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HOW DID THE VERCELLI COLLECTOR
INTERPRET THE DREAM OF THE ROOD?

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In their discussion of 'the mode of existence of a literary work of art',
Rene Wellek and Austin Warren remark that a poem

has something which can be called 'life'. It arises at a certain point of time, changes in the course of history, and may perish. A work of art is 'timeless' only in the sense that, if preserved, it has some fundamental structure of identity since its creation, but it is 'historical' too. It has a development which can be described. This development is nothing but the series of concretizations of a given work of art in the course of history which we may, to a certain extent, reconstruct from the reports of critics and readers about their experiences and judgements and the effects of a given work of art on other works. Our consciousness of earlier concretizations (readings, criticisms, misinterpretations) will affect our own experience: earlier readings may educate us to a deeper understanding or may cause a violent reaction against the prevalent interpretations of the past.¹

This quotation serves to indicate a fundamental weakness of our understanding of Old English poetry, as indeed of much medieval literature. We are almost entirely lacking in evidence of how the original audiences reacted to Old English poems; and after the Old English period there is a gap of almost a millenium before the texts are once again read and we

get the beginnings of what we can call 'traditions of interpretation'. If, as Wellek and Warren put it, 'one can speak of the "life" of a work of art in history in exactly the same sense in which one can speak of an animal or a human being remaining the same individual while constantly changing in the course of a lifetime'², then Old English poetry was for hundreds of years in a state of suspended animation. In this century, it has in scholarly discussion entered on a new kind of life, under conditions which the Anglo-Saxon poets could not have imagined.

Any evidence we can find, therefore, of how the Anglo-Saxons themselves may have interpreted Old English poetry is valuable. As practically nothing survives in the form of explicit comments - none of the major Old English poems have even been provided with titles in the manuscripts³ - we are forced to glean what evidence we can from the contexts of the poems in the manuscripts; forced, in fact, to judge the texts by the company they keep.⁴

With *The Dream of the Rood*, we are in a slightly more fortunate position than is usually the case with Old English poetry. For a start, we have two related texts: the Ruthwell Cross Crucifixion poem is, in some sense, the ancestor of *The Dream of the Rood*. Thus we know for a start that the poem in the Vercelli Book has existed, in some shape or form (and the shape and form of the poem may have varied considerably) for some 250 to 300 years - from the date of the Ruthwell Cross (ca. AD 700) to that of the Vercelli Book (ca. AD 950-1000). It is possible to speculate with some likelihood of being right about the interests and concerns of those who erected the Ruthwell Cross; the Cross is provided with an extended programme of figural panels which it is possible to interpret convincingly,⁵ and the Crucifixion poem inscribed on the Cross can be seen to fit in with some of the themes to be found in the series of figural panels.⁶ The present paper attempts to show that the Vercelli

Book, also, provides us with hitherto unnoticed evidence of how *The Dream of the Rood* was used and understood in the tenth century; that the Vercelli Book is valuable not merely as the vehicle through which *The Dream of the Rood* is preserved, but as providing a rudimentary critical context for the poem.

The primary value of the Vercelli Book as a critical context for *The Dream of the Rood* lies in the fact that it is one man's book⁷ - it has the appearance of being one man's collection of texts, made for personal use, and gathered together over a pretty extended period of time from whatever vernacular material came to hand which fitted in with the collector's interests.⁸ While it is now bound together as one book, it formed originally three booklets.⁹ All three booklets were copied out by the same scribe, but he may have kept them apart and considered them as separate collections before he (or some other person, perhaps after his death) had them bound together in the order in which we now have them.¹⁰ The compiler of the manuscript did not try to produce a visual uniformity in his collection, or even a uniformity of punctuation or dialect; he seems to have kept pretty closely to the layout, punctuation, language and even blunders of the exemplars he used.¹¹

From the differing features of the various texts in the manuscript, we can see that the collector often copied in three or four related items together. In Booklet B, for example, Homilies XI-XIV clearly come from a single exemplar (the manuscript headings clearly identify them as a set of three rogationtide sermons, followed by an additional homily for use on various occasions 'to swilcere tide swa man wile'.¹²) The following homilies (Homilies XV-XVIII) form a distinct group. The different form of their headings (in Latin, as distinct from the English used for Homilies XI-XIV, and in bold large capitals as distinct from the minuscule script used for Homilies XI-XIV) as well as dialectal differences,¹³

indicate that these homilies were copied from a separate exemplar. The exemplar may have been a homiliary, i.e., a collection of sermons arranged in order of the liturgical year for public use in church services; but if so, the Vercelli Collector excerpted a scattered set of items:

- (XV) ALIA OMELIA DE DIE IUDICII (fol. 80v/8)
- (XVI) OMELIA EPYFFANIA DOMINI:- (fol. 85v/9)
- (XVII) DE PURIFICATIONE . SANCTA MARIA . (fol. 90v/22)
- (XVIII) DE SANCTO MARTINO CONFESSORE . (fol. 94v/24)

After this group of homilies come three verse-texts, *Soul and Body I*, *Homiletic Fragment I* and *The Dream of the Rood*. As I shall argue below, these texts also form a group. They are in their turn followed by three homilies (Homilies XIX-XXI) which, as their language, contents and layout suggest, also form a related group.¹⁴

What sort of collection is the Vercelli Book? While it consists entirely of religious material, it clearly was not intended as a homiliary. Not only are texts in verse interspersed with the homilies; the ordering of the homilies and the use of headings are so haphazard that nobody except the compiler of the manuscript could easily find his way around the collection. There is a complete absence of texts in Latin, and the howlers in such Latin phrases as occur within the Old English texts prompt Dr Celia Sisam to remark that the scribe 'had no understanding of Latin.'¹⁵ It is extremely unlikely, therefore that the collection was intended for use in the instruction of the young.¹⁶ The key to the use for which the collection was intended is to be found in the clearly-defined preoccupations of the collector. He collected texts which had a clear ascetic significance, and he ensured throughout his collection a regular recurrence of texts describing the Last Judgement. These two classes of items in fact are different facets of the same preoccupation: the Last Judgement items provided the strongest possible motivation for responding to the advice

to be found in the intervening ascetic material. In the majority of the texts, the recurring theme is the necessity for repentance; and it seems reasonable to conclude that this was the central concern of the collector. Such a preoccupation indicates that we have in the Vercelli Book an example of the well-known monastic genre of ascetic *florilegia*, anthologies of ascetic texts.¹⁷ Three of the four items in the collection which deal with the lives of the saints - the Homily on St Martin (Homily XVIII) and the verse texts *Andreas* and *Elene* - describe the conversion of large numbers of heathens. It seems likely that the collector valued these texts because they provided him with motivation for the conversion of his own moral life. If, as seems likely, he was a monk, he would have known that in the Benedictine Rule the second of the three solemn vows taken by monks was one of 'conversio morum', conversion of the moral life to God.¹⁸

The most interesting facet of the grouping of texts in the manuscript is the regular recurrence of eschatological material. All three booklets conclude with eschatological material.¹⁹ In Booklet A, the Passion narrative of Homily I is followed by the Last Judgement scene in Homily II; while the ascetic injunctions of Homily III are followed by the extended description of the Last Judgement in Homily IV, which concludes the booklet.²⁰ Booklet B opens with what seems to be an Advent collection: two homilies which deal with the Advent season (Homilies V and VI) act as a frame for the long verse text *Andreas* (to which the single section of *The Fates of the Apostles* formed an epilogue, allowing the reader to move from consideration of St Andrew's achievements to those of the other apostles). The Feast of St Andrew the Apostle fell on 30 November, thus always within the octave of the first Sunday of Advent. Together with Homily V which precedes the verse and Homily VI which follows it, *Andreas* and its epilogue would have formed a suitable text for private reading 'to middan wintra',²¹ 'ante aduentum saluatoris domini nostri iesu christi'.²²

But then, after the brief programme of ascesis set forth in Homily VII come no less than three successive homilies describing the Last Judgement:²³ it looks almost as if the collector were making up for the absence of explicitly eschatological material earlier in Booklet B. The group of four homilies which follows (Homilies XI-XIV, referred to above) is entirely concerned with ascetic themes (as one might expect in Rogation homilies). The lack of eschatological material in this group of texts is immediately supplied by the first homily in the next group, which provides (as its heading proclaims) 'alia omelia de die iudicii' (Homily XV, fol. 80v/8). As it stands in the Vercelli Book, the 'alia' of the heading can only refer to the eschatological homilies (VIII-X) copied in before Homily XV in Booklet B. As we have seen, the group of related homilies of which Homily XV is the first (XV-XVIII) does not include any further eschatological material; but the collector followed the group with three eschatological texts in verse (of which the third is *The Dream of the Rood*). The next group of homilies forms a clear set, with a simple thematic progression: Homily XIX begins with an account of the Creation, while Homily XXI ends with a description of the Last Judgement. The collector supplemented the themes of Homily XXI by copying another eschatological item (Homily XXII, which tells 'hu sanctus isidorus spræc be ðære sawle gedale ond be þæs lichoman' [fol. 116v/20-21]). This homily forms what is now the final item in Booklet B.²⁴ Booklet C is almost entirely taken up with the text of *Elene*. On the remaining leaves of the final quire, the collector copied Homily XXIII, which is not really a homily at all, but an excerpt from the Old English translation of Felix's *Life of St Guthlac* (surely no preacher could have begun a sermon with the abruptness of 'wæs þær in þam sprecenan iglande sum mycel hlæw of eorþan geworht þone ylcan hlæw iu geara men bræcon ond dulfon for feos pingum ...' [133v/8-10]). It is probable that, in the eyes of the collector, the

Guthlac excerpt complemented *Elene* just as much as *The Pates of the Apostles* complemented *Andreas*. One thematic link between the poem and the excerpt is that, while the poem describes how St Helena encouraged the Jewish leader Judas to reveal the whereabouts of the buried True Cross by confining him for a week in a pit ('in drygne seað', fol. 127v/26, *Elene* 693a), the excerpt begins at the point at which St Guthlac takes up his fenland abode - also in a pit:

ða wæs þær on oðre sidan ðæs hlæwes gedolfen
swylce mycel seap on þam seape ufan se eadiga
wer guðlac him hus ond eardungstowe getimbrode
fol. 133v/10-12 .

