and George Hardin Brown advocated for the continued relevance of style as a vital

[78] Talbot Rice, *English 871-1100*, 214.
[79] Talbot Rice, *English 871-1100*, 214.
[80] Talbot Rice, *English 871-1100*, 214-5.

'methodological and theoretical prism', emphasising the importance of seeking difference as well as consistency in an approach to studies of style.[81] Karkov and Brown simultaneously decried that 'style' has been overlooked in modern studies more concerned with 'the personal, the ephemeral, and the fragmentary' whilst acknowledging that 'the whole idea of style as "constant form" has its limitations'.[82] With reference to eleventh- and twelfth-century textiles, the notion of 'Winchester' as a style embodies these tensions. 'Winchester' at once forces one to consider the similarities and differences which may inform a more nuanced understanding of the simultaneous flux and continuity in visual culture, and the prowess of textile workers at manipulating forms to greatest effect in their own media, whilst simultaneously implying a visual continuity that is both overstated and racially essentialist.

Where the concept of 'Winchester' may retain some utility is not as a taxonomical category but as evidence of the kind of environment in which visual exchange would have flourished, and which enabled the development of innovative forms in textile production. Winchester was indeed a significant cultural centre: King Edgar's monetary reform had centralised die-cutting at Winchester in the late tenth century, and the development of both a permanent court and reformed monastic community had established the city as a significant seat of political, religious, and cultural power which was reflected in the rich material of diverse media that archaeological evidence suggests was produced there.[83] That textiles, and the English women with which some sources associated their production, were a significant element of the city's creative culture is known. In the will of Queen Matilda, the wife of William the Conqueror, it was stipulated that her embroideries made by a woman in Winchester ('Alderet's wife') be donated to the monastic church of the Holy Trinity at

[81] Karkov and Brown, *Anglo-Saxon Styles*, 12.
[82] Karkov and Brown, *Anglo-Saxon Styles*, 2.
[83] Excavations of medieval material in Winchester uncovered evidence of textile production, gold and silver working, lead, tin and pewter working, copper-alloy working and iron working (see: Martin Biddle, *Object and Economy in Medieval Winchester vols. I and II* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990)).

Caen.[84] This has been interpreted as evidence of the 'Norman appreciation of Anglo-Saxon textiles and embroidery', but such a commission from the new Queen may also be interpreted as evidence of concerted cultural hybridity after the conquest, in which textiles, and the English women who made them, continued have a significant position in material culture and may have shaped innovations in the imagery of this period. The possibility that this was the case is explored at more length in the second chapter in this thesis.

Karkov has acknowledged the role of English queens in the establishment of Winchester as an important politico-cultural royal power: the city, she claimed, was 'transformed' by the building of the New Minster and the convent at Nunnaminster, begun during the reign of King Alfred, the latter built on the grounds of an estate belonging to Queen Ealhswith, prompting the suggestion that 'she rather than Alfred may have been the real founder'.[85] Karkov additionally noted that the eleventh-century Queen Ælfgifu/Emma appeared to have maintained a property in Winchester (granted to her by her first husband King Æthelred II) throughout her second marriage to King Cnut, whose court was most likely based at the royal palace located near the Old Minster.[86] The placement of these palaces within the city's geography, Karkov suggested, may explain the unusual placement of Emma and Cnut in the illuminated frontispiece to the New Minster *Liber Vitae*: 'the queen stands

[84] Schulenburg, 'Holy Women and the Needle Arts', 99 (citing: Christie, *English Medieval Embroidery*, 32, itself citing: Charles Henry Hartshorne in *English Medieval Embroidery* (London: J.H. Parker, 1848), 86: 'casulam quam apud Wintoniam operator uxor Aldreti, et clamidem operatam ex auro quæ est in camera mea ad cappam faciendam, atque de duabus ligaturis meis auris in quibus cruces sunt, illam quæ emblimatibus est insculpta, ad lampadem suspendendam coram Sancto altare, candelabraque maxima quæ fabricantur apud Sanctum Laudum, coronam quoque et sceptrum, calicesque ac vestimentum quod operator in Anglia' ('The chasuble which is being embroidered at Winchester by Alderet's wife, the cloak wrought in gold, laid up in my chamber, to make a cope of; one of my two gold girdles with crosses, the one which is engraved with emblems, to hang the lamp before the holy altar; also my… robe, and another robe now being embroidered in England') (himself citing M. l'Abbé De la Rue, *Ex Cartulario Sanctæ Trin. Bibl. Reg. Paris, No. 5650*: *Essais historiques sur la ville de Caen*, vol. i. Preuves, No. 1)).

[85] Karkov, *The Art of Anglo-Saxon England*, 114 (citing: *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ed. and trans. by Dorothy Whitelock with David C. Douglas and Susie I. Tucker (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1965), s.a. 903, 58; Simon Keynes, *The Liber Vitae of the New Minster and Hyde Abbey, Winchester: British Library Stowe 944: Together with Leaves from the British Library Cotton Vespasian A. VIII and British Library Cotton TItus D. XXVII* (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1996), 31-2 and 81-2).

[86] Karkov, *The Art of Anglo-Saxon England*, 116.

in the place of honour to Christ's right, and the king in the lesser position to his left', in a reversal of 'traditional formulae' (fig. 30).[87] Whatever led to the decision to depict the royal couple thus, it cannot be denied that queens appear to have been prominent within Winchester's development into a major royal centre. Moreover, evidence for a monastic school at the convent of Nunnaminster suggests the possibility, indeed the high likelihood, that precious textiles were produced there, which would further implicate women, and the institutions which they endowed and at which they worked, within the dynamic exchange of material and imagery in early medieval Winchester.[88] Whether this was to the extent that textile production became emphatically gendered cannot be definitively asserted. Nevertheless, the production of textiles in this place must be presumed to have provided significant texture to the development of Winchester as the centre of Alfredian, and subsequent, imagined Englishness, and may therefore contextualise those sources which credit women (or women's institutions) with the production of textiles, associate textile production with English women, or which describe embroidering or weaving as constituent in that gendered performativity through which English womanhood was established: textiles were identified as significant, as objects in their own right and as a cultural category of object. In creating these textures and producing such complex conceptual enmeshments, the relevance of that intersectional identity, English women, was secured within early medieval material culture. Those sources which associate textile production and women themselves enacting their association and establishing the significance of their material contributions.

The potential for productive image exchange to occur within such an environment is exhibited in the church of St Andrew near Winchester in Nether Wallop, Hampshire. A late tenth- or early eleventh-century wall painting of angels that survives on the east wall of the church, over the chancel arch (fig. 31), has been interpreted as 'approximate to

[87] Karkov, *The Art of Anglo-Saxon England*, 117.
[88] Hollis, 'Wilton as a Centre of Learning', 336.

Winchester work of the later tenth century' on account of its consistency with the draughtsmanship of the Benedictional of St Æthelwold and the New Minster Charter image of King Edgar (figs. 32 and 33).[89] Certainly the pair of angels floating above the mandorla in the New Minster Charter miniature are strikingly consistent with the Nether Wallop angels painted above the chancel arch. Compellingly, when the Sarum Group of Ecclesiastical Embroiderers were commissioned to create an embroidered altar frontal in 2002, they too chose to depict an 'Anglo-Saxon design of Christ in Majesty' inspired by the imagery within the church and contemporaneous manuscripts (fig. 34).[90] One imagines that motifs would have been similarly exchanged between media in such a collaborative nexus on an altogether broader scale in Winchester. Winchester may therefore have acted as a venue for such visual exchange. However, the portability of objects, in particular textiles, would implicate any objects made in Winchester within a broader visual culture which lies beyond a single city.

CONCLUSION

The assumption that textiles were a derivative art in early medieval Britain has obscured the manner in which they may disrupt some of the entrenched taxonomies applied to art of this period. Though many extant embroideries have been perceived as 'Winchester' works, thereby reasserting the 'Winchester' taxonomy, comparisons to manuscripts made at the scriptorium in Winchester, and to those characteristics historically associated with the style, both challenge the taxonomy and suggest the prominence of textiles in visual culture of this period.

Figural embroideries of this period are sufficiently consistent with works in other media that their 'style' may definitively be regarded as significant elements of English material

[89] Richard Gem and Pamela Tudor-Craig, 'A 'Winchester School' wall-painting at Nether Wallop, Hampshire' in *Anglo-Saxon England*, 9 (1981), 115-136 (127).
[90] 'St George's News: Waterlooville's Parish Magazine', 2002, http://www.stgeorgesnews.org/2002/04f10.htm, [accessed 20 June 2021].

culture rather than derivative or naive interpretations of a prevailing national style. Simultaneously, the elements of figural representation unique to embroidered works display a creative approach to representation that relies on a sophisticated understanding of the material on which they were worked, and the role of imagery in the rituals of the church. Such conclusions do not advance an understanding of the ethno-racial or gendered identities of the makers of embroideries, but may instead provide an alternative means of engaging with these objects: they demonstrate an art historical value that is no longer defined by essentialised, racialised, or simply racist stylistic categories. In this chapter textiles have been demonstrated as possessing a dislocatory capacity: the stylised figures on vestments implicate the human bodies beneath them so that they are positioned both within and through the sacred figures which adorned their clothing, and are as such dislocated. Textiles are analogously dislocated within historiography: they are not sufficiently consistent with 'Winchester' so as to affirm a unifying English style, dislocating those long-entrenched taxonomies which have underpinned interpretations of early medieval art. Instead the observations made in this chapter assert the skill of textile workers, providing further context for both textiles' associations with 'the women of the English people' and their role in the development of Winchester into a significant cultural centre.

CHAPTER 2

ESTABLISHING A CULTURE OF TEXTILES

One of the primary conclusions of the preceding chapter was that textiles were significant elements in English material culture in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Comparison with (a selection of) contemporaneous manuscripts demonstrated that textile workers of this period were aware of both the stylistic innovations of the age and the unique possibilities represented by the medium in which they worked. The significance of textiles proven, this chapter will demonstrate not only their significance but also their likely primacy in material culture at this time. It is vital to acknowledge the possible primacy of textiles if the significance of the contributions of the 'the women of the English people' are to be fully understood.

Any attempt to more substantively include textiles within an art historical study of this period in order to better understand their importance at this time is, however, significantly challenged by the paucity of extant early medieval textiles. Although the potential for contemporaneous ekphrastic sources to substantiate the limited surviving corpus has been acknowledged, the potential for skeuomorphic references to textiles in contemporaneous works of other media has not yet been fully realised.[1] An exploration of

[1] The art historian Jenifer Ní Ghrádaigh described how the absence of extant works associated with women, including textiles, in England and Ireland from the tenth to twelfth centuries has meant that their involvement has been routinely underestimated by scholars. In this study Ní Ghrádaigh referenced the Cuthbert vestments (fig. 2) and two 'lost' works which are evoked through ekphrasis in literary sources to create an 'inventive history of women and art' which included discussion of religious devotion, power, politics and family ties (see: Jenifer Ní Ghrádaigh, 'The Occluded Role of Royal Women and Lost Works of Pre-Norman English and Irish Art (Tenth to Twelfth Centuries)', *Journal of Medieval History* 42.1 (2016), 51-75, 74); Charles Dodwell, in the 1973 paper 'Losses of Anglo-Saxon Art in the Middle Ages' advocated that ekphrastic literary accounts of art from this period, be used to mitigate the iconoclastic fate which befell much earlier medieval material, and his chapter on 'Textiles' in *Anglo-Saxon Art*, is considerably enriched by descriptions from such sources as the *Liber Pontificalis*, *Liber Eliensis*, Goscelin's *Miracula S.Ivonis* and wills (see: Charles Reginald Dodwell, 'Losses of Anglo-Saxon Art in the Middle Ages', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 56.1 (Autumn 1973), 74-92; Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, 129-169).

such skeuomorphs has the capacity not only to substantiate a limited corpus, but also to reveal a culture of textility in eleventh- and twelfth-century Britain which may then be used to contextualise those sources which associate textiles with that intersectional identity, English women.

Textility's dual meanings are such that the term holds doubly significant potential for this thesis - referencing something that is both 'textile-like' in appearance and form and, as articulated by Tim Ingold's understanding of the term within his essay 'The textility of making' (2010), as 'emphasizing materials and forces…the movement and processes of negotiation between material and human action'.[2] Ingold additionally described making as 'a practice of weaving, in which practitioners bind their own pathways or lines of becoming into the texture of material flows comprising the lifeworld'.[3] The extent to which textiles gave 'texture' to eleventh- and twelfth-century England is one of the central concerns of this thesis, which seeks to examine how that intersectional identity, 'English women' was, has been, and continues to be entangled with textiles. Recognising objects in alternative media which are to some extent textile-like therefore holds the potential to substantiate the limited corpus of extant textiles, give a sense of the primacy of textiles in material culture, and suggest the extent to which those identities associated with these objects were interwoven into the culture of eleventh- and twelfth-century more broadly, their own lives bound into images and materials which comprised the 'lifeworld' of early medieval England.

[2] Elizabeth Murphy, *The Complexity of Making within Disciplinary Traditions: Some Considerations of Ingold's "The Textility of Making" in Archaeological Production Contexts* (30 December 2010), < The Complexity of Making within Disciplinary Traditions: Some Considerations of Ingold's "The Textility of Making" in Archaeological Production Contexts | Studio Michael Shanks ~ Stanford> [accessed 8 January 2024] (citing: Ingold, 'The textility of making', 91-102).
[3] Ingold, 'The textility of making', 91-102, 91.

SKEUOMORPHISM

Skeuomorphism, which, put simply, refers to the manipulation of materials to look like others, has already been considered in studies of early medieval stone sculpture in particular. There, observations of skeuomorphism have confirmed transmedial exchange between stone masons and metalworks in early medieval Britain.[4] Elizabeth Coatsworth suggested that some early medieval stone sculptures, such as the eighth-century cross from St Andrew's church in Auckland, County Durham, give the impression of 'a gigantic metal cross or piece of precious goldsmith work. The whole object is a skeuomorph'.[5] However, skeumorphs have additionally been identified as some of the most explicit examples of textility in early medieval England. Coatsworth considered the possibility that textiles too were involved in the skeuomorphic exchange at the cross from St Andrew's, speculating that 'the earliest examples in sculpture and metalwork are always representations of interlace that could be made using wire or thread'.[6] Though no definition of skeuomorphism was offered within this study, an instructive definition of skeuomorphism was included by Megan Boulton her study of the 'petrified tassels' sculpted upon a pair of ninth-century grave stones in St Gregory's Minster in Kirkdale, North Yorkshire: skeuomorphs, Boulton argued, were not merely 'vestigial traces of earlier technologies', but should be understood as invocations of the symbolism inherent within the materials which the object references.[7] In addition, Boulton observed, skeuomorphs acted as 'powerful signifiers of social understandings', noting that materials may be 'chosen and employed coherently for their ability to create societal meanings, concepts and even memories'.[8] By this understanding, skeuomorphic

[4] Richard Bailey, *England's Earliest Sculptors* (Ontario: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1996), 123.
[5] Coatsworth, 'Design in the Past', 146.
[6] Coatsworth, 'Design in the Past', 146.
[7] Megan Boulton, 'Embroidered stones: considering the symbolism of Anglo-Saxon skeuomorphs and the Kirkdale grave-slab', in *The Art, Literature and Material Culture of the Medieval World: Transition, Transformation and Taxonomy*, ed. by Megan Boulton and Jane Hawkes with Melissa Herman (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2015), 198-216, 200-2.
[8] Boulton, 'Embroidered stones', 201 and 204.

references to textiles may therefore be interpreted as an evocation of the 'societal meanings' and concepts associated with textiles.

Beyond providing a fuller impression of what textiles in this period may have looked like, the notions of value inherent within Boulton's understanding of skeuomorphism therefore also allow skeuomorphic references to textiles to be understood as providing an insight into textiles' materiality and the notions of value inherent in transmedial exchange in this period more broadly. That certain sources attest to a connection between textiles' production and the 'women of the English people' may additionally permit a means for these gendered, racialised, and colonised identities to be included in art historical studies of this period, which need not rely on the essentialist connoisseurship which has characterised much previous study. These skeuomorphs may contextualise those written sources which associated these objects with these groups.

TRANSFORMATIVE TEXTILES

There exists a long history of the representation of textiles, in particular draped wall hangings, within alternative media, dating back to antiquity.[9] Painted versions survive on wall in several medieval churches (including those in Aquileia Cathedral, fig. 35), and are presumed to have been installed when churches could not afford embroidered wall

[9] There is surprisingly sparse bibliography on the specific subject of skeuomorphic paintings of hanging drapes in the History of Art, despite their long continuous history. This may be interpreted as further evidence for the disregard of textiles, and by extension textility in other media, within scholarship more broadly. There is greater acknowledgement of the centrality of hanging drapes within painted schemes in manuscript illuminations. A selected bibliography on the imagery of hanging drapes in both wall paintings and manuscript illuminations from Antiquity to the Renaissance includes: John Osborne, 'Textiles and their painted imitations in early medieval Rome', *Papers of the British School at Rome*, vol. 60 (1992), 309-351; Maria G. Parani, 'Presence in Middle and Late Byzantine Imperial Ceremonial Portraiture', *Byzantine Modern and Greek Studies*, vol 42.1 (April 2018), 1-25; Victor M. Schmidt, 'Curtains, Revelatio, and Pictorial Reality in Late Medieval and Renaissance Italy' in *Weaving, Veiling, and Dressing: Textiles and their Metaphors in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. by Kathryn M. Rudy and Barbara Baert (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 191-213.

hangings.[10] Eleventh- and twelfth-century wall paintings, depicting textile elements, survive as some of the most definitively skeuomorphic material from England in this period.[11] Though these have been identified within art historical scholarship, they have typically been understood merely as 'ornament' or 'decorative' elements, and thus their potential material significance has been overlooked.[12] In his survey of twelfth-century wall paintings (1944), Ernst Tristram noted the extensive list of 'painted hangings', 'both extant and perished', which included those in the altar recess in the Galilee Chapel at Durham Cathedral, at the Chapter House at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, in the Presbytery at Peterborough Cathedral, St Gabriel's Chapel in Canterbury Cathedral, St Augustine's Abbey in Canterbury, Winchester Cathedral, the Palace of Westminster, and churches at Barfeston, Binstead, Thursley, West Chiltington, Chippenham, and Hardham.[13] Later medieval examples of painted drapes, such those dated to the thirteenth century at Romsey Abbey and St Peter's church in Martley, Worcestershire, also suggest that a significant precedent for skeuomorphic depictions of textiles existed, and gestures towards their potential ubiquity in earlier eleventh- and twelfth-century painted schemes which have not survived. Of these surviving wall paintings, those discussed at length in this chapter are those which display the greatest material or visual consistency with contemporaneous textiles and therefore make the most compelling points of comparison. Marginally greater consideration was perhaps

[10] Charles Dodwell noted the presence of such paintings in San Quirce de Pedret in Spain, Santa Maria della Libera at Foro Claudio in Italy and the crypt of Aquileia Cathedral (fig. 35) (see: Dodwell, *The Pictorial Arts of the West 800-1200*, 15).
[11] A map of the wall paintings discussed within this thesis can be found within the illustrations, see: fig. 36.
[12] In his survey of *English Medieval Wall Painting*, Ernst Tristram included 'Painted Hangings' as an element in the 'Ornament' chapter of his study, and in describing the painted drapes at St Mary's church in West Chiltington, West Sussex, detailed that 'Drapery appears on the lower part of the walls, and the presence of ornament and drapery on what remains of the wall at the back of the recess may be taken to imply that an important subject was once depicted above the altar', thereby implying that the drapes themselves were not a subject of importance (see: Ernst William Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting: The Twelfth Century* (London: Pilgrim Trust, 1944), 35 and 75; In Roger Rosewell's later survey of *Medieval Wall Paintings in English and Welsh Churches*, Rosewell characterised the 'imitation drapery' at St Botolph's church in Hardham, West Sussex and Corhampton church in Hampshire as 'embellishment', and described the later, thirteenth century 'drapery effects' at Romsey Abbey as 'decoration' (see: Roger Rosewell, *Medieval Wall Paintings in English and Welsh Churches* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2008), 16 and 21).
[13] Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting*, 75-6.

given to those of the so-called 'Lewes Group', which are significant in the corpus of extant 'Anglo-Norman' works and are thus especially relevant within this thesis, which seeks to interrogate these taxonomies. The 'Lewes Group' of wall paintings in Sussex has historically described the paintings at St Botolph's church in Hardham, St John the Baptist's church in Clayton, St Michael and All Angels church in Plumpton, Coombes Church, and St Martin's church in Westmeston (though those at St Martin's have subsequently been destroyed) and have long been considered to be the work of the same 'school', consisting of continental craftsmen employed by the Cluniac Priory founded at Lewes in 1081 by the first Norman Earl of Surrey, William de Warenne, and his wife Gundrada.[14]

At a break in the wooden dado panelling on the north wall of the nave at St Botolph's church in West Sussex, three successive painted drapes are visible (fig. 37), the muted grey colour of which renders them distinct from the 'bacon and egg' colour palette that characterises the rest of the scheme.[15] Fragments of grey pigmentation additionally survive on the lower east wall of the church's nave behind the pulpit (fig. 38), which suggests that the painted drapery may originally have existed as a continuous register around the nave of the church. A remarkably similar painting of three drapes also survives at dado-height on the north wall of the nave at St Mary's church in West Chiltington, West Sussex (fig. 39), dated to the early twelfth century.[16] An additional twelfth-century example of similar hangings, (albeit taller as the painted drapes extend the height of the wall to 'full length curtains') survives at Corhampton church in Hampshire (fig. 40).[17]

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[14] P.M. Johnston, 'Mural Paintings in Sussex Churches' in *Memorials of Old Sussex* ed. by P.D. Mundy (London: George Allen & Son, 1909), 220-251, 246; Tristram claimed that it was a 'matter beyond doubt' that the paintings 'are of Cluniac workmanship, and [were] inspired by the Priory of St. Pancras at Lewes, the chief Clunianc house in this country', though he also includes the paintings at Binstead and Witley, which are less commonly included in discussions of the 'Lewes Group' (see: Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting*, 27).
[15] The 'bacon and egg' shades which predominate in the 'Lewes' scheme were made using simple ochre pigments that are easily obtainable from a number of deposits in England (see: Rosewell, *Medieval Wall Paintings in English and Welsh Churches*, 136-7).
[16] Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Paintings*, 36; Rosewell, *Medieval Wall Paintings in English and Welsh Churches*, 15.
[17] Rosewell, *Medieval Wall Paintings in English and Welsh Churches*, 16.

The extremely poor survival of church wall paintings from this period renders the relative prevalence of these drapes in surviving schemes notable and confirms that such motifs were likely an established part of early medieval visual culture. However, these painted drapes are notable not only for the relatively large numbers in which they survive, but also for their striking simplicity. It is this lack of iconography which one may assume has sustained interpretations of them as purely 'decorative' visual elements.[18] To apply Boulton's definition of skeuomorphism, however, is to understand the simplicity of the drapes as a clear invocation of the materiality of textiles, and the identities with which they were, in some sources, associated.

The intrinsic value of textiles in early medieval Britain is well recorded: the processes of sourcing fibres, and assembling and dyeing fabric, rendered even the most simple hanging cloth a considerable investment of time, labour, and expense.[19] Beyond the mere signification of 'opulence and expense' that has been understood in the study of painted drapes, however, textiles in the eleventh and twelfth centuries also appear to have had a social and sacral significance which, it may be assumed, the painted textiles were supposed to invoke.

The prominence of textiles within the Marian cult, with its origins in Byzantium, were enthusiastically taken up in early medieval Britain and Ireland. In her study of cloth within the iconography of the ninth-century Book of Kells, Heather Pulliam claimed that Proculus' third-century homily of the Virgin Mary weaving a veil for priests and Gregory of Tours' sixth-century account of Mary protecting the city of Constantinople with her veil were celebrated tales in early medieval Byzantium, and were well known in western Europe

[18] Further painted drapes (which shall be discussed later in this essay) in the chancel at St Botolph's are occupied with figural imagery, and Tristram detailed that painted drapes in Cormac's Chapel, on the Rock of Cashel in Ireland are 'adorned with a variety of fret patterns' (see: Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Paintings*, 76), though extant painted drapes are otherwise unadorned.

[19] For a comprehensive detailing of the labour-intensive processes required for each stage of textile production see: Gale Owen-Crocker, 'Smelly sheep, shimmering silk: the sensual and emotional experience textiles' in *Sense and feeling in daily living in the early medieval English world*, ed. by Gale Owen-Crocker and Maren Clegg Hyer (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020), 197-218, 197-202.

by the seventh and eighth centuries as a result of dynamic cultural exchange.[20] Moreover, the use of relic wrappings, clerical dress, shrouds, and church furnishings also naturally increased the prominence of textiles, positioning them as essential elements in the Church's fabric and rituals.

The tenth-century has been described as a period which witnessed 'the growth of dramatic ritual' in England, considered concurrent with developments in polyphonic music and 'a style of manuscript illumination referred to as the 'Winchester School' flourished'.[21] These dramatic rituals (at least partially) depended on textiles for their effect. The *Regularis Concordia*, a tenth-century document compiled by Æthelwold following the Benedictine reform at Winchester, stipulated regulations for monastic life that included prescribing particular albs to be worn at Candlemas.[22] Moreover, Sarah Larratt Keefer has argued that directions for which vestments should be worn on Easter Sunday ought to be understood as 'costuming'.[23] In addition to which, vestments have been identified as essential in the articulation of clerical hierarchies in the early medieval church with, for instance, the wearing of a stole reserved for an Abbot.[24] Traditions around clerical dress were complex and involved multiple elements including the stole, maniple, cope. Though variation had characterised earlier medieval vestments, by the twelfth-century they had become broadly standardised across Christian Europe:[25]

> Perhaps the most outstanding characteristic of vestments during this period is their sumptuousness. Copes, chasubles, and dalmatics were made of rich silks and velvets shot with metallic threads and woven in magnificent patterns…These garments were further enriched with broad bands of applied embroidery called orphreys. Even the

[20] Heather Pulliam, 'Looking to Byzantium: Light, Colour, and Cloth in the Book of Kells' Virgin and Child Page' in *Insular & Anglo-Saxon Art & Thought in the Early Medieval Period*, ed. by Colum Hourihane (Princeton, New Jersey: Index of Christian Art, Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University, In association with the Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), 59-78, 68.
[21] M. Bradford Bedingfield, *The Dramatic Liturgy of Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002) 2.
[22] Sarah Larratt Keefer, 'Every Picture Tells a Story: Cuthbert's Vestments in the Benedictional of St Æthelwold', *Leeds Studies in English* 37 (2006), 111-34, 113.
[23] Larratt Keefer, 'Every Picture Tells a Story', 113.
[24] Larratt Keefer, 'Every Picture Tells a Story', 113.
[25] Jane Hayward, 'Sacred Vestments as they developed in the Middle Ages', *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* vol. 29.7 (1971), 299-309, 305.

> simpler vestments such as the amice and the alb received patched of embroidery known in the case of the alb as apparels.[26]

Though considerably more is known about ecclesiastical dress, secular dress too was a considered assemblage of textile elements. Owen Crocker has outlined the cloak, gown, tunic, belt or girdle and leg coverings as the main elements within a man's wardrobe in tenth- and eleventh-century England (with the addition of undergarments and, if the weather required, fur garments), whereas a woman's wardrobe would typically hold a cloak, a sleeveless overgarment (with or without a hood), a sleeved gown, a girdle or sash, leggings and some form of head covering or head band.[27] In both secular and religious contexts textiles were thus richly layered, purposefully worn, and thoughtfully preserved. That they were worn thus must surely have enhanced their phenomenological potential, an intermediary element between the body and the world beyond it, an idea which is explored in greater depth in the third chapter of this thesis.

The use of textiles within the dramatic rituals of the church extended beyond vestments: the practice of veiling the cross within churches during Lent has been traced to at least the tenth century in the French abbey at Cluny, and to at least the eleventh century in Britain.[28] The Sarum rites of Salisbury record how the Lenten veil was essential within the rituals of Holy Week:

> the Lenten veil would appear in the sanctuary on the Saturday after Ash Wednesday, remaining there until the Mass on Wednesday of Holy Week, when, during the chanting of the Passion of Saint Luke, as the words relating to the rendering of the Temple veil…were sung, it was dramatically made to fall. Relics, crosses, and other religious images as well as the tabernacle were individually veiled with their own cloths from the Monday after Ash Wednesday until Easter Sunday.[29]

Textiles therefore appear essential in manufacturing those moments of transformation required within the early medieval Christian liturgy to simulate the

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[26] Hayward, 'Sacred Vestments as they developed in the Middle Ages', 305-6.
[27] Owen-Crocker, *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England*, 202-271.
[28] James Monti, *A Sense of the Sacred: Roman Catholic Worship in the Middle Ages* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2013), 354.
[29] Monti, *A Sense of the Sacred*, 354.

miraculous transformations which form the cornerstone of the Christian faith at the apex of its celebrations. The Anglo-Norman liturgy, and the effects of the conquest therein, has not yet been comprehensively explored by scholars.[30] However, the continued prominence of textiles, implied by textility as woven through the 'lifeworld' of eleventh- and twelfth-century England, suggests at least some degree of continuity in liturgical costumes and spaces, implying the prominent position of textiles within the 'lifeworld' of postcolonial eleventh- and twelfth-century England. Textility, in works of other media, must be presumed to have purposefully gestured towards these associations.

Martina Bagnoli's essay, 'Dressing the Relics' (2014), argued that textiles in medieval Christendom, as a result of their association with relics, came to engender relationships 'of power, control and the invisibility of God's presence', thereby embodying the paradox presented by the 'earthly remains of the saints and their heavenly lives'.[31] A depiction of textiles fulfilling this role is prominent within what is perhaps the most pivotal scene of the Bayeux Tapestry. In the scene depicted under the embroidered inscription, 'UBI HAROLD SACRAMENTUM FECIT WILLELMO DUCI' ('Where Harold took an oath to Duke William'), King Harold swears an oath (the exact nature of which is unclear from surviving historical records) to Duke William, standing between two reliquaries, his hands over them as a demonstration of his solemnity and commitment (fig. 41). In his analysis of the Tapestry, Lucien Musset described the two reliquaries as distinct from one another, with the right being 'of a conventional rectangular design… standing on an altar', whilst that on the left is 'placed on a kind of bier' with a hogback roof that has parallels with an eleventh-century Danish reliquary.[32] The reliquaries' rich hanging draperies dominate the exterior of both,

[30] Bradford Bedingfield, *The Dramatic Liturgy of Anglo-Saxon England*, 228.
[31] Martina Bagnoli, 'Dressing the Relics: Some Thoughts on the Custom of Relic Wrapping in Medieval Christianity' in *Matter of Faith: An Interdisciplinary Study of Relics and Relic Veneration in the Medieval Period*, ed. by James Robinson and Lloyd de Beer with Anna Harnden (London: The British Museum, 2014), 100-109, 105.
[32] Musset, *The Bayeux Tapestry*, 150.

however, and they are ultimately the unifying element in their design. In the absence of any architectural setting, these reliquaries alone enable the evocation of an ecclesiastical environment, and the prominence of textiles within their design is a telling indication of the significance of fabrics in the formation of religious space and the facilitation of religious ritual in the eleventh century.

The representation of these embroidered hangings on the Bayeux Tapestry bears a striking resemblance to the paintings at St Mary's and St Botolph's churches, in which triplicate successive drapes convey the quantity and richness of the fabric depicted. The commonality of this motif, repeated also in contemporaneous ivories and manuscripts as a means of depicting reliquaries or rich furnishings (figs. 42 and 43), suggests that this had developed as a standardised mode of representation.[33] That such a common signification had developed further points to the enduring intrinsic and apotropaic value of textiles in this period. This degree of standardisation is additionally suggestive of the significance of textility as a visual and material category in this period. To return to Ingold's description of making as 'a practice of weaving, in which practitioners bind their own pathways or lines of becoming into the texture of material flows comprising the lifeworld', the consistency of how textiles are represented within these objects reveals how embroidered and woven objects were visually woven into objects of alternative media and thus were prominent within the 'lifeworld' of eleventh- and twelfth-century England.[34] The inclusion of reliquary draperies on the Bayeux Tapestry, as textiles represented on a textile, is thus especially compelling as the scene represents not only the objects depicted, but also a skeuomorphic tradition of representation which affirms the material significance of the very material on which they are displayed.

[33] Dodwell cited these two depictions of hanging drapes (figs. 37 and 39) in his claim that 'one function of these fabrics was to brighten up the inside of houses' and (as he goes on to claim) churches (see: Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, 141), an assessment which perhaps overlooks their profound sacral significance.
[34] Tim Ingold, 'The textility of making', *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 34 (2010), 91-102, 91.

Such an interpretation is additionally supported by the nature of stitching used to express the draperies. Stem stitching marks the outlines of the folds in the drapery, which are then infilled with laid couching – that laboriously intensive stitch which therefore conveys a sense of material luxury that must surely have been considered fitting for the rich drapery which it depicts (fig. 44). Though the tenth-century Cuthbert vestments are almost entirely surrounded by gold couched thread, the Bayeux Tapestry's 'background' (in addition to much of the space within the outlines of stem stitch) is left unembroidered, which Owen-Crocker has suggested was dictated by economy of material and labour (to cover the surface of the scene in which Harold is offered a crown, with the couching used on Cuthbert's vestments would have taken a single embroiderer over a week).[35] It is therefore significant that a considerable amount of couched stitching was undertaken in the portrayal of these hanging draperies, particularly as it is especially fine and is crucially absent from the blind arcading in the upper part of the reliquaries, which presumably represent wood or metalwork.

In veiling the relics upon which the legitimacy of Harold's oath depends, these drapes are also consistent with Bagnoli's understanding of how textiles' concealment of relics meant that they came to signify the sacrality which lay beyond them. To the viewers of the Tapestry, the relics which legitimise Harold's oath (and on which the entire scene centres) are at once concealed and revealed by the drapes, as even in representation they must be veiled to secure their sanctity. In this instance textiles are therefore undeniably employed to navigate that essential paradox which material theorists have determined to lie at the heart of Christian materiality: how to represent the immaterial through the material.[36]

[35] Owen-Crocker, 'Fur, Feathers, Skin, Fibre', III 3.
[36] Daniel Miller, *Materiality* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2005), 16.

Early medieval Christianity demanded faith in what one could not see – the miraculous conception, life, and resurrection of Christ, the mystery of the Eucharist, and ultimately an afterlife to which no living being could attest. Skeuomorphic representations of textiles for textiles' sake (or 'decoration') may therefore have been understood as an illustration of the Christian faith itself – a mediation between the earthly and the divine – in which an appreciation for the wealth of the material world co-existed with the belief in what lay beyond, veiled from view by one's own mortality. That imagery was exchanged between mediums in this period has long been accepted, but the commonality of representations of textiles, the richness of their embroidered depictions, their skeuomorphic prominence in surviving painted schemes, and their apparent position as material intercessors should be read as evidence of the centrality of textiles in the material culture of this period.

Boulton also related this significant role of textiles in veiling relics, to their inherent allusions to Moses's portable Tabernacle and textiles' broader role in providing 'a connection with the realm of heaven and beyond' or 'the construction of an eschatological iconography'.[37] In the case of the painted drapes at St Botolph's this 'iconography' is complicated by the fact that as paintings on a wall, these drapes do not conceal a relic or clothe a body, and nothing lies behind them as they are not textile. Though the virtuosity of the painting may be praised for evocatively capturing the heaviness of drapes so as to convincingly and immediately invoke rich fabric hangings, there is no possibility that a viewer would mistake them for genuine textile hangings. They are therefore not a conceit: they do not attempt to obfuscate the viewer but instead to signal textile and thereby enact textility within the painted scheme of the church. In doing so these objects problematise Kathryn Rudy's understanding of skeuomorphs, included in her essay, 'Skeuomorphs in Late Medieval Europe' (2019), in which she defined them thus:

[37] Boulton, 'Embroidered Stones', 212.

> Skeuomorphic decorative features refer to an earlier technology. Artists could use another material when the first choice would require too much skill, or be too expensive.… These transformations often occur at the edges of skill-intensive manufacturing… When a maker creates, say, a faux-marble sculpture made of moulded concrete, or any of the items discussed in this paper, she is creating a simulacrum that relies on misrecognition… The context of the faux object can help the beholder to suspend disbelief, which may be necessary, for an image of an image is mimesis twice removed.[38]

The paintings at St Botolph's do occur at the edge of 'skill-intensive manufacturing' as they reference a media which is more expensive and time-consuming to produce and they do depend on the manipulation of paint into 'believable forms' to create a 'simulacrum', however, it is not one which relies on misrecognition – the viewer is not required to suspend their disbelief to the extent that they would believe a textile hung where the wall is painted. The skeuormorph is transformative, but not in the sense that it is materially transformed: the wall does not *become* textile, but its painted surface prompts material associations analogous to those of viewing a hanging textile, transforming the experience of beholding the wall. The wall is not transformed and yet still a transformation occurs. Even in the absence of textile, its invocation enables a transformation by depicting that media which is in its materiality wholly transformative. This has parallels with the transformation inherent in the use of textiles as relic wrappings: they do not transform the object but are entangled in the transformative capacity of the relics. This embodies Ingold's understanding of textility: the wall is not textile but through the application of skeuomorphic paint the artist weaves textiles as an idea, a concept, and the cultural associations of textiles, onto the surface thereby drawing both the wall and the fabric which it references into the 'lifeworld' of early medieval England in which sanctity is conveyed and conferred by the presence of a textile object.

Such a reading is additionally consistent with contemporary art historical understandings of medieval material more broadly. Within her study of *Christian Materiality*

[38] Kathryn Rudy, 'Skeuomorphs in Late Medieval Europe: Playful and Utilitarian Approaches to New Materials', *MEMO* 5 (2019), 24-37, 35-6.

