Litterae Florissae in English Manuscripts in the Late Twelfth/Early Thirteenth Century

Sara J. Charles

University of London, sara.charles@sas.ac.uk

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Abstract

This article examines a group of manuscripts produced in England in the late twelfth/early thirteenth century and compares their artistic penwork, particularly looking at litterae florissae and linefillers. Some of these manuscripts have already been linked by their decorated initials, and were thought to be produced in a workshop in Oxford. By looking closely at the style of flourished letters, it was possible to identify a precise standard of creating letterforms, further linking these manuscripts to one production centre in Oxford. English litterae florissae and linefiller styles have not received much academic analysis to date, but finding similarities between letter styles has the potential to provide further identification for manuscript production and workshop standards.

Keywords

Manuscripts, Medieval, Illumination, Oxford, Book production, Penflourishing, Linefillers, Litterae florissae, Manuscript Studies

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VOLUME 5, NUMBER 1

Yemeni Manuscripts Online: Digitization in an Age of War and Loss NANCY UM	1
Opening the Text in the Floreffe Bible (London, BL Add. MS 17738): From Ways of Seeing to Ways of Touching DOMINIC MARNER	45
<i>Litterae florissae</i> in English Manuscripts in the Late Twelfth/ Early Thirteenth Century SARA CHARLES	79
The <i>Durham Latin Prose "Brut"</i> to 1347 with a Continuation to 1348: A Nationalistic Chronicle of England and Its Manuscripts TREVOR RUSSELL SMITH	120
A Brief Introduction to Seventeenth-Century Military Manuscripts and Military Literacy LUCIAN STAIANO-DANIELS	142
 <i>Annotations</i>	
How Many Glyphs and How Many Scribes? Digital Paleography and the Voynich Manuscript LISA FAGIN DAVIS	164
In the Orbit of the <i>Sphere</i> : Sacrobosco's <i>De sphaera mundi</i> in UPenn MS Codex 1881 AYLIN MALCOLM	181

Reviews

Erik Kwakkel and Rodney Thompson, eds. *The European Book in the Twelfth Century*.

JOANNA FRONSKA 203

Paul M. Love, Jr. *Ibadi Muslims of North Africa: Manuscripts, Mobilization, and the Making of a Written Tradition*.

AMANDA PROPST 206

Jeffrey F. Hamburger, Robert Suckale, and Gude Suckale-Redlefsen, eds. *Painting the Page in the Age of Print: Central European Manuscript Illumination of the Fifteenth Century*.

GREGORY CLARK 210

Erik Kwakkel, ed. *Vernacular Manuscript Culture, 1000–1500*.

HANNAH MORCOS 214

Gaudenz Freuler. *The McCarthy Collection, Volume I: Italian and Byzantine Miniatures*.

BRYAN C. KEENE 218

List of Manuscripts Cited

223

Litterae florissae in English Manuscripts in the Late Twelfth/Early Thirteenth Century

SARA J. CHARLES

University of London

LITTERA FLORISSA IS THE term used to describe “a pen-flourished initial, usually composed of delicate geometric and foliate motifs.”¹ This pen decoration of enlarged capital letters in manuscripts occupies an area between script and art. At its most basic, it is merely a capitalized letter to indicate the start of a sentence; at its most complex, it can consist of elaborate swirls, intricate ornamentation, and contrasts of color. It occupies a visual space in between functioning, neat lines of text and highly skilled decorated and/or illuminated initials.² As this is an area that is somewhat understudied, it is worth explaining the terminology used to describe the different types of lettering that intersperses text on a folio. Rubrication is

1 Michelle P. Brown, *Understanding Illuminated Manuscripts: A Guide to Technical Terms* (London: J. Paul Getty Museum in association with the British Library, 1994), 81. See, e.g., British Library, Sloane MS 3098, fol. 1r, <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMIN.ASP?Size=mid&IllID=4127>.

2 For an example of a decorated initial, see Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 835, fol. 46r, <http://daten.digital-sammlungen.de/-db/0001/bsb00012920/images/index.html?seite=97&fip=193.174.98.30>. An inhabited initial is a decorated initial with animals or people, and a historiated initial is a decorated initial that features a particular narrative scene; see, e.g., London, British Library, Yates Thompson 15, fol. 20r, with David playing a harp, and David fighting Goliath in a decorated initial of the letter *B*, <https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMIN.ASP?Size=mid&IllID=5807> (accessed 5 May 2019).

the term commonly used in manuscripts to describe a title written in red, often inserted after the main text was written, which derives from the Latin word for red ochre, *rubrica*.³ Red was the most commonly used color after black ink (made from carbon or galls) and is found in most manuscripts, even those with very little other decoration.⁴ However, this term does not exactly fit the following article, which concentrates on the color and decoration of enlarged initials that are part of the sentence whole, rather than a separate piece of text. *Litterae notabiliores* is another term for enhanced initials, describing an enlarged capital that works as a visual aid to signify the syntax of a text, yet does not fully encompass the artistic flair applied to the initials that will be examined in this article, and therefore the term *litterae florissae* will be used throughout.⁵ *Litterae florissae* appear in many manuscripts in many different shades, red, blue, green, and a brownish-yellow (particularly in the twelfth century), often alternating with each other.⁶

This article will examine a group of manuscripts produced in England in the late twelfth/early thirteenth century that share similar decorative *litterae florissae* and linefillers.⁷ Nigel Morgan and Cynthia Johnston have linked these manuscripts on the basis of their similar artistic details in their illuminations, and this study hopes to build on their extensive research.⁸ As

3 Patricia Lovett, *The Art and History of Calligraphy* (London: British Library, 2017), 45. See e.g., British Library, Cotton MS Faustina A X, fols. 122v–123r, http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=cotton_ms_faustina_a_x_fs001r.

4 *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, Vol. 2: 1100–1400, ed. Nigel J. Morgan and Rodney M. Thomson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 82.

5 Brown, *Understanding Illuminated Manuscripts*, 81.

6 See, e.g., Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 4: The Dover Bible, Volume II, fol. 14r, <https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/fn354xs7634>, and British Library, Harley MS 624, fol. 94v, http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=harley_ms_624_f001v (accessed 5 May 2019).

7 Linefillers are decorative ink drawings that are used to complete a line where there is no script. They feature a variety of designs, such as geometric patterns, foliage, animals, and grotesques. See e.g., British Library, Egerton MS 1066, fol. 113v, <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMIN.ASP?Size=mid&IllID=7754>.

8 See Nigel J. Morgan and J. J. G. Alexander, *Early Gothic Manuscripts I, 1190–1250*, Vol. 4: *A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles* (London: Harvey Miller, 1982) (here-

far as this author is aware, there has not been a study that specifically examines the *litterae florissae* and linefillers of these manuscripts, and the purpose of this article is to analyze the stylistic features of the letters to ascertain whether one single style can be identified, and possibly one single workshop style. This identification of style has the potential to connect other manuscripts by comparison of *litterae florissae* and pinpoint more accurately the area of production. It could also shed light on workshop practices—for example, whether text, *litterae florissae*, and illuminated initials were produced together, or as a separate process. Scholars interested in quiring and the development of *mise en page* could also build on this research to provide further evidence of workshop development and practices. It could also provide further insight into workshop standards and networks in the thirteenth century. Table 1 details the manuscripts to be discussed.

Many of these manuscripts can be identified with Oxford during the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. As many scholars have noted, this period witnessed rapid changes in approaches to and methods of manuscript production as patronage and reading audiences shifted from monastic circles to urban centers.⁹ A significant change was the rise of the urban workshop

after *EGM*); Nigel J. Morgan, “The Decorative Ornament of the Text and Page in Thirteenth Century England: Initials, Border Extensions, and Line Fillers,” in *English Manuscript Studies, 1100–1700*, vol. 10, ed. A. S. G. Edwards (London: British Library, 2002), 1–33; Nigel J. Morgan, *The Munich Golden Psalter, Clm 835, Bavarian State Library Munich* (Lucerne: Quaternio, 2011); Cynthia Johnston, “The Development of Penflourishing in Manuscripts Produced in England Between 1180 and 1280” (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, Institute of English Studies, 2014).