What is significant is not just the parallel between Judas and Guthlac, but the differences. For the Vercelli collector, the Guthlac excerpt would have clarified spiritual issues which were central to *Elene*, but the application of which to the reader's spiritual life was not made clear in the poem. The conversion of Judas after a seven days' fast would have suggested the connection between fasting and spiritual enlightenment: a theme which, we know from other texts he collected, was dear to the Vercelli collector's heart.²⁵ It did so, however, in terms which would have been difficult for the collector to apply directly to his own spiritual life. Judas, when he fasted, had done so unwillingly and under the direct supervision of a saint, *Elene*. For a man without such inspired spiritual direction, excessive asceticism might be a dangerous temptation. In the Guthlac excerpt, the devils suggest to Guthlac that he should emulate God at the Creation by fasting for seven days (fol. 134v/6-13). Guthlac after prayer rejects the suggestion 'forþan hie þa ealle idle ond unnytte ongeat' (fol. 134v/19). A seven-days' fast, which for Judas had been the beginning of conversion, for Guthlac (as for most monks, unless commanded by a spiritual guide) was a temptation to pride. The Vercelli collector probably found it useful to weigh one passage against the other, before drawing the conclu-

sion, at any particular stage of his life, which was at that time more relevant to his spiritual progress. In a similar way, the Guthlac excerpt complements the vivid description of the Last Judgement with which Elene ends; though the excerpt does not itself describe the Last Judgement, it answers to the eschatological preoccupations of the collector in a striking way; but this is more fittingly examined in the next section of the article.

II

It is possible, therefore, that the verse texts on fols. 101v-106r of the Vercelli Book, the last of which is *The Dream of the Rood*, were included in the collection because of the collector's desire to ensure a regular recurrence of eschatological material throughout his collection: in particular, because he wished to provide additional eschatological material after Homily XVIII. At this point I shall examine in general terms how *The Dream of the Rood* fits into the eschatological preoccupations of the collector, before going on in Section III to examine the place of *The Dream of the Rood* within the verse texts on fols. 101v-106r.

At the beginning of *The Dream of the Rood*, the dreamer is frightened when the visionary tree ('wuldres treow', 'wealdes treow', 104v/18, 20; *Dream* 14, 17) begins to bleed on the right side:

Hwæðre ic þurh þæt gold ongytan meahte
 earmra ærgewin þæt hit ærest ongan
 swatan on þa swiðran healfe eall ic wæs mid surgum gedrefed.
 Forht ic wæs for þære fægran gesyhðe geseah ic þæt fuse beacen.
 wendan wædum ond bleom

104v/20-105r/1, *Dream* 18-22.²⁵

It has been recognised that in this passage there are eschatological overtones. As Michael Swanton comments, 'the bleeding tree was not without significance for the early Anglo-Saxon church. Trees were believed to have bled at the crucifixion in recognition of Christ's divinity and a similar sign would herald the approach of Judgement Day.'²⁷ The Vercelli Collector would certainly have understood the Dreamer's fear, and responded to the

eschatological overtones of the passage. The last eschatological homily he copied into Booklet B before the verse texts on fols. 101v-106r, Homily XV, contains an extended account of the signs which would herald the approach of the Judgement Day. Judgement Day itself would fall on a Sunday (83v/22). On the preceding Wednesday afternoon, a 'victory-sign' will appear in the heavens:

ond þonne þy þridan dæge þæt bið on wodnes dæg
 æt þære æfteran tide þæs dæges þonne cymeð
 sige beacen of heofonum.

82v/17-19.

It is not made clear that this sign is the Cross, any more than it is made clear at the beginning of *The Dream of the Rood* that the 'sigebeam' (104v/17; *Dream* 13) which appears in the heavens is the Cross. Both visions however cause fear among mankind:

ond þonne cweðað ealle men . wa us nu earmingas .
 ond swa synfullan þæt we æfre þis sceoldon gebidan .
 Wa us þæs þæt we æfre gestrynde wæron oððe geborene .
 ond nu we magon geseon . ond witan witodlice . ðæt nu
 nealæceð ure endedæge .

82v/24-83r/4.

Another text, which the Vercelli collector copied twice into his collection, makes it clear that the Cross would appear as a sign of the end of the world. The next eschatological item which he copied into Booklet B, after the verse of fols. 101v-106r, was Homily XXI. This homily ends with a description of the Last Judgement in the most vivid terms. At the beginning of the description comes a mention of the bleeding Cross, which serves to introduce the figure of Christ himself (as He appeared when the Jews scourged and crucified Him). This vision will lead to despair among the sinful:

On ðam dæge dryhtnes roð byð blode flowande betweox
 wolcnum . ond on ðam dæge byð dryhtnes onsyn swiðe
 egeslicu ond ondrysencu . on þam hiwe þe he wæs
 þa hine iudeas swunon ond ahengon ond hyra spatlum
 him on spiwon . On þam dæge þa synfullan heofað ond
 wepað . forðon þe hie ær noldan hyra synna betan .
 Ac hie þonne sceolan sarie asweman ond on susle afeallan .

115r/8-14.

The collector copied the same description of the Judgement Day into Booklet A, where it forms a complete item (Homily II). As Homily II occurs in a separate booklet from Homily XXI, we have no way of knowing which homily was copied in first. The recurrence of this Last Judgement scene, however, in which 'dryhtnes rod blode flowende betweox wolcnum' (9v/9) recurs as a preface to the appearance of Christ 'swiðe egeslicu . ond ondryslicu . ond on þam hiwe þe he was þa hine iudeas swunon ond ahengon . ond hiora spatlum him on spiwon' (9v/10-12) makes it certain that the Vercelli collector was familiar with the idea that the appearance of the bleeding Cross in the heavens was a sign of the imminence of Judgement Day. Swanton's remark that the bleeding Cross anticipates the 'final apocalyptic vision'²⁸ of the poem gains force when we realise that in Homilies II, XXI and XV the appearance of the visionary cross is a prelude to the appearance of Christ himself to judge mankind; in Homily XV, as in the other two texts, Christ's appearance will be such as to frighten sinners: 'in ðam dæge ures dryhtnes onsyn bið swiðe reðe ond swiðe egesful ond grim' (83v/23-4). After such an opening, the Vercelli collector would have been prepared for a description, in *The Dream of the Rood*, of how Christ

hider eft fundap

on þysne middangeard mancynn secan
on dom dæge dryhten sylfa
ælmhtig god ond his englas mid.
bæt he þonne wile deman se ah domes geweald
anra gehwylcum swa he him ærur her
on þyssum lænum life gecearnap .

105v/31-106r/3; *Dream* 103-9.

The appearance of a stern Christ at the Judgement is a common motif in the eschatological items of the Vercelli collection.²⁹ What is peculiar to *The Dream of the Rood* is its presentation of the Cross as a saviour and patron; for in the other homilies where it is mentioned in the context of the Last Judgement the cross appears as a symbol of retribution: 'seo reðe rod ond se rihta dom' (Homily XXI, 115v/15-16), the fierce Cross and true Judgement, are closely associated.

There was one text in the collection in which an appearance of the Cross in the heavens did not forebode the end of the world, but rather victory and peace. This was the dream-vision of the triumphal cross ('sigores tacen', 121v/24, *Elene* 85) given to the emperor Constantine before his battle against the Huns. The appearance of the cross is close to that of the Cross in *The Dream of the Rood*:

geseah he frætum beorht
wliti wuldres treo ofer wolcna hrof
golde gelenged gimmas lyxtan
Wæs se biaca beam bocstafum awriten
beorhte ond leohte mid þys beacne ðu
on þam freccan fære feond oferswiðesð
geletest lað werod þa þæt leoht gewat
up siððe ond se ar somed
on clænra gemang

121v/26-32, *Elene* 88-96.