(2015), Caroline Walker Bynum argued that 'Throughout the Middle Ages, matter was defined – and explored – as the locus of change.'[39] Of particular relevance to this study is Bynum's interpretation of panel paintings and three-dimensional sculptures which had relics placed within them: 'Hence, what modern art historians would call "iconography" or "image of" could become the thing itself.'[40] In the case of the painted drapes, no relic was inserted, but the notion that an 'an image of' could 'become the thing itself' is nevertheless instructive for an understanding of the transformative potential of this imagery: in invoking the material of textiles, the paintings project the materiality of this alternative media and are to some extent transformed, going at least part way to becoming the object. Textiles have already been characterised as inherently transformative objects. The transformative capacity of textiles is underscored by their mere painted mirage transforming the wall. Furthermore, Bynum's understanding of the materiality of 'holy matter' rested in large part on the 'appearance of animated statues and wall paintings', which itself depended on the object's 'plasticity and tactility'.[41] Though Bynum's study is principally concerned with later medieval sculpture and wall painting, the transformative capacity of these painted textiles must too be understood to have engaged with the plasticity and tactility of actual textile objects to incite transformative allusions to an alternative media and its associated materiality. Textiles, more than any other material, must be assumed to have prompted tactile associations, their intimately labour-intensive processes of making and subsequent positioning as clothing and furnishings within material culture necessitating an engagement with touch not necessarily required by other objects. This may be extended even further to include the argument within the previous chapter that the stylised, elongated, and fundamentally linear figures on

[39] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality* (New York: Zone Books, 2015), 25.
[40] Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, 29.
[41] Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, 28. In this claim Bynum acknowledged a debt to the ideas of the art historians Michael Baxandall and Herbert Kessler, citing: Michael Baxandall, *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980), esp. 53-94; Herbert Kessler, *Seeing Medieval Art*, Rethinking the Middle Ages 1 (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2004).

vestments such as those preserved at Worcester and their abstractedly stylised hands, feet, and faces may have acted as a visually sophisticated means by which the wearer was themselves transformed to embody the embroidered character, in an invocation of the transformative moment of the Eucharist. Bynum references animated wall paintings and statues to illustrate her argument that transformative 'holy matter' depended on plasticity and tactility, but the bodies clothed by these objects were literally animate and the vestments they wore were animated by their movements, surely therefore significantly heightening any transformative allusions.

'FICTIVE' DRAPES

Roger Rosewell described these painted drapes as 'fictive'.[42] Textiles, as relic wrappings and wall hangings, already invoked the material paradox which required viewers to believe in that which they could not see, but these painted textiles contribute an additional layer of belief to this paradox: the belief not only in what one could not see but in what is not truly there. The textiles do not hang on the wall and as such the viewer would instantly understand that it also concealed nothing, underscoring textiles' fundamental ability to point to the unseen, the non-existent, navigating the boundaries between the material world and that which may lie beyond it. The painted drapes are therefore 'fictive' in that they are not a portrait or copy of a real textile. However, Rudy's description of late medieval skeuomorphic devices as 'simulacra' may approach closer to an early medieval understanding. Jean Baudrillard, in his treatise on the subject (1981), defined simulation as 'opposed to representation' which considers the sign and the real equivalent, and instead operated on a 'principle of equivalence' through such successive phases:

1. It is the reflection of a basic reality.

[42] Rosewell, *Medieval Wall paintings in English and Welsh Churches*, 155.

2. It masks and perverts a basic reality.
3. It masks the absence of a basic reality.
4. It bears no relation to any reality whatever: it is its own pure simulacrum.[43]

None of Baudrillard's phrases perfectly describe the painted drapes which do not reflect, pervert, absent, or deny any reality. They are neither a painting nor a textile, but still depend on the materiality of textiles to function as a simulacrum and convey their own transformative potential. Gilles Deleuze extended this understanding to contrast 'simulation' (a copy *with* resemblance) with 'simulacrum' (an image *without* resemblance which is not an unfaithful copy but rather interrupts the relation between the original and the copy).[44] This too, however, fails to frame an understanding of these images, which are not unfaithful evocations of textiles and may be interpreted less as an 'interruption' of any original textile than as an extension of textiles' materiality into the painted and built space, underscoring the profundity of its materiality in this context. Textility is therefore the best way of framing an understanding of these objects, in which textiles are 'woven through' the material culture of early medieval Britain, not necessarily present, but conceptually woven into alternative media through visual references.

This signalling of textility within the divine space is especially profound in the extant twelfth-century wall paintings in the Galilee Chapel at Durham cathedral, in which painted drapes extend across the wall of the recessed niche within which the altar was placed (fig. 45). The adjacent walls feature a figural painting which depicts St Oswald, who casts his eyes towards the space where an altar must be presumed to have stood, as indeed it does today (fig. 46). Just as the heavy and stylised drapery upon the reliquaries depicted on the Bayeux Tapestry used the evocation of textiles' materiality to locate the scene within a sacral space, so the paintings at the Galilee Chapel in Durham (and those at St Botolph's, and elsewhere) signal sacrality by gesturing towards textiles. What may be concluded from such observations

[43] Jean Baudrillard, 'Simulacra and Simulations' in *Jean Baudrillard, Selected Writings*, ed. by Mark Poster (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 166-184, 168.
[44] Gilles Deleuze, 'Plato and the Simulacrum', trans. by Rosalind Krauss, *October* 27 (Winter 1983) , 45-56, 48.

is the prominence of textiles in early medieval material culture, and the crucial role played by textiles and textility in the articulation of sacred spaces and the expression of the paradoxes central within early medieval Christianity.

EMBODYING THE MATERIAL PARADOX: VEILING ENGLISH WOMEN

It remains to consider the extent to which these observations of the materiality of textiles and textility within other media, may inform an understanding of the intersectional identities with which they were, in some cases, associated. As described in the introduction to this thesis, there are sources which implicate textiles within accounts of English women (both as an intersectional category and as individuals) or femininity. There are two concepts which are particularly helpful in seeking to understand this paradigm. Bynum described medieval matter as a 'locus of change', possessing a transformative capacity.[45] That even in contemporary contexts textiles have been understood thus was articulated by Bryan-Wilson in her claim that contemporary fiber art is a transformative site for 'identity construction'.[46] In this claim, Bryan-Wilson further identified needlework as a tool for self-definition through which embroiderers allowed the 'self to be manifest in the world'.[47] Within the first chapter of this thesis, textiles were described as having a transformative effect on the body of the wearer of medieval vestments, exhibited within and enabled by the stylised figures embroidered upon them. Though I maintain that identities cannot be located within these objects or that imagery, textiles as a material category do appear in some instances to have possessed a transformative capacity which allowed for the intersectional identity of an English woman to be made manifest.

[45] Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, 25.
[46] Bryan-Wilson, *Fray*, 7.
[47] Bryan-Wilson, *Fray*, 7; see introduction, footnote 32, Amos and Binkley, *Stitching the Self: Identity and the Needle Arts*, 69.

Accounts of the use of textiles by English women, for instance, appear in some cases to have simultaneously affirmed their intersectional identity as both English and a woman and enabled individuals to embody the intercessory paradoxes expressed by relics, as in the practice of veiling. In the specific context of conquest-era England, 'taking the veil' could be a signal of both commitment to holy orders and, in the wake of the Norman conquest, a means of guarding against the presumed predatory urges of the incoming Norman ruling class towards English women. In veiling themselves, these women may be understood to have undergone a material process analogous to the wrapping of relics or of high crosses during Christian celebrations, as a means of transformation: in becoming a nun, they too embodied a mediation between an earthly and heavenly life, and a violation of the veil was thus seen as a significant cultural transgression.

The eleventh-century chronicler Goscelin's account of King Edgar's 'marriage' to Wulfthryth of Wilton in the late tenth century, as told in the *Vita Edithae*, attested to the gravity of such a violation: having 'carried off' Wulfthryth from the nunnery at Wilton where she had taken the veil (and of which she later became abbess), Edgar was forced by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dunstan, to give penance for his crime and to allow Wulfthryth to return to Wilton.[48] Though Edgar acknowledged the daughter from his union with Wulfthryth (Edith) as a legitimate daughter, the legitimacy of the marriage itself was nevertheless compromised by Wulfthryth's having taken the veil.

This cultural concern not only survived into the twelfth century, but after the conquest appeared to have acquired additional cultural connotations within a postcolonial context. In 1100 the Archbishop of Canterbury, Anselm, had to be persuaded to give his permission for the Anglo-Scottish princess Edith/Matilda to marry King Henry I, as there

[48] Hollis, 'Wilton as a Centre of Learning', 311 (citing: Goscelin, *Vita Edithae*, trans. By Michael Wright and Kathleen Loncar in *Writing the Wilton Women: Goscelin's Legend of Edith and Liber Confortatorius* ed. by Stephanie Hollis (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 17-96, 26-7); Elizabeth Tyler, *England in Europe: English Royal Women and Literary Patronage c. 1000-1150* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 223.

was some suggestion that she had taken the veil during her education at the nunneries at Romsey and Wilton.[49] Though historical sources are inconsistent as to whether or not Edith/Matilda had taken the veil, Anselm's predecessor Archbishop Lanfranc had considered this distinction the determining factor in dictating whether convent members were able to marry.[50] Indeed Elizabeth Tyler, in her study of women's literary patronage in the early eleventh century (2017), claimed that Edith/Matilda's veiling was lent a 'singular political weight', as 'the legitimacy of the fusion of the Anglo-Saxon and Norman dynasties rested on the resolution of the issue'.[51] Though textiles were evidently significant in the signification of taking holy orders in this period, their exact role is not precisely known. On the matter of veils, Owen-Crocker and Desirée Koslin noted that 'from the establishment of convents in the British Isles, the veil was associated with the profession of nun, and the concept of 'taking the veil' was synonymous with entering the religious life, as it remains today'.[52] In particular, they cite as evidence the ninth-century collection of hagiographies, *The Old English Martyrology*, which stated that 'sancta Hylda wæs XXXIII geara on læwedum hade and XXXIII geara under haligryfte' ('Saint Hilda was 33 years in secular life and 33 years under holy veil').[53] However, the variety in depictions of nuns' veils and the imprecision in language used to described them (the words 'wimpel', 'winpel' or 'gwimpel' were used until

[49] Tyler, *England in Europe*, 308 (citing: *The Letters of St Anselm of Canterbury*, ed. by F.S. Schmitt and trans. by Walter Fröhlich, (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1990-4), 177, 91).
[50] Tyler, *England in Europe*, 308 (citing: *The Letters of Lanfranc Archbishop of Canterbury*, ed. and trans. by Helen Clover and Margaret Gibson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 53, 166-7).
[51] Tyler, *England in Europe*, 308.
[52] Gale Owen-Crocker and Desirée Koslin, 'Veil' in *Encyclopaedia of Medieval Dress and Textiles*, eds. by Owen-Crocker, Coatsworth and Hayward, 611-3, 612.
[53] Owen-Crocker and Koslin, 'Veil', 612 (citing: Georg Herzfeld, *An Old English Martyrology* (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1900), 206); it worth nothing here that Herzfeld's own translation of this passage is 'St. Hilda was for thirty-three years in worldly life and for thirty-three years in the cloister', though 'haligryfte' is translated as 'veil' or 'holy garment' by Joseph Bosworth (see: Herzfeld, *An Old English Martyrology*, 207; Joseph Bosworth-Toller, 'hálig-rift' in *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, Thomas Northcote Toller, Christ Sean, and Ondřej Tichy (Prague: Faculty of Arts, Charles University, 2014)). Such mis-translations are yet further evidence of the extent to which textiles have been elided from the historical record.

the thirteenth century to gloss Latin words with a variety of meanings that are not typically consistent with their modern usage).[54]

In the case of Edith/Matilda it nevertheless appears the deciding factor in her commitment to Holy Orders. The matter was eventually resolved by the intercession of Edith/Matilda's aunt, Christina, the Abbess of Romsey (where Edith/Matilda was first educated), who confirmed that Edith/Matilda had not taken holy vows and had only taken the veil at her instruction, to protect her 'Normannorum libidinem' ('from the lust of the Normans').[55] Edith/Matilda would seemingly not have been alone in expecting the veil to protect her from the Normans, as Archbishop Anselm acknowledged in a letter to Gundulf, the Bishop of Rochester, 'uero non amore religionis sed timore Francigenarum sicut uos dictis ad monasterium confugerunt' ('those who as you tell me fled to a monastery not for love of the religious life but for fear of the French').[56]

In this context textiles truly must be considered 'a transitive verb', undoubtedly giving texture to politics and refusing easy binaries.[57] English women were transformed by the wearing of a textile veil, which for those seeking to avoid marriage to incoming Norman forces served to underscore their intersectionality as well as their gendered identity. Betancourt's understanding of intersectionality as an 'enmeshed' and life-altering identity, when applied to English women after the conquest reveals also the prominence of textiles: English women's lives were altered, their marriage prospects drastically changed, their gender, Englishness, and colonised identities enmeshed. In the cases of preventative veiling textiles appear well within the fray of this enmeshment.[58] Thus textiles were both

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[54] Owen-Crocker and Koslin, 'Veil', 611-2.
[55] Tyler, *England in Europe*, 308 (citing: Eadmer, *Historia novoum in Anglia*, trans. by Geoffrey Bosanquet (London: Cresset Press, 1964), 127. A transcript of the original Latin is within *Eadmeri Historia Novorum in Anglia, et Opuscula Duo de Vita Sancti Anselm et Quibusdam Miraculis Ejus*, ed. by Marting Rule (London: Longman & Co., 1884), 122).
[56] Tyler, *England in Europe*, 308 (citing: *The Letters of Lanfranc Archbishop of Canterbury*, eds. and trans. by Clover and Gibson, 53, 166-7).
[57] Bryan-Wilson, *Fray*, 7.
[58] Betancourt, *Byzantine Intersectionality*, 2.

'transformative sites' and marked transformative sites (women's bodies): signalling the transformed prospects of those women who would perhaps not have taken the veil were it not for fear of the Normans, and transforming women's bodies into inviolable sites.

Such accounts suggest that in this context veiling may have acted as one such 'performance of difference' described by Bhabha as essential in the emergence of cultural differences, or that performativity essential to Butler's understanding of the cultural construction of 'woman' as a gendered identity.[59] The both performative and literal act of veiling, in this context, appears not only to confirm textiles' ability to confer sanctity (and the construction of a sacred womanhood therein), but also its potential to act as a means of dynastic protection, which affirmed in so doing the continued existence of the cultural group which that dynasty represented and a gendered group within it. This is unsurprising, as Tyler argued that nunneries were in themselves considered at the time 'to act as repositories of Anglo-Saxon loyalties and cultural memory', such as those around Winchester which were patronised by English Queens, included in the first chapter of this thesis.[60] The essential role of 'memory', or histories of association, by which emotions may 'stick' to objects as argued by Ahmed, and the potential for such affective stickiness to inform an understanding of how identities became 'stuck' to objects or materials, as described in the introduction to this thesis, may therefore inform a reading of skeuomorphic representations of textiles.[61] The anxieties present around veiling in English nunneries evidence how textiles were mobilised within cultural memories of Englishness and womanhood so much so that they must be presumed to have 'stuck' to the medium, in addition to its sacral and transformative associations. The textility of these painted skeuomorphs therefore too reference these cultural associations, allowing their makers to 'weave' them into the space they adorned,

[59] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 2004), 3; Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 4-5.
[60] Tyler, *England in Europe,* 308.
[61] Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 11.

binding these identities into these spaces. It is, however, difficult to assess the extent to which such cultural constructs may be considered exhibitions of women's agency in this period. Surviving sources are ambiguous as to whether the cultural distinctions drawn around individuals' perceived Englishness and womanhood by taking the veil in the context of post-conquest nunneries were empowering or exploitative, or whether they were an emphatic expression of Insular traditions or imposed by fear of a colonising force.

Though one should therefore be cautious about drawing conclusions about the agency or categories of identity which 'stuck' to women within these cultural constructions, the surviving visual evidence does at least permit the conclusion that skeuomorphic expressions of textiles confirm the centrality of textiles in post-conquest visual culture. It may also be concluded that such references expressed the mutual affirmation between the persons, materials, and performatives that created the English woman, and which were ultimately invoked to 'give texture' to the establishment of 'Anglo-Norman' cultural hybridity in the instances of dynastic intermarriage described in the introduction of this thesis.

EMBROIDERING HYBRIDITY

The hanging drapes on the north wall of the nave at St Botolph's are not the only skeuomorphic references to textiles within the church's scheme. The distinctive depiction of the Temptations of Adam and Eve on the west wall of the chancel is presented as a *trompe l'oeil* textile hanging, suspended from above by loops and a rail (fig. 47). Though this detail is unique in surviving eleventh- and twelfth-century wall paintings, the fragmentary nature of other extant wall paintings from this period, and the general stylistic consistency of what survives of the 'Lewes Group', makes it unlikely that this detail at St Botolph's was unique. Indeed in his survey, Tristram argued that the paintings at Hardham, in particular, must have

included painted draperies if judged 'by analogy with other examples'.[62] Though continental parallels were identified by Dodwell in the churches of San Quirce de Pedret in Spain, and Santa Maria della Libera and the crypt of the Basilica of Aquileia, Italy (fig. 35), it is still essential to consider the Insular context in which the paintings at St Botolph's would have been made and viewed.[63]

Although the admiring accounts of English women's needlework make their invocation in alternative media wholly unsurprising, studies of the 'Lewes Group' rarely include comparisons with embroidered works. In a rare exception, David Park's study of the 'Lewes Group' (1983) identified pronounced commonalities between the paintings and the Bayeux Tapestry, notably their use of inscriptions, narrow towers to act as architectural divisions between scenes, and the humped shoulders, small heads, and long necks of the figures, in addition to the alteration of colour between the horses' legs and figures' sleeves as a means of shading.[64] Based in part on this shared imagery, Park argued that these paintings ought to be understood less as evidence of an innovative 'Cluniac' style in the South of England, and more as an 'Anglo-Norman' style similar to works in a number of media in both England and Normandy in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries.[65] Park's overriding conclusion that 'wall paintings may have been at least as important as manuscript illumination in the post-conquest period…therefore no study of the latter can afford to ignore them', affirmed the preoccupation with manuscripts that has characterised much of the art historical scholarship of art of the eleventh century.[66] Moreover, Park's comparisons with the Bayeux Tapestry have since been undermined by Musset, who claimed

[62] Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Paintings: The Twelfth-Century*, 27.
[63] Dodwell, *The Pictorial Arts of the West 800-1200*, 15.
[64] David Park, 'The 'Lewes Group' of Wall Paintings in Sussex', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 6 (1984), 200-235, 225.
[65] Park, 'The 'Lewes Group' of Wall Paintings in Sussex', 231.
[66] Park, 'The 'Lewes Group' of Wall Paintings in Sussex', 235.

that such parallels have little merit beyond observing that both the Tapestry and the 'Lewes Group' paintings share the practice of identifying persons by name.[67]

Park's arguments are perhaps limited by their failure to explore the specific material implications of shared imagery between paintings and textiles, and to include other surviving embroideries from this period. The distinctively stylised figures which Park identified were not limited to the Bayeux Tapestry, but rather are consistent with the stylisation described as abstract in the first chapter of this thesis, which was characteristic of (and indeed more pronounced within) the figural embroideries that survive from the eleventh and twelfth centuries and are evidence of the creativity and skill of textile workers in this period. Indeed Christie described this figural representation as one of the major stylistic factors that rendered English embroideries distinct, and thus one may presume contributed to its exalted place in early medieval visual culture.[68]

That single figure which survives attached to a twelfth-century embroidered band in the Victoria & Albert Museum (fig. 24), though in a fragmentary and significantly degraded condition, exhibits the characteristic stylisation defined by Christie. The hands, engaged in gesture, are so comparatively large in relation to the body as to appear almost abstracted, and thus convey a sense of vitality which is mirrored by the similarly abstracted feet. It could be argued that the nature of ecclesiastical dress, on which most of this surviving embroidery was placed, dictated the stylisation of these figures, in particular the slender elongation of the figures which, like those on the late eleventh-century Worcester vestment fragments, would have needed to fit within the narrow strips of mitre lappet, maniple, or stole (figs. 19, 23, and 48). However, the fragment of an apparel in the Victoria & Albert Museum (figs. 20, 26, and 49) are placed within arcades that extend horizontally and are therefore not

[67] Musset, *The Bayeux Tapestry*, 31.
[68] Christie, *English Medieval Embroidery*, 5.

constrained by the cut of the fabric. Nevertheless, the figures' abstracted bodies, faces, and gestural hands and feet are entirely consistent with other contemporary embroideries of this period, not least the Bayeux Tapestry (fig. 50), suggesting that the motivation behind this representation was purely stylistic. The effect of this is, in any case, highly expressionistic and is suggestive of the embroiderers' commitment to conveying a sense of vitality and character, rather than the pursuit of idealism or realism, consistent with the conclusions drawn in chapter 1.

This consistency of style in surviving embroideries, and the skeuomorphic references to textiles which frame the similarly styled figures in the 'Lewes Group' paintings invite an extension of Boulton's definition of skeuomorphism. It may have been the case that certain imagery, which was more commonly associated with a particular medium, when included on others (even in the absence of explicit skeuomorphic references) may still have acted in a quasi-skeuomorphic manner. It is possible that these stylised figures may have transcended the walls of these churches, to enrich their material value with evocations of highly prized embroidered works, and the cultural actors with which they were associated. Moreover, the invocation of a material form in both its imagery and explicit skeuomorphic framing proposes an alternative means of understanding these images within the categories of identity which were mobilised in the period of the conquest. Dodwell may have observed that 'the hunched shoulders and expressive gestures [within the 'Lewes Group'] are Anglo-Saxon traits', and posited that if the Norman artist had settled in England then he would be Anglo-Norman, in a seeming panoply of undefined categories of identity.[69] However, if these visual characteristics are instead observed to possess the abstractedly stylised figures which define textiles' stylisation, moreover framed so as to appear as a textile, then the figures may instead be understood as a quasi-skeuomorphic reference to this media, underscoring their explicitly

[69] Dodwell, *The Pictorial Arts of the West 800-1200*, 325.

skeuomorphic framing. Even if these paintings were painted by an artist who arrived in England after the Norman conquest, these paintings could still have acted as an invocation of the skills and media associated with English women, and their presence in a scheme likely painted shortly after the conquest an example of a Bhabhaian establishment of cultural difference as a means of constructing a hybrid 'Anglo-Norman' material culture. However, this is potentially to pile hypothesis upon hypothesis, and risk repeating the sins of past scholars: mapping gendered and racialised identities onto objects which cannot articulate them themselves. What may instead be concluded is that these paintings affirm the apparent primacy of textiles in material culture of this period and thereby significantly contextualise those written sources which do associate textile production with that identity of the colonised English woman. It is not certain that English women were universally associated with textiles, or were necessarily invoked by these wall paintings. However, a comparison between these paintings and extent embroideries contextualises William of Poitiers' description of the 'women of the English people' he describes. They were making objects of considerable social and sacral significance, their contributions referenced in the textility of alternative media, or to parse Ingold, their 'pathways or lines of becoming' woven into the texture of the material culture of eleventh- and twelfth-century England.[70]

QUASI-SKEUOMORPHISM AT ST NICHOLAS' CHURCH, PYRFORD

The wall paintings at St Nicholas's Church, in Pyrford, Surrey, provide an interesting case study to consider within this framework, and may provide further evidence for the direction of transmedial image exchange from embroideries to wall paintings. Though geographically close, the paintings at St Nicholas's (thought to date from the late eleventh or early twelfth century) represent a reasonably significant stylistic diversion from the Lewes

[70] Ingold, 'The textility of making', 91.

schemes, and thus represent a significant challenge to scholars attempting to assemble a coherent narrative of art historical developments in the eleventh century (which it may be assumed has contributed to Pyrford's neglect within the historiography).

Though small fragments of wall painting survive on the east and south walls of the nave at St Nicholas's, the scene uncovered on the north wall of the nave (fig. 51) is by far the most extensive extant element of what was presumably once an elaborate scheme that adorned every wall of the church. Nineteenth-century studies speculated that the surviving north wall paintings depicted either 'angels welcoming a soul to paradise beneath a scroll', or a depiction of scenes from the life of Jezebel, the latter hypothesis being that repeated in twentieth-century studies.[71] The fragmentary nature of the scheme's survival and limited comparative material makes it difficult to accept either interpretation of this scene with any certainty. However, elements of the painting survive with startling clarity and, even in the absence of a clear subject matter, may prove a productive point of comparison with eleventh- and twelfth-century embroideries, and the skeuomorphic exchanges between wall paintings and textiles more broadly in this period.

Even more than the figures in the 'Lewes Group' schemes, the elongated figures at Pyrford bear a close resemblance to the stylised depictions of the human form present on the Bayeux Tapestry, Worcester fragments, and the pair of apparel fragments in the Victoria & Albert Museum/Vienna Museum für Angewandte Kunst. The shifting sense of scale in

[71] J.L. André, described the paintings thus: 'At Pirford, Surrey, are paintings supposed to be of Jezebel looking out of window, and of the same lady at her toilet' (see: J.L. André, 'Mural and Other Paintings, in English Churches', *Archaeological Journal* 45.1 (1888), 400-422, 404); C.E. Keyser, however, claimed that 'At Pirford church, Surrey, are paintings assigned to the early part of the twelfth century, viz., on the north wall of nave "a scroll with figures above it, and beneath it two angels welcoming a soul to Paradise"' (see: C.E. Keyser, 'The Mural Paintings at Kempley Church, Gloucestershire', *Archaeological Journal* 34.1 (1877), 270-278, 278); Tristram refutes theories that the subjects may be 'from the story of Jezebel and Jehu', 'the sacraments of the Jews' or 'the legend of St Nicholas' on the basis that 'it is unlikely that these subjects were ever represented in English Church paintings of the twelfth century', and instead posits that the paintings' subjects are 'possibly episodes from the life of the virgin' (see: Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting*, 41); Rosewell's assessment is uncertain: 'Romanesque paintings of unidentified scenes including a mounted horseman (blowing a horn?) and the outline of a ship (?)' (see: Rosewell, *Medieval Wall Paintings*, 295).

both the Pyrford paintings and Bayeux Tapestry also invite comparison – in particular, the scenes on the Tapestry that depict the climactic moments of the battle which decided the conquest. In scene 55 (fig. 52), 'HIC EST WILLELM DUX' ('Here is Duke William'), a line of crouched archers advance in the lower registry beneath the cavalry. The archers are considerably smaller than the mounted knights who ride above them, and this discrepancy of scale gives the impression of teeming figures filling the battlefield, which energises the scene with a powerful evocation of the dynamism of medieval battle. This is repeated in the following scenes (fig. 53), in which those fighting alongside Harold are slain or turn in flight: soldiers fight and fall at a reduced size in the lower register so as to convey the chaos of battle without distracting from the narrative scene in the main register.

A range of scales also exist in the main register of the Tapestry within certain scenes, for instance those in scenes 9-10 (fig. 54), in which people are depicted at a smaller scale in the lower register, toiling at sowing and ploughing underneath the scene, 'UBI NUNTI WILLELMI DUCIS VENERUNT AD WIDONEM' ('Where messengers of Duke William came to Wido'). Those in the heat of battle, however, draw particularly strong parallels with the mural on the north wall at St Nicholas's, where a significantly smaller line of spear-bearing figures appear to process in a lower register beneath the main figural scene (fig. 51 and 55), which, as in the Bayeux Tapestry, has the effect of imbuing the scene with the frenetic energy of war. Though the Bayeux Tapestry is a unique survival, there is evidence to suggest that embroidered depictions of battles existed as a wider genre with a rich Insular history. The twelfth-century *Liber Eliensis* claimed that Ælffæd, the widow of the nobleman Byrhtnoth, commissioned an embroidered depiction of the Battle of Maldon in her husband's memory, which she gave to the monks at Ely in the late tenth century.[72] That, in the painted scenes at Pyrford, this imagery may have acted as a quasi-skeuomorphic reference

[72] Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, 135 (citing: Liber Eliensis, 136).

to epic embroidered battles, was presumably enhanced by the skeuomorphic painted drapery above the scene, which would surely have reinforced the resemblance between the painting's iconography and that on contemporaneous embroidered works. The explicit reference to hanging textiles, at Pyrford as elsewhere, supports the idea that in early medieval transmedial image exchange, those working in other media were inspired by the artistic innovations in embroideries, rather than the other way around.

In addition to the stylised figures and abstracted hands and feet which the St Nicholas's painting shares with the 'Lewes Group' schemes, the figures' heads, contrasted so as to appear dramatically large against their abstractedly narrow bodies, are notably shared with surviving contemporaneous vestments. As argued in the first chapter of this thesis, the dynamism of the disproportionately large gesturing hands of the single figure attached to an embroidered twelfth-century band (fig. 24) is, for instance, complemented by the prominence of the figure's head, with eyes that confront the viewer with a direct stare. Almost identical expressions are included in the Worcester vestments (figs. 19, 23 and 48), though small differentiations in gesture and facial features give each figure a sense of individual character that complements their animated poses and enlivens their slender forms.[73] The same is undoubtedly true of the paintings at St Nicholas's, in particular the central kneeling figure, whose head is also turned to display three quarters of the figure's face and which is considerably broader than the shoulders on which it rests.

Such pronounced stylistic similarities suggest that wall paintings may indeed have been purposefully enriched by the imagery associated with embroidered works. However, a close reading of how a particular element is depicted by stitched or painted strokes may

[73] Originally thought to date from the thirteenth century, Linda Wooley of the Victoria & Albert Museum examined the fragments in 2006 and thought it more likely that dated from the later eleventh-century (Rosie Pugh, 'A Medieval Swap Shop? Medieval Embroidery Fragments in Worcester Cathedral Library', Worcester Cathedral Library and Blog (23 November 2015) <https://worcestercathedrallibrary.wordpress.com/2015/11/23/a-medieval-swap-shop-medieval-embroidery-fragments-in-worcester-cathedral-library/> [accessed 25 April 2020]).

extend this understanding further. In particular, a comparison of the depictions of chainmail in either medium, when considered in relation to contemporaneous literary evidence, may confirm the direction of image exchange from embroideries to wall paintings and further illustrate that the visual innovations made by embroiderers were repeated in other media. Such an understanding would additionally affirm that embroiderers were significant actors in early medieval visual culture.

EMBROIDERED AND PAINTED CHAINMAIL

Though there is no consensus as to the exact subject of the Pyrford paintings, the cross-hatching on the garments of the kneeling figure on the north wall (fig. 55), in the context of the surrounding battle imagery, suggests that the garment was to be read as a representation of chain mail body armour. By the eleventh century chain mail was an established, albeit costly, element of armour in both Normandy and Britain. Some two hundred mail coats are depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry, though it has been suggested that it is somewhat overrepresented within the Tapestry, as only the wealthiest members of either army (a 'small military elite') would have been able to afford it.[74] This intrinsic value is attested to in the scenes of the tapestry that depict mail's desirability and the care with which it was treated. In particular, this may be observed in the lower register of scene 57, where three infantry soldiers, who are not dressed in mail, remove mail coats from fallen soldiers (fig. 56), and in scene 37 where seven men are depicted carefully carrying four mail coats, suspended from rods, onto the waiting ships in preparation for the battle across the channel (fig. 57).

[74] Musset, *The Bayeux Tapestry*, 47.

The overrepresentation of mail may also be explained by the place chainmail occupied in the early medieval popular imagination. Chainmail featured prominently amongst the heroic imagery of Old English poetry, which in its allusions to binding and weaving, Megan Cavell described as the 'cloth-material nexus', whereby terms relating to textile and mail coat construction were essentially interchangeable.[75] Three versions of the same riddle in particular attest to this literary tradition; the Northumbrian *Leiden Riddle* and the *Exeter Book Riddle* 35 (both preserved in tenth-century manuscripts, though the date of the riddles themselves likely predates this), which are both, it has been argued, transmutations of Aldhelm's seventh-century Latin *Enigma 33 De lorica*.[76] In all three verses the confounding element of the riddle depends on the ambiguity that existed around the descriptive language associated with the construction of textiles and chain mail.[77] The narrative voices in all three of the riddles have also been interpreted as diversions from usual riddling form, in their simultaneous use and denial of the connection between this associated language, suggesting that the connection between weaving and armour construction was well understood.[78]

Though little early medieval chain mail survives to attest to the material connection between mail and textiles which underlay this literary tradition, an Iron Age mail coat preserved in bog-land in Vimose, Denmark (fig. 58), and the twelfth-century mail associated with St Wenceslas in Prague Cathedral, are both constructed of inter-connected metal loops which closely parallel textile construction.[79] Early medieval embroiderers may have been particularly aware of these parallels, as there is archaeological evidence to suggest that, in addition to silver and gold-coated threads, embroiderers may also have worked with metal

[75] Megan Cavell, *Weaving Words and Binding Bodies: The Poetics of Human Experience in Old English Literature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 48.
[76] Cavell, *Weaving Words and Binding Bodies*, 54-5.
[77] Cavell, *Weaving Words and Binding Bodies*, 67.
[78] Cavell, *Weaving Words and Binding Bodies*, 67.
[79] Cavell, *Weaving Words and Binding Bodies*, 48.

wire. [80] A ninth- or tenth-century textile fragment excavated from a cremation grave at Ingleby, Derbyshire, has been identified as silver wire 'metalwork embroidery' sewn through a (now carbonised) ground fabric, likely wool or silk.[81] Alexandra Lester-Makin's analysis of this fragment included her own experimental embroidery, in which a large-eyed needle was used to create a looped stitch with metal wire that closely resembles the fragment's stitching (fig. 59), underlining further the material affinity of chainmail and embroidery in this period.[82] Moreover, looped stitch, chain stitch, and split stitch were all common outline stitches in eleventh- and twelfth-century Insular embroideries, and their construction bore a natural affinity with the intersecting loops of metal that formed mail coats. If not themselves involved in the production of chainmail, early medieval embroiderers would thus surely have possessed an intimate understanding of how it was made.

It is perhaps surprising, therefore, that neither metal wire nor blocks of exaggerated chain or stem stitch were used to depict chainmail on the Bayeux Tapestry. Instead, depictions of chainmail are illustrative and diverse; Michael Lewis's analysis of *The Archaeological Authority of the Bayeux Tapestry* (2005) identified eight distinct types of 'chainmail designs' (fig. 60). Though chain and split stitch are present on the Tapestry (usually to add emphasis to lettering, though the inconsistencies in its application have been understood as 'experimental'), it is stem stitch that is used to express the chainmail worn by soldiers, the stitch which is used most commonly throughout the Tapestry as an outline.[83] It is widely accepted that the Tapestry depicts a 'stylised representation of mail', and of the eight 'types' of body armour depicted on the Tapestry, only the 'half circles' (type d) mail has been

[80] The Worcester fragments (fig. 23), the figure attached to a band in the Victoria & Albert Museum (fig. 24) and the pair of fragments of an apparel in the Victoria & Albert Museum/Museum für Angewandte Kunst (figs. 49a and b) are all worked in silver gilt thread.
[81] Lester-Makin, *The Lost Art of the Anglo-Saxon World*, 159-160.
[82] Lester-Makin, *The Lost Art of the Anglo-Saxon World*, 161.
[83] Michael J. Lewis, *The Archaeological Authority of the Bayeux Tapestry* (Oxford: John and Erica Hedges, 2005), 50.

interpreted as an 'attempt' to accurately depict chainmail.[84] However, the riddling sources, archaeological evidence from Ingleby, and structural understanding of chain and split stitch suggest that early medieval embroiderers would have possessed a thorough technical understanding of mail's construction, and any 'attempt' to faithfully render it would therefore have been considerably more convincing.

The diversity of depictions of mail within the Tapestry may have resulted from the number of embroiderers thought to have worked on the Tapestry, each with their own artistic approach, or may be an accurate reflection of the variety of methods used in the construction of eleventh-century mail coats, though the absence of surviving mail-coats or embroiderers' accounts makes either claim impossible to assess. In any case the result was highly expressionistic and suggests that embroiderers were more concerned with constructing an immediately comprehensible signification of mail than merely mimicking it. Such an approach may be considered analogous to the riddling literature which tacitly referenced chainmail; just as these riddles denied the metaphors which automatically associated mail with textile production (as these parallels were already so materially obvious as to be understood), the process of embroidery appears to have already been considered to bear so close a material association to metal mail that the embroiderers were free to invent their own metaphoric modes of representation.

That these metaphoric modes of representation became well-established in early medieval Insular visual culture may be ascertained from the depictions of mail in other mediums. The mail worn by the kneeling figure painted on the north wall of Pyrford consists of simple cross-hatched brushstrokes, which closely resembles the 'type e' 'cross horizontal hatch' that survives at various points on the Bayeux Tapestry (in particular the mail hauberks carried aboard waiting ships, fig. 57). But, in the absence of the material affinities shared by

[84] Lewis, *The Archaeological Authority of the Bayeux Tapestry*, 50.

embroidered stitches and mail, this bears little resemblance to actual mail. The painted mail in a twelfth-century depiction of battle at All Saints' Church in Claverley, Shropshire, is similarly rendered with simple intersecting straight lines of paint (fig. 61).

The same is true of a near contemporaneous eleventh-century sculpted depiction of mail from a stone fragment from Winchester (fig. 62). In this fragment a trousered hauberk is composed of alternating depressed and raised squares of relief carving, which appears considerably closer to the embroidered 'type e' squares of mail on the Tapestry than any surviving medieval mail. This particular pattern of relief-carved squares in alternating depressions has a long history in sculpture, including within Britain: the late seventh- or early eighth-century sculpted stone Bewcastle Cross features, on its North face a panel of abstract chequer pattern comparable to the representation of mail on the Winchester fragment (fig. 63). Indeed, the representation of mail on the Winchester fragment bears a significantly closer relation to the abstract panel at Bewcastle than it does actual mail; on both the Winchester fragment and the paintings at All Saints' and St Nicholas's, it appears that no attempt was made to depict the constructional complexities of metal mail that was automatically implied by embroidered cross-hatching. It may thus be inferred that embroidery capitalised on its material affinity to, and cultural associations with, linked mail to develop its own creative modes of representation that were then repeated in other media.