9 Of particular relevance to the present discussion, see Christopher De Hamel, *The Book: A History of the Bible* (London: Phaidon, 2001); Chiara Ruzzier, “The Miniaturisation of Bible Manuscripts in the Thirteenth Century: A Comparative Study,” in *Form and Function in the Late Medieval Bible*, ed. Eyal Poleg and Laura Light (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 105–25; Jane Chedzey, “Manuscript Production in Medieval Winchester,” *Reading Medieval Studies* 29 (2003), 1–18; and Michael A. Michael, “Urban Production of Manuscript Books and the Role of the University Towns,” in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, Vol. 2, 1100–1400, ed. Nigel J. Morgan and Rodney M. Thomson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 168–93.

TABLE 1

<i>Manuscript</i>	<i>Place of origin</i>	<i>Date</i>
Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 835 (Munich Psalter)	Oxford	1200–1210 ^a
London, British Library, Arundel MS 157 (Psalter)	Oxford	1200–1210 ^b
London, British Library, Harley MS 2905 (Psalter)	Southern England	1175–1225 ^c
London, British Library, Royal MS 1 D X (Psalter)	Oxford	c. 1210 ^d
Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 10 (Gratian's <i>Decretum</i>)	Northern France or Southern England	1190–1200 ^e
Lincoln, Lincoln Cathedral Library, MS 147 (Psalter with gloss of Peter Lombard)	Lincoln or Oxford	c. 1175–1200 ^f
National Art Library, MSL/1916/404 (Lesnes Missal)	Oxford	c. 1200–1220 ^g
National Library of Scotland, MS 10000 (Iona Psalter)	Oxford	c. 1210 ^h

^aEGM, 68; Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, <http://daten.digital-e-sammlungen.de/-db/0001/bsb00012920/images/>.

^bEGM, 72; British Library, http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Arundel_MS_157.

^cBritish Library, http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?index=?&ref=Harley_MS_2905.

^dEGM, 73; British Library, http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Royal_MS_1_d_x.

^eCorpus Christi College, Parker Library on the Web, <https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/qx973nn9218>; Morgan, *Munich Psalter*, 241.

^fRodney M. Thomson, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Lincoln Cathedral Chapter Library* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1989), 113–14.

^gRowan Watson, *Western Illuminated Manuscripts: A Catalogue of Works in the National Art Library from the Eleventh to the Early Twentieth Century* (London: V&A Publishing, 2011), 63; *V&A*, <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1410794/missal-the-lesnes-missal-with-manuscript/>.

^hEGM, 76.

system which relied on complex, and often organic, networks among the many artisans involved in producing manuscripts. In Oxford, documentation survives of illuminators and scribes working together on Catte Street since 1190 that illuminates these networks, including those forged by family connections. For example, Peter the Illuminator and his wife, Sarah Bradfot, sold a tenement on Catte Street to Sarah's father, witnessed by

Thomas Scriptor and Roger Pergamenerus (a scribe and a parchment-maker, respectively).¹⁰ These records give an indication of how close-knit the book trade was, and may explain how a variety of Oxford manuscripts have so many different strands that bind them together; in such close quarters, manuscripts may have been passed from one workshop to another, or scribes and artists may have learned from each other as different relationships were formed.¹¹

It was in this period and context that the practice of *litterae florissae* started to develop its own distinctive style.¹² As Morgan has noted, the decorative penwork (including penflourishing and linefillers) featured in late twelfth/early thirteenth-century manuscripts (fig. 1) has been somewhat neglected in favor of the stronger visual impact of decorated initials.¹³ In her thesis, Johnston outlines the historiography of penflourishing as divided into two sections, with the first focusing on the technical forms of the decoration and how to categorize them.¹⁴ The only significant study on the developing styles of English penflourishing is by Sonia Scott-Fleming, but there are also works discussing European penflourishing by Jan Květ; Patricia Stirnemann; and Wolfgang Augustyn, Christine Jakobi-Mirwald, Christine Sauer, and Martin Roland.¹⁵ The second strand of historiography focuses on the use and function of penflourishing.¹⁶ Despite medieval

10 Michael, "English Illuminators c. 1190–1450: A Survey from Documentary Sources," in *English Manuscript Studies, 1100–1700*, Vol. 4, ed. Peter Beal and Jeremy Griffiths (London: British Library, 1993), 79.

11 See also Cynthia Johnston, "A Model Community? An Investigation into the Use of Models in the Work of William de Brailes," in *The Use of Models in Medieval Book Painting*, ed. Monika Mueller (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 89–109.

12 Kathleen Doyle and Charlotte Denoël, *Medieval Illumination: Manuscript Art in England and France, 700–1200* (London: British Library, 2018), 26.

13 Morgan, "Decorative Ornament," 1.

14 Johnston, "Penflourishing," 48.

15 Sonia Scott-Fleming, *The Analysis of Pen Flourishing in Thirteenth-Century Manuscripts* (Leiden: Brill, 1989); Jan Květ, "Kreslený filigrán v rukopisech XII–XIV století," *Památky archeologické* 34 (1924–25): 92–113; Patricia Stirnemann, "Fils de la vierge: L'initiale à filigranes parisienne, 1140–1314," *Revue de l'art* 90 (1990): 58–73; Wolfgang Augustyn, Christine Jakobi-Mirwald, Christine Sauer, and Martin Roland, "Fleuroneé," *Reallexikon zur deutschen Kunstgeschichte*, Vol. 9 (Munich: Institut für Kunstgeschichte, 2003), cols. 1113–96.

16 Johnston, "Penflourishing," 48.

FIGURE 1. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 835, fol. 43r, showing early English penflourishing.

marginalia being dismissed by scholars in most of the twentieth century as irrelevant or vulgar, in the 1990s Michael Camille drew attention to marginal ornamentation, applying post-deconstructionist theory that succeeded “in validating art-historical interest in marginal art.”¹⁷ In Chapter 2 of her thesis, Johnston explores the importance of early English penflourishing, charting its progression into the more familiar penwork that is seen by

17 Johnston, “Penflourishing,” 37–38, 48.

the mid-thirteenth century, for example in the workshop of William de Brailes.¹⁸

This article will focus mainly on the technical skill of early English penwork, drawing parallels between stylistic features of the *litterae florissae* and linefillers in the manuscripts. Where available, the vocabulary describing the penflourishing detail will be that employed by Scott-Fleming and Johnston.¹⁹ Although Morgan discusses initials in his chapter on decorative ornament, the focus is not on *litterae florissae*, but on the large illuminated initials, heavily decorated with tight concentric circles, white lions, and foliage typical of the late twelfth/early thirteenth century.²⁰ For a typical example, see London, British Library, Royal MS 2 A XXII, folio 15r.²¹ These initials are termed “Channel style,” as the relationship between French and English artists at this time was so fluid it is impossible to differentiate the country of origin, with many artists working and moving between both sides of the Channel. This channel style can also be applied to *litterae florissae*, as the initials share many similar features.

Decorated initials were a feature of manuscripts since the beginning of codex production, and during the early medieval period both Continental and Insular styles developed, featuring zoomorphic figures shaped into initials and the distinctive red dots surrounding capital letters found in many well-known manuscripts such as the Lindisfarne Gospels and the Book of Kells.²² It seems likely that large capital letters were added to provide visual orientation, especially at the start of Christianity, when the codex was an unfamiliar technology and reading was a new skill to many. They may also have acted as a memory aid, allowing readers to “stamp” the page image

18 Johnston, “Penflourishing,” 104–65; London, British Library, Add. MS 49999, fol. 6r, http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_49999_f006r (de Brailes Hours, ca. 1240).