But this visionary cross is accompanied, as the last sentence of my quotation makes clear, by a messenger ('ar'), an angel whose role it is to explain the vision and its significance. The messenger is described, and his message given, before the Cross itself is introduced:

þa wearð on slæpe sylfum ætywed
þam casere þær he on corðre swæf
sigerofum gesegen swefnes woma .
þuhte him wlitescyne on weres hade
hwit ond hiwbeorht hæleða nathwylc
geywed ænlicra þonne he ær oððe sið
gesege under swegle ...

121v/13-18, *Elene* 69-75.

The visionary cross in *Elene* is not only reminiscent of the Cross in *The Dream of the Rood* in its appearance, covered in gold and gems, and in the message of hope that it brings, but also in the explicitness with which that message is announced. But where the cross in *Elene* is accompanied by an angel who speaks for it, as it were, the Cross in *The Dream of the Rood* is given human consciousness, and brings its own message to the Dreamer.

The patronage which the Dreamer in *The Dream of the Rood* tells us he expects from the Cross is of an unusual kind. He expects the Cross to come at the time of his death and bear him 'from this transitory life' to heaven.

This passage gives to the Cross the role of psychopomp: a supernatural being who at the point of death leads the good soul away from the attacks of the demons into the heaven which God has assigned to it.³⁰ In eschatological literature, the function of psychopomp is usually assigned to an angel - St Michael the Archangel is the figure most commonly found³¹ - and so it is interesting to find that the Cross is itself, at the beginning of the poem, called 'the angel of the Lord' ('engel dryhtnes', 104v/13-14, *Dream* 9). The poem does not explicitly tell us whether this privilege is to be granted to the Dreamer's body and soul, or to his soul alone;³² but remarkably vivid (in view of such verbs as 'gefetige', 'gebringe' and 'asette', one might almost say 'physical') terms are used:

ond ic wene me
daga gehwylce hwanne me dryhtnes rod
þe ic her on eorðan ær sceawode
on bysson lænan life gefetige
ond me þonne gebringe þær is blis mycel
dream on heofonum þær is dryhtnes folc
geseted to symle þær is singal blis
ond he þonne asette þær ic sybþan mot
wunian on wuldre weall mid þam halgum
dreames brucan

106r/19-25, *Dream* 135-144.

It is likely that the Vercelli collector saw this passage as reflecting one of his own major concerns. As the texts of the collection show, the collector was interested in all aspects of the parting of the soul from its body at death;³³ and there are two other texts in the collection which describe the activities of psychopomps, saving souls either at the Last Judgement or at the moment of death.

One of these texts is Homily XV: the final eschatological item copied into Booklet B before the set of eschatological poems on fols. 101v-106r. The account of the portents of the Judgement, which we have already briefly referred to, is followed by an account of the Judgement itself. This account is remarkable for the role played in it by the three chief patrons of mankind: St Mary, St Michael the Archangel and St Peter. When the

sinful souls, united with their bodies, have been condemned by Christ,³⁴

Mary intercedes for them with the Son she has borne:

ond þonne gesyhð ure leofe hlæfdic sancta maria
cristes moder þone earman heap ond þone sarigan .
ond þone dreorigan . ond þonne ariseð heo . mid
wependre stefne . ond gefealleð to cristes cneowum
ond to his fotum . ond heo swa cweð . min drihten
hælenda crist ðu þe gemedomadest bæt ðu wære on
minum innode eardiende ne forlæt ðu næfre þa
deofla geweald agan ðus myclan heapes bines
handgeworces . Bonne forgifeð ure dryhten bryddan
dæl bæð synfullan heapes . þære halgan sancta marian.
84r/2-11

Mary is followed by St Michael and St Peter; each makes a plea to Christ, and each is given a third of the condemned sinners that remain. Even when the pleas are over, many sinners are left: 'bonne bið þær gyt swiðe mycel werod behindan' (84v/13-14). These are locked by St Peter in Hell for eternity, while

dryhten færð him mid his englum ond mid his apostolum
ond mid his ðam haligra werod to heofena rice mid
myclan þrymme ond bæð syððan wuniað in ecum wuldre
85v/1-4

When, some twenty folios later in Booklet B, the collector copied in the account of how the Cross would take the Dreamer to Heaven, he might have associated the Cross with the other patrons - St Mary, St Michael and St Peter - who would save many souls from the waiting devils at the Last Judgement.

The other text is the final item in Booklet C, the Guthlac excerpt known as Homily XXIII, which we have already suggested was considered by the collector as a text complementing the devotional themes of *Elene*. The homily ends with a passage in which devils bring Guthlac to the mouth of Hell. The devils are just about to shove Guthlac into the flames, when his patron St Bartholomew comes flying through the darkness:

hie þa werigan gastas hine to ðam gegearwodon
swylce hine man þær in scufan wolde þa semninga
com se heofones biggenga . se haliga apostol .
sanctus bartholomeus mid heofonlicre beorhtnesse

ond wuldre scinende betwuh þa dimman bystro
 þære sweartan helle ... ða se eadiga wer his
 þone getrywan freond geseah ða was he mid
 gastlicre gefeannesse ond on heofoncundre
 blisse swiðe gefeonde

135v/17-25

The text ends, not with material taken from Felix's *Vita Guthlaci*, but with a curious added passage in which St Bartholomew flies to heaven with Guthlac. As in *The Dream of the Rood*, it is not made entirely clear whether we are to imagine Guthlac's soul being brought to heaven, or his body as well:

ond þa æfter þam fleah se haliga guðlac mid þam
 apostole sancte bartholomei to heofona rices wuldre
 ond hine se hælend þær onfeng ond he þær leofað ond
 rixað in heofona rices wuldre a butan ende on
 ecnesse amen finit :7

135v/25-8.

How are we to explain this addition, not found in any other extant text, to the Guthlac legend? Dr Jane Roberts argues that the man who selected the excerpt which we find in the Vercelli Book had access to another version of the Guthlac legend, perhaps earlier than Felix's *Vita*, and that from it he preserved this single detail:

a fuller, or at least different, story of St Guthlac may have been available to the man who selected these chapters of the Old English translation of the *vita* for a homily, but he seems not to have considered anything outside them important. Perhaps in his selection we can glimpse Bartholomew in his original function as psychopomp within the legend of St Guthlac.³⁵

The theory is an attractive one, and Dr Roberts has since provided additional reasons for believing that Chapters xxviii-xxxiii of Guthlac's life (corresponding to the Vercelli excerpt) originally formed a separate account of Guthlac's occupation of his hermitage, an account in which the patronage of St Bartholomew played an important part:

in both the Vercelli Book homily and the Anglo-Saxon poem *Guthlac* A the saint's temptation at hell's gates is the climactic episode of his life, and it is tempting to infer that at one time it constituted Guthlac's martyrdom.³⁶

We should ask ourselves, however, why the excerpt was included in the Vercelli collection after *Elene*. The concern of the Vercelli collector to end groups of texts with eschatological material is not in itself a sufficient explanation, as *Elene* ends with an epilogue in which the Last Judgement itself is described. We have already seen, however, that the Guthlac excerpt provided a useful counterweight to the treatment of the theme of fasting in *Elene*, giving the reader of the Vercelli Book an *exemplum* which was closer to his own experience than the experience of Judas in *Elene*. The Guthlac excerpt provides a similar counterweight to the treatment of the Last Judgement in the epilogue to *Elene*. The epilogue would have aroused in the Vercelli collector some disturbing reflections. Alone of all the accounts of Judgement Day in the Vercelli Book, it prophesied a fiery future even for the elect. The righteous ('soðfaste', 133r/19) will indeed be placed higher in the refining purgatorial fire, suffering only what they can easily bear, and better off than the other two divisions of mankind, the sinners ('synfulle', 133r/23) who are placed in the middle of the flames, and the reprobate ('awyrgeðe womsceaðan', 133r/25) who are placed at the bottom of the fire, and thence consigned to the bottom of hell ('in helle grund', 133r/29). The uncomfortable fact remained, however, that even the saved would have to be refined as gold in the furnace:

hie asodene beoð
 asundrod fram synnum swa smæte gold
 þæt in wylme bið womma gehwylces
 þurh ofnes fyr eall gecleasod
 amered ond gemylded swa bið þara manna ælc
 ascyred ond asceaden scylda gehwylcre
 deopra firena þurh þæs domes fyr ,

133r/30-133v/2, *Elene* 1305b-14.

Elene, indeed, ends with an indirect appeal to the reader to pray for the bliss of heaven.³⁷ The following Guthlac excerpt, however, provided the reader with an *exemplum* in which the intervention of a patron-psychopomp saved a man from the very mouth of Hell, and ensured him a much easier passage to Heaven than the fiery crucible pictured in the epilogue to *Elene*. The Guthlac excerpt provided the reader with an example of the

power of prayer: before St Bartholomew appeared in order to rescue him,

Guthlac had defied the devils and called to God:

mid þy þe ða werigea gastas byssum wordum spræcon ond
him swa to beotodon þa andswarude he him ond him
to cwearð wa eow þystra bearnum ond forwyrde tuddor
ge synd on dustes acsan hwa geaf eow yrmungum þæt
ðæt ge min gewcald ahton in þas witu to sendanne .
Hwæt ic eom her ondweard ond earo ond bide mines
dryhtnes willan forhwan mid eowrum leasum beotungum
me bregean

135v/11-17.³⁸

More important still, the excerpt provided the reader with two patrons to whom to pray after meditation on Hell and its terrors: St Bartholomew, whose power as psychopomp is shown in the excerpt, and St Guthlac, whose narrow escape from Hell might be expected to make him sympathetic to a suppliant in similar danger. Homily XXIII enabled the Vercelli collector to move from the epilogue to *Elene* to material which not merely provided more optimistic themes for meditation, but patrons to whom his prayer could be directed.

