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THE RUTHWELL CRUCIFIXION POEM IN ITS ICONOGRAPHIC AND LITURGICAL CONTEXTS

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Abstract: The Northumbrian vernacular crucifixion poem is integrated with the iconographic programme on the eighth-century Ruthwell Cross. The first half of the poem is related to the panels on the first broad side. These reflect Roman lenten ceremonies for the catechumenate. The poem's stress on Christ's divine will and human courage may reflect the rejection of monotheletism at the synod of Hatfield (679). The second half of the poem is related to and completed by the eucharistic iconography on the second broad side. It reflects the emphasis on *traditio* in the catechumenate, the use of the kenotic lection Phil. 2:5–11 on the sixth Sunday of Lent, and the Roman Good Friday stational procession to Santa Croce in Gerusalemme. The cross is designed to be read sunwise (OIr. *dessel).* The poem's *incipit* is reminiscent of the prose collect for sext in the Antiphonary of Bangor.

Keywords: Anglo-Saxon poetry, Antiphonary of Bangor, catechumenate, Christ, Passion, *Dream of the rood,* eucharist, Good Friday, high cross, iconography, epigraphy, kenotic christology, Lent, monotheletism, liturgy Roman, Ruthwell cross, runes, sculpture, Northumbria.

1. THE SCHOLARLY DEBATE ON THE RELATION OF POEM TO CROSS

At the end of the middle ages, the Anglo-Saxon high cross at Ruthwell, Dumfriesshire, stood within the parish church at Ruthwell. It was seen in the church by an antiquarian, Reginald Bainbrigg, either in 1599 or in 1601. He sent a brief Latin description of the monument to William Camden. Some forty years later, the monument was badly scarred at the hands of Protestant iconoclasts. Enforcing an act of the General Assembly 'anent the report of idolatrous monuments in the Kirk of Ruthwell' (1642), they tore down the cross. Attempts were made to deface almost all of the panels: one panel, at the foot of the cross (on the side which probably faced west originally, and now faces north) was almost completely effaced. The crucifixion panel at the foot of the opposite side was also badly damaged, and the lower portions of the vernacular poem inscribed on the narrow sides of the cross were damaged beyond recall. The cross had originally been made from two separate blocks of red sandstone. The upper stone was pulled and hacked down, and in the process broken into at least four fragments. Of these, one (the transom of the cross) has not yet been found. The portion of the upper stone just below the transom had been broken into two pieces. These were reassembled in the eighteenth century: one of them had been

buried, and was discovered by chance by gravediggers. The lower stone was also knocked down, broken in two, and embedded (but not wholly buried) in the floor of the church. The Reverend Henry Duncan, minister of Ruthwell 1799–1843, had the lower stone and the surviving fragments of the upper stone brought together, and erected in a garden near the church, in the summer of 1802. In 1823, despairing of finding the missing transom, he had a local mason make one. In 1887, to protect the cross from the weather, it was brought back inside the church, and placed in an apse which was built on to the north wall to contain the monument.[1]

Even in its present fragmentary and defaced state, the cross is remarkable for the sculptural quality of its figural panels. These indicate that the sculptors had a deep familiarity with Mediterranean models (see pl I–III).[2] The cross is perhaps even more remarkable for the large number of these panels: perhaps, originally, twenty-four in all. The nineteenth-century transom probably corresponds roughly to the dimensions of the original transom; but naturally it gives no idea of what the iconography of the original transom can have been like. It seems likely that each side of the intersection of the cross was originally occupied by a roundel, and that each roundel was surrounded by four small scenes: one above and below the roundel, and one on each arm of the cross.[3] If this speculation is correct, there were originally ten small figural panels on the cross-head; and these ten panels were balanced by nine, or possibly ten, large figural panels on the broad sides of the shaft. Five large panels survive on the side which probably faced east originally (it is now turned to the south).[4] The lowest panel is badly damaged, but it clearly represents the crucifixion. On the opposite (originally west?) side, four panels survive. It is probable that a fifth panel originally existed at the base of this side, but it has been almost completely cut back to rough-surfaced, featureless stone, probably by the iconoclasts. Traces of a figure seated in profile, facing right, can perhaps be made out at the left of the base: Saxl (1943, 5 n 5) and Schapiro (1944, 238) tentatively suggested that the obliterated panel might possibly have represented the nativity of Christ, and that the traces represent the remains of a figure of the Blessed Virgin, seated in profile. So thoroughly was the panel obliterated that this suggestion must now remain speculative, although a point in favour of the speculation is that a nativity scene would be likely to have attracted the most eager attentions of iconoclasts in seventeenth-century Scotland. Counting this panel, the iconographic programme on the Ruthwell Cross would have consisted of twenty-four figural panels: ten panels on each broad side, and on the narrow sides four panels of inhabited foliage scroll (a panel on each narrow side of the lower stone, and a panel on each narrow side of the upper stone). On each of the broad sides, the five small panels on the cross-head would have been balanced by five large panels on the cross-shaft. It is clear that the Ruthwell community erected a cross with a figural programme which was remarkably, and perhaps uniquely, extensive for the eighth century.[5]

But a feature of the Ruthwell Cross which is if anything more remarkable still is

the amount of writing inscribed on the monument. Eight of the nine surviving large panels on the broad faces of the cross are identified by Latin inscriptions.[6] Seven of these Latin inscriptions are in majuscule script; the eighth, though it is also in Latin, is in runic letters.[7] Around the fine inhabited foliage scrolls on the narrow sides the designer left broad borders. The borders on the narrow sides of the lower stone have been inscribed in runic characters with a text in verse. With the possible exception of the texts of Caedmon's hymn in the earliest manuscripts of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History,* this is the earliest surviving text of a poem in English (the layout of the poem on the narrow sides of the cross is shown in pl I and II).[8]

The aim of the present paper is to analyse the structure and themes of this poetic text which, following David Howlett, I shall term 'the Ruthwell crucifixion poem'; and to enquire about the reasons which the Ruthwell community may have had for inscribing the poem on the cross in the way they did. This paper was prompted by a remark by Paul Meyvaert in a recent article on the iconography of the cross:

> It has been argued that the content of the poem is intrinsically linked with the conceptual theme of the cross as it emerges from the sculptured panels. I admit that while the runic verses appear very suitable for *any* cross, I can discern no compelling link between their content (and that of the 'Dream of the Rood') and the iconographic scheme presented by the Ruthwell panels. (25)

A survey of scholarly enquiry about the relationships between poem and cross suggests that the passage just quoted might more aptly have begun with the words 'it has been stated' rather than 'it has been argued'. Scholars have indeed expressed clear and strong opinions on one side or another; but no one has to my knowledge explained in any convincing way how the poem is linked with the iconographic scheme of the cross. Similarly, the scholars who deny such a link do so in such offhand terms that it is difficult to be convinced that they have seriously considered the themes and structure of the poem on the cross (for example, they often make no clear distinction between it and the *Dream of the rood).* Indeed, no one, since the fundamental but now dated papers of Fritz Saxl (1943) and Meyer Schapiro (1944), has argued that a single coherent scheme can be found in the iconography of the cross.

Schapiro began his article by quoting the opinion of G. Baldwin Brown (1921, 314) that the Ruthwell monument was erected to symbolize the triumph of the Cross. Schapiro remarks that Brown's 'interpretation is supported by the Anglo-Saxon verses inscribed on its side in runic characters, a poem of the *Dream of the rood* … '. To illustrate this point, Schapiro quotes, in translation, some five lines of the Vercelli poem (lines 33b–38: 'Then the young hero, that was God Almighty, stripped himself,/Strong and steadfast … '); and goes on: 'Yet when we turn from these lines to the sculptured images beside them, we find little that pertains directly to the poem' (Schapiro, 1944, 232 = 1980, 151). The lines Schapiro quotes are the

lines of the Vercelli text which correspond to the opening of the Ruthwell poem. But it is significant that Schapiro quotes, not the Ruthwell text itself, but the version in the tenth-century manuscript. It is clear that he understood the Ruthwell text, not as a poem in its own right, but simply as an extract from 'the poem, which is preserved in toto in the Vercelli codex' (Schapiro, 1944, 232 = 1980, 186 n 2). It is as if the Ruthwell text was invisible to him, obscured by the vivid heroic images of the later poem. As I shall demonstrate, there are decisive differences in wording, and hence in emphasis, between the lines of the Vercelli text which Schapiro quotes and the 'corresponding' opening of the Ruthwell poem. It is hardly surprising that Schapiro found little in the Ruthwell iconography to correspond to the poem he quoted: it was the wrong poem.

Frank Willett's article (1956–57), published over a decade after Schapiro's, shows a more sophisticated awareness of the distinctions to be made between the Ruthwell poem and the Vercelli *Dream.* He pointed out that 'the inscription has been used to correct the manuscript, and in some cases it seems to be rather better poetry … The style seems to be more compact than that of the Vercelli poem' (110–11). Willett looked on the poem as a composite text, with the dreamer, and the dream-vision frame, being a later addition: 'Originally there was probably only the speech of the Cross, the rest being added later. It is not inconceivable that the original poem was inspired by the Ruthwell Cross itself, and especially composed for inscription on it' (111). However, these interesting opinions were not backed up by any close examination of the Ruthwell poem's theme or structure. Rather disappointingly, the only theme of the poem to impress this scholar was 'the heroic nature of the Cross's speech' (111). It would seem that the *Dream* was here again exercising its magic, and that Willett, like Schapiro, was projecting onto the earlier poem those qualities of the later which have in modern times been most exhaustively admired.

Some scholars who have more recently pronounced on the relationship between poem and iconography have agreed with Willett that, as Cramp (1959–60) put it, 'the theme of the poem is well linked with the themes of the figure-sculpture' (12). What has been missing has been any attempt to justify such views in detail. Michael Swanton's edition of the *Dream* (1970) summarized the consensus of scholarly opinion on the Ruthwell Cross. He felt that

> it is no mere chance that we should find the *Dream* associated with a carefully planned theological programme. The artist of the cross clearly understood the poem to be an integral part of his conception, underpinning and augmenting his meaning in the sculpture (13).

But Swanton did not explain in any detail how the poem underpins the meaning of the sculpture. This failure to back up his opinions with fully-developed arguments leaves him, like previous scholars who felt as he did, open to the trenchant objection expressed by Meyvaert. By pointing out that 'the runic verses appear very suitable for

any cross', Meyvaert at one stroke disposed of the general opinions expressed on this matter by Willett, Cramp and Swanton. He performed the useful task of identifying an important problem on which scholars had felt it proper to have opinions, but had not thought it necessary to develop arguments to support those opinions. Any further effort to uphold the relevance of poem to cross must go much further than they felt the need to do.

2. IS THE POEM A LATER ADDITION TO THE CROSS?

Before turning to the text of the Ruthwell crucifixion poem, another problem must be considered: did the poem form an integral part of the cross from the beginning, or was it added later? Willett's opinion, that the poem was inspired by the cross, was part of a larger theory:

> If my suggestion is correct that the Ruthwell Cross inspired the poem inscribed upon it, it is not surprising that the language should be a little later than the cross. Moreover the poem is inserted upon the cross in such a way as to suggest that it was not part of the original design, but was added later (112).

This theory was necessary to Willett: he wished to date the iconography to the late seventh century (109), but was aware that philologists dated the runes to the first half of the eighth century (112). Cramp (1959–60, 12) and Eric Mercer (1964) argued that the cross was erected in the mid-eighth century. Both felt that the poem was inscribed on the cross from the beginning. Mercer dismissed Willett as follows:

> I consider that his is a desperate attempt to circumvent the philological evidence, but I admit that although his arguments are indecisive there is no argument that decisively refutes him. I think, however, that the long-accepted contemporaneity of cross and inscription at Ruthwell is not to be abandoned for a mere possibility. Even if it were there would still be no reason for putting the cross into the late 7th century, for it is anybody's guess whether the inscription was added six months or six years or sixty years later (270).

The next challenge to the contemporaneity of the cross and poem came in 1973, from R. I. Page. He pointed out that the runes on vertical borders of the lower stone were not set along the length of the border, but 'in a succession of short horizontal lines of two, three or four letters each'. Words are split up into arbitrary groups of two, three or four runes, in a manner that bears no relation to their sense. Page comments:

> This looks absurd and is maddeningly hard to read. So odd does it appear that I incline to think it may not be part of the original design for the cross, and to wonder if these runes were added by a later carver who had less command over the space he had to fill (150).

Page was quoted approvingly by Meyvaert, who added an appendix to his article in which he argued that the only explanation for the way in which the runes were inscribed was that they were added after the cross was already in position (26). He argued that the 'view of these runic verses as an integral and original feature of the cross' was based on two sorts of reasoning, 'theological and aesthetic' (25). We have already seen his rejection of the 'theological' argument: for him there is no compelling link between the content of the poem and the iconographic scheme of the cross. As an example of the 'aesthetic' argument, he quotes part of the following remark by Cramp, that

> even if one supposes the runic poem was inscribed to fill in the ugly wide margins (which would have to be left for reasons of symmetry on the narrow sides) there seems no convincing reason why they should have been carved in later There is nothing in the cutting of the runes, as Baldwin Brown and Blyth Webster first pointed out, to suggest that the inscription was a later addition to the cross, quite apart from the commonsense improbability of leaving the broad margins blank (1959–60, 12).

Meyvaert picks out the phrases 'ugly wide margins' and 'commonsense improbability' from this passage, and asks 'who is to decide what looked "ugly" to an Anglo-Saxon of the eighth century?'. Meyvaert's characterisation of Cramp's argument here as simply 'aesthetic' is perhaps a little unfair. Presumably, the point made by Cramp could be given objective backing by a survey of whether, and under what circumstances, margins equally wide were left blank in Anglo-Saxon sculpture of the same period. If similar examples are few or non-existent, it is reasonable to conclude that margins as wide as those around the foliage scroll at Ruthwell were not intended to be left blank by those who designed them-that they would have been considered unusual, and so indeed perhaps 'ugly'. This question needs archaeological treatment. It and the larger question, whether the layout of the runes necessarily implies that they were incised after the cross was erected, will no doubt be fully considered, in archaeological terms, by Cramp in her forthcoming account of the monument. But in picking out two phrases from the passage given above, Meyvaert manages to miss the main point Cramp was making: that even if the poem was added when the cross was standing, this does not provide any evidence as to the span of time between the erection of the cross and the inscription of the poem. As Mercer pointed out, it could have been six days, six months, six years or sixty years.

At present the weight of scholarly authority agrees with Paul Meyvaert's argument that the poem is a later addition to the cross. Professor Eric Stanley (1987, 385) finds 'Page's and Meyvaert's reasoning … wholly convincing' and, building on the idea that the poem is a later addition to the cross, argues on epigraphic and linguistic grounds that the poem could have been added to the cross in the latter half of the ninth or even in the first half of the tenth century. Further, he argues that the Ruthwell

poem is copied and abbreviated from a text close to, and not much earlier than, the Vercelli *Dream* (396–99).

Common to Page, Meyvaert and Stanley is the assumption that it would matter very little to the meaning of the cross if the poem had never been added to the monument. It is a short step from saying that the layout of the poem 'looks absurd and is maddeningly hard to read' to thinking that nobody at Ruthwell actually read the poem or cared much what it said. Meyvaert's opinion, that the runic verses appear suitable for any cross, implies that they have no particular part to play in the meaning of the Ruthwell Cross. In Stanley's endorsement of Page and Meyvaert there is a clear note of 'neo-grammatical joy'[9] at the freedom he now has to attend to the linguistic and epigraphical evidence the poem's text provides, unconstrained by other considerations. The debate on the relation of poem to cross has swung to a new centrifugal orthodoxy. There is now a new consensus: a group of good scholars agree that the poem is best understood in isolation from the cross.

I wish to challenge this consensus. I begin with the fact that, as Cramp put it, 'Ruthwell is a highly individual monument' (1959–60, 12). The Ruthwell poem is (like the Vercelli *Dream)* also highly original. If there is a consonance between the originality of the monument and the originality of the poem—if poem and iconography say similarly original things, or say commonly-held things in a similarly original way—then the likelihood is that they come from the same creative historical milieu. Meyvaert's hypothesis in itself provides no evidence that the poem was added considerably later to the cross. Stanley's paper provides a salutary reminder (particularly useful to art historians and archaeologists) of how inconclusive and flimsy is the epigraphic and linguistic evidence for dating: while on the linguistic evidence alone the poem could be dated to as late as the tenth century, nothing in the language of the poem positively excludes an eighth-century date. But even if any conclusive evidence *were* to emerge that the poem was added a generation or more after the cross was erected, the question, whether the poem was relevant to the cross, would still have to be taken seriously. It would then be necessary to enquire whether the people who added the poem did so by accident or in a fit of carelessness; whether the devotional concerns of the added poem differed from those of the original patron who had the monument designed; or whether, conversely, the poem shows that those who added it appreciated the iconography which already existed on the cross. Indeed, if any scholar were to show that half a century or more separated the erection of the cross from the inscription of the poem, then the question of the relevance of poem to cross would become more rather than less important. If a highly original poem was added to a highly original iconographic scheme fifty years or more later, and if it could be shown that the poem complemented the iconography, this would be first-hand evidence that a stable and intellectually lively community flourished for over half a century at Ruthwell. In that case, we would know that a later generation so appreciated the achievement of those who first erected the cross that they went to the

trouble of embellishing their predecessors' monument with an apt and remarkably original English poem. If the poem was indeed added later, then the poem, if original and if consonant with the rest of the cross, is a vital document recording the way the cross was interpreted by a later generation at Ruthwell: an important stage in the 'reception history' of the cross as a whole.[10]

The present paper does not directly confront the question of dating. It attends to preliminary questions, of meaning and structure, which have not hitherto been fully examined. It starts from Cramp's considered opinion, based on archaeological evidence, that Ruthwell is a highly individual monument. It argues that the key to the monument's individuality is the coherence between the unique iconographic programme and the unique poem found on the cross. It argues, first, that the Ruthwell crucifixion poem has a coherent structure and can be appreciated in its own right as a poem of considerable power; and second, that on the cross the poem and the iconography are complementary: each helps us to understand the other more fully. To the establishment of these two hypotheses the idea of the uniqueness of the Ruthwell iconography and poem is vital: it is likely to have been the very uniqueness and originality of the poet which made his poem, in various manuscript or oral versions, appeal to other audiences (such as the southern English, perhaps Kentish, community, c. AD 970, which included the scribe of the Vercelli Book, or the makers of the Brussels Cross in the early eleventh century).[11]

Page's remark, that the poem on the cross 'looks absurd and is maddeningly hard to read' forces us to enquire whether there can have been any particular reason why the carvers arranged the poem as they did. The designer of the Latin inscriptions around the panels on the broad faces generally made the inscriptions run across the top of a panel and down the right side; then the left side of the panel was inscribed and (in two cases, one of which is 'Mary Magdalen at the feet of Christ', where the inscription was particularly long) the inscription could be finished on the lower margin.[12] The parts of the Latin inscriptions on the vertical borders ran downwards, in a continuous text along these borders. The words which Professor Page used of the runes on the upper stone are applicable to these Latin inscriptions: they are 'cut sensibly, so as to run in fairly long text lengths along the borders they filled' (150). But the operative phrase here is *'fairly* long text lengths'. The Latin inscriptions are all relatively short, and as a rule they have a reasonable balance between text which runs from left to right (along the top and in two surviving instances the bottom margin of a panel) and text which runs in a single continuous line down the right or left margins of a panel. Such a balance between horizontal and vertical layout was not available to the designer who planned to inscribe the poem around the foliage scroll on the narrow sides of the lower stone. Even in its present defaced state, some 268 runes survive of the Ruthwell poem: this is by far the longest surviving single runic inscription from England. It is possible that the original poem had over 480 runes: if they were inscribed in vertical columns down the sides of the scrolls, each

column would have had, on average, 115–20 runes.[13] The designer may have felt that to inscribe each margin, practically the whole length of the lower stone, with a continuous row of runes laid at right angles to the onlooker's vision, might have had the Ruthwell community murmuring of cricks in their necks, or else of runes running up and down before their eyes. By adopting the solution he did, the designer at least ensured that all the runes of the poem were the right way up when the cross was erected, even if he sacrificed logical word-division in the process. As the margins around the foliage scrolls grow broader towards the bottom of the stone, the designer was free to chose when to change from two to three, or from three to four, runes per line. In this way he could use the space available to him in the most economical way, and at the same time keep the runes to a consistent size throughout the design of the border. By using short lines, therefore, it was easier for the designer to ensure that the area covered in runic script was aesthetically coherent. The designer of the Latin dedicatory inscription on the reliquary cross of Justin II (565–70) (sent as a gift to Rome in the sixth century; now in the treasury of St. Peter's) set out in a similar way that part of his inscription on the upright of the cross. He had to inscribe a narrow vertical strip which first grew narrow towards the intersection of the cross, then broad again towards its base. Like the Ruthwell designer, he split the words of his text, arranging groups of one, two or three letters in a series of short lines reading from right to left. Here, as at Ruthwell, the reader has to work to reconstruct the meaning of the inscription from letter-groups which do not always correspond to wordor syllable-divisions. On the other hand, the letters are consistent in size, and the reader does not have to bend his head sideways or tilt the cross to one side.[14]

The absence of any surviving English runic inscription as long as the Ruthwell poem suggests that the Ruthwell designer may have had no precedent available to him for his ambitious enterprise. Perhaps the fact that runic inscriptions are as a rule short, often enigmatic, and rarely susceptible of rapid reading or scanning encouraged him to divide the text on the long borders of the lower stone of the cross into a series of short lines, which could not be read off casually, but had to be chewed over and perhaps pronounced orally before they began to make sense. The space available for the poem presented the designer with a major problem: it is proper to recognize that his solution had considerable practical and aesthetic merits.[15]

3. THE POEM IN THE CONTEXT OF MONASTIC MEDITATION

Perhaps it is wrong to discuss the layout of the poem on the cross in simple evaluative terms like 'sensible' or 'absurd'. It might be more instructive to consider just who can have read those runes, and in what way. The runes are certainly not easy to read; if we ever had the illusion that a wandering pilgrim passing by Ruthwell might have read off the poem for himself, and gone on his way edified, we should relinquish it for ever. But if, instead of a casual reader, we try to imagine how the poem on the cross might have existed for a member of a community at Ruthwell, then the

picture changes somewhat. Presumably, part of the reason for inscribing the poem in runic letters was that it would have required readers to ruminate on the text at some length before it would yield its secrets. But monks or nuns who had (as St Benedict prescribed in his Rule) taken a vow of 'stabilitas' had, to put it mildly, time on their hands. The kind of reader who might not have found the text maddeningly difficult, in short, is precisely the kind of reader for whom the text is likely to have been intended: a permanent member of a community at Ruthwell who knew the monument from years of use, and who probably knew the poem off by heart from hearing it from other members of the community, from hearing it sung, or from reading some version of the poem in a manuscript. To such readers, the maddening layout of the text would not have been such a big problem. They would have been in the position of modern students of Old English who have an elementary but imperfect practical command of the runic alphabet: such students can make out the text on the cross without too much difficulty, because they already know by heart another version of the poem (the Vercelli *Dream).* But monastic meditation, at this period, essentially consisted of chewing over a text which one had got by heart so as to make of it food for prayer. The primary meaning of *meditari,* in fact, was 'to get by heart'; a text once read was retained by meditation, so that it could be used for prayer even when a monk was engaged in manual labour. This is the point of the advice given by Caesarius of Arles (advice incorporated by Defensor of Ligugé in his immensely popular *Liber scintillarum)* that 'you should devote yourself to reading and prayer, in such a manner as to be able, between times, to pursue manual work'.[16] For Anglo-Saxon clerics at Ruthwell, the runes are likely to have served their purpose well: to remind them, when they looked at the cross, to ruminate on a well-known text, perhaps composed by a member of the community. The runes would have given to such a well-known text a local habitation and a name, presumably in a prominent place within, or near, the monastic enclosure. The primary function of the runes would therefore have been mnemonic. A cleric at Ruthwell might, at one period in his or her monastic life, have given time to puzzle them out, or have got one of the community to explain them. Ever after, the whole text, or a whole *sententia* from the text, could have been called to mind by nine or ten runes read in sequence.