19 Johnston, “Penflourishing,” 22–33; Scott-Fleming, *Analysis of Pen Flourishing*.

20 Morgan, “Decorative Ornament,” 2–10.

21 British Library, http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=royal_ms_2_a_xxii_fs001r.

22 See also the Book of Nunnaminster (London, British Library, Harley MS 2965, fol. 16v, http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=harley_ms_2965_fs001ar).

onto their visual cortex. At a time when books were rare and precious objects, access to material was not always possible, and therefore committing texts to memory may have been necessary.²³ *Litterae florissae* would have been especially useful for the new texts being produced for university students, such as Gratian's *Decretum*, a compilation of ecclesiastical law drawn up by a theology teacher at the University of Bologna in the mid-twelfth century.²⁴ The addition of glosses to expand on the central material required a more comprehensible layout, so scribes applied further *litterae florissae*, including colored and puzzle initials, mostly in red and blue, but sometimes green ink, to orientate the reader to relevant sections.²⁵

Decorative penflourishing also became well established during this period, with *jeux de plume* (penwork with elaborate and consistent structures descending from initial letters, mostly featuring red or blue tendrils extending from a central baseline with stylistic termini) in the *bas de page*.²⁶ However, while *litterae florissae* seemed to serve as a necessary location tool, the development of *jeux de plume* seems to have been more frivolous and exists as an addition to, rather than an intrinsic part of, the text.²⁷ In England in the late twelfth century, a different style of penflourishing developed with spray-like decoration; often with pointing-finger termini and fanflourishing (fig. 2). This burst of creativity, termed "early English style" by Johnston, seems to have burned itself out fairly quickly and was replaced by the more linear continental style (see Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 218, fol. 1r). In Cambridge, Sidney Sussex College, MS 101, the alternating red and blue *litterae florissae* can clearly be seen, as well as elongated incipit initials contained within tassel-like penwork, known as carpet letters. This

23 See Susan L'Engle, "The Pro-Active Reader: Learning to Learn the Law," in *Medieval Manuscripts, Their Makers and Users*, ed. Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 51–75.

24 Rosy Schilling, "The Decretum Gratiani Formerly in the C. W. Dyson Perrins Collection," *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 26 (1963): 27–39.

25 Johnston, "Penflourishing," 125.

26 Johnston, "Penflourishing," 125; see Cambridge, Sidney Sussex College, MS 101, fol. 91v, https://iconographic.warburg.sas.ac.uk/vpc/VPC_search/pdf_frame.php?image=00054136 (Bologna, late twelfth century).

27 Johnston, "Penflourishing," 104–65.

FIGURE 2. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 835, fol. 51v, showing pointing-finger flourishing.

style of *litterae florissae* originated in northern Italy, probably Bologna, and spread to France and England by the beginning of the thirteenth century.²⁸

Unfortunately, there is little information on the standing of the medieval producers of *litterae florissae*, seeming to occupy a position between scribe and artist. Manuscripts would often be passed on to someone else for *litterae florissae* once the text had been written; small guide letters left by the scribe are often visible, indicating the initial to be added. An excellent example of this can be seen in the Lesnes Missal (National Art Library, MSL/1916/404, fol. 191v). There are accounts of scribes and creators of *litterae florissae* being the same person, but it is unclear how common this was, and while there are some examples of the cost of penwork decoration, these are not common.²⁹ One surviving example of a manuscript commission comes from a roll belonging to the Royal Collegiate Chapel of St. George in Windsor, circa 1389, where the production of a gospel priced the scribe at 13s 4s, the corrections and coloured initials at 3s, and the illuminations at 3s 4d.³⁰ This gives an indication of the relative low value of colored initials compared to the scribe, yet on a similar pricing to the illuminations. The description of corrector and colored initials together seems to imply this would have been done by someone different to the scribe, although it cannot be ruled out that illuminations and colored initials were done by the same person (despite being priced separately). Scott-Fleming and Stirnermann acknowledge that individual penflourishers can be identified through their penwork, but generally align them with scribes rather than artists, which does not seem the case in this example. Anthony Ian Doyle also points out that penwork could be added at any later date, which adds another layer of difficulty when examining trends and stylistic features.³¹ However,

28 See, e.g., London, National Art Library, MSL/1980/72, fol. 4v (France 1175–1200) and London, British Library, Stowe MS 378, fol. 2r (England, 1200–1225), <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMIN.ASP?Size=mid&IllID=5160>.

29 Anthony Ian Doyle, “Penwork Flourishing of Initials in England from c. 1380,” in *Tributes to Kathleen L. Scott: English Medieval Manuscripts: Readers, Makers and Illuminators*, ed. Marlene Villalobos Hennessy (London: Harvey Miller, 2009), 65–72.

30 James M. W. Willoughby, ed., *The Libraries of Collegiate Churches*, 2 vols. (London: The British Library in association with the British Academy, 2013), 2:898–901 (SC349).

31 Doyle, “Penwork Flourishing,” 65.

certain developments in penwork can be identified, as moving into the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, *litterae florissae* develop tight beading around the edge and, particularly in England, have foliate designs rather than abstract motifs.³² Although of a later period, Lawrence Warner's work on the Chaucer scribes also highlights the problems in misidentifying scribal hands, yet he does acknowledge letter decoration as a useful tool for comparison between letterforms.³³

Litterae florissae

With the growth of manuscript production in the late twelfth century, particular letterforms, such as *Q* with a hanging tail and paraph symbols with an extended top line, become common features, and many letters such as *C*, *E*, *F*, *O*, *P*, and *S* become so formulaic it is impossible to analyze any stylistic individualism. Other colors are phased out, and the blue and red alternating initials become the standard. However, it is possible to distinguish traits of individual artistic style in some initial letters. Building on connections already made by Morgan from the group of manuscripts in Table 1, it is possible to further analyze letter styles to determine whether there are features common to those manuscripts, perhaps even identifying a certain "house style" practiced by a workshop in Oxford. The wide selection of highly flourished *litterae florissae* in the Munich Psalter (BSB, Clm 835) make it an ideal starting base to compare with other manuscripts, particularly letters *A*, *H*, *M*, *N*, *Q*, *T*, *X*, *U* and paraph marks. Despite the standardization of most letters during this period, the initial *A* seems to lend itself to artistic expression and therefore is the most interesting to analyze.

The Munich Psalter is a deluxe manuscript, richly decorated and finished to an exceptional standard. Morgan describes the picture cycle as "one of the most important in English medieval art." He identifies three

32 Doyle, "Penwork Flourishing," 66–67. See, e.g., British Library, Burnley MS 310, fol. 158v, <https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMIN.ASP?Size=mid&IllID=12375>.

33 Lawrence Warner, *Chaucer's Scribes: London Textual Production, 1384–1432* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 44.

Pointed-bar, fol. 93r.

Double-bar, fol. 60r.

Pointed-bar with shoulder, fol. 126v.

Double-bar with shoulder, fol. 157r.

Slanted-bar with shoulder, fol. 56v.

Curled-end with shoulder, fol. 56v.¹

1 This letterform occurred the most infrequently.

FIGURE 3. Style of initial As from Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 835.

artists involved in the artwork, with Hand A the most accomplished; Hand B also the artist of London, British Library, Arundel MS 157; and Hand C an inferior imitator of Hand B.³⁴ Morgan believes the artwork in the manuscript to have been produced in Oxford but does not discuss the *litterae florissae*. In the Munich Psalter, six different types of *A* are consistently seen (fig. 3).³⁵

These examples are seen all through the Munich Psalter, from the calendar all the way through to the Litany of the Saints, and even on a few

³⁴ EGM, 71.

³⁵ Vocabulary for letterforms by author.

FIGURE 4. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 835, fol. 31r.

added scrolls in the miniatures (there is a trademark flourish *A* on fols. 12r and 15v).³⁶ It is also noticeable on the gold incipit lettering on the Beatus page (fig. 4).

Two manuscripts have been linked with the Munich Psalter by similarities in figure style, ornament, and text: Arundel MS 157 and Edinburgh,

36 Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 835, <http://daten.digital-sammlungen.de/-db/0001/bsb00012920/images/index.html?id=00012920&nativeno=12>; <http://daten.digital-sammlungen.de/0001/bsb00012920/images/index.html?id=00012920&groesser=&fip=xdsydyztsxsxdsydxrsxdsydwxsydx&no=&seite=36>.

National Library of Scotland MS 10000 (the Iona Psalter).³⁷ When comparing Arundel MS 157 with the Munich Psalter, almost all *A* letterforms were found, with the exception of pointed-bar with shoulder and curled-end with shoulder.³⁸ Therefore, the links between Arundel MS 157 and the Munich Psalter are further strengthened through having the same style of *litterae florissae*. However, despite strong similarities between the two manuscripts, one obvious difference is the lack of the spray penflourishing in Arundel MS 157. Johnston attributes this to Arundel MS 157 being produced at a later date, when penflourishing had reached such a crescendo (as can be seen in Lincoln, Lincoln Cathedral Library, MS 147; fig. 5) that it had no further room to develop, and it faded out as quickly as it began. Although Arundel MS 157 does not have spray penflourishing, it does have pointing-finger and fanflourishing detail descending from the *litterae florissae* also seen in the Munich Psalter (see fig. 2).