We may surmise, therefore, that the Vercelli collector valued *The Dream of the Rood* because it reflected particularly fully his devotional preoccupations. Together with the verse texts which precede it in the manuscript, *The Dream of the Rood* is concerned with the last things: death, Judgement, hell and heaven. In addition, it explicitly encouraged its reader towards *compunctio*, an act of will defined by St Isidore of Seville as 'humilitas mentis cum lacrimis, exurgens de recordatione peccati et timore iudicii'.³⁹ In all of the eschatological texts which the collector used to round off groups of texts in the Vercelli Book, the reader is encouraged to compunction. In Homilies XV and XXIII and also in *The Dream of the Rood*, however, the reader is given an even more immediate stimulus to prayer: here thoughts of the Judgement are combined with pictures of patrons who, if cultivated, had power to snatch a man even from the jaws of Hell, and lead him to Heaven.

III

Having seen how *The Dream of the Rood* fits into the recurrent preoccupations of the Vercelli collector, we shall concentrate, in this section, on the relation between *The Dream of the Rood* and the verse texts which immediately precede it in the manuscript. Between these texts we shall find thematic progressions similar to, but stronger than those we have seen between *Elene* and Homily XXIII. That these thematic progressions have not hitherto been noticed is due to the unfortunate custom of considering Old English poetic manuscripts, not in their own right as compilations, but as vehicles merely of the texts they contain. Too often the editor of an Old English text seems to have looked on his description of the manuscript simply as a chore to be got over before he proceeded to the real business of considering 'his own' text - in isolation from the texts which the Anglo-Saxon scribe copied in with it in the manuscript. This approach is particularly unfortunate in the case of a private and personal collection like the Vercelli Book, in which the collector clearly copied his texts in groups, and where the manuscript layout clearly reflects the grouping of his texts.

But can we consider *The Dream of the Rood* as forming a group together with the preceding verse texts occupying fols 101v-106r of the manuscript? D. G. Scragg thought it did, and labelled the texts as a separate subgroup (group B4a) linked linguistically to the other homiletic texts between the poems and the end of Booklet B:

The three sub-divisions of group B4 - the three short poems of 4a, the three homilies of 4b, and homily XXII in 4c - are linked by their sharing of a number of late West Saxon features ... But the poems and homily XXII have other features which mark them off from the three homilies of 4b ... The items of B4b, homilies XIX-XXI, are intimately linked linguistically.⁴⁰

Dr Scragg concluded that 'there is no proof that B4a, b and c were all taken from one exemplar by V, ... But neither can it be shown definitely

that the three groups are from separate sources, and they must remain, as yet, subdivisions of one unit.⁴¹ However, in her facsimile of the Vercelli Book, Dr Celia Sisam provides a different theory of the compilation of this part of the manuscript. She proved that quire 15 (fols 105-111), which contains most of *The Dream of the Rood* (lines 22-156), Homily XIX and the beginning of Homily XX,

is irregular both in make-up and lineation, and its irregularities suggest that it was specially made to link to the Vercelli compilation the already copied quires 16 and 17, containing the end of Homily XX, Homilies XXI and XXII. ... The scribe seems to have been fitting his texts, *The Dream of the Rood*, Homily XIX, and the first part of homily XX, with unusual care to the pages of quire 15.⁴²

Dr Sisam argued that in the original copy, Homily XIX was preceded by

matter not wanted for the Vercelli Book; matter which could not be excised because it occupied part of the recto of the leaf on which homily XIX began. In its place the Vercelli compiler inserted the shorter *Dream of the Rood*. With characteristic economy, he began it in the blank space after 'Deceit' [i.e., *Homiletic Fragment I*] on the last page of quire 14; then made a new quire 15, exactly tailored to contain the rest of *The Dream of the Rood*, and the homilies (XIX and part of XX) which had to be recopied from his original quire *15.⁴³

Thus Dr Sisam numbers the groups within Booklet B differently; she links Homilies XI-XVIII, together with the two short verse texts *Soul and Body I* and *Homiletic Fragment I* as a single copying job (group D); on the other hand she links *The Dream of the Rood* to the texts which fill the recopied quire 15 (Homily XIX and the beginning of Homily XX: Group E1).⁴⁴

Dr Sisam's argument splits the verse texts on fols 101v-106r into two unrelated sections; *Soul and Body I* and *Homiletic Fragment I* simply become appendages to Homilies XV-XVIII, and *The Dream of the Rood* is not palaeographically related to them:

The argument for assigning *The Dream of the Rood* to E1 rather than D rests mainly on the manuscript make-up. Scribal differences between *The Dream of the Rood* and 'Soul and Body' lend some support:

The Dream of the Rood shows the abbreviation $\bar{q}$ for $\bar{q}e$ (106r21), which is lacking in D (apart from the correction at 88r16) but present in E; like homilies XIX-XXI, it lacks the $\bar{f}$ -shaped $\bar{y}$, found in 'Soul and Body' and most other pieces in the manuscript.⁴⁵

The palaeographical features mentioned here by Dr Sisam are themselves so sporadic that not much weight can be attached to them;⁴⁶ and they are outweighed by the general layout of the texts and the evidence of their punctuation. It is odd that, if the scribe knew he was going to crowd his text in the recopied quire 15, there is no sign of crowding in the text of the first 21 lines of *The Dream of the Rood*. Instead we have a text laid out with some expansiveness: lines 1-12 are set out as a separate paragraph, with a *positura* or end-of-section mark (: $\bar{y}$) followed by a small blank at the end of the line (104v/16); another *positura* occurs a few lines later (104v/20). The preceding verse texts on fols 101v-104v are marked by the recurrence of similar *positurae* (: $\bar{y}$). This form of *positura* occurs four times in the text of *Soul and Body I* (at fols 101v/10, 102r/6, 102v/14 and 103r/20) and once at the end of *Homiletic Fragment I* (104v/5). Taken together with the two occurrences in lines 1-21 of *The Dream of the Rood*, this form of *positura* occurs seven times in fols 101v-4v; but no *positura* occurs in that part of *The Dream of the Rood* on the recopied Quire 15, except the one which ends the text (fol. 106r/32); and this *positura* is different in form from all those on fols 101v-4v (:-, colon and tilde).

Furthermore, the text of *The Dream of the Rood* on Quire 15 contains two examples of what Dr Sisam calls a 'comma-shaped point',⁴⁷ similar in form to a lengthened comma (fol. 105v/14, 24). This comma-shaped point also occurs in the recopied text of Homily XIX in Quire 15 (fols 106v/26, 107v/31 and 108r/7), and is very common in the text of *Elene* in Booklet C. The comma-shaped point is not found in the first 21 lines of *The Dream of the Rood* or in the preceding verse texts. Equally remarkable is the extraordinary number of 34 full stops (*punctus*) on fol. 105r, the first page

of the recopied quire. The number of *punctus* falls in the remaining pages of *The Dream of the Rood* (there are 19 on fol. 105v and 13 on fol. 106r); but even these figures are higher than the number of *punctus* on the last page of Quire 14 (7 on fol. 104v, which contains the beginning of *The Dream of the Rood*), and above the average number of *punctus* per page for the preceding verse texts.⁴⁸ The remarkable number of 34 *punctus* on fol. 105r might indicate that the collector was taking the opportunity of carefully repointing a text which (as he had copied it before and had had it in his collection for some time) he already knew and understood; but his energy seems to have begun to flag after the first page was recopied.

The evidence of the punctuation indicates that *The Dream of the Rood* was already part of Booklet B before the Vercelli collector thought of the splicing procedure which gave us quires 15-17 as we have them; when he made a decision to splice Homilies XIX-XXII on to Booklet B, he recopied lines 22-156 of *The Dream of the Rood* in Quire 15, and fitted after it Homily XIX and the beginning of Homily XX. This makes it much more likely that the collector originally found *The Dream of the Rood* already circulating with the preceding verse texts, *Soul and Body I* and *Homiletic Fragment I*, and copied them as a group into his collection.