The layout of the text on the Ruthwell Cross, as well as the nature of the monastic life, precluded a member of the Ruthwell community from giving the poem a casual reading. The poem on the cross is divided up into clearly articulated (and, I shall argue, structurally significant) sections. The poem was divided into two by the major physical fact that it was inscribed on two opposite sides of the cross. Monks were trained to recall liturgical texts by means of *incipits* or opening phrases. It is therefore likely to be significant that the first words of each half of the poem run across one of the top margins of the lower stone: the *incipit* of each half thus entirely escapes the strictures of Professor Page, and is by no means maddeningly difficult to read. Each half of the poem was further subdivided into two manageable *sententiae* by the

physical fact of its layout on each of the two vertical margins of a narrow side of the cross. I use the Latin term *sententia* to denote both 'sentence, unit of meaning' and the monastic sense 'unit of spiritual meaning'; both of these senses of the term would have been perfectly familiar, in the context of devotional reading and meditation, to a monastic community, if such existed at Ruthwell.[17] Each of the four divisions is the length of a normal sentence, and each expresses a single connected thought. When a reader had worked out the meaning of any one of the four *sententiae,* he could have held it easily in his mind, in the way recommended by Caesarius of Arles, for ruminative meditation. Such separate use of an individual *sententia* in no way precluded a cleric from becoming gradually familiar with all four *sententiae,* and using all four, or any combination of them, for rumination. If this happened, then a monastic reader would have been in a position to appreciate that the four *sententiae* together form a single, deeper *sententia:* that they develop a single spiritual theme. Once he had realised this, a brief glance at the runes of a *sententia* would suffice to remind a member of the Ruthwell community of the relation of each *sententia* to the others, so that he could preserve a spatial as well as a verbal picture of how the poem on the lower stone of the cross formed a unity. (See pl I–II, where Baldwin Brown's drawings of the poem's layout are juxtaposed with photographs of the cross so as to show how the poem, and the iconography of the cross, may be read in sequence: W. G. Collingwood's drawings of the cross (1927, 84, fig 104), together with the text of the poem and the iconographic inscriptions, are presented in this sequence in Ó Carragáin, 1987b, appendix, 124–27, fig 1–4.)

It is important finally to note the way in which a connected reading of the poem compels the reader to imagine the text in spatial terms. Starting at the (originally) north side of the cross, the first *sententia* is inscribed across the top of the foliage scroll. This *sententia* then, logically enough, runs in a column of short lines down the right side of the scroll. A monk could then read the second *sententia* by moving slightly in a sunwise (or clockwise) direction, so as to examine, or remind himself of, the runic sentence which ran down the left hand side of the foliage scroll. Continuing his sunwise movement around the cross, the onlooker would pass the (originally) east side of the monument; and would find that the third and fourth *sententiae* of the poem were laid out in a similar manner on the opposite side of the cross. We have already seen that the Latin inscriptions on the broad faces of the cross imply a similar sunwise movement on the part of the onlooker: in general, they read across the top, down the right side, and then down the left side of the panels. Therefore, anyone reminding himself of the *sententia* or spiritual meaning of the cross as a whole would gradually find that the cross made sense when you examined its sides by walking with your right hand towards the cross, proceeding sunwise around the monument. This is a matter to which we shall return; at present it is sufficient to emphasise that it would have been clear to an informed onlooker, who had worked out the runes or had them explained to him, that the poem had a beginning and an end: that it began on the top

and right margin of the north side of the cross, and ended on the left margin of the south side. If such an onlooker were inclined to enquire whether the iconography of the broad sides of the cross likewise had a beginning and an end, it would have been logical for him to assume that the iconographic programme began with the east side (now facing south), which would have presented itself to his gaze when he had finished reading the first two *sententiae* of the poem; and that it ended with the west side (now facing north), with which, having looked at the second half of the poem, he might complete his meditative circuit of the monument.

4. THE IMPORTANCE OF HOWLETT'S ATTEMPT TO RECONSTRUCT THE RUTHWELL CRUCIFIXION POEM

It is odd that, as far as I am aware, no one has hitherto attempted a critical reading of the themes of the Ruthwell crucifixion poem as a poetic structure in its own right.[18] We have seen Schapiro quote from the Vercelli text as though there were no significant difference between it and the Ruthwell poem. Schapiro was by no means alone in this tendency. In 1958 Rosemary Woolf, in her seminal study of doctrinal influences on *The dream of the rood,* stated her belief that the *Dream* is, as we have it, a composite text (153 n 34). However, she by no means carried her views to their logical conclusion. At no stage does her article betray the awareness which she undoubtedly had, that there are differences between the Ruthwell and Vercelli texts; indeed, she twice quotes phrases from line 39 of the *Dream,* apparently without adverting to the fact that in one case the phrase she quotes exists on the Ruthwell Cross, albeit in a slightly different spelling;[19] while in the other case the phrase she quotes exists only in the Vercelli text.[20] It would seem that, when Woolf wrote this highly influential article, she believed on the one hand that lines 78ff of the Vercelli text were a later addition, and on the other that lines 1–77 could be dated without question to the age of Bede, so that no particular attention need be paid, even when arguing that early christology is reflected in the poem, to the Ruthwell text. It hardly needs saying that such a position, at once iconoclastic and reverent towards the authority and antiquity of the Vercelli text, lacks internal logic.[21] In 1970, Swanton in his edition still looked on the Ruthwell Cross as providing 'the lesser text of the *Dream of the rood'* (9). In short, the Ruthwell poem has been used simply as a quarry, from which evidence has been extracted to date the *Dream* as of the eighth century or earlier; and from which a missing word in the text of the *Dream* ('sorgum', line 59a, corresponding to line 12 of the Ruthwell poem) has been restored.

But this was, after all, natural. The lower part of the lower stone at Ruthwell is now badly defaced, and this means that each of the four *sententiae* on that stone has runes missing at the end. Thus all editions of the Ruthwell poem fade off into dots at the end of each *sententia.* It was only with Howlett's imaginative and scholarly attempt in 1976 to work out what the whole text of the Ruthwell crucifixion poem might have been like, that it was possible to imagine the shape and extent of the

poem. The words ‘imaginative’ and ‘scholarly’ are, for good reasons, not often found together in the literature on runes: in the preface to the best modern introduction to English runes, Page writes that

> In defining what we know about this scantily documented subject I have felt encouraged to allow my north-country scepticism full play, with the result that I may give too little credit to more imaginative, ingenious and perhaps romantic theories (1973, xv).

One cannot but agree; and one cannot but feel that among epigraphers the words ‘imaginative, ingenious’ and perhaps ‘romantic’ are all euphemisms for ‘unreliable, unsound’. It is necessary therefore for me to make clear why I attribute importance to Howlett’s reconstruction of the Ruthwell poem, and the use I have made of his reconstruction. Howlett’s reconstruction is nothing more than a series of educated guesses — guesses educated by a good knowledge of early Northumbrian dialect, and a careful calculation of what runes would actually fit in the space available. These guesses are themselves based on two unverifiable assumptions: first, that all the space at the foot of the cross was filled with runes, and second, what one might term ‘the Vercelli hypothesis’: that the missing half-lines were based on verses of which there is some equivalent in the Vercelli *Dream.* These educated guesses based on unverifiable assumptions are nevertheless important; and their importance does not at all depend on whether the guesses are right. Other reconstructions of the poem are possible, as I have no doubt that Howlett would admit. His exercise in scholarly imagination is important because it helps us for the first time to imagine in hypothetical terms the shape and themes of the poem. The value of Howlett’s study can only be fully appreciated if other scholars who possess something of his knowledge, meticulousness and ingenuity were to put forward different reconstructions (perhaps not using the ‘Vercelli hypothesis’?), so that we would get a fuller realisation of the possible options available.[22] But in the meantime Howlett has given us an idea, however speculative, of the sort of text that might have existed in these groups of runes. He has allowed us to begin to imagine the implications of that useful calculation by Dickins and Ross that there is space for thirty runes at the end of the first *sententia,* forty at the end of the second, eighteen at the end of the third and forty at the end of the fourth. We can realise, with a vividness which was previously impossible, that what is missing at the end of each *sententia* (assuming all the available space was filled) is not a text which might have gone on *ad infinitum* (as a series of spaced dots at the end of a sentence tends to suggest) but something between five and ten words.

Some of these missing words can be guessed with reasonable probability because at the end of each of the extant *sententiae* there is a fragment which seems to correspond to the beginning of a verse preserved in the *Dream.* If we can with some likelihood of being right complete these verses from the later poem, then Howlett’s

guesswork has been entirely responsible for composing *one* (half-line) verse at the end of each of three *sententiae* (the first, second and fourth). His guesses may be wildly wrong; but I do not expect that anyone can come up with a different set of three half-lines which drastically changes the meaning and theme of the poem as reconstructed. Howlett's speculations have an importance far greater than the question of whether they are right or just romantic: they point, as nothing else could, to the fact that *what is still extant or recorded* of the Ruthwell poem is so important, historically and poetically, that it deserves to be taken seriously as poetry, and that what it says should be thought about: a thing that, to judge by the published literature, had not happened before Howlett published his reconstruction of the poem, and has not happened since. In my interpretation of the Ruthwell poem, I have relied entirely on the verses which survive on the cross, or which can be guessed with some confidence because a fragment, corresponding to a verse of the *Dream,* still exists (I treat the latter category with caution, and point out when using them the fragmentary state of the extant text). Although I give all of Howlett's reconstructions, I do so between braces (thus { }). The three half-lines entirely composed (from the *Dream)* by Howlett, and which have no warranty on the cross, I have further distinguished from the extant text by placing in front of them the warning letters 'DH'; and I do not use those speculative verses in any part of my argument.

The Ruthwell crucifixion poem may conceivably be an original composition, intended from the first to stand alone and perhaps, as Willett suggested, composed for the cross. In that case, the Vercelli *Dream of the rood* should be seen as a manuscript version developed (perhaps through many stages) for 'private' devotional reading, as distinct from the 'public' text on the monument at Ruthwell. But the frequent occurrence in the Ruthwell poem of verses which do not combine with another to form alliterative lines perhaps makes it more likely that in it we have a series of *sententiae* extracted from a longer poem, rather in the manner imagined by Henry Sweet in 1885: 'the sculptor or designer of the Ruthwell stone, having only a limited space at his command, selected from the poem such verses as he thought most appropriate, and engraved them wherever he had room for them' (125).[23]' Although I now examine only the inscription on the lower stone, I am not entirely sure that the four *sententiae* on that stone were the only *sententiae* originally inscribed on the cross: as Page has pointed out,

> the upper stone sequence 'dægisgæf[.]' has been completed 'wœpdæ gisgæft' and likened to the phrase *weop eal gesceaft,* 'all creation wept', of the Vercelli poem, 55; but this theory remains unproven and probably is unprovable.[24]

The 'dægisgæf' inscription appears on the right hand margin of the (originally) north narrow side of the cross: above the beginning of the first *sententia* on the lower stone (see pl IIa). If indeed it once formed part of an additional *sententia,*

from a crucifixion poem which also existed in manuscript form, we may expect it to have been balanced by another *sententia* on the other side of the upper stone (see pl IIa).[25] On that hypothesis, six *sententiae* may once have been inscribed on the Ruthwell Cross, two on the upper stone and four on the lower. Leaving aside such unprovable possibilities, I shall argue that in the four *sententiae* on the lower stone a single *sententia,* a coherent meaning and unified poetic structure, can be seen; but I am perfectly well aware that if on the upper stone *sententiae* had been preserved or could be recovered, our understanding of those on the lower stone would be altered. The relations between the Ruthwell poem and the poem from which it may have been extracted, and those between the latter and *The dream of the rood,* are not my concern here. I will only remark that the way in which devotional texts in prose are expanded, cut and otherwise altered by monastic editors in Anglo-Saxon devotional *florilegia,* like the Vercelli Book, inclines me to find attractive the remark of Kenneth Sisam that 'the history that links these three survivals [the Ruthwell poem, the *Dream,* and the couplet on the Brussels Cross] must be one of movement and change that stretches the imagination' (122)[26]. The hypothetical existence of a poem from which the Ruthwell text was extracted should not discourage us from examining the Ruthwell text as a poem in its own right. If the Ruthwell text was edited from a longer text, the Ruthwell editor is likely to have known his job. The sixth to the tenth centuries were the golden age of *florilegia,* in which monastic editors gave to the *sententiae* of scripture or of the Fathers new shapes and a new life. The structure of the collection of private prayers which Bede compiled from the psalter, of Isidore's *Sententiarum libri tres,* of Defensor's *Liber scintillarum,* or of Alcuin's *De virtutibus et vitiis liber,* can be analysed and appreciated notwithstanding the fact that each work is made up of *sententiae* extracted from the more voluminous writings of earlier authorities.[27] Similarly, it is reasonable to examine the Ruthwell crucifixion poem as an independent poetic text. Once we do this, we shall find that in several ways the Ruthwell poem is significantly different, in theme and structure, from *The dream of the rood.*

5. A READING OF THE RUTHWELL CRUCIFIXION POEM

In each of the four *sententiae* on the lower stone a cross speaks of its own experience, or of what it saw on Good Friday. The *sententiae* are inscribed on a cross, and therefore for a monastic reader the speaker of the *sententiae* was clearly defined: they made the Ruthwell Cross speak, and speak of itself. They gave the stone a voice and a personality. As we shall see, the kind of qualities which a great stone cross might be imagined to have (such as immobility and steadfastness) are an important theme in the first two *sententiae.*

SENTENTIA I [North (now east) side, top and right border][28]

1 [+ Ond]geredæ hinæ ḡod almeȝttig [.] þa he walde on ḡalḡu gistiḡa
2 modig f[ore allæ] men
3 [buḡa] {ic ni dorstæ
4 DH: ac scealde fæstæ standa}

1 Almighty God stripped himself. When he willed to mount the gallows,
2 Courageous before all men,
3 {I dared not} bow
4 {DH: but I had to stand fast}

In this first *sententia,* Christ's decision to mount the Cross is contrasted, in the starkest terms, with the dilemma this poses for the Cross itself. The first clause of the *sententia,* in which Almighty God strips himself, cannot be read simply on the level of 'heroic' narrative: it has clear and important theological overtones. It presents Christ's action as an epiphany of his divine nature: it is 'God Almeȝttig' who strips himself here. The phrase 'God Almeȝttig' translates the Latin 'Deus Omnipotens'. Taken on its own, the phrase 'Deus Omnipotens' almost always refers to God the Father, as in the opening clause of the Apostles' Creed: 'Credo in *Deum* Patrem *Omnipotentem'.* For example, all the solemn intercessory prayers at the Good Friday service of readings began with the formula *'omnipotens* sempiterne *Deus',* referring to God the Father.[29] It is the human action described, 'ondgeredæ hinæ', which makes it clear that the person performing the action is Christ, the Son, rather than the Father. This first verse is an example of the linguistic device of *communicatio idiomatum* or 'interchange of the properties', found in the Fathers, and in particular in the 'Tome' of Leo I (his *Epistola* 28), as a way of expressing the hypostatic union in Christ of two natures, divine and human: 'while the human and divine natures were separate, the attributes of one may be predicated of the other in view of their union in the one Person of the Saviour' (Cross and Livingstone, 1978, 321–22). As Rosemary Woolf (1958, 140) has pointed out, the usual method was

> to attribute to Christ under a divine title one of the limitations of humanity: authority for this could be found in the works of St Paul himself, who had written in a much quoted text, 'If they had known it they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory (1 Cor. 2:8)'.

In the Pauline verse just cited, Christ's divinity is referred to by the noun-phrase 'Lord of Glory'; his humanity by the verb 'crucified': the essence of *communicatio idiomatum* is the paradoxical effect produced by bringing into close union references to divine power (in the object noun-phrase) and human suffering (in the verb). In the opening verse of the Ruthwell poem, Christ's humanity is referred to in the physical action of stripping; his divinity is referred to in the striking subject-phrase. Christ is seen as courageous ('modig'). He therefore has the power of will which in Old

English poetry defines men as noble. Christ, as well as being Almighty God, has a human will, which can be seen and admired 'fore allæ men'. It is necessary to spell out the implications of this last point. Modem readers are perhaps too apt to see any reference to bravery or courage as 'heroic' not to say 'secular' and 'Germanic'. Such a reaction may be anachronistic. An Anglo-Saxon poet, working in the only vernacular poetic tradition available to him (which of course drew its vocabulary from its aristocratic origins and patronage)would naturally have used a concept such as bravery to emphasise that Christ had a human will. In Old English poetry, if a man lacked courage or willpower (even though that willpower, *mod,* might drive him to danger and death)[30] the essence of his humanity was lacking. Therefore in using such images the Ruthwell poet may not have been primarily concerned to present Christ as 'heroic', but to present him as 'fully human', and in particular 'having a human will', in terms which made sense within an aristocratic poetic tradition. However, at the same moment as he affirms the humanity of Christ, the poet, by calling him 'Ḡod Almeȝttig', presents him explicitly as equal to, and of the same nature as, God the Father. Christ's act in choosing to ascend the Cross ('walde') was an act of the divine will as well as an act of human courage.

The christological idea with which the poem opens, that 'God almighty stripped himself when he willed to ascend the gallows, courageous before all men', was nothing if not memorable. While the first verse of the poem is, on the cross, marked off by a *punctus,* a cleric who used the text for meditation, 'memorizing it and ruminating over it, like some clean animal chewing the cud',[31] must in the process have 'repunctuated' the memorized text in various ways at different times. The opening verse demands to be seen, not only as an independent clause, but also in the context of the following verses. Taken together, the references to Christ in the opening lines were clearly suitable for separate rumination, as they expressed with the greatest economy the remarkable idea that Christ's courageous decision to mount the gallows of the Cross revealed his divine and human natures. While they present a vivid narrative action, the opening lines manage to be christologically profound. They link (i) two actions of Christ ('[ond]geredæ hinæ … walde'); (ii) Christ's willpower (the central human quality in Anglo-Saxon heroic poetry) embodied in these actions ('modig'); (iii) the physical setting and universal perspective of the act here willed by Christ ('on ḡalḡu gistiḡa … f[ore allæ] men': a central theme of the poem will be that Christ, raised on the Cross, draws all things to himself) and (iv) the divine nature and title ('ḡod almeȝttig'), revealed to all men through Christ's act. The opening reflexive verb ('[ond]geredæ hinæ') describes a human action which is also a divine epiphany. These opening verses are a profoundly successful poetic response to the tradition of referring to the union in the person of Christ of divine and human natures by the *communicatio idiomatum.* They present, in unpolemical and non-technical language which can be appreciated both as narrative and as theology, an important doctrinal truth. In other words, they are a perfect example of unobtrusive yet effective

catechesis.

It is historically interesting that the Ruthwell poem should begin with a catechetical narrative which emphasises that Christ's ascent of the Cross involved at once an act of the divine will and an act of human courage. Since the early seventh century, Rome had been faced with the problem of Byzantine emperors who held to the monothelete christological theory: that Christ had two distinct natures, human and divine, but only one will, the divine will which he shared with God the Father and the Holy Spirit.[32] The Byzantine emperors Heraclius (610–641) and Constans II (641–668) not only held this theory, but enjoined it on their subjects (including their subjects in Italy), and forbade other theories about Christ's will to be discussed or propounded. Pope Honorius I (625–38) wrote to Sergius, the patriarch of Constantinople, in terms which were interpreted in the East as an acceptance of monothelete theories. However, Honorius's successors, starting with John IV (640–42), rejected monotheletism as heresy: Honorius was to be posthumously anathematized at the sixth ecumenical council (680).[33] The monothelete controversy is particularly interesting as it brought about important developments in the philosophical and theological understanding of Christ's human will, and of the nature of human will in general. The chief intellectual opponent of monotheletism was Maximus the Confessor (580–662), whose importance and originality has only in recent years begun to be appreciated by historians of theology. Among the writings attributed to Maximus we find the earliest extant collection of definitions of Gk. *thelêsis* as a technical philosophical term for will (PG 91, 275–80). Although the definitions are there labelled as extracted from the works of a variety of earlier authorities, John D. Madden has demonstrated (1982) that such attributions are false. All earlier philosophers and theologians had avoided *thelêsis* as a non-philosophical term (though it was found in poetry and in the bible, and common in everyday speech). The definitions are likely to have been composed, and the attributions invented, by Maximus himself, in an effort to give an authoritative ancestry to a term which had just become of vital theological and political importance. Maximus was the first theologian to analyse in detail Christ's acceptance of the Cross as a fully free and independent human act of will, distinct from, though in accord with, the divine will which Christ shared with his Father and the Holy Spirit. This important theological development is fully stated, for example, in his *Opusculum* 6, PG 91, 65–70, dated as of AD 641.[34]

In 646 Maximus came to Rome from Carthage, and collaborated with Pope Theodore (642–49) in developing the Roman response to Byzantine monotheletism. Rome by now was taking a fully-developed duothelete position: that Christ had two wills, the divine will which he shared with his Father and the Holy Spirit, and also a human will. Thus, while every act of Christ was an act of the divine will in which Christ fully participated (so that Christ could say 'my meat is to do the will of him that sent me': Jn 4:34; cf. Jn 5:30) Christ also freely chose his own actions, and his

death, by distinct, fully human acts of will (thus, at Gethsemane, Christ could say in a supremely human act of courageous self-mastery over his natural human impulse to shun death 'not my will but thine be done', Lk 22:42; cf. Mt 26:39, Mk 14:36). Roman adherence to the duothelete position was solemnly affirmed at the first Lateran council in AD 649. As Bede put it in his *Historia ecclesiastica,* the Lateran council 'was chiefly directed against those who declared that only one will operated in Christ' (*contra eos maxime qui unam in Christo operationem et uoluntatem praedicabant*).[35] Rudolf Riedinger has shown (1982) that the original (Greek) text of the acts of the Lateran council was drafted by Maximus himself. The council gave dogmatic force to Maximus's major theological achievement, to bring into the forefront of discussion and provide an explicit analysis of Christ's human will. The Lateran council's solemn profession of faith added to the Chalcedonian profession a statement that Christ 'willed and effected our salvation at once divinely and humanly' *(utpote volentem et operantem Divine et humane nostram salutem).*[36] The statement has been justly described as the dogma of Christ's human liberty:

> En effet, au plan théologique, tout le poids de la controverse monothélite a porté sur la volonté humaine du Christ, et non sur la volonté divine, volonté de notre salut commune aux Trois Personnes (*eudokia*). En ce qui concerne la volonté divine, le Concile de Latran n'apporte rien de vraiment nouveau; il ne fait que rappeler une verite communement admise depuis la fin de la controverse arienne. Ce qu'on appelle généralement le dogme des deux volontés est ainsi de façon plus exacte, *le dogme de la deuxième volonté du Christ,* volonté humaine. Plus précisement encore, puisqu'il s'agit de la volonté libre de notre salut, on devrait parler du *dogme de la liberté humaine du Christ.*[37]

The Lateran council was a direct challenge to the imperial order that the problem of Christ's human will and energy should not be discussed. The emperor Constans II ordered his exarch or viceroy in Italy to arrest pope Martin (17 June 653) for his audacity in calling the council. The pope was exiled to Constantinople (where he arrived on 17 September 653), publicly flogged, and banished to the Crimea where he died of ill-treatment (16 September 655); he was later to be honoured as a martyr for orthodoxy and for the Roman church (the last pope to be revered as a martyr). Pope Martin's major theological adviser, Maximus, also gave his life (13 August 662) rather than accept the imperial prohibition against discussing Christ's human and divine wills. Pope Martin's exile from Rome had just taken place when Benedict Biscop and Wilfrid made their first visit to Rome (653).[38] Under imperial pressure a Roman cleric was consecrated as pope Eugenius I (10 August 654) to replace pope Martin, then still living in exile. But Roman clerical and popular feeling was very much in favour of Martin and his duothelete position: for example, clerics and people physically prevented pope Eugenius from completing the celebration of mass at Santa

Maria Maggiore until he promised to reject a synodical letter forwarded to Rome by the patriarch of Constantinople. The letter gave offence because it was ambivalent on the question of Christ's wills.

Without compromising Roman adherence to duotheletism, pope Vitalian (657–72) made strenuous efforts to settle the schism with Constantinople. It was during Vitalian's reign that Benedict Biscop made his second pilgrimage from England to Rome (c. 666). After a few months of study there, he left to become a monk at Lérins. When, two years later 'overcome once more by love of the Prince of the Apostles' Benedict returned from Lérins to Rome, Vitalian prevailed on him to give up his idea of living as an exile for Christ, and instead to accompany Theodore of Tarsus, whom the pope had just consecrated as archbishop of Canterbury, to England (669).[39] Meanwhile pope Vitalian had found opportunities to begin to heal the schism between Rome and Constantinople. He accepted the lavish gifts which Constans II made to the shrine of St Peter, and he received the emperor with elaborate ceremonies when Constans paid a state visit to Rome for twelve days in July 664, the last eastern emperor to honour the old capital with his presence.[40] In 668 Constans II was murdered in Sicily by his officer Mizizios. Vitalian organized the military and political opposition in Italy to Mizizios. The pope thus played a vital part in ensuring that the legitimate heir, the young son of Constans, was accepted as the emperor Constantine IV (668–86). Constantine duly responded to the support he had received from the papacy, after first establishing his military and political authority in the empire. He suggested to pope Donus (676–78) that Rome and Constantinople should open discussions on christological problems, and implied that he himself no longer supported the monothelete heresy. Pope Donus died before the imperial messengers reached Rome. His successor, pope Agatho (678–81) welcomed the imperial offer of reconciliation. He ordered the churches of the West to discuss the matter and to send their conclusions to Rome; the responses of the Western churches were to form part of a considered Western reply to the emperor. The Western statement was finally ratified at a council held at Rome at Easter 680 and forwarded to Constantinople: St Wilfrid sat among the one hundred and twenty-five bishops who attended this Roman council (HE v 19).