Another manuscript Morgan linked with the Munich Psalter is the Iona Psalter. Unfortunately, the digitized manuscript is not widely accessible, but from the limited available images, the style of the *litterae florissae* are noticeably different. Examination of folio 37r, particularly of the letter *U*, shows a clear difference. However, some letterforms display some similarities with the Munich Psalter, such as *N*, although there are no stylistic features on *A*, so it remains uncertain.³⁹ Also, *Q* in the Iona Psalter is not the sharp wedge shape usual to the Munich Psalter, but it does have similarities to another manuscript, Oxford, Bodleian MS Liturg. 407 (see fol. 140r).⁴⁰ The addition of the hairpin flourishing is also something not seen on other penflourished manuscripts linked with the Munich Psalter, which may denote a later date.

37 Morgan, *Munich Golden Psalter*, 244.

38 See, e.g., fol. 81v (pointed-bar, double-bar and double-bar with shoulder) and fol. 43v (slanted-bar with shoulder) http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=arundel_ms_157_fs001r. Other letterforms were compared and noted; see Appendix A.

39 Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS 10000, fol. 57v, detail of *N* compared with Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 835, fol. 59v.

40 Bodleian Library, <https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/inquire/p/4a777ba5-a9a1-4d4d-b306-5e21ac80b232>.

FIGURE 5. Lincoln, Lincoln Cathedral Library, MS 147, fol. 15r.

Morgan has also noted that London, British Library, Harley MS 2905, has the same illustration and ornament features as the Munich Psalter and Arundel MS 157, suggesting they may have been illustrated in the same workshop by one branch of artists (the Oxford group), with another branch of artists working as another group who began a workshop in Winchester before relocating to Oxford (the Winchester group).⁴¹ Morgan has also linked the minor decoration of Arundel MS 157 with Harley MS 2905 and the Lesnes Missal, which were both compared to the *litterae florissae* of the Munich Psalter.

Harley MS 2905 is also a psalter, but with a different layout than the Munich Psalter and Arundel MS 157; written in two columns, it has thick parchment and less illumination, perhaps suggesting a less expensive commission. However, the *litterae florissae* are the same style, featuring the stylistic *As* and also the incipit initials seen in figure 4. Although the incipit initials are decorated in gold, it is still possible to distinguish them as a stylistic match.⁴² Another important feature is the pointing-finger pen-flourishing detail, further strengthening the idea that the person adding the *litterae florissae* was trained in the same style.⁴³ Interestingly, the calendar is by a different hand (fols. 1r–6v), and the style is easily distinguishable, with *As* that do not match any of those in the Munich Psalter. It is quite possible that this calendar was produced independently from the rest of the manuscript and bound together at a later date. The Beatus page is also missing from the manuscript.

Although there are enough examples of the initial *A* to firmly link Harley MS 2905 with the Munich Psalter and Arundel MS 157 (see Appendix A), the *littera florissa* hand demonstrates an additional style in

41 EGM, 74–75.

42 See fol. 84v, showing pointed-bar *A* and double-bar *A* (British Library, Harley MS 2905), https://manuscripts-france-angleterre.org/view3if/pl/ark:/81055/vdc_100056045764.0x00001/f176).

43 See, e.g., fol. 63r, British Library, Harley MS 2905, https://manuscripts-france-angleterre.org/view3if/pl/ark:/81055/vdc_100056045764.0x000001/f133.

this manuscript—unbarred *A*.⁴⁴ However, the thickened shoulder and flourish on the arm of the *A* is still identifiable with the previous *As*, and it may denote several *littera florissa* hands working within a characteristic house style. There is also an abundance of decoration around the initial letters, many with the pointing-finger flourish and fanflourish seen in the Munich Psalter. On one folio there is an example of a later added *littera florissa* that perhaps was missed by the original hand. The difference in style and color immediately jumps out as mismatched, so in this case, at least, a later added letter is clearly distinguishable.⁴⁵

The Lesnes Missal is thought to have been produced in Oxford for the Augustinian canons of Lesnes in Kent.⁴⁶ Examination of the initial letters in the manuscript did not reveal the same close matches as Arundel MS 157 and Harley MS 2905. The *M*, *T*, and *U* are not the same, and *A* lacks stylistic similarities. Yet there are examples of a stylized *A*, different than in the three identified manuscripts above but proof that this was a letter that lent itself to individual artistic expression.⁴⁷ Clearly, the Lesnes Missal had a different *littera florissa* style than the Munich Psalter, Arundel MS 157, and Harley MS 2905 group, despite being linked by artist for the minor decoration.⁴⁸ The decorated initials of the Lesnes Missal also seem very different from those in the manuscripts mentioned above, looking very sketchy and lacking the acanthus leaves with white highlighting and tendrils so characteristic of the Oxford group.

44 See fol. 36v, Harley MS 2905, https://manuscripts-france-angleterre.org/view3if/pl/ark:/81055/vdc_100056045764.0x000001/f80.

45 See fol. 65r, Harley MS 2905, https://manuscripts-france-angleterre.org/view3if/pl/ark:/81055/vdc_100056045764.0x000001/f137.

46 Rowan Watson, *Western Illuminated Manuscripts: A Catalogue of Works in the National Art Library from the Eleventh to the Early Twentieth Century* (London: V&A Publishing, 2011), 63.

47 See, e.g., London, National Art Library, MSL/1916/404, fols. 88r, 110v, and 188v, and <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1410794/missal-the-lesnes-missal-with-manuscript/>; for other examples of stylized *As*, see Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum 254, fol. 42v; London, British Library, Harley MS 5102, fol. 22v; London, National Art Library, MSL/1980/72, fol. 47r; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Auct. D 2 1, fol. 80r.

48 EGM, 73.

Penflourishing

The next group of manuscripts analyzed were those linked by the ornate pointing-finger penflourishes: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 10, and Lincoln MS 147. Both manuscripts have an undetermined place of production. CCCC MS 10 is a copy of Gratian's *Decretum* and, according to Morgan, has an uncertain provenance, falling into the Channel style category, although he links the figure style strongly with the Munich Psalter. Morgan dates it ten years prior to the Munich Psalter and suggests a southern England provenance, quite possibly Oxford, given that a growing university town would have had demand for legal texts.⁴⁹ A comparison with the pointing-finger penflourishes from the Munich Psalter and Harley MS 2905 display clear similarities.⁵⁰ More important, however, are the exact matches with letterforms, in the *litterae florissae* within the text and also with incipit initials attached to the decorated initial.⁵¹

These matching letterforms further strengthen the case for an Oxford provenance, although there is the possibility that the *littera florissa* hand was working in France at this time, considering that it was produced ten years earlier. If this was the case, it could mean this *littera florissa* hand developed an individual artistic style and then brought it to Oxford, although given the strong links with the Oxford group, it seems more likely to have been made there, with a trained group all conforming to the same style of *litterae florissae*.

The second penflourished manuscript is Lincoln MS 147, a psalter with the gloss of Peter Lombard. Again, its provenance is unclear, and although Lincoln Cathedral was a scholarly center in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, it had only a small library, with no detailed evidence for a scriptorium,

49 Morgan, *Munich Golden Psalter*, 242–43; *EGM*, 52–53.

50 See, e.g., Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 10, fols. 3v and 32v, <https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/qx973nn9218>.

51 Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 10, fol. 19v (pointed-bar with shoulder *A*), fol. 30v (slanted-bar *A*), and fol. 113r (pointed-bar *A* and double-bar *A*), <https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/qx973nn9218>.

Pointed-bar, fol. 40r.

Double-bar, fol. 27r.

Double-bar with
shoulder, fol. 3r.Slanted bar with
shoulder, fol. 40r.