It is unlikely that the Vercelli collector would, as modern editions encourage us to do, have seen fols 101v-6r as comprising three entirely unconnected poems. *Soul and Body I* is divided into two clear sections in the manuscript (at fol. 103r/21). The section division marks off the dialogue between the blessed soul and its body from the preceding speech of the damned soul to its body. The loss of a leaf after fol. 103 has unfortunately deprived us of the end of the second section of *Soul and Body I*, and the beginning of *Homiletic Fragment I*; but it seems likely that there were originally four manuscript sections of verse between Homily XVIII and Homily XIX. The collector might have referred to the

sections by the term 'fitte': he was familiar with the term, as *The Fates of the Apostles*, a poem itself occupying one manuscript section, is referred to as 'pas fitte' (fol. 54r/2; *Fates* 98).⁴⁹ The two long poems in the Vercelli collection, *Andreas* and *Elene*, present in the manuscript a similar appearance to the texts on fols 101v-6r: they, too, look like a series of linked sections, not long continuous texts. The Vercelli collector is unlikely to have shared our concern with the integrity and separate individual history of the poems he collected. From the evidence of the layout of the manuscript, he seems to have considered the long poems as comprising series of linked sections; and, on the other hand, he is likely to have considered the verse texts on fols 101v-6r as forming a sequence of lections rather than a set of texts which, because they had separate histories, had to be interpreted in isolation from each other.

Clear thematic links can be seen between the texts on fols 101v-6r. The similarities and progressions between the texts can be examined under three main headings: first, similarities of setting (and corresponding similarities in the layout of the texts) between *Soul and Body I* and *The Dream of the Rood*; secondly, the theme of messengers and messages (shared by all three poems); and thirdly, the treatment of time (and with it the possibility of repentance). This last theme can be traced in all three poems, and develops consecutively from one text to another.

The similarities in setting between *Soul and Body I* and *The Dream of the Rood* are striking. Like *The Dream of the Rood*, *Soul and Body I* is set at night: the damned soul is condemned to seek out its body on one night each week ('symble ymbe seofon niht', 101v/7, *Soul* 10) for three hundred years - unless the end of the world comes sooner. The damned soul fully describes the obligation placed upon it to visit the body:

sceal ic ðe nihtes swa beah nede gesecan
synnum gesargod ond eft sona fram þe
hweorfan on hancrod þonne halige men
lifiendum gode lofsang doð
secan þa hamas þe ðu me her scrife .

102v/1-5, *Soul* 66-70.

The manuscript layout of the two poems suggests that the collector (or the compiler of the exemplar which he copied) had noticed the similarity of setting between *Soul and Body I* and *The Dream of the Rood*: both poems are provided with prologues in the manuscript. Each prologue is marked off by a *positura*, or end-of-section mark; a capital letter then marks the beginning of the poem proper. In *Soul and Body I*, the *positura* marks off the description of the way in which the damned soul is forced to visit its body once a week; the following sentence introduces the imprecations of the soul to its body:

Sceal se gast cuman geohðum hremig
 symble ymbe seofon niht sawle findan
 bone lichoman þe hie ær lange wæg
 þreo hund wintra butan ær þeodcýning
 ælmihtig god ende worulde
 wyrcan wille weoruda dryhten :7
 Cleopað þonne swa cearful cealdan reorde
 spreceð grimlice se gast to þam duste .

101v/6-11, *Soul* 9-16.

In *The Dream of the Rood* the marking of the 'prologue' is even more prominent. The *positura* comes towards the end of a manuscript line. The collector, instead of crowding the word 'syllic' in at the end of the line⁵⁰ left a small blank and began a new line with a capital letter for the word 'syllic'. The 'prologue' in this text ends with the description of how all creation honours 'the angel of the lord' spanning the heavens; the next sentence contrasts this splendid vision with the sinfulness of the Dreamer:

beheoldon þær engel dryhtnes
 ealle fagere þurh forðgesceaft ne wæs ðær huru fracodes gealga.
 Ac hine þær beheoldon halige gastas
 men ofer moldan ond eall þeos mære gesceaft :7
 Syllic wæs se sigebeam ond ic synnum fah
 forwunded mid womnum

104v/13-18, *Dream* 9-14.

Next, we shall examine the theme of 'messengers' in these poems. Here we shall find not only correspondences between the three texts, but also progression and development between them. It is curious that one link between *Soul and Body I* and *The Dream of the Rood* has not hitherto been

remarked: at the beginning of each text is a passage of textual difficulty involving the word 'engel'. *Soul and Body II*, in the Exeter Book, avoids the difficulty of the Vercelli *Soul and Body I*. In that text the soul reproaches the body with maltreating it in this life, even though God Himself had sent the soul into the body 'through an angel':

ond be þurh engel ufan of roderum
 sawle onsende þurh his sylfes hond,
 meotud ælmihtig, of his mægenþrymme,
 ond þe þa gebohte blode þy halgan,
 ond þu me þy heardan hungre gebunde
 ond gehæftnadest helle witum!⁵¹

But in the Vercelli text, the passage appears as follows:

hwæt þe la engel ufan of roderum
 sawle onsende þurh his sylfes hand
 meotod ælmihtig of his mægenþrymme .
 ond þe gebohte blode þy halgan .
 ond þu me mid þy heardan hungre gebunde
 ond gehæftnedest hellewitum .

101v/19-23, *Soul* 27-32.

The difficulty is the phrase 'be la engel', which appears in the Vercelli text instead of the 'be þurh engel' of the Exeter Book poem. Krapp, in his edition of the Vercelli poems, suggests that 'as the text stands, "engel" is appositive to "meotod", l. 29, which implies an unusual use of "engel"'.⁵² Krapp goes on to give instances of '"engel" meaning Christ'.⁵³ However, it is also possible to take 'engel' here as accusative, in apposition to the accusative 'sawle', and to translate the passage as follows: 'Lo, Almighty God, in His power, sent you an angel - your soul - from the heavens above, through His own hand, and redeemed you through His holy blood; but you bound me (your soul) with severe hunger, and imprisoned me in the tortures of hell.' Assuming (as do several editors⁵⁴) that the Exeter Book *Soul and Body II* preserves the original reading of the poem's text, the syntactically awkward variant in the Vercelli Book might have been introduced by a scribe who saw that the soul did indeed act in the poem as a messenger, and thus assumed that the word 'engel' could

only refer to the soul.

A very similar problem arises with regard to the word 'engel' at the end of the 'prologue' to *The Dream of the Rood* (the passage has been quoted above). The word 'engel' has all too often been emended away, and when allowed to stand has been interpreted as 'Christ on the Cross'.⁵⁵ In recent years, however, scholars have increasingly recognised that the word 'engel' must refer to the Cross itself, and to its role as message-bearer in the poem.⁵⁶ I would translate lines 9b-12 of *The Dream of the Rood* as follows: 'All fair creatures throughout time and creation looked upon the angel of the Lord there; that was no criminal's gallows, but blessed spirits, men throughout the earth and all this glorious creation looked upon it there.'⁵⁷

In both *Soul and Body I* and *The Dream of the Rood* we have bearers of messages; in both poems, if my interpretations are accepted, they are called 'angels', in the sense of 'messengers'. We have already seen that in *The Dream of the Rood* the role of the Cross as 'angel' is carried forward to the end of the poem, where the Dreamer expects the Cross to act as psychopomp to him at the hour of death; most psychopomps were, in fact, angels. In *Soul and Body I*, we are several times told that the soul was sent from God to the body: not only in lines 66-70 (quoted above), but in the passage in which the condemned soul refers to itself as 'gast on ðe fram gode sended' (102r/10, *Soul* 46). In the second manuscript section of the poem, the good soul is likewise said to come on an 'errand':

bið þæt ærende cadiglicre
funden on ferhðe

103r/22-3, *Soul* 129-30.

Indeed, the blessed soul looks forward to the Judgement Day, when it can lead the body to heaven. Its message is a foretaste of the hopes which the Dreamer will have of the Cross in *The Dream of the Rood*:

þær ic þe moste mid me lædan
þæt wyt englas ealle gesawon
heofona wuldor swylc swa ðu me ær her scrife
103v/4-6; *Soul* 139-41.

The theme of 'messages' and their trustworthiness is also central to *Homiletic Fragment I*. The fragmentary text opens with the theme of untrustworthy speech, backbiting and betrayal:

eorl oðerne mid æfþancum
ond mid teonwordum tæleð behindan
spreceð fægere beforan ond þæt facen swa swa þeah
hafað in his heortan hord unclæne
byð þonne þæs wommes gewita weruda dryhten ;
104r/1-5, *Fragment* 3-7.

The theme of the poem is that, in these last days of the world before the Judgement (31-2), a man cannot trust in the promises or honeyed words of the sinners who proliferate on the earth:

swa bioð gelice þa leasan men
þa ðe mid tungan treowa gehataþ
fægerum wordum facenlice þencaþ
þonne hie æt nehstan nearwe beswicab
hafað on gehatum hunigsmæccas
smeðne sybcwide ond in siofan innan
burh deofles cræft dyrne wunde . .
104r/14-18, *Fragment* 24-30.

It would be difficult to imagine a more fitting counterweight to this theme of treachery and untrustworthiness than the opening of the next and final text in the series:

Hwæt ic swefna cyst secgan wylle
hæt me gemætte to midre nihte
syðþan reordberend reste wunedon .
þuhte me þæt ic gesawe syllicre treow
104v/7-9, *Dream* 1-4.