The preliminary English council, held at Hatfield in September 679 and presided over by archbishop Theodore of Canterbury, therefore had before it a christological issue with important implications for future relations between eastern and western christianity. It is important to realise that the primary reason for holding the council of Hatfield was the papal desire to present a series of coordinated statements of the adherence of the Western church to the duothelete position, as part of the preparations for the sixth ecumenical council (held in Constantinople in 680–81) which was to reject monotheletism as a heresy. Pope Agatho sent no less a person than John, the archicantor or precentor of St Peter's on the Vatican, to represent him at this council. There were liturgical as well as christological factors involved in the papal choice

of John as legate. In 678–79 Benedict Biscop had made his fifth visit to Rome (his fourth journey from Britain to Rome). Benedict was accompanied on this fifth visit by Ceolfrid who was to succeed him as abbot of Monkwearmouth-Jarrow. John the archicantor went to England in their company. Apart from his desire to get ecclesiastical privileges from the pope for the monastery at Wearmouth which he had recently founded (674), Benedict Biscop's most pressing need was to ensure that the liturgy was properly performed there. Bede states that it was precisely because of this that pope Vitalian at Benedict's request chose John to represent the papacy at the council of Hatfield.[41] Benedict must have considered that abbot John, as the monk in charge of the liturgy performed at St Peter's body, would be the most suitable person in all christendom to establish an authentic liturgical tradition in the monastery which he himself had founded 'in honore beatissimi apostolorum principis Petri' on the north bank of the Wear.[42] Thus Benedict Biscop ensured that during his visit to Northumbria John should

> teach the monks of his monastery the mode of chanting throughout the year as it was practised at St Peter's in Rome. Abbot John carried out the pope's instructions and taught the cantors of the monastery the order and manner of singing and reading aloud and also committed to writing all things necessary for the celebration of festal days throughout the whole year; these writings have been preserved to this day in the monastery and copies have now been made by many others elsewhere. Not only did John instruct the brothers in this monastery, but all who had any skill in singing flocked in from almost all the monasteries in the kingdom to hear him, and he had many invitations to teach elsewhere.[43]

John brought with him the decrees of the Lateran council of 649, and a copy of these was made at Wearmouth. These decrees were formally accepted at the council of Hatfield, which was using the language of the first Lateran canon when it affirmed the orthodox dogma of the Trinity, 'one God in three substances or consubstantial persons equal in glory and honour'.[44] In reiterating the very words of the theological statement for which pope Martin had suffered martyrdom twenty-four years before, the council of Hatfield was not only affirming its adherence to orthodoxy: it was also affirming its solidarity with Rome at a moment when Rome was on the point of having its own position accepted by Constantinople. We may reasonably assume that Benedict Biscop and Wilfrid, who must still have remembered the tense atmosphere of Rome during their first youthful visit in the aftermath of the violent events of June 653, would have been aware that the decisions of the council of Hatfield were helping to close (in a manner favourable to the Roman see and the Western church) a dispute between Rome and Constantinople which had split christianity for most of their adult lives.

Although monotheletism was rejected at the sixth ecumenical council held the

next year, the heresy must have been a living issue well into the eighth century for any Northumbrian clerics aware of how vital for the unity of the church was a correct understanding of Christ's human will. Bede demonstrates a keen interest in the controversy.[45] His interest cannot merely have been that of an historian: monotheletism was still an actual or potential threat to the unity of christianity in the first half of the eighth century. The emperor Philippicus Bardanes (711–13) was a fanatical monothelete: he rejected the sixth ecumenical council and tried to enforce his position on pope Constantine (708–15). When pope Constantine rejected the imperial order to accept monotheletism, Bardanes attempted a re-enactment of the way the emperor Constans II had punished pope Martin sixty years before. Bardanes sent his exarch in Italy to bring the pope to heel, causing riots and bloodshed in the city of Rome; the violence was ended only when the news arrived that Bardanes himself had been deposed (June 713). Bardanes was to be the last monothelete emperor, but for contemporaries without the benefit of hindsight monotheletism can hardly have suddenly become a dead issue when Bardanes was overthrown. Some considerable time must have elapsed before western clerics could be sure that the question of Christ's human will would not lead to further strife between emperor and pope, or to renewed schism between Rome and Constantinople. It would seem reasonable to speculate that the monothelete schism may have helped to create a sharpened awareness among Northumbrian clerics that Christ not only participated fully in all acts of the divine will (this fact no one in the period disputed) but also operated by means of fully human acts of will (the truth in defence of which Martin and Maximus had given their lives). Such members of the audience as were theologically aware, and concerned for the wider unity of the christian church in east and west, are likely to have given an appreciative reception to a vernacular poet of the late seventh or early eighth centuries who emphasised that Christ's decision to choose his death on the Cross involved at once an act of the divine will and an act of human courage.

Most modern readers, when they come to the Ruthwell crucifixion poem, are already familiar with another recension, the tenth-century text of the *Dream.* They thus find it difficult to respond to the Ruthwell poem as an independent text. But the lines in the Vercelli poem which incorporate this first Ruthwell *sententia* produce an effect which differs in important ways from that produced by the Ruthwell *sententia* itself:

> Ongyrede hine þa geong hæleð, (þæt wæs God ælmihtig),
> strang ond stiðmod; gestah he on gealgan heanne,
> modig on manigra gesyhðe, þa he walde mancyn lysan. (39–41)[46]
>
> The young hero stripped himself (it was God Almighty),
> strong and resolute; he mounted on the high gallows,
> courageous in the sight of many, as he willed to free mankind.

In the *Dream,* the theme of divine epiphany, central to the Ruthwell *sententia,* is reduced (line 39b) to what could be termed a parenthesis-indeed, that is the way the most widely-used modern editions punctuate it.[47] Other concerns, not found in the Ruthwell *sententia,* are important in the Vercelli poem. The most striking difference between the two texts is their descriptions of Christ. In the Vercelli poem he is described as a 'young hero … strong and resolute', while in the Ruthwell poem he is presented directly as 'Almighty God'. The action of stripping becomes in the Vercelli poem part of a young warrior's preparation for an heroic action. Its theological significance as a divine epiphany (39b) is not indeed completely destroyed; but while it was inescapable in the Ruthwell poem, it is no longer inescapably the central issue in the *Dream.* This is possibly why it has, as far as I have been able to ascertain, entirely escaped the attention of modern critics.

But an even more important difference between the two poems is the indicative verb *gestah he,* 'he mounted', crucial to the presentation of the scene in the *Dream.* The Vercelli poem here tells an heroic narrative, and 'gestah he' expresses its central action. Instead, the first Ruthwell *sententia* presents a dramatic contrast between Christ's acts of will on the one hand, and on the other the dilemma into which these acts plunge the Cross.[48] As we have seen, Christ's 'walde' is at once an act of the divine will (that of 'Ḡod Almeȝttig') and a supreme act of human will (an act of one who is 'modig f[ore allæ] men'). The poem's achievement here can be precisely summed up by the crucial phrase added to the Chalcedonian confession of faith by the first Lateran council: the poem presents Christ 'utpote volentem et operantem Divine et humane nostram salutem'. Indeed, it is possible that the Ruthwell text embodies a conscious effort to realise the poetic implications of the recent dogmatic development enshrined in the Lateran confession of faith. In the first *sententia* of the Ruthwell poem, two things are important: how in willing to ascend the Cross Christ revealed himself (both to the Cross and 'f[ore allæ] men') as at once fully man and fully God; and the tension which its own obedient humility imposed on the Cross, when it was confronted with Christ's heroic and divine acts of will. The *sententia* steers clear of details which might distract from the confrontation between Christ's acts of will and the Cross's obedience, and so we are told nothing of the appearance of Christ, nor how he mounted the gallows. Instead the poem concentrates on the two aspects of the crucifixion which define, first, the devotional importance, and, second, the very nature of this great stone monument: (i) it is designed to proclaim how Christ's death upon it revealed him as willing and effecting our salvation at once divinely and humanly; and (ii) its own stone-like nature is not to move, but to stand fast.

SENTENTIA II [North (now east) side, left border]

5 [Ahof] ic riicnæ k̄yningc [.]
6 heafunæs h[l]afard hælda ic ni dorstæ
7 [b]ismæra[d]u ungk̄et men ba æt[g]ad[re i]c [wæs m]iþ blodi bist[e]mi[d]
8 bi{ḡoten of þæs ḡuman sida DH: siþþan he his ḡastæ sendæ}

5 I [lifted up] a powerful king—
6 the lord of heaven I dared not tilt:
7 men insulted the pair of us together; I was drenched with blood
8 po{ured from the man's side, DH: after he sent forth his spirit}

The first verse of this *sententia* was marked off, like the first verse of the previous *sententia,* by a *punctus* or point which was recorded in early drawings of the Ruthwell Cross.[49] This first verse does not alliterate with any other. It could have been taken separately for meditation, as it summarizes the devotional importance of the Holy Cross: that it had lifted up a powerful King. '[Ahof] ic riicnæ k̄yningc' develops the theme of divine epiphany with which the poem had begun: in St John's Gospel (the gospel which dominated Lenten mass readings, and from which the Passion narrative for Good Friday was taken) the lifting up of Christ on the Cross is presented several times as a revelation of his glory and divinity.[50] This first verse, and also the two verses which make up the alliterative line (6) which follows, again use the rhetorical device of *communicatio idiomatum.* Christ's divine power is referred to in the object-phrases ('riicnæ k̄yningc' and 'heafunæs hlafard'), while his human creatureliness is indicated in the physical actions described by the verbs ('ahof' and 'hælda'). In addition, lines 5–6 form a chiasmus. The subjects ('ic' in both cases, referring to the Cross) are placed, together with the verbs, at the beginning of line 5 and at the end of 6. The subjects and verbs together are therefore interwoven with the object-phrases (which in both cases refer to Christ) so as to form a cross-pattern—Cross:Christ;Christ:Cross. The *punctus* after 'k̄yningc' is the only punctuation-point in the *sententia.* It emphasises the importance of the first verse, and helps the reader by marking off the line (6) which follows as an alliterative unit. However, in the absence of consistent pointing, it should not be seen as having the same force as a modern full stop. It is possible to read the verb 'hælda' (6) in two ways: as reflexive ('I dared not tilt myself': in which case 'heafunæs h[l]afard' can be taken as a variation on 'riicnæ k̄yningc'), or as transitive ('I dared not tilt the lord of heaven'). Any modern translation, using a fully-developed system of punctuation, has to eliminate the choice which was available to each member of the Ruthwell community who meditated the text. Neither interpretation of 'hælda' interferes with the chiasmus-pattern: and this close interweaving of references to the Cross and of references to Christ prepares for the central theme of the *sententia:* the intimate union now created between the Cross and Christ. They are seen as united in two ways: by the insults thrown at the pair of them together (it would be difficult to imagine a more powerful

syntactic expression of unity between two persons than the phrase 'ungk̄et … ba ætḡadre'), and by the blood from Christ's side which drenches the Cross.

We have seen that several aspects of this second *sententia* refer back to the themes and images of the first; but it is equally important to stress the crucial progression between the two *sententiae.* Line 6b, 'hælda ic ni dorstæ', refers again to the theme of the immobility of the Cross, with which the first *sententia* had ended; but whereas in the first *sententia* there was a clear contrast between the immobility of the Cross and the freely chosen action of Almighty God, the central theme of the second is the intimate union now created between the Cross and Christ. Corresponding to this new unity between Creator and created object, we move from the emphasis on the divinity of 'Almighty God' in the first *sententia,* and on his divine power at the beginning of the second, to a new emphasis on his humanity in the creaturely image of Christ's blood at its end.[51] However, if the original contrast between Almighty God and the Cross is transformed in this second *sententia* into a profound unity, an important new contrast is now stated: that between the intimately unified Cross and Christ, on the one hand, and, on the other, the men who revile the pair of them together (line 7a).

SENTENTIA III [South (now west) side, top and right border]

9 [+] kris[t] wæs on rodi.
10 hweþræ þer fus[æ] fearran kw[o]mu
11 [æ]þþilre til anum ic þæt al bi[heald]
12 sa[ræ] ic w[æ]s mi[þ] s[or]ḡu[m] gidræ[fi]d h[n]aḡ {ic þam secgum til handa}

9 Christ was on the Cross.
10 But eager ones came thither from afar,
11 the noble ones [came] together. I looked upon all that:
12 I was terribly afflicted with sorrows; I bowed {to the hands of the men}

Once more, the first verse is marked off by a *punctus,* which in this case is still visible on the cross. This verse could have been taken separately for meditation: it again summarizes, as the opening verses of the first and second *sententiae* had done in different terms, the devotional importance of the Cross and of the Ruthwell Cross. This *incipit,* on the south side of the monument, occupies the corresponding position to the position occupied by the *incipit* of the first half of the poem on the north side. Both *incipits* run across the top of the border above the foliage scroll on their respective sides. It is interesting that pride of place, the part of the runic inscription that was easy to read, should be given to verses which sum up so concisely, first the significance of the crucifixion as a revelation of the nature of God the Son ('Ondgeredæ hinæ ḠOd Almeȝttig') and second, the devotional importance of the Cross ('Krist wæs on rodi').

The statement that 'Christ was on the Cross' refers once more to a major theme of the second *sententia:* that the Cross lifted up Christ (5–6). The theme is restated so

that it can be developed: Christ, lifted up on the Cross, now begins to draw all things to himself. The progression of ideas in this third *sententia* is clearly reminiscent of John 12:32: 'et si exaltatus fuero a terra, omnia traham ad me ipsum'. As we have seen, the second *sententia* had emphasised the contrast between, on the one hand, Cross and Christ united in suffering, and, on the other, the men who insult them. The third *sententia* now presents men who come from afar to the Cross, eager ('fusæ'—the full range of meanings which this word can connote will be considered later) and noble ('æþþilæ'). These figures bear little relationship to the Gospel accounts of how the discouraged apostles buried Christ. Apostles they are indeed: apostles already imbued with post-Resurrection and, indeed, post-Pentecostal zeal. It would seem that these 'nobles' are intended to suggest, not simply the apostles on Good Friday, but also the followers of Christ in later ages. This is a matter to which we shall return.

In addition to moving from men who revile the Cross and Christ to men who come to it with noble eagerness, this third *sententia* marks another striking development in the poem's themes. In the first half of the poem (inscribed on the opposite side of the cross) the immobility of the Cross, and what one might term the psychological tension this necessary immobility imposed upon the Cross, was a central theme. This theme is now transformed. The Cross now bends (thus going in a new way against its 'nature') to give Christ into the hands of his followers. We have already seen that the third *sententia* is inscribed on the corresponding position to the first *sententia,* on the opposite side of the cross, and that the first verse of each *sententia* recalls that of the other. These thematic and spatial echoes between the first and third *sententiae* indicate that the narrative action in which the Cross hands on Christ to his followers may have symbolic implications worth exploring. The first revelation of Almighty God to the Cross had posed the Cross with a striking challenge to its faith and obedience. It is perhaps reasonable to suggest that now the Cross is passing on to the followers of Christ, not merely a dead body, but a challenge to faith and obedience similar to the one it had itself faced. In other words, the awareness and compassion which in lines 11 and 12 are attributed to the Cross ('ic þæt al biheald/saræ ic wæs miþ sorḡum gidrœfid') seem by implication required of the noble followers of Christ at the moment they receive his body from the Cross. There may also be a further implication: that such awareness and compassion are also required of the audience of the poem. In view of these possibilities, it is interesting that, in the next *sententia,* there is no further description of how the Cross beholds and participates in the action. The fourth *sententia* concentrates on the actions of Christ's followers when they have received from the Cross the dead body of Christ.

SENTENTIA IV [South (now west) side, left border]

13 [m]iþ s[t]re[l]um giwundad
14 alegdun hiæ hinæ limwœrignæ gistoddu[n] him [æt his li]cæs [hea]f[du]
m
15 [bih]ea[ld]u[n] [h]i[æ þ]e[r] {heafunæs dryctin DH: ond he hinæ þer
hwilæ restæ amen}

13 Wounded with arrows,
14 they laid him down, limb-spent; they stood by the shoulders of his
corpse;
15 there they looked on {the Lord of heaven, DH: and he rested himself
there for a while. Amen.}

In the Vercelli *Dream of the rood,* the Cross is seen as wounded with arrows; an image that has been much admired. In the Ruthwell text, however, it is Christ himself who is wounded with arrows, and this is of considerable poetic importance.[52] We have seen that the first verse of each of the previous three *sententiae* was marked off on the Ruthwell Cross by a *punctus:* as Howlett points out (1976, 58) the absence of such a mark here provides some confirmatory evidence that the sculptors intended 'miþ strelum giwundad' to be read, not on its own, but in apposition to 'hine limwœrignæ'. Both 'giwundad' and 'limwœrignæ' are in the accusative case, the case of the uninflected 'giwundad' being indicated by the inflection of 'limwœrignæ', which with 'giwundad' forms a poetic variation. In Old English verse, the case of a word may be indicated, not by inflection, but by its context: as Alastair Campbell has put it, in verse 'a parallel may be uninflected if the case is clearly indicated in the expressions which it parallels'.[53] There is therefore no grammatical difficulty in taking 'giwundad' as referring to Christ, and in apposition to 'limwœrignæ'.[54] The fact that in the Vercelli text not Christ but the Cross is 'all wounded with arrows' ('eall ic wæs miþ strælum forwundod' (62b)), seems to provide us with particularly important evidence of the shift of devotional emphasis in the later poem towards the power of the Cross. By the tenth century, if not earlier, this shift had made of the crucifixion poem a dream-vision in which the Cross itself, embodying the wounds of Christ, offers its patronage to men.[55]

The Ruthwell text creates a direct link (lost in the Vercelli *Dream)* between the idea that Christ is 'wounded with arrows' and the idea that he is 'limb-spent', 'exhausted through his limbs'. The Ruthwell text emphasises that Christ is 'limwœrignæ' because of the *wounds* in his limbs. This looks back to the second *sententia* (the corresponding *sententia* on the opposite side of the cross) where the Cross had been seen as drenched with Christ's blood. Clearly, the idea that Christ's death involved the pouring out of his blood is a central structural feature in the Ruthwell poem: it dominates the second and fourth *sententiae,* and provides an important thematic link between them.

This fourth *sententia* is the only one in which the Cross does not mention its own reaction to what is going on. The central interest of the *sententia* is how the followers of Christ react to his dead body. The emphasis is here on Christ's creatureliness, on his 'wounded' and 'limb-exhausted' body, emptied even of its blood. On the other hand, if the final surviving verse on the cross may be completed from the Vercelli text, a final example of *communicatio idiomatum* emphasises that the union of two natures, human and divine, is to be seen in the body of the 'lord of heaven': 'bihealdun hiæ þer {heafunæs Dryctin}'. The partly-surviving word 'bihealdun' suggests that the verse should indeed be completed with the alliterating phrase 'heafunæs Dryctin'. But whether or not the verse can safely be restored in this way it is clear that the challenge to the faith of Christ's followers in the poem, and to the reader of the poem on the Ruthwell Cross, consists in the necessity of grasping in its entirety the unified ontological spectrum the poem has presented. The poem's four *sententiae* form a single, deep *sententia:* a challenge to the followers of Christ, those in the poem or those meditating on the cross, to recognize the divinity of 'ḡod Almeȝttig' (line 1) in and through the freely-willed act which rendered his body 'limwœrignæ' (line 14). The coherent way in which this challenge is presented in the poem points to the way in which the poem itself coheres.

The fourth *sententia* seems also designed to bring to the mind of a monastic reader a specific liturgical text, and the moment on Good Friday on which this text was chanted. In the *sententia,* the followers of Christ stand close to his wounded body (14) and contemplate it (15). The service of readings which began on the ninth hour on Good Friday closed Gust before the ceremony of the adoration of the Cross) with a solemn reading of the Passion according to St John (18:1–19:42). Just after John has described the moment of Christ's death (19:34), he indicates the significance of that death by saying that, through it, two Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled. The first of these 'you shall not break a bone of him' (19:36) recalls (among other texts) Exodus 12:46, one of the ritual prescriptions for the treatment of the paschal lamb. John thus makes of the spear wound of 19:34 a sign that Jesus was the paschal lamb of the new passover. John then goes on (19:37) to quote Zachary 12:10: 'They shall look on him whom they pierced' *(Videbunt in quem transfixerunt).* In the fourth Ruthwell *sententia* Christ's followers look on Christ's body (15) which has just been described as 'miþ strælum giwundad' (13) and 'limwœrignæ' (14): a monastic reader of the *sententia* could hardly fail to recall the prophecy read at the same moment of Good Friday, and which also referred to a pierced body being contemplated by onlookers. This was perhaps the most searching moment of the Passion narrative read on Good Friday evening, because the prophecy implicitly invited the congregation to contemplate the role of mankind in the death which the Passion had just described. A monastic reader would have seen the contemplation of Christ's pierced body as in no sense elegiac or sentimental, but as demanding an urgent and vigorous devotional response. For this same prophecy was recalled at the beginning of the Apocalypse, in

a warning of Christ's imminent return to judge mankind:

> Behold, he cometh with the clouds, and every eye shall see him: and they also that pierced him *(et videbit eum omnis oculus, et qui eum pupugerunt).* And all the tribes of the earth shall bewail themselves because of him. Even so. Amen. (1:7)

In order to understand the important part which the reminiscence of Zachary's prophecy plays in the Ruthwell poem, it is necessary to be aware of the verbal echoes of *Sententia* II in *Sententia* IV. The way in which the two *sententiae* are physically balanced against each other on the Ruthwell Cross would encourage an onlooker to become aware of the structural function of such echoes within the poem. Those who look on the pierced body of Christ in the fourth *sententia* are the followers of Christ; they are the very opposite of those who had pierced and mocked him in the second *sententia.* One possible, but rather limited, interpretation of the reminiscence would be to see a simple contrast between the situation in the poem and the situation envisaged in John 19:37, as though in the poem these followers 'look on him whom *others* have pierced'. But this would be to undervalue the way in which the reminiscence reminds the reader that the situation of Christ's followers in the poem is (like the reader's own situation) problematic. Every follower of Christ knew that Christ 'bore our sins in his body upon the tree: that we, being dead to sins, should live to justice' (1 Pet. 2:24); but no one could presume that he would never offend Christ. Thus he could never be sure that on the Last Day he would not be amongst 'them that pierced him'. St John's quotation of Zachary was consistently interpreted in the light of Apocalypse 1:7. As Augustine put it, in Jn 19:37 'it is promised that Christ will come in the flesh in which he was crucified' *(ubi promissus est Christus, in ea qua crucifixus est carne uenturus).*[56] The New Testament and the Good Friday liturgy both made of Zachary's prophecy a probing challenge: how could any individual christian persevere in the faith until Christ should come again? Paradoxically, it was through their recognition of and compassion with Christ's pierced body, which had borne their sins, that followers of Christ might hope that, when they and all men saw Christ's body on the Last Day, they would not be condemned along with those who had pierced him by 'not discerning the body of the Lord' (1 Cor. 11:26–29). As the inscription for the great crucifixion miniature in the Durham Gospels puts it, Christ who suffered for us, casting down the devil who was the author of death, will give us back our life 'if only we suffer with him' *(Auctorem mortis deieciens uitam nostram restituens si tamen compatimur).*[57] The most important liturgical opportunities for such recognition of and compassion with Christ's pierced body were the ceremonies of the ninth hour on Good Friday, and, throughout the year, the communal act of discerning, and partaking of, the body of the Lord in the eucharistic breaking of bread. The Cross itself had in the previous *sententia* provided a model for Christ's followers' act of contemplation ('ic þæt al bi[heald]', 11], and for the compassion

required of all Christians in the face of Christ's death ('sa[ræ] ic w[æ]s mi[þ] s[or] gu[m] gidrœ[fi]d', 12).