FIGURE 6. Lincoln, Lincoln Cathedral Library, MS 147.

and it is quite possible that the manuscript was produced in Oxford.⁵² The penflourishing shown in figure 5 already displays strong similarities with examples from the Munich Psalter, Harley MS 2905, and CCCC MS 10, with pointing-finger and fanflourish detail. The *litterae florissae* examples in figure 6 provide further evidence of an Oxford provenance, with letterform matches closely linking it to the Oxford group.

British Library, Royal MS 1 D X, was the final manuscript examined for its *littera florissa* style. Although Morgan placed it with the Winchester group, he noted that it may provide links between the two groups (based on ornamental style and calendar entries).⁵³ Henry Graham placed the psalter at a later date than the Munich Psalter and Arundel MS 157 on account of stylistic development in the miniatures.⁵⁴ There are no pointing-finger penflourishes as seen in the Munich Psalter, Harley MS 2905, CCCC MS 10, and Lincoln MS 147, which may also justify a later date of production,

⁵² Johnston, "Penflourishing," 154; Rodney M. Thomson, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Lincoln Cathedral Chapter Library* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1989), xv.

⁵³ Morgan, *Munich Golden Psalter*, 242.

⁵⁴ Henry B. Graham, "The Munich Psalter," in *The Year 1200: A Symposium* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1975), 301–12.

but the champ initials make it very difficult to examine.⁵⁵ By examining other *litterae florissae* in the calendar and the incipit initials, however, some distinguishing features emerged. On folio 23r, the background of some initials have been left undecorated, showing the tail wedge of *Q* and fanflourish descending from *N*, which can be matched to the Oxford group *litterae florissae*.⁵⁶ Although fine definition is harder when working with gold decoration, there are at least three instances where a pointed-bar *A* can be seen.⁵⁷ There is also a clue in the calendar, where an unstylized *A* is given a fanflourish, almost as if the *littera florissa* hand did it out of habit. There are also examples of the unbarred *A* already seen in Harley MS 2905.⁵⁸

From these comparisons, it seems likely that this *littera florissa* hand was working in the same style as the Oxford group. Although other scholars have assumed a strong relationship between scribe and rubricator and/or the creator of the *litterae florissae*, in these manuscripts there does not seem to be a strong link between the scribes, based on careful study of the *g* letterform and the differing penstrokes for contractions and abbreviations.⁵⁹ The range of scribes employed would suggest that they were operating independently of the *littera florissa* hands, although in a close-knit environment such as Oxford, it is possible that they were produced close to one another.

There are other examples of penflourishing in manuscripts from this period, such as in the Westminster Psalter.⁶⁰ The styles of flourishing and

55 The later date of production is based on Johnston's theory that the early English penflourishing had exhausted itself by this point (Johnston, "Penflourishing," 148–65). Champ initials are gold letters on a red or blue background.

56 British Library, Royal MS 1 D X, fol. 23r, http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=royal_ms_1_d_x_fs001r.

57 British Library, Royal MS 1 D X, fols. 31r, 34r, and 47r, http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=royal_ms_1_d_x_fs001r.

58 British Library, Royal MS 1 D X, fols. 10v and 9r, http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=royal_ms_1_d_x_fs001r.

59 Scott-Fleming, *Analysis of Pen Flourishing*, 10; Patricia Danz Stirnemann, "Private Libraries Privately Made," in Rouse and Rouse, *Medieval Manuscripts*, 185–98. The Munich Psalter and Arundel MS 157 may be linked by scribe.

60 British Library, Royal MS 2 A XXII, fol. 163v, http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=royal_ms_2_a_xxii_fs001r.

litterae florissae are quite different from those found in the Munich Psalter, Arundel MS 157, Harley MS 2905, CCCC MS 10, and Lincoln MS 147, however, and the Westminster Psalter is thought to have been produced in St. Albans or Winchester. Nevertheless, it is a useful example to show that other styles were developing in other parts of the country, and that English penflourishing was a widespread practice, not just confined to the Oxford manuscripts.⁶¹ As these manuscripts are grouped into the Channel style, it might be reasonable to argue that many French manuscripts contain the same ornamental vocabulary, and therefore this was a popular style not confined to one area. After looking closely at over two hundred manuscripts from England and France, however, the differences in style become clear, to the extent of being able to notice further matches in *litterae florissae*. Appendix B shows the manuscripts that have the closest similarities to the Oxford group, with three French manuscripts in particular showing strong stylistic matches. They are copies of Gratian's *Decretum* dated to the last quarter of the twelfth century, but while Cambrai, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 0967 (0865); Troyes, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 103; and Douai, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 590, show some examples of the stylized letters we see in the Oxford manuscripts, they did not become fully developed and standardized like the Oxford examples. For example, a double-bar *A* and a slanted-bar with shoulder *A* appear on folio 3r of Cambrai, Bib. Mun., MS 0967, a double-bar *A* appears throughout Troyes, Bib. Mun., MS 103, and a variant of a double-bar with shoulder *A* features in Douai, Bib. Mun., MS 590, folio 3r. However, the French *Q* never developed the sharp, even tail wedge with the narrow gap between the bowl and tail that you can see in all the Oxford group manuscripts (e.g., Munich Psalter, fol. 91v and figs. 5 and 7), it has a shorter wedge, followed by the rest of the tail. This is largely true for all the manuscripts featured in figure 8. All other *Q*s look somewhat flabby in comparison to the crispness of the Oxford group.

Cambrai, Bib. Mun., MS 0967, and Troyes, Bib. Mun., MS 103, seem to share the same scribal, artistic, and *littera florissa* features. As well as identical

61 See also British Library, Stowe MS 378, fol. 2r.

A and *Q litterae florissae*, the top bar of the *T* is quite distinctive.⁶² Both of these deluxe manuscripts were produced in Paris and have been also linked artistically by Morgan to CCCC MS 10, adding further speculation to the production of CCCC MS 10. The stylized letters of the Oxford group are not repeated in any of the French (or English) manuscripts examined, however; the consistency of a strict formulation of *litterae florissae* and the repeated use of the pointing-finger motif suggest that these manuscripts were produced in accordance with a specifically taught house style. The artist of CCCC MS 10 may have worked in Paris, learning the artistic technique, and then trained in Oxford, learning the *litterae florissae* (or vice versa), but all evidence suggests that Oxford was the home of the *litterae florissae* we see in the manuscripts examined. This would provide an interesting area of study for those working on quiring and ruling, as perhaps further matches could be made to ascertain the point of origin. The similarities seen in the French manuscripts demonstrate how influences spread during this period—we can see the beginnings of this distinctive *littera florissa* style in northeast France, which was then adopted by an Oxford group that transformed it into a precise art.

It should also be noted that in all the manuscripts examined with the Oxford *littera florissa* style, there is rarely a standard, unstyled *A*. They are consistently decorated in the six styles described in figure 3 (or seven, counting unbarred *A*), which suggests a trained house style, almost like a form of branding or a trademark, perhaps by the most highly skilled at the workshop. This consistency has not been found in other manuscripts; there are plenty of stylized *As*, but they are interspersed with standard unstylized *As*.