Such observations confirm that the direction of transmedial imagery exchange operated from embroideries to paintings, an observation rendered unsurprising by the more explicit skeuomorphic references to textiles in which these details, and wall paintings more broadly in this period, appear often to have been framed. And the previously discussed historical evidence for the respected position of embroiderers in early medieval material culture makes this entirely unsurprising. This assessment is additionally consistent with the impression given by historical evidence that English women were considered loci of

Insularity and thus possessed significant cultural capital in the developing 'Anglo-Norman' cultural construction. The influence of embroidered works on those of other media therefore provides a considerably more compelling means of assessing the extent to which these works may have been associated with such gendered or racialised identities than the continued identification of essentialised 'traits'.

These observations may also give a greater sense of the connections between media in material culture more broadly in this period. Though the paintings at St Nicholas's may be considered an artistic outlier to the more uniform painted styles of the 'Lewes Group' and those at St Mary's, it is perhaps telling that what they have in common is also what they have in common with embroideries. Skeuomorphic drapery, stylised figures, and playful approaches to perspective exist in all and, as has already been argued, were considered characteristic of contemporaneous embroideries. Given the portability of textiles their imagery was inherently more transmittable than that of wall paintings, which surely enabled them to act as consistent sources of inspiration for artists working in other media, and facilitated a degree of visual continuity denied by art historical studies that focus on the supposed differences that constitute the shift from 'Anglo-Saxon' to 'Romanesque' artistic styles, and which consider the 'Lewes Group' paintings to exhibit the influence of French painters without due consideration of the Insular context.

CONCLUSION

A consideration of textility and skeuomorphic references to textiles in eleventh- and twelfth-century wall paintings provide an important means of visually assessing the claims made in eleventh- and twelfth-century literary sources that suggest the significance of textiles, and in particular embroideries, in material culture throughout this period. The explicitly skeuomorphic depictions of hanging drapes confirm that textiles occupied a rarefied

position, in their ability to depict the paradoxes central to the Christian faith. Such paradoxes may additionally be considered to have been embodied by those English women that 'took the veil' in the period after the Norman conquest. These paradoxes confirm the mutual affirmation found in early medieval England between certain acts, materials, and identities as a means of establishing cultural difference (in this case as a means of protection from marriage to Normans).

Historical sources which suggest that these differences were also associated with the production of embroidered works in this period may also be substantiated by the skeuomorphic visual evidence. Shared imagery between embroidered and painted works, which has been largely overlooked in art historical studies, may, from a close reading of painted and stitched chain mail, be considered evidence of painters attempting consciously to enrich their works with the imagery associated with embroidered works, and potentially by extension the English women associated with their making. The quasi-skeuomorphic repetition of this imagery would presumably have affirmed the prominent position of needlework within the transmedial exchanges of iconography in early medieval Insular art, and by extension the prominent position of the English women with which this media was associated throughout the period of the conquest.

If the primary concern of this thesis is to demonstrate what textiles can do, then this chapter has identified how textiles were not just significant, but they also furnished and gave texture to early medieval England. This is more so still when material which expresses any degree of textility is considered: textiles were woven into the 'lifeworld' of eleventh- and twelfth-century England even when textiles were not present, a painted reference to them being sufficient to invoke their sacral and social potential as veils, covers, or furnishings, which provided moments of mediation and negotiation for wearers and viewers alike. In seeking to show what textiles could do this thesis naturally moves away from the taxonomies

which had characterised their study in the past, to discuss them not only in terms of their makers: women and English. Nevertheless, in demonstrating what textiles could do, this chapter has provided more context for 'the women of the English people' which some sources associate with their production and identified additional areas of visual culture in England in which this identity may have been entangled.

CHAPTER 3
WEAVING BORDERS OF MEMORY

To more fully understand the position of textiles in eleventh- and twelfth-century Britain, their broader material context, including the woven textiles which framed embroideries, must also be considered. However, if embroideries have been overlooked in studies of this period (and indeed more broadly in art historical scholarship), then weavings have been even further marginalised. Though the literal marginal position of tablet-woven bands in this period may (in part) account for this, a reassessment of these items, which considers their materiality and the contextual evidence for their use and production, suggests that woven edges were essential elements in the articulation of what textiles could do in this period. If the previous two chapters of this thesis have revealed the centrality of textiles in material culture, their transformative capacity (which extended to references to textiles in other media), and their phenomenological capacity to implicate the viewer within an ontological understanding of the material world, then an examination of tablet-woven bands within this chapter reveals their complementary ability to embody memories, further underscoring the significance of textiles in eleventh- and twelfth-century Britain.

Though embroideries and weavings have rarely been considered together (embroideries more usually forming the subject of discrete studies), it is clear that woven and embroidered elements co-existed, in some cases on the same object.[1] The late tenth-century

[1] Grace Christie's, Donald King's and (most recently) the Victoria and Albert Museum's *Opus Anglicanum* exhibition catalogues are all concerned with early medieval embroideries specifically, as is Alexandra Lester-Makin's 2019 study of *The Lost Art of the Anglo-Saxon World* (see: Christie, *English Medieval Embroidery*; King, *Opus Anglicanum*; Browne, Davies, Michael and Zöschg, *English Medieval Embroidery*; Lester-Makin, *The Lost Art of the Anglo-Saxon World*). Similarly, tablet-woven bands are usually the subject of their own discrete studies (see: Spies, *Ecclesiastical Pomp & Aristocratic Circumstance*; Peter Collingwood, *The Techniques of Tablet Weaving* (London: Faber, 1982); G.M. Crowfoot, 'The Braids' in *The Relics of St Cuthbert*, ed. by C.F. Battiscombe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), 433-63).

textiles preserved amongst the relics of St Cuthbert, for instance, consist of both embroidered and woven elements; the embroidered figural maniple and stole are both bordered by patterned tablet-woven bands, and a number of additional woven braids were also preserved amongst the grave goods (figs. 2 and 64-69).[2] Within C.F. Battiscombe's collection of essays on *The Relics of St Cuthbert* (1956), Grace Crowfoot's study of 'The Braids' noted that the woven borders to the maniple and stole bore a 'strong resemblance' to the embroideries that they framed, in their shared 'gold brick' effect backgrounds and acanthus foliage, observations consistent with Christie's suggestion that the braids may have been woven for this specific purpose.[3] When one considers the significant investment of time and money required by the production of these textiles it seems unlikely that these elements were not produced simultaneously with a view to creating a homogenous work.[4] It may therefore be concluded that woven bands, like figural embroideries, were integral to the construction of such precious objects, and it is likely that one cannot be understood without the other.

Though tablet-weaving has been considered characteristic of early medieval English dress, as a material process it was not unique to this period or to the British Isles.[5] Examples of tablet-weaving which date from as far back as c. 700 BC have been found in Austria,

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[2] Crowfoot, 'The Braids', 433.

[3] Crowfoot, 'The Braids', 433 (citing: Christie, *English Medieval Embroidery*, 49).

[4] Spies has claimed that it takes approximately an hour to weave one inch of a brocaded tablet-woven band (see: Spies, *Ecclesiastical Pomp & Aristocratic Circumstance*, 93); Owen-Crocker estimated that to cover the surface of the scene in which Harold is offered the crown in the Bayeux Tapestry, with the couching used on Cuthbert's vestments, would have taken a single embroiderer a week (see: Gale Owen-Crocker, 'Fur, Feathers, Skin, Fibre, Wood: Representational Techniques in the Bayeux Tapestry' in *The Bayeux Tapestry: Collected Papers*, ed. by Gale Owen-Crocker (London: Routledge, 2023), (previously unpublished, read as a paper at the Medieval Congress in Kalamazoo, May 2009), III 3, 133-150, 136); Similarly the professional embroiderer, Helen Stevens, estimated that the couched gold-work, split stitch, and stem stitch worked in silk thread on the Maaseik embroideries was so labour-intensive that a single unit would take a week to produce (see: Lester-Makin, *The Lost Art of the Anglo-Saxon World*, 120, citing: H.M. Stevens, 'Maaseik Reconstructed: a practical investigation and interpretation of 8th-century embroidery techniques' in *Textiles in Northern Archaeology: NESAT III*, ed. by P. Walton and J.P. Wild (London: Archetype Publications, 1990), 57-60). Robert Patterson has claimed that during the construction of the facsimile of the thirteenth-century tablet-woven bands found in the tomb of Walter de Gray at York Minster, it took four hours to weave a centimetre (see: Robert Patterson, 'Tablet-woven Braids' in *Thread of Gold: The Embroideries and Textiles in York Minster*, ed. by Elizabeth Ingram (Andover: Pitkin Press, 1987), 20-22, 20).

[5] Hyer considered tablet-woven borders an 'identifying factor for the English and their textile work' (see: Maren Clegg Hyer, 'Text/Textile: "Wordweaving" in the Literatures of Anglo-Saxon England', *Medieval Clothing and Textiles* 15, 35-52, 37).

Germany, and France.[6] Bone tablets found in London and the upper Walbrook valley from the second and first centuries AD attest to the craft's existence in Romano-Britain, over one thousand years before the creation of the Cuthbert vestments.[7] The basic tools and processes of tablet-weaving appear fundamentally unchanged across this period and archaeological finds from the intervening centuries in the British Isles indicate a long-standing continuous tradition.[8] Moreover, in a chronology of 'tablet weaving before A.D. 1000', compiled by Peter Collingwood, in his study of *The Techniques of Tablet-Weaving* (1982), evidence for this material process has been found in such varied locations as (modern day) Germany, Greece, Spain, Denmark, Sweden, Poland, Norway, Finland, Egypt, Lithuania, Kazakhstan, and Ireland.[9]

Previous chapters of this thesis observed the cross-media exchanges between embroidered imagery and that painted on walls on pages, however, exchanges between woven works and those in other media are perhaps even more prominent in the History of Art, and certainly in Britain pre-date the eleventh-century. Cynthia Thickpenny, in her PhD thesis on the subject of 'Making Key Pattern in Insular Art: AD 600-1100' (2019), noted the 'ultimate origins' of key pattern in 'pre-historic basketry in central and Eastern Europe', which was then more widely disseminated in later periods and into additional geographic regions through textile weaving.[10] Key pattern, which was a common abstract motif throughout early medieval Insular art, attests to the prominence of such exchange within this particular context, and should frame an understanding of the comparisons drawn between tablet-woven bands and other media later in this chapter.

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[6] Owen-Crocker, Coatsworth and Hayward, *Encyclopaedia of Dress and Textiles in the British Isles c. 450-1450*, 572.
[7] Owen-Crocker, Coatsworth and Hayward, *Encyclopaedia of Dress and Textiles in the British Isles c. 450-1450*, 572.
[8] Clegg-Hyer and Owen-Crocker, 'Woven Works: Making and Using Textiles', 172; see also chapter 3, footnotes 7 and 8.
[9] Collingwood, *The Techniques of Tablet Weaving*, 12-18.
[10] Cynthia Thickpenny, 'Making Key Pattern in Insular Art: AD 600-1100' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2019), 22.

AN INCOMPLETE CORPUS: EXTANT TABLET-WOVEN BANDS

Any significant reassessment of this material is, however, challenged by the paucity of extant woven bands from this period. Woven bands which may be securely dated from between the time of the Cuthbert vestments (c. 966) and the end of the twelfth century are scarce. The woven elements found amongst Cuthbert's relics therefore represent a significant share of the extant weavings from this period (figs, 64-9). This includes ten woven bands and additional braids, placed in three 'groups' by Crowfoot, consisting both of those attached to embroideries and those whose original context is less clear (though on the basis of some, Hero Granger-Taylor has argued for the existence of a separate dalmatic within the tomb).[11]

Tablet-woven bands have also been excavated from among the surviving textiles found within the so-called 'Blois' and 'Cantilupe' tombs in Worcester cathedral, the former of which also included fragments of eleventh-century embroidered vestments (figs. 70a-d). Though the embroidered fragments may be dated reasonably securely to the eleventh century, the date of the woven elements is less clear as their exact archaeological context has not been well recorded (though they cannot be older than the first half of the thirteenth century and, if they are considered contemporaneous to the embroideries, were likely to be considerably older). This points to, albeit rather tantalisingly, not only to the continued presence of woven patterned bands on vestments throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries, but also to their continued existence in material contexts which, like the Cuthbert vestments, also included embroideries.

[11] Hero Granger-Taylor, 'The weft-patterned silks and their braid: the remains of an Anglo-Saxon dalmatic of c. 800?' in *St Cuthbert, His Cult and His Community to AD 1200*, ed. by Gerald Bonner, David Rollason and Clare Stancliffe (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1989), 303-327.

Further evidence for a continuous tradition of tablet-woven bands on ecclesiastical garments may be gained from the fragments of bands excavated from the tombs of clergymen. Excavations from the tomb of Henry of Blois (d. 1171) in Winchester, for instance, recovered several fragments of tablet-woven bands, the latest possible date for which would be in the latter half of the twelfth century. The bands are woven with a variety of geometric patterns which include 'diagonals and linked triangles' (fig. 71c and d), 'diagonal lines and triangles filled with small diamonds' (fig. 71a), 'lattice enclosing gold crosses' (fig. 71b), 'zig-zag' (fig. 66c), and 'frets and connecting diagonal crosses' (fig. 72).[12] This last pattern of connecting crosses is echoed in the complex pattern of crosses found on garments in the tomb of Archbishop Walter de Gray (d. 1255) at York Minster (fig. 73), alluding not only to a continuous tradition of material production, but also to an established visual tradition in the imagery of tablet-woven bands.[13] Fragments of silver-gilt tablet-woven bands have also been excavated from the tomb of Abbot Roger II (d. 1272) in St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury, the designs of which include chevrons, crosses, interlaced diamonds, spaced spots, light pattern diagonals, diamonds, and 'running saltires'.[14] Also in St Augustine's Abbey, Abbot Dygon's tomb contained an orphrey dating from the thirteenth or fourteenth century, which was 'woven with four borders' (fig. 74).[15] An additional, earlier, orphrey with tablet-woven elements was also recovered from the tomb of Archbishop Hubert Walter (d. 1205) at Canterbury Cathedral (fig. 75a), which featured a geometric

[12] Elizabeth Crowfoot, 'Personal Possessions: Textiles' in *Artefacts from Medieval Winchester Part II: Object and Economy in Medieval Winchester*, ed. by Martin Biddle (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 467-488, 487-8 (NB: Those pictured and described are not the complete corpus of tablet-woven bands excavated from the tomb of Henry of Blois, merely those that are the best preserved for art historical analysis).
[13] Patterson, 'Tablet-woven Braids', 20-23.
[14] Elizabet Crowfoot, 'St Augustine's Canterbury: Textiles from the tombs of Abbot Roger II and Abbot Dygon', *Historic England: Ancient Monuments Laboratory Report* (4 March 1979), 1-9 <TEXTILES FROM THE TOMBS OF ABBOT ROGER II AND ABBOT DYGON; ST AUGUSTINE'S, CANTERBURY | Historic England> [accessed 01.08.2023].
[15] Crowfoot, 'St Augustine's Canterbury', 6.

pattern of near heart shapes repeating in a frame of smaller triangles (fig. 75b).[16] In their angularity Hubert Walter's chasuble bands may be most readily compared to a likely near contemporaneous fragment of woven band recovered at Worcester Cathedral (fig. 70b), in which a similar pattern appears as though mirrored, woven almost as a doubled version of that on Hubert Walter's chasuble.

The longevity of the objects themselves may also be ascertained from a composite mitre originally in the collections of St Peter's Abbey in Salzburg (fig. 76). The mitre is believed to date to the twelfth century; however, it has been argued that the braided lappets were 'Anglo-Saxon in origin' (which in this instance appears to mean made in England) and made at a much earlier date, analogous with an eighth-century braid from the tomb of St Cuthbert, which would itself have been an antique at the time of Cuthbert's burial.[17] Such re-use leaves open the possibility that many woven bands on later objects may date from even centuries before. Some fragmentary tablet-woven braids (fig. 77) excavated from within the tomb of a bishop in Rosemarkie Cathedral in Fortrose, Scotland (and now preserved in the collections of the National Museum of Scotland), may also date from a period earlier than the fourteenth-century crozier alongside which they were excavated. In any case, they, like the entirely woven early thirteenth-century mitre in the Victoria & Albert Museum (fig. 78), are suggestive of the continuity of weaving as a material process across centuries in early medieval Britain.

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[16] Anna Muthesius, 'The Silks from the Tomb' in Neil Stratford, Pamela Tudor-Craig, Anna Muthesius, 'Archbishop Hubert Walter's Tomb and its Furnishings' in *Medieval Art and Architecture at Canterbury before 1220* (Leeds: British Archaeological Society, 1982), 80-87.

[17] Coatsworth and Owen-Crocker, *Clothing the Past*, 58-96; comparisons in both material and design have been drawn between the St Peter's braid, and the Soumak braid found amongst the grave goods of St Cuthbert (see: Granger-Taylor, 'The Weft-patterned Silks and their Braid', 321 and Leslie Webster, 'Fragment of a Braid' in *The Making of Anglo-Saxon England: Anglo-Saxon Art and Culture AD 600-900,* ed. by Leslie Webster and Janet Backhouse (London: British Museum Press, 1991), 183-4; Leslie Webster, 'Fragments of a tunic (probably a dalmatic): Braid with soumak brocading decorating the edges of the garment – the Soumak braid' in *The Making of England: Anglo-Saxon Art and Culture AD 600-900*, ed. by Leslie Webster and Janet Backhouse (London: British Museum Press, 1992), 135-6.

Though the majority of extant tablet-woven bands have been recovered from rich ecclesiastical settings, it appears that they were a common element of clothing and furnishings more generally in early medieval Britain.[18] Indeed, tablet-woven elements have also been recovered from secular archaeological contexts.[19] They survive in a fragmentary and significantly degraded state, rendering them largely unsuitable for visual analysis. Nevertheless, their survival suggests the existence of woven bands in modest secular, as well as highly rarefied ecclesiastical, contexts and therefore their likely ubiquity in early medieval Britain. As with the excavations of tablet-woven elements on vestments, their discovery in secular settings similarly reveals a sense of profound continuity, stretching across centuries of garments. Excavations in Winchester have, for instance, produced fragments of tablet-woven bands dating from the ninth to the fourteenth centuries; a skull recovered from an early to mid-ninth-century grave (673) in the Old Minster, Winchester, still has attached to it gold threads from a tablet-woven band (fig. 79), and a gold brocaded tablet-woven band was excavated from a grave (155) in the Winchester Cathedral Paradise cemetery which dates from the early to mid-fourteenth century.[20] Such survivals point to their longevity as significant elements of material culture in Britain across successive centuries, consistent with an understanding of visual and material culture in the eleventh and twelfth centuries as a longue durée, in which certain visual and material principles appear to have remained constant across vast periods and multiple generations against a background of significant political flux.

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[18] Spies has claimed that 'tablet woven bands… along with embroidery, woven bands, and narrow strips of appliquéd fabric, [served] as the primary form of secular clothing ornamentation for a thousand years', and she notes that depictions of patterned edges in a number of early medieval Insular manuscripts (see: Spies, *Ecclesiastical Pomp & Aristocratic Circumstance*, 37-52).

[19] For instance, the seventh-century fragments of tablet-weaving excavated at Taplow, Buckinghamshire, the sixth-century fragments excavated in Faversham, Kent, the sixth-century bands from Howletts, Littlebourne, Kent, the sixth-century weaving found in a grave in Chessell Down on the Isle of Wight, the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century tablet-weaving recovered from urban deposits in London and now in the Museum of London, a number of sixth-century bands excavated from graves in Bifrons, Lymige Sarre and Stowting in Kent (see: Spies, *Ecclesiastical Pomp & Aristocratic Circumstance* (2000), 218-230).

[20] Katherine Barclay and Martin Biddle, 'Gold Working' in *Artefacts from Medieval Winchester Part II: Object and Economy in Medieval Winchester*, ed. by Martin Biddle (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 79-81.

The longevity of these objects is also attested in contemporaneous written sources. The twelfth-century *Liber Eliensis*, for instance, records that after his death at the Battle of Maldon in 991, Ealderman Byrhtnoth's will stipulated the donation of 'Hanc quoque donationem cum duabus crucibus aureis, et duabus laciniis pallii sui pretioso opera auri et gemmarum contextis, binisque cyrothecis artificiose compositis, ecclesiae Elyensi investivit' ('two golden crosses and two borders of his cloak, woven with costly of gold and gems, and a pair of skillfully made gloves be donated to the monastery at Ely').[21] An account of two copes, donated by Queen Edith to Ely in the mid-eleventh century, also includes specific mention of finely woven gold borders, which similarly suggest that they were a significant material element of this donation, valued by the Church and therefore consequential in signifying an individual's position and memory within its furnishings and rituals.[22] The tenth-century wills of Bishop Theodred and Wulfwaru also bequeathed vestments and furnishings with the description of both the individual item and allusions to the items themselves and additional items which 'belong' to them: 'And into sc̄e Paules kirke mine to beste messehaclen. þe hic habbe mid alle þe þinge þereto birið mid calice and on cuppe' ('And to St Paul's church I grant the two best chasubles that I have, with all the things which belong to them, together with a chalice and one cup') and 'anes mæsserafes mid eallum þe ic hæbbe. Anes hricghrægles þæs selestan þe ic hæbbe. Anes beddreafes mis wahryfte mid hoppscytan. Mid eallum þam þe þærto gebyreð' ('and a set of mass-vestments with everything that

[21] *Liber Eliensis: A History of the Isle of Ely from the Seventh Century to the Twelfth, Compiled by a Monk of Ely in the Twelfth Century*, trans. and ed. by Janet Fairweather (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1995), 162. A transcript of the original Latin is within *Liber Eliensis, ad fidem codicum variorum*, trans. by David James Stewart (London: Impensis Societatis, 1848), 182.

[22] Maren Clegg-Hyer and Gale Owen-Crocker, 'Woven Works: Making and Using Textiles' in *The Material Culture of Daily Living in the Anglo-Saxon World*, ed. by Maren Clegg Hyer and Gale Owen-Crocker (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1988), 157-184, 173.

belongs to it, and the best dorsal that I have, and a set of bed-clothing with tapestry and curtain and with everything that belongs to it').[23] Such details suggest that textiles were perceived as composite objects with delineated parts (such as woven borders) that may be removed or repurposed.

The apparent multi-object lifespans of tablet-woven bands imply a capacity to significantly outlive their makers, wearers, and original material contexts. In a study of gift-giving among 'Anglo-Saxon' women (2014), Laura Michele Diener argued that donated borders such as Brythnoth's would have ensured a 'concrete memory of the giver'.[24] That textiles were, in some instances, intended to act thus is also apparent in the embroidered dedication at the ends of the tenth-century St Cuthbert's stole (fig. 64), detailing that Queen Ælfflæd (wife of Edward the Elder) ordered the vestments to be made for Bishop Fridestan.[25] Cuthbert's vestments are described in some detail within Bede's eighth-century *Vita* of the Saint. In Bede's account of Cuthbert's translation eleven years after his death, Cuthbert's remains were found to be incorrupted, his vestments described as new, causing the Bishop Eadberht to kiss them when they were brought to him.[26] It is clear therefore, that woven bands had the capacity to act similarly as repositories of memory, ensuring the preservation of an individual within the material fabric of the Church. Indeed, some extant tablet-woven bands made outside of Britain between the eighth and fifteenth centuries do feature lettering or inscriptions (both religious phrases and individuals' names), so it is entirely possible that early medieval Insular works may also have explicitly named those whose memories they sought to invoke.[27] A thirteenth-century tablet-woven band excavated

[23] Dorothy Whitelock (trans. and ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Wills* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930), 2-5 and 62-65.
[24] Laura Michele Diener, 'Sealed with a Stitch: Embroidery and Gift-Giving among Anglo-Saxon Women', *Medieval Prosopography* 29 (2014), 1-22, 14.
[25] 'ÆLFFLÆD FIERI PRECEPIT' and PIO EPISCOPO FRIÐESTANO' (see: Christie, *English Medieval Embroidery*, 45).
[26] *Bede: Life of Cuthbert*, in *Lives of the Saints: The Voyage of St Brendan, Bede: Life of Cuthbert, Eddius Stephanus: Life of Wilfrid*, trans. and ed. by J.F. Webb (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1965), 69-130, 125-5.
[27] Spies, *Ecclesiastical Pomp & Aristocratic Circumstance*, 83-87.

in Salisbury additionally contained heraldic details (fig. 80), which may be interpreted as similarly invoking the memory of the identity of the patrons with whom they were associated.[28] The historian Elisabeth van Houts has described the capacity for objects to act as 'pegs for memory' (including as examples a number of Insular textiles) and it clear that, as a category of objects, textiles possessed a significant potential to act as such.[29] This ability to act as a locus of memory should not, however, be conflated with the 'histories of association' through which sediments of race and gender have 'stuck' to these objects. Memory and imagination are different things.

The social and sacral significance of early medieval textiles more broadly, and particularly in eleventh- and twelfth-century England, as argued in the previous chapters (and confirmed by textility within alternative media) may be considered evidence of the cultural investment in these objects, which surely imbued them with a sense of collective memory, as it was understood by the twentieth-century philosopher, Maurice Halbwachs, in his writings on *Collective Memory* (1952), in which he argued that it was through membership of religious, national, or class groups that people were able to recall memories.[30] In this case, a memory of the ability of tablet-woven bands to possess social and sacral significance across the history of early medieval Britain. This must be presumed to have been heightened in the context of the conquest. If one considers William of Poitiers' description of the prominence of textiles within the 'performances of difference' at Féchamp following the conquest (as recorded in a text which may itself be understood as an attempt to legitimise William dual rule over the two nations that stretched across a channel), these objects appear invested in the construction of post-conquest hybridity.

[28] Elizabeth Crowfoot, 'Textiles' in *Salisbury Museum Medieval Catalogue: Part 1*, ed. by Peter and Eleanor Saunders (Salisbury: Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum, 1991), 50-3.
[29] Elizabeth Van Houts, *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe 900-1200* (London: Macmillan, 1999), 101-6.
[30] Maurice Halbwachs, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (Paris: De Gruyter Mouton, 1952).

Furthermore, this understanding of their capacity to hold memory may inform an alternative interpretation of the imagery on extant tablet-woven bands, distanced from taxonomies that have previously been applied. This capacity was defined by the cultural understanding of their longevity. The longevity of these objects, implied literally by their re-use and bequeathment in wills, may also have been conceptually enriched by the longevity of the processes by which they were made, which as already outlined earlier in this chapter, extended far back into history and across large geographical areas.[31] The longevity of the processes by which these objects were constructed surely enriched the longevity of the objects themselves, engaged with both a past and future that the maker or wearer were themselves unable to access.

Memory and monumentality were familiar concepts in early medieval Britain: Jane Hawkes has demonstrated that early Christian buildings and sculptures sought to reference the Roman past through their dedications, geographical locations, and materials (specifically, stone), as an expression of the Roman church, and its implied future permanence in early Christian England.[32] Similarly, Martin Carver has argued that political factors were the primary motivations behind the production of various elements that sought to monumentalise different branches of the early medieval Christian Church in Britain.[33] Though tablet-woven bands do not conform to Carver's exact definition of monumentality as primarily 'fossilized' political statements, they may nevertheless be read as monumentalising efforts: objects which imply a presumed future.[34]

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[31] See: footnotes 6-9.

[32] Jane Hawkes, ''Iuxta Morem Romanorum': Stone and Sculpture in Anglo-Saxon England' in *Anglo-Saxon Styles*, ed. by George Hardin Brown and Catherine Karkov (Albany: New York: State University of New York Press, 2003), 69-100.

[33] Martin Carver, 'Why that? Why there? Why then? The Politics of Early Medieval Monumentality' in *Image and Power in the Archaeology of Early Medieval Britain: Essays in Honour of Rosemary Cramp*, ed. by Helena Hamerow and Arthur Macgregor (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2001), 1-22.

[34] Carver defines monuments as a 'shorthand' for the 'major investments' in elements such as burial mounds, churches, illuminated manuscripts and sculpture – objects which he felt exceeded 'passive memorials' and possessed 'meaning beyond some vague celebration of an individual or propitiation of an unseen

Where tablet-woven bands perhaps exceed those stone monuments in other media is their simultaneous gesture to both the past and future. Zainab Bahrani, in her study of ancient Mesopotamian sculpture *The Infinite Image* (2014), described the art of ancient Mesopotamia as an art that sought to resist death, one that to ancient viewers could 'break through the boundaries of its own time and transcend its place and moment of creation'.[35] Evidently intended, and used, as material elements across generations of objects, it may be claimed that tablet-woven bands occupied an 'ontological status' analogous to that identified in Mesopotamian art by Bahrani: 'extending into and existing in the infinite, surpassing spatial frames and temporal limits'.[36] If we presume that the makers and viewers of these tablet-woven bands were aware of the longevity of this medium (and it is difficult to believe that they were not), then tablet-woven bands surely possessed an analogous sense of dislocation and timelessness. In this way the woven bands imply both their deep, rich history as the products of an ancient, widely practised craft and their future existence on successive generations of objects, their capacity to significantly exceed the lives of those who witnessed their production, and in doing so their ability to exist in the past, future, and present. Such an interpretation may be perceived as related to embroidered stylisation of the human body identified in the first chapter of this thesis, as weighted with ontological potential. In which human bodies were not so much represented as implicated in encounters which included the bodies of the wearers and viewers, in a compression of any distance between them and the sacred figures and biblical characters represented on vestments.

In his study of 'Memory/Monument' (2003), James Young cited both Rosalind Krauss's argument that modernist monuments are only able to refer to themselves, and those critics who have questioned whether an abstract, self-referential monument is capable of

omnipotence', and were active as 'fossilized versions of arguments that were continuous and may have related more to what was desired than occurred' (see: Carver, 'Why that? Why there? Why then?', 1).
[35] Zainab Bahrani, *The Infinite Image* (London: Reaktion Books, 2014), 7 and 10.
[36] Bahrani, *The Infinite Image*, 1.

commemorating events outside of itself, or 'whether it only motions endlessly to its own gesture to the past, a commemoration of its essence as dislocated sign'.[37] In the case of tablet-woven bands it appears that they achieve both at once: they gesture to their own longevity, and, in doing so, attest to the longevity of their own medium (and patron, as in the case of Brythnoth's bands), whilst simultaneously dislocating themselves from their immediate context through their engagement with timeless processes of making and life sequence across generations of objects. A sense of the infinite may also have been reinforced by the bands' structural composition; the act of weaving a continuous and repetitive process which has the potential (were the threads long enough!) to extend indefinitely. Thus, tablet-woven bands are objects which with their every fibre appear to have pointed to the infinite. The processes by which tablet-woven bands, which are discussed further later in this chapter ('Makers of Memory'), possessed deep histories of unbroken traditions of making, which were also reflected in the continuity and repetition inherent in the actions they required, thereby further enriching this sense of the infinite and timelessness.

RESISTING FIXITY: A NON-TAXONOMICAL APPROACH TO ORNAMENT

Interpreting these objects thus also provides an alternative means of understanding the bands' imagery. The existence of 'ornament' as a distinct art historical category perhaps goes some way to explaining the division between woven and embroidered textiles in art historical studies, which has historically isolated visual elements perceived to be 'ornamental' and grouped them in stylistic or chronological categories.[38] In studies of early medieval

[37] James E. Young, 'Memory/Monument' in *Critical Terms for Art History*, ed. by Robert Nelson and Richard Schiff, 2nd edition (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 234-250, 237 (citing: Rosalind Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1988), 280).
[38] See: Owen Jones, *Grammar of Ornament* (London: Day & Son, 1856), and more recently Eva Wilson, *8000 Years of Ornament* (London: British Museum Press, 1994).

Insular art, 'ornament' has historically been viewed as an isolated element, referenced as a means of comparison between works of different media, and supported the application of entrenched taxonomies to visual culture in this period: 'developed spiral ornament' has been interpreted as a 'Celtic' motif, whilst certain combinations of zoomorphic and foliate elements have been described as an 'Anglo-Saxon version of the Scandinavian Ringerike and Urnes styles' or as indicators of the 'Winchester Style'.[39] So much so that in an analysis of the category of 'style' in the study of Insular Art, Netzer noted that the 'categorization of distinguishing elements' was a 'basic tool in the scholarly discourse about Insular art' for generations of successive scholars.[40] Though it has long been recognised in art historical studies that ornament's potential as a vehicle for meaning exceeds 'mere decoration', these taxonomical assessments of ornament have typically produced interpretations which possess a significant degree of ethno-racial essentialism, characteristic of much nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholarship.[41]

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[39] See: Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, 113; Karkov, *The Art of Anglo-Saxon England*, 157; Deshman, 'The Leofric Missal and tenth-century English art', 173.

[40] Netzer, 'Style: a History of Uses and Abuses in the Study of Insular Art', 171 (citing: Gwenda Adcock, 'The theory of interlace and interlace types in Anglian sculpture' in *Anglo-Saxon and Viking Age Sculpture and its Context: Papers from the Collingwood Symposium on Insular sculpture from 800-1066*, ed. by James Lang (B.A.R. Brit. Ser. 49) (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1978), 33-45; Rosemary Cramp, *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984)).

[41] On the potential for ornament to act as a vehicle for meaning: James Trilling's claim that 'beyond its implications for social status, aesthetic choice, and religious veneration, and the tempting but uncertain profundities of irreducible form, ornament has conveyed many specific meanings, each requiring a different interpretive approach' (see James Trilling, *Ornament: A Modern Perspective* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2003), 91); Oleg Grabar too argued at length the ability of ornament to possess meaning and shape viewers' encounters with artworks, in the context of medieval Islamic art (see: Oleg Grabar, *Mediation of Ornament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); In the context of early medieval art, Catherine Karkov challenged Ernst Kitzinger's view that 'very strict limits must be imposed if floodgates are not to be opened to wild and reckless interpretations of every bit of knotwork or zoomorphic interlace in Insular art' and claimed that in other parts of the medieval world 'pattern and abstraction do carry meaning at the same time they carry aesthetic importance' and that 'knots do take time to design, to create and to unravel, and as such become traces of labour, time and the act of deciphering the image' (see: Karkov, *The Art of Anglo-Saxon England*, 72 (citing: Ernst Kitzinger, 'Interlace and Icons: Form and Function in Early Insular Art' in *The Age of Migrating Ideas: Early Medieval Art in Northern Britain and Ireland*, ed. by R. Michael Spearman and John Higgitt (Edinburgh: National Museums of Scotland, 1993), 3-15, 3); Michael Brennan, too, has written much on the subject of Insular 'ornament' in non-taxonomical terms, as in 'The Lindisfarne Gospels: The Art of Symmetry and the Symmetry of Art', in which he claimed that the illuminator of the Gospels used symmetry and asymmetry within the patterned carpet pages to imbue the object with a mystery (see: Michael Brennan, 'The Lindisfarne Gospels: The Art of Symmetry and the Symmetry of Art' in *The Lindisfarne Gospels: New Perspectives*, ed. by Richard Gameson (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2017), 157-165). Cynthia Thickpenny's study of key pattern in Insular art too moved away from taxonomical concerns to observe the

Tablet-woven borders have been subject to such taxonomical interventions. For instance, Spies' book, *A Thousand Years of Brocaded Tabletwoven Bands* (2000), which is still the most recent and most thorough study of the medium, cited a claim made in Richard Glazier's study of *Historic Textile Fabrics* (1923):

> Ancient and Medieval patterned fabrics are clearly differentiated by marked characteristics corresponding to racial and religious customs, yet there is no doubt that woven fabrics, more than any other of the products of the industrial arts, were largely influenced by the persistency of the Eastern tradition of material and design due to the migratory habits of weavers.[42]

In this analysis, that woven imagery may be considered evidence of the existence of a racial identity is explicit and embodied: visual traditions are explained by racial identities and were transmitted by the racialised bodies in which they were located, moving then to new locales but nevertheless retaining a connection to their racialised 'Eastern' origins. Though Spies draws a number of well-observed parallels between tablet-woven bands from a variety of locations and notes contextual evidence for the movement of weavers from Persia to Byzantium, from Damascus and Syria to Spain, and from Byzantium to Sicily to support her observation of an "'International style" of silk weaving in the Mediterranean region, Spies' and Glazier's shared conclusions of 'Eastern' influence appear not only to be informed by a high degree of essentialism, but also by an Orientalist understanding of medieval visual culture.[43] Their approach exemplifies the observation made by John Ganim, in his study of *Medievalism and Orientalism* (2005), that since the eighteenth century, 'the Medieval and the Oriental had been paired, as aesthetic styles, as points of linguistic origin, and, increasingly, as stages of cultural development.'[44] The 'intertwined histories of medievalism and Orientalism in architecture, linguistics and literature', observed by Ganim, may also be

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evidence for artists' creative agency in pattern-making (see: Thickpenny, 'Making Key Pattern in Insular Art: AD 600-1100').

[42] Spies, *Ecclesiastical Pomp & Aristocratic Circumstance*, 77 (citing: Richard Glazier, *Historic Textile Fabrics: A Short History of the Tradition and Development of Pattern in Woven and Printed Stuffs* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1923), 2).

[43] Spies, *Ecclesiastical Pomp & Aristocratic Circumstance*, 78-9.