Having looked in turn at the four *sententiae* of the poem, I shall now examine its leading ideas: first, the presentation of Christ in the poem; and then the presentation of the Cross.

6. THE KENOTIC CHRISTOLOGY OF THE RUTHWELL POEM AND THE EPISTLE FOR THE SIXTH SUNDAY IN LENT

One of the most admired features of the Vercelli *Dream* is the heroic presentation of Christ in that poem. But in the Ruthwell crucifixion poem the specifically heroic images are few in number, and are clearly subordinated to particular theological concerns. The word 'modig' in line 2 has, as we have seen, the specific purpose of emphasising Christ's human will, in the context of the striking reference to his divine will with which the poem opens. There are three clear examples of *communicatio idiomatum* in the first two *sententiae:* one in the first line of the poem, and two in the chiasmus in the second *sententia.* The heroic phrases of this chiasmus, 'riicnæ k̄yningc' (5) and 'heafunæs hlafard' (6) have thus, once more, the specific function of reiterating the unity in Christ of divine and human natures. At the beginning of the third *sententia,* the word 'Krist' (9) should also be interpreted as a specifically divine or messianic title ('the anointed one'): the Latin equivalent, 'Christus', is interpreted as such in scriptural commentary of this period, and is used as a divine title in liturgical contexts.[58] Each of the first three *sententiae* of the poem thus begins with an example of *communicatio idiomatum.* It seems reasonable to follow Howlett in his speculation that the words 'bihealdu hiæ þer' (15) should be completed from the Vercelli text by the alliterating phrase 'heafunæs dryctin'. The phrase would then juxtapose a human action, looking, with a divine title, the Lord of Heaven. If Howlett's speculation is correct, the fourth *sententia* also contained an example of *communicatio idiomatum,* bringing to five the occurrences in the poem of this rhetorical figure which had such major theological significance.

It can be seen, therefore, that the heroic epithets applied to Christ in the poem have the specific purpose of presenting the crucifixion as a revelation of the unity of divinity and humanity in Christ. The idea that the crucifixion was a revelation to all men of the unity of Christ's two natures was a familiar one in eighth-century Northumbria. The Durham Gospels crucifixion miniature, for example, invites the onlooker to 'know who, and what kind, he is who [suffered] such things [for us]', clearly intending the reader to meditate on the divinity as well as the humanity of Christ.[59] A striking example of the idea is found in Bede's commentary on the phrase 'you will be known in the midst of two animals' *(in medio duorum animalium innotesceris),* from verse 3 of the Canticle of Habbakuk:

> The phrase ['in the midst of two animals'] can aptly be taken as 'in the midst of two thieves'. Crucified between them, he revealed

> by dying that he was man. But by the darkening of the sun, the earthquake, and the other miracles which the gospel tells of being done around the Cross, he made known that he was God.[60]

The use of heroic metaphors to provide a series of examples of *communicatio idiomatum* in the Ruthwell poem, when seen in the context of the Ruthwell iconography, and in particular of the magnificent representation of Jesus Christ 'iudex aequitatis' adored by the two animals, would have encouraged onlookers at Ruthwell to understand that the crucifixion revealed the unity of humanity and divinity in Christ.

But there is another aspect to the way in which the revelation of Christ's nature is presented in the Ruthwell poem. The poem opens with the image of Christ, Almighty God, stripping himself: thus, by implication, revealing his human body before 'all men'. This expression of the theme of epiphany with which the poem begins would probably have been seen in the eighth century in the context of the baptismal liturgy of the Easter vigil. The catechumens laid aside their clothes to enter the baptismal font in imitation of Christ, the new man, who by his death destroyed for ever the shamefulness which, since the sin of Adam, had befallen the human body.[61] Baptism was seen as a participation in Christ's death and Resurrection; and it is remarkable that the poem should open with the precise act of Christ which the catechumens imitated, in their symbolic re-enactment of his death during the Easter vigil. We shall return to the liturgy of the catechumenate and of baptism when considering the relation between this first half of the poem and the iconography of the (originally) east side of the Ruthwell Cross. At present, I wish to emphasise that the theme of Christ stripping himself, with which the poem opens, is not an isolated image. It is in fact the key to a central theme in the poem. There is a natural progression between the image of Christ stripping himself in the first *sententia,* and the theme in the second and fourth *sententiae* of Christ's body being emptied of his blood. In these connected ideas, stripping and emptying, we see the central paradox of the Ruthwell poem. The poem presents the crucifixion as indeed a revelation of Christ's divine power; but it presents the act which reveals his divine power as an act of stripping (*Sententia I*) and self-emptying, so that Christ is united with the Cross as an object of scorn to men (*Sententia II*).

The two poetic metaphors in the fourth *sententia,* 'miþ strelum giwundad' (13) and its parallel 'limwœrignæ' (14) have, as usual, a theologically precise role to play in the poem's structure. They bring to completion the theme of self-emptying, central to the poem. At the moment in which the followers of Christ contemplate his dead body, the images which describe that body emphasise the wounds through which Christ has emptied himself of his blood. The idea that Christ's body was completely emptied of his blood is expressed in a vivid image in St John's Gospel, the Passion narrative read at the moment of Christ's death on Good Friday. St John specifies that when the soldier pierced Christ's side, blood and water immediately issued from the

wound (‘continuo exivit sanguis et aqua’, 19:34). The church herself was born at this moment from Christ’s side, as Eve had been brought to birth from Adam’s side. By his act of self-emptying, Christ gained for the church baptism and the eucharist (the two sacraments administered to the catechumens during the Easter vigil).[62]

In the light of the theological importance of Christ’s wounds, it is interesting that the Ruthwell poet does not refer directly to the nails which pierced Christ’s limbs, but uses poetic metaphors. Swanton has remarked that ‘*stræl* might refer to the soldier’s spear which pierced the side of Christ … were it not for the plural form of the noun’ (1970, 122). But the plural form of the noun is in fact essential to the poet’s purpose: through it he can refer to the nails in a metaphor which does not exclude a reference also to the fifth wound in Christ’s body, the wound of the spear. The metaphor ‘miþ strælum’ is an important reminder, within *Sententia* IV, of *Sententia* II where there seems to have been a specific reference, ‘bi[ḡoten] … ‘, to the wound of the spear in Christ’s side at the moment of his death (8). But in *Sententia* IV, by which point the handing on of Christ’s body has been described, the centre of the poet’s attention has shifted from the spear-wound to the wounds in Christ’s limbs. The beautiful metaphor ‘limwœrignæ’ brings the theme of self-emptying to completion. In *Beowulf,* compounds of *werig* always mean that the person referred to has been brought to death (deað-werig 2125 ‘dead’; fyl-werig 962 ‘killed’; guð-werig 1586, ‘worn out with fighting, dead’).[63] Such metaphors suggest that here ‘limwœrignæ’ has a dimension that a literal translation such as ‘limbweary’ cannot convey. It implies that Christ has been ‘spent’ or ‘exhausted’ and so ‘brought to death’ precisely because of the way his limbs were ‘giwundad’. The metaphor brings to a moving resolution the poet’s examination of the central role played in Christ’s victory by the wounds and the complete loss of his blood which, ‘when he willed to mount the gallows, courageous before all men’ (1–2), he courageously willed to undergo for mankind. But to interpret the arrows which wound Christ simply as a literal reference to nails or spear is to miss the deeper resonances of ‘miþ strælum’. Anglo-Saxon poets used the metaphor of arrows to express the ways in which the devil could afflict men with temptation to sin, and with the consequences of sin: spiritual torment, bodily suffering and death. Death, itself, was personified as an archer whose prey was man.[64] Through the metaphor ‘miþ strælum’ the Ruthwell poet hints, with marvellous economy, at the way in which Christ spent himself even unto death when, as the artists of the Durham gospels put it, he was ‘casting down the author of death’ (*auctorem mortis deieciens*).

The Ruthwell poem presents the crucifixion paradoxically as at once a revelation of Christ’s divine power and an act of self-stripping and self-emptying. But such a paradox cannot but have seemed natural to a clerical poet familiar with the Roman liturgy. Holy Week began with the sixth Sunday in Lent. This is the Sunday later known as Palm Sunday, but it is not certain whether the ceremony of the blessing of palms would have reached Ruthwell at the time the cross was erected.[65] For the present argument, the significance of the sixth Sunday of Lent is the way in which

the mass for that day was dominated by the events of the following Friday. The sixth Sunday was commonly known as 'Dominica de passione domini'.[66] Good Friday itself was, strictly speaking, aliturgical, in the sense that mass could not be celebrated on that day. The events of Good Friday were therefore commemorated in the mass of the preceding Sunday. The main feature of the mass of the sixth Sunday in Roman use was the solemn reading of the whole of the Passion according to St Matthew (26:1–27:61).[67] Verses from Psalm 21 ('Deus Deus meus respice in me …'), the most extensive prophetic description in the psalter of Christ's sufferings on the Cross, were sung at the introit; and the same psalm was sung as the tract.[68] At the offertory, when the congregation brought bread and wine to the altar for sacrifice, the text chanted by the choir reminded the congregation of the desolation men inflicted on Christ during his sacrifice on the Cross. It was based on Psalm 68:21–22, and included the prophecy 'they gave me gall for my food; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink'. Similarly, after communion, when the priest had partaken of the chalice, the choir sang of the bitter chalice which Christ had accepted from his Father: 'Father, if this chalice may not pass away, but I must drink it, thy will be done' (Mt. 26:42). The choir thus once again reminded the congregation that on the following Friday they would be commemorating Christ's Passion and death. So completely does Christ's Passion dominate the chants of the sixth Sunday in Lent that in his great edition Dom René Hesbert was able to reject, as a later interpolation into the mass of that day, the only antiphon which does not explicitly describe an incident of the passion.[69]

In the early Roman liturgy, therefore, the sixth Sunday in Lent was, in every sense of the word, 'Dominica de passione Domini'. When an Anglo-Saxon cleric thought of the passion, it is likely that he would have thought of it in terms of the texts sung on that Sunday as readily as of the texts. sung on the following Friday. It is therefore significant that on that Sunday the epistle was the great christological hymn, Philippians 2:5–11. This hymn is the classic exposition of the idea that the Incarnation and Passion of Christ together formed a unified act of kenosis or self-emptying:

> [5]Hoc enim sentite in vobis, quod et in Christo Iesu: [6]qui cum in forma Dei esset, non rapinam arbitratus est esse se aequalem Deo: [7]sed semetipsum exinanivit formam servi accipiens, in similitudinem hominum factus, et habitu inventus ut homo. [8]Humiliavit semetipsum factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis. [9]Propter quod et Deus exaltavit illum, et donavit illi nomen, quod est super omne nomen: [10]ut in nomine Iesu omne genu flectatur caelestium, terrestrium et infernorum,[11] et omnis lingua confiteatur, quia Dominus Iesus Christus in gloria est Dei Patris.[70]

This lection, interpreted in the context of its liturgical use, seems to be the central inspiration for the presentation of Christ in the Ruthwell crucifixion poem. The lection begins by asserting Christ's equality with God (verse 6: 'who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God'); the poem begins with

a striking reference to Christ as 'Ḡod Almeȝttig' (line 1). The lection defines the relationship between the Son and the Father at the Incarnation by the concept of Christ's kenosis, emptying of self (verse 7: 'but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant'). The first line of the poem, by juxtaposing the concepts 'Almighty God' and 'stripped himself', presents the crucifixion as the continuation and fulfilment of Christ's original act of 'self-emptying' at the Incarnation. In the epistle lection, both Incarnation and crucifixion are seen as acts freely willed by Christ (verse 8: 'He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross'): in the poem, there is a similar stress on the free acts of will which Christ made 'when he willed to ascend the gallows' (line 1).[71] In the lection, Christ's self-emptying is a revelation to all mankind of how Almighty God is now 'made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man' (verse 7), while in the poem Christ's stripping of himself enables mankind to recognize him as a human hero 'courageous before all men' (line 3). The lection sees Christ as taking on the form of a slave (verse 7), while the poem emphasises the mockery Christ endured on the Cross (line 7). The central theme of the lection is its presentation of Christ's humanity in terms of self-emptying (verse 7), and the central theme of the poem is that on the Cross Christ poured out all of his blood, so much so that his body was finally spent or exhausted *(Sententia* IV). The lection sees the crucifixion as forming with the Incarnation a single act of obedience (verses 7–8); as we shall see, the poem and the iconography of the Ruthwell Cross both suggest the closest possible links between Christ's Incarnation and his Passion. The lection ends by emphasising that Christ's kenosis and obedience has led to his exaltation and power (verses 9–11: 'For which cause, God also hath exalted him … that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father'); if the final surviving verse of the poem can be completed from the Vercelli *Dream,* the poem ends as the followers of Christ look upon 'the Lord of Heaven' (line 15a), a similar reference to Christ's victory in death. Apart from the theological parallels, the liturgical use of the lection provides a strong reason for thinking it likely that Philippians 2:5–11 could have inspired the poem's christology. Of all the New Testament statements of the significance of the Passion, the Roman liturgy prescribed this one for the Sunday which opened Holy Week, and in which the events of the Passion completely dominated the readings and antiphons sung at mass. This epistle-lection for the Sunday 'de passione Domini' is likely to have been seen as the most solemn liturgical statement of the theological pattern which underlay Christ's Incarnation, death and victory.

If the christology of the poem is kenotic, in the sense that the pouring out of Christ's blood is central to it, then it is of interest to note that this poem is inscribed on the cross around two of the finest examples of foliage scroll-pattern to survive from Anglo-Saxon England. Professor Rosemary Cramp has remarked, of the vine-scroll on Acca's cross, that it is the 'symbol of the church in union with Christ, or Christ's sacramental presence in the Eucharist' (1965, 7). The foliage scrolls at

Bewcastle and Ruthwell are not realistic depictions of vines. The foliage suggests that the designer intended a reference to the idea that the Cross is the Tree of Life; but the clinging volutes, lacking a trunk and with grape-like berry bunches from which animals feed, suggest that a reference to the vine should not be excluded. Ambrose described Christ as 'the new drink brought down from heaven to earth … who just like the grape on the vine, hung in the flesh from the wood of the Cross'; and from early christian times the vine was used as a symbol of the blood of martyrs.[72] Such symbolic traditions may be relevant to the way in which the poem and the foliage scrolls are combined at Ruthwell. The Bewcastle sculptor left no wide margins around the great foliage scroll on the east side of his cross, just as he left no wide margins around the three figural panels on the west side. Here we have a major difference in design between the Bewcastle and Ruthwell crosses. It is striking that, in contrast to the Bewcastle Cross, all the large Ruthwell panels which survive (with the exception of the damaged crucifixion panel at the base of the originally east side) have been provided with wide margins, each used for extended explanatory inscriptions. The Ruthwell designers may have seen the English poem on the lower stone as another explanatory inscription, like the inscriptions for the large panels on the broad sides (it was also, incidentally, like the inscription for the crucifixion miniature in the Durham gospels). The poem certainly provides an extended meditation on one devotional theme with which foliage scrolls may have been associated: the pouring out for men of the blood of the Lamb.

It is perhaps going too far to suggest that a desire to provide a visual reminiscence of the blood of the Lamb might even have prompted the designer to leave a broad margin across the top and down the sides of the scroll in the way he did, and to inscribe this poem on it. The second Old Testament lection read at the moment of Christ's death, at the ninth hour on Good Friday, was Exodus 12:1–11, the prescriptions for the paschal meal. It prescribed that the blood of the lamb was to be put on the lintel, and on both the doorposts, of each house of Israel in which the paschal lamb was eaten ('et sument de sanguine eius, ac ponent super utrumque postem, et in superliminaribus domorum, in quibus comedent illum', 12:7).[73] If the Ruthwell audience were (perhaps particularly in Holy Week) open to such a reminiscence, the broad margins with the poem, reminiscent of a door-frame, could have reminded the onlookers of the door (cf. Jn 10:9, 'I am the door') who alone could admit them to participation in the life of his mystical body the church.[74] It is likely that this mystical life formed part of the symbolic meaning of the foliage scroll which was the central feature of each narrow side (cf. Jn 15:1, 'I am the true vine'). In John's gospel, Christ identifies both the 'door' and the 'vine' with himself: thus the image of the 'vine' would not exclude a visual reference to the 'door'; rather, a reference to one of these images could naturally be combined with a reminiscence of the other, as they were both images of Christ.

That the layout of the poem was designed specifically to recall this Old Testament

lection of the Good Friday liturgy, and its fulfilment in the eucharistic discourses of John's gospel, must remain a speculative suggestion. I by no means wish to insist on it. The speculation is useful, however, as it serves to highlight a more likely possibility: that the verbal images of the pouring out of Christ's blood, central to the poem, should be related to the visual symbolism of the foliage scrolls. If this is so, the poem forms a closely integrated element of the design of the narrow sides of the cross: it functions as an inscription, giving the key to the meaning of the scrolls. Such a possibility enables us better to appreciate how coherent was the design of the whole Ruthwell monument: almost every large panel on the cross has been provided with an interpretative inscription, even the great foliage scrolls. There is a pleasing contrast between the design of the narrow sides (with its integrated verbal and visual images of Christ's blood and its equivalent the eucharistic wine) and the design of the broad side which may originally have faced west (dominated, as we shall see, by images of how Christ's body was recognized in the eucharistic breaking of bread).

7. THE PRESENTATION OF THE CROSS IN THE POEM: CRUCIFIXION IN THE CONTEXT OF INCARNATION

Once we begin to examine the presentation of the Cross in the Ruthwell crucifixion poem, it becomes clear that the poem has a coherent structure. It also begins to appear likely that those who planned to have it inscribed on the lower stone of the Ruthwell Cross appreciated that structure. In the first half of the poem, the Cross is presented as immobile. In this very immobility lies its trial, and in it lies the dramatic tension of the first two *sententiae* (the ones inscribed on what may originally have been the north side of the Ruthwell monument). This theme is reversed in the second half of the poem. On the south side of the Ruthwell Cross, we read of the Cross bending to give up the body of Christ to his followers. It is clear that the physical division of the poem into two halves, on the Ruthwell Cross, is related to a profound thematic contrast between the role of the Cross in the first half of the poem, and its role in the second. At the same time, underlying this contrast between the two halves of the poem, there are highly significant similarities between the roles of the Cross in each half. On the north side, the Cross sees Christ come to it, stands to receive him, is united to him by blood and men's mockery. On the south side, the Cross sees the followers of Christ come to it, and bends to present him to them; in the final *sententia* they stand around Christ's corpse and look upon him. Their final act of contemplation ('bihealdun hiæ þer …', 15) can reasonably be interpreted as the beginning of their effort to assimilate, in their turn, what this mystery implies. One can hardly escape the conclusion that the designer who divided the poem between the two sides of the Ruthwell Cross had a quite remarkable insight into the structure of the poem. If he was editing extracts from a longer poem, he showed remarkable intelligence in compiling a text which divided so clearly into two contrasting halves, so that the thematic divisions of the poem's structure correspond to the physical divisions of the

poem's text on the Ruthwell monument.

In order to understand the theological implications of the way the Cross is presented in the Ruthwell poem, it is best to return once more to the epistle for the sixth Sunday in Lent. An essential aspect of the christology of that epistle lection is the close link it establishes between the Incarnation and the crucifixion. The Pauline hymn moves directly from the original act of self-emptying at the Incarnation (verse 7) to the culmination of this act in Christ's obedience, even to death on the Cross (verse 8) and its fulfilment in the glory accorded Christ by his Father as a reward for his obedience (verse 9). The lection provided, at the beginning of Holy Week, an important statement of the idea that the Passion was not to be seen in isolation, but as part of a single act which began with the Incarnation and ended with the glorification of the Son by the Father. It is clear that the original compilers of the mass for the sixth Sunday of Lent saw the link which the epistle establishes, between Incarnation and crucifixion, as important. The collect for that mass is clearly intended to prepare the mind of the congregation for the epistle lection which was read immediately after. The collect sees both Incarnation and crucifixion as manifesting Christ's obedience. It is a reasonable assumption that the compiler who assigned the collect to the mass for the sixth Sunday felt that this theological idea was the kernel of the epistle:

> Deus, qui humano genere ad imitandum humilitatis exemplum saluatorem nostrum *et carnem sumere et crucem subire fecisti*, concede propitius, ut et pacientiae eius habere documentum et Resurrectionis eius consortia mereamur, Christi domini nostri: qui tecum uiuit et regnat deus in unitate spiritus sancti: per.[75]

The Ruthwell poem does not speak explicitly of Christ's obedience to the Father. It does so implicitly, however, by emphasising the close unity achieved between Christ and the Cross ('unk̄et … ba ætḡadre', 7), while emphasising that the Cross, in remaining immobile to receive Christ, is going against its natural reactions ('hælda ic ni dorstæ', 6; cf. also lines 3 and 12). The Ruthwell poem implies that the coming of Christ to give his life upon it was a trial of obedience for the Cross. The Cross goes against its natural reluctance to bear Almighty God to his death, in obedience to a higher command (unexpressed but implied). This terrible duty which was required of the Cross, to remain immobile and be the instrument of its Lord's death, provides most of the dramatic tension of the poem. It is startlingly original. Parallels can be found for crosses that speak, or for Christ 'ascending the Cross'.[76] But no convincing parallel has been found for the dramatic situation of the Cross as described in the Ruthwell poem, and the dilemma which it resolves by standing immobile and bearing Christ to his death. There is however a close parallel in the gospels for the situation of the Cross: not in their accounts of the passion, but in the only gospel account of the moment of Christ's Incarnation. The original act of obedience by which Christ took on 'the form of a servant' also involved the cooperation of a creature. The

Incarnation took place at the moment when Mary 'the handmaid of the Lord' agreed to bear Christ into human life, although she was troubled at the angel's message and although she knew not man: 'Ecce ancilla domini, fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum' (Luke 1:38). We know that Bede was perfectly familiar with the ancient patristic tradition that the crucifixion took place on 25 March, the spring equinox in the Julian calendar, and that the Incarnation had happened on the same day of the year, thirty-three years before. We may take it that other Anglo-Saxon clerics were also aware of the possibilities the tradition offered, in particular how it enabled the Passion to be seen in the perspective of the Incarnation, as in Philippians 2:5–11. The tradition was not merely old, but important: for important theological reasons, the spring equinox was vital in determining the date of Easter (which had to be celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the equinox). The Ruthwell poem presents the crucifixion as requiring of the Cross an act of obedience similar to the act which Mary had made exactly thirty-three years before. This poetic concept, perhaps the most striking example of the Ruthwell poet's originality, seems to spring from a profound theological insight: that the Incarnation and Passion of Christ, and hence his glorification as 'the Lord of heaven', were aspects of a single unified divine action.[77]

The Ruthwell poet seized on the idea that the crucifixion, no less than the Incarnation, involved the obedient cooperation of a creature in the divine plan. By this stress on obedience, the poet was faithful to the liturgical texts we have been examining. The collect for the sixth Sunday of Lent emphasised that God had his son take on a body and undergo the Cross in order to give the human race an example of humility *to imitate* ('ad imitandum humilitatis exemplum').[78] The epistle for that day begins likewise by stressing the importance of imitating Christ ('For let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus', verse 5). The theme of Christ's obedience was clearly seen as the core of the epistle: the verses which emphasised Christ's obedience were taken out and used as the basis for an antiphon (*Christus factus obediens:* cf. verses 8–9) sung during the *triduum sacrum* (Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday) itself.[79] If the Ruthwell poet chose not to describe Christ explicitly as obedient to his Father, he nevertheless allowed this theme to emerge indirectly. Christ's obedience is reflected in, and mediated to the reader through, the presentation of the Cross in the poem. The last action of the Cross described in the poem is consistent with its earlier obedience. In the light of the liturgical texts we have examined, it is hardly going too far to suggest that when the Cross bows (12) to present Christ to his followers it is here presenting to them, both in its own action and in the body which it presents, 'an example of humility to be imitated' ('ad imitandum humilitatis exemplum').

8. ET CARNEM SUMERE ET CRUCEM SUBIRE: THE RELATION BETWEEN THE FIRST HALF OF THE POEM AND THE ICONOGRAPHY OF THE (ORIGINALLY) EAST SIDE OF THE RUTHWELL CROSS (pl I)

The argument to this point suggests two hypotheses on which one might base an examination of whether any relationships exist between the content of the Ruthwell crucifixion poem and the conceptual theme of the iconographic programme on the broad sides of the cross: (a) There are significant differences between the role of the Cross in the first half of the poem and its role in the second. In the first half, the Cross receives Christ; in the second it presents him to his followers. It would seem that for the people who laid out the poem on the cross, the contrast between the two halves of the text was as important as the continuities between them. This suggests the hypothesis that, as the iconography of the cross is also physically divided into two halves by its layout on two opposite broad sides, one half of the poem may be related to the iconography of one broad side of the cross. (b) If so, which side? The layout of the written texts on the cross suggests, as we have already seen, an answer to this question. The right hand vertical borders are as a general rule to be read before the left hand ones. Though there are some minor exceptions in the Latin inscriptions (as noted earlier), they serve only to prove the general rule. The rule holds good, without exception, for the English poem on the lower stone. The layout of the inscriptions on all sides of the cross encourages the onlooker to move around the cross from right to left, sunwise, or with his right hand turned towards the monument.