In the examination of over two hundred manuscripts, two more examples were found of the Oxford group *littera florissa* style. The manuscript British Library, Royal MS 8 E IV comprises *Magnus Felix Ennodius, Dictiones, Epistule*, extracts from *Opuscula*, and some anonymous epistles. It has one illuminated initial on folio 1r, followed by the stylized *litterae florissae* on the first eight folios, corresponding to the collation of one quire. It is from the last quarter of the twelfth century and is believed to come from

62 See Cambrai, Bib. Mun., MS 0967 (0865), fol. 3r, and Troyes, Bib. Mun., MS 103, fols. 3r, 17v.

Rievaulx abbey.⁶³ Anne Lawrence-Mathers has noted how unusual this manuscript is compared with the other manuscripts produced at Rievaulx, in terms of vellum, rubrication, and initials, and suggests that it was written by a professional scribe.⁶⁴ It is unlikely to have been produced at a Cistercian abbey, as the illuminated initial on the first folio would have been forbidden.⁶⁵ It seems likely that this manuscript was produced elsewhere and somehow came into the abbey at Rievaulx, perhaps as a gift. The other quires of the manuscript feature a far less accomplished style of *litterae florissae*, as can be clearly seen between the first and second quires of folios 8v and 9r.⁶⁶ The stylized *As* can be seen on folio 1r (pointed-bar and pointed-bar with shoulder), folio 3v (pointed-bar), folio 5r (slanted-bar with shoulder), and folio 7r (pointed-bar with shoulder). The pointing-finger motif is also clear on the penflourishing on folios 3r–v, 4r–v, 5v, 6v, 7r–v, 8r–v. This single quire with an illuminated initial and stylized *litterae florissae* creates a far stronger link between the artists and the creators of the *litterae florissae*, suggesting that this first quire was separated from the main text block and passed on to the Oxford workshop before being bound. Appearing only in the first quire, this decoration would have been added to impress the reader upon opening the manuscript, and the fact that these stylized *litterae florissae* appear

63 It is thought to be the same copy that John Leland (d. 1552) listed in his *Joannis Lelandi antiquarii De rebus Britannicis collectanea*, 6 vols. (Farnborough: Gregg International Publishers, 1970), 4:38. In the British Library catalog entry, it is further linked to Rievaulx by scribal matches with British Library, Royal MS 8 D XXII, a manuscript known to have been produced at Rievaulx, but no similarities were found by this author. See http://searcharchives.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/dlDisplay.do?docId=IAMS040-002106375&fn=permalink&vid=IAMS_VU2.

64 Anne Lawrence-Mathers, *Manuscripts in Northumbria in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2002), 208–10; Anne Lawrence, “English Cistercian Manuscripts of the Twelfth Century,” in *Cistercian Art and Architecture in the British Isles*, ed. C. Norton and D. Park (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 284–98.

65 The Cistercians passed a statute ca. 1145–51 allowing only letters of one color, and forbade any use of images or crosses. They also forbade outer book decoration (ca. 1109–19) and gold or silver rubrics (1202) (C. Norton, “Table of Cistercian Legislation on Art and Architecture,” in *Cistercian Art and Architecture in the British Isles*, 315–93 at 323, 325, 345).

66 British Library, Royal MS 8 E IV, https://manuscripts-france-angleterre.org/view3if/pl/ark:/81055/vdc_100063228362.0x000001/f20.

with the decorated initial implies that the letters were considered to be a higher standard too, formed only by the highly skilled artists in the Oxford workshop. It also gives an indication of how this workshop operated; as well as producing decoration for whole deluxe manuscripts, it would work on separate quires for those able to afford only a small amount of decoration.

The second manuscript with the same style of *litterae florissae* was Hereford Cathedral Library, MS O.V.7, a late twelfth-century manuscript containing a gloss of the Gospel of St. John. Folio 2r has an illuminated initial *I* (fig. 7), very similar to the style of CCCC MS 10, folio 140r. The Hereford

FIGURE 7. Hereford Cathedral Library, MS O.V.7, fol. 2r.

Double-bar with shoulder, fol. 9v.

Slanted-bar with shoulder, fol. 10v.

Pointed-bar with flourish, fol. 21v.

Penflourishing, fol. 14r.

FIGURE 8. *Litterae florissae* from Hereford Cathedral Library, MS O.V.7.

manuscript also displays the pointing-finger penflourishing on this folio, and examples of the stylized *litterae florissae* can be seen in figure 8.⁶⁷ There is also a good example of the pointing-finger motif on folio 14r decorating an initial V.

Similar to Royal MS 8 E IV, the manuscript has only one decorated initial at the beginning of the book, followed by several quires of the Oxford

⁶⁷ Further examples can be seen on fols. 4v, 5v, 6v, 7r, 19v, and 22r.

style *litterae florissae*, before the letters morph into a different style (fig. 9). The text is also written by one scribe all the way through, again implying that the first quires were sent to a workshop to be finished to a high standard after being written.⁶⁸ The manuscript is thought to have been at Hereford Cathedral from early on, although there is no suggestion that it was produced there.⁶⁹ Both of these manuscripts are very similar in circumstance: they are both written by one scribe throughout (possibly a professional); they have only one illuminated initial at the beginning of the manuscript, with only the first quires in the style of the Oxford *littera florissae* with pointing-finger penflourishing; and the rest of the manuscript was completed with a lower standard of *litterae florissae*. This strongly suggests that artist and penflourisher (at least in this case) were much more closely aligned than scribe and penflourisher. It would seem that the Oxford workshop was creating beautiful illuminated artwork and a highly stylized form of *litterae florissae* that was unique to this workshop. The separate quires that were finished at this workshop imply that they were producing deluxe manuscripts in their entirety to wealthy customers, but also individual quires to those with more limited budgets, who could perhaps afford to splash out on a decorated initial. The fact that the Hereford manuscript has the first three quires decorated with the Oxford *litterae florissae* gives a tantalizing suggestion that initials and *litterae florissae* were priced separately, and that the commissioner of this manuscript could afford a bit more than the commissioner of Royal MS 8 E IV. The range of texts also suggests that it was not just wealthy patrons that employed the skills of the workshop artists for personal items of piety; at least three manuscripts went on to be used in religious houses (although it remains unknown whether they were actually commissioned by the religious houses themselves). It does, however, reflect the changing landscape of book production in the early thirteenth century.

68 The collation is A (4–6 canceled), 1⁸ (lacks 1), 2–10⁸, 11¹⁰. The stylized *litterae florissae* run from folios 1r through 23v, making up the first three quires.

69 R. A. B. Mynors and Rodney M. Thomson, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Hereford Cathedral Library* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1993), 34. However, further examples of the Oxford *litterae florissae* in other manuscripts may exist at Hereford, hinting at regular exchanges between the two.

FIGURE 9. Hereford Cathedral Library, MS O.V.7, fol. 54r.

Linefillers

Linefillers in manuscripts became popular in England from the mid-twelfth century, featuring a range of geometric designs, animals, and grotesques, ideal for filling up space at the end of the line in psalters.⁷⁰ The Munich Psalter provides many examples of the types of quirky linefillers seen in the thirteenth century (fig. 10).⁷¹

⁷⁰ Morgan, *Munich Golden Psalter*, 241.

⁷¹ It is assumed that the *littera florissa* hand was also responsible for the linefillers, based on the closeness of the penwork.

Pointing-finger (fol. 64v).

Fanflourish (fol. 74v).

Soldier merman (fol. 54v).

Grotesque (fol. 57r).

Swirls (fol. 52r).

FIGURE 10. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 835.

As with the *litterae florissae*, when Arundel MS 157 and Harley MS 2905 were compared with the Munich Psalter linefillers, it was fairly straightforward to distinguish similarities, but these motifs are fairly common to the period and do not necessarily denote individual artists.⁷² The Iona Psalter, however, although not from the same *litterae florissae* group anyway, can definitely be ruled out when comparing linefillers, as they display clear stylistic differences.⁷³

Unfortunately, CCCC MS 10 and Lincoln MS 147 do not have linefillers, so Royal MS 1 D X was the last manuscript to be compared. Although some strong connections were found in the letterforms with the Oxford group, further verification was needed to link it firmly with them. Again, it was difficult to draw an immediate connection, as Royal MS 1 D X contains far more geometric designs and seems to lack the originality and spontaneity of the linefillers in the Oxford group. However, similar patterns did begin to emerge. Folio 50v, line 18, shows the pointing-finger detail (compare with Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 835, fol. 64v); folio 29v, line 23, shows a soldier merman (compare with Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 835, fol. 54v), and folio 34v, line 5, shows a swirling motif (compare with Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 835, fol. 52r).⁷⁴

72 See, e.g., red grotesque on line 12 (British Library, Arundel MS 157, fol. 31r, http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=arundel_ms_157_fs001r) and blue grotesque on line 7 (British Library, Harley MS 2905, fol. 55v, <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMIN.ASP?Size=mid&IllID=21030>). Although there are so many stylistic features shared by the Munich Psalter and Arundel MS 157, it may be possible that the same *littera florissa* hand and scribe worked on both manuscripts, as well as the same artist (Hand B).