[44] John Ganim, *Medievalism and Orientalism: Three Essays on Literature, Architecture and Cultural Identity* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 84.

applied to Crowfoot's analysis of the braids found amongst the relics of St Cuthbert, in which she noted that the sprays of acanthus in these woven borders resembled those on the silk 'oriental tree of life', but were executed with a 'lively English freedom of adaptation', observations used to support the thesis that ninth- and tenth-century 'Anglo-Saxon' England and Scandinavia imported fine 'Eastern' textiles, which local weavers and embroiderers then copied in local materials.[45] Certainly, imported textiles may have provided inspiration to the weavers in early medieval England. The observation of ill-defined 'Eastern' influence, however, perpetuates Orientalist observations of a nebulous 'Eastern' culture and place, and continues to define our understanding of these objects in essentialist, taxonomical terms.

Such interpretations may also be considered constituent of the historic, explicitly racialised, readings of early medieval ornament as a visual category more broadly. Netzer noted the racialisation of ornament as a visual category implicit in studies such as John Obadiah Westwood's *Paleographia Sacra Pictoria* (1845), which sought to determine a 'national character' within Insular manuscript illuminations, and James Romilly Allen's still oft-referenced survey of *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland* (1903), which similarly made the study of the geographical distribution of different elements a 'relationship of race'.[46] In his later study of *English Art 871-1100* (1952), Talbot-Rice too noted of stone crosses that 'the character of their ornament helps to show in what direction their contacts lay, with what regions they traded, and what types of racial and cultural infiltration affected each region throughout the ages'.[47] With such a historiography considered, it is difficult to disassociate even recent studies' categorisation of ornamental elements within perceived cultural categories from the ethno-racial essentialism of these categories' origins.

[45] Ganim, *Medievalism and Orientalism*, 85; Crowfoot, 'The Braids', 433 and 460.
[46] Netzer, 'Style: a History of Uses and Abuses in the Study of Insular Art', 170-3 (citing: John Romilly Allen and Joseph Anderson, *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 1903) and John Obadiah Westwood, *Palaographia Sacra Pictoria* (London: William Smith, 1845)).
[47] Talbot-Rice, *English Art 871-1100*, 133.

Such approaches have been problematised by modern and contemporary scholars. In his study, *Ornament: A Modern Perspective* (2001), James Trilling appeared to move away from an essential, racialised reading of ornament to instead argue that 'Ornament has always been a powerful tool of ethnic and cultural self-definition', though his study still relies primarily on taxonomical understandings of ornamental modes.[48] Conversely, scholars of medieval race have sought to advance away from racialised readings of objects, consistent with Heng's argument that 'race *has* no singular or stable referent'.[49] Indeed, to continue to consider these textile elements as such an indicatory 'referent' would be incorrect. Efforts to taxonomise patterns and non-figural imagery betray the impulse to fix and categorise non-figural art, but if we recognize the 'ontological status' of these objects' allusion to the infinite, their implied future and acknowledged past, then the need to 'fix' their imagery to a certain period or ethno-racial identity dissipates. Tablet-woven bands need not be a referent to a particular context or racialised identity. There is no evidence to suggest that these objects acted as such a tool of ethnic or racial self-definition. These objects resist such categories by instead placing their makers and wearers within a longer material history through their framing of time.

Such an understanding may also provide a useful framework in which to interpret the imagery on these objects. Certainly, the patterns (interlace, geometric designs, foliage) found on woven objects and bands are not unique to this medium, nor to the time or place in which they were made.[50] This does not mean, however, that they did not possess a

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[48] Trilling, *Ornament: A Modern Perspective*, 3.

[49] Netzer, 'Style: A History of Uses and Abuses in the Study of Insular Art', 169-178; Rambaran-Olm and Wade, 'What's in a Name? The Past and Present Racism in "'Anglo-Saxon" Studies', 135-153; Lawrence Nees, 'Ethnic and Primitive Paradigms in the Study of Early Medieval Art' in *Paradigms and Methods in Early Medieval Studies*, ed. by Cecilia Chazelle and Felice Lifshitz (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 41-60; Heng, *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages*, 19.

[50] Crowfoot has noted the 'easiest patterns to produce in a tablet-weave', 'strap patterns, crosses, swastikas, and triangles recur through the centuries', from Cuthbert's vestments, those at Birka and Mammen, the thirteenth-century bands at Sens, Canterbury, Dunfermline and Winchester, from the sixth to the fourteenth centuries (see: Crowfoot, 'Personal Possessions: Textiles', 471).

significance that may further inform an understanding of ornament and textiles in this period. The interlaced squares on the entirely braided early thirteenth-century stole (fig. 78), for instance, bear a striking resemblance to those on the fragments of a thirteenth-century orphrey from within the tomb of Abbot Dygon (fig. 74), which in turn recall the thirteenth-century woven bands from the tomb of Walter de Grey at York Minster (fig. 73). Both also resemble elements included in the Scandinavian Oseburg tapestries, excavated from a rich burial alongside looms and implements for weaving and textile work, and believed to date from the ninth century. In these, repeating cross patterns (in addition to lone swastikas) were woven into figural and zoomorphic scenes (figs. 81 and 82). Observing this does not necessitate a taxonomical interpretation from which Scandinavian influence may be inferred. Nor does it observe anything new; the similarities between braids in Scandinavia and indeed elsewhere have been noted.[51] Swastikas were ancient symbols found throughout surviving visual material across the globe, as is indeed true of many fundamental ornamental elements.[52] Similarly, the repeating imagery of alternating small birds and stylised tendrils woven into a tunic sleeve band, believed to have been made in Egypt between the seventh and tenth centuries, an example of which is now held in a collection of Byzantine textiles at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington DC (fig. 83), has parallels in one of the woven bands from amongst St Cuthbert's grave goods (figs. 66 and 69). So too do the heart shapes woven into extant cloth, also dating from seventh- to tenth-century Egypt (fig. 84) and the repeating heart shaped designs on the Salzburg mitre lappet (fig. 76). It is possible that this is evidence of the influence of imported textiles from North Africa, though it need not necessarily be

[51] Crowfoot noted the comparable material discovered in Scandinavia (most notably the ninth-/tenth-century braids discovered in the Birka burial), in addition to bands discovered in Egypt (though it is suggested that they may have been imported from elsewhere), and references to tablet-woven bands made in Byzantium (see: Crowfoot, 'The Braids', 449-450); The Salzburg braid on the later mitre lappet (fig. 76) and the soumak braid in St Cuthbert's tomb have also been compared to silks from modern Uzbekistan and a braid from Sant Apollinare in Ravenna, Italy (see: Leslie Webster, 'Fragments of a tunic (probably a dalmatic)', 135-6; Granger-Taylor, 'The Weft-patterned Silks and their Braid', 321; Webster, 'Fragment of Braid', 183-4.
[52] The study of a fifth-century belt buckle Karkov notes the 'pre-Christian' origins of crosses, swastikas and 'beast ornament" (see: Karkov, *The Art of Anglo-Saxon England*, 12).

thus. This imagery may instead be considered as evidence of the longstanding popularity of some motifs, the endurance and universality of which may be assumed to have conveyed a sense of longevity and timelessness consistent with the use of the objects on which they were woven, and the processes by which they were made. Recognising such continuity in the production of textiles in this period is significant, as it points to a degree of material and visual consistency denied by a historiography which seeks to taxonomise and delineate between imagery as a means of establishing chronological, cultural, and racial boundaries. It is additionally consistent with the

This sense of dislocation may be related to some of the more recent art historical scholarship on early medieval 'ornament' as a visual category. In an essay on the subject of 'Ornament as Incarnation' (2016), Benjamin Tilghman claimed an 'iconographic association between ornament and Christ's Incarnation' within the Book of Kells and related works.[53] The close relationship between 'the Man and incarnational theology', Tilghman argues, was at play in the ornamental embellishment so that 'Simply put, ornament represents flesh'.[54] Pulliam observed a similar phenomenon within the ornament of the Corbie Psalter: the entanglement motifs present in both the Psalter and the Book of Kells (in which quadrupeds, 'beasts', and humans are ensnared in ornamental interlace) create 'patterns of meaning' which, Pulliam argues, may be perceived as 'commenting upon and embroidering the content of the psalms… the sinful man is shown entangled in a web of his own making.'[55] Tilghman concluded that 'Insular art, attractive as it is, is exceedingly hard to look at closely: it is confusing, disorientating, exhausting'.[56] To this list of adjectives describing ornament, tablet-woven bands may add the word dislocatory: possessing an ability to decontextualise the

[53] Benjamin C. Tilghman, 'Ornament and Incarnation in Insular Art', *Gesta* 55.2 (Fall 2016), 157-177, 157.
[54] Tilghman, 'Ornament and Incarnation in Insular Art', 176.
[55] Heather Pulliam, 'Eloquent Ornament: Exegesis and Entanglement in the Corbie Psalter' in *Studies in the Illustration of the Psalter*, ed. by Brendan Cassidy and Rosemary Muir Wright (Shaun Tyas: Stamford, 2000), 24-33, 32-3.
[56] Tilghman, 'Ornament and Incarnation in Insular Art', 176.

maker, wearer, and viewer from their immediate time and place to consider the longer material history in which these objects existed.

To consider them thus may at first seem paradoxical: one would perhaps assume that objects which were worn (by people, buildings, objects) were objects that grounded their wearers rather than items that allowed them to embody ontological allusions. This is especially the case when one considers that these bands were, by their nature and position on clothing, used to demarcate boundaries: to stop hems from fraying and prevent seams from loosening. However, such an interpretation is also consistent with some of the conclusions drawn thus far in this thesis about the phenomenological capacity of textiles more broadly. The woven bands which, like those on the Worcester vestments (in their presumed original condition), bordered stylised figural embroideries surely enriched the potential for textiles to engage their viewer in phenomenological encounters with themselves, the spaces they inhabited, and the objects within them. On encountering a tablet-woven band one's body was defined as an element within a larger phenomenological milieu in which the past, present, and future were simultaneously implicated. Just as the stylisation of figural embroideries dislocated the bodies of clerical wearers to allow them to embody the sacred figures on their vestments, so the bordering tablet-woven bands similarly dislocated the bodies of their wearers, suspending the mundanities of mortal flesh and invoking ideas of eternal life. In the case of these vestments this must be presumed to have enabled significantly heightened religious devotion. However, the written sources which survive from secular contexts (wills), where tablet-woven bands were mobilised across generations, must be considered no less profound: in prompting the wearer to consider the past, the future, the universal, these objects affirm the potential for textiles to engender significant material principles.

MAKERS OF MEMORY

Very little is known about the context in which these objects were produced, and thus how this continuity was enabled. However, a glimpse is provided in the tenth-century will of Wynflæd (an Old English woman's name): 'Eadgyfe hio becwið Eadgyfe ane crencestran ane sem[estra]n oþer hatte Eadgyfu oþer hatte Æþelyfu' ('and she bequeathes to Eadgifu a woman-weaver and a seamstress the one called Eadgifu, the other called Æthelgifu').[57] Though the position of these women is not entirely clear, they are bequeathed in the section of the will which contains instructions for freeing Wynflæd's slaves.[58] This not only suggests that Eadgifu and Æthelgifu were themselves enslaved, but also that their work was too valuable or too specialised to be relinquished in granting them their freedom – instead their skills were inherited by the deceased's relations. When the apparent longevity of woven bands is considered, as objects that were themselves bequeathed in wills and transferred across generations of objects, then the role of the maker in facilitating this material tradition becomes apparent. It is perhaps analogous to the mention of Ælfgyth, the woman recorded in the Domesday Book who held her lands on the condition that she teach the Sheriff of Buckinghamshire's daughter gold textile work, which suggests that specialist skills in specific areas of textile work were practiced by certain individuals who ensured the continuity of their craft through teaching or inheritance.[59]

In both Wynflæd's will and William of Poitiers' description of 'the women of the English people are very skilled in needlework and weaving in gold thread' (sources written

[57] Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, 10-13.
[58] Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, 10-14; Clegg Hyer and Owen-Crocker also interprets this passage as confirmation that Eadgifu and Æthelgifu were slaves (see: Clegg-Hyer and Owen-Crocker, 'Woven Works', 182).
[59] *Domesday Book: Buckinghamshire*, trans. and ed. by John Morris (edited from a draft translation prepared by Elizabeth Teague and Veronica Sankaran) (Chichester: Phillimore, 1987), 19, 149c.

over a century apart), weaving is both delineated from needlework as a specialist skill and is associated with English women, as either a category of identity and individuals with English women's names. Eadgifu, the name of Wynflæd's 'weaving woman', is an Old English woman's name, and the very word used to describe her, 'crencestran', is translated as a gendered role referring specifically to a woman who weaves, further evidence of the gendered performativity described by Butler, in which textiles and textile production were also implicated in the gendering of individuals in the context of early medieval England.[60] Further evidence for which may be located in William of Poitiers elaboration on his remark about English women's skill in gold needlework and weaving, with the comment that 'the men [of the English people] are outstanding in craftsmanship of all kinds', thus outlining needlework and weaving as distinct crafts at which women excelled, significantly gendering these media. One such skilled woman is recorded in the twelfth-century *Liber Eliensis*; the heiress Aethelswith, who lived a 'semi-anchoritic life' at Ely and 'ubi aurifrixoriae et texturis secretius cum puellulis vacabat' ('in great seclusion she used to devote her time to gold-embroidery and tapestry-weaving, in company with young girls [keeping a textile school]'), producing works subsequently listed in the 1134 Ely inventory.[61] It is also an association reflected in the depictions of women weaving on a skein and two beam loom in the illustrations within the twelfth-century Eadwine Psalter (fig. 85), itself a reiteration of the women weaving within the earlier ninth-century illuminated Utrecht Psalter on which it was based (fig. 86), suggesting the enduring cultural relevance of this motif. It may therefore be claimed that at least some women made weavings, and at least some weavings were made by women in early medieval England. It is also possible that women specifically enabled the cultural longevity created by woven bands in their manufacture of them, an idea consistent

[60] Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, 10; Joseph Bosworth and T. Northcote Toller (eds.), *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), 170.
[61] Michele Diener, 'Sealed with a Stitch', 5 (citing: *Liber Eliensis*, Fairweather, 187-8). A transcript of the original Latin: Stewart, *Liber Eliensis, ad fidem codicum variorum*, 208).

with historical evidence for women's positions as incubators of Insular culture after the Norman conquest.[62] As with embroideries of the period, however, in no case is the identity of the maker of any surviving tablet-woven bands known. Indeed, evidence relating to the gendered identity of weavers is sparse when one considers that weaving was a widely practiced craft.

Certainly, in the preceding centuries, men appear to have been familiar with the processes involved in weaving. As cited in the second chapter of this thesis, the late-seventh-century Latin poem composed by Bishop Aldhelm, *De Lorica*, exhibited a detailed knowledge of weaving and looms, which was reiterated in later Old English translations of the poem, the Leiden Riddle and Exeter Book Riddle 35, preserved in manuscripts dating to the ninth and tenth centuries respectively.[63] Owen-Crocker observed that 'it is interesting to find a male scholar, Aldhelm, using the technical terms of the women's craft of weaving'.[64] Maren Clegg Hyer posited in response that Aldhelm, and those in monastic communities more broadly, likely gained this familiarity with weaving through exposure in 'the domestic environments of childhood – where both women and children were present'.[65] With the relative paucity of sources, however, it is difficult to refute with any certainty that monastic men were familiar with the processes of weaving because they themselves were involved in weaving. Any gendered division of labour in the production of textiles may therefore have

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[62] See introduction, footnote 58: Marjorie Chibnall has claimed that 'the aristocratic element in old English society survived principally through the marriages of its womenfolk to Norman lords. For many new barons this strengthened their hereditary claim to the lands they acquired' and that 'assimilation of culture and tradition advanced rapidly', noting in particular genealogical accounts which acknowledge both traditions (see: Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England 1066-1166*, 208-10); see also chapter 2, footnote 50: Elizabeth Tyler's claim that nunneries were considered 'to act as repositories of Anglo-Saxon loyalties and cultural memory' after the Norman conquest (see: Tyler, *England in Europe*, 308).

[63] 'Wundene me ne beoð wefle, ne ic wearp hafu/ne þurh þræd me ne hlimmeð/ne æt me hrutende hrisil scriþeð/ne mec ohwonan sceal amas cnyssan', 'Wefts are not interlaced for me, neither have I a warp, nor does a thread resound for me through the force of strokes, nor does the whirring shuttle move through me, nor shall weavers' tools beat me from anywhere' (see: Gale Owen-Crocker, *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), 279-80 (citing: Albert Hugh Smith (ed.), *Three Northumbrian Poems* (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1968), 44)).

[64] Owen-Crocker, *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England*, 279-80.

[65] Hyer, 'Text/Textile', 36.

been overstated. Furthermore, Ruth Mazo Karras has argued that, in general during the Middle Ages in Europe, changing economic conditions and technological developments altered the production and distribution of cloth such that it meant that men 'took it [weaving] over on a commercial basis' (an argument that has also been made about embroidery), which at least suggests the capacity for men to be involved in the production of textiles.[66] In addition, she maintains that even after men came to dominate weaving, textile work broadly 'remained a symbol of feminine virtue'.[67] However, Karras included little material from eleventh- or twelfth-century England in her study, and associations between weaving and femininity as a performative and gendered action cannot be so securely claimed (though the claim that men later 'took over' weaving at the time of the popularisation of the foot-pedalled loom has been accepted and is made too by Owen-Crocker and Hyer).[68]

The evidence for the specific involvement of weaving as a performative constituent in the gendering of women in this period is therefore not conclusive, and one should be wary about applying limited sources to broad conclusions about the role of gender in the production of certain media. Hyer, for instance, supported her claim that 'women were identified with spinning, weaving, and creation of fabrics and garments' with reference to that single maxim preserved in the tenth-century Exeter Book: 'Fæmne æt hyre bordan gerisеð' (a woman's place is at her embroidery').[69] Furthermore, given the prevalence of weaving in material culture, both men and women likely produced weavings, or were at least well acquainted with the processes involved. In the specific case of tablet-woven bands, to presume the gender of their makers would therefore be to overemphasise a handful of

[66] Ruth Mazo Karras, '"This Skill in a Woman is By No Means to Be Despised": Weaving and the Gender Division of Labor in the Middle Ages' in *Medieval Fabrications: Dress, Textiles, Clothwork, and Other Cultural Imaginings*, ed. by E. Jane Burns (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 89-104, 89-90; Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, 47.
[67] Mazo Karras, '"This Skill in a Woman is By No Means to Be Despised"', 89.
[68] Clegg-Hyer and Owen-Crocker, 'Woven Works', 182.
[69] Clegg Hyer, 'Text/Textile', 36; *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* vol. III ed. by G.P. Krapp and E.V.K. Dobbie (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931-53), 159.

contextual sources, and also to risk reinforcing the gendered essentialism implied by the identification of certain 'tastes' in earlier taxonomical assessments.

Though the limitations of this material and its related contextual sources may at first appear frustrating, significant conclusions may still be drawn: it appears that tablet-woven bands successfully embodied their own capacity for longevity as material objects whose lives would exceed those of their makers, wearers, and viewers – a longevity enabled by individual craftspeople, who appear (in at least some cases) to have been women. The inherited and taught traditions exchanged across generations therefore appear as poignant as the extant objects which were themselves passed between generations. Allusions to longevity, immortality, and continuity must be presumed to have been especially profound in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, as periods of flux precipitated by the conquest. These are no small conclusions to draw about these woven objects, which to contemporary viewers may appear quite modest survivals from an ill-understood period. It may be impossible to ascertain whether women were wholly responsible for their production. Yet recognising the processes by which material continuity was achieved, and the contributions of at least some women therein, is in itself significant as it challenges those studies which have historically denied women's contributions, the importance of textiles, and survival of pre-existing material modes throughout the period of the conquest. We may not claim that all of these significant objects were made by women, but we may be sure that the women described by William of Poitiers made important objects such as these.

WOVEN WORKINGS

Evidence for the re-use of these objects, and the prominence of weavers in material culture in this period make it unlikely that woven bands were peripheral ornamental

elements. Instead, they must be understood as integral to the reception and use of the objects on which they featured, and the place of textiles in material culture more broadly.

Tablet-woven bands were evidently essential elements of vestments, and in contemporaneous depictions care is taken to represent woven braids; the depictions of Aminadab and Nasson, in the late-twelfth-century stained glass windows from Canterbury Cathedral, for instance, include the exaggerated drapes of their garments, trimmed with bands of alternating roundels and diamonds, a pattern punctuated by smaller radiating circles and edged with an additional band (figs. 87 and 88). The same may be observed in a twelfth-century limestone sculpture of St Peter from Ivychurch Priory in Wiltshire (fig. 89), in which great care appears to have been taken in the carving of beads trimming the edge of the chasuble, and the squares of patterned relief on the end of the orphrey and stole to suggest woven bands. The tablet-woven bands positioned on the edges of vestments may be presumed to have implied the immortality, longevity, and continuity central to the Christian faith, further legitimising the intercessory capacity of the wearer. This is an intercessory capacity which, as argued in the first chapter of this thesis, could also be articulated through and enabled by the figural stylisation in contemporaneous embroideries.

The bands themselves may also have pointed to an intercessory capacity in their repetitive imagery. Michelle Brown has claimed that the dense pages of patterned interlace filling the 'carpet pages' of the Lindisfarne Gospels were inspired by textile elements, specifically Coptic prayer mats (the *oratorio*), to support her argument that the pages were intended to signify the entrance to the 'holy ground' of sacred text and further facilitate the meditative capacity of these pages.[70] Anna Bücheler, in a study of *Textile Pages and Textile Metaphors in Early Medieval Manuscripts* (2019), similarly claimed that 'textile-like' motifs

[70] Michelle Brown, 'Reading the Lindisfarne Gospels: Text, Image, Context' in Richard Gameson, *The Lindisfarne Gospels: New Perspectives* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2017), 84-95, 91.

alluding to 'oriental silks' existed as a theological concept, acting as a threshold to the divine.[71] It is possible that the absorbing geometric patterns of tablet-woven bands facilitated similarly meditative moments. Indeed, it may be more than likely, when one considers that the interlace depicted on the surface of, for instance, the bands found amongst the Worcester vestments (figs. 70a and 70c) was self-referential, in that these bands both consisted of interlaced threads and depicted a pattern of interlace. This meditative capacity was also surely enriched by the process by which these objects were made, namely threading tautly held yarn through holes in tablets, which are turned to rotate the warp threads around the weft during weaving to create patterns (fig. 90). It was a form of making unlike any other, the repetitive act of turning and pulling being without parallel in facilitating contemplative thought. In her study of tablet-woven bands, Spies included the comments of Heidi Stolte, a contemporary tablet-weaver in Berlin who recreated the complex tenth-century woven maniple of St Ulrich:

> How could weavers plan the twistings and turnings of tablets in such a complicated piece as the maniple is?... If it has been only for the single motif – I think a skilled weaver who has not done much else during most of his life could have done them freehand, by heart or after a rough drawing. Those patterns follow the laws of symmetry, and there is a lot of mathematics behind them… Sometimes when I was weaving, at night, without thinking of other concerns, quite relaxed, I noticed that I anticipated the next turns of the tablets unconsciously without the help of the drawing – but those were rare moments, perhaps comparable to the state of mind one can reach in meditation.[72]

If one considers that the thirteenth-century tablet-woven bands from the tomb of Walter de Gray (fig. 73) required two hundred and one tablets (each with four holes), using a total of eight hundred warp threads, the extent to which the complexity of this work would have absorbed one's entire focus, and the meditative mode one would have had to access, can only be imagined.[73] Furthermore, the familiarity with weaving exhibited in contemporary literature suggests that these modes of making would have been immediately recalled on

[71] Bücheler, *Ornament as Argument*, 145.
[72] Heidi Stolte in correspondence with Nancy Spies (see: Spies, *Ecclesiastical Pomp & Aristocratic Circumstance*, 91-2).
[73] Patterson, 'Tablet-woven Braids', 20-21.

viewing these objects, thereby enriching the meditative implications of interlace as a visual category. Ahmed's understanding of emotions as formed by memory or histories of association, which then 'stick' to objects, should frame how tablet-woven bands were surely read: a widespread familiarity with the processes of weaving and the contemplative potential therein, sticking to the objects even after their production, underscoring their sacral significance.[74]

In addition to their contemplative and intercessory capacity, the intrinsic value of these bands also appears a significant element of their materiality, as a mutual enhancement of the objects' spiritual and material richness. The twelfth-century chronicler, Reginald of Durham, evocatively recorded the translation of St Cuthbert's remains to a new grave in 1104 and described the borders of his clothes as so richly woven with gold that 'non facile, et tunc quidem cum aliquo stridore' ('it is not easily bent back, and then it makes a crackling sound'), a description which emphasises the sheer material weight of the expensive materials used.[75] The capacity for these elements to enrich an object's material value is also apparent in the passage of Wynflæd's will, in which she dictates that 'Æðeflæd syþþan an hyre nun 's' crude loce hwæt hio betsð mæge Wulfflæde Æþelgife ice mid golde þæt hyra ægþer hyru hæbbe LX peneng[a wyr]þ Ceolwynne Edburge þæt sy XXX penega wyrþ' ('Æthelflæd is to supply from her nun's vestments the best she can for Wufflæd and Æthelgifu and supplement it with gold so that each of them shall have at least sixty pennyworth: and for Ceolwyn and Eadburg it shall be thirty pennyworth').[76] Wynflæd also dictated that two goblets and an armlet be enriched with gold or furnished further.[77] Adding gold to objects thus appears to have been a standard means of enriching an object's value. Other

[74] Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 11.
[75] Clegg-Hyer and Owen-Crocker, 'Woven Works', 173 (citing: E.G. Pace (trans.) in Battiscombe, *The Relics of St Cuthbert*, 110, itself a citation of the original Latin, a transcript of which was included in James Raine, *Saint Cuthbert: with an account of the state in which his remains were found upon the opening of his tomb in Durham cathedral in the year MDCCCXXVII* (Durham: G. Andrews, 1828), 4 (appendix)).
[76] *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, Whitelock, 14-15.
[77] *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, Whitelock, 12-13.

contemporaneous wills also differentiate between objects (including textiles) by describing them as either 'ornamented' or 'unornamented', suggesting that the addition of gold bands was likely an established means of displaying one's individual wealth and status, and an object's value.[78] Elizabeth Crowfoot has also claimed that gold braids must be interpreted as 'a sign of the importance' of the wearer, citing the suggestion that the seventh-century Taplow burial, which included a gold tablet-woven band, was that of a 'minor king', and that other early medieval gold headbands in Kentish graves belonged to daughters of the royal house, and noted the presence of tablet-woven bands in saints' shrines.[79] She also noted their position in wills as 'the equivalent of cash bequests'.[80]

Beyond contributing to the objects' monetary value, the addition of gold or silver threads to woven bands may be considered significant in their gestures to longevity and timelessness. Reginald of Durham's consternation at St Cuthbert's woven borders also attests to their survival in a tomb for some centuries. All that survives of a sixth- or seventh-century woven band excavated from Taplow, Buckinghamshire, is the gold wire thread from around which the organic textile elements decomposed, leaving only the skeleton of an object from which the original pattern has been reconstructed (fig. 91). At the rich burial in Prittelwell, Essex (dating to the sixth century), a gold neck trim survives even though the garment to which it was attached, and the body itself, had decomposed entirely.[81] Considering the Prittlewell burial, Hyer and Owen-Crocker noted the inaccuracy of the Old English Blickling homily which states: 'Nu þu miht her geseon moldan dœ & wyrmes lafe, þœr þu œr gesawe godweb mid golde gefagod' ('Now you may see here a portion of the earth and the leavings of worms, where you saw before a fine cloth interwoven with gold').[82]

[78] *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, Whitelock, 2-5, 14-15, 22-23, 84-85.
[79] Crowfoot, 'Personal Possessions: Textiles', 471.
[80] Crowfoot, 'Personal Possessions: Textiles', 471 (citing: *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, Whitelock, 28-9, 63).
[81] Clegg-Hyer and Owen-Crocker, 'Woven Works', 176.
[82] Clegg-Hyer and Owen-Crocker, 'Woven Works', 176 (citing: *The Blickling Homilies*, EETS Original Series 58, 63, 73, ed. by R. Morris (London: Trubner, 1880), 28, ll. 19-20)).

The homily no doubt uses poetic licence, as one presumes that the practice of translating saints' remains (such as St Cuthbert's) meant that it was common knowledge which materials would not quickly degrade. Thus, quite apart from the practicalities of using a durable material for items which were transferred across objects, the longevity of the material must be presumed to have increased the significance of these objects, enriching the textiles with the knowledge that their precious material would enable their endurance into an unknowable future. This material wealth does not preclude tablet-woven bands from also possessing a profound spiritual dimension. Hyer and Owen-Crocker note that the Old English words for borders occur most commonly in glosses of 'biblical or hagiographical textile-related healings', such as the New Testament account of the woman whose haemorrhaging was healed by touching the fringe or edge of Jesus's clothing.[83] Thus, woven bands may be said to have possessed multivalent significance, as objects possessing considerable sacrality, material value, and longevity.

Tablet-woven bands appear not to have been limited to precious vestments, and have indeed been considered as the 'norm for Anglo-Saxon clothing'.[84] In her study of 'wordweaving' within the broader category of 'text-textile' metaphors in Old English and Anglo-Norman literature, Hyer argued that the prevalence of these metaphors suggest a significant familiarity with weaving and its processes, so much so that she concludes that weaving and interweaving were the dominant artistic styles in England, and that 'braided and tablet-woven borders of Anglo-Saxon garments' were considered an 'identifying factor for the English and their textile work'.[85] It is tempting to consider whether tablet-woven bands, in addition to their many other significances, also acted as a means of negotiating cultural boundaries post-conquest. For instance, the claim that, in applying gold work to her

[83] Clegg-Hyer and Owen-Crocker, 'Woven Works', 173.
[84] Clegg-Hyer and Owen-Crocker, 'Woven Works', 173.
[85] Clegg Hyer, 'Text/Textile', 37.

husband, King Cnut's clothing, Queen Edith of Wessex was 'developing the simple traditional borders into extravagant decoration in eleventh-century Anglo-Scandinavian taste' implies such an ability to negotiate cultural difference.[86] However, as with speculation as to the significance of the (possibly) gendered identity of the bands' makers, such a conclusion would potentially be to hypothesise excessively. That woven bands were produced and worn in England does not necessarily make tablet-woven bands especially 'English'.[87] However, this does not make the context in which they were made irrelevant; their continued creation and use in this period in Britain is significant not because it makes the bands 'English', but because it further suggests the continuity of material principles over a long period of time, one previously understood as a time of seismic artistic change. The contributions of women like Eadgifu and Æthelgifu and, across the period of the conquest, Leogyth and Ælfgyth were significant in enabling this continuity, though their position in the footnotes of many previous studies has obscured this for too long.

CROSS-MEDIA WEAVING

This continuity in textile production may have had a stake in the expression of continuity in material and visual culture more broadly in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Indeed, when the evidence for textility included earlier within this thesis is considered it seems likely that imagery and materiality relating to tablet-woven bands was similarly bound

[86] Clegg-Hyer and Owen-Crocker, 'Woven Works', 173 (citing: Owen-Crocker, *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England*, 242-3).
[87] Clegg Hyer and Owen-Crocker themselves acknowledge the depictions of spinning and weaving by hand in 'the art of other cultures, such as those of Ancient Greece and Byzantium' (see: Clegg-Hyer and Owen-Crocker, 'Woven Works', 158).

into the texture of the broader 'lifeworld' of early medieval Britain.[88] In her study of *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England* (1986), Owen-Crocker makes the observation that:

> the most skilled weavers probably produced imaginative designs which were influenced by changes in fashion such as we find in illuminated manuscripts… but there was probably a strong traditional element too, and, among the early settlers and the rustic population throughout our period, custom may have established patterns which were peculiar to families or regions. Unfortunately, the surviving examples recovered so far have been too few and small to test this hypothesis.[89]

As has already been argued, interpreting the imagery on these objects in taxonomical terms, to claim any degree of geographical-specificity or inherent identity, is no longer justifiable. The limits of essentialist approaches having been established, Owen-Crocker's observation of the tablet-woven bands' potential relationship to contemporaneous manuscripts is compelling. Granger-Taylor, too, in her analysis of the Soumak braid found amongst St Cuthbert's grave goods (fig. 69), noted that the style of the Cuthbert braids' borders is, in its pattern of 'short and long alteration of colour', reminiscent of the border of the Sutton Hoo purse mount, and that its proportions 'recall the narrow "tramline" borders often with similar bars, occurring in Insular manuscript illuminations, for instance in the Book of Kells, in the framework around the figure of Christ'.[90] The very material structure of weavings may also have been referenced in other media. That interlace as a motif may have possessed intrinsic associations with textiles in early medieval Britain has been suggested by Coatsworth, in a study of earlier 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'Scandinavian' metalwork and stone sculpture, in which it was noted that 'representations of interlace that could be made using wire or thread… therefore possibly providing evidence for missing or fragmentary textile detail'.[91] Skeuomorphic references to textiles (both quasi and explicit) in

[88] The notion of making as 'a practice of weaving, in which practitioners bind their own pathways or lines of becoming into the texture of material flows comprising the lifeworld' was included by Ingold in his definition of textility (see: Ingold, 'The textility of making', 91).
[89] Owen-Crocker, *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England*, 179.
[90] Webster, 'Braid with soumak brocading decorating the edges of the garment', 135-6.
[91] Coatsworth, 'Design in the Past', 146 (referencing: G. Adcock, 'A Study of the Types of Interlace on Northumbrian Sculpture', MPhil Thesis, University of Durham (1974), 35-42).

early medieval art have already been noted in this thesis, in particular in contemporaneous wall paintings. Bands of patterned ornament were a common motif in early medieval Insular art, and thus a reassessment of the interpretation of tablet-woven bands may also have potential for better understanding this motif across a variety of media.

The capacity for ornamental elements to point to textiles in particular has been argued by Bücheler, who in her study of 'textile-like' motifs in early medieval Ottonian manuscripts questioned not what textile ornament was, but rather what it *does* – concluding that it sought not to mimic specific textiles, but rather evoked textiles in a more general manner to generate 'didactic and contemplative' responses.[92] Though Bücheler does not include any Insular material in this study, it is a framework which may inform an understanding of cross-media patterned borders in art made in Britain in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. If the same principles are applied, then 'woven band-like' elements (not as elegant a phrase, it may be conceded) may be observed in bands of ornamental pattern of similar dimensions and repeating imagery across media, as a means of assessing the prevalence of these objects in this period. Such an interpretation not only points to the prevalence of these object in this period, beyond what the paucity of extant object may suggest, but also to the intended purpose of such imagery. If one accepts that tablet-woven bands embodied notions of timelessness and the infinite then it may be assumed that the presence of this motif on objects of other media held similar associations.

A mid-twelfth-century bell shrine, the 'Kilmichael Glassary Bell Shrine' in the collection of the National Museums of Scotland, for instance, has on each of its edges high relief patterned bands placed over the joins of the copper alloy panels which form the faces of the shrine (fig. 92). The bands are engraved with continuous, repeating patterns of stylised foliate and geometric elements, the relative angularity of which contrasts with the curvilinear

[92] Bücheler, *Ornament as Argument*, 18-9.

tendrils of foliate scrolls on the object's front and back faces, embossed on the face of the metal in considerably lighter relief than that on the bordering bands. So much so that on first viewing one may not immediately notice the patterns on the faces, unlike those on the bands which could not be missed. This disparity in relief on the different pieces of metal could perhaps be a reference to the contrasting textures of embroidered panels and woven bands on contemporaneous textiles. Functionally, these elements also act as metal joins between the panels of the reliquary, analogous to the manner in which tablet-woven bands edged seams and hems, therefore surely enhancing the textility inherent within their presence on the shrine. Indeed, in the stylised geometric bands bordering more curvilinear foliate ornament, the shrine is reminiscent of the Cuthbert vestments (fig. 64). Though they are only reminiscent of and not identical to any other extant band, they may be considered to be governed by the same principles of design (though considering the paucity of surviving evidence alongside the ubiquity of weaving in this period, it is not unlikely that an exact textile parallel did exist). These are principles which appear to have been widely expressed across media in this period. One may assume that, on the Bell Shrine, the bands of pattern possessed an analogous capacity to that of the tablet-woven bands they appear to emulate. Their position on a reliquary shrine is, for instance, significant as an object with a designated intercessory position – intended to mediate encounters between mortals and the objects through which they may access the miracle-working capacity of the divine. This intercessory capacity is not unlike that on vestments, worn by those individuals with an intercessory capacity, navigating the boundary between the mortal and the divine, the mundane and the miraculous.

The bands of pattern which feature commonly, both as painted and sculptural elements, within the material fabric of church in this period also attest to the commonality of these motifs and their position on the boundaries of objects and spaces. The early twelfth-century wall paintings within the radiating archivolts in the nave at St Mary's Church in

Kempley, Gloucestershire, for instance, are painted with bands of pattern that include alternating squares, successive circles, chevrons, and diamonds (fig. 93). The alternative squared and chevrons in particular recall the patterns on braids found amongst the relics of St Cuthbert (figs. 67 and 68). English Heritage's description of the paintings at St Mary's characterise them as 'the most complete set of Romanesque frescos in northern Europe'.[93] However, the 'post-conquest' specificity implied by applications of the term Romanesque to these paintings is disrupted by the bands of pattern which point to a coherent set of visual and material codes with a long history in Insular Britain, upholding longstanding visual traditions which embodied sacral boundaries and their capacity for the infinite.