Attention to the theme of messengers and messages throughout the verse texts on fols 101v-6r reveals in them a simple fourfold pattern. The pattern is antiphonal: a theme is stated, then followed by its counter-theme; and this process is twice repeated. The grim message of what damnation is like (*Soul and Body I*, section one) is answered by the message of peace and praise brought by the good soul (*Soul and Body I*, section two). The warning of *Homiletic Fragment I* that men are not to be trusted is

answered by *The Dream of the Rood* which brings a messenger and a message which can be trusted:

Ac ðurh ða rode sceal rice gesecan
of eorðwege æghwylc sawl
seo þe mid wealdende wunian þenceð
106r/9-11, *Dream* 119-21.

We shall now examine the third set of thematic links between the verse texts on fols 101v-6r: time and the possibility of repentance. All three texts invite the reader to examine his position in the light of the imminence of death and the Last Judgement:

HVRV ðæs behofað hæleða æghwylc
þæt he his sawle sið sið sylfa gefence .
hu þæt bið deoplic þonne se deað cymeð
101v/1-3, *Soul* 1-3.

Soul and Body I and *The Dream of the Rood* both use a similar motif in their account of the Judgement - the challenge of Christ as Judge will reduce sinners to silence:

þonne ðu for unc bæm andwyrðan scealt
on ðam miclan dæge þonne mannum beoð
wunda onwrigene þa ðe on worulde ær
fyrenfulle men fyrrn geworhton .
Bonne wyle dryhten sylf dæda gehyran
hæleða gehwylces heofena scippend
æt calra manna gehwæs muðes reorde
wunde widerlean . Ac hwæt wylt ðu þær .
on þam domdæge dryhtne secgan .
102v/16-22, *Soul* 88-96.

Not only is it implied that the evil body will have no defence 'þonne reðe bið dryhten æt þam dome' (103r/1, *Soul* 99-100), but the soul's accusation leaves its body speechless:

liget dust bær hit wæs .
ne mæg him ondsware ænige gehatan
geomrum gaste geoce oððe frofre .
103r/5-7, *Soul* 105-7.

On the other hand, the blessed soul assures its body that they need not fear for the answer they will both be able to give at the Judgement:

ne þurfon wyt beon cearie æt cyme dryhtnes .
ne þære andsware yfele habban
sorge in reðre . ac wyt sylfe magon
æt ðam dome þær . dædum agilpan .

hwylce earnunga uncre wæron .

103v/20-3, *Soul* 160-4.

In *The Dream of the Rood* we find a similar contrast, between the tongue-tied fear which will come upon most men when Christ challenges them at the Judgement, and the confidence of those who 'bear the Cross':

Ac hie bonne forhtiað . ond fea þencaþ
hwæt hie to criste cweðan onginnen .
Ne þearf ðær bonne ænig unforht wesan
þe him ær in breostum bereð beacna selest .
106r/7-9, *Dream* 115-8.

If there is a common concern in all the texts with the Judgement, there are differences in perspective between the texts with regard to this terrifying event. The dialogues of *Soul and Body I* are, as we have seen, set in the period between death and the end of the world - a period that may be longer than three hundred years, but that is in fact indeterminate because God may bring the world to an end at any time (101v/4-10, *Soul* 5-14). The two sections of *Soul and Body I* are clearly intended to face the reader with an 'either/or' choice. The technique of the poem is, however, rather drastic: it tries to stimulate the reader to conversion by imagining the time (between death and Judgement Day) when conversion and choice will no longer be possible, when the reader will be frozen for eternity in the destiny that his deeds on earth have shaped for him. *Homiletic Fragment I* modifies this stark vision. It shifts the attention of the reader back from the time after death to the dangers and possibilities of the present life. The world is indeed near its end, and the devil has more power over it than ever before, so much has loyalty declined among degenerate mankind (104r/14-24; *Fragment*, 24-39). But the people envisaged in *Homiletic Fragment I* still have power of repentance; through it, they can transcend the treacherous world in which they at present live, and attain Heaven:

uton to þam beteran nu we cunnon
hycgan ond hyhtan þæt we heofones leoht

uppe mid englum agan moton
 gastum to geoce þonne god wile
 eorðan lifes ende gewyrca

104v/2-5, Fragment 43-7.

In the context of an utterly pessimistic vision of treachery in a degenerate world, *Homiletic Fragment I* holds forth the possibility of repentance and transcendence. *The Dream of the Rood* carries the sequence another important step forward. Conversion, a possibility in *Homiletic Fragment I*, is enacted in the experience of the Dreamer. At the end of *The Dream of the Rood*, the Dreamer has placed his sinful life in the past. No longer does he fear death or lack of friends: in a kind of joyful heroism he longs for death, confident in the patronage of the Cross. To the reader working through the texts on fols 101v-6r 'not ... in a turmoil, but quietly, not skimmed or hurried through, but taken a little at a time, with deep and thoughtful meditation',⁵⁸ *The Dream of the Rood* would have provided, in the Dreamer, an *exemplum* of how the reader himself should react to the texts; in the Cross, a patron against the dangers of death; and, in the final part of the poem, words with which to begin prayer to Christ victor over death and hell:

si me dryhten freond
 se ðe her on eorþan ær þrowode
 on þam gealgtreowe for guman synnum
 he us onlȳsde ond us lif forgeaf
 heofonlicne ham hiht wæs geniwad
 mid bledum ond mid blisse þam þe bæc bryne polodan .

106r/25-29, *Dream* 144-9.

If we try to read *The Dream of the Rood* in the context of the other eschatological texts, as the Vercelli collector would have done, we can better appreciate just what a masterstroke is the return at the end of the poem to Christ's Harrowing of Hell. After the apocalyptic visions of an uncertain future in *Soul and Body I* and in *Homiletic Fragment I*, and after the confident message of *The Dream of the Rood* itself which, precisely because it deals with the future, must contain a grain of uncertainty ('ond ic wene me daga gehwylce ...', 106r/18-19, *Dream* 135-6), comes a

final vision of an achieved victory over hell. There is nothing the Dreamer hopes of his patron the Cross which Christ did not already achieve while His dead body lay in the tomb. Christ the victor was Himself the greatest of psychopomps

þa he mid manigeo com
 gasta weorode on godes rice
 anwealda ælmihtig englum to blisse .

106r/30-31, *Dream* 151-3.

It seems likely therefore that in the verse texts on fols 101v-6r the Vercelli collector, interested as he was in the necessity of repentance, would have found a thematic progression useful for his devotional life. If Dr Sisam's palaeographical arguments have greater weight than the ones set forth above, and if it be thought that the collector added *The Dream of the Rood* to the preceding texts only when he came to recopy the texts on Quire 15, then we have a fascinating example of the Vercelli collector's habits as scribal editor: he found a text in *The Dream of the Rood* which, as well as filling the right amount of parchment which needed to be filled at the end of Quire 14 and at the beginning of Quire 15, complemented in a remarkable manner the devotional themes of the preceding poems. It is perhaps more likely however that these verse texts had been placed in sequence before the Vercelli collector came across them. They have the appearance of a devotionally self-sufficient sequence, and may have circulated unattached to any prose homilies such as we find juxtaposed to them in the Vercelli collection. Perhaps they once formed a separate pocket-book, one of the unbound 'folded manuscripts' circulating as single quires, known to exist in the late Anglo-Saxon period.⁵⁹ Whether the Vercelli collector created the sequence himself or found it ready made, he is likely, in subsequent use of his manuscript, to have seen the devotional themes of *The Dream of the Rood* in the light of the themes of *Soul and Body I* and *Homiletic Fragment I*.

IV

Finally, we may ask how the Vercelli collector might have interpreted that aspect of *The Dream of the Rood* which has most interested modern readers - the way in which Christ is presented in heroic terms in the Crucifixion narrative. The Vercelli collector is likely, like modern readers, to have found this presentation somewhat unusual. In Booklet A, he had included a Passion narrative which presents a complete contrast to the narrative in *The Dream of the Rood*. Homily I is a paraphrase of the Passion according to St John, the lection for Good Friday. As befits a Good Friday homily, the sermon is concerned with Christ's humanity and humility, and it encourages its readers to meditate on Christ's patience in suffering. The theme of the homily is summarised at the end of the text:

Ac utan we nu forþan a singalice ussum dryhtne
hælendan cristo þanc secgan eallre þære eaðmodnesse
þe se heofonlica cyning ælmihtig drihten in þas
halgan tid callum mancynne gecyððe .

9r/17-20.

There is little exhortation in the homily, but the theme of Christ's humility is emphasised occasionally. Thus at the end of the scene where Christ is questioned and mocked at the house of Caiaphas, we are reminded that 'he þæt eall se heofonlica cyning fŕ mancynnes hælo geþyldelice abær ond aræfnode' (4r/2-3), and there is a similar comment at the end of the account of the crowning with thorns (5v/16-18). However, it is only when, in the final paragraphs of the homily, the Harrowing of hell is described, that the homilist refers to Christ's 'great power':

menn þa leofostan hwæt ure drihten ælmihtig god
þa his haliga lichama in þa halgan byrgenne geseted
wæs . þurh þa myclan miht his þære ecean
godcundnesse he in helle astah . ond he þær ealle
þa fæstan carcarn gebræc þæs ecan deapes .

9r/5-9.