If we proceed on these hypotheses, significant relationships emerge between the themes of the poem and the iconographic themes of the relevant sides of the cross. In brief, the first half of the poem (on what was originally the north side of the cross) corresponds to the unified iconographic scheme which runs up the (originally) east side: the iconography of this side is concerned with the Lenten liturgy, in particular with the Lenten catechumenate. Its central theme is, like that of the first half of the poem, the reception of Christ: first by the Cross and by Mary on 25 March; then, thanks to their reception of him, by the individual soul to whom faith and repentance is offered. The second half of the poem corresponds to (and is completed by) the iconographic scheme which runs up the west side: this is concerned with the eucharist, in which Christ is presented to his followers, who in the eucharist commemorate his death, recognize his divinity, and await his return as ‘iudex aequitatis’ on the last day.

I will now summarize as briefly as possible some conclusions about the influence of the Roman liturgy of Northumbria on the iconographic programme at Ruthwell, which will be argued and documented in a forthcoming book *(Rome, Ruthwell, Vercelli).* The central panel of the east side, which represents Christ healing the blind man, is inscribed with a paraphrase of John 9:1. The healing of the blind man in John 9:1–38 was seen as an image of the enlightenment of the christian by the gift of faith, and the lection was associated from the earliest times with the Lenten catechumenate.

In eighth-century Roman use, John 9:1–38 was the gospel for the Wednesday of the fourth week in Lent, a week in which some of the most important ceremonies of the catechumenate took place. The panel immediately above the blind man represents the conversion at Nairn of the woman who was a sinner. This episode is told only in St Luke's gospel, and the panel is inscribed with verses from Luke (7:37–38). This *mulier peccatrix* was identified by Gregory the Great, and (following him) Bede, as Mary Magdalen. The panel would therefore have been seen as representing the act of conversion which marked the beginning of the process by which Mary, who also anointed Christ at Bethany, became an important model for the contemplative life. Thus the iconographic programme of the (originally) east side of the cross has at its centre two images of enlightenment and conversion: images relevant to the Lenten catechumenate. These panels are flanked by a pair of panels which refer to the infancy narrative of Luke's gospel: the Annunciation (below) and, apparently, the Visitation (above). The catechumenate was presented in the liturgy as a time of spiritual gestation, in which the catechumens were prepared, in the womb of the church, for their virginal birth from the baptismal font during the Easter vigil. The primary model for the catechumenate was therefore Christ's growth in the virgin's womb. The Annunciation and Visitation panels make it clear that the growth of the catechumen in enlightenment and faith is not only a gift given by Christ (as in the case of the blind man and of Mary Magdalen), but is a spiritual imitation of Christ's own conception and birth.[80]

One of the patterns that emerges from the panels of this side of the cross is the achievement of union between humans and Christ. Enlightenment (the blind man) is a natural prelude to repentance (Mary Magdalen). The virgin's acceptance of Christ (at the Annunciation) led to the growth of Christ in her womb, and to the moment in which the as yet unborn Christ was recognized for the first time (at the Visitation). There, John the Baptist leaped for joy in his mother's womb when Elizabeth greeted Mary (Luke 1:40–45). The theme of union between Christ and other men is completed by the panel of the eagle on the branch which stood at the top of this side (it was mistakenly reversed in the nineteenth-century restoration). In the catechumenate ceremonies of the fourth week in Lent, the catechumens were told that the eagle was an image of Resurrection (the scriptural text used to justify this interpretation was Psalm 102:5, 'your youth shall be renewed as the eagle's'). The catechumens were told that the eagle denoted at once the resurrected Christ and the christian who, after baptism (and again after death), will enter new life in union with Christ.[81] In the multivalent image of the eagle the liturgy presented the designers of the cross with a perfect image of achieved union between men and Christ.

Part of the inscription for the Annunciation panel can still be made out: 'INGRESSVS ANGELUS …'. The inscription was evidently based on Luke 1:28; and this verse is found as an antiphon for the feast of the Annunciation (25 March) in the earliest surviving Roman antiphonaries.[82] If the first half of the poem presents

the Crucifixion in terms of the Annunciation, the Annunciation panel associates the Ruthwell Cross itself with the Annunciation, and directs our attention to 25 March, the spring equinox in the Julian calendar, and the anniversary of the completion of the world's creation.[83] Either when the cross was first put up, or perhaps later, a crucifixion panel was added below the Annunciation panel. The decision to juxtapose the two panels, whenever it was taken, suggests that the Ruthwell community may have been familiar, as was Bede, with the tradition that Christ died on the anniversary of his Incarnation, when the sun's light began to triumph over the winter's darkness. In a recent study, R. T. Farrell has pointed out that the iconography of the Annunciation panel is unusual for this period, in that in it Mary is standing (she is usually seated). He has emphasised that the figure of Mary, on the right of the panel, draws back from the angel who approaches from the left, and that 'her stance indicates awe, or fear, as she is as far drawn back as she can be', while the figure of the angel, leaning forward and with one foot advanced, contributes to the dramatic tension of the scene (1986, 369). It is possible that the scene may have been made so dramatic because sculptors or patron were concerned to make the scene as vivid and compelling as the poetic text on the north side of the cross, which presents the startled obedience of the Cross on Calvary as reminiscent of the obedience of Mary, thirty-three years before.

The iconographic programme of the cross, read in logical order, begins with these crucifixion and Annunciation panels. In them the Ruthwell community juxtaposed two images of conception and birth. As we have seen, the idea that the church was born from Christ's pierced side on Calvary was an important Augustinian theme, familiar to Bede. Theologically speaking, this birth was fundamental: from it flowed the sacraments, and the role of Mary as a type of the church. Meyvaert (1982, 6) quotes the description of the Ruthwell crucifixion panel by Alexander Gordon who, in 1726, saw on the panel 'a representation of our Saviour upon the cross with two figures, one on each side, much defaced'. This is of interest, as it suggests that Longinus and Stephaton flanked Christ in the Ruthwell panel, as in the Durham Gospels miniature. If they did, the panel alluded unmistakably to John 19:34, and the birth from Christ's side of baptism and the eucharist, the two sacraments from which the church was built up. As the rest of the cross is dominated by the themes of the catechumenate (the preparation for baptism, east side, and the eucharist, west side), there could hardly have been a more appropriate beginning for the iconographic programme of the cross. After this resounding opening, the iconography proceeds to explore the implications of the birth of the church from Christ's side on Good Friday. The programme first links the crucifixion directly to the Incarnation of Christ at the Annunciation: in such a link it is faithful, not only to the theology of the Ruthwell crucifixion poem, but to the collect and epistle for the sixth Sunday in Lent. We may conclude that the linked obedience of Cross and Mary on 25 March, fundamental to the first half of the poem on the north side, is equally fundamental to the conceptual

theme of the sculptured panels on the east side of the Ruthwell Cross.[84] Although the programme of this side of the cross is concerned with the catechumenate, it lacks a baptismal scene; and one might speculate that the baptismal ceremony could possibly have been represented in the central roundel of the missing transom.[85]

Directly below the transom an archer is represented in the act of drawing a bow which he aims to the right at something on the now missing arm (see pl III). The locus classicus for understanding the archer is Gregory's extended survey of the various uses of the 'bow' image in scripture, in his *Moralia in Job* (xix 30). Following Augustine, Gregory emphasises the multivalence of the image: 'in sacred writings under the name of the bow are signified, at times, the attacks of the wicked; at times, the day of judgement; and at times indeed the sacred writings themselves'.[86] He then illustrates each of these three meanings in turn. The designer is unlikely to have given a place of honour, just under the transom of the cross, to an image which he intended the onlooker to read primarily as an image of evil, representing the devil or the wicked. Every other single panel on this side of the cross represents Christ, or the Blessed Virgin, or a saint. Such a context suggests that the two positive interpretations of the image, the day of Judgement and the sacred scriptures, should be taken as particularly relevant to the Ruthwell panel. Bede, who knew the *Moralia* intimately, combines these two positive meanings in his interpretation of a phrase from verse 9 of the canticle of Habbakuk, 'tendens extendes arcum tuum super sceptra'. He sees the phrase as referring to those who teach God's revelation, through whom 'you [Christ] will give warning of your Judgement which is suddenly to come, so that whoever will be terrified by the warning of your anger though at a drawn bow, and takes care to beg your mercy, will not feel the arrow-shot, that is, the warning of eternal punishments'.[87] Bede's commentary on the image centres on a paradox. His archer draws his bow to threaten, but only in order to save; the drawn bow, when taken seriously, ensures the safety of the person aimed at. Primarily, the archer is to be interpreted, following Bede who himself followed Gregory, as an image of the preacher who, by means of the scriptures, aims God's commands and warnings of God's punishments at men, so as to touch their hearts with the salutory fear which leads to repentance.

A visual detail of the archer panel seems to confirm that the designer had in mind the positive interpretation of the drawn bow, as found in Gregory and Bede (see pl III). A large satchel hangs in front of the archer's body. The satchel is supported by a strap which passes behind the archer's neck, so that the satchel hangs from his left shoulder. A ridge which runs diagonally across from behind the archer's right elbow to the satchel-strap (intersecting with the strap just under the drawn bowstring) seems designed to represent the back (inner) rim of the satchel, so as to give the satchel the illusion of depth. In the satchel a squarish object is clearly discernible, its edges bevelled either by weathering or by design. As every detail of the arrow in the archer's bow is clearly sculpted, it is odd, if the large satchel which

the archer wears were intended as a quiver, that no effort has been made to make the object in the satchel suggest arrows. But the sculptor may not have had a normal quiver in mind. It is possible that the satchel represents a book-satchel, and that the squarish object in the satchel represents either a copy of the scriptures or a book-shrine *(capsa)* in which the scriptures were kept. If the square object in the archer's satchel were indeed intended to represent a copy of the scriptures, then this archer took his ammunition, in Gregory's words, from 'ipsa eadem sacra eloquia'.[88] Whether or not this interpretation of the satchel and its contents be accepted, the panel seems to be primarily, in Bede's words, 'a warning of your Judgement which is suddenly to come'. The panel has the same eschatological urgency as the image of Christ's dead body, wounded with arrows, in *Sententia* IV of the Ruthwell poem. The archer's or preacher's drawn bow was intended to warn the Ruthwell community to act so as avoid being among those who, on the last day, would 'look on him whom they pierced'.

9. STATIO AD SANCTAM CRUCEM IN HIERUSALEM: THE RELATION BETWEEN THE SECOND HALF OF THE POEM AND THE ICONOGRAPHY OF THE (ORIGINALLY) WEST SIDE OF THE RUTHWELL CROSS (pl II)

In the first half of the poem, the Cross receives Christ; in the second, it hands the body of Christ on to his followers, who receive him in their turn. These followers first appear in the third *sententia* of the poem. Some of the expressions which describe them are rather odd if we assume, as scholars have hitherto done, that the poet was simply thinking of the events of the first Good Friday evening. There seem to be, not one or two followers, but a group of them who 'come together' ('til anum', 11). They are described as 'fusæ' (10), which might be translated as 'restless, eager' (but its full range of meanings will be discussed later), and 'æþþilæ' which means 'noble'. Even more odd, we are told that these followers 'came thither from afar'. We have already remarked that these followers seem to be presented, not as the downcast apostles of Good Friday evening, but as already full of post-Resurrection, indeed post-Pentecostal faith.

The poet thus describes the deposition on Good Friday evening in terms which, while they make sense as an historical narrative, are slightly odd. But the introduction of apparently arbitrary, puzzling details is a standard device in medieval poetry. It is as though the poets wished to stimulate, and indeed irritate, their readers into interpreting narratives, not merely in terms of their obvious meaning, but also as having deeper symbolic dimensions. The oddities we have noted are resolved once we realise that the poet is here thinking, not simply of the events of the first Good Friday as described in the Gospels, but also of the way these events were yearly re-enacted by himself and his community in the liturgy of his own day.[89] On Good Friday afternoon at Rome, in order to commemorate the moment of Christ's death, the pope and clergy went in solemn procession from the Lateran basilica to the

basilica of Sancta Crux in Hierusalem. The solemn procession was clearly conceived of as a pilgrimage: on it, the long psalm, 'Beati immaculati in via' (Psalm 118) was sung (it was sung again after the ceremony, on the return to the Lateran). This psalm combined the idea of pilgrimage with that of moral conversion, *conversatio morum;* as the descriptive title to the psalm in the Vespasian psalter puts it, he will be blessed 'who will have been spotless on the way, that is in Christ who says "I am the way"; and who will have walked through him in the law of the Lord, and who through him will have searched its testimonies, and sought them with all his heart'([*erit itaque beatus] qui inmaculatus fuerit in via, id est in Christo qui dicit: ego sum via, et per ipsum ambulaverit in lege Domini, et per ipsum scrutatus fuerit testimonia eius, et in toto corde suo exquisierit ea).*[90] The basilica of Santa Croce lies to the east of the Lateran, near the Porta Praenestina (now Porta Maggiore), through which St Helena had brought into Rome the relics of the Cross she had found in Jerusalem. A well-founded tradition affirmed that Constantine built the church to receive these relics of the Cross.[91] Santa Croce in Gerusalemme was in the liturgy the symbolic equivalent, in Rome, of Jerusalem: thus to proceed to that basilica was the equivalent, in terms of the Roman stational liturgy, of making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. This is clear from the way the basilica is referred to in *Ordo* XXIII, a description of the Good Friday procession of the mid-eighth century, simply as 'Hierusalem': 'dum perveniunt ad Hierusalem, intrant aecclesiam …' (§12).[92] In Santa Croce the ceremony of readings, culminating in St John's Passion, was held; and then the wood of the Cross was kissed by the clergy and the people of the city.

Several scriptural passages associate Christ's sacrifice on the Cross with the idea of pilgrimage. The Epistle to the Hebrews emphasised that Jesus, 'that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered outside the gate. Let us go forth therefore to him outside the camp, bearing his reproach: for we have not here a lasting city, but seek one that is to come' (13:12–14). St Peter invited his readers to come to the Lord 'as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men but chosen and made honourable by God' (1 Pet. 2:4). In view of this scriptural theme it is likely that the Ruthwell community would have been receptive to the symbolic resonance of a poem, inscribed on a stone monument, which described the followers of Christ coming in pilgrimage to the Cross. I do not wish to argue that the Ruthwell community necessarily went in procession to their cross on Good Friday (though they may have done). It is much more important that they could have been alive to the symbolic significance of the scriptural theme and to the symbolic reasons why the theme had been embodied in Roman liturgical practice. It is likely that the Ruthwell community would have been aware that the Roman liturgy involved a pilgrimage to the Holy Cross on Good Friday. As we have seen, Bede described the visiting lectures on liturgy which John, the archicantor of St Peter's on the Vatican, gave in Northumbria at the time of the council of Hatfield, in 679–80; Bede is equally explicit about the care which his abbot Hwaetberht (abbot 716–c. 750) took to learn,

write down and bring back from Rome to Northumbria all he could about Roman chant.[93] A desire to emphasise that those who performed the Good Friday evening ceremonies should see themselves as 'in via', on pilgrimage, may possibly provide an explanation of why such an elaborate cross should have been erected, not at a great ecclesiastical centre like York or Wearmouth-Jarrow, but at what seems to have been a relatively small (though perhaps important) monastery near the river Neath. At York or Wearmouth, apart from the major community church, another building or chapel would have been available to serve as the equivalent of Santa Croce.[94] At a monastery where there was only one church, the most sensible course may have been to erect their own *sancta crux,* either in the monastic church or elsewhere, at which some of the Good Friday and Easter ceremonies might possibly have been held.

The narrative of lines 10 and 11 of the Ruthwell crucifixion poem is placed in liturgical rather than in historical time. The best context within which to explain the adverb 'fearran' (10) is the liturgical idea of the church headed by its hierarchy going on pilgrimage to the Holy Cross in Jerusalem at the ninth hour on Good Friday. In the psalm they sang, the Good Friday pilgrims referred to themselves as 'beati' and 'immaculati' as well as 'in via'. It is not impossible (though it can only be suggested tentatively, not proven) that in lines 10–11 the Ruthwell poet wished his audience to recall the incipit of Psalm 118. To call his pilgrims 'æþþilæ' (noble) is to use of them an aristocratic, poetic term; but the term is not incompatible, in semantic range, with the connotations of spiritual nobility which 'immaculati' bears in the different language of the Psalms. Swanton has given a useful list of the wide range of connotations which the word 'fusæ' can carry: 'eager, hastening, moving, shining, doomed' (1970, 120). No element of this semantic range is irrelevant to the way the word 'fusæ' is used in the Ruthwell poem. The pilgrims in the Ruthwell poem are 'beati', in the sense of 'eager, joyful'. But the negative end of the spectrum, if for 'doomed' we can here read 'preoccupied by death', is also devotionally important. It is reinforced by the words of the Cross which declares that it was 'saræ … miþ sorgum gidrœfid' (12) when it presented Christ's body to the pilgrims, and by the image of the body itself, 'miþ strælum giwundad' (13) and 'limwœrignæ' (14). That there might be a reminiscence of the 'beati immaculati' *incipit* in lines 10–11 is no more than a possibility, and perhaps a far-fetched one. I by no means wish to insist on it: it is more important to note that a congregation which sang Psalm 118 at the moment of Christ's death on Good Friday must have considered themselves as being 'in via', on pilgrimage, when they worshipped the wood of the Cross on which the Saviour of the world had hung. The followers of Christ in the Ruthwell poem are similarly seen as 'in via', coming to the Cross as though they were eighth-century pilgrims: pilgrims coming to the Holy Cross in Jerusalem, or at Rome to Sancta Crux in Hierusalem, or at Ruthwell to the Ruthwell Cross itself.[95]

It is necessary to stress that the Ruthwell poem should not be seen simply as a recording, in imaginative terms, of liturgical practice. Instead, awareness of the

liturgical references in the Ruthwell text provides us with a historically convincing basis on which to explore other symbolic dimensions of the text. One of the most important of these is the scriptural symbolism embodied in the poem. For the Ruthwell poet, the liturgical gathering of the community at the Sancta Crux on Good Friday evening would have been itself a symbol of the truth that the church was a community called together from Jews and Gentiles as a consequence of the fact that 'Krist wæs on rodi' (9). By balancing against each other the adverbs 'fearran' (10) and 'til anum' (11) the poet is able to allude to a whole series of scriptural passages which present the church as brought together by Christ lifted up on the Cross. Perhaps the text most clearly alluded to is Ephesians 2:13–18—a passage the importance of which might have been particularly appreciated in eighth-century Ruthwell, in a border area between two cultures, particularly if it had been recently re-evangelised:

> Nunc autem in Christo Iesu vos, qui aliquando eratis *longe,* facti estis *prope in sanguine Christi.* Ipse enim est pax nostra, qui fecit *utraque unum,* … ut duos condat in semetipso in *unum novem hominem,* faciens pacem, et reconciliet ambos in uno corpore, Deo per crucem, interficiens inimicitias in semetipso. Et veniens evangelizavit pacem vobis, qui *longe* fuistis, et pacem iis, qui *prope.* Quoniam per ipsum habemus accessum ambo in uno Spiritu ad Patrem.

Behind this Pauline text is a whole series of related images in the scriptures; perhaps the most important expression of the theme is, as we have seen, the words of Christ in St John's gospel: 'and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself' (12:32). The theme received liturgical expression, not only in the procession to the Holy Cross on Good Friday, but also in a *versus* (sung in the litanies which followed lauds on Holy Thursday and on Holy Saturday) which saw Christ as having drawn all ages to himself when he stretched wide his hands on the Cross ('Qui expansis in cruce manibus traxisti omnia ad te secula'). The stress on 'omnia … secula' in this *versus* indicates how naturally the theme under consideration could be seen as indicating Christ's sovereignty, not only over all peoples, but over all history, and so related to his statement that 'I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, … who is and who was and who is to come' (Apoc. 1:8).[96] The phrase 'til anum' (11) is particularly resonant in view of the way in which, at the ninth hour on Good Friday, the Roman liturgy made Holy Cross the setting for a solemn synaxis (a 'coming together' or 'congregation'), and so acted out the Pauline idea that the church was gathered together *ad unum* by its corner stone (Eph. 2:20), the body of Christ lifted up on the Cross.[97]

The contrasting narratives of each half of the Ruthwell crucifixion poem are equally original; no convincing literary parallels for either half have yet been found. We have argued that the first half of the poem was possibly inspired, not by any literary analogue, but by a desire to stress, by describing the crucifixion as reminiscent of the Annunciation, the intimate relationship between Christ's

Incarnation and his crucifixion. In the second half of the poem, no one has yet suggested a convincing literary or iconographic source for the remarkable idea that the Cross itself bends to present the body of Christ to his followers. The famous hymn 'Pange lingua' by Venantius Fortunatus provides suggestive parallels to certain features of the Ruthwell poem; but for this crucial idea the 'Pange lingua' provides, not an analogue, but rather a significant contrast:

> Flecte ramos, arbor alta, tensa laxa viscera,
> et rigor lentescat ille, quern dedit natiuitas,
> ut superni membra regis mite tendas stipite.[98]

Venantius Fortunatus indeed asks the Cross to 'bend its boughs' ('flecte ramos'); but he does so in the context of asking the Cross to relax *(laxare)* its tense trunk ('tensa … viscera'), and to soften the stiffness it was born with, 'so that you may stretch out *(tendere)* the limbs of the king of heaven on a gentle log' ('mite … stipite').[99] Venantius is interested in how the Cross should bear Christ aloft, not in whether it should hand on his body: unlike the Ruthwell poem, he makes no mention of the reception of Christ's body from the Cross by his followers. Where the 'Pange lingua' has *tendere,* a close Latin analogue of the Ruthwell poem, if such existed, would perhaps have *tradere* ('to hand on').[100] Indeed, the uniqueness of the idea of the Cross bending to Christ's followers, and its poetic power, have not been sufficiently remarked in modern commentary. But if hymns or literary texts apparently do not provide a close analogue for this moving idea, eighth-century liturgical custom certainly does. From the earliest times, the idea of *traditio,* handing on, was central to the catechumenate. In the Roman liturgy of the seventh and eighth centuries, the documents of the faith were symbolically handed on to the catechumens in a ceremony which took place on an unspecified day during the fourth week of Lent. This was the central ceremony of the eighth-century Roman rite of the catechumenate. From the theme of the opening exhortation of the catechumens by the celebrant, the ceremony was known as 'the opening of the ears' *(in aurium apertione).* The ceremony began with a *traditio evangeliorum,* in which the *incipit* of each of the four gospels was read aloud, and the catechumens were instructed in the relevance of each of the evangelist symbols to its appropriate gospel. We know that the *traditio evangeliorum* was practised in eighth-century Northumbria. Bede provides two brief accounts of it, the earliest unambiguous references to the ceremony to survive from any source:

> Vnde pulcher in ipsa ecclesia mos antiquitus inoleuit ut his qui catechizandi et christianis sunt sacramentis initiandi quattuor euangeliorum principia recitentur ac de figuris et ordine eorum in apertione aurium suarum sollerter erudiantur quo sciant exinde ac meminerint qui et quot sint libri quorum uerbis maxime in fide ueritatis debeant erudiri.[101]

Bede was impressed by the beauty of this ceremony: in his second reference to it, he terms it 'pulcher ac salubris'.[102] The directions for the ceremony are found in *Ordo* XI. It has been argued that this *ordo* was compiled by John the Archicantor of St Peter's, visiting lecturer on liturgy in Northumbria in 679–80; but the attribution of the document to a particular compiler whose name we happen to know must be regarded as extremely doubtful. The hypothesis is in any case unnecessary: whether or not John did compile *Ordo* XI is of little importance compared with the fact that the *ordo* does apparently reflect the Old Roman rite of the second half of the seventh century. It must therefore correspond, directly or indirectly, to the instructions which John would have given about the catechumenate and baptism; and it was considered particularly important to follow the Roman *ordo* for baptism.[103] In the *Apertio aurium* ceremony, the handing on of the gospels was followed by a handing on of the creed *(traditio symboli)* and a handing on of the Our Father *(traditio dominicae orationis).*[104] In the Our Father the catechumens prayed for another *traditio:* its central petition (the fourth of seven), 'give us this day our daily bread', was interpreted with reference to the reception of Christ's body in the eucharist.[105] Liturgical practice strongly reinforced this interpretation: the 'Our Father' was recited daily in the mass just before communion and, in that context, the petition for 'daily bread' must have been interpreted in eucharistic terms. It is clear therefore that christian initiation in the eighth century was intimately associated with the idea of *traditio.* In the second half of the Ruthwell poem we have an original and moving variation on this concept. The poet makes the Cross, on Good Friday evening, perform for Christ's followers a *traditio corporis Domini:* hand on to them the body of Christ, and so bring the liturgical sequence of *traditiones* (Gospels, Creed, Our Father) to completion. The poem's narrative, however original, was entirely consistent with the logic of the Lenten catechumenate. The early christian rites of initiation culminated precisely in a handing on of the body of Christ to the neophytes when, on the vigil of Easter, having received baptism and the seal of the spirit (confirmation) they for the first time partook of the eucharist.[106]

The Ruthwell poem ends, not with a sense of completion and finality, but rather on a note of pause and expectancy as the followers look on the body of Christ. This lack of finality in the fourth *sententia* is interesting. Up to this point, the poet has devised a poetic narrative which, while alluding to the liturgy of Holy Week, also told what was recognisable as an account of the first Good Friday. The poem ends at the precise moment when this parallel between liturgy and history breaks down. On the first Good Friday, Christ was buried in a tomb. On Good Fridays from the late seventh century onwards, the adoration of the Cross was followed by the recitation of the Our Father and the silent reception of the eucharist. Up to the moment in which the followers gaze upon the body of Christ the poet could have it both ways; beyond this moment, he would have to choose to describe either Christ's burial on the first Good Friday or the liturgical reception of Christ's body, in Holy Communion, on Good

Fridays in the poet's own lifetime.