These objects are therefore also suggestive of the visual longue durée suggested in the second chapter of this thesis, a durability which significantly problematises the boundaries established between 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'Romanesque' art. Such categories not only obscure visual continuity in this period, but also obscure its potential visual connections across the British Isles in areas beyond the Norman conquest. Tablet-woven bands have been described as constituent elements of early medieval 'Englishness', Crowfoot having claimed that the gold braids excavated from the tomb of Henry of Blois in Winchester were, like those included in the grave goods of St Cuthbert and those edging the chasuble excavated at Canterbury, 'in an English tradition of some centuries' growth'.[94] However, one of the earliest and most significant extant textiles found in the British Isles, the Orkney Hood (fig. 94), discovered in the nineteenth-century in a peat bog in Orkney, includes a tablet-woven border and dates from the Iron Age. The eighth-century Irish Athlone Crucifixion Plaque (fig. 95) also appears to depict tablet-woven bands: perhaps the most dominant visual features of the central crucified figure, and mourners either side, are their garments' edgings

[93] 'St Mary's Church, Kempley', *English Heritage*, <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/st-marys-church-kempley/> [accessed 25 January 2022].
[94] Crowfoot, 'Personal Possessions: Textiles', 477; Crowfoot, 'St Augustine's Canterbury', 1-9.

of repeating key patterns, interlace, and peltae. Brown has described the gilt bronze plaque as possessing the enlarged head of 'Iron Age Celtic art', the Roman style of tonsure, 'eastern-style angels' hovering either side of Christ's head, and the figures of Sephaton and Longinus flanking the cross as in the style of the 'Syriac Rabbula Gospels', visual parallels which position early medieval Insular art within a broad cultural network.[95] Peter Harbison's analysis of the plaque observed similarly diverse sources of influence, including Irish manuscripts illuminations and the possibility that some of abstract patterns were a reference to an earlier version carved in wood, though he noted that 'those [strips] on the edges of the garments worn by Longinus [the figure on the lower right hand side of the central figure of Christ], find perhaps their best parallels in stone – on the north and south sides of the shaft of the North Cross at Ahenny in Co. Tipperary'.[96] However, the plaque's garment's patterned borders also display how integral textile bands appear to have been to an early medieval understanding of the construction of rich and precious imagery, situating the object and its depicted bands within a long, far-reaching material context which elides attempts to apply geographically-specific categories.

Tilghman understood the ornament on this crucifixion plaque as a response to a 'desire to touch Christ's body':

> While the abstract patterns on the angels hovering above Christ are in very low relief, the whorls on his torso have greater depth and serve to form his body, most distinctly at the shoulders. The ornamental pattering imparts a sense of liveliness to Christ (as well as the angels), emphasizing his living flesh even in the moment of his death. The use of ornament as a metaphor for Christ's flesh underscored the fact of Christ as a person who had form, mass, and texture, who palpably existed.[97]

Reading textility into this object does not contradict this interpretation, it enriches it. Observing the mutual-enrichment between the processes of making, material, use (sustained

[95] Brown, *Art of the Islands*, 102-3.
[96] Peter Harbison, 'The Bronze Crucifixion Plaque Said to be from St John's (Rinnagan), near Athlone', *Journal of Irish Archaeology* 2 (1984), 1-17, 1 and 8.
[97] Tilghman, 'Ornament and Incarnation in Insular Art', 175.

across generations of objects), and abstract pattern on tablet-woven bands provides vital material context for objects in alternative media which include analogous ornament. This imagery was especially profound within textile objects in which it contributed to the creation of an embodied sense of timelessness, which underscored the articulation of Christ's own embodiment in this plaque. Fragmentary remains of tablet-woven bands which date from between the tenth and twelfth centuries have been excavated from an urban deposit in Dublin, further attesting to the existence of these objects in early medieval Ireland.[98]

The textility of the Kilmichael Glassary Bell Shrine's 'tablet-woven band like' borders similarly challenge the categories by which the object has previously been defined. The National Museum of Scotland's description of the Kilmichael Glassary Bell Shrine as 'English Romanesque in style, Scottish work' is a claim made without evidence or observed visual parallels.[99] As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, the use of 'Romanesque' as an art historical term was popularised by nineteenth-century scholars specifically to describe ecclesiastical architecture in eleventh- and twelfth-century Britain and northern France perceived to emulate Roman architectural and sculptural elements, but has since been applied more generally to describe any extant visual material made in Europe in this period.[100] The description of objects such as the Kilmichael-Glassary Bell Shrine, which bears no obvious relationship to any antique Roman material, forces one to consider what purpose this taxonomy is serving is this instance. Indeed, Virginia Glenn's more expansive analysis of the Bell Shrine in her study, *Romanesque and Gothic: Decorative Metalwork and Ivory Carvings in the Museum of Scotland* (2003), does not draw comparisons to any Roman objects, but instead considers the 'zoomorphic top handle and feet and the strapwork decoration' as 'indebted

[98] Frances Pritchard, 'Silk Braids and Textiles of the Viking Age from Dublin' in *Archaeological Textiles* (NESAT II), ed. by Lise Bender Jørgensen, Bente Magnus, and Elizabeth Munksgård (Copenhagen: Arkaeologisk Institut, 1988), 149-156.
[99] 'Reliquary', *National Museums Scotland*, <https://www.nms.ac.uk/explore-our-collections/collection-search-results/reliquary/14466> [accessed 11 February 2022].
[100] See introduction, footnotes 105-6 (Seidel, 'Rethinking "Romanesque;" Re-engaging Roman[z]').

to the Celtic tradition', and the 'border decoration and the crucifix figure' as having 'their closest parallels in Scandinavian art', drawing convincing parallels to the Eriksberg Reliquary from Västergötland in Sweden (fig. 96).[101] Like Romanesque, it is important to question what the terms Celtic and Scandinavian are *doing* in the context of this object, and to advance an art historical understanding of the period in which it was made. Describing the Kilmichael Glassary Bell Shrine as 'Romanesque', or identifying the influence of Celtic or Scandinavian elements, appears in this instance to situate the object as related to a myriad of potential cultural forces, based both within Insular Britain and beyond it, associated with both long-standing ancient motifs and objects contemporary with its production, at odds with the categorisation implied by the application of these terms but consistent with the evidence for a tradition of tablet-weaving which, by this point in history, had already endured across centuries and continents. More recently, analysis of the shrine by David Caldwell, Susy Kirk, Gilbert Márkus, Jim Tate and Sharon Webb (2012), considered its 'mixed artistic heritage, including local, Irish and Scandinavian influence', in addition to the possibility that it 'represents the artistic output of the Kingdom of the Isles or Dunkeld, in the kingdom of the Scots', based on 'parallels for its design and decoration'.[102]

The manner in which this object therefore appears to reach out in all directions, may only be fully understood when one considers the contemporaneous textile context. Tablet-woven borders and their material and imagery point to the universal and timeless. To seek to fix their patterns to a source (or sources) of geographical or cultural influence is to miss the point of what they were likely trying to achieve: a reference to a broadly shared, deeply rooted visual precedent which therefore implies an object's continued existence into an unseen future, thereby eliding their likely dislocatory potential which observes no fixed or

[101] Virginia Glenn, *Romanesque & Gothic: Decorative Metalwork and Ivory Carvings in the Museum of Scotland* (Edinburgh: National Museums of Scotland, 2003), 102.
[102] David H Caldwell, Susy Kirk, Gilbert Márkus, Jim Tate and Sharon Webb, 'The Kilmichael Glassary Bell-Shrine', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 142 (2012), 201-244, 201 and 225.

specific time of place. Comparatively little material survives from this period of Scottish history, due to Scotland's startlingly thorough iconoclastic Reformation. Though skirmishes and attempts to advance the Northern border were made, William the Conqueror's forces never succeeded in conquering Scotland, and even by 1100 Norman control of the Northern border was very limited.[103] However, Anglo-Norman nobles did migrate to the Scottish court, and though the extent of any 'dramatic cultural shift' has been debated, Agnes Strickland compellingly argued that Scottish kings followed Norman and Angevin models of kingship in their adopted social, political, and military institutions, suggesting a degree of cultural exchange which also causes one to question the value of any divisions within previous art histories.[104]

Though the abandonment of taxonomising categories may thus appear to limit an understanding of these objects, perhaps reducing the conclusions that may be drawn, it may actually open up how tablet-woven bands may be read. To return to Van Houts' idea of objects as 'pegs for memory' and Halbwachs' understanding of 'Collective Memory' based on religious, national, or class groups , one may observe that tablet-woven bands potentially gesture towards a larger sense of collective memory, in which an all-embracing sense of material memory appears to be referenced, through which groups may have sought to define the potential of the objects they made by drawing upon the universal and infinite allusions of the woven bands.[105]

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[103] Christopher Daniell, *From Norman Conquest to Magna Carta: England 1066-1215* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 57-8.
[104] Daniell, *From Norman Conquest to Magna Carta*, 60-1 (citing: Matthew Strickland, 'Securing the North: Invasion and the Strategy of Defence in Twelfth-Century Anglo-Norman Warfare', *Anglo-Norman Studies* XII, 177-98, 177).
[105] Halbwachs, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*.

CONCLUSION

The corpus of woven bands has significant limitations, and as such many conclusions cannot be drawn and questions that one would like to pose cannot be answered. However, this does not permit the overapplication of taxonomies which result in essentialist interpretations. Observations may still be made which advance our understanding of ornament, textiles, and material culture more broadly in this period. These are observations of no small significance, concerning visual continuity in a period of flux and longevity in a medium that is often dismissed. Observing thus within these objects is significant, as it further implies the ability of textiles to gesture towards the compression of time and space. The first and second chapter of this thesis examined how embroideries and textiles as a broader material category were likely understood as transformative and dislocatory objects. A woven border which similarly encourages ontological confrontation further affirms the significance of textiles and their makers within eleventh- and twelfth-century Britain.

In drawing these connections, nationalistic taxonomies or any united 'English' approach to ornament may be challenged. Indeed, these observations destabilise the boundaries between 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'Romanesque', English or Scottish, pre- or post-conquest. It may instead be claimed that the universality of certain motifs acquired a poignant significance in this period, attesting to the longevity of artistic skill in the production of textiles in Britain, one that (whether associated with Englishness and women or not) was rewarded with continued patronage throughout the period of the conquest and reflected in references made in other media.

CHAPTER 4
FRAMING TEXTILITY

The tablet-woven bands which framed early medieval garments and furnishings are but one instance in which textiles were implicated within the larger material, visual, and conceptual category of 'framing' in eleventh- and twelfth century England. In extant material works from early medieval Britain, consistencies in visual framing devices are such that certain motifs appear as formulae which 'float' across objects. This has the effect of compressing divisions between media, including textile works, as well as encouraging phenomenological encounters with material objects, analogous to those described in the preceding chapters. Frames appear permeable, the boundaries between material porous. The apparent permeability of frames can be considered analogous with the mediatory capacity of textiles described in the second and third chapters of this thesis, so that shared framing devices may be perceived as inherently 'textile-like'. Such devices enmesh works of all media so firmly within a network of metaphoric references to textiles that the culture of textility discussed in preceding chapters may be brought into even clearer focus, and may be further permitted to contextualise those sources which implicate that 'enmeshed and life altering' intersectional identity: English women.[1]

In this chapter, the understanding of 'Textility' draws particularly from the definition of 'textile-like' provided by Bücheler, in her study of 'textile pages' in early medieval Ottonian manuscripts, in which she observed a series of dense and complex textile metaphors that exceed mere shared iconography and point instead to the shared material properties of both objects (fig. 97).[2] Bücheler compellingly argued that the manuscripts of the Echternach scriptorium are so possessed with this 'textility' that they may be regarded as 'material book-

[1] Roland Betancourt defined intersectionality as 'enmeshed and life altering' in his study of early medieval Byzantium (see: Betancourt, *Byzantine Intersectionality*, 2).
[2] Bücheler, *Ornament as Argument*, 44.

bodies, as a form of scriptural incarnation that makes visible and tangible the presence of the word in the medieval liturgy.'[3] The significance of borders and edges in enabling such textility in material culture more broadly in eleventh- and twelfth-century Britain may affirm the theological potential of textiles identified by Bücheler in addition to the mediatory capacity of textiles (and textile metaphors) on the edge, as observed in the preceding chapter of this thesis. Such conclusions also emphatically affirm the continued prominence of textile makers in the construction of material culture in Britain in this period. This chapter therefore seeks to identify the inherent textility of frames, in addition to the inherent 'frame-ness' of textiles, as motifs which confirm the mediatory capacity of certain imagery and objects.

Frames have been identified as significant elements in much early medieval art produced in the British Isles. Owen-Crocker observed that 'it is clear that in the design of many Anglo-Saxon artefacts the border was as prominent in the creative process as the image it surrounded.'[4] That this appears to have been the case has caused some scholars to consider certain elements of framework as characteristic of or related to a sense of Englishness or English identity. Alexandra Lester-Makin cited Leslie Webster's argument that the arcade and roundel strips within the Maaseik embroideries (fig. 98) were related to 'the art of eighth-century Mercia in central England', referencing both 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'Byzantine' elements

[3] Bücheler, *Ornament as Argument*, 135-6; an additional recent study of the book as a material object, and which includes the consideration of textiles in addition to other media, is the edited volume *Clothing Sacred Scriptures: Book Arts and Book Religion in Christian, Islamic, and Jewish Cultures*. David Ganz introduced the volume by noting that 'material devices' were essential to the manner 'by which scripture is perceived and performed as an aesthetical, tangible and visible object. In analogy to Bezalel who crafted the Ark, countless scribes, painters, goldsmiths, embroiderers and ivory carvers were engaged in crafting what the title of this book labels "clothing sacred scripture"' (see: David Ganz and Barbara Schellewald, eds., *Clothing Sacred Scriptures: Book Arts and Book Religion in Christian, Islamic, and Jewish Cultures* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 3). Anna Bücheler also contributed a chapter to this volume on the subject of two c. 1100 manuscripts from the Domschatz in Trier which she claimed 'illustrate in exemplary manner how so-called textile pages, ornamented folios evoking the appearance of precious cloth, contribute to the clothing of sacred scripture' (see: Anna Bücheler, 'Clothing Sacred Scripture: Textile Pages in Two Medieval Gospel Books (Trier, Dombibliothek, Ms. 138 and 139)' in *Clothing Sacred Scriptures: Book Arts and Book Religion in Christian, Islamic, and Jewish Cultures* by David Ganz and Barbara Schellewald (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 123-138).
[4] Owen-Crocker, 'Bayeux Tapestry', 235-6.

as essential to the creation of 'a uniquely Mercian style'.[5] And borders have additionally been described prominently within analyses of the 'Winchester' style, as in Talbot-Rice's analysis of the Benedictional of St Æthelwold:

> There is already to be observed here a distinctive quality which marks the paintings not only as an outstanding work of art, but also as something undoubtedly and unquestionably English. This Englishness is primarily a question of style, but it is attested also by the presence of certain more concrete elements. Most striking of them is the development of the frame-like borders.[6]

Frames are thus considered significant sites for interpretation in the historiography of early medieval English art, where identities have historically been located and styles identified. The limitations of iconographic approaches have already been argued in this thesis and this chapter will therefore consider how the textility within frames may provide an alternative means of engaging with early medieval frame-work.

DRAPED BORDERS

That there existed an affinity between textiles and frames in early medieval Britain may be perceived in the commonality of hanging drapes as a motif to border and frame imagery, or to mark divisions between discrete scenes. By the eleventh century, hanging drapes appear to have been a well-established means of framing, the longevity of which is particularly discernible in manuscript illuminations.[7] In the portrait miniature of St Matthew the Evangelist in the eleventh-century St Margaret's Gospel book, for instance, a pair of drapes hang from a solid gold frame, itself bordered by a second frame of solid colour, the corners of which are accented with finials (fig. 99). The drapes, of opposing colours, are

[5] Lester-Makin, The Lost Art of the Anglo-Saxon World, 89 (citing: Webster, Anglo-Saxon Art, 114, 138, 139).
[6] Talbot-Rice, English Art 871-1100, 185.
[7] Rebecca Rushforth, in her study of *St Margaret's Gospel Book*, noted that 'Architectural decoration above an arch, and tucked-up curtain, as found in St Margaret's Gospel Book, are both common motifs in late Anglo-Saxon author portraits' (see: Rebecca Rushforth, *St Margaret's Gospel Book: The Favourite Book of an Eleventh-Century Queen of Scots* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2007), 43).

heavily stylised and knotted back, to dramatically reveal the figure of St Matthew scribing at a lectern. The opposing colours of the drapes, one red and one blue, echo the duplicate hues of the illustration of St Matthew, clad in blue garments and sitting on an ochre stool with coordinating cushion and draped fabric, which is itself consistent with the mottled and undulating ochre ground on which Matthew's stool and lectern is placed. The drapes are therefore integral in providing a sense of visual harmony in the composition.

However, they cannot be said to 'frame' the image in the conventional understanding of the word, as a demarcation of the visual field, as that is already marked by the gold and ochre duplicate frame which surround the draped image. The drapes may instead be considered to 'frame' the image in a rather more conceptual sense, one which provides a visual and material context for the imagery held within them. Reading the drapes in this way is consistent with an understanding of the *parergon*, the conceptualisation of the boundaries around a work which are part of and not separate to the work. Immanuel Kant illustrated his understanding of the *parergon* as the frame around a painting, the columns on a building, or the draped cloth on a sculpted figure – all distinguished by Kant as elements of 'decoration' to the work (*ergon*).[8] As drapes that frame, these textile edges in Insular manuscript illuminations appear therefore as a doubling of Kant's *parergon*, though to consider them as decoration would perhaps be to overlook the extent to which their position on the edge may elucidate further how the materiality of textiles in this period contextualised the imagery that they frame.

In his own understanding of the *parergon*, Jacques Derrida challenged the binaries drawn by Kant between the work and the frame, arguing that the *parergon* is neither part of the work, nor outside it:

[8] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, ed. by Paul Guyer, trans. by Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 110-111.

> I write four times here, *around* painting. The first time I am occupied with folding the great philosophical question of the tradition ('What is art? 'the beautiful?' 'representation?' 'the origin of the work of art?') on to the insistent atopics of the *parergon*: neither work (*ergon*) not outside the work [*hors d'oeuvre*], neither inside nor outside, neither above nor below, it disconcerts any opposition but does not remain indeterminate and it *gives rise* to the work. It is no longer merely around the work.[9]

In describing the *parergon* thus, Derrida's notion of 'giving rise' is significant for an interpretation of the drapes in the miniature of St Matthew, which do not act as conventional frames but instead may have acted as a formal or conceptual boundary, *giving rise* to the imagery contained within them by providing a material context for the imagery that they contain, insofar as the depiction of drapes invokes textiles' multivalent associations.

On first viewing, one may presume that these evocations of drapes were intended to 'give rise' to the imagery by situating it within an interior space, the sole element of an implied internal space that is otherwise only occupied by the sitter, the chair on which he sits and the desk at which he scribes. The overall effect is of surprising material richness in an otherwise sparsely furnished room. However, it does not appear that the illuminator intended the drapes to accurately depict interior space, especially when one observes that St Matthew's stool appears to have been placed on earth, the stylised representation of which appears to be intended to evoke an almost paradoxical earthen floor in a heavenly world.[10] The incongruity between the two environmental elements suggests that they were not intended to depict St Matthew in a realistic space, but rather to 'frame' him within elements that 'give rise' to the depiction of him scribing, acting as significations which provide a conceptual context for St Matthew and his work.

The understanding of textiles as elements of 'portable wealth' in early medieval Britain, as attested to in archaeological and literary sources of the period, makes it likely that,

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[9] Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, trans. by Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 9.

[10] Rushforth has described the stool as 'set on the earth, signified by the curvy lines made with different intensities of the same shade of brown' (see: Rushforth, *St Margaret's Gospel Book*, 39).

on an intrinsic level, the drapes were intended to 'give rise' to the image of St Matthew by evoking a sense of material richness.[11] By framing the image of St Matthew thus, the drapes signal a material preciousness which not only enriches the image but also the book it is itself depicted within. Framing an image of the creation of the book conveying God's word (itself highlighted with gilding in this miniature) within such a clear signification of material richness acts as an almost self-referential signal of the value of the drapes and the book in which they are depicted. This must be seen as analogous to the capacity for tablet-woven bands to signal material richness in their own position as textiles on the edge, as outlined within the previous chapter.

Their prominence within the miniature therefore suggests the significant ability of textiles, both depicted and real, to give rise to a sense of material richness. It is a framing analogous to the fabric chemises which were sometimes wrapped around 'especially precious' early medieval books, in addition to their precious or leather bindings.[12] Indeed Turgot's early twelfth-century account of the Life of St Margaret described that her Gospel book accidentally fell into a river because it was both unwrapped and carelessly carried, suggesting that textiles were seen as essential in the encasement of precious objects and images, and thereby came to act as significations of such preciousness themselves, similarly to the manner in which Bagnoli described how relic wrappings came to signify the sanctity of the relics they wrapped.[13] Though none from an Insular context survive, this episode from the Life of St Margaret perhaps also alludes to the practice of attaching textiles to book pages

[11] Gale Owen-Crocker described hanging textiles as 'portable wealth' in her study of the archaeological reality of the descriptions of Heorot in *Beowulf*, noting the rich wall hangings 'may already have been a feature of luxury-class living by the early seventh century' and the frequency in which hangings and curtains were included in 'late Anglo-Saxon' wills and the increased presence of spun gold in textiles from the tenth century (see: Gale Owen-Crocker, 'Furnishing Heorot', in *Crossing Boundaries: Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Art, Material Culture, Language and Literature of the Early Medieval World*, ed. by Eric Cambridge and Jane Hawkes (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2017), 232-242, 232-4).
[12] Rushforth, *St Margaret's Gospel Book*, 47.
[13] Rushforth, *St Margaret's Gospel Book*, 47 (citing: Turgot Bishop of St. Andrews, *The Life of St. Margaret, Queen of Scotland*, ed. by William Forbes-Leith (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1896), 30-31); Bagnoli, 'Dressing the Relics', 107.

to protect especially rich illuminations: one such protective textile is preserved in a Carolingian ninth-century manuscript, a Touronian gospel book which includes a fragment of cloth attached to the page of its first illuminated initial to protect the painting beneath (fig. 100).[14]

The depicted bordering drapes and textile wrappings may be perceived not only to have signalled value, but also to have allowed one to access or interact with the framed imagery or object, through their inherent mediatory capacity. In a study of textiles as mediatory objects in late Byzantine visual culture, Maria Evangelatou described textiles as:

> instrumental cultural mediators, facilitating and regulating peoples' interactions with each other and their surroundings. Indeed, given their adaptability and omnipresence, textiles can be said not only to mediate culture but to be emblematic of mediation itself.[15]

Evangelatou credits the 'physical characteristics' of textiles with enabling this inherent mediatory capacity, describing their material properties as 'both boundary and permeable membrane'.[16] Understanding these depicted drapes and fabric wrappings as both mediatory and permeable is to resolve what may appear to be the paradox at the heart of the *parergon*: how something can be both of an object and separate to it. Surrounded by fabric, the imagery and objects within it are at once removed from the everyday as their material richness is signalled, and made accessible in a near phenomenological sense, as the viewer may perceive themselves as moving beyond the mediatory textile frames to engage with what lies within. Referencing the work of Johann Konrad Eberlein, Bücheler asserted that this motif of drawn curtains was common within evangelist portraits and possessed significant symbolic meaning: 'The curtain signifies the veil that lay over the Old Testament but was take away from the New. It is a visual comment on the dual meaning of scripture including

[14] The manuscript was most recently included in a study by Beatrice Kitzinger (see: *The Cross, The Gospels, and the Work of Art in the Carolingian Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 158.
[15] Maria Evangelatou, 'Textile Mediation in Late Byzantine Visual Culture: Unveiling Layers of Meaning through the Fabrics of the Chora Monastery', Dumbarton Oaks Papers 73 (2019), 299-354, 299.
[16] Evangelatou, 'Textile Mediation in Late Byzantine Visual Culture', 299-300.

the literal and spiritual senses.'[17] Bücheler extended this understanding to assert that the pages of pattern and text, 'textile pages', behaved similarly in the context of the two eleventh-century manuscripts from Trier which form the focus of her study, acting as a 'curtain metaphor' which similarly conveys the 'dual natures of scripture'.[18] That textiles possess a significant capacity for metaphor and imbue objects with a sense of multi-layered complexity is therefore well-established.

The ability of frames in general to affect and be affected by human behaviour, and to remove objects from the fray of the everyday, has been noted by Alison Wright, in her study of 'framework' in renaissance Italy (2019):

> As a social activity, creating distinction and shaping societal perceptions of value and of space, the visual and conceptual framing of images lends itself to sociological and anthropological study. Indeed framing can extend to the whole set of actions that centre attention on the object, image or work. Such human behaviour – whether that of pilgrimage to, procession of, reverence before or temporary adornment of the object – sets the work apart from the everyday in which it is otherwise embedded, in a way that is every bit as affective and rhetorically structured as the separation marked by the physical frame.[19]

Though Wright is referring primarily to ritualistic or behavioural framing, the rarefied position of textiles in early medieval culture argued in this thesis, and the physical characteristics unique to textiles identified by Evangelatou, must be considered to have made textiles especially potent at removing the viewer from the everyday by allowing them to seemingly traverse the boundaries of the object itself.

The materially transgressive nature of textile borders is further exhibited in the illuminated miniature on the first folio of the eleventh-century manuscript of *Encomium*

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[17] Bücheler, 'Clothing Sacred Scripture', 129-30 (citing: Johann Konrad Eberlein, *Apparitio regis – revelation Veritatis: Studien zur Darstellung des Vorhangs in der bildenden Kunst von der Spätantike bis zum Ende des Mittelalters* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1982().

[18] Bücheler, 'Clothing Sacred Scripture', 130 and 133.

[19] Alison Wright, *Framework: Honour and Ornament in Italian Renaissance Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 14; Wright cites a recent study as a recent application of this approach to graffiti art: Rafael Schater, *Ornament and Order: Graffiti, Street Art, and the Parergon* (Farnham: Routledge, 2016).

Emmae reginae, a text in praise of Queen Emma (d. 1052), the consort of two successive Kings of England: Æthelred II and Cnut (fig. 101). In the illumination a scribe presents an enthroned Emma with a book, an exchange witnessed by her sons, Harthacnut and King Edward the Confessor (d. 1066). Described in a recent study of manuscript art as a 'powerful reminder of a determined and ambitious woman', the illumination (thought to have been made in either St Omer or the South of England in the mid-eleventh century) depicts Emma beneath and between a pair of stylised drapes, which are dramatically pulled back to reveal the figural scene.[20] In this case the drapes are not pinned back against a border but are instead woven through the windows of the architectural piers. In doing so, the curves of the drapes extend beyond the limits of the picture frame set by the architectural structure and create a sense of rhythm through which the interior and exterior spaces interact in a manner which compels the viewer into the space. In weaving through the piers thus, the drapes are also presented in a near self-referential manner. It seems unlikely (though not impossible) that any curtains would have been woven through the windows of interior spaces, if only to prevent their dirtying. Veronika Gervers has posited that the increasing stylisation of the depiction of drapes in illuminated manuscripts, and in particular the lack of accuracy in the presentation of their hanging (including their hanging from arches without rods, which is also a feature of those that hang above Emma), may be noted from around the year 1000 and claimed that:

> From this time on the hangings became purely decorative elements used to fill background space. It can hardly be coincidental that descriptions of curtains also disappear from western documents at this time. While at first these representations were no more than misunderstood interpretations of earlier works, from the eleventh century they became part of a new iconographic form in themselves. As a result the misrepresentations served as sources for new conventions. Their setting invariably formed according to the rules of ornamentation and line harmony, curtains were hung illogically.[21]

[20] Kathleen Doyle and Charlotte Denoël, *Medieval Illumination: Manuscript Art from England and France 700-1200* (London: British Library, 2018), 79.
[21] Veronika Gervers, 'An Early Christian Curtain in the Royal Ontario Museum' in *Studies in Textile History in Memory of Harold B. Burnham*, ed. by Veronika Gervers (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1997), 56-81, 73.

Gervers noted the continuity of this visual tradition into the twelfth century (and in particular in Insular manuscripts), in which 'together with the architectural settings', curtains 'can be considered no more than abstract parts of a conventional stage scenery'.[22] Though the increasing formalisation and concurrent lack of naturalism observed by Gervers may be accurate, dismissing their function as purely 'ornamental' or illogical overlooks the likelihood that the greater formalisation of this motif may also signal the greater significance attributed to their ability to act as the signification of a conceptual and material boundary. The weaving of the drapes through the window frames in the miniature of Emma may, for instance, be interpreted as a visual device in which the drapes, woven through the piers, recall the weaving processes by which they would have been constructed. In turn, this affirms the extent to which textiles were so thoroughly enmeshed in interior spaces and the material world of early medieval Britain – they need not be depicted accurately as they were already understood to at once frame the image and exceed the frame, giving rise to the enthronement of Emma within. This sense of rich textility may also perceived in the patterned borders of the garments worn by Emma, Harthacnut, and Edward, which are some of the most detailed aspects of the illumination and likely represent some of the tablet-woven bands described in the third chapter of this thesis. The care taken to represent such textile elements further points towards not only the prominence of textiles, but also the ability of rich textiles to frame material encounters, giving rise by mediating between the body of their wearer and the world which they inhabit. This mediatory capacity is further conveyed by the depiction of the cloth book wrapper which the monk, presenting the book to Emma, holds beneath it and which one may presume was an example of the 'chemise' used to wrap precious books, as previously discussed, which therefore acquired an inherent interstitial quality that framed material encounters.

[22] Gervers, 'An Early Christian Curtain in the Royal Ontario Museum', 73.

Such mediatory encounters not only invited interaction between the viewer and material world depicted, but also represented the potential for textiles and frames to enable the traversal of significant sacral boundaries. On an early eleventh-century stone sculpted grave-marker, excavated from the Old Minster at Winchester (fig. 102), drapes are teased around piers, similarly to those depicted in the illustration of Emma in the *Encomium Emmae reginae*. The decorated face of the stone is divided into three arcades through which the drapes are drawn, suspended from the central arch and knotted within the radiating arcades.[23] The grave-marker has been described by Leslie Webster as possessing a 'certain theatrical quality', as the looped hangings are pulled back to reveal a lamp, considered by Webster as a possible reference to Isaiah 9:2: 'they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined', or a symbolic reference to Christ as the 'Lamp of Life'.[24] The 'theatricality' enabled by the drapes may therefore be interpreted as performing a significant theological function. Drawn back to reveal the highly symbolic lamp, the drapes exhibit the essential capacity for textiles to reveal and conceal, and in framing the lamp therefore giving rise to implications of light over darkness and life over death – iconography which naturally acquires particular significance in the context of a sculpture intended to mark a grave, alluding to the liminal spaces in which the reality of mortality and the transference to an afterlife may be acknowledged.

In his study of *Anglo-Saxon Art* (1984), David Wilson considered the grave-marker as being carved 'in the true Winchester Style… the curtains are carved with great precision in a slightly stiff version of normal Winchester draperies'.[25] The imprecision of 'Winchester' as a stylistic taxonomy has already been argued in the first chapter of this thesis, and in the

[23] Dominic Tweddle, Martin Biddle and Birthe Kjølbye-Biddle, *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture Volume IV: South-East England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 276-7.
[24] Webster, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, 197; Leslie Webster, 'Stone Sculpture' in *The Golden Age of Anglo-Saxon Art 966-1066*, ed. by Janet Backhouse, D.H. Turner and Leslie Webster (London: British Museum, 1984), 130-134, 130.
[25] Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, 198.

case of this sculpture its conformity to 'Winchester' (whatever that may be understood to mean) is less noteworthy than the apparent significance of textiles' materiality in the articulation of such iconography. In her study of the ritual of medieval relic wrapping, Bagnoli observed a 'blurring of boundaries' between relic textiles and textile relic wrappings, underlining the metaphoric capacity of textiles and the extent to which that capacity is dependent on their inherent ability to frame, encircle, and cover.[26] Relic wrappings, Bagnoli argued, 'did not merely act as a framing device, but rather as the embodiment of the relics: it personified them'.[27] In acting as such 'self-referential enshrinement', relic wrappings exhibit the extent to which the materiality of textiles possess an inherent ability to frame, and in so doing gesture to the objects or imagery that they frame or enclose, thereby embodying Derrida's understanding of the *parergon* as an interstitial element which problematises any separation between the frame and the object.[28]

This conclusion may nevertheless be extended to the portrait miniatures depicted within hanging drapes, which similarly require the viewer to consider themselves in a liminal position, not between life and death, but between the mundane earthly world and that depicted. The two miniatures discussed thus far, that in St Margaret's Gospel Book and the *Encomium Emmae reginae*, are in books with contrasting purposes, one a religious, devotional book and the other a secular, biographical text. In both cases, however, the drapes compel the viewer to consider themselves as transgressing the bordering textiles to encounter the object in a manner which appears to transcend merely looking at it. In the case of St Margaret's Gospel book, the purpose of this intimacy with the depiction of the scribing Evangelist may be presumed to encourage a greater interaction with God's word, perhaps

[26] Bagnoli, 'Dressing the Relics', 107.
[27] Bagnoli, 'Dressing the Relics', 107.
[28] Bagnoli describes relic wrappings and inscriptions as a 'self-referential enshrinement' (see: Bagnoli, 'Dressing the Relics', 107).

explaining the commonality of the motif of 'tucked up curtains' in early author-portraits.[29] In the case of the *Encomium Emmae reginae*, a sense of material richness is similarly conveyed to the viewer, as an analogous appeal to the viewer to traverse the material boundary of the page to allow a greater sense of interaction with the image, to create a compelling and affecting depiction of the Queen before her supplicant sons, in a powerful expression of her queenship.[30]

Further evidence for the capacity of textiles and frames to mediate space may be perceived in the illuminations in the twelfth-century Winchester Psalter, in which drapes, in addition to architectural elements, are essential in the articulation of spaces which narrativize the imagery. The significance of frames in creating a 'condition of intelligibility' has been identified by Rico Franses, who claimed that the demarcation of discrete scenes within episodic visual narratives is crucial to 'making sense' of extended narrative depictions.[31] Drapes and architectural elements are used to divide the scenes depicting Joseph and Potiphar's wife, and the Accusation of Potiphar's wife, in the central panel of an illuminate panel in the Winchester Psalter (fig. 103). However, both the drapes and architectural divisions seem to convey a sense of the permeable *parergon*, at once dividing scenes and suggesting transference between them. The drapes are drawn over the scene in which Joseph refuses the advances of Potiphar's wife, but like those in the *Encomium Emma reginae* they exceed the architectural boundaries also drawn around the figures, fluttering behind the bedstead and through the open door into the liminal space between that scene and the next (in which Potiphar's wife accuses Joseph of rape to the Pharaoh).

This transgression of boundaries is echoed in the Joseph's dynamic contrapposto pose, which causes his foot to punctuate the black line which marks the base of the scene,

[29] See chapter 4, footnote 7 (Rushforth, *St Margaret's Gospel Book*, 43).
[30] Tyler, *England in Europe*, 131-2.
[31] Rico Franses, 'Postmonumentality: Frame, Grid, Space, Quilt' in *The Rhetoric of Frame: Essays on the Boundary*, ed. by Paul Duro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 258-273, 265.

thereby inserting himself into the lower register of imagery, filled with crenelated architectural details. In perhaps the only study of frames in early medieval art, the essay 'Some Attitudes toward the Frame in Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts of the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries' (1982), Herbert Broderick described the inhabitation of frames as one of the three innovations which occurred in framing in this period.[32] Broderick noted that the inhabitation of frames not only extended the 'narrative and symbolic space of the field it contains' but may also be 'a survival of the ancient Celtic notion of "shape-shifting"', and cites as an example the occupied frame of the Bayeux Tapestry, in which the narrative capacity of the embroidery was enhanced by the extension of imagery into the border below.[33] The transgression of the drapes floating through an open doorway in the Winchester Psalter similarly appear to compress time and space to convey narrative and present the *parergon* as a dynamic interstitial space which simultaneously demarcates imagery and connects it to provide a sense of continuity, analogous perhaps to the act of turning a page within a book. This compression of time and space may also be extended to consider the experience of viewing these images. In acting as visual elements which traverse the very same narrative episode which they in part divide, they may, like those drapes which frame Evangelist portraits, encourage viewers to permeate the material boundary between themselves and the object, interacting with the imagery in a more immediate manner. That textiles were capable of articulating such transgression is consistent with arguments made within the first chapter: the stylised figuration embroidered on eleventh- and twelfth-century vestments allowed wearers and viewers to project themselves upon and through the depicted sacral characters,

[32] Herbert R. Broderick, 'Some Attitudes toward the Frame in Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts of the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries', *Artibus et Historiae* 3.5 (1982), 31-42, 31.
[33]Broderick, 'Some Attitudes toward the Frame in Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts of the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries', 37 (citing in relation to the 'Celtic' notion of shape-shifting: Proinsias MacCana, *Celtic Mythology* (Feltham: Hamlyn, 1970), 123; Françoise Henry, *Irish Art* I (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press), 208-212).

suspending boundaries between matter and implicating the body within a profound phenomenological encounter.

LOCATING THE BODY IN TEXTILE FRAMES

The permeability of textile motifs, when positioned as a *parergon*, permitted the inclusion of the viewer within the experience of encountering the imagery which it framed, and the object on which it appeared. I posit that this also implicated the body of the maker in this conceptual framing.