73 See, e.g., Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS 10000, fols. 37r and 57r.

74 See http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=royal_ms_1_d_x_fs001r. The soldier motif features regularly in the Munich Psalter, and as Walter de Lacy has been suggested as a possible patron, this could be a connection to him. De Lacy was an Anglo-Norman magnate involved in skirmishes in Ireland, and against King John. He was also a patron to the Augustinians. The soldier motif appears in the Munich Psalter (fols. 54v, 75r, 102r), Arundel 157 (fols. 84r, 113r, 114v), and Royal MS 1 D X (fol. 29v), and as they all have Augustinian connections, it is possible that de Lacy commissioned these manuscripts. M. T. Flanagan, "Lacy, Walter de (d.1241)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004, <http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/view/article/15864> (accessed 28 December 2016); Morgan, *Munich Golden Psalter*, 243–44.

Although these may seem like random doodles, comparisons of other manuscripts such as Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B.11.4; London, British Library, Egerton MS 1066; London, British Library, Harley MS 5102; London, British Library, Lansdowne MS 420; and London, British Library, Royal 2 B VI, show differing stylistic details in the linefillers.⁷⁵ However, the linefillers in Royal MS 1 D X do sit slightly apart from those in the Oxford group, so perhaps this shows a *littera florissa* hand practicing the Oxford style, but with a different artistic style in linefillers. This may also demonstrate the fluid relationship between artists and *littera florissa* creators (as Royal MS 1 D X was attributed to the Winchester group), where *littera florissa* hands could float between the different artists. As Morgan has previously said, this could have all happened within one workshop, and it further brings to life the busy working environment of book production in Oxford.⁷⁶ The range of material also demonstrates the output that may have been typical of an Oxford workshop—psalters, law books, and gospel glosses, creating luxury items for private devotion in the case of the Munich Psalter, student textbooks such as Gratian's *Decretum*, and piecemeal items done by quire.

Decorated Initials

Another interesting feature of Royal MS 1 D X is the extremely close relationship between the large and small initial decoration, adding further evidence that the *littera florissa* hand may have been involved in the creation

75 Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B.11.4, http://trin-sites-pub.trin.cam.ac.uk//manuscripts/B_11_4/manuscript.php?fullpage=1&startingpage=1; British Library, Egerton MS 1066, <https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8715&CollID=28&NStart=1066>; British Library, Harley MS 5102, <https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8758&CollID=8&NStart=5102>; British Library, Lansdowne MS 420, <https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8757&CollID=15&NStart=420>; British Library, Royal MS 2 B VI, <https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8793&CollID=16&NStart=20206>.

76 *EGM*, 73. There are also strong parallels in *littera florissa* style between London, British Library, Royal MS 2 A XXII, and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 10433, indicating another house style in London or St. Albans.

FIGURE 11. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 835, fol. 44v.

of the decorated initials.⁷⁷ Further examples can be seen in the other manuscripts examined, where the style of the decorated initials strongly mirror the *littera florissa* style (fig. 11).⁷⁸

The decorated initial *A* in CCCC MS 10 has the pointed-bar with shoulder form, which is immediately recognizable. The similarities between the initial *I* in CCCC MS 10, folio 140r, and the Hereford manuscript (see fig. 7) are also worth commenting on. The faces at either end of the decorated initial look of a very similar style and expression, and the coloring, with a red central panel surrounded by a blue border, and a central roundel with red border, is identical. Other features, such as the white lions and biting animal heads, are so ubiquitous in the Channel style that it is near impossible to note individual styles, as is also the case for the acanthus leaf decoration

77 See, e.g., initial *R*, fol. 103r, and initial *A*, fol. 129r (British Library, Royal MS 1 D X).

78 See also initial *A*, fol. 214r (CCCC MS 10, <https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/qx973nn9218>), and initial *M*, fol. 98v (British Library, Arundel MS 157, <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMIN.ASP?Size=mid&IllID=7511>).

with the white dots and white tendrils, yet these initials do bear a startling resemblance to one another. This further strengthens the idea that the skilled artists of the decorated initials also produced the *litterae florissae*, as demonstrated by the individual quires from the Hereford manuscript and Royal MS 8 E IV. Morgan has noted that the figures in CCCC MS 10, the color of the drapery, and the highlighting with white hatching are all features appearing in the Munich Psalter.⁷⁹

CCCC MS 10 continues to fascinate. Close inspection of the decorated initials shows almost all of them to be pasted in over the folio, but often with extensions of the letter that have been seamlessly matched up in both style and color on the original folio (see, for example, fol. 130v, bottom right corner, and fol. 204v, bottom left corner). The use of the *litterae florissae* on the pasted incipit initials still suggests the same workshop as the point of origin, but perhaps demonstrates much more of a “production line,” particularly for Gratian’s *Decretum*, which tends to have very formulaic decoration. This gives an interesting insight into the methods of a medieval workshop, where they might have been producing standard images constantly so they had a ready-made supply for more popular texts. It seems likely that these would have been merely the lead drawing, or the miniatum outline, which was then painted in, as the colors and outline continue so fluidly onto the folio underneath they must have been added at the same time. This gives an exciting insight into an aspect of manuscript decoration in a very busy thirteenth-century workshop.

This article has discussed the *litterae florissae*, penflourishing, linefillers, and decorated initials of a group of manuscripts, linked in various ways. Eight manuscripts were found to have the same style of *litterae florissae*: the Munich Psalter; Arundel MS 157; Harley MS 2905; CCCC MS 10; Lincoln MS 147; Royal MS 1 D X; HCL, MS O.V.7; and Royal MS 8 E IV. The Munich Psalter; Harley MS 2905; CCCC MS 10; Lincoln MS 147; HCL, MS O.V.7; and Royal MS 8 E IV were all further connected by penflourishes. The Munich Psalter; Arundel MS 157; Harley MS 2905; and Royal MS 1 D

79 EGM, 52–53. See, e.g., CCCC MS 10, fol. 283v, and Munich Psalter, fol. 67v.

X were all linked by linefillers, and the Munich Psalter; Arundel MS 157; CCCC MS 10; Royal MS 1 D X; and HCL, MS O.V.7, were all found to have similarities in the design of some decorated initials (although this area needs further investigation). The two manuscripts HCL, MS O.V.7 and Royal MS 8 E IV were found to have individual quires with decorated initials featuring the *littera florissa* style. The *litterae florissae* of all the manuscripts had exact matches to each initial letterform, and therefore it is suggested that it was the work of a small group of Oxford *littera florissa* hands, working to a precise standard. The *littera florissa* creators would seem to occupy the best of both worlds, where letterforms comply to a certain shape and style, yet there is still room for artistic freehand in the penflourishes and linefillers. From analyzing the penflourished manuscripts, the *littera florissa* hands appear to be more artist than scribe, working in a close-knit artistic environment in Oxford at the turn of the thirteenth century.

The deluxe psalters possibly owe their survival to their very nature, being produced as high-end items to be treated with care. However, the range of manuscripts—psalters, law books, gospel glosses, and the writings of Ennodius—signifies both religious and secular reading. The fact that two of the manuscripts were housed in religious institutions with scriptoriums also poses the possibility that religious scriptoriums were sending individual quires of their manuscripts to Oxford to be finished. The individual quires decorated in this style suggest that the illuminated initials and *litterae florissae* were priced separately, and although it is possible that artists and *littera florissa* hands had individual roles, they were certainly produced at the same workshop. It seems probable based on the decorated initials that there was an overlap of roles here, with the highly skilled artists producing both decorated initials and a strict style of *littera florissa* that is consistently adhered to, easily identified by the six styles of *A* and the crisp, tight wedge of *Q*. Although many other manuscripts from this period share the same ornamental vocabulary, this style from the Oxford workshop is consistent and distinctive from all others. *Litterae florissae* and linefillers have received little scholarly attention to date, yet they clearly have the potential to provide further identification for the production of manuscripts.