But if the poem ends at this moment of pause, the Ruthwell Cross completes the narrative action and does so in liturgical terms. The final *sententia* of the poem, in which the followers gaze at Christ's body, is inscribed on the left-hand border of the (originally) south side of the cross. If an onlooker completed his circuit of the cross he would find, on the immediately adjacent west side, a large panel of Christ over two animals. As I have argued elsewhere (1986) this panel alludes to two texts chanted during the ceremony of readings held at Santa Croce at the ninth hour on Good Friday up to, or shortly before, the reign of pope Gregory II (715–31). The phrase 'in medio duorum animalium innotesceris', from the Canticle of Habbakuk, was sung as part of the responsory after the first Old Testament reading; while the verse 'super aspidem et basiliscum ambulabis et conculcabis leonem et draconem' (Ps. 90:13) was sung as part of the responsory (Ps. 90) sung after the second Old Testament reading (during, or shortly before, the reign of pope Gregory II Psalm 90 was at this point in the Roman ceremony replaced by Ps. 139, 'Eripe me').[107] The iconography of the west side of the cross refers, like the third and fourth *sententiae* of the poem, to the Old Roman ceremonies at Santa Croce in Gerusalemme at the moment of Christ's death.

Recent studies have emphasised the eucharistic inspiration of all the iconography of the originally west side of the cross.[108] Central to the sequence of panels is the idea that in the breaking of bread Christ is to be recognized: the ultimate theological inspiration of the sequence is St Luke's gospel, in which the disciples at Emmaus 'knew him in the breaking of bread' (24:35). The panel of Christ recognized by the beasts is flanked by two references to the breaking of bread for communion: above, the Agnus Dei panel (the Agnus Dei chant had recently been introduced to accompany the breaking of bread for communion) and, below, the panel which shows Paul and Anthony breaking bread in the desert, FREGER[VNT] PANEM IN DESERTO (probably a reference to the way in which, in the Iona rite, two priests broke the bread between them).[109] But the breaking of bread for communion was usually interpreted as a re-enactment of the breaking of Christ's body, by the nails and spear, on the Cross.[110] Thus we can say that the designer placed at the centre of the iconography of this side three linked references, all of which use eucharistic symbolism, to Christ's death on the Cross: Christ's recognition 'in medio duorum animalium' (in terms of the chants sung at the moment of his death); his recognition as Agnus Dei (the chant sung at the breaking of bread); and his recognition in the act of breaking bread itself (Paul and Anthony). This emphasis on the eucharistic recognition of Christ's sacrifice can reasonably be seen as a completion of the final *sententia* of the poem in which the followers of Christ look on his body. The early Northumbrian followers of Christ would have seen each mass as a re-enactment of the death of Christ on the Cross. It is therefore of interest that, if mass were ever celebrated near, or in front of, the Ruthwell and Bewcastle crosses, the congregations and celebrants, if they were correctly oriented, would have faced the west sides of the monuments. They would

then have been able at Ruthwell (if that cross was oriented as the Bewcastle Cross still is) to gaze upon the eucharistic images we have just analysed. Liturgical and, particularly, eucharistic action would have provided the most practical commentary on the iconography of the west side. Liturgical action would also have encouraged a monastic audience to appreciate the ways in which the iconography of the west side brought the poem to completion, by showing how its narrative was made present in their own daily lives. While the idea of the *traditio corporis Domini,* of the Cross handing the body of Christ to his followers, is consonant with the emphasis on *traditio* in the liturgy of the catechumenate, a monastic audience is likely to have seen the idea as equally appropriate to the references on the west side of the cross to the liturgy of the eucharist. In mass they would have seen themselves as receiving the body of Christ, broken for them, from the altar as from the Holy Cross itself.[111] Finally, the west side makes explicit the eschatological perspective implicit in the final *sententia* of the Ruthwell poem with its reminiscence of 'they shall look on him whom they have pierced'. The central panel, 'Christ over the Beasts', presents Christ, the 'iudex aequitatis', as coming in glory to judge mankind; and it seems likely that at the top of this side the four evangelist-symbols surrounded another image, inspired by Apocalypse 4:2–5:14, of Christ in glory.[112] The unifying idea of the west side of the monument is the recognition of the body of Christ. This concern unites the images on that side: of his infancy, of his adult majesty, of the recognition and reception of his body in the eucharist, and of his return in glory. The theme controls even the details of the iconography: John the Baptist's pointing hand provides a visual equivalent for the words of his recognition of Christ in St John's gospel (1:29, 36), 'Ecce Agnus Dei'; and the animals which recognise Christ are made to cross paws so that, crossing between their bodies, the paws of the two animals form the Greek letter *chi,* the first letter of Christ's name. These two animals not only create a visual title *(Christus)* for the panel in which they occur, a title which preceded but was reinforced by the Latin inscription for the panel. They also wittily fulfil, by their cooperative gesture, the prophecy of the Canticle of Habbakuk that Christ will be known between two animals ('in media duorum animalium innotesceris'). Bede's description of the pictures which Benedict Biscop brought from Rome to adorn the church of St. Peter at Wearmouth (679) provides an analogue for the effect which the imagery of the Ruthwell Cross, and in particular of its west side, seems designed to produce on the onlooker: 'so that all people … even if they were illiterate, could look whatever way they turned, even if only in an image, on the dear countenance of Christ and his saints; or recollect with a more wide-awake mind the grace of the Lord's Incarnation; or remember to examine their conscience more strictly, having the crucial moment of final judgement as though it were before their very eyes'.[113]

10. CONCLUSION: THE RUTHWELL CROSS AS AN INTEGRATED MONUMENT, DESIGNED TO BE READ *DESSEL* (pl I–III)

I conclude that the Ruthwell Cross is a carefully integrated monument; and that there are close and compelling links between the unique themes and structure of the Ruthwell crucifixion poem and the unique conceptual theme of the cross as it emerges from the sculptured panels. The poem was carefully designed or edited for the cross by people who knew and cared deeply what the cross was about. The poem can be understood as a continuous text by starting at the (originally) north side and moving to the south. The iconography can also be read as a single continuous programme by beginning at the bottom of the east side, reading upwards to the eagle on the branch (originally at the top of that side), and then reading the opposite west side, from the bottom to the representation of St John and his eagle at the top. It is important to emphasise that both the poem and the iconography *can* be read separately, each in its own terms; and that some early onlookers may well have appreciated the iconography in isolation from the poem or, like some good modern scholars, have preferred to appreciate the poem in isolation from the iconography. Such onlookers would, however, have missed the single coherent concept behind the design of the cross. Poem and iconography explain and complement each other: the poem presents Christ's victory on the Cross as a historical event which took place on Good Friday; while the iconography presents the ways in which the Northumbrian church interpreted their liturgical participation in his victory: how (in the rites of the catechumenate, the ceremonies of Good Friday, the initiation ceremonies of the Easter vigil, and mass throughout the year) they assimilated the fruits won by that victory. The poem's narrative is itself shaped so as to recall the liturgical celebration of Christ's death on Good Friday in the eighth century. Poem and iconography are not only extremely original: they are original in similar, consonant ways. Poem and iconography together express a single, profoundly coherent, *sententia.*

This coherence can only be appreciated by moving continuously around the cross sunwise. The onlooker who had (perhaps over many years) familiarized himself with all major features of the cross would find few visual disjunctions in the design of the monument. The first *sententia* of the poem flows across the top and down the right hand border of the north side of the lower stone; the foliage scroll on that side then attracts the eye upwards towards the beginning of the second *sententia* of the poem, at the top of the left hand border. The second *sententia* flows down this border; moving sunwise to the east side, the onlooker would find that the iconography is best read upwards from the foot of the cross. This would leave him well-placed to read the *incipit* of the third *sententia* of the poem (which runs across the top margin and down the right-hand border of the south side of the lower stone). The layout of the 'second half' of the cross (south and west sides) duplicates that of the 'first half'. The coherence of the cross's design is the best justification for the layout of the poem's runes in short lines which (apart from the brief easily-read incipits to each half of the

poem) form four great vertical columns flanking the two foliage scrolls. The columns of runes are, as design, aesthetically pleasing. They cannot be read quickly or easily: the onlooker must spend time and effort, not only to get by heart the text but also to appreciate the layout, and so the structure, of the poem on the cross. But when he has once performed that necessary process of rumination, one or two short lines of runes can act as a mnemonic for a whole *sententia.* Each *sententia* fills a unified column of runes: and the order in which the four columns must be ruminated in order to meditate on the poem as a whole teaches the patient onlooker the direction he should follow in order to understand the whole cross. It is unlikely that a poem, the themes, structure and layout of which are all consonant with the iconographic structure of the cross should have been added to the cross by accident, or in a fit of carelessness.

The principle of sunwise movement is built deeply into the design of the cross, controlling not only the relationships between the narrow sides and the broad sides, but also the layout of the vernacular poem and of most of the Latin inscriptions on the cross. It may possibly be one of the 'Irish symptoms' on the cross for, while most cultures have felt that sunwise movement was propitious, the many references in Old-Irish literature to the desirability of following one's right hand (OIr *dessel, for láim deis)* may possibly indicate that the literate classes in Ireland took such symbolism more seriously than their literate counterparts in Germanic cultures.[114] At least one early Irish high cross, the cross at Moone, Co Kildare, was clearly meant to be read *dessel.*[115] There may be other 'Irish symptoms' on the Ruthwell Cross. Its 'Paul and Anthony' panel is the only one to survive on an Anglo-Saxon monument. The 'Paul and Anthony' motif is, however, found four times on Pictish monuments, and is common in Ireland, where ten definite examples survive.[116] Both Saxl and Schapiro argued convincingly that the emphasis on life in the desert, in the panels of the west face, might reflect the spirituality of Celtic monasticism.[117] The concern to juxtapose crucifixion and Annunciation panels, and so perhaps to emphasise that both these events occurred on 25 March, may possibly indicate that for the Ruthwell community old controversies about the date of Easter were less important than a historical tradition (the coincidence of the Annunciation and the anniversary of the crucifixion at the vernal equinox) which both Celtic and Roman scholars agreed to be true.[118] It is not surprising to find 'Irish symptoms' on a monument such as the Ruthwell Cross. Recent studies have provided new evidence of the openness of Irish and Northumbrian cultures to mutual influence at this period: a striking example is the Anglo-Saxon monastery at Ráth Melsigi where, among other English monks, Ecgberct and Willibrord went to study the scriptures. If Fr Colmcille Conway's identification of the site of this monastery is correct, it stood at Clonmelsh, Co Carlow, not ten miles from the high cross, designed to be read *dessel,* at Moone.[119] Scholars have recently demonstrated Bede's debt to Irish authors, and the quick acceptance of Bede's writings in eighth-century Ireland.[120] It is clear that Irish scribes and illuminators worked in Northumbria, such as the Ultán whose work is praised

so highly in Aethelwulf's *De abbatibus.*[121] Indeed, the assured way in which the Ruthwell designers incorporated themes common in Irish art or spirituality within a cross which is deeply influenced by the *ordo Romanus* provides proof, if more proof were needed, that the sharp distinction which Schapiro and scholars of his generation made between 'Celtic' and 'Roman' spirituality was misleading.[122]

I shall end by suggesting that there may possibly be an 'Irish symptom' in the opening line of the Ruthwell crucifixion poem, which refers to Almighty God as stripping himself when he wished to ascend the gallows. As we have seen, this line is remarkable in referring to Christ as 'Ḡod Almeȝttig', a phrase normally, when without qualification, used only of God the Father. The events of the Passion were usually commemorated daily in the prayers for terce, sext and none, because the gospel Passion narratives referred to the third, sixth and ninth hours. The prose collect for sext in the Antiphonary of Bangor refers to Christ's ascent of the Cross. It addresses him, without further qualification, as 'almighty eternal God':

> Omnipotens aeterne Deus, qui nobis magnalia fecisti, sexta hora crucem (sanctam: *add. corr.)* ascendisti et tenebras mundi inluminasti: sic et corda nostra inluminare digneris, qui regnas.[123]

It is reasonable to suggest that, when he described the ascent of the Cross by Christ, the imagination of a monastic poet might have been informed by a reminiscence of the lapidary phrases of a prayer which he and his community daily recited at the symbolically appropriate time (the sixth hour). In the light of this possibility, it is particularly interesting that the prayer includes the *crucem ascendere* formula, a clear analogue of the phrase 'on ḡalḡu gistiḡa' which in the opening line of the Ruthwell poem is linked by alliteration to the phrase 'Ḡod Almeȝttig'. But, although versions of this prayer are found in Roman use and in the Ambrosian liturgy of Milan, it is only the version in the Antiphonary of Bangor which addresses Christ as 'omnipotens aeterne Deus'. In Roman use one surv1vmg eighth-century Gelasian sacramentary, the Sacramentary of Angouleme, contains a corrected version in which for 'omnipotens aeterne deus' an alternative form of address based on Ps. 110:9 has been substituted: 'Sanctum et terribile nomen tuum, domine, qui pro nobis magnalia fecisti …'.[124] The motive for this substitution may have been an awareness of how unusual it was to address the Son as 'omnipotens aeterne Deus', a phrase usually reserved as an address to God the Father.[125]' The Sacramentary of Angouleme also provides an alternative prayer for sext which avoids theological difficulty by addressing Christ by name. This prayer, alone, is provided for sext in another eighth-century Gelasian sacramentary, the Sacramentary of Gellone:

> Domine iesu christe qui dum hora sexta pro redemptione mundi crucis ascendisti lignum uniuersus mundus in tenebris conuersus est, illam nos lucem in anima et corpore nostro semper tribue per quam ad eternam uitam peruenire mereamur. Per.[126]

Alcuin also addresses Christ by name in the prayer for sext in his *Liber sacramentorum.* His prayer seems to be a rewritten and stylistically improved version of the prayer just quoted:

> Domine Deus Iesu Christe, qui hora sexta pro redemptione mundi crucis lignum ascendisti, ut universus mundus, qui in tenebris erat, illuminaretur; te supplices deprecamur, ut illam lucem nobis in animo et corpore nostro semper tribuas, per quam ad vitam aeternam pervenire mereamur. Qui vivis.[127]

In manuscripts of the Ambrosian rite of Milan, we find an expanded and thoroughly corrected version of the prayer for sext in the Antiphonary of Bangor. The compiler of the Ambrosian prayer seems to have known both the Bangor prayer and the revised version of that prayer found in the Sacramentary of Angouleme, but to have found both versions theologically unsatisfactory. The Ambrosian prayer does not address Christ, by name or otherwise. It uses both the versicle from Ps. 110:9 found in the Sacramentary of Angouleme and, also, the phrase 'Omnipotens aeterne Deus' found in the Antiphonary of Bangor. But it applies both of these phrases to God the Father and, in this way, makes a clear distinction between the actions of the Father and of the Son at the crucifixion. Here God the Father, clearly identified as 'omnipotens aeterne Deus', is seen as willing his Son to ascend the Cross in order to save mankind from the power of the enemy:

> Sanctum et terribile nomen tuum, *omnipotens aeterne Deus,* humiliter deprecamur: ut qui hora diei sexta *gloriosissimum filium tuum d.n.I. Christum in crucem ascendere voluisti,* ut nos a potestate hostis nequissimi liberares, praesta, quaesumus, ut eius cruce redempti, tibi domino iugiter sine offensione omni tempore serviamus, per eundem.[128]

The Antiphonary of Bangor and the Ruthwell crucifixion poem are both unusual in that, when describing how Christ ascended the Cross, each refers to him without further qualification as 'Almighty God'.[129] These two texts were familiar to communities who lived quite near each other near opposite shores of the Irish sea; and it seems very likely that during the period in which some or all of the Ruthwell community would have known their great crucifixion poem, the Bangor community would have known the prayer 'Omnipotens aeterne deus' from reciting it publicly each day at the sixth hour (the Antiphonary was written between 680 and 691; and, leaving aside the question of when it was inscribed on the cross, the Ruthwell poem reflects the christological and liturgical interests of the Northumbrian church in the late seventh and early eighth centuries). Bangor lies west of Ruthwell, on a convenient sea route from Loch Laig (Belfast Lough) to Whithorn and Ruthwell, and then by land via Bewcastle and Hexham to Jarrow and Wearmouth near the eastern end of Hadrian's wall, or north to Lindisfarne, or south to Whitby. The other signs

that the Ruthwell designers were receptive both to Roman and to Irish liturgical, devotional and symbolic traditions render it possible that the Ruthwell community also might have been familiar, from daily use, with the prayer preserved in the Bangor manuscript.

The Ruthwell crucifixion poem should be recognized as a major poem in its own right: indeed, the earliest surviving text of a major poem in the English language. The designers of the Ruthwell Cross made that poem an integral part of the iconographic programme of the finest high cross to survive from the island of Britain. Poem and cross both provide evidence that the Ruthwell community combined a deep reverence for the Roman way of doing things (the *ordo Romanus)* with a receptive awareness of Irish traditions.

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NOTES

1 This brief sketch of the modern history of the cross summarizes the research of Meyvaert (3–8), and the account by Farrell (1986) of the damage done to the cross. The theory that one side of the missing transom contained an image of the Agnus Dei, or a Majestas Domini, was fully argued by Cramp (1978).

2 See Saxl and Wittkower (1948) §§15–16. The best accounts of the stylistic affinities of the cross are those of Saxl (1943), together with Cramp (1959–60 and 1965).

3 Thus in 1978 Cramp was able to use as evidence for her theory that the Agnus Dei or Majestas Domini was portrayed on the central roundel which now faces north (and which probably faced west originally) the fact that a small scene which survives below the transom apparently represents St Matthew and his angel; while St John and his eagle, mistakenly reversed in the nineteenth-century reconstruction, probably occupied the top of this side of the cross. Cramp deduced that SS Luke and Mark, with their symbols the ox and the lion, were represented on the arms of this side.

4 In its present position the broad sides of the cross face north and south. It is likely that the cross was originally oriented with its broad sides facing east and west: the Ruthwell cross is closely related stylistically to the cross at Bewcastle, which seems never to have been moved. Only the west side of the Bewcastle Cross has figural panels; and two of the three surviving panels on this west side (representing John the Baptist holding the Agnus Dei, and Christ over the Beasts) correspond closely, both in design and in relative position, to two panels on the side of the Ruthwell cross which now faces north. I shall proceed on the assumption that these panels were originally oriented as at Bewcastle, and shall, for the remainder of this article, refer to this hypothetical orientation rather than to the present one. For some recent speculations on the possible relationship between the iconographic programme of the Bewcastle Cross and that of the Ruthwell Cross, see Ó Carragáin, 1987a, 36–40.

5 Following Cramp (1959–60, 12) I would date the cross to the first half of the eighth century, with a preference for the latter part of this period (730–50). But I would not exclude a date later in the eighth century (750–800).

6 No inscription survives for the crucifixion scene at the foot of the (originally) east side; the damage to that panel is such that it is impossible to be sure whether or not it was ever provided with an inscription.

7 The best text of the inscriptions on the cross will be found in Okasha (1971, 110–11). As well as the inscriptions for eight of the major panels, it is possible that some of the smaller panels at the cross-head were once identified by inscriptions, but they are now illegible (Okasha, 1983, 110).

8 The earliest surviving texts of Caedmon's Hymn, the Moore and Leningrad manuscripts of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica,* are dated to the period 731(at the earliest)–747: see Colgrave and Mynors (1969, xliii–xliv). This may make them

contemporary with, or a little later than, the Ruthwell Cross.

9 The phrase is Stanley's (393): I find a note of glee in his iteration that Meyvaert's hypothesis gives him freedom, resolution and independence to attend to the linguistic evidence untrammelled by other considerations: ' … if we are now free to consider a later date for the inscription' (365); 'we need no longer feel constrained by the dating of art historians, now that we are freed by [Sir David Wilson's] expert acknowledgement of the difficulty of dating works of Anglo-Saxon art by the comparative method .. .' (367); 'we have cut the dating of the inscription loose from the dating of the cross itself' (389, repeated in similar words on p 390); 'Meyvaert has freed the dating of the verse inscription from the dating of the cross' (396); 'Meyvaert has freed us from having to assume a long period of time between the cutting of the runes and the writing of the Vercelli book' (399). Stanley has little to say of the themes or structures of the Ruthwell, Vercelli or Brussels versions of the poem, except to state that in the Vercelli *Dream* 'ideas are handled repetitiously' (398); he repeats this charge on the next page ('repetitious', 399).

10 Elizabeth Coatsworth considers that ' … the Crucifixion on the Ruthwell cross and on the Rothbury cross-head, seem to represent a new influence in Anglian art of the late pre-Viking period, and in both there are clear traces of influence from the new Carolingian image of the ninth century' (1988, 185). If the Ruthwell crucifixion panel is a ninth-century addition to the cross, or if an original figure of Christ in the panel were at that time remodelled to reflect new ninth century iconographic and devotional interests, this would reflect just the kind of informed interest in completing and updating the work of an earlier generation which one might expect in a stable community. But such remodelling or updating, if it indeed occurred, would not imply a lack of interest in the unity or integrity of the cross, rather the reverse: the panel enriches and completes the iconographic programme of the cross, and (juxtaposed as it is to an Annunciation scene) provides a clear analogue for the presentation of the crucifixion in the poem as reminiscent of the Annunciation: see Section 7, and (for the place of the panel in the iconography of the cross) Ó Carragáin, 1987b, 120–22.

11 The inscription on the Brussels Cross includes what appears to be a reminiscence of certain lines of the *Dream:* cf. Dickens and Ross, 1954, 13–19; Okasha, 1971, no 17: p 57–58 and pi 17a–17c; Backhouse, Turner and Webster, 1984, no 75: p 90–92 and pl XXIII.

12 The lower margin was also used in the case of the panel representing John the Baptist bearing the Agnus Dei. There are two exceptions to the sequence Top-Right Margin-Left Margin- (when necessary) Lower Margin. When the 'Healing of the Blind Man' panel was inscribed, the top margin must have been already occupied by the end of the long inscription to 'Mary Magdalen at the feet of Christ', directly above. The inscription to the 'Healing of the Blind Man' runs downward from the top of the left margin, and John Higgitt (1985) suggests that this was done to place the beginning of the inscription, which refers to Christ, next to the figure of Christ which

stands on the left side of the panel. Second, in the 'Christ over the beasts' panel the carver placed the first of the two *sententiae* of the inscription ('IHS XPS / IVDEX AEQVITATIS') in the usual manner, across the top and running half-way down the right side. He then inscribed the second *sententia* so that it runs down the left side. But there was not enough room for the whole *sententia* on that side, so he finished it off on the second half of the right margin (which had been left blank at the end of the first *sententia)* going so far as to divide the word 'DE / SERTO' between the two sides. This has naturally been criticized as clumsy, as it divided the *sententia* in two: 'BESTIAE ET DRACONES COGNOUERVNT IN DE / SERTO SALVATOREM MVNDI'. But there is some merit in the carver's procedure. The inscription consists of two separate sentences, but has only one expressed verb. The carver's solution may have been clumsy, but it avoided the bathos that would have resulted from running the second sentence on directly after the first: 'IHS XPS / IVDEX AEQVITATIS BESTIAE ET DRACONES / .. .'. Planned like that, the inscription would have appeared to consist of a single *sententia,* with Christ, the beasts and dragons as its subject, and Christ ('SALVATOREM MVNDI') as its object as well. As it stands, it is impossible to read the inscription except as two separate *sententiae.* Meyvaert provides a particularly useful analysis of the various possible ways of arranging an inscription around a panel or illustration (23–25). He points out that the system used for the Latin inscriptions at Ruthwell is not often found, but is found in both the Durham Gospels and the Codex Amiatinus (24).