In the Passion according to St John, the story of Simon of Cyrene

[found in the synoptic gospels of St Matthew (xxvii, 32) and St Luke (xxiii, 26)] is omitted, and Christ Himself carries His cross to Calvary:

Then therefore he delivered Him to them to be crucified. And they took Jesus and led Him forth. And bearing his own cross, He went forth to that place which is called Calvary, but in Hebrew Golgotha, where they crucified Him, and with Him two others, one on each side, and Jesus in the midst.⁶⁰

This passage is paraphrased and expanded in Vercelli Homily I, which emphasises that Christ was led to Calvary, that He carried His Cross 'a certain part of the way' thither (this departure from St John's text being clearly a reminiscence of the synoptic accounts), and that He was suspended on the Cross between the two thieves by Pilate's soldiers and the Jews. Christ is presented in the homily as a prisoner; He plays a relatively passive role in the account, as the recurrence of verbs such as 'lædan' and 'ahon' makes clear:

he pilatus urne crist Iudeum agef and sealde his agene
men mid . ond heht hine to rode lædan . ond hine
ahon . þa namon hie hine ond læddon to bære stowe .
þær hie hine eft on ahengon . ond he sylfa bær þa
rode sumne dæl þæs wegges þe hine man eft on aheng .
þa æfter þam ahengon hie hine on þam clife . þe hie
heton golgoðða . ond twegen sceaðan him on ba twa
healfa . ond hine urne drihten crist on middan
ahengon .

6v/23-7r/7.

In devotional atmosphere and narrative detail, Vercelli Homily I is very different from the account of the Crucifixion in *The Dream of the Rood*. Rosemary Woolf has pointed to the crucial shift of perspective in that poem, *vis à vis* all other accounts: 'that the Cross is already in position and watches Christ advancing to it seems to be the poet's own variation.'⁶¹ The reader of *The Dream of the Rood* experiences the Crucifixion through the Cross's consciousness, and all elements of the scriptural narratives which make Christ seem a prisoner, or which might distract from the encounter between the Cross and the heroic Christ are

omitted:

geseah ic þa frean mancynnes
efstan elne mycle . þæt he me wolde on gestigan .
105r/10-11, *Dream* 34-5.

No other text in the Vercelli collection provided the collector with a parallel for this heroic scene. *The Dream of the Rood* itself, however, suggests a context within which the Vercelli collector could have understood why the poet had altered the scriptural narrative. The Cross, later in the poem, explains the honour done to it by a comparison between itself and Mary:

hwæt me þa geweorðode wuldres ealdor
ofer holmwudu heofonrices weard .
swylce swa he his modor eac marian sylfe
ælmhtig god . for ealle menn
geweorðode ofer eall wifa cynn .
105v/23-6, *Dream* 90-4.

As I have argued elsewhere,⁶² this passage would have reminded a cleric like the Vercelli collector of a coincidence which was very widely known, and accepted as historically true, throughout the Anglo-Saxon period: that the Crucifixion took place on 25 March, the thirty-third anniversary of Christ's incarnation at the Annunciation. The tradition receives a clear and expanded account in *The Old English Martyrology*. This text states that on 25 March not only did Mary become pregnant in Nazareth through hearing the angel's word 'like the trees, when they blossom under the breeze'; Christ was crucified on the same day 'after thirty-two years and three months' (i.e., when aged thirty-two and three months, counted from the Nativity, 25 December; thirty-three years after His incarnation):

On þone fif ond twentegðan dæg þæs monðes com
Gabrihel se engel ærest to sancta Marian mid
godes ærende, ond on þone dæg sancta Maria
was eacen geworden on Nazareth þære ceastre
þurh þæs engles word ond þurh hire earena
gehyrnesse, swa þæs treowa þonne hi blostmiað
þurh þæs windes blæd. ... ond þa æfter twa ond
britegum geara ond æfter þrym monðum was Crist
ahangen on rode on þone ylcan dæg; ond sona
swa he on þære rode was. þa gescæfte tacnedon
þæt he was soð god.⁶³

If, as is very likely, the Vercelli collector was aware of the coincidence of the Annunciation and the Crucifixion on 25 March, the comparison between the Cross and Mary in *The Dream of the Rood* would have explained the departure from the scriptural narratives in the poem. The Cross is placed on Calvary before Christ approaches it, so that the Cross can be seen to play a role reminiscent of the role of Mary at the Annunciation. As Mary was then commanded to bear Christ into human life, so the Cross must now bear Him to His death - it cannot participate in the protest of all creation at the death of Christ (*Dream*, 35-8), and must instead become His 'bana' (105v/6, *Dream* 66). The similar glory given to the Cross and Mary is a reward for the similar trials they underwent on 25 March, thirty-three years apart.

The Vercelli collector would probably have understood the heroic presentation of Christ in *The Dream of the Rood* as another facet of the presentation of the Crucifixion in terms of the Annunciation in the poem. In Annunciation homilies, Christ's incarnation was invariably seen as an heroic act, as a battle in which Christ came to defeat 'the powers of the air'.⁶⁴ The name of the archangel Gabriel, which was interpreted as 'fortitudo Dei', 'the strength (or valour) of God',⁶⁵ invariably led the homilists to emphasise how God's strength and power was made manifest at the Annunciation. This can be seen in the two vernacular English Annunciation homilies by contemporaries of the Vercelli collector. Aelfric, paraphrasing Bede, describes Gabriel's role as follows:

Se heah-engel, þe cydde þæs Hælendes acennednysse,
was gehaten Gabrihel, þæt is gereht, 'Godes strengð.'
þone he bodode toweardne, þe se sealm-sceop mid
þisum wordum herede, "Drihten is strang and mihtig
on gefeohte." On ðam gefeohte, butan tweon, þe
se Hælend deofol oferwann, and middangeard him
ætbræd.⁶⁶

The Blickling Homilies are, with the Vercelli Book, the major extant collection of non-Aelfrician homilies in Old English. The Blickling

Annunciation Homily is the sort of text the Vercelli Collector himself is likely to have read. Therefore it is particularly interesting to find that it too sees Christ's power ('*mægen ... mihte ... mægen-þrym*') manifested at the Annunciation:

Eala men þa leofestan, mycel wæs bes ærendwreca,
 & mycel ærende brohte he; forþon his nama wæs
 gereht 'Godes strengo.' Wel hæst wæs gecweden,
 forþon þe se hæfde mægen ofer ealle gesceafta þe
 he towearde sægde & bodode; & his rices ongin, ne
 his mihte, ne his mægen-þrymnes næfre gewonad
 ne weorðeþ, ac he bið aa ece.⁶⁷

We have seen that, because of his devotional preoccupations, the Vercelli collector is likely to have been particularly interested in the presentation of the Cross as 'engel dryhtnes' in line 9 of *The Dream of the Rood*. This same passage would have alerted him to reminiscences of the Annunciation elsewhere in the poem; for if the Cross plays a role in the Crucifixion narrative reminiscent of Mary's role at the Annunciation, in the dream-vision frame the Cross (no longer the passive recipient of a divine command) comes to announce its message of God's power to the Dreamer. Indeed, the heroic terms used to describe the Cross in the opening vision of *The Dream of the Rood* imply that the Cross comes (like Gabriel) as an embodiment of 'fortitudo Dei': 'sigebeam' (104v/17, *Dream* 13), 'wealdes treow' (104v/20, *Dream* 17). The role of the Cross is now reminiscent of that of Gabriel rather than that of Mary. It is the Dreamer who now receives a challenge to respond to God's word, as announced by the Cross; the dreamer, in turn, is asked to pass on to other men the message he has received:

Nu ic ðe hate hæleð . min se leofa .
 þæt ðu þas gesyhðe secge mannum
 onwreoh wordum þæt hit is wuldres beam
 se ðe ælmihtig god on browode .

105v/26-28, *Dream* 95-8.

The Vercelli collector would have understood *The Dream of the Rood* itself as the Dreamer's 'annunciation' to him; he would have been very ready to

participate by repentance and prayer in the 'great valour' ('*elne mycle*', 105r/11, *Dream* 34a) of Christ, as mediated to him by the Cross (*Dream* 60a) and the Dreamer (*Dream* 123a).

The essence of this way of reading *The Dream of the Rood* is to recognise that the poem tells of the death of Christ in terms reminiscent of His Incarnation. It is interesting, therefore, to note that it is in Booklet B, the booklet which contains *The Dream of the Rood*, that the collector has brought together all the material in his collection which deals with Christ's advent, and with the feasts (such as the Epiphany) reckoned by the solar cycle centred on the feast of Christmas.⁶⁸ I have already suggested that the group of texts at the beginning of Booklet B (Homily V - *Andreas* and *The Fates of the Apostles* - Homily VI) might have been seen as suitable reading for the Advent season. This group is completed by a series of Last Judgement homilies (VIII-X), two of which (Homilies VIII and IX) were assigned to the Sundays after the Epiphany in later homiliaries.⁶⁹ The set of homilies copied in immediately before the verse texts on fols 101v-6r contains a homily on the Epiphany (Homily XVI) followed by one describing the presentation of the Christ-child in the temple (Homily XVII). Homily XVI, *Omelia epiffania domini*, contains an extended passage explaining how, throughout Christ's life on earth, all created things recognised Him as their Creator. This was so particularly at the Crucifixion:

Swylce eac þeos eorðe hine ongeat . ond heo forðan
 bifode ond geforhtode in þa tid þe for mannum
 geprowode . ond hwæt hine eac swylce wegas . ond
 stanas ongeaton ond swa we leorniaþ on bocum . þæt
 ða wæs geworden in ða tid þe he for mancynne
 geprowode þæt þas temples in hierusalem sum dæl
 on innan gefeol ond manige stanas toburston . ond
 golgoðða þæt clif þe he on ahangen wæs þæt toberst
 eall ond he ða byrþenne ahebban ne meahte ;
 forðan he hit eallra gesceafta scippend on him
 hæfde ;

87v/6-15.