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Appendix A: Letterform Matches

	Pointed- bar A	Double- bar A	Pointed- bar with shoulder A	Double- bar with shoulder A	Slanted- bar with shoulder A	Curled- end with shoulder A	Unbarred A	Lower- case H	Rounded M
Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	✓	✓
Folios	31v, 56v, 59r	103v, 113r, 181r	48v, 53r, 56v	31v, 51v, 98r	56v, 59r, 65v			17r, 48r, 96v	15v, 97v, 98v
Lincoln, Lincoln Cathedral Library, MS 147	✓	✓	–	✓	✓	–	–	✓	✓
Folios	40r	3r, 27r		3r	27r, 40r (x2)			10v, 40r	5v, 9v
London, British Library, Arundel MS 157	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	x	x	✓	✓
Folios	31r, 45v, 60r	73r, 81v, 104v		20v, 35r, 81v	31v, 43v			30r, 45v, 98v	23v, 45v, 99r
London, British Library, Harley MS 2905	✓	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓
Folios	21v, 36v, 42r	22r, 28r, 49v				43v	7v, 177r, 177v	44r, 45v, 62v	9v, 25v, 178v

	Pointed- bar A	Double- bar A	Pointed- bar with shoulder A	Double- bar with shoulder A	Slanted- bar with shoulder A	Curled- end with shoulder A	Unbarred A	Lower- case H	Rounded M
London, British Library, Royal MS 1 D X	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	✓	✓	✓
Folios	31r, 34r, 47r	129r, 139v					9r, 30v, 34r	30r, 49v	9v, 10v, 29v
Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, CIm 835	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓
Folios	35v, 80r, 93r	51v, 80r, 130v	42v, 48r, 87v	42v, 49r, 51v	32r, 45r, 56v	48r, 56r, 56v		56v, 87r, 128r	48v, 56v, 120v
London, National Art Library, MSL/1916/404	x	x	x	x	x	✓*	✓	✓*	✓*
Folios						31r, 188v	31v	88r, 143v, 191v	11v, 110v, 191v
Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS 10000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Folios									

	<i>Rounded N</i>	<i>Q with spray</i>	<i>Q with wedge</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>Rounded T</i>	<i>U</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>Paraph</i>
Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 10	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Folios	15v, 29v, 168v		29v, 54r, 240r	91v, 131r, 240r	13v, 28r, 34v	15r, 134r	24r, 38r, 100r	17r, 29v, 31v,
Lincoln, Lincoln Cathedral Library, MS 147	–	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Folios		3r, 19v	3r, 10r, 13v	42v (x3)	42v	8r, 16v, 42v	43r, 57r	3r, 9v, 13v
London, British Library, Arundel MS 157	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Folios	27r, 37r, 38r		24r, 84r, 114v	32v, 41r, 44r	21r, 65v, 81r	38r, 60r, 85v	126v, 128v	31v, 44r, 125r
London, British Library, Harley MS 2905	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Folios	7v, 24v, 32v	16r, 18r, 32v	50r, 80r, 123v	7r, 29r	7v, 66v	24r, 67v, 123v	211v	81v, 103r
London, British Library, Royal MS 1 D X	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x
Folios	13v, 14r, 23r		23r	40r, 54r, 68r	12r, 17r, 18v	17r, 81r, 83r	137r, 139r	
Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, CIm 835	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

	<i>Rounded N</i>	<i>Q with spray</i>	<i>Q with wedge</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>Rounded T</i>	<i>U</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>Paraph</i>
Folios	81v, 88r, 139v	47v, 78v, 97r	48r, 81v, 97r	64r, 80r, 94v,	32r, 86v, 135v	32r, 45r, 47v	160r, 162v	77r, 120ar, 145r,
London, National Art Library, MSL/1916/404	✓*	x	x	✓	✓*	✓*	✓*	✓*
Folios	33v			86r, 99r, 110v	44r, 88r, 191v	11v, 33v	86r, 88r, 191v	110v, 142r
Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS 10000	✓	—	✓*	—	—	✓*	—	✓*
Folios	59v		59v			32r		32r

Where possible, at least three examples are given. Those marked with a dash (—) denote that the letterforms were not found from the images available, but cannot be ruled out completely.

* indicates that letterforms were not found, but not stylistically identical

Appendix B: Manuscripts with litterae florissae, 1175–1225

<i>Manuscript</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Text</i>	<i>Linefillers</i>
BSB, Clm 835 ***	Oxford	England	1200–1225	Psalter	Yes
Lincoln Cathedral, MS 147 ***		England	1200–1225	Psalter with gloss of Peter Lombard	
British Library, Arundel MS 157 ***	Oxford	England	1200–1225	Psalter	Yes
British Library, Royal MS 1 D X ***	Oxford	England	1200–1220	Psalter	Yes
British Library, Harley MS 2905 ***	Oxford	England	1200–1225	Psalter	Yes
Cambridge Corpus Christi College, MS 10 ***		Eng/Fra	1190–1200	Gratian's Decretum	
British Library, Royal MS 8 E IV ***		England	1175–1200	Magnus Felix Ennodius	
Hereford Cathedral Library, MS O.V.7***		England	1175–1200	Glossed gospel of St John	
British Library, Royal MS 2 A XXII **	Westminster	England	1200–1220	Psalter	Yes
British Library, Cotton MS Nero C IV **	Winchester	England	1150–1250	Psalter	
British Library, Harley MS 5102 **	East Midlands	England	1175–1225	Psalter	Yes
Bodleian Library, MS. Bodl. 284 **	Cirencester	England	1200–1225	Psalter	
V and A, MSL 1916/404 **	Oxford	England	1200–1220	Missal	
NLS MS 10000 **	Oxford	England	1180–1220	Psalter	Yes
Morgan MS G.25 **	London, possibly	England	ca. 1225	Psalter	Yes
British Library, Lansdowne MS 420 **	London	England	1220–1230	Psalter	Yes
Cambrai, Bibliothèque municipale, 0967 (0865) **	Paris	France	1175–1200	Gratian's Decretum	

<i>Manuscript</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Text</i>	<i>Linefillers</i>
Troyes, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 103 **	Paris	France	1175–1200	Gratian's Decretum	
Douai, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 590 **	France	France	1175–1200	Gratian's Decretum	
J. Paul Getty Museum, MQ 163 **		France	1170–1180	Gratian's Decretum	
British Library, Add. MS 54229 **	Canterbury	England	1175–1200	Glossed psalter	
BnF, Département des Manuscrits, Latin 7593 **		England	1175–1200	Isidorus Hispalensis, Etymologiarum libri XX	
BnF, Département des Manuscrits, NAL 1670 **	Canterbury	England	1186–1200	Psalter	
British Library, Stowe MS 104 **	Northern	England	1175–1200	Bede, Cuthbert	
British Library, Add. MS 40007 **	St Paul's, London	England	1195	Ralph de Diceto, Opuscula	
Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 75 **	East Anglia	England	1200–1225	Glossed psalter	
BnF, Département des Manuscrits, Latin 3888 **		England	1171–1180	Gratian's Decretum	
BnF, Département des Manuscrits, Latin 3884 **		Eng/Fra	1175–1200	Gratian's Decretum	
British Library, Royal MS 9 C III **		England	1175–1225	Gratian's Decretum	
British Library, Harley MS 46 *		England	1175–1200	Glossed Gospels of St Matthew and St Mark	
BnF, Département des Manuscrits, Latin 768 *		England	1176–1200	Psalter Latin and Old French	
Cambridge, Trinity College, B.10.9 *		Eng/Fra	1200–1225	Psalter	Yes
British Library, Royal MS 12 C XIX *	n. or cntrl	England	1200–1225	Bestiary	

<i>Manuscript</i>	<i>Origin</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Text</i>	<i>Linefillers</i>
Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B.11.4 *	Canterbury	England	12th century	Hrabanus Maurus, Commentary on Genesis etc.	
British Library, Royal MS 4 E IX *	Paris	France	1175–1200	Peter Lombard, Magna glossatura in epistolas Pauli	
British Library, Davis386 *	Paris	France	1200–1225	The Gospels of Matthew and Mark with Glosses	
Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 1186 *	Paris	France	1200–1225	Psalter	Yes
British Library, Egerton MS 2818 *	Pontigny	France	1175–1200	Benedict of Peterborough	
British Library, Add. MS 38687 *	Pontigny	France	1200–1225	Hrabanus Maurus	
British Library, Arundel MS 490 *	Sens	France	1175–1200	Gratian's Decretum	
Boulogne-sur-Mer, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 2 *	Sens	France	1175–1200	Bible	
Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, MS 1287 *	Sens	France	1170–1180	Gratian's Decretum	

*** exact matches to Oxford *litterae florissae* style

** close matches to Oxford *litterae florissae* style

* some similarities or interesting features