13 The figure of 268 surviving runes is given by Howlett (1976, 54): he bases his calculations on the texts given by Okasha (1971, 111–12) and Page (1973, 150–51). Howlett estimates that over 60 runes can be restored from early drawings: this would bring the total to over 328. Page is in substantial agreement with this figure: according to him, there are 'over 320 runes remaining or recorded' from Ruthwell (1973, 15). In addition, Howlett calculates that, in the case of small lacunae in the extant text on the cross, a further 30 runes can be supplied from collation with the Vercelli Book. Finally, Dickens and Ross estimated that space existed on the defaced lower margins of the cross for a further 128 runes (25 n 42; 27 n 49; 28 n 59; 29 n 64: cited by Howlett, 1976, 56 n 4): this indicates that the poem, if it filled all the available space, may have originally comprised in excess of 480 runes. The second longest runic inscription which survives from England is that of the Franks casket (over 260 runes); but these are divided between the four sides and the top of the casket, so that there are 'five sculptured panels, each with one or more runic legends, making up eleven discrete inscriptions on the casket' (Page, 1973, 175). As Page has put it, the corpus of English runic inscriptions comprises 'under thirty significant texts, and several of these consist only of personal names in the nominative case' (15). No other surviving runic inscription from England compares in length to the poem at Ruthwell.

14 See Ute Schwab, 1978, 156 and n 134. There is a good drawing of this cross and its inscription in Silvana Casartelli Novelli, 1987, pl xv, fig 22 and, on the history

of the cross, 145. Schwab (1978, 160–62) also points out that parts of the Greek inscription on the Limburg Staurotheca (a gift of the tenth-century Byzantine emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitos) run down the margins of the vertical sides in a series of short lines reading from right to left, so that the onlooker need not turn the reliquary to read those parts of the inscription. I am grateful to Dr Jane Roberts for help with this paragraph.

15 Anne King (1986, 68–69) writes well on the aesthetic factors involved in the layout of the Ruthwell runes, in particular the probable 'desire on the part of the rune cutter to set out the inscriptions as neatly as possible on the area of stone available by spacing the runes evenly, aligning them with each other horizontally and vertically and leaving no vertical gaps in the rows so that they would form complete and proportionate horizontal and vertical linear units' (66). Stanley points out that economy of space and ease of cutting may have determined the choice of some runes over others (393–94).

16 'CAESARIVS DIXIT: Sic lectione et oratione debetis incumbere, ut interdum etiam manibus aliquod possitis exercere'—H. M. Rochais (ed), *Liber scintillarum,* CCSL 117 (1957) 7:54, 34. Good introductions to monastic meditation and 'lectio activa' are to be found in Leclercq; Crepin; and Tugwell, 103–13. John Higgitt (1986) has a stimulating discussion of the ways in which the inscribed Insular stone crosses of this period may have been read by, or explained to, early medieval audiences. Hamlin (1987) provides an excellent survey, from literary sources, of the uses to which Irish High Crosses were put.

17 The term *sententia,* and its meaning in the context of monastic reading, is discussed at length in Ó Carragáin, 1975, chapter 2.

18 The only article devoted to the literary qualities of the Ruthwell poem is Howlett's brief analysis of the poem's symmetry, published in 1978, two years after he had suggested how the poem might be reconstructed.

19 'ongyrede hine' line 39a, quoted by Woolf, 147: cp. Ruthwell line 1, 'ondgeredæ hinæ'.

20 'geong hæleð', line 39a, quoted by Woolf, 145.

21 The difficulties Woolf placed herself in by ignoring the Ruthwell text and relying solely on Vercelli are reflected, but not resolved, in the final paragraph of her article (153 and n 34). It is only fair to remark that Woolf was following a scholarly consensus in dismissing lines 78ff of the poem as a later addition: see, for example, the edition of Dickins and Ross, (first published in 1934) 18. In contrast, it is a relief to find Stanley stating (1987, 399) that he accepts the *Dream* 'as a whole'.

22 Ada Bundi (1979) has published a meticulous and important assessment of Howlett's reconstruction, and has made some alternative suggestions. Only one materially alters the poetic significance of Howlett's reconstruction (the opening line of *Sententia* IV, discussed in Section 5).

23 'The metrical structure of the Ruthwell text implies that its source was a

longer poem which contained both normal and hypermetric lines': Howlett, 1978, 167. Like Sweet before him, Howlett identifies the 'editor' of the Ruthwell poem with 'the designer and carver of the Ruthwell Cross' (1978, 169).

24 Page, 1973, 151. The theory is considered and rejected by Dickins and Ross (4 n 4), who consider that 'the word *dægisgæf* may be a personal name'.

25 In the way in which, as I shall argue, the *sententiae* on the lower stone were balanced against each other.

26 I find Sisam's note of caution here more attractive as a point of departure than Stanley's confident hypothesis that the Ruthwell inscription was taken from 'the exemplar of the Vercelli scribe, or an antecedent' (398).

27 Rochais, 1964, provides the best introduction to the devotional and ascetic *florilegia* of early medieval monasticism. For analysis of the Vercelli Book as an Anglo-Saxon example of this genre, see Ó Carragáin, 1975 and 1981.

28 Lineation of the text follows Howlett (1976); as well as examining the cross itself, I have consulted the texts of Dickins and Ross, Swanton, Page's text printed in Okasha (1971, 111–12) and Page (1973, 150–51), as corrected by Howlett (1974a). Square brackets denote runes not now legible but which can be restored with confidence from early drawings, or from collation with the Vercelli Book. The translation is my own, although I have consulted Okasha (1971) Page (1973) and Howlett (1976).

29 For some idea of the frequency with which God the Father was referred to by collocations involving the word 'omnipotens', see the index of liturgical forms in Wilson's edition of the Gelasian Sacramentary, under 'Deus omnipotens' (377) and 'omnipotens sempiterne Deus' (385–86). The solemn prayers on Good Friday are printed by Wilson, 75–77, and by Mohlberg, p 65–67 §§400–417. 'Deus omnipotens' is discussed further in Section 10.

30 In his fine analysis of the use of *mod* in Old English poetry, Godden (1985, 285–91) connects the word with 'an inner passion or wilfulness, an intensification of the self that can be dangerous' (287), and suggests that for the Anglo-Saxons passions or feelings 'did not just take hold of one from outside or inside but involved, at some level, an act of will' (286).

31 Bede's account of the poet Caedmon, HE iv 24 ('rememorando secum et quasi mundum animal ruminando'): Colgrave and Mynors, 418–19. Plummer (ii 250) lists eleven occurrences of the metaphor in Bede. The topos is fully discussed by Spitz, 1972, 41–46 and 57–104.

32 For convenient summaries in English, with bibliography, of the importance of the monothelete controversy for relations between pope and emperor from the reign of Pope Honorius I (AD 625–38) to that of Gregory II (AD 715–731), see J. N. D. Kelly, 1986, 70–86, and Judith Herrin, 1987, 207–19, 250–59, 263–82, 311–13, 340–43. The wider christological issues are well summarized by Woolf, 137–41. Although she does distinguish between Monophysitism (the heretical doctrine that in

Christ there was only a single, divine, nature) and its variant Monotheletism (which held that Christ had two natures but only a single, divine, will), Woolf does not sufficiently stress the particular political importance at this period of the latter heresy: as a corrective see Plummer ii 230, Swanton, 1970, 57–58, and Ute Schwab, 1982, 304–305 and n 19, and 1984, 105–106. Schwab was the first to relate the stress on Christ 'willing' in the Ruthwell and Vercelli texts to the monothelete controversy. Some implications of the monothelete controversy for the art of the period, in Byzantium and at Rome, are discussed by Per Jonas Nordhagen, 1968, 95–98, and by Anna D. Kartsonis, 1986, 40–81.

33 The best modern study of the 'Honorius question' is Georg Kreuzer (1975); see also Doucet (1983), 63–64, 77, and 80–81.

34 The clearest analysis of the development of Maximus's thought about Christ's divine and human wills is in François-Marie Léthel (1979), in particular (for translation and analysis of *Opusculum* 6) 86–99. Léthel should be read in conjunction with the criticism of some of his arguments by Marcel Doucet (1983): Doucet points out that while Maximus enriches and develops what was implicit in earlier patristic thought about Christ's human will, what Maximus says is consistent with earlier patristic references to Christ's will, not (as Léthel states) an abrupt break with the past. Aldo Ceresa-Gastualdo (1985) provides a useful Italian translation of some of Maximus's analyses of Christ's decision to accept the Cross. Juan Miguel Garrigues (1976) gives a general account of Maximus's theological achievement, a readable account of his life and martyrdom (35–75) and an excellent bibliography. The symposium edited by Heinzer and Schonborn (1982) gives a good recent conspectus of the various issues raised by Maximus's writings.

35 HE iv 18 [16]; Colgrave and Mynors, 390–91; cf. Plummer, i 242, and his note on monotheletism, ii 230.

36 Haddan and Stubbs, iii 146. The Latin canons of the Lateran council are conveniently printed there as an appendix to the Council of Hatfield, 679, where they were solemnly accepted by the Anglo-Saxon Church. See also canon 10 ('quod per utramque ejus naturam voluntarius naturaliter idem consistit nostrae salutis', iii 148) and, for parallel expressions, canons 11–15 (iii 148). Léthel points out (107–08) that the passage containing the phrase I have quoted was added, at the Lateran council, to that council's reiteration of the Chalcedonian profession of faith.

37 Léthel, 108–09; emphasis by Léthel. The phrase 'dogme de la liberté humaine du Christ' is quoted approvingly by Doucet (79) with the important qualification that the point of the Lateran definition (and of that of the sixth ecumenical council in 680) is best appreciated by stressing 'humaine' rather than 'liberté': what was at issue was not so much Christ's liberty so much as the reality of his human will (which of course was seen to be free: it was precisely because it was quite free from sin that it could always remain freely in concord with the divine will shared by the Word and the other members of the Trinity).

38 Bede, *Historia abbatum,* ii: Plummer i 365; see also Plummer's note (on HE v 19) on the coincidence of Benedict's and Wifrid's first visit and pope Martin's exile: ii 321–22. For the dates of Martin's arrest, exile and death, see J. N. D. Kelly, 1986, 74.

39 *Historia abbatum* ii–iii; Plummer i 365–67. Theodore, as a Greek monk, and his companion the bilingual abbot Hadrian, must have been particularly aware of the implications for church unity of the monothelete problem. The earliest life of pope St Martin was written (by the middle of the eighth century) in Greek by monks at Rome (Herrin, 1987, 258–59).

40 Vitalian even apparently concealed his chagrin when Constans II, for the sake of armaments and the prestige of Constantinople, stripped the Pantheon and the other Roman buildings of their bronze and metal fittings, and of their remaining statues. The loot, which Constans intended to ship to Constantinople, never got there: Arab raiders intercepted and captured it off Syracuse, finally selling it at Alexandria (Llewellyn, 1971, 157–58; Herrin, 1987, 263–67).

41 *Historia abbatum,* vi: '[Benedictus] … ordinem cantandi psallendi atque in aecclesia ministrandi iuxta morem Romanae institutionis suo monasterio contradidit, postulato videlicet atque accepto ab Agathone papa archicantore aecclesiae beati apostoli Petri et abbate monasterii beati Martini Iohanne …' (Plummer i 369).

42 Bede, *Historia abbatum,* i; Plummer i 364. It may not be merely a coincidence that Bede immediately goes on to emphasise, just after telling of the dedication of Wearmouth to St Peter, that Benedict Biscop founded his monastery on the *north* bank ('iuxta ostium fluminis Uiuri ad aquilonem'): he would have been aware that in Rome the Vatican stands on the north bank of the Tiber (thus pilgrims from England normally visited St Peter's before entering the city itself); and that the Tiber, too, had its Ostia.

43 Bede, HE iv 18 (16); trans. Colgrave and Mynors, 1969, 389.

44 HE iv 17 [15], trans. Colgrave and Mynors, 387; cf. Plummer i 329, ii 230–33.

45 Woolf lists anti-monothelete comments in Bede's gospel-commentaries (149–51). However, she speculates that the contrast in the *Dream* between the hero-Christ and the reluctant Cross should be related to Bede's stress on the conflict at Gethsemane between Christ's own divine and human wills, so that the Cross somehow stands for Christ's human will (151). This is theologically and poetically unconvincing. When in the *Dream* (as in the Ruthwell poem) the humanity of Christ is directly emphasized (by such phrases as 'geong hæleð', 39a) this is always done in contexts (e.g., 39b) which express the equally vital truth that Christ's two natures subsist in hypostatic union *in one and the same person.* There is no basis in the poem for splitting Christ's divinity and humanity between two different persons, Christ and the Cross; and such an idea, being heretical, is historically unlikely in the period in question. However, I do not wish to exclude the possibility that Christ's courageous human mastery at Gathsemane of his natural repulsion towards death may, like the way Mary at the Annunciation overcame her initial puzzlement when asked to bear

Christ (see Ó Carragáin, 1982), have influenced the poet's presentation of the way the Cross in turn resolves its human dilemma on Calvary.

46 Text from Swanton (1970).

47 e.g., Krapp, 62; Dickins and Ross, 25; Swanton, 91. I agree with Stanley (398) that Ruthwell 1b 'þa he walde on ḡalḡu gistiḡa' is closer to *Dream* 34b 'þæt he me wolde on gestigan' than to *Dream* 40b.

48 On the whole the Ruthwell poem, to which Rosemary Woolf does not refer, supports her theory of 'doctrinal influences' rather better (by its emphasis on Christ's divine and human acts of will when ascending the Cross) than the Vercelli *Dream* on which she bases her argument.

49 Howlett (1976) following Page (1959, 288) suggested that these points, and the one following 'rodi' in the third *sententia* (line 9), may be punctuation marks.

50 In the Lindisfarne Gospels, at John 12:32 *exaltatus* is glossed *ahefen;* in the West-Saxon gospels, the phrase is translated 'gif ic beo upp-ahafen': Skeat 1878, 121, 120. For the theme see also John 3:14 and 8:28–29, and Augustine on John 8:28–29 (CCSL 36, 350–51). On his sixth and last journey to Rome Benedict Biscop brought back for the adornment of the monastic church of St Paul at Jarrow (which had been dedicated on 23 April 685) a series of typological pictures, one pair of which 'set together *(conparauit)* the Son of man lifted up on the cross *(in cruce exaltatum)* with the serpent lifted up by Moses in the wilderness' (Bede, *Historia abbatum,* 9; Plummer i 373). On Christ crucified as the power and wisdom of God, see I Cor. 1:23–24: 'praedicamus Christum crucifixum … Christum Dei virtutem, et Dei sapientiam'. That theme is found in Venantius Fortunatus, *Vexilla Regis* (Walpole, 1922, no 34), e.g., line 16, 'Regnavit a ligno Deus' (based on an Old Latin variant of Ps. 95:10) and *Pange Lingua* (Walpole, 1922, no 33), e.g., line 2, 'Et super crucis tropaeo die triumphum nobilem'. See also Ambrose on Luke: 'He extends his hands to conquer for all, not only for himself, so he might draw all things to himself': Allen and Calder, 1976, 58 (translating CCSL 14, 377). The relevance of the theme to the poem is further discussed in Section 9.

51 An emphasis which would be all the clearer, if the fragmentary verse Sa, at the end of the *sententia,* could indeed be restored from the Vercelli text as a reference to Christ as 'man': 'biḡoten of þæs ḡuman sida' or its equivalent.

52 Howlett (1976, 58, translation: 'They laid him down, wounded with arrows, weary of limb') was the first to interpret the passage in this way. Ada Bundi prefers to assume that the 'ic' of the previous *sententia* ('hnaḡ ic') provides a subject for the present sentence, and is to be understood before '[m]iþ s[t]re[l]um' (1979, 47–48) or, alternatively, that the previous *sententia* ended with runes, now obliterated, which read 'al ic wæs' (Bundi, 54–55, following the Vercelli *Dream* line 62b). But as we have seen, the Ruthwell runes are laid out in a way which renders continuous reading difficult if not impossible: the sentences of the poem must have been chewed over slowly, and memorised, before they could be appreciated. The layout of the

inscription demands that each column of runes, and indeed each few lines of runes, should make sense, so that the text can be slowly ruminated and gradually seen as a whole. It strains credibility to assume that a Ruthwell reader was expected to bow down to the foot of the right-hand border of the stone, and then immediately to shift one pace to the left and strain on tiptoe to decipher the top of the left-hand border, before he could appreciate that the right-hand border provided the subject missing from the left-hand border. The text on the left-hand border makes sense without recourse to a hypothesis which would require aerobic abilities of a Ruthwell reader.

53 Campbell, 1962, 22; he gives nine examples in 22 n 2. See Roberts, 1979, 70, on the 'uninflected participial adjective in variation' in which occurs in *Guthlac* Bline 1019 ('gesoht'); she remarks that 'sporadic examples can be found in verse from all periods'. See also Mitchell, 1985, i 602–04 §§1438–40. I am grateful to Dr Jane Roberts and to a postgraduate student, Mr Eugene O'Sullivan, for help with this matter.

54 Contrast Bundi, p. 54: 'ci saremmo aspettati al posto di *giwundad* un participio declinato, dal momento che dovrebbe riferirsi ad un accusativo'. Bundi raises a more weighty, but hardly fatal, difficulty with her next sentel).ce: 'Sarebbe, inoltre, opportuno cercare dei paralleli circa la costruzione della frase, la quale inizierebbe con un complemento'. The designer of the cross might well have felt that an unusual but emphatic phrase, beginning with 'miþ', was an acceptable price to pay in order to anticipate and reinforce the vivid epithet 'limwœrignæ' with an even more striking parallel phrase ('miþ strelum giwundad'). As the inscription stands, 'miþ strelum giwundad' focusses attention immediately and unambiguously on the central devotional image of the *sententia:* the wounded body of Christ. If later scribes, like Dr Bundi, considered a sentence beginning with 'miþ' unusual or awkward, this precise feature might have encouraged a reviser or glossator who was primarily interested in the jewels and wounds of the Cross to provide a gloss ('Eall ic wæs') which made 'miþ strelum giwundad' serve his interest in the Cross. I have suggested elsewhere that a scribe may have provided a similar gloss (the metrically difficult 'ealle') between lines 9b and 10a of the *Dream,* to emphasize the devotional sense of that passage: 'ealle fægere þurh forðgesceaft' (Ó Carragáin, 1982, 499, n 48); Alfred Bammesberger (1984, 47–48) came independently to the same hypothesis. Might one cautiously speculate that an '*eall*-reviser' may have been among those who updated and reinterpreted the *Dream* for a tenth-century, southern English audience?

55 The wounding of the Cross in *Dream* 62b is to be interpreted in the context of the wounds on the Cross described in *Dream* 46–47 ('dolg … opene inwidhlemmas'), details not found in the Ruthwell poem, but which can be associated with the 'fife [gimmas] … uppe on þam eaxlegespanne' (7–9) of the glorified visionary tree described in the opening lines of the *Dream.* It should be pointed out that there is no indication that the Ruthwell Cross was iconographically represented as 'wounded with arrows' (the archer panel, which has a different significance, will be discussed

later). It would not be fitting therefore for the Ruthwell Cross to say of itself that it was 'wounded with arrows', though it is entirely consistent of the Cross in the *Dream* to do so. But the Ruthwell Cross does have a crucifixion panel, in which the wounded body of Christ is represented: to that extent, that panel provides an iconographic analogue for the idea in the Ruthwell poem that Christ's body was 'wounded with arrows'.

56 Augustine on Jn 19:37 (CCSL 36, 662), copied by Alcuin (PL 100, 986C) and by Pseudo-Bede (PL 92, 916D). See the marginal gloss on Jn 19:37 in the Lindisfarne Gospels, London, British Library, MS Cotton Nero D. xiv, f 225r: 'Id est in die examinis iudicii. districti iudicis. ðus beda ðe broema boecere cuaeð' (Skeat, 1878, 173); this reference to Bede perhaps refers to the Augustinian passage in Pseudo-Bede, or to Bede's comment on Apoc. 1:7 in his *Explanatio Apocalypsis* (PL 93, 135A): for the latter suggestion, see W. J. P. Boyd, 1975, 52. For the uses of Zach. 12:10 in later Old English homiletic prose and verse, see Cook, 1909, 194–95, note to *Christ III,* line 1107; Wulfstan, 1957, 286–87, note to Homily III, lines 65–73; Bazire and Cross, 1982, 127, introduction to Homily X. For a possible visual reference to John 19:37 on the housecap of Muiredach's Cross, Monasterboice, see Roe, 1981, 34 and Ó Carragáin, 1988, 28. I am indebted to my colleague Dr Jennifer O'Reilly, who first brought to my attention the importance of Zach. 12:10 for the visual arts: see her paper in the present volume.

57 See the full transcription of the inscriptions to the Durham crucifixion miniature (Durham, Cathedral Library, MS A.II.17, f 38v) by Coatsworth (1980, 59); see also Nordenfalk, 1977, 57 and pl 14. The occurrence of the Greek letters 'alpha' and 'omega', and their Latin equivalents, 'initium' and 'finis', in the miniature (cf. Apoc. 1:7–8) makes it clear that those artists saw the act of contemplating the body of Christ to be a preparation for his appearance again at the Last Judgement, just as the Ruthwell sculptors did; and Coatsworth (1980, 60–61) rightly emphasizes that the miniature links the Crucifixion to the second coming of Christ (similarly, Christ over the beasts at Ruthwell is also the 'iudex aequitatis'). On the idea that the Crucifixion spans and unites all ages, see the *versus* 'qui expansis in cruce manibus traxisti omnia ad te secula', discussed in Section 9.

58 See McNally, 1965; some liturgical uses of the title 'Christus' are noted in Ó Carragáin, 1987a,17 n 4 and 29–30.

59 Coatsworth, 1980, 59; as the inscription is at this point somewhat garbled, I give Mynors's reconstruction, as quoted by Coatsworth, 1980, 59 n 43: 'Scito quis et qualis est qui talia … passus [est] p(ro) nobis'.

60 CCSL 119B, 383; for discussion of the relevance of this verse of the Canticle of Habbakuk to the Ruthwell Cross, see Ó Carragáin, 1986, 386; its relevance to some Pictish and Irish monuments is discussed in Ó Carragáin, 1988; and see also Section 9.

61 Danielou, 1956, 37–40; see also Maertens, 1962, 96. On Christ's heroic

stripping of himself as a model for the catechumens who as 'athletes of Christ' stripped themselves to overcome death and the devil in baptism, see Ó Carrag:iin, 1987b, 121.

62 See Bede's comment on the blood and water which issued from the spear-wound: 'Aqua scilicet qua abluimur in baptismo et sanguis quo consecramur in calice sancto': *De templo Salomonis liber,* CCSL 119A, 166. See further Bede on Genesis, CCSL 118A, 38 and 56, and the references there. Dr Gerald Bonner has kindly pointed out to me how central the idea that the church was born from the wound in Christ's side is to Augustine's view of the Crucifixion: *De civitate Dei,* xxii, 17 (CCSL 48, 835–36); *Enarrationes in psalmos* on psalm 40:10 (CCSL 38, 456) and psalm 103, sermo 4, par. 6 (CCSL 40, 1525); *Tractatus in euangelium Ioannis* on John 19:34, CCSL 36, 661: 'Hie secundus Adam inclinato capite in cruce dormivit, ut inde formaretur ei coniunx, quod de latere dormientis effluxit' (a comment copied by Alcuin, PL 100, 986, and also by Pseudo-Bede, PL 92, 916).

63 Examples, and definitions, from Klaeber's glossary (1950).

64 See Stanley, 1956, 419–22; Lee, 1975, 181; Farrell, 1978, 109–11; Roberts, 1979, 173, note to *Guthlac B,* line 1154a. I am grateful to Dr Jane Roberts for help with this paragraph.