The same material properties which Evangelatou identified as granting textiles, both real and represented, with an inherent permeability, were considered by Victoria Mitchell in an essay addressing 'transitions and boundaries' between language and textiles (1997): the 'subtle nuance and fragile pliability of textiles as embodied metaphor have contributed actively to the disruption of the authority of language'.[34] The same distinctive materiality which, Mitchell perceives, lends itself to metaphor and linguistic disruption may be interpreted as making it suitable for expressing visual metaphors in the manner which appears when used as a framing device: disrupting material boundaries rather than enclosing imagery or objects. What remains to be considered, however, is whether textiles in early medieval Britain similarly expressed the 'issues of gender and class' that Mitchell claims are a feature of modern textiles.[35]

Mitchell privileged 'making' within her understanding of textiles' ability to convey meaning: 'the manipulation of textiles has implications for meanings which come about directly, if not instinctively, through making'.[36] Such a claim significantly implicates the maker

[34] Victoria Mitchell, 'Textiles, Text and Techne' in *The Textile Reader*, ed. by Jessica Hemmings (Oxford: Berg, 2012), 5-13, 11.
[35] Mitchell, 'Textiles, Text and Techne', 12.
[36] Mitchell, 'Textiles, Text and Techne', 11-12.

within how textiles may be understood. The twentieth-century textile artist, Anni Albers, illustrated an understanding of her own investment in the construction of textiles, through her description of weaving as the 'adventure of being close to the stuff that the world was made of'.[37] When one considers the apparent significance of textiles as frames through which encounters with the divine were mediated, then the makers of early medieval textiles may be perceived as being significantly situated in the production of the world around them. Such an understanding is consistent with what has been observed in previous chapters of this thesis: the contributions of textile makers added significant texture to the material culture of eleventh- and twelfth-century Britain, positioning themselves prominently within its 'lifeworld'.[38] This in turn provides significant context for the claims of William of Poitiers and the embroiderers with women's names recorded in the Domesday Book (Leogyth and Ælfgyth). The world they inhabited was made of, and textured by, textiles: their contributions were significant in framing material encounters more broadly and in positioning matter as that which may possess a transformative capacity.

If one accepts the associations drawn between textile production and the intersectional identity of 'English women' in some contemporaneous written sources, then observations concerning the prominence of textiles and textile metaphors as frames or boundaries may be perceived to contextualise those sources which implicate 'English women' in a significant element of early medieval materiality. However, the ability to draw such conclusions is significantly limited by the relative paucity of evidence as to the makers of any textiles from this period. Contemporaneous accounts, such as William of Poitiers' observation that 'the women of the English people are very skilled in needlework and

[37] Briony Fer, 'Close to the Stuff the World is Made of: Weaving as a Modern Project', in *Anni Albers* ed. by Ann Coxon, Briony Fer, and Maria Müller-Schareck, (London: Tate, 2018), 20-43, 21 (citing: Anni Albers, 'Work with Material', in *Black Mountain Bulletin* 5 (1938), 1-3, 3).
[38] Ingold described making as 'a practice of weaving, in which practitioners bind their own pathways or lines of becoming into the texture of material flows comprising the lifeworld' (see: Ingold, 'The textility of making', 91).

weaving gold thread', do not directly imply that textiles were necessarily associated with women or Englishness.[39] The prominent position of textiles as frames is not therefore evidence of the prominence of English women in the production of eleventh- or twelfth-century material culture. Rather, the continued prominence of textiles and textile references as framing devices throughout the Middle Ages may be perceived to frame accounts like that made by William of Poitiers. If the significance of textiles in the materiality of early medieval Britain is recognised then the English women described by William of Poitiers may be perceived to have made a significant contribution, even if not all textiles were necessarily made by English women.

Such a contribution to the material which, above others, appears to be the integral 'stuff of which the world was made' may be considered especially significant in the context of early medieval England. Noting the eleventh-century Cotton *mappa mundi*, Karkov observed the location of Britain's islands at one end of the earth:

> While the idea that Britain was located at the edge of the known world gave it a seemingly marginal position, the early medieval England and their successors turned this position into one of power by equating marginality with exceptionalism. At the edges of the known world the island hovered in a liminal space on the border between the known and the unknown, this world and another world.[40]

This notion of geographic liminality, Karkov claims, may be traced back to at least the eighth century, and contributed to a larger sense of exceptionalism which precipitated 'the Anglo-Saxon conquest of the Britons [which] was the start of a long history of colonial-inspired violence'.[41] Karkov extensively explored how the 'early medieval English' simultaneously constructed and questioned this exceptionalism within her study *Imagining Anglo-Saxon England* (2020). For the purpose of this thesis, however, it is her observation that there was evidently perceived to be a power *on the edge* which is significant. Liminal spaces were viewed

[39] *The Gesta Gvillelmi of William of Poitiers*, 177.
[40] Karkov, *Imagining Anglo-Saxon England*, 3-4.
[41] Karkov, *Imagining Anglo-Saxon England*, 4 (referencing: Kathy Lavezzo, *Angels on the Edge of the World: Geography, Literature, and English Community, 1000-1534* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2006).

as sites of self-determination and potential. This is essential to contextualise the continuity of framing devices across media throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Though there may not be anything especially 'English' about textile production or the textility of frames, their continued prominence in material culture may be interpreted as significant in understanding the construction of material culture in England. Acknowledging those elements which suggest continuity, in a period so often considered to be one of change precipitated by the Norman conquest, may permit one to identify those material principles through which a sense of post-conquest hybridity in material culture was established.

That material spaces remained where people could read themselves into objects and engage with notions of embodied liminality has particular purchase in a period of conquest. Treharne, in a study of 'Borders' (2012), summarised the literary evidence for an 'Anglo-Saxon' understanding of borders and landownership, in which she observed complexities that resist 'oversimplistic definition or predetermined categorization'.[42] The 'in-between' of land between borders, Treharne noted, may be considered akin to a post-colonial hybridity 'where the hybrid is created as a destabilising identity emerging from the contested space between the colonizer and the colonized.'[43] The ability of the border or frame to signal and enable a sense of interstitiality must therefore be perceived to have had particular significance in the context of post-conquest England. This may be allowed to contextualise the evocation of an analogous interstitially in textile borders, or borders which engage with textility: borders and boundaries possessed a cultural potency which transcend the mere demarcation of space. Moreover, the textile borders of drapes gave rise to a sense of visual continuity which acquired additional cultural significance after the conquest, significantly exceeding any interpretation of them as expressions of certain localised or racialised taxonomies.

[42] Elaine Treharne, 'Borders' in *A Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Studies*, ed. by Jacqueline Stodnick and Renée R. Trilling (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 9-22, 9.
[43] Treharne, 'Borders', 9-10.

Betancourt additionally recognised areas of interstitiality as sites for articulation of intersectional identities. In the epilogue of *Byzantine Intersectionality* (2020), Betancourt cited Michael Camille's argument that 'the margins add an extra dimension, a supplement, that is able to gloss, parody, modernize and problematize the text's authority while never totally undermining it', and expanded upon it to argue that the marginal identities in medieval Byzantium did not have a 'strictly binary relationship with the center', instead 'the ultimate recognition of the alterity of the so-called marginal is what shocks those in the center into realizing their misgivings'.[44] Camille was writing on the subject of medieval manuscripts, and Betancourt on Byzantine identities, however, a refusal to accept the binary between the margin and that that it frames, and the recognition of an affinity between marginal imagery and intersectional identities may be constructive in framing some of the ideas explored in this chapter. The textile and textile-like frames included in this chapter, in addition to the tablet-woven bands described in the previous chapter, are simultaneously separate and inseparable from the objects and imagery they edge, therefore also challenging any sense of binary between frame and framed. There is perhaps none of the conflict or opposition between the frame and framed as implied by Betancourt's characterisation in the early medieval imagery and material discussed in this thesis, but the notion that the two inter-relate in a manner which defines their respective positions is helpful in thinking through how their frequent position on the edge articulated an understanding of textiles as inherently 'frame-like', possessing the same potential as frames to negotiate boundaries and create spaces where the interstitial could appear accessible. This may also act as a way to frame the intersectional identity associated in some sources with textile production: English women, and their position within post-conquest Anglo-Norman cultural hybridity. One cannot claim with certainty that English women were considered marginal in post-conquest England,

[44] Betancourt, *Byzantine Intersectionality*, 205 (citing: Michael Camille, *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art* (London: Reaktion Books, 1992), 10).

however their identification as a gendered, ethno-racialised, colonised group is analogously essential in framing and forming the cultural landscape of England after the Norman conquest. In their alterity, of which the performative association with textile production appears in some sources to have been a constituent part, English women enabled a continuity in the material traditions of textile production upon which William the Conqueror depended to articulate his position as a king of both Normandy and England (according to William of Poitiers' account). Conceptual parallels therefore exist between the media and identity, even if it cannot be securely claimed that English women were responsible for the production of textiles, or that extant textiles may reveal anything definitive about the lives of English women in eleventh- and twelfth century England.

'FLOATING FRAMES'

The commonality of certain framing devices across media is such that they may be said to 'float' across objects as a means of uniting media to invoke a set of consistent material and visual codes. Textiles have already been identified within this thesis as inherently transformative, both as material objects and in the instances of textility through which the materiality of textiles was evoked. Recognising the commonalities within framing not only affirms the affinity between textiles and frames, and specifically textiles' ability to signal a transformative boundary, but also suggests a possible inversion: if textiles may signal boundaries with their inherent interstitiality, then do frames and boundaries also possess the capacity to signal textiles owing to their inherent textility?

The explicit skeuomorphic framing of the wall paintings of Adam and Eve at St Botolph's church in Hardham, Sussex, depicted as though on a hanging textile suspended from a rail (fig. 47), discussed in the second chapter of this thesis, suggest that borders in particular were capable of invoking textility. Even in the absence of skeuomorphic devices,

however, certain framing motifs may also be perceived to have purposefully invoked textiles. The extant wall paintings at All Saints' church in Claverley, Shropshire, for instance (fig. 104), have, in Richard Gameson's words, drawn 'formal as well as thematic comparison with the [Bayeux] Tapestry', owing in part to the dimensions (though their dimensions are comparable, their scale, it must be noted, is not: the wall paintings are approximately 15.5 metres long and 142 centimetres high, compared to the Tapestry's 70 metres length and 49.5 centimetres height) and 'decorative border', in addition to the shared imagery: 'knights who fight their way along the north nave arcade'.[45]

The narrow visual field of the All Saints' scheme certainly appears more 'Tapestry-like' for its border, in which two bold parallel lines contain stylised repeating foliate pattern. There is no direct parallel for this motif on the Tapestry itself; the bordering embroidery is mostly contained within straight parallel lines, and the mixture of animals, shapes, and foliate elements are sometimes interrupted by human figures or elements from the larger scene (fig. 105). However, this only serves to make the comparison drawn between the painting and the Tapestry more compelling: it implies that neither the painting nor the embroidery were necessarily copies of the other medium, rather both were governed by the same visual principles and were thus able to imply the materiality of each other. In this case it may be assumed, given the sacrality and cultural significance of textiles and their makers (and the comparatively high cost of production), that the paintings, as with those in the 'Lewes Group', sought to act as an analogous reference to textiles rather than the other way around.

Gameson's recognition that the borders of the All Saints' fresco are as consequential as the shared dimensions and subject matter in recalling the Bayeux Tapestry is thus well observed, but it is significant not only because it draws comparisons between these paintings

[45] Richard Gameson, 'The Origin, Art, and Message of the Bayeux Tapestry', in *The Study of the Bayeux Tapestry*, ed. by Richard Gameson (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997), 157-211, 210 (citing: Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting* 48).

and the Tapestry, but also because it identifies the ability of frames to destabilise the boundaries between media. Such an observation also enriches the transformative potential of both textiles and frames, giving rise to a phenomenological viewing experience in which beholders not only perceives the object or imagery before them, but also the textility to which the alternative media gestures, thereby giving the sense of traversing sacred and material boundaries.

Far from being unique, the wall paintings at All Saints', Claverley, have notable parallels in the extant paintings at St Michael's church in Upton Cressett, Shropshire (fig. 106), in which parallel bands of repeating foliate pattern border figural scenes as a continuous upper and lower register.[46] Further potential 'painted' textile borders may be observed at St John the Baptist's church in Clayton, Sussex. Another member of the so-called 'Lewes Group', the two extant registers of paintings at Clayton are bordered by bands of vegetal and geometric motifs (fig. 107). The band of vine scroll which divides the two extant registers, and which also sits above the rounded chancel arch in the nave, is particularly striking. Tristram identified such a 'riband' as a 'constantly occurring motif' in 'Romanesque' painting, used to 'finish' the upper edge of paintings, divide 'zones of subjects', 'define the main forms of the building' (as it does in bordering the chancel arch in Clayton), or sometimes serving no other purpose than to be 'purely ornamental'.[47] The limitations of categorising certain motifs as 'ornamental' has been argued in the previous chapter, and the suggestion that acting as a frame (be it in a narrative sense, providing emphasis to architectural elements, or marking the limits of the visual field) negates its aesthetic or 'ornamental' value is to claim a dichotomy that perhaps did not exist to the early medieval viewer. Moreover, Tristram's claim that these bands of patterned ornament were a recurring motif 'in all Romanesque

[46] Rosewell suggests that the two schemes are so similar they may be evidence of 'the brush and palette of a single artist travelling between different commissions' (see: Rosewell, *Medieval Wall Paintings in English and Welsh Churches*, 117).
[47] Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting*, 70.

work' overlooks the likely textility of this motif.[48] The prominent bands of vinescroll at Clayton may be observed to strongly resemble the bands of embroidered foliate scrolls, dating from between the eleventh and twelfth centuries, which are preserved amongst the textiles in the tomb of Bishop William de Blois at Worcester Cathedral (fig. 108). In these, embroidered underside couched stitches form stylised curvilinear tendrils which grow between two rows of stitching on either side (one in feather stitch, the other satin) – urging the viewer's eyes along the boundaries of the textiles that these bands presumably framed. The same effect may be observed in the narrow painted bands of stylised foliate ornament between two painted bands at St John the Baptist's in Clayton. These are notable as, like the embroidered bands, they leads one's eyes around a gentle curve to create a sense of visual continuity in the bend of the architectural detailing of the chancel arch that could otherwise have appeared disruptive to the painted scheme. The effect of both is to create a seamless rhythmic boundary to the imagery that they frame and which therefore may be considered to reference a continuous textile tradition in the British Isles that considerably pre-dates works described as 'Romanesque'. (In the case of the textile, they are literally seamless, as the embroidered bends would likely have obscured the edging of the garment). Indeed, Owen-Crocker observed that 'stylized vegetation' was evidently established as a border ornament on Anglo-Saxon textiles from at least the seventh century, citing as evidence the earliest extant fragment of 'Anglo-Saxon embroidery' which, preserved in a box from Kempston, Bedfordshire, features 'a scroll pattern which was evidently used as a border device'.[49]

Acknowledging such shared imagery is significant not only because it suggests the relevance of textiles (and by extension textile-makers) and pre-existing visual motifs within an understanding of material culture in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, but also because

[48] Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting*, 70.
[49] Owen-Crocker, 'Bayeux Tapestry', 237.

it further suggests that it was paradoxically the boundaries to works which destabilised the boundaries between media, and between the viewer and material objects, thereby enabling a phenomenological viewing experience. The rich band of pattern not only divides the registers of imagery as a means of narrativisation, but also references the myriad other media on which such a motif would have been shared, and in encircling the chancel arch brings the paintings into direct conversation with the architectural elements of the church. In doing so, the boundaries between painting, textiles, architecture, and sculpture are disrupted. Through this shared motif, one is invited to contemplate the multiplicity of media implied by these framing devices which float across objects, and to contemplate one's own place in a space where patterns and imagery enmesh different materials and imply the profound transformative potential of material objects.

FRAMING FONTS

In his broader discussion of 'ribands' as an ornamental motif in twelfth-century wall paintings, Tristram observed that 'it is noticeable that, in painting, neither the riband nor the stem of the foliated scroll is ever plaited, knotted, or interlaced in the elaborate manner which is so characteristic in sculpture.'[50] It is notable that Tristram confined his comparative discussion to sculpture when his ekphrastic terms speak the language of textiles – riband, plaits, knots, interlace. The inherent textility of such an image is thus apparent, even if Tristram himself is not fully cognisant of it. Nevertheless, his linguistic choices expose the slippage between media, in particular the triangulation between sculpture, textile, and painting, especially on their patterned borders.

[50] Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting*, 70.

The material parallels between sculpture and textiles have elsewhere been noted: in his study of the Bayeux Tapestry, Musset observed: 'A good deal of late-eleventh-century and twelfth-century sculpture is done in low relief, and is thus essentially graphic rather than plastic in character, with aesthetic values very close to those of the Tapestry.'[51] However, the stitch-intensive nature of laid couching, used as 'filler' in the Tapestry, is such that it may be more accurate to note the material parallels between the two media by observing that early medieval embroideries were essentially plastic. As outlined in the first chapter of this thesis, this plasticity enabled textiles to interact with their surroundings (namely light) so that they were significantly enlivened. Embroidered figures on such objects as the Worcester vestments, for instance, were animated by the interplay between their stitches, surroundings, and the bodies they clothed. The significant three-dimensionality of the embroidered stitches on the Tapestry is enabled by the use of laid couching, which layers threads upon itself so that gradations of relief between the ground fabric and embroidery are not insignificant. So much so that in depictions which are particularly lavishly couched, such as the depiction of Harold swearing an oath on two reliquaries (fig. 41), the draped reliquaries cast very slight shadows when viewed as currently lit in the Musée de la Tapisserie de Bayeux (an effect surely heightened in the presumably candlelit context in which it first hung).

Musset further illustrated the similarity between sculpture and the Tapestry by citing the 'various baptismal fonts carved from black Tournai marble', including those at Winchester Cathedral (fig. 109) and All Saints' church in East Meon, Hampshire.[52] In drawing parallels between the works, Musset observed that 'these have images of buildings very like some of the Tapestry's drawings, although arguably the parallels are grounded in nothing more than the normal conventions for architectural drawing in the Romanesque

[51] Musset, *The Bayeux Tapestry*, 28.
[52] Musset, *The Bayeux Tapestry*, 28.

period'.[53] Certainly the representation of architectural elements in the sculpted face depicting the story of Adam and Eve on the font at All Saints' Church in East Meon, Hampshire and a scene from the life of St Nicholas on the font at Winchester Cathedral (fig. 109) are, in their crowded towers and successive arcades, analogous to those in the Bayeux Tapestry (fig. 110). However, additional material and conceptual parallels may be observed between the Tournai fonts and contemporaneous textiles, which exceed mere resemblance or consistency with contemporary pictorial convention. It must be acknowledged, for instance, that the dimensions of these fonts, like those of the wall paintings at All Saints' church in Claverley and St Michael's church in Upton Cressett, enable a material instability by invoking those of the Tapestry, in addition to the degree of plasticity they share. Ascertaining the direction of visual exchange between media is impossible, as stated previously in this thesis. However, in this case it may be noted that the Tournai fonts are considered to date to the latter half of the twelfth century and the presumption is that the Tapestry was made in England shortly after the conquest in the latter half of the eleventh century. Thus, were one to speculate as to the direction of artistic influence, one would be compelled to conclude that earlier Insular textiles sustained and shared these conventions across geographies for their use on these later relief sculptures.[54]

Evidence that frames acted across textiles and sculpture, and fonts in particular, to enrich both media with evocations of the other may be observed in the commonality of successive arches as a framing device between figures in eleventh- and twelfth-century fonts. For instance, the arcades dividing the three magi on one of the faces of the twelfth-century font at St Martin's church in Fincham, Norfolk (fig. 111), may easily be perceived to have

[53] Musset, *The Bayeux Tapestry*, 28.
[54] Cecil Eden, in a singular study of the *Black Tournai Fonts in England*, affirmed Dean Kitchin's earlier argument that the fonts were imported and dated to the latter half of the twelfth century (see: Cecil H. Eden, *Black Tournai Fonts in England: The Group of Seven Late Norman Fonts from Belgium* (London: Elliot Stock, 1909), 9 (citing: G.W. Kitchin, 'The History of the Winchester Cathedral Font' *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 50 (1894), 6-16, 6-8); Musset, *The Bayeux Tapestry*, 16.

floated across from the twelfth-century apparel, fragments of which are preserved in the Victoria & Albert Museum and the Museum für Angewandte Kunst in Vienna (figs. 49a and b), in which saints' figures are placed under each arcade. In his analysis of *English Romanesque Sculpture 1066-1140* (1951), Zarnecki noted of the St Martin's font that:

> the Norfolk sculptor placed each Magi under a separate arch; each figure is treated in an identical, doll-like manner, facing the spectator. These figures are expressionless but they form part of a decorative scheme in which one motive is repeated several times as if it was an ornamental pattern: there is thus complete unity between the figures, the arcades, and the diaper ornament above and below them.[55]

To describe three figures with such expressive gestures as 'expressionless' is perhaps to excessively privilege naturalism in the representation of the human form. However, the harmony enabled by unification of the frame and figures in the composition is revealing of the significance of frame in the construction of visual imagery. The narrative capacity of frames has also been read into these fonts, Frances Alvater argued that the architectural framework separating Adam and Eve on another face of the St Martin's font at Fincham 'highlights that sense of post-Fall shame, even as the event is still simultaneously occurring'.[56] Such a reading is consistent with an understanding of the frame as facilitating phenomenological encounters, as it may be considered that, in compressing time and space in the communication of Biblical narratives, any chronological, physical, or material distance between the viewer and the imagery or theological concepts to which the frames 'give rise' was also suspended. Indeed, the consistency of the arcades at the Fincham font underlines Alvater's argument that 'taken together, the Fincham program focuses the viewer's attention on a succinct statement of sacramental necessity: because your body is both marked by the sin of Adam and Eve and saved by Christ's sacrificial body, you should in reverence follow Christ's example in being baptized.'[57] Transformative parallels may therefore be drawn

[55] George Zarnecki, *English Romanesque Sculpture 1066-1140* (London: Alec Tiranti, 1951), 29.
[56] Frances Alvater, *Sacramental Theology and the Decoration of Baptismal Fonts: Incarnation, Initiation, Institution* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017), 68.
[57] Alvatar, *Sacramental Theology and the Decoration of Baptismal Fonts*, 70.

between frames that collapse the distance between the viewer and the theological narratives of the font, and the ritual of baptism enabled by the font.

Pulliam observed a similar phenomenon in the tenth-century stone Clonmacnoise Cross, which originally stood outside in the medieval monastery at Clonmacnoise, beside the River Shannon in Ireland. Pulliam concluded her study of its sculpted scheme with the claim that 'the semiotic field of high crosses includes the syncratic relation between the object, the audience, and the living, dynamic world in which it was situated', analogous to the depictions of the 'monstrous Blemmye' in the late tenth- or early eleventh-century *Marvels of the East* which exceeds the frame that surrounds it so that 'the figure and image violate the frame and collapse fields… destabilizing boundaries between medium, audience, and image.'[58] The idea that art may exceed its own boundaries, and in doing so implicate the body of the viewer, is particularly relevant for those objects whose own physical boundaries were transgressed: the placing of an infant's head in the baptismal waters held in a font, or the placing of a body within woven and embroidered textiles.

That these frames appear to have floated across media surely enhanced this ability simultaneously to demarcate narrative episodes and suspend such mundanities as time and space. A further embroidered example of repeating arcades may be viewed amongst the more fragmentary textiles excavated from the tomb of Bishop William de Blois from Worcester Cathedral (fig. 112). Though in poor condition, two of the four 'wedge-shaped panels' are sufficiently well preserved as to depict an arch, each containing a single figure.[59] From the extant embroidered details, Grace Christie was able to ascertain that the two best preserved figures were 'NICO[LA]VS' (a saint Christie described as 'much favoured in England), 'ADELBERTVS' (who she presumed is St Ethelbert, the eighth-century King of East

[58] Heather Pulliam, 'Between the Embodied Eye and Living World: Clonmacnoise's Cross of the Scriptures', *The Art Bulletin* 102:2 (2020), 7-35, 27.
[59] Christie, *English Medieval Embroidery*, 53.

Anglia) and perhaps, in the third (much less complete) panel, a headless figure holding a crowned head with the letters 'TO' (which Christie posits is St Thomas of Canterbury).[60] The prevalence of 'figures under arches' on vestments, as a motif that appears across media to unite figure and frame, viewer and object, may be considered to possess a transformative capacity analogous to fonts. Both signify a threshold, but textiles possess the material implications of concealment and mystery, in addition to the essential ability to frame suggested by the commonality of drapes as a framing device.

ARCADES AND THE GRID

The apparent ability of such 'floating frames' to facilitate phenomenological moments of viewing and to compress time, space, and material has parallels with Rosalind Krauss's understanding of 'the grid' as a modernist visual motif which 'extends in all directions to infinity'.[61] In her theorisation, Krauss contrasted the modernist 'grid' against renaissance perspectival grids – claiming that the modern was not concerned with making space real and rather sought to withdraw from it.[62] By this measure, early medieval repetitive 'floating frames' may be thought to appear modern. Far from creating a sense of realistic space they instead demarcate a boundary, albeit a penetrable one, which signals the space in which a viewer may experience the transformative capacity of the imagery.

Krauss additionally claimed that the modern grid does not 'map the space of a room or a landscape or a group of figures onto the surface of a painting' (as renaissance perspectival grids may), but instead:

> maps the surface of the painting itself. It is a transfer in which nothing changes place. The physical qualities of the surface, we could say, are mapped on the aesthetic dimensions of the same surface. And those two planes – the physical and the

[60] Christie, *English Medieval Embroidery*, 53-4.
[61] Rosalind Krauss, 'Grids', *October* 9 (Summer 1979), 50-64, 60.
[62] Krauss, 'Grids', 52.

> aesthetic – are demonstrated to be the same place: coextensive, and, through the abscissas and ordinates of the grid, coordinate.[63]

This sense of the grid uniting the aesthetic and physical qualities of the work may too be read into an understanding of early medieval frames, fusing the aesthetic and physical properties of the work in a manner which affirms the relevance of their materiality. To this it may be added that shared framing devices, such as the repeating arcades, also bring individual works to co-ordinate with works across media, thereby situating works within broader material and visual culture.

In his study of the different forms of 'ornament' in English medieval wall painting of the twelfth century, Tristram claimed that 'painted arcades' were 'apparent in Romanesque art of preceding centuries' and were intended to act either as an 'architectural type' or 'simply as an ornamental motive', noting examples at Clayton, St Mary's church in West Chiltington, Sussex, and St Mary's church in Kempley, Gloucestershire (fig. 113), amongst others and observing the use of arcading in contemporaneous sculptured fonts 'as a method of disposing a sequence of subjects'.[64] It is not clear to what Tristram refers when describing 'Romanesque art of preceding centuries', though arcades were indeed a common mode of framing in the preceding centuries of art in the Britain. Indeed, arcades have a longer tradition within the History of Art more broadly: in particular, blind arcades with empty interior niches have historically been associated as signifiers of New Jerusalem and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.[65] Most extant examples of this motif within Britian are sculpted, and include not only fonts, but also a ninth-century panel from the church of St Mary and St Hardulph at Breedon-on-Hill in Leicester, thought to have originally been part

[63] Krauss, 'Grids', 52.
[64] Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting*, 73.
[65] Neta Bodner noted the prominence of arcades in the architectural schemes of both the rotunda of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Baptistery of Pisa (see: Neta Bodner, 'The Baptistery of Pisa and the Rotunda of the Holy Sepulchre: A Reconsideration' in *Visual Constructs of Jerusalem*, eds. by Bianca Kühnel, Galit Noga-Banai and Hanna Vorholt (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 95-105, 97-8).

of a sarcophagus (fig. 114) and the Hedda Stone in Peterborough Cathedral, a ninth-century grave cover (fig. 115).

The manner in which arcades appear to have 'floated' across periods, media, and objects, enduring in material culture throughout the period of the conquest, creates a sense of the surface of the object which may immediately be perceived as grid-like, in Krauss-ian terms, in that the aesthetic and physical qualities of an object are united by the 'mapping' of the surface. In this case such mapping also related objects to a broader and deep-rooted material culture, entangling them in the frames of the objects which shared the same motifs and ensuring a visual continuity throughout the period of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, a period which, one may presume, acquired additional poignance in what was a time of significant political flux. Though this mapping asserts the surface, in doing so it nevertheless attributes an internal life to objects beyond the surface. It may be argued that this internal life is especially apparent in textiles, which in their fundamental construction have been recognised as especially 'grid-like'. In a study of Anni Albers, Briony Fer acknowledged that 'weaving offers not just a surface on which to articulate the form of a grid; the weaving process is fundamentally structured on the basis of a complex interplay of verticals and horizontals'.[66] The popular familiarity with both the processes of textile-making and the structure of textiles (particularly woven textiles) displayed in the popularity of 'wordweaving' metaphors in both Old English and Anglo-Norman literature, mentioned in the previous chapters of this thesis, suggest that early medieval viewers would too have recognised this element of textiles' fundamental structure.

The presence of a 'floating' frame on a 'grid-like' structure, such as the embroidered arcades on the Victoria & Albert Museum or Worcester alb apparels (figs. 49a and 112), must therefore be perceived as doubly 'grid-like', further enhancing the intercessory and

[66] Fer, 'Close to the Stuff the World is Made of', 27.

permeable sense of the boundary, in which it gives rise to a profound and phenomenological encounter with the material object and its iconography. The frequent transgression of frames in early medieval art further suggests that frames were indeed understood in such permeable and transformative terms. In acting thus, the frames on the tapestry compress time and space to convey narrative and present the frame as a dynamic interstitial space through which the viewer may access the imagery and material. The 'Atlas-like' figure supporting a band of pattern which frames the architectural space, painted on the soffit of the chancel arch at Coombes Church in West Sussex (fig. 116), more explicitly asserts the possibility for human figures in particular to inhabit the interstitial space of the frame, further compelling the viewer to consider their own position in phenomenological encounters with imagery in this period.[67]

The permeability implied by such 'floating' frames therefore again invites one to consider the possible implication of the maker's body. In addition to acknowledging the 'grid-like' nature of textiles in her study of Albers, Fer noted that the very apparatus of the loom acts as a three-dimensional grid which becomes an extension of the weaver's body.[68] Embroiderers and weavers are similarly implicated. The intersection of the warp and weft of woven fibres with a needle and thread duplicates the grid, by granting the material a visual mapped 'surface' that implies a depth and internality to the object which the maker both creates and inhabits.

EMPTY FRAMES

The extent to which such 'floating frames' encouraged a phenomenological engagement with material, and gave a sense of both material and conceptual depth to objects,

[67] Rosewell, *Medieval Wall Paintings in English and Welsh Churches*, 12.
[68] Fer, 'Close to the Stuff the World is Made of', 27.

may be productively applied to those extant objects whose imagery is only frame – a motif which survives particularly on eleventh- and twelfth-century sculpted fonts. It must be acknowledged that it is possible, indeed likely, that the niches within these 'frame only fonts' originally contained painted figures. However, they survive as sculpted schemes with only the frames intact, suggesting their primacy within the material scheme of the object.

The twelfth-century stone font at St Bartholomew's church in Appleby, Lincolnshire, for instance, is encircled by high relief blind arcades that, unlike the arches on the font at Fincham, do not frame figures, but frame nothing at all (fig. 117). Instead, the arcades *are* the image. The arcades may be presumed to reference blind arcading in an architectural space. Though the font at St Bartholomew's significantly predates the extant church architecture so this cannot be determined, analogous blind arcading on a contemporaneous font at All Saints' church in Lydiard Millicent, Wiltshire (fig. 118), features more detailed piers, including a base and scalloped capitals, indicating a greater degree of architectural realism. Any such visual recall between the architectural and sculptural elements may be considered to have enhanced the effect of frames 'floating' between objects and media, in a manner that reaffirms their consistency with a Kraussian understanding of the grid and which 'extends in all directions to infinity', encompassing the broader material world and drawing together the physical and aesthetic planes by mapping the physical qualities of the surface.[69]

The emptiness within the frames may also be considered to have enriched the permeability of the boundary between the viewer and object, further enabling a phenomenological encounter with the material. Gertsman, in a study of *The Absent Image* (2021), described the empty spaces in late medieval manuscripts as 'other missing bodies; as visual lacunae they unleash beholders' imaginations, inviting the audience to look at, around

[69] Krauss, 'Grids', 60.

and through absence'.[70] In particular, the presence of holes in the parchment of manuscripts, Gertsman claimed, 'serve as nothing less than points of entry: invitations to cross the body-parchment threshold, to penetrate it visually, to see through and find oneself within'.[71] Though Gertsman speaks of a more literal lack, in the sense that no material exists in these chasms (fig. 119), the idea that absence of the expected may both unleash the beholder's imagination and invite them to penetrate the boundary between themselves and the object may also be applied to the absence found within those sculpted frames which lack the saintly bodies usually associated with the motif, and iconography intended to evoke the traversal of a sacral boundary inherent to the act of baptism of which the font is a central part.

The possibility that such motifs additionally possessed a sense of textility may also be claimed, not least because some devices, such as the successive arcades already noted, were present on textiles and fonts which, like that at St Bartholomew's church in Appleby, frame only absence (fig. 117). However, the twelfth-century font at St Mary's church in Ashby Folville, Leicestershire, more explicitly exhibits the possible textility of sculpted framing devices. The four faces of the font represent an abundance of frames, consisting of intersecting arcades, successive arcades with beaded arches, and string courses, and leaves placed within some spandrels (figs 120a–d). The east face of the font (fig. 120a) features a beaded string course which lies horizontally across the centre of the font's face. The upper level of the font is filled with intersecting ridged blind arcades, and the lower features what are described in the *Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture* as 'paired foliate scrolls'.[72] Though the furthest left scroll does feature a tendril that is perhaps vegetal, the entire effect of the imagery is closer to the motif of stylised hanging drapes. This slippage between vegetal and

[70] Elina Gertsman, *The Absent Image: Lacunae in Medieval Books* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2021), 119.
[71] Gertsman, *The Absent Image*, 149.
[72] Richard Jewell and Ron Baxter, *The Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain and Ireland: St Mary, Ashby Folville, Leicestershire* <https://www.crsbi.ac.uk/view-item?i=10458&WINID=1660066864080> [accessed 11.08.2022].

draped motifs suggests the inherent malleability of framing devices in art in this period, reaffirming their intrinsic transformative capacity and exhibiting their ability to signal a sense of textility.

Whilst at first glance the twelfth-century font preserved at All Saints' church in Christian Malford, Wiltshire (fig. 121), appears to bear no resemblance to that in St Mary's church (fig. 120), it possesses many of the same visual principles. Though the font is cylindrical, its sculpted surface is similarly divided into an upper and lower register, the upper register of which features successive single arcades, decorated with beading and above which a band of chevrons marks the edge of the font's bowl; the spaces between the arcades contain only emptiness. The lower register also contains an ambiguous, repeating motif which has been described as a 'scalloped pattern'; however, there is a sense of the hanging textile evoked by its proximity to successive hanging drapes. The symmetry of the pattern and appearance of weight or hanging from the columns above is reminiscent of the painting hanging drapes at St Botolph's church in Hardham, West Sussex (fig. 37), or St Mary's Church in West Chiltington, West Sussex (fig. 39).

The sense of permeability, transformation, and the capacity for phenomenological engagement possessed by textiles (and references to textiles), patterned borders, empty spaces, and the grid-like structure of 'floating' frames thus coalesce on those 'frame only' fonts, to powerfully convey the potential of fonts, and material culture more broadly, to facilitate the traversal of sacral and material boundaries.

CONCLUSION

Both frames and textiles in early medieval material culture appear to have been intended to act as a *parergon*, at once part of the imagery or object that they enclosed and

separated from it by virtue of their position on a border. Both also possessed an inherent sense of interstitality that implied a permeable and transformative boundary by which several media could be evoked simultaneously in a single object, and the viewer may consider themselves capable of traversing the boundary that they implied. This imagery therefore possesses a significant phenomenological potential in which time, space, and material were compressed so that the viewer's own body and that of the maker of the object is implicated in any engagement with the object and its iconography. Such principles have particular significance for fonts, which played a central role in the act of baptism by enabling one to cross the boundary and transform into a follower of the Christian faith, and vestments which transformed their wearers into the embodiment of Christ's teachings on earth.

Such conclusions affirm the continued significance of textiles throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries and the principles of textility which underpinned visual culture at this time. Recognising such constancy complicates the fissure between artistic styles which are usually read into extant material from this period and further emphasises the importance of textile makers in this period, as has been argued throughout this thesis. Such conclusions provide no further elucidation as to who was responsible for the production of textiles but do provide context for the English women described as textile-makers in the limited written evidence. Textiles, and their makers, occupied a prominent position and enabled significant phenomenological engagements with objects that may be perceived to have characterised some of the most profound visual and material principles of the age.

CHAPTER 5

ENCOUNTERING EARLY MEDIEVAL TEXTILES: REPRODUCTION, TRANSLATION, MEDIATION

Though this thesis has often lamented the marginalisation of textiles within art historical studies of this period, one need not study this material for long to sympathise with those scholars who have not made textiles central to their studies of early medieval art: there are perhaps few corpuses of objects more frustrating.[1] Extant early medieval textiles are fragmented and usually in appalling physical condition. Their colours are faded and their threads loose. They are often poorly preserved in ecclesiastical collections which do not possess the resources required for their care or in tightly regulated museum collections which limit scholars' access. They have been permanently glued to boards, fastened behind glass, held loose in plastic wallets in long-abandoned drawers in cathedrals, or stuck behind frames from which they cannot be removed. Gaining access to these materials is an additional challenge (particularly in pandemic conditions), and even when access is granted to view these objects, it cannot come close to the viewing experience of an early medieval viewer, who would have seen them hanging on a wall in candlelight or on a body in motion.

Early medieval textiles nevertheless retain enough of their original state that to see them in the flesh is to still experience something of their magic: it is almost moving to see

[1] David Talbot Rice reduced the study of metal-work, enamels, textiles, and pottery across 871-1100 to a single chapter titled 'Minor Arts', as distinct from the chapters individually detailing architecture, sculpture, ivories and manuscripts (see: Talbot Rice, *English Art 871-1100*, 226-248); Charles Dodwell too, despite his acknowledgement of the evidence for the continuation of Insular embroidery traditions, claimed that there was 'no evidence' that the Normans shared 'this interest in fabrics', and the overriding narrative of his concluding chapter, 'Anglo-Saxon Art and the Norman Conquest', is that of 'intruding Normans [that] were determined to preserve themselves as a ruling caste over the English' in the decades that followed the conquest in the eleventh century (see: Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon*, 217).

even the few extant flecks of metallic thread that cling to a fragmented band, glinting under the fluorescent light of Worcester Cathedral's Library as a ghost of the gilt vestment which would have moved around a candlelit congregation over eight hundred years ago. Conveying this to a reader or an audience, however, is almost impossible when photographs appear only to show a collection of fragmentary brown rags (fig. 1). Similarly, the joy one experiences when contemplating the faces of the embroidered figures on the Worcester vestments, stylised so as to arrest and engage the viewer, cannot be translated when the objects are glued behind glass so that any photographs show mainly light's reflection on the glass, framing a few non-descript strips of brown and obscured by one's own reflection (fig. 122).