65 The blessing of the palms, and the processions with them, originated in Jerusalem. It had reached Visigothic Spain by the lifetime of St Isidore of Seville (d. 636), and is reflected in the eighth-century (Irish and Gallican) Bobbio Missal. It penetrated late into Roman use: the processional antiphons are found in only one of Hesbert's six mass-antiphonaries, the Antiphonary of Compiègne (Paris, BN fonds latin, 17436, compiled for Charles the Bald about AD 877): and there they appear as an appendix, under the rubric 'Antiphonas de passione Domini': Hesbert, 1935, introduction, lvi, and no 213 (p 221–23). See DACL 14/2, col 2060–64, under 'rameaux'. On the other hand, Bede has a homily on the entry into Jerusalem, Matthew 21:1–9, for the sixth Sunday (Book ii, Homily 3: ed. Hurst, CCSL 122, 200–06). Some form of the custom may possibly have reached Wearmouth-Jarrow by the 730s.

66 Hesbert, 1935, introduction, lvi.

67 Klauser, 1972, 23, no 85; 69, no 99; 110, no 95; 149, no 108; 176, no 101.

68 The antiphons for the sixth Sunday in Lent quoted in translation in the present paragraph are to be found in Hesbert, 1935, no 73. Throughout this paper, translations from scripture are based (with occasional minor adaptations and repunctuation) on the Douay version.

69 The gradual 'Tenuisti': Hesbert, 1935, Iii, n 3.

70 On the liturgical use of this epistle lection on the sixth Sunday of Lent, see Frere, 1935, 8, no lxi (standard series of Roman epistle lections), and p 38, note (d). In the Campanian series of lections found in the Victor Codex (Fulda, Landesbibliothek, Cod. Bonifatianus 1, written in or before AD 546–47 at the

command of bishop Victor of Capua and possibly brought to England by abbot Hadrian of Naples in AD 668) which later belonged to St Boniface, this epistle lection is assigned, with St John's Passion, to Good Friday itself: Gamber, 1962, 331–32 and 351. For early medieval commentaries on Phil. 2:5–11, see Ambrosiaster (ed. Vogels, 1969, pt 3, 139–45); the commentary on the Pauline epistles by John the Deacon (fl. c. AD 560, Rome), PL 30, 844–46; modern commentary and a survey of scholarship on the passage in F.W. Beare, 1969, 40–42 (bibliography), 73–88 (commentary) and 159–74 (a note on 'kenotic' christology). I wish to emphasise that when I use the term 'kenotic' of the christology of the Ruthwell poem I do not do so in the nineteenth-century senses examined (and theologically rejected) by Beare, 1969, 159–74. The use of heroic metaphors to provide examples of *communicatio idiomatum* throughout the Ruthwell poem makes it clear that the poet would have agreed with St Leo I that Christ 'assumpsit formam servi sine sorde peccati, humana augens, divina non minuens' ('tome' of Leo I, epistola 28, PL 54, 765A); see also St Leo's sermon xxiv, PL 54, 205D: *'Verbum caro factum est* provectione carnis, non defectione deitatis'). The central importance of Philippians 2:5–11 to the theology of Maximus the Confessor, and so to the resolution of the Monothelete controversy, is particularly interesting (see Léthel, 1979, 98–99).

71 It is interesting, but perhaps merely a coincidence, that the epistle uses a reflexive verb, 'semetipsum exinanivit', to describe the Incarnation, and that the Ruthwell poem also opens with a reflexive verb which describes Christ's free action of stripping himself.

72 Ambrose, *De fide,* i 20 §135, PL 16, 559A; see also Venantius Fortunatus, 'Crux benedicta nitet', lines 9–10 and 172D–18, (ed. Walpole, 1922, 179 and 181); on the blood of martyrs, DACL 15, 3115, s.v. 'vigne, vignoble'; see also Kirschbaum and Braunfels, 1968–74, iv 491–94, s.v. 'Weinstock'. The symbolism of foliage scrolls is discussed more fully, with particular reference to the Bewcastle Cross, in Ó Carragáin, 1987a, 30–33.

73 On this lection from Exodus and its significance, see Tyrer, 1932, 120 and Capelle, 1955, 76–77. The Roman station for the commemoration of Christ's death on Good Friday was at the basilica of Holy Cross in Jerusalem, a point discussed in section 9 below.

74 On the iconographic motif of Christ as door, and its relation to the idea of Christ as Tree of Life, see Kartsonis, 1986, 26 and reff.

75 The Gelasian Sacramentary (ed. Mohlberg, 1960, 53 §329). A version of the same prayer occurs in the Gregorian Sacramentary (ed. Lietzmann, 1921, 42 §73).

76 For the motif of crosses that speak, see Allen and Calder, 1976, 51–53, and Horgan, 1978, 12; for Christ ascending the Cross, see the hymn for terce by St Ambrose which begins 'Iam surgit hora tertia/ qua Christus ascendit crucem' (ed. Walpole, 1922, 40) and the daily prayers for sext discussed in Section 10.

77 This is a point of view that I have argued elsewhere: 1978, 140–41; 1982,

504–05. Vincenzo Loi (1971) and A. H. M. Scheer (1977) give good surveys of the patristic tradition. Bede explains the idea at length in his commentary on Luke 1:26 (CCSL 120, 30). The crucifixion, the Incarnation, and Mary's new role as virginal mother of the newly-born church are beautifully linked by Ambrose, *Iam surgit hora tertia,* lines 13–24 (ed. Walpole, 1922, 41–43). That the association of the crucifixion with the vernal equinox was primary, so that the date of Christmas was originally calculated from it, is argued by Louis Duchesne, 1925, 275–78. For the theological importance of the relation between the equinox and Easter, see Ceolfrid's letter to king Nechtan: HE v 21: Colgrave and Mynors, 1969, 504. 25 March was the date on which the Celts reckoned the spring equinox to fall (see Section 10 and n 118): Bede, although he came to the conclusion that it fell on 21 March, always respected a tradition so important in the liturgy: *De temporum ratione,* eh. 30 (Bede, 1935, 235).

78 In his commentary on the collect, Dom Bernard Capelle (1955–67, i 229–30) suggests that its juxtaposition of 'carnem sumere' and 'crucem subire' was influenced by the tradition that Christ was conceived and died on 25 March as well as by Philippians 2:5–11.

79 Hesbert, 1935, 92–93, no 77; 94–97, no 78; for a full discussion of these antiphons and their uses, see Hesbert, 1983.

80 If, on the other hand, the runic inscription around the 'Visitation' panel refers to 'Martha and Mary, worthy women' ('marþa maria mr [= merentes] dominnæ'), as argued by Howlett, 1974b, the panel should be taken, not as forming a pair with the Annunciation panel, but as leading on from the conversion of Mary Magdalen immediately below, and as representing the reconciliation of the active and contemplative lives, the fruit of conversion.

81 In Ó Carragáin, 1987a, 20–24, this catechumenate ceremony is discussed in relation to the image of St John the Evangelist and his eagle on the Bewcastle Cross.

82 Hesbert, 1935, 42–45, no 33: see Ó Carragáin, 1978, 134.

83 On the idea (found in MartT and elsewhere) that the vernal equinox marked the anniversary of the completion of creation, see further below.

84 The relevance of the crucifixion scene to the catechumenal programme of this side of the cross is more fully examined in Ó Carragáin, 1987b, 120–22.

85 Baptismal scenes are represented in the central roundels of three cross-heads from Durham, dated as of the early eleventh-century: Cramp, 1984, Durham no 5C, 6C, 7C: i 68–71; ii pi 206 (5C), 210 (6C) and 215 (7C). For their iconography, see Elizabeth Coatsworth (1978). An eagle is represented over one of these roundels: the eagle is clearly identified as Christ by the sun and moon symbols which flank its head (Cramp, no 5C and pl 206). The tail of a bird survives over the second (Cramp, no 7C and pl 215). Damage prevents us from knowing whether the third Durham transom (Cramp, no 6C and pl 210) was likewise surmounted by an eagle. As we have seen, an eagle surmounted the transom on this side of the Ruthwell Cross; and because of the presence of the eagle surmounting the roundel in no 5C, Saxl (1943,

6–7) suggested that the Durham roundels might provide analogues for this side of the missing Ruthwell transom. Because the crosses are late (though they might possibly be based on earlier models) this speculation must remain tentative.

86 CCSL 143A, 998–1002, commenting on Job 29:20. 'Arcus autem nomine in sacro eloquio aliquando malorum insidiae, aliquando dies iudicii, aliquando uero ipsa eadem sacra eloquia designantur' (999). Similarly, Augustine explains how the ambivalent bow image expresses the problematic nature of scriptural interpretation: the scriptures can, like arrows, inflame the hearts of readers into love of God, or provide the ammunition by which heretics poison souls: *Enarrationes in Psalmos* on Ps. 7:14, CCSL 38, 45–46. I am indebted to the survey of the topos of the drawn bow by Spitz, 1972, 219–23. Barbara Raw (1967, 393) was the first to suggest that the Ruthwell archer was an image of the preacher.

87 Translated from CCSL 119B, 394; the passage is more fully discussed in Ó Carragáin, *Rome, Ruthwell, Vercelli* (forthcoming). On Bede's use of the *Moralia,* see Laistner, 1935, 248 and 264.

88 I hope to present the relevant comparative iconographic material for this interpretation of the archer's 'satchel-quiver' in a forthcoming study of the panel.

89 The following account of the Good Friday ceremony at Santa Croce is summarized from Ordo XXIII, §§9–22 (Andrieu, 1931–61, iii 270–72). On the symbolic importance of the basilica of Holy Cross in Jerusalem, see Willis (1968, 40, 45, 56–57 and 83).

90 London, British Library, MS Cotton Vespasian A.i, f 10v, emended in accordance with the critical text of P. Salmon, 1959, 89.

91 On the historicity of the tradition, see Krautheimer, 1983, 23 and n 16 (p 129).

92 Santa Croce was habitually referred to as 'Hierusalem' in the early medieval period: see the list of references in Krautheimer 1937–77, i 168–69. In his indispensable modern introduction to the stational liturgies of Jerusalem, Rome and Constantinople, John F. Baldovin (1987, 155) refers to Santa Croce as 'Rome's Golgotha'.

93 On John the archicantor and the council of Hatfield, see further the references in Plummer, 1896, ii 118–19; on Hwaetberht, see Bede, *Historia abbatum* xviii: Plummer, 1896, i 383. The best surveys of contact between Rome and Northumbria in the age of Bede are provided by Wilfrid J. Moore (1937) and Levison, 1946, 15–44.

94 Such a use of a second church is implied in Ordo XXIV, §22 (Andrieu, 1931–61, iii 291–92), a text in which the Roman liturgy for Good Friday is adapted for an unnamed cathedral city, probably in Italy or France.

95 Donnchadh Ó Corráin has kindly brought to my attention the particular importance of Psalm 118, as a ritual form of prayer and intercession, in Irish tradition: see DIL s.v. biait. For patristic commentary on and liturgical uses of the psalm, see Charles Kannengiesser (1962) and Andre Rose (1983). The singing of psalm 118 is not merely described in Ordo XXIII, the account of the ceremonies at Rome; in

Ordo XXIV, in which these ceremonies are adapted for use in cities outside Rome, it is prescribed to be sung at, or perhaps just after, the adoration of the cross: no 35; Andrieu, 1931–61, iii 294. To a milieu which knew Adomnan's *De locis sanctis* or Bede's reworking of that text, the existence in the Roman liturgy of a symbolic equivalent to the Jerusalem pilgrimage to Golgotha on Good Friday must have been of particular interest. On the possible relevance to the poem of Jerusalem pilgrimage, and of pilgrims' accounts of the Holy Land, see Ute Schwab, 1978, 153–56 and Julia Bolton Holloway, 1984, 22–24: but the essence of the present argument is that what the Ruthwell community themselves did on Good Friday must have been far more important in shaping their communal understanding of the first Good Friday than any pilgrims' tales. The Ruthwell Good Friday ceremonies were probably based on the Roman liturgy, which was itself a mimetic representation of events at Jerusalem. On mimetic liturgical ceremonies see Baldovin (1987, 238); he points out (54–55, 100–101) that at Jerusalem itself the stational liturgy must have been adversely affected by the sack of the city by the Persians under Chosroes II (AD 614) and by the Arab conquest of the city (from AD 638) and that, in contrast to the exuberant liturgy described by the fourth-century nun Egeria, seventh-century pilgrims (such as Arculf as reported by Adomnán) who describe the surviving buildings lay comparatively little emphasis on the stational liturgy of the city (256). The psalms and lections used on Good Friday at Jerusalem differed markedly from those used at Rome on that day, although both liturgies used the Passion according to St. John at the ninth hour: see Baldovin (96), and Theodor Kluge, 1915, 225–29.

96 See also Jn 8:28; Col.1:20; Is.. 57:19, 60:9, 43:6; Hab. 1:8. I am grateful to Terence O'Reilly, who brought this scriptural theme to my attention. On the uses of the *versus* 'Qui expansis' (which occurs in the early office antiphonaries both of the *cursus romanus* and of the *cursus monasticus)* see Hesbert, 1983, 246–47 and 249. The formula *expandere manus* is based on Rom. 10:20–21 (interpreting Is. 65:1–2); cf. 'populum sanctum tibi adquirens extendit manus cum pateretur' in the eucharistic prayer of Hippolytus: Jungmann, 1959, 67 and 71–73. On the references to Apoc. 1:8 in the Durham Gospels crucifixion miniature, see Section 5 and n 57.

97 In taking the phrase 'til anum' as meaning 'together, to one place' I follow Rissanen, 1967, 286 and Bruce Mitchell, 1975, 24–25. On the Greek use of the term *synaxis* see Baldovin, 205–206.

98 Ed. Walpole, 1922, 172, lines 25–27. Patch (1919, 252) convincingly relates this stanza to the *Dream* lines 33–37, 40, and 42–43 in which 'the Cross explains why it was unable to bend'.

99 We have here one of the favourite themes of Venantius Fortunatus, that the greatest privilege of the Cross was to have been chosen to 'touch such holy limbs': 'electa digno stipite/tam sancta membra tangere': 'Vexilla regis prodeunt' lines 19–20 (Walpole, 176). In the 'Pange lingua', there may possibly be an element of fruitful ambiguity in the word 'tendas': in Latin as in English, the concept of 'stretching

out, extending' could in certain contexts include the idea of 'stretching forth, offering'. But, if so, a context is needed which would give that ambiguity meaning, so that, for example, the Ruthwell poet might be interested in building upon it: the catechumenate, and its eucharistic climax, provides such a context.

100 Ute Schwab (1982, 303), suggests as an analogue the hymn 'De ecclesia' by Ephraim Syrus, in which Christ himself, 'the branch of truth' (Cf. Isaiah 11:1 11), bends down so as to provide fruit for ungrateful men to pluck: i.e., comes down from heaven, and even penetrates Hell so as to set Adam free and restore him to Eden (Schwab quotes from Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 175, Scriptores Syri, 79, as translated by E. Beck, 1957, 6lff.). Ephraim in that passage describes the Incarnation and earthly life of Christ as a unified heroic action. As the Ruthwell poem itself links Christ's crucifixion closely to his Incarnation, the hymn provides a suggestive analogue (though hardly a direct source) for the Ruthwell poem.

101 *De tabernaculo* ii, lines 1849–55: CCSL 119A, 88. The best introduction to the ceremony is De Puniet, 1924; the homilies read during this ceremony are edited in De Puniet, 1904–05.

102 *In Ezram et Neemiam* ii, lines 924–27: CCSL 119A, 310–11.

103 Carlo Silva-Tarouca, 1924, argued for John's authorship; this theory was rejected by Andrieu, 1931–61, iii 6–15, but strongly defended by S. J.P. van Dijk, 1961, 455–65, who stressed the point that the *ordo* does show signs of having being compiled or revised in St Peter's in the second half of the seventh century. Antoine Chavasse (1958, 166–68) demonstrated that *Ordo* XI was a revision by 'un canoniste pointilleux' (167) of the Roman *ordo* of baptism incorporated into the Gelasian sacramentary, which he dated as earlier than the mid-seventh century (168). In the English edition of the standard handbook by Cyrille Vogel the *ordo* is said to have been redacted at Rome: *'Ordo* XI may well have appeared around 650–700 and is therefore one of the oldest *ordines* to have survived' (165). St Augustine of Canterbury insisted (when confronting the British bishops) on the importance of following the Roman rite for baptism: Bede, HE ii 2 (ed. Colgrave and Mynors, 1969, 139); discussed by Willis, 1968, 198. The importance of following the Roman rite for baptism was also stressed in canon 13 of the council of Clovesho, AD 747: Haddan and Stubbs, 1871, iii 367.

104 *Ordo* XI, no 61–71; Andrieu, 1931–61, ii 433–40. In view of the importance of the Creed and Our Father in the catechumenate, it comes as no surprise to find Bede stressing that every christian should know these prayers by heart, if necessary in the vernacular: letter to Ecgbert (ed. Plummer, 1896, i 408–09).

105 See the homily for the *traditio dominicae orationis* in *Ordo* XI, no 69: Andrieu, 1931–61, ii 439: 'Hie spiritalem cibum intellegere debemus. Christus enim panis est noster, qui dixit: "Ego sum panis vivus qui de caelo descendi" [Jn 6:41], quern cottidianum dicens, ita nos semper inmunes praecepit esse peccati, ut digni simus caelestibus alimentis'.

106 See J. D. C. Fisher, 1965, 20, 27–28 and 87; Maertens, 1962, 173.

107 The way in which the 'Qui habitat' was replaced by the 'Eripe me' on Good Friday is carefully traced in the surviving early antiphonaries and *ordines* by S. J.P. van Dijk, 1961, 482–484. See also Hesbert, 1935, no 78a, and p !ix n 4. Whether such liturgical developments can enable us to date the Ruthwell cross with greater precision needs further investigation.

108 Henderson, 1985; Ó Carragáin, 1986.

109 Saxl, 1943, 3–4; Ó Carragáin, 1978, 134–37. On Bede's knowledge of the Agnus Dei chant, see Willis, 1968, 221.

110 Jungmann, 1951–55, ii 301–02; also the Old-Irish tract on the mass in the Stowe Missal, §12 (ed. Stokes and Strachan, 1901–03, ii 253: 'the fraction on the paten is the breaking of Christ's Body with nails on the Cross'; on the antiquity of this commentary, ibid., xxviii.

111 As I shall argue elsewhere *(Rome, Ruthwell, Vercelli,* forthcoming) the eucharistic ceremony (the 'Mass of the Presanctified') on Good Friday was particularly designed to encourage the congregation to associate the altar and the Cross, and to see themselves as receiving the body of Christ from the altar as from the Cross *(Ordo* XXIV, no 29–39: Andrieu, 1931–61, iii 293–94). Northumbrian writers during the seventh and eighth centuries show a strong interest in the idea that the mass was a re-enactment of Calvary: see, for example, the occurrence of the earliest version of the 'mass of St Gregory' miracle in the Whitby life of Gregory the Great (Colgrave 1985, 104–09 (ch. 20)); see also the references to Bede's eucharistic theology collected by X. le Bachelet, 1909; and Ó Carragáin, 1986, 393–95. For the liturgical custom of erecting tall crosses behind altars in this period, see the references in Ó Carragáin, 1987a, 36–38.

112 On the iconography of this side of the missing transom, see Cramp, 1978.

113 *Historia abbatum,* vi; Plummer i 369–70: 'quatenus … omnes etiam litterarum ignari, quaquauersum intenderent, uel semper amabilem Christi sanctorumque eius, quamuis in imagine, contemplarentur aspectum; uel dominicae Incarnationis gratiam uigilantiore mente recolerent; uel extremi discrimen examinis, quasi coram oculis habentes, districtius se ipsi examinare meminissent.'

114 O'Rahilly, 1946, 296–97; Alwyn and Brinley Rees, 1961, 145 and n 32 (p 381–83); and DIL s.v. dessel. I wish to thank Dr GearÓid Ó Crualaoi for help on this matter, which is further discussed in Ó Carragáin, 1987b, 119.

115 Françoise Henry, 1964, 39–41, and plates; she argues for an eighth-century date (59).

116 They are surveyed in Ó Carragáin, 1988, together with a further eight 'dubious' panels, some of which may possibly represent the motif. A 'Paul and Anthony' panel occurs at Moone: see Ó Carragáin, 1988, 20–22.

117 The relevant panels are: the Flight into Egypt; Paul and Anthony who break bread 'in deserto'; the beasts who recognise Christ 'in deserto'; and the recognition of

the Agnus Dei by John the Baptist, the 'vox clamantis in deserto' (Mk 1:3): see Saxl, 1943, 5; Schapiro, 1944, 236–38, 243–45 (= 1980, 161–63, 174–76).

118 MartT at 25 March (27): 'Dominus noster Jesus Christus crucifixus est. et conceptus. et mundus factus est. Passio Jacobi fratris Domini. Et conceptio Mariae. Et immolatio Isaac a patre suo Abraham in monte Morae …'. The English parallels are discussed in Section 7 and n 77.

119 For Fr Colmcille's suggestion that Clonmelsh, Carlow, might be the site of Rath Melsigi, see Gwynn and Hadcock, 1970, 402. Dáibhi Ó Cróinín, 1984, accepted Fr Colmcille's identification of the site, and explored its implications for Hiberno-English cultural contacts in the seventh and eighth centuries.

120 Ó Cróinín, 1983 and Joseph F. T. Kelly, 1986.

121 Cramp, 1986.

122 This tendency to make sharp antitheses between 'Celtic' and 'Roman' spirituality, once useful in post-Reformation polemic, has not yet disappeared: Carol L. Neuman de Vegvar's recent account of the Ruthwell Cross is vitiated by her argument (strongly influenced by Schapiro (1944) and at times an exaggeration of Schapiro's views) that the cross reflects the anti-Roman politics of a 'celtic' community (1987, 203–37). It is remarkable that such 'celtic' christians, if they existed, spoke, or at least inscribed their cross in, English. It is equally remarkable that, in her opinion (206), they set up the cross around 750, some twenty years after Bede's friend and correspondent Pehthelm had become the first Anglo-Saxon bishop of Whithorn.

123 Warren, 1893, no 29; i 18v; ii 20, as quoted by Curran, 1984, 99. I am indebted to Curran's discussion of this prayer, 1984, 99–100 and 175, and to discussion of this matter with Fr Curran. In view of the emphasis in the Ruthwell poem on the way the followers of Christ gaze upon his dead body, it is of interest that the Bangor prayer for none associates the descent from the Cross with wonders revealed to Christ's followers: 'qua cultoribus tuis divina monstrantur miracula': Warren, 1893, no 30; ii 21; Curran, 100–01 and 175. The tradition of associating the little hours with the events of the Passion is surveyed by Philomena, 1964.

124 Cagin, 1919, no 1893, as quoted by Curran, 1984, 99.

125 Jungmann, 1965, 114–15, states that the mass-prayers in the early Roman sacramentaries (the Leonine and the Gelasian) are without exception addressed to the Father through the Son. He lists only three exceptions in other prayers from the Gelasian sacramentary (115n), pointing out that all three show Gallican influence (he lists Gallican prayers addressed to Christ, 92–94). Jungmann points out that the use of formulae (such as *Domine* or *Deus omnipotens)* in such a way that they could refer to the Son as well as the Father is a characteristic of the Mozarabic liturgy (98), and attributes it to the struggle against the Arianism of the Visigoths (102).

126 Adapted (with scribal errors silently corrected) from Dumas and Deshusses, 1981, 303, no 2123; cp. Cagin, 1919, no 1892.

127 PL 101, 463A, discussed by Philomena, 1964, 43.

128 Magistretti, 1905, ii 452, and Paredi, 1962, no 1583, as quoted by Curran, 1984, 99.

129 Miss Barbara Raw has kindly brought to my attention some references to Christ as God, in the context of the Passion, in later Insular prayer books: e.g., the prayer 'Deus qui voluisti pro redemptione mundi a Iudeis reprobari' in the .Ælfwine prayer-book, London, British Library, Titus D. xxvi, f 71v–72r, and the prayer for terce in the Old-English Benedictine Office, ed. Ure, 1957, 96–97: 'Domine deus qui hora tertia diei ad crucis poenam pro mundi salute ductus es …'. These and other examples, though sporadic, show that 'the practice of addressing Christ as God does not disappear entirely': I quote (with permission) from Miss Raw's forthcoming book on later Anglo-Saxon crucifixion iconography (p 173–74). I have not yet found another prayer which combines an address to Christ as almighty God with the *crucem ascendere* formula.