There are perhaps no objects so ill-suited to long-term survival as textiles: they endure heavy use comparative to other media; their material is particularly vulnerable to the effects of nature and time; and their marginalisation in art historical study means that they have rarely been a priority in collections' conservation efforts – the effect of which is that these objects are uniquely poorly preserved. There are therefore no materials which so urgently require reproduction as early medieval textiles, both to capture their state before they physically degrade further and to enable scholars to include them in their research.

Their poor preservation requires extensive mediatory interventions for the objects to even be sufficiently visible for art historical study. Throughout this project I experimented with different means of reproducing early medieval textiles to illustrate my research: different photographic methods, significant editing of the resulting images, taking videos of the embroideries to try and show the plasticity of the stitches and the effect of light on their surface, or (most usually) composing ekphrastic accounts of my encounters. Nevertheless, if encountering textiles in their contemporary context is far removed from an early medieval viewing experience, viewing them in reproduction is one step even further removed. The greatest disappointment of studying early medieval textiles is that their lingering affective

potential is almost impossible to convey in reproduction and the greatest challenge of this project has been trying to express it.

I am perhaps uniquely conscious of the effects of studying works in reproduction, as the Covid-19 pandemic significantly limited my access to the corpus of early medieval textiles for two years of research for this thesis. The transfer of the collections of the Victoria & Albert Museum's Clothworker's Centre to the new Victoria & Albert East Museum has additionally made the UK's largest collection of medieval textiles inaccessible from the time of the first 'lockdown' in Spring 2020.[2] I am therefore indebted to the previous generations of scholars who reproduced these early medieval textiles but I am nevertheless aware that during the research for this thesis I, like others before me, was studying their reproductions rather than the objects themselves. This chapter will seek to acknowledge how historical reproductions exist as a mediation of others' encounters with textiles. It will consider how these mediations have shaped and perhaps continue to shape interpretations of textiles and early medieval art more broadly, and question whether acknowledging these processes of mediation may reveal anything about the subjects of reproduction themselves.

AN OUTLINE OF EXISTING REPRODUCTIONS

Still the most complete collection of reproductions of early medieval English embroideries is that assembled in the 1938 catalogue, *English Medieval Embroidery*, composed by Grace Christie (1872-1953).[3] The comprehensively illustrated catalogue contains black-and-white photographs of each embroidery of such clarity and quality that Christie's images remain the best published images of a number of these objects. These photographs are

[2] At the time of writing (January 2024), the new Victoria & Albert East textile archive store in Stratford has not yet opened to the public (see: *The Clothworkers' Centre* (2024) <The Clothworkers' Centre · V&A (vam.ac.uk)> [accessed 15 January 2024]).
[3] Christie, *English Medieval Embroidery*.

supplemented by several drawn illustrations which detail the outlines of embroidered designs or the technicality of certain stitches (figs. 123-4). The thoroughness of Christie's reproductions is such that they have remained the starting point for studies of medieval textiles. Donald King's 1963 catalogue of the Victoria & Albert Museum's *Opus Anglicanum* exhibition acknowledged that the catalogue was 'indebted to the Clarendon Press for permission to reproduce a number of diagrams from Mrs. A. G. L. Christie's *English Medieval Embroidery*', of which it included a selection.[4] And in the 'Afterword' to the catalogue which accompanied the 2016-17 Victoria & Albert Museum *Opus Anglicanum* exhibition, Clare Browne affirmed that Christie's publication was the 'foundation from which Donald King developed the [1963] exhibition *Opus Anglicanum: English Medieval Embroidery*'.[5] The reproductions in King's catalogue cannot rival Christie's: it contains only a handful of black-and-white photographic reproductions, and two colour reproductions which act as the frontispiece of the book. Likewise, the 2016-17 catalogue produced to accompany another Victoria & Albert Museum exhibition, *Opus Anglicanum: Masterpieces of English Medieval Embroidery*, contains a number of colour photographs of the exhibited works, but is far from the comprehensive catalogue of (in particular early) medieval embroidered works produced by Christie.[6]

It must be noted that the Bayeux Tapestry, the largest and perhaps most complete extant embroidery from eleventh-century England, is not included in Christie's catalogue.

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[4] King, *Opus Anglicanum*, i.

[5] Clare Browne, 'Afterword' in *English Medieval Embroidery*, ed. by Browne, Davies, Michael, and Zöschg, 105-111, 111.

[6] The 2016-17 catalogue does not include a number of the textiles included by Christie in her publication, including the vestments at Worcester Cathedral, the collection of early medieval textiles held in Sens Cathedral (which include the vestments of St Thomas of Canterbury, two mitres, the vestments of St Edmund of Canterbury, the fragments of sandals from the tomb of Archbishop Gilon II Cornut), the apparel of amice and six fragments of stole sound in the tomb of Archbishop Hubert Walter in Canterbury Cathedral, the apparel of amice and a dalmatic from Halberstadt Cathedral, the mitre in Anagni Cathedral, the mitre in the Bayerisches Nationalmuseum in Munich, the full set of textiles from the tomb of Archbishop Walter de Cantilupe spread across collections at the Victoria & Albert Museum, the British Museum, and Worcester Cathedral, the cope from the Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum in Brunswick, the portion of an orphrey in the Musée de Cluny in Paris, and a cope in Uppsala cathedral.

The Tapestry has its own history of reproduction and has often been the subject of innovatory efforts to reproduce it. A complete set of photographs of the Tapestry was made in 1873 by Joseph Cundall (and assistants) for the British government's Department of Science and Art. Two copies of the same 180 hand-coloured glass plates are now in the collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum and provided the model for an embroidered replica of the Tapestry made by a group of English women in 1885 (now in the collection of the Museum of Reading).[7] Such efforts at replication were repeated by the Nazi's *Ahnenerbe* (the Ancestral Heritage Bureau) project, which in the years 1941-3 commissioned the production of a painted (colour) facsimile of the Tapestry in addition to photographic reproductions in both colour and black and white.[8] Wilson's study, *The Bayeux Tapestry* (1982), was the first book to contain a complete colour reproduction of the Tapestry, a feat repeated in Musset's study of *The Bayeux Tapestry* (2005).[9] A fully digitised reproduction of the Tapestry was made available online through the Musée de la Tapisserie de Bayeux in 2021.[10] The Bayeux Tapestry, an object afforded UNESCO 'Memory of the World' status, is unique within the corpus of extant early medieval textiles to have been afforded such attention and attempts to faithfully reproduce it by the most up-to-date methods.

If other surviving embroideries suffer by comparison, then tablet-woven bands have been even further neglected and have rarely been reproduced at all. Spies' 2000 catalogue of tablet-woven bands does not include a complete set of reproductions, instead relying largely on ekphrastic entries for each object (though there are a number of drawn and monochromatic photographic reproductions included in the study).[11] The cost of printing

[7] *The Bayeux Tapestry* (2022) < https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O118318/bayeux-tapestry-photograph-cundall-co/bayeux-tapestry-photograph-cundall--co/>[accessed 27.03.2023].
[8] Shirley Anne Brown, 'Decoding Operation Matilda: The Bayeux Tapestry, the Nazis, and German Pan-Nationalism' in *The Bayeux Tapestry: New Approaches*, ed. by Michael J. Lewis, Gale R. Owen-Crocker and Dan Terkla (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2011), 17-26, 17.
[9] Wilson, *The Bayeux Tapestry*; Musset, *The Bayeux Tapestry*.
[10] *Explore the Bayeux Tapestry Online* (2023) < https://www.bayeuxmuseum.com/la-tapisserie-de-bayeux/decouvrir-la-tapisserie-de-bayeux/explorer-la-tapisserie-de-bayeux-en-ligne/> [accessed 24.03.2023].
[11] Spies, *Ecclesiastical Pomp & Aristocratic Circumstance*.

must be presumed to have limited the inclusion of colour photographs in this, and many other, studies. Studies of individual bands vary in the approach taken to reproduction: though colour reproductions exist of the bands attached to the embroidered stole and maniples amongst the Cuthbert vestments, the unattached bands are reproduced in black and white in Battiscombe's 1956 collection of essays on the subject of *St Cuthbert's Relics* (fig. 125).[12] Similarly, reproductions of other extant bands usually consist of black-and-white photographs or drawings, though colour photographs do exist in studies of the band attached to the mitre at Abegg-Stiftung (fig. 76), the braids from the tomb of Walter de Gray at York Minster (fig. 73), and (somewhat morbidly) the remains of a ninth-century braid attached to a human skull found in Winchester (fig. 79).[13] The colour reproductions of the bands preserved amongst the Worcester vestments were produced specifically for this thesis (figs. 70a-d). Thus, as with embroideries, the primary means through which scholars and students first encounter early medieval tablet-weavings is through black-and-white photographs or illustrated line drawings.

THE VISUAL EFFECTS

The visual effects of these varying reproductions may be well observed in a comparison between the colour photographs of the tablet-woven braids from the tomb of Walter de Gray (fig. 73), the illustration of the 'Abbot Dygon Orphrey' preserved within the tomb at St Augustine's Abbey (fig. 74), and the monochromatic photographs of the bands from the tomb of Henry of Blois preserved in Winchester Cathedral (fig. 71a-c); all are

[12] Battiscombe, *The Relics of St Cuthbert*, plates 41-43.
[13] Coatsworth and Owen-Crocker, *Clothing the Past*, 58-96; Robert Patterson, 'Tablet-woven Braids', 21; Katherine Barclay and Martin Biddle, 'Gold Working' in *Artefacts from Medieval Winchester Part II: Object and Economy in Medieval Winchester*, ed. by Martin Biddle, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 75-84, plates 36a-36c.

reproductions of key-patterned tablet-woven bands.[14] None capture the immense accomplishment of these works, the sheer skill and creativity required to use over two hundred tablets (in the case of the band excavated from the tomb of Walter de Gray) to weave bands with such complex patterns: dense interlace outdone by the even denser interlaced threads from which it was woven.[15] The pattern may be described as 'clearer' or more comprehensible in the illustration of the 'Abbot Dygon Orphrey' (fig. 74), in as much as the lines of the key pattern are more sharply defined than in the photograph. But the monochromatic photographs of those from the tomb of Henry of Blois (fig. 71) may similarly be observed to display the design more 'clearly' than that of the colour photograph (fig. 73). Conversely, the materiality of the band is best expressed within the colour photographs, the shimmering of its gold threads and the shadows cast by its three-dimensionality more immediately apparent, in comparison to the monochromatic images in which line is emphasised over colour, and form over material, significantly distancing the work from the processes of making and individual(s) involved in its production.

Christie's images of embroideries have the same effect. The objects are reduced to a state of severe two-dimensionality as the close-up images divorce the embroideries from any sense of their context, underscored by the austere white backgrounds and uniform sizing between works, dictated by the dimensions of the pages of the volume which frame each reproduction. Moreover, the monochromatism has the effect of crystallising the outlines of the embroidered imagery, so that their designs are more readily discernible, bringing the embroideries closer to line drawings than they appear when viewed in the flesh. Indeed, when one encounters early medieval textiles in person, the difference between the media and Christie's reproductions is stark: the plasticity and three-dimensionality of the embroidered

[14] Patterson, 'Tablet-woven Braids', 21; Crowfoot, 'St Augustine's Canterbury', 8-9; Elizabeth Crowfoot, 'Personal Possessions: Textiles', plates 40 and 41.
[15] Patterson, 'Tablet-woven Braids', 20-21.

works has been entirely removed in Christie's reproductions, in addition to the fluidity of textiles' movements and their interaction with their environment (most notably light). The dual (but related) consequence of these visual effects is the simultaneous reduction of any impression of their materiality and consequently the incitement of a principally iconographic approach to the study of these objects.

LACK OF MATERIALITY AND 'AURA'

The effect of this reduction of a sense of textiles' materiality cannot be overstated. From the outset, the research conducted for this thesis sought to acknowledge the materiality of early medieval textiles, namely the ability of imagery and objects to evoke multiple materials (and multiple materialities), their affective potential, their ability to engage with their context and wearer, and the extent to which they permitted the viewer to engage in a phenomenological experience in which textiles traversed boundaries, implied unknown futures, invoked interstitiality, and implicated the human body within such profound experiences. This reading was undoubtedly provoked by my first-hand encounters with early medieval textiles in the first months of research for this thesis, between its start in Autumn 2019 and the beginning of the pandemic in Spring 2020. However, it was only when first-hand engagement with these objects was denied after March 2020, and I experienced the frustration of not being able to engage with the material of these objects, that I realised how integral their material was to an encounter with them and how inadequately Christie's reproductions (which remain the best quality and most complete) convey this.

That something of an artwork may be lost in its reproduction has been a significant area of art historical study since the invention of photography. Walter Benjamin's essay, 'Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' (1935), summarised many of the issues concerning the photography of artworks which are demonstrated in the comparison between the black-

and-white photographs, colour photographs, and illustrations of tablet-woven bands discussed above: their divorce from context, the failure to capture subsequent physical degradation, a denial of the objects' physicality, reproduction's ability to 'bring out those aspects of the original that are unattainable to the naked eye yet accessible to the lens', the object's authenticity 'interfered with' and its historical testimony (and related authority) 'jeopardized'.[16] Benjamin sought to succinctly articulate these myriad issues in the claim that the 'aura' of the work 'withers in the age of mechanical reproduction'.[17] The effect of this destruction of 'aura', Benjamin posited, is to destroy what is unique about an object, most particularly the unique space which exists between an object and viewer at the moment of encounter.[18]

In a 2009 essay, the art historian Horst Bredekamp extended Benjamin's argument within the context of medieval art, complicating the understanding of 'aura' by citing the transference of the healing powers of reliquaries in their reproduction (and specifically referencing the production of copies of devotional figures of the Virgin, made around 1400).[19] In this, Bredekamp challenged Benjamin's claim that the 'aura' of works was lost in reproduction and argued that replication in a medieval context was not necessarily destructive but rather functioned in an ambassadorial capacity for the object's aura: 'its ambassador, deputy, and advanced guard'.[20] In doing so, Bredekamp claimed, neither the aura of the original nor that of the reproduction was destroyed.[21] In a study of early medieval

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[16] Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in *Illuminations*, ed. by Hannah Arendt, trans. by Harry Zohn (1936; New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 1- 26, 3-4.
[17] Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', 4.
[18] Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', 4-6.
[19] Horst Bredekamp, 'The Simulated Benjamin: Medieval Remarks on its Actuality', trans. by Iain Boyd Whyte, *Art in Translation* 1.2 (2009), 285-301, 285-6 (though it should be noted that though this translation was published in 2009, the original essay by Bredekamp was first published in German in 1992, see: Horst Bredekamp, 'Der simulierte Benjamin: Mittelalterliche Bemerkungen zu seiner Aktualität' in *Frankfurter Schule und Kunstgeschichte*, eds. by Andreas Berndt (Berlin: Reimer, 1992), 117-140).
[20] Bredekamp, 'The Simulated Benjamin: Medieval Remarks on its Actuality', 297; this argument was to influence applications of Benjamin's writings on reproduction to studies of pre-modern reproductions, including in the work of Christopher Wood (see: Christopher S. Wood, *Forgery, Replica, Fiction: Temporalities of German Renaissance Art* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2008)).
[21] Bredekamp, 'The Simulated Benjamin: Medieval Remarks on its Actuality', 297.

textiles, both Benjamin and Bredekamp's viewpoints may be considered instructive in attempting to understand the implications of their reproduction. Though Bredekamp argued that reproductions may act as ambassadors for the original object's 'healing powers', though this definition of ambassador could be interpreted to suggest a neutrality within the ambassadorial role, a neutral mediator through which powers are communicated, it could also be interpreted as an anthropomorphised, active agent, whose own specificity determines the manner in which the original is communicated. It is this understanding which may best inform an understanding of reproductions of early medieval textiles. If 'aura' is what is unique about a work at the moment it is encountered, then certainly an aura is expressed in the reproduction of early medieval textiles. It may not be an aspect of its 'aura' which, though unique to the object, is universal to the encounter with it; rather it may be an expression of the experience of the object's aura by the individual responsible for its reproduction: their *own* encounter encapsulated in a reproduction, the reproduction functioning as an ambassador in the sense that it is a representation of *their* experience.

Benjamin, in his summary of some of the issues surrounding reproduction, stated that:

> technical reproduction can put the copy of the original into situations which would be out of reach for the original itself. Above all, it enables the original to meet the beholder halfway, be it in the form of photograph or a phonograph record. The cathedral leaves its locale to be received in the studio of a lover of art; the choral production, performed in an auditorium or in the open air, resounds in the drawing room.[22]

However, the object has not actually 'left' its locale, it is not the work which meets the viewer 'halfway', but a reproduction of a unique encounter. One may be able to get physically closer to the images of the Worcester vestments in Christie's volume than to the actual vestments in Worcester cathedral which are contained behind glass. However, one is not actually gaining an intimate, close view of the vestments. Rather, one is gaining a closeness with the

[22] Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', 4.

end of Christie's lens. This may be what Benjamin meant when he stated in the following sentence that reproductions 'may not touch the actual work of art, yet the quality of its presence is always depreciated'.[23] One can gain no closer, no more intimate an encounter, than that experienced by Christie's camera. The reproductions thus act as ambassadors of the aura present in Christie's encounter, capturing the unique distance between the vestments and her lens. The paradox inherent in this has been described by the art historian Christopher Lakey in his study of Benjamin's writings and 'Imagining the Medieval Past' (2016): that on the one hand images may 'claim historical authenticity in the presentation of a certain object or monument', whilst simultaneously they may present 'a subjective point of view that emphasizes the presentness of that object over its historicity'.[24] In the case of early medieval textiles, the 'subjective points of view' offered by reproductions and on which scholars are largely dependent have shaped understandings of these objects.

Jacqueline Jung, who has written extensively on the subject of the reproduction of medieval sculpture, observed this phenomenon in the black-and-white photographs taken of Gothic sculptures in her study of 'Gothic Sculpture in the Age of Photographic Reproduction' (2021).[25] Photographs taken of Gothic sculpture by the German photographers Walter Hege and Richard Hamann (and their associates) in the early twentieth century, Jung argued, challenged Benjamin's claim that the aura 'withers' in the age of mechanical reproduction directly:

> The photos by Richard Hamann and his associates imparted to Gothic environments and objects a degree of clarity, cohesion, stability, and comprehensibility that is difficult, if not impossible, to attain on-site; those by Walter Hege swathed their subjects with an aura of enchantment and vivacity, enabling viewers to feel as if they were inhabiting the spaces themselves…Surely Benjamin was wrong: at the very time

[23] Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', 4.
[24] Christopher Lakey, 'Contingencies of Display: Benjamin, Photography, and Imagining the Medieval Past', *postmedieval* 7 (2016), 81-95, 82.
[25] Jacqueline E. Jung, 'The Work of Gothic Sculpture in the Age of Reproduction' in *The Lives and Afterlives of Medieval Iconography*, ed. by Pamela A. Patton and Henry D. Schilb (Philadelphia: Penn State University Press, 2020), 161-199

> he was writing, photography was working hard – and successfully – to create aura around objects that were, on their own, difficult to see and understand.[26]

Nevertheless, Jung conceded that the uniqueness of the work at the moment of the encounter with the material, that which Benjamin also perceived as aura, was 'eradicated in the crisp and totalizing photographs of the Marburg school…and the romanticizing closeups of Walter Hege'.[27] This paradox, in which the aura experienced by the photographer is crystalised whilst the aura between the object itself and the viewer is destroyed, is also instructive in understanding Christie's images. Indeed, visual parallels may also be drawn between Christie's images and both Hege and Hamann's: Christie's reproductions in many ways represent a synthesis of the two men's approaches. In the placement of the embroideries on austere white backgrounds Christie shares the 'calculated objectivity' of Hamann's photographs of Reims: face-on images, cropped around individual elements, the monochromatism possessing a strong chiaroscuro so that the minutiae of the objects' outlines are clearly defined and appear in sharp relief.[28] Conversely, Hege's images sought to make his Gothic subjects 'immediate and fresh' for a modern audience and were thus 'more atmospheric and informational, with stark contrasts of light and shadow and an embrace of the fragmentary and obscure'.[29] Christie's images too possess stark contrasts in light and shadow (which, one must presume, were the result of significant editorial interventions, as the objects themselves possess no such clarity of outline or significant contrast within their imagery) and, though the textiles are arranged in an attempt to recreate a sense of the objects as they would have appeared in their original state: complete and whole, they nevertheless do not shy away from their fragmentary reality. Christie's reproductions are thus attempts at reproducing the objects in a manner which is at once both atmospheric and objective, similarly embodying the paradox of Benjamin's 'aura': no greater material sense of the objects

[26] Jung, 'The Work of Gothic Sculpture in the Age of Reproduction', 173.
[27] Jung, 'The Work of Gothic Sculpture in the Age of Reproduction', 173.
[28] Jung, 'The Work of Gothic Sculpture in the Age of Reproduction', 169.
[29] Jung, 'The Work of Gothic Sculpture in the Age of Reproduction', 170.

may be gained, as one can gain no closer and no more intimate an encounter than that experienced by Christie's camera.

TAXONOMICAL APPROACHES

The related effect of an object's materiality being denied in reproduction is the concurrent emphasis on its iconography. Jung observed of the work of the Marburg photographers: 'In their clarity, thoroughness, and interest in detail, they facilitated the formal comparisons and iconographic analyses that continued to be the central ambitions of academic art history in the decades after the war.'[30] Christie's images, also produced in the first half of the twentieth century, in the years preceding the Second World War, as has already been observed were governed by the same principles: clarity and the depiction of detail chief among them. As has already been argued in this thesis, art historical approaches to early medieval material (including early medieval textiles), particularly material dating to around the period of the Norman conquest, have been characterised by iconographic analyses and, in particular, the application of stylistic taxonomies. Christie's reproductions must be understood as primers for such iconographic interpretations: the close-up images largely divorce the embroideries from their original context, underscored by the austere white backgrounds and uniform size. This presentation reduces any impulse to understand the embroideries as material objects: they appear less as items which one could imagine wearing against one's body, and more visual subjects for iconographic study. Thus, the reflex to taxonomise described by Ján Elsner earlier in this thesis is encouraged as one is compelled chiefly to observe differences and similarities within the designs of the embroidered imagery.[31] Iconographic assessments are all that are possible through such a presentation.

[30] Jung, 'The Work of Gothic Sculpture in the Age of Reproduction', 169.
[31] Elsner, 'Style', 101.

Jung observed the same in the Marburg images, which she argued 'flattened' the sculpted figures into 'graphic designs' that were then more easily iconographically read.[32]

In another study of Gothic sculpture, Jung additionally argued that, since the introduction of photography, 'scholars have been able to place sculptures in expansive iconographical genealogies (particularly through their resemblances to motifs in manuscript paintings and other small-scale art forms)'.[33] The insertion of textiles into genealogies, such as 'Anglo-Saxon' or 'Romanesque', has been summarised at various points in this thesis and 'Englishness' is bound up in both Christie's visual analysis and reproductions. Christie introduced her volume with the claim that 'In England the art of needlework attained such notable perfection that its masterpieces challenged comparison with the finest paintings. The fame of English work spread all over the Continent, and it was everywhere sought after.'[34] In outlining the identifying features which distinguished English work from French or German embroideries, Christie cited the 'choice of saints and scenes, style of figures, accessory elements, character of enclosing framework, and of pattern-work upon backgrounds', in addition to observing of figural elements: 'embroideries that can be ascribed with certainty to England are often short in height, with heads, hands, and feet disproportionally large'.[35] It may be noted that these figural characteristics are consistent with art historical definitions of the 'Winchester' style summarised in the first chapter of this thesis.[36] Christie does not associate this style with an explicitly biologically essential 'Englishness': here 'English' appears to mean only that the object was produced in England. But her description of 'English' also does not preclude such an interpretation, nor does it

[32] Jung, 'The Work of Gothic Sculpture in the Age of Reproduction', 169.
[33] Jacqueline E. Jung, *Eloquent Bodies: Movement, Expression, and the Human Figure in Gothic Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020), 8.
[34] Christie, *English Medieval Embroideries*, 2.
[35] Christie, *English Medieval Embroideries*, 4-5.
[36] See chapter 1, footnote 49 (Wormald, 'The "'Winchester School'" before St Æthelwold', 307-8). It may also be noted that later in the introduction Christie describes Winchester as 'the capital city of the realm' and 'a great centre of art production', as well as the most likely place of production for the Cuthbert vestments (see: Christie, *English Medieval Embroideries*, 18).

contradict the enduring understanding of the 'Winchester' style which would interpret it thus for decades after.

Christie's images illustrate such an understanding and guide the viewer towards Christie's conclusions: the absence of materiality and colour flattens the objects' differences and enables only iconographic interpretations. Were one to line up the same objects in the flesh and view them thus it is unlikely that the same conclusions about characteristically 'English', disproportionally large heads would be one's first observation. It may be noted that Wormald's essay which draws these same connections, 'The "Winchester School" before St Æthelwold' (1971), did not reproduce the Cuthbert vestments at all but was illustrated by black-and-white photographs of the manuscripts that it references and between which it draws parallels.[37] It is possible that the Cuthbert vestments were excluded from the illustrative images due their difficulty to photograph and the comparatively less clear figural outlines than those in the referenced manuscripts and wall paintings. In looking at these images, however, one is forced to confront whether the similarities observed would be quite so compelling if the objects themselves were viewed side by side when differences in scale, colour, and media could additionally be observed.

The role of photography in establishing 'iconographical genealogies' has additionally been identified as underpinning racialised categories. Friedrich Kestel described Walter Hege as a 'race art photographer'; his images of certain Gothic sculpted figures intended to convey an image of heroism which conformed to a 'racist idea of beauty' and which acted as 'pictorial witnesses of the National Socialist attitude'.[38] Kestel cited the use of Hege's photograph of the sculpted Rider from Bamberg Cathedral (fig. 126) in the publication, *Nordische Schönheit: Ihr Wunschbild in Leben und Kunst* [Nordic Beauty: The Ideal Image] (1937) by Paul Schultze-

[37] Wormald, 'The 'Winchester School' before St Æthelwold', 305-313.
[38] Friedrich Kestel (trans. Judith Supp), 'Walter Hege (1893-1955): "Race Art Photographer" and/or "Master of Photography"', *Visual Resources* 7 (1990), 185-207, 185, 199.

Naumburg, in which Schultze-Naumburg used the image as evidence of what he described as the 'true racial relationship' between German Gothic sculpture and ancient Greek art (fig. 127).[39] This 'relationship' was not unique to 1930s Germany, having its origins in the century which preceded it when the use of photography in art historical study was also becoming more widespread. In 1995, Kathryn Brush also argued that 'assumptions about medieval nationality owe less to the Middle Ages than to the nineteenth century, a period in which issues of national identity and ethnicity were of vital concern to many scholars in the field'.[40]

Though Christie's study and images have not been attached to such explicitly racialising rhetoric, Christie's images remain the starting point for all scholars of early medieval textiles. This thesis has argued that a more substantive art historical engagement with textiles may disrupt the application of ethno-racial categories. For this to be effective, however, it must be acknowledged the extent to which repeated modes of reproduction have potentially mirrored or even enabled the repeated applications of ethno-racial taxonomical categories. The comparative neglect of textiles in even recent art historical assessments, in addition to the limited efforts to produce a complete catalogue of them since the invention of colour photography, must be viewed as related problems in the field of early medieval art history.

[39] Kestel, 'Walter Hege (1893-1955): "Race Art Photographer" and/or "Master of Photography"', 193.
[40] Kathryn Brush, 'Gothic Sculpture as a Locus for the Polemics of National Identity' in *Concepts of National Identity in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Simon N. Forde, Leslie Peter Johnson, and Alan V. Murray (Leeds: University of Leeds, 1995), 189-213, 189. It is additionally important to note that this phenomenon occurred more widely in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, not only in the field of history of art. Indeed, the origins of the field of medieval studies more broadly have been observed to have been precipitated by the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century colonialism at which time 'New narratives of hereditary greatness and racial superiority required a history differentiating a white Christian past from the narratives of other places and peoples' (see: *Whose Middle Ages? Teachable Moments for an Ill-Used Past* ed. by Andrew Albin, Mary C. Erler, Thomas O'Donnell, and Nina Rowe (New York: Fordham University Press, 2019), 4).

AFFECT AND THE NAZI '*AHNENERBE*' PROJECT

Though the Bayeux Tapestry has its own unique history of reproduction, efforts at reproducing the Tapestry engage with the issues already described. Its history of reproduction was comprehensively outlined by Carola Hicks, in her study *The Bayeux Tapestry: The Life Story of a Masterpiece* (2006).[41] However, the efforts of the Nazi's *Ahnenerbe* (Ancestral Heritage Bureau) project are of particular relevance to this thesis, in that they demonstrate how reproductions may deny an object's materiality, facilitate an (ethno-racially essentialist) taxonomical approach, and act as an 'ambassador' only to the reproducer's experience of that object, recording the 'aura' unique to their encounter.

Unlike the mere glimpses afforded by Christie's methods of reproduction, the Nazis' zeal for recording the minutiae of their activities allows considerable insight into the motivations and methods through which they sought to reproduce the Tapestry: a study of the Bayeux Tapestry was proposed in a memorandum directed to the managing director of the *Ahnenerbe*, Wolfram Sievers, on 8 July 1939 on the grounds that it was an important document recording the Norman conquest, and that the medieval and modern English and German empires were the heirs of the early Normans.[42] In pursuit of this study, the artist Herbert Jeschke was commissioned to create a painted facsimile of the Tapestry, alongside efforts to produce photographic reproductions of the work (in both colour and black and white, though the complete set of photographs of the Tapestry are in black and white), first by the photographer Rolf Alber and then by Ursula Uhland, who replaced Alber after the first week of project following his request to return to the Eastern front.[43] Uhland, it should

[41] Carola Hicks, *The Bayeux Tapestry: The Life Story of a Masterpiece* (London: Penguin Random House, 2006).
[42] Brown, 'Decoding Operation Matilda', 17.
[43] Brown, 'Decoding Operation Matilda', 19; Shirley Anne Brown, '*Sonderauftrag Bayeux*. Herbert Jeschke and the 'Lost' Drawings of the *Bayeux Tapestry*', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 83 (2020), 236-254, 238; Brown's additional studies of the Tapestry include: Shirley Anne Brown, 'A facsimile for everybody: From Foucault to Foys and Beyond' in *Making Sense of the Bayeux Tapestry*, edited by Anna Henderson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 133-153; Shirley Anne Brown, 'A building is more than a building: Reading the Bayeux Tapestry's Architecture', *Text, for the Study of Textile Art, Design and History*, vol. 42 (2014-15), 12-18; Shirley Anne Brown, *The Bayeux Tapestry. Bayeux Médiathèque municipal: MS 1. A Sourcebook* (Brepols: Turnhout,

be noted, was an associate at Marburg University, working with the previously discussed and so-called 'Race Photographer', Richard Hamann.[44]

Shirley Anne Brown, who facilitated the donation of materials relating to Jeschke's involvement in the project by his children to the Musée de la Tapisserie de Bayeux in 2019, and who has undertaken extensive research about the *Ahnenerbe's* engagements with the Tapestry (and the Tapestry and its histories more broadly), outlined Jeschke's methodology, one 'formulated on exacting archaeological practice':

> Jeschke's technique was to trace the desired images on 1cm squared tracing paper, wherever they would fit on the roll of paper. The drawn details were numbered to correspond to his marked-up copy of the 1/7 scale leporello of the tapestry. On some details, such as the English ship about to cast the anchor in scene 5, the colours are coded to colour charts that he created for Jankuhn. Jeschke's proposal for the colour charts was very detailed: they include colour chips in watercolour, matching the colours in the embroidery exactly, each one given a keyring number. On separate sheets, the components in the colours are listed. At the time, this was the only way that true colour could be recorded, given the colour shifts in colour photography and the effects of lighting. The eye could capture what the camera could not.[45]

The claim made here by Brown, that 'the eye could capture what the camera could not', is echoed in a later claim made in the same article that Jeschke's drawings 'capture the liveliness of the original in a way that cannot be reproduced by the photograph, bringing us

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2013); Shirley Anne Brown, 'The Strange Tale of the Bayeux Tapestry, Archaeology and the Nazi Party', *British Archaeology*, vol. 122 (January – February 2012), 44-49; Shirley Anne Brown, 'Auctoritas, Consilium, et Auxilium: Images of Authority in the Bayeux Tapestry' in *The Bayeux Tapestry: New Interpretations*, eds. by Dan Terkla and Martin Foys (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009), 25-35; Shirley Anne Brown, 'Les Scandinaves, les Vikings et la Tapisserie de Bayeux' in *La Tapisserie de Bayeux: une chronique des temps vikings?* edited by Sylvette Lemagnen. (Bonsecours: Point-de-vues, 2009), 230-245; Shirley Anne Brown, 'Cognate Imagery: The Bear, Harold and the Bayeux Tapestry' in *King Harold II and The Bayeux Tapestry* , ed. by Gale Owen-Crocker (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005), 149-60; Shirley Anne Brown, 'Bibliography of Bayeux Tapestry Studies: 1985-1999' in *The Bayeux Tapestry: Embroidering the Facts of History*, eds. by Brian J. Levy and François Neveu (Caen: Presses de l'Université de Caen, 2004), 411-18; Shirley Anne Brown, 'Prolepsis in the Bayeux Tapestry' in *Le Futur dans le Moyen Âge Anglais* (Paris: Publications de l'Association des Médiévistes Anglicistes de l'Enseignement Supérieur, 1999), 21-53; Shirley Anne Brown and Michael W.Herren. 'The Adelae Comitissae of Baudri of Bourgueil and the Bayeux Tapestry' in *Proceedings of the Battle Conference 1993*, ed. R.Gameson (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1994), 55-73; Shirley Anne Brown, 'The Bayeux Tapestry: Why Eustace, do and William?' in *Proceedings of the Battle Conference 1989* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1990), 7-28; Shirley Anne Brown, *The Bayeux Tapestry: A History and Bibliography* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1988); Shirley Anne Brown, 'The Bayeux Tapestry: History or Propaganda?' in *The Anglo-Saxons, Synthesis and Achievement* edited by J.D.Woods and David A.E.Pelteret (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1985), 11-25; Shirley Anne Brown, 'The Bayeux Tapestry and the 'Song of Roland' *Olifant* 6.3 and 4 (Spring & Summer 1979), 339-350.

[44] Brown, '*Sonderauftrag Bayeux*', 238.

[45] Brown, 'Decoding Operation Matilda', 19; Brown, '*Sonderauftrag Bayeux*', 238 245.

close to the exacting observations and skills of the original designers and embroiderers'.[46] As Brown outlines, Jeschke was undoubtedly afforded a privileged viewing of the Tapestry, which imbued his reproductions with details that attest to his intimacy with the object, However, one should be cautious about favourably comparing his reproductions to those achieved through photography. The eye could capture what the camera could not, though it is not necessarily the case that this was then captured accurately by Jeschke's brush.

As has already been argued, the idea that any 'distance' has been compressed or intimacy gained through looking at photographic reproductions is wholly illusory, one has only gained intimacy with the photographer's experience of the objects - the same is true painted reproductions, Jeschke's included: one is drawn no closer to the Tapestry, only to Jeschke's translation of it. The word translation is appropriate here. Jeschke's reproductions required many moments of translation to produce: the tracings of individual elements, their transference to drawings, their infill with the selected hue from Jeschke's colour charts (the creation of these charts representing an additional moment of translation, the perception of colours itself being highly subjective). Elsner described the act of describing art inherent within art history as 'a discipline of the constant translation and re-translation of art into text'.[47] Elsner does not preclude photography from this understanding of translation: photography, Elsner claimed, is no more or less 'objective' (or not) than verbal ekphrasis, like written 'descriptive translations', photographs are to Elsner 'tendentious personal "takes" on whatever they frame in shot'.[48] Jeschke's works arguably represent an even more subjective, more personal 'take' than photography for the additional translatory moments required in the creation of a painted facsimile.

[46] Brown, '*Sonderauftrag Bayeux*', 251.
[47] Elsner, 'Art History as Ekphrasis', 24.
[48] Elsner, 'Art History as Ekphrasis', 12-13.

In this material one therefore sees both one man's encounter with the Tapestry and, as with Christie's photographs, the mediation of one material into another. In Jeschke's reproductions the Tapestry has again been reduced to a two-dimensional account of the Tapestry's visual elements: individual motifs with corresponding discrete modes of colour. There is some evidence in his paintings to suggest that Jeschke was interested in the stitches and material composition of the Tapestry (fig. 128).[49] In the extant painted panels, however, he appears only to try and depict individual stitches in areas where some of the hold stitching contrasts against the laid couched threads over which they were placed (fig. 129). Mieke Bal, in the essay 'Translating Translation' (2007), argued that translation would always be an 'unfulfilled promise; necessarily trailing in its wake the "remainder" of its past, no longer accessible'.[50] Translation was therefore 'always tentative, approximate and incomplete', the 'initial thing, always deferred, never reached'.[51] That there appears to have been no consistent effort made by Jeschke to evoke the textility or three-dimensionality of the objects, therefore emphatically denies the materiality of the Tapestry. This in turn contradicts Brown's claim that Jeschke's work brings the viewer closer the 'exacting observations and skills of the original designers and embroiderers', instead underscoring Bal's claim that in translation the initial thing may never be reached. As with Christie's images, what one is instead brought closer to is the skill and observations of Herbert Jeschke.

This process of translation was guided not only by Jeschke's necessarily subjective modes of looking, but also by the *Ahnenerbe* project's desire that the resultant reproductions be disseminated to universities across the Third Reich for comparative study by art history and archaeology students, so that they may observe the roots of the Aryan race believed to

[49] Those of Jeschke's reproductions which are still in the possession of the Jeschke Family Collection do show a greater interest in the stitching of the Tapestry and are reproduced in Brown's study (see: Brown, '*Sonderauftrag Bayeux*', 246-7).
[50] Mieke Bal, 'Translating Translation', *Journal of Visual Culture* 6.1 (2007), 109-124, 110.
[51] Bal, 'Translating Translation', 110.

writ large in the Tapestry's iconography.[52] In this, Jeschke's works do not bring the viewer closer to the eleventh century and nor are they any more capable of capturing the liveliness of the Tapestry than photography would be. The medieval past remains inaccessible, the object translated into its early twentieth-century context by the forces which commissioned its reproduction. This is additionally consistent with what is known about how the study was conducted: Jankuhn would direct Jeschke to 'details of archaeological interest' within the Tapestry to copy, the intention being that the drawings would then be used by 'researchers who could compare them to objects of proven "Germanic origin" in museums and collections for the express purpose of proving the distinct Viking characteristics of the eleventh-century Normans.'[53] In describing the flattening of Reims cathedral's sculptural scheme for iconographic analysis in Max Hirmer's photographs, Jung described how their transformation into 'graphic designs' for iconographic interpretation had reduced the sculpted figures into a series of '*signs*'.[54] The materials of Jeschke's donated to the Musée de la Tapisserie de Bayeux attest to a similar transformation from Tapestry to assemblage of signs, quite literally. The tracings taken by Jeschke from the Tapestry on the direction of Jankuhn appear as a jumble of the tapestry's visual elements: dislocating its imagery from itself and its material context until they are just discrete elements to be interpreted as signs of the archaeological evidence of the Aryan race.

The tracings additionally preserve quite compellingly that 'aura' which existed between Jeschke and the Tapestry. These objects attest to the intimacy of the artist's encounter with the Tapestry, instantly recalling Jeschke's investment in the process of reproduction. Such objects are complemented by the visible brush strokes in the hastily made colour swatches which were then inserted into Jeschke's colour charts, recording his own

[52] Brown, '*Sonderauftrag Bayeux*', 245.
[53] Brown, '*Sonderauftrag Bayeux*', 245.
[54] Jung, 'The Work of Gothic Sculpture in the Age of Reproduction', 178.

impression of the colours of the Tapestry preserved (figs. 130-1). This is not to say that photographs cannot capture such intimacy, as this impression is undoubtedly reinforced by the photographs from Jeschke's personal album which include images of him hunched over the Tapestry, resting upon it to examine it more closely (fig. 132). The importance of such a privileged viewing of the Tapestry to Jeschke's process is captured again in his sketch of himself, Dr Herbert Jankuhn (the university professor who headed the *Sonderauftrag Bayeux* [Special Project Bayeux]) would direct, and Dr Karl Schlabow (a textile expert) huddled together in deep contemplation over the Tapestry under his own delighted inscription '*die Tapisserie!*' (fig. 133). Further material produced by Jeschke includes sketches of the countryside and architecture in and around Bayeux (fig. 134), photographs of him at work or reclining in the grass (fig. 135), a drawing of visiting SS personnel outside the Lion D'Or Hotel on the main street in Bayeux (fig. 136), letters requesting further supplies, tracings from the Tapestry, studies of the Tapestry's colour, and sketches of certain designs (fig, 137). These quite literally paint a rich picture of Jeschke's project and frame his reproductions. They simultaneously reveal an insight into his own personal delight at viewing the Tapestry, the significant attention paid by the broader *Ahnenerbe* project to the Tapestry, and a preoccupation with numbers, categories, and codes as a means of understanding the object that sat before him. In this material one therefore sees both one man's encounter with the Tapestry and, as with Christie's photographs, the mediation of one material into another. In Jeschke's reproductions the Tapestry was again reduced to a two-dimensional account of the work's visual elements: individual motifs with corresponding discrete modes of colour.

Brown's studies of this material lead her to conclude:

> It [Jeschke's work] allows us some insight into *Sonderauftrag Bayeux* as a case study of the inner workings and methodology of a specific propaganda campaign. Jeschke's drawings, watercolours, sketches, charts, and written musings, in conjunction with Jankuhn's very precise metre-by-metre written description of the Bayeux Tapestry, also constitute the first detailed recording of the physical condition of the hanging.

> Today, they are an indispensable resource for conservators who are charting changes over time in the condition of the textile and its embroidery.[55]

Brown's primary conclusions about the value of Jeschke's materials to future scholars are thus dual: providing insight into a 'specific propaganda campaign' in addition to the value she notes they hold for conservators.[56] That Jeschke's work gives some insight into this specific propaganda campaign is irrefutable, however, its value to this thesis extends beyond that to consider the affect of their inevitable entanglement with the context in which they were produced and, perhaps more significantly, the reverberations of this affect throughout subsequent generations of art historical studies of this material: Jeschke's material in itself is neither a neutral account of the physical condition of the Tapestry, nor an immediately obvious piece of propaganda. The imagery that he produced attests to his encounter with the Tapestry and neither destroys the 'aura' he experienced nor acts as a simulation of some kind of universal viewing experience. To present Jeschke's works as valuable because they are faithful recordings of the Tapestry and provide information on the physical condition of the tapestry, though undoubtedly accurate, risks overlooking the additional value of these objects as evidence of a viewing experience unique to Jeschke which cannot be replicated.

The extent to which Jeschke's own experience of viewing the Tapestry was intimately interwoven with his efforts to reproduce it is most obviously apparent in the sketchbook in which he worked on his second trip to Bayeux in 1943, in which he included a number of paintings that appear to have displaced elements from the Tapestry (namely knights in similarly stylised looped chainmail) and which convey a sense of turmoil: a knight is taunted by an eagle, sits alone on a rocky outcrop, crucifies an eagle by nailing it to a tree, commands slaves to build a castle, scratches his head over an architectural ground plan, and rides a startled horse (figs. 138-143). It is not the place of the present study to consider Jeschke's

[55] Brown, '*Sonderauftrag Bayeux*', 251.
[56] Brown, '*Sonderauftrag Bayeux*', 251.

possible psychological motivations in producing these images. They may, however, remind the viewer of his reproductions that, whatever his personal politics, his reproductions are the product of a personal encounter in a particular historical context, far exceeding a 'detailed recording of the physical condition of the hanging'.[57] It would be a mistake to consider them such.

The methods of reproduction employed by the *Ahnenerbe* project, notably the emphasis on categorisation, have continued to inform approaches to this material throughout successive generations of studies of early medieval textiles. In her 2019 study of the *Ahnenerbe* project, Brown speculated as to whether the British 1957 study of the Tapestry, edited by Frank Stenton and 'still seen today as foundational to modern Bayeux Tapestry studies', had a relationship with the work undertaken by the *Ahnenerbe* researchers.[58] In particular, Brown noted the similarities between the Table of Contents in Stenton's study and that in the planned *Ahnenerbe* publication.[59]

In her earlier study of this material, Brown questioned whether the 'German project' could 'somehow have served as a catalyst for the Stenton study', and credited the *Ahnenerbe* researchers with having 'anticipated' some of the ideas present in current Bayeux Tapestry studies (namely the Tapestry's 'Scandinavian connection' and the suggestion that 'the Tapestry was a political document meant to reconcile the Normans and Anglo-Saxons in the aftermath of the invasion').[60] It entirely possible that the *Ahnenerbe* project 'anticipated' these views, however, it is also likely that later studies have continued to follow a tradition of taxonomising the Tapestry as a means of cultural assessment, of not only the object but also the broader cultural categories which we have continued to apply to ourselves. Brown's claim that the *Ahnenerbe* project was 'one step in the process whereby a 900-year-old art object has

[57] Brown, '*Sonderauftrag Bayeux*', 251.
[58] Brown, 'Decoding Operation Matilda', 25.
[59] Brown, 'Decoding Operation Matilda', 24-5.
[60] Brown, 'Decoding Operation Matilda', 25.

achieved relevance and status in our modern society', may therefore be accepted. However, one must be critically rigorous about the 'relevance and status' it has acquired and the extent to which repeated modes of reproduction have acted as both an expression and enablement of a continuous compulsion to taxonomise early medieval material.

CONCLUSION: AFFECTIVE REPRODUCTIONS

Efforts at reproductions will always be chiefly governed by emotions. Indeed, the impetus for this chapter was borne from the frustration I felt at reproducing early medieval textiles and the anxiety I felt that they did not adequately convey the arguments contained within this thesis, themselves based on the experience of viewing these objects first-hand. I was concerned that my images did not capture the affect that I experienced in the presence of early medieval textiles, and that consequently my argument that these objects were capable of conveying such weighty notions as phenomenology, memory, and displacement would ring hollow. As Christie sought historical accuracy for some kind of complete 'record', and the *Ahnenerbe* project sought to highlight iconography for broader studies of the origins of the Aryan race, my own photographic efforts sought to highlight these objects' materiality and affective potential. To consider these efforts is, however, to observe the impossibility of producing a neutral reproduction of this material.

The relevance of medieval material to cultural theory's 'affective turn', and the intent of medieval objects to act on emotions, has already been described.[61] The particular relevance of considering 'affects' in this study is their potential to act as 'vehicles of personal transformation, sometimes creation' and to 'make the body a site of imaginative

[61] Holly A. Crocker, 'Book Review Essay: Medieval Affects Now', *Exemplaria*, 29.1 (2017), 82-98, 82 (citing: Patricia Ticineto Clough and Jean Halley (eds.), *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2007)).

transformation'.[62] Such an understanding has import for both the textiles themselves and the images in which they are reproduced. Reproductions of early medieval textiles are part of the emotional weight which 'sticks' to the originals, sedimentary elements which weigh down the original objects with the weight of subsequent affective memories. Though they may frustrate scholars by at first appearing to obscure how textiles were received in an early medieval context they also reveal a truth inherent within the original objects: they were affective sites on which viewers would project the experiences they prompted.

As has been argued in the previous chapters of this thesis, early medieval textiles may be understood to have possessed a transformative capacity expressed through their ability to evoke (and to be evoked within) alternative media, the inherent interstitiality of the framing devices to which they reference, the capacity of their own woven borders to transform the objects and wearers into gestures towards the immortal and infinite, and the phenomenological potential of the stylised figural forms embroidered on vestments to allow the viewer to place themselves both upon and within the clerical garments.

These transformations may perhaps only be understood through textiles' ability to affect the viewer. In the introduction to a collection of essays on objects and emotions in history (2018), Stephanie Downes described how material objects may possess emotional importance, in particular in pre-modern periods where 'limited literacy often prioritized material modes of communication', a claim particularly pertinent to textiles produced in the multilingual but poorly literate Britain of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.[63] The transformational affect of viewing these objects may still be recognised by contemporary viewers; however, this does not mean that their effect is universal. Downes' claim that 'objects are intrinsic to transhistorical emotional change' may therefore inform this

[62] Crocker, 'Book Review Essay: Medieval Affects Now', 83, 94.
[63] Stephanie Downes, 'Introduction' in *Feeling Things: Objects and Emotions through History*, ed. by Stephanie Downes, Sally Holloway, and Sarah Randles (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 1-7, 1.

understanding and be instructive in comprehending subsequent reproductions: they are illustrations of the affect of these objects, informed by the experience of the individual and the contextual climate in which they worked. Nonetheless, their ability to enable affect on viewers with their transformative capacity is constant.

This therefore leads back to my own frustrated efforts to produce reproductions of my encounters with early medieval textiles during archival visits. Though I often regretted the images I had taken in my fruitless attempts to capture these objects, in particular those encased behind glass or plastic, there is something almost fitting in them: one's own reflection obscuring the work beneath, a reproduction explicitly mediated by the body which stands between the object and the internal life. They are therefore accounts of affect, as all reproductive efforts are. Though, owing the pandemic, the research conducted for this project has had more cause to engage with reproductions, in doing so I have been forced to acknowledge the highly individualised affect of viewing these objects, and have inadvertently observed that about them which is universal: the viewer is forced to confront their own personhood, their position as an element in the broader material world in relation to the textiles lying before them. The phenomenological capacity of textiles to place the viewer is therefore underscored, whether that be in relation to a patterned tablet-woven band attached by a lay person to the border of their clothes as a means of framing their garments, or to the glittering vestments which could be observed on clergymen and which inspired devotion as they moved around candlelit spaces. This perhaps recalls the ekphrastic accounts contemporaneous to early medieval art which have frustrated art historians by focussing their descriptions chiefly on colour, light, and sensation, rather than detailed accounts of iconography, line, or form.[64] In acknowledging the inference of affect within these accounts, that have been felt to evade art historical detail, we may actually be brought closer to an early

[64] Wilson, Anglo-Saxon Art, 10; Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, 41.

medieval understanding of these objects, their aura, and their affect, revealing profound truths about early medieval material objects more broadly.

CONCLUSION

This thesis began with the Worcester vestments which lay neglected by art historical study: resistant to the taxonomies which have been applied to early medieval objects, unable to fit within the frameworks which have defined studies of this period, overlooked on account of their media, the contributions of their assumed makers disregarded. Over five chapters this thesis has sought to demonstrate how it was the very things that led to these objects' marginalisation that make them productive subjects of art historical study. Their failure to fit within studies of 'Anglo-Saxon' or 'Romanesque' art exhibited the extent to which understandings of eleventh- and twelfth-century Britain may have more to offer than the narratives of conquest which have thus far dominated. Their poor survival necessitated more creative approaches which proved productive in gaining a further understanding of the materiality of textiles and their comparative position in material culture. The suggestion that they were the work of English women permitted new engagements with an intersectional identity largely invisible in the historical record. Their material, textile, proved to be a site for affective experiences unparalleled in other media. Their resistance to the application of stylistic taxonomies historically associated with early medieval material proved timely, in permitting these objects to contribute to broader efforts in the field of early medieval studies to reckon with its pasts and reconfigure itself for the future.

The contributions of textile makers and the identities with which they were associated were contextualised in the first chapter of this thesis, in which the phenomenological capacity of figural stylisation within textiles was demonstrated. The representations of the human body characteristic in eleventh- and twelfth-century embroideries privileged the expression of vitality and character over realism and idealism, thereby de-emphasising the body of those depicted, paradoxically on vestments which themselves clothed the body, exposing the limitations of mortal flesh. In considering the

potential for skeuomorphism to substantiate the small corpus of extant textile works from this period, the second chapter of this thesis argued that textiles did not exist in a vacuum: they literally furnished and clothed the eleventh and twelfth centuries and conceptually enriched both daily life and sacral rituals to the extent that other media referenced their materiality as a means of expressing profound material paradoxes which formed both the foundations of the early medieval Church and phenomenological conceptions about one's place in the material world. The manner in which bodies were implicated in this understanding acquired additional poignance in the context of post-conquest England, which was expressed in anxieties around veiling as a means of preserving English women in the very monastic spaces associated with the incubation of English collective memory. Moreover, the continued significance of textiles to which skeuomorphic references point is indicative of a continuity in their production and an importance which challenges narratives of cultural fissure and enriches an understanding of the contributions of the 'women of the English people' such as Leogyth and Ælfgyth. The ability of textiles to gesture to that beyond themselves and their wearers was further identified within the third chapter, in which the tablet-woven bands were demonstrated to compress time and space, doing so in a manner which displaced the body of the wearer by alluding to a sense of timelessness consistent with these objects' transference across generations of objects and its own processes of making's allusions to the infinite. The ability of early medieval framing devices to signal thus was identified in the fourth chapter of this thesis; the frames which 'floated' across media were especially effective at signalling grid-like allusions to the infinite: textiles created boundaries which only they themselves (and their makers and wearers) could transgress. The affective potential of textiles is implicit within the conclusions drawn within these chapters: their interactions with their surroundings, phenomenological capacity, and gestures to the memory all depend on the prompting of emotions within the viewer, maker, wearer. This potential is made explicit in the consideration of reproductions of textiles within the final

chapter of this thesis: to view early medieval textiles is to experience their affect, an experience as limiting as it is enlightening.

Throughout this thesis the prominence of textiles which contemporaneous written sources imply has been borne out in cross-media visual analysis. Many of the visual principles identified within textiles also governed works in other media – patterned borders, shared framing devices, painted drapes – so much so that other objects make considerably more sense when the materiality of the textiles which share these principles are considered. These conclusions, when considered alongside the written sources which claim that textiles were the work of English women (or that English women made textiles), have permitted new engagements with that overlooked intersectional identity. The potential histories of association which existed in England by the eleventh century between women, Englishness, and textile production may be cautiously considered a potential pillar in the construction of a hybrid, post-conquest(s), Anglo-Norman identity. This hybridity may only be cautiously posited because the contemporaneous written sources which indicate this connection constitute no more than a handful of sources. This thesis did not seek to visually locate this hybridity within the objects themselves – to do so would likely repeat some of the sins of past iconographic and taxonomical approaches. Instead, the conclusions drawn by this thesis enrich an understanding of the position of textile-producing English women in the eleventh and twelfth centuries by providing a material context for the handful of written sources which drew connections between this medium and this intersectional identity. The significance of William of Poitiers' 'women of the English people' such as the Leogyth and Ælfgyth named in the Domesday book must be presumed to have been significant cultural actors, as the works they produced, if anything like those that survive to be studied first hand today, depended on their affective potential to make manifest such ideas as memory, phenomenology, and interstitiality.

The unparalleled ability for textiles to possess memories must be presumed to have enabled any such hybridity; however, it additionally permits an interrogation of their affective histories and the categories which have since 'stuck' to these objects and which cling to them into the present day. To some extent these memories have been proved in this thesis to be a mirage, proving to have less basis in reality the more they are interrogated. The application of 'Winchester' as a hegemonic taxonomy and the notion of a visual vernacular more broadly, for instance, has been challenged by visual analysis which positions textiles centrally within comparisons with other media.

Textiles furnished the imagined England of the post-conquest eleventh century and continue to furnish the modern imagined England. However, the two must not be conflated. Visual analysis of eleventh- and twelfth-century textiles has a role to play in critically assessing these Englands and the manner in which they communicate. I sought in this thesis to demonstrate thus, though this study does not offer a singular or all-encompassing response. Indeed, this thesis perhaps leaves more questions than it proffers answers. I often felt as if each chapter could have been the subject of its own thesis, such were the conceptual possibilities presented by these textiles and the complex, shifting identities with which they were associated. Much work remains to be done to understand these objects. Further efforts to situate these objects in a broader Insular context, in particular, would likely prove productive. Cross-media comparisons with a greater range of objects would surely also lend further weight to the conclusions drawn in this thesis and present additional conceptual possibilities. Similarly, this thesis did not include mention of all the extant textiles dated to this period (largely for want of access owing to the Covid-19 pandemic). A comprehensive study would surely advance understanding of these objects further.

Race and gender cannot be perfectly mapped onto these objects, though they act as useful critical tools by which the visual analysis of textiles may still be brought into

conversation with the identities with which they are associated in some early medieval sources. This thesis draws no neat conclusions, however, there was no neatness to eleventh- and twelfth-century Britain and certainly none to textiles. Within this thesis textiles have been understood as fundamentally dislocatory objects: resisting the fixity of taxonomical categories, compressing time and space, implicating the bodies of wearers and makers in phenomenological understandings of the material world. There is surely no better material through which to acknowledge the complexities of shifting categories of identity in conquest-era Britain and the manner in which they have subsequently been motivated in modern and contemporary identitarian politics.

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APPENDIX 1
A NOTE ON TERMS

TEXTILES AND TEXTILITY

When this thesis describes 'textiles', it refers to the material category of objects which may include embroidered and/or woven elements. This thesis uses 'embroidery' and 'weaving' to refer to the specific techniques featured upon the objects described. 'Textile', where it is used, is not intended to imply any homogeneity between embroidered and woven works. Rather, its use seeks to acknowledge that these materials and processes co-existed in a material culture where they could feature on the same single object and within which they occupied a related position in the cultural imagination. The Bayeux *Tapestry* is referred to as such within this thesis, not because it is a tapestry (it is an embroidery), but because that is the name by which it is most commonly known.

Textility is as much the subject of this thesis as the extant textile objects themselves, and is a particular concern in the second, third, and fourth chapters. Textility should be understood to mean 'textile-like'. In some cases this denotes visual consistency, however, it should also be understood to imply a material and/or conceptual gesture towards textiles in works of alternative media. Such an understanding is informed by the definitions of two scholars: Anna Bücheler, who observed how shared iconography underscored shared material properties between books and textiles in early Ottonian manuscripts, and Tim Ingold, who defined textility within a broader phenomenon whereby the practice of making represented the mediation between human and material elements, allowing humans to weave

themselves into the material objects which form the world around them.[1] Eleventh- and twelfth- century textility too depended on material affinities between textiles and works of other media and similarly allowed the makers of textile objects to be thoroughly woven into the material culture of early medieval Britain.

GENDER/WOMAN/FEMINITY

I have sought to avoid any elision between woman as an identity, the experiences of individual women, the experiences of groups of women, and culturally constructed notions of femininity. Such are the totalising associations drawn between textiles, womanhood, femininity, and women in many of the art historical studies of this period that it is difficult to ascertain how these categories, objects, identities, and individuals relate to one another in the limited extant source material from eleventh- and twelfth-century England. In this thesis I have tried to be explicit about what the sources are actually citing, whether it be a mention of 'women', 'woman', or an individual with what is understood to be a woman's name. Gender refers to the social and cultural constructs that have been primarily assigned on the basis of one's sex. There is no fixed definition of gender in either early medieval or contemporary contexts and the constructed markers of a gendered identity are always in a state of flux. To be a woman likely meant conforming to a very different set of social and cultural norms in early medieval England than today. Nevertheless, 'woman' existed as a gendered identity in early medieval England, an identity which in some sources was related to textiles. An understanding of the individual women associated with textiles in the early medieval record may be viewed in the context of those sources which associate their gendered identity with textiles, but should not be allowed to contribute to a totalising association between women and textiles. This thesis ultimately recognises woman as a

[1] Anna Bücheler, *Ornament as Argument* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2019), 44; Tim Ingold, 'The textility of making', *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 34 (2010), 91-102.

gendered identity, individual women, and femininity as related but interdependent elements which have each been associated with textiles in early medieval and contemporary contexts. I have sought to evaluate how useful these associations are in framing art historical interpretations of early medieval textiles and in turn to evaluate how art historical studies of these objects may inform these associations.

RACE/ETHNICITY/ETHNO-RACIAL

Post-conquest England has often been understood through racialised terms. Citing Chibnall's description of 'Anglo-Norman England' as a 'multi-racial society', Thomas Hahn advanced that 'the incoherent, diverse, antagonistic populations that jostled each other on English soil provided a powerful incentive – for political leaders, lawyers, intellectuals – to imagine a larger community, and consequently race and nation circulate as precociously viable terms in the British Isles'.[2] It has additionally been noted that the earliest written accounts of the Norman conquest 'make striking use of race as a trope of difference', citing the descriptions of William of Malmesbury and Orderic Vitalis of 'mixed' ancestry two generations after the conquest, the latter describing the Normans as a race (*gens*), based on their common traits.[3] Use of *gens* has also been counted approximately one hundred times in William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum*, composed in the 1120s.[4] The most neutral potential translation of *gens* is 'people', however, 'race' does exist as a possible translation and there is some evidence for it also being understood as an ethnic identity, an issue of 'biological descent' as well as membership of a nation – *gentes* did not have to be 'immutable' and one

[2] Thomas Hahn, 'The Difference the Middle Ages Makes: Color and Race before the Modern World', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31.1 (Winter 2001), 1-38, 7 (citing: Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England*, 208, 211).
[3] Thomas Hahn, 'The Difference the Middle Ages Makes: Color and Race before the Modern World', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31.1 (Winter 2001), 1-37, 7 (citing: Marjorie Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984)).
[4] Robert Bartlett, 'Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31.1 (Winter 2001), 39-56, 42.

could have 'more than one ethnic identity simultaneously'.[5] In an essay on medieval and modern concepts of race and ethnicity (2001), Robert Bartlett cautioned against over extending written sources by a singular medieval author to a homogenous understanding of early medieval race and instead cautioned that any source only 'highlights a few of the issues and may serve as a kind of bridge between discussion of modern and medieval terminology'.[6]

This thesis understands race and ethnicity by their modern definitions: race refers to the grouping of people through perceived shared characteristics (be they physical or cultural), the resultant groups of which are then ascribed social meaning. Ethnicity is more likely to be self-defined and based on shared cultural traditions. Race looms large as a category in the historiography of studies of early medieval England and is therefore a category with which I was frequently forced to reckon in undertaking research for this thesis. There is little early medieval material which describes textiles, their production, and their makers in racialising terms. There is an enormous amount of historiography which does. This thesis offers no alternative definitions of race, in either a medieval or modern context. In identifying race in an early medieval context I accept Geraldine Heng's description of race as 'strategic essentialisms' (which can be both biological and socio-cultural) used to construct 'a hierarchy of peoples for differential treatment'.[7] Definitions of race within a medieval context are explored more fully in the introduction to this thesis, in addition to a more detailed exploration of race in relation to early medieval textiles. In much of the historiography of early medieval England, the words race and ethnicity are used interchangeably. Where I use 'ethno-racial' is it to indicate this sort of imprecision in the historic usage of these terms, which implies a belief in an ethnic and/or racial understanding of 'Anglo-Saxon' and

[5] Bartlett, 'Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity', 43-44.
[6] Bartlett, 'Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity', 44.
[7] Geraldine Heng, *The Invention of Race in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 3.

'Norman' as taxonomical categories, but which is rarely explicit about this understanding or critically rigorous about the use of these terms.

BRITAIN

Though this thesis' primary focus is textiles which were most likely made in England, and in many places it seeks to use these objects as a means of reassessing Englishness at this time, such a study inevitably has a stake within understandings of the broader archipelago of islands in which England is situated. Retaining Britain within the title of this thesis is an acknowledgement of this. I have sought to be considered in the use of England, Britain, and Insular, though it must be acknowledged that these words rarely do justice to the complexities of the shifting political and cultural landscape in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In no instance are they intended to act as visual categories which may be mapped onto extant objects.

INSULAR

'Insular' has been suggested as a possible alternative to Irish, Welsh, Pictish, or Anglo-Saxon and their 'disputed associations' which have led to these terms becoming 'highly charged both politically and racially'.[8] However, Nancy Netzer ultimately concluded that 'Insular' as a stylistic category serves only as a synthesis of these 'highly charged' associations, rather than a means of circumnavigating them.[9]

[8] Nancy Netzer, 'Style: A History of Uses and Abuses in the Study of Insular Art' in *Pattern and Purpose in Insular Art: Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Insular Art held at the National Museum & Gallery Cardiff 3-6 September 1998*, ed. by Mark Redknap, Nancy Edwards, Susan Youngs, Alan Lane and Jeremy Knight (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2001), 169-178, 169.

[9] Netzer claimed that 'In different contexts, various exponents of the style may be made to signify an imagined glorious past of a specific nationality, the triumph or superiority of one ethnic group or culture over another, a connection to the Roman or Celtic church, and/or the ultimate attainments of Christian spirituality. Although such interpretations of visual style depend on memory, they are as present-oriented as their written counterparts' (see: Netzer, 'Style', 176).

This thesis will use 'Insular' only to imply the geographical origins of those objects believed to have been made within what is now referred to as the British Islands and Ireland. It is not used to denote a stylistic mode or visual category, nor is it intended to imply any degree of cultural consistency across the diverse peoples who lived on this collection of islands in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In places 'Insular' is also used to distinguish the people already living in Britain in the eleventh century from those who came to reside in Britain from Normandy around the period of the conquest of England by William the Conqueror.

ANGLO-SAXON

In the original proposal for this project, written in 2018, I described wanting to trace the development of an imagery associated with 'Anglo-Saxon textile tradition' through the period of the Norman conquest. However, by the time I began research in September 2019, debate about continued use of the word 'Anglo-Saxon' had spilled beyond the field of early medieval studies to become the subject of widespread international attention.[10] This is not a thesis about historical or contemporary uses of the term 'Anglo-Saxon': it is not a defence of its use nor an attempt to devise an alternative term. This is a thesis about eleventh- and twelfth-century textiles, and what they can *do* for an art historical understanding of this period. However, the period in which these objects were produced spanned the period of the conquest, historically understood as the end of the 'Anglo-Saxon' age and which has been identified as an essential component in modern-day race-making.[11] Textiles and their associations with Englishness (in both medieval and contemporary contexts) are thus

[10] See 'Introduction', footnote 70.
[11] See 'Introduction', footnote 69.

significantly implicated within the discourse of the place of 'Anglo-Saxon' in the study of the early medieval past.

Where this thesis has used 'Anglo-Saxon' it is primarily in the citing other scholars' use of the term. The histories of and controversies surrounding this term are summarised within the introduction. This thesis does not use 'Anglo-Saxon' as either an identifier of peoples or an art historical taxonomy. 'Anglo-Saxon' instead exists within this project as a *historiographical* category, upon which various meanings have been projected in the histories of early medieval England.

NORMAN AND ROMANESQUE

The interchangeability of 'Romanesque' with 'Norman' in art historical studies of post-conquest Britain also brings its art historical applications into a conversation with a broader set of historiographical questions. The very notion of a 'Norman' people (whether these peoples be understood as a race, ethnicity, culture, or otherwise) has been the subject of significant discussion in scholarship: the 'ambiguity and elasticity' of the term 'Norman', to refer to such wide ranging groups as those living in Normandy from the beginning of the tenth century, to those of a wider diaspora from that area that identified as culturally 'Norman', or an elastic term which is indicative of an inescapable ambiguity and diversity within 'the Norman experience' has been noted, and there has long been scepticism around the existence of any Norman ethnic identity.[12]

[12] In her study of *The Normans in Europe* (2000), the historian Elisabeth Van Houts defined the Normans as 'the people of Normandy, the north-western province of France that came into existence at the beginning of the tenth century' (see: Elisabeth Van Houts, *The Normans in Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 1). Though Van Houts claimed that the Normans were largely unmatched in their writings, which she claimed espoused their 'pride and self-awareness' (and which she claimed were also reported by others), she did also acknowledge that debate existed around the 'Normannitas' [Normanness] of their own self-perception, both in Normandy and beyond (see: Van Houts, *The Normans in Europe*, 3, 9); the historians Keith Stringer and Andrew Jotischky, on the other hand, observed the complexity of attempting to identify 'Normans' within the available historical evidence and summarised the shifting and varied positions in the field of medieval studies: 'there is, of course, a price to be paid by resorting to imprecise terms such as 'Anglo-Normans' and 'Norman-French', or simply 'Franks' or 'French'; but their very ambiguity and elasticity

'Romanesque' has been observed to be 'generally, but not quite correctly' associated with the Norman conquest, so much so that in British scholarship 'Norman' and 'Romanesque' have been used interchangeably in the discussion of English art after 1066.[13] Originally adopted by nineteenth-century scholars to refer specifically to the ecclesiastical architecture of eleventh- and twelfth-century Britain and northern France which was perceived to emulate Roman architectural and sculptural elements, 'Romanesque' has since been widely used as means of describing European art more broadly in this same period.[14] However, the exact extent to which the 'Romanesque' may be understood as a continent-wide engagement with the art of antiquity has been debated in recent decades.[15] Though the term may therefore be appropriate for works where explicit references to Roman antiquity

do help to highlight the diversity of the Norman experience' (see: Keith Stringer and Andrew Jotischky, 'Introduction' in *Norman Expansion: Connections, Continuities and Contrasts*, ed. by Keith Stringer and Andrew Jotiscky (Routledge: London, 2016), 14-36, 16); Stringer observed: 'Since R.H.C. Davis first cast doubt on the notion of a 'Norman people' by problematising links between 'ethnicity' and peoplehood, further scepticism has been expressed about Norman identity in Southern Italy, for instance, and indeed about the plausibility of trying to capture a distinct and 'ethnic' reality at all' (see: Keith Stringer, 'Prologue' in *The Normans and the 'Norman Edge': peoples, polities and identities on the frontiers of medieval Europe*, ed. by Keith Stronger and Andrew Jotischky (London: Routledge, 2019), 17-112, 29).

[13] Zarnecki, *English Romanesque Art 1066-1200*, 15; Zarnecki additionally argued that this conflation was 'inaccurate and certainly ridiculous when used in such expressions as, for instance, Norman art in Burgundy!' (see: Zarnecki, *Further Studies in Romanesque Sculpture*, i). The art historian Andreas Petzold observed that the understanding of 'Romanesque' established by nineteenth-century scholars was 'in the manner of the Romans', then 'extended to encompass all media and generalised to denote the style of the period' (see: Petzold, *Romanesque Art*, 7); in his own scholarship Petzold defined 'Romanesque' as the art and architecture of western Europe from 1050 to 1200, though he acknowledged the erroneousness of its implication that Roman art was the primary influence on visual arts in this period (see: Petzold, *Romanesque Art*, 7, 11).

[14] In *Romanesque*, George Zarnecki acknowledges the difficulties in securely dating the 'Romanesque period', but describes it as extending from the mid-eleventh century (after a preliminary period of about fifty years) to the thirteenth century. See: George Zarnecki, *Romanesque* (London: Herbert, 1971), 5. Zarnecki additionally does recognise some variation between the Romanesque in different parts of Europe, but concludes that it had an 'international character' which 'knew no frontiers or national barriers; it was truly the art of the Christian West' (13). Andreas Petzold, in the opening of his chapter 'The Definition of Romanesque', claimed that 'For the purposes of this book, the term 'Romanesque' is used to describe both the art and architecture of western Europe from 1050 to 1200' with a preceding fifty years which acted as a preparatory period. See: Andreas Petzold, *Romanesque Art* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1995), 7. Linda Seidel claimed that the term was first used to describe architecture in France and England in the eleventh and twelfth centuries before the rib-vaulted buildings of the later twelfth century, and was then extended to contemporaneous sculpture. See: Linda Seidel, 'Rethinking "Romanesque;" Re-engaging Roman[z]', *Gesta* 45.2 (2006), 109-123, 109. In this Seidel claimed that the 'designator' of the term *Romanesque* was William Gunn, in a book published in 1819. See: William Gunn, *Inquiry into the Origin and Influence of Gothic Architecture* (London: Richard and Arthur Taylor, 1819).

[15] Linda Seidel argued that 'Romanesque' continues to be an appropriate term in some instances, on the basis of evidence for a 'substantive interaction' between extant Roman ruins and Romanesque monuments in eleventh-century Gaul (see: Seidel, 'Rethinking "Romanesque;" Re-engaging Roman[z]', 109).

can be established, this is not historically how it has been understood in relation to eleventh- and twelfth-century art in Britain.

There additionally exists in the foundations of 'Romanesque' (in its art historical application) some of the 'increasingly overt racial theories' of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries which may also be observed in the origins of 'Anglo-Saxon'.[16] 'Norman' and 'Romanesque' are thus both also weighed by down by that same sediment which clings to 'Anglo-Saxon', and by extension the material objects understood through the application of these terms as taxonomies.

Within this thesis 'Norman' is used to reference those people who emigrated to the Britain from Northern France in the period around the conquest of England by William the Conqueror in 1066. It does not imply a racial or ethnic identity, though the thesis will in places explore the extent to which early medieval sources refer to Normans in terms which may be understood as race-making, and consider how textiles are implicated therein.

In the context of this thesis, 'Romanesque' refers to that historical paradigm which has existed within the History of Art to refer to art in Western Europe from roughly 1050 to 1200, with its origins in references to Roman art and architecture in the art made in early eleventh-century Gaul. This thesis does not accept that there was any great unifying element to art within this (expansive) period and locale. Nor does it contend any essentialised connection between it and the Norman people or the Norman conquest.

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[16] The art historian Robert Maxwell observed how nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholars speculated as to the varying influences of different cultural forces on regional articulations of the Romanesque: Roman, 'byzantine', 'oriental', 'Northern' (see: Robert A. Maxwell, 'Modern Origins of Romanesque Sculpture' in *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, ed. by Conrad Rudolph (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006) 334-356, 335-6). In some cases, Maxwell observed, 'discussion occasionally tipped into explicit commentary on the race of nations', citing such scholarship as the 1901 work of Josef Strzygowski which included descriptions of the 'special innate qualities of the "Nordic" man' in the development of Romanesque art and the twentieth-century art historian, Henri Focillon's argument that Romanesque art was 'distinct to the West (*l'Occident*) and foreign to Germanic lands whose rudimentary arts reflected the barbarism of the people' (see: Maxwell, 'Modern Origins of Romanesque Sculpture', 336 (citing: Josef Strzygowski, *Orient oder Rom* (Leipzig, 1901); Walter Cahn, 'L'Art francais etl'art allemande dans la pensée de Focillon' in *Relire Focillon*, ed. by Matthias Waschek (Paris: Ecole nationale supérieure des beaux-arts, 1998), 27-51)).

THE CONQUEST

The conquest does not refer to a single day on a battlefield at Hastings in 1066. Though this thesis does draw from sources which were inspired by or make reference to William the Conqueror's successful invasion of England in 1066, it is primarily to contextualise some of the cultural changes which formed the backdrop against which textiles were made and evolving ideas of Englishness were constructed. 1066 is arguably more significant in *modern* notions of Englishness than the medieval. Cultural change in eleventh- and twelfth-century England was the result of several factors which included a number of conquests (including not just that of William the Conqueror but also that of the Danish King Cnut in 1016). Where this thesis uses the word conquest it should not be understood to imply a moment of monolithic cultural change, rather a broader period of change of which William the Conqueror's 1066 invasion and subsequent rule was a significant constituent part.