The collector must certainly have remembered this description when he came to copy, at the end of this group of homilies, *The Dream of the Rood* -

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in which the Cross 'bifian geseah eorðan sceatas' (105r/12-13, *Dream* 36-7),
and in which we are told that, when Christ was on the Cross,

þystro hæfdon
bewrigen mid wolcnum wealdendes hræw .
scirne sciman sceadu forð eode .
wann under wolcnum weop eal gesceaft
cwiðdon cyninges fyll

105r/26-8, *Dream* 52-6.

In both texts, the moment of Crucifixion is seen as an epiphany, to all
Creation, of Christ's divinity.

V

The present paper has been an attempt to learn something about the
way *The Dream of the Rood* was probably received and understood in the
Anglo-Saxon period, rather than an attempt to interpret the poem in its
own right. We have seen how the poem answered to the preoccupations of one
of its readers, the Vercelli collector. It reflected his concern with
eschatology, and his desire for patrons who would save him at the moment
of death. He probably considered that the short verse texts, immediately
preceding *The Dream of the Rood*, found the development and resolution of
their devotional themes in that poem. The basic awareness which the collec-
tor had of the shape of the liturgical year would have enabled him to
understand and appreciate the most striking aspect of the poem's strategy:
the presentation of Christ as heroic warrior at the Crucifixion.

No one reading or interpretation can exhaust a poem as rich in meaning
as *The Dream of the Rood*. Though the Vercelli collector would probably
have responded to those elements of *The Dream of the Rood* I have examined,
he is likely to have been blind to other elements in the poem which modern
scholars have discerned.⁷⁰ Our enquiry as to how he could have read the
poem, however, can serve as a useful reminder that *The Dream of the Rood*,
for all its richness and beauty, is primarily a devotional text; all
interpretations of the poem's imagery and structure must begin with

this fact. At the end of the vision, the Dreamer immediately begins to
pray:

gebæd ic me þa to þan beame bliðe mode
elne mycle þær ic ana was
mæte werede

106r/11-12, *Dream* 122-4a.

The Dreamer's prayer is a paradigm of how the reader should respond to
the poem. Certainly the Vercelli collector would have seen *The Dream of
the Rood*, like the other texts he collected, primarily as a stimulus to
prayer and repentance. As another of his texts put it, reading and
prayer should have the intimacy of two sides in a dialogue:

Wiotodlice swa hwa swa wile symle mid gode bion
he sceal gelomlice hine gebiddan ond rædan .
forþam þonne we us gebiddaþ þonne sprecað we
wið god ond þonne we redaþ þonne spricþ god
wið us .

Homily III, fol. 15v/17-20.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Wellek, R. and A. Warren (1963), *Theory of Literature* (Harmondsworth), p. 155.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 155.
3. There are no contemporary titles for the poems in the major codices (MS Junius 11, the Exeter Book, the *Beowulf* manuscript or the Vercelli Book). Some minor poems have been provided with titles, such as *The Judgement Day* in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 201, p. 161 - Ker, N.R. (1957), *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford), No. 49, p. 83; and *Durham* in Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 1. 27, p. 202 - Ker, No. 14, p. 12.
4. For the phrase, and the principle behind it, I am grateful to M.B. Parkes. I am grateful to Professor Paul Christophersen, who read an early form of these ideas in my PhD thesis and was encouraging about its value, and to Dr. Elisabeth Okasha and Dr. A.J. Minnis, who read this paper in typescript and offered helpful comments.
5. See Saxl, F. (1943), 'The Ruthwell Cross', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 6, pp. 1-19; Schapiro, M. (1944), 'The Religious Meaning of the Ruthwell Cross', *Art Bulletin*, 26, pp. 232-245.
6. See Ó Carragáin, É. (1978), 'Liturgical Innovations Associated with Pope Sergius and the Iconography of the Ruthwell and Bewcastle Crosses', *Bede and Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Farrell, R.T., British Archaeological Reports 46 (Oxford), pp. 131-147, see especially pp. 140-141.

7. See Sisam, C. (1976), *The Vercelli Book*, Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile 19 (Copenhagen), pp. 32-44; Scragg, D.G. (1973), 'The Compilation of the Vercelli Book', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 2, pp. 189-207.
8. See Ó Carragáin, É. (1975), *The Vercelli Book as an Ascetic Florilegium*, unpublished PhD thesis, (Queen's University of Belfast).
9. For this term, see Robinson, P.R. (1978), 'Self-contained Units in Composite Manuscripts of the Anglo-Saxon Period', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 7, pp. 231-238.
10. See Sisam (1976), p. 44; Scragg (1973), p. 190, who however points out that 'the present order of quires was probably the final decision of V [the Vercelli scribe], whatever order in which items and quires were written, for the quire signatures are contemporary, almost certainly in V's hand.'
11. Sisam (1976), p. 44; Scragg (1973), p. 196.
12. Sisam (1976), p. 42; Scragg (1973), p. 194.
13. Sisam (1976), pp. 42-43; Scragg (1973), pp. 194, 202.
14. Sisam (1976), p. 43; Scragg (1973), p. 204.
15. Sisam (1976), p. 44.
16. For two examples of the very different kind of collections which were used as class-books, see Rigg, A.G. and G.R. Wieland (1975), 'A Canterbury Classbook of the Mid-Eleventh Century (the 'Cambridge Songs' Manuscript)', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 4, pp. 113-130; Hunt, R.W. ed. (1961), *Saint Dunstan's Classbook from Canterbury*, *Umbrae Codicum Occidentaliū*, 4, (Amsterdam).
17. See Rochais, H. (1937-), 'Florilèges latins', in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, V, (Paris), columns 435-60, under 'Florilèges spirituels'; Rochais, H. (1953), 'Contribution à l'histoire des florilèges ascétiques du haut moyen âge latin: le *Liber Scintillarum*', *Revue Bénédictine*, 63, pp. 246-291; Rochais, H. (1957), 'Le florilège anonyme pour Alagus, manuscrit Reims 443', *Revue Bénédictine*, 67, pp. 141-150.
18. *Sancti Benedicti Regula*, Chapter 58; see de Vogüé, A. and J. Neufville, edd. (1971-2), *La Règle de saint Benoît*, II (of 6 vols.), (Paris), p. 626 ff. See also Mohrmann, C. (1961-5), 'La langue de saint Benoît', in *Études sur le latin des chrétiens*, II (of 3 vols.), (Rome), pp. 325-345 (especially pp. 343-345).
19. Booklet A concludes with Homily IV, an extended description of the Last Judgement; Booklet B with Homily XXII (see p. 68 below); Booklet C with the epilogue to *Elene*, in which the Last Judgement is described, and an excerpt from the Old English prose *Life of St Guthlac*: for the eschatological relevance of this excerpt (Homily XXIII) see below, p. 77.
20. As Homily I is a paraphrase of the lection for Good Friday, and as Homily III refers to 'þyssum halgum lengten fæstenes', it might be suggested that Booklet A was compiled as a collection particularly suited to Lenten reading.
21. Heading to Homily V, fol. 25r/1.
22. Heading to Homily VI, fol. 54v/1-2.
23. Homilies VIII-X; from the palaeographical features of this part of the manuscript, Sisam (1976), p. 38, concludes that 'Homilies VI-X form a group.'
24. Quire 17, the final quire of Booklet B, 'consists of two single leaves (fols. 119 and 120) and lacks the usual signature at the end' (Sisam (1976), p. 39). Miss Sisam concludes that 'Homily XXII was originally followed by other matter, different in kind (perhaps verse), which needed a new page. This other matter ... would have been discarded when quires 15-17 were added to the Vercelli Book' (Sisam (1976), p. 39).
25. See for example, Homily III (fol. 14v/7-15r/25).
26. In all quotations from the Vercelli Book I shall follow the punctuation and capitalisation of the Manuscript, but set out verse texts according to the lineation of modern editions and give references to the lineation of modern editions. In all cases I refer to the manuscript by folio number and line.
27. Swanton, M. ed. (1970), *The Dream of the Rood*, (Manchester), pp. 64-65.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
29. See, for example, Homily VIII (fol. 60r/1 ff.); Homily XV (fol. 83v/23 ff.).
30. On psychopomps, see Willard, R. (1935), *Two Apocrypha in Old English Homilies*, *Beiträge zur englischen Philologie*, 30 (Leipzig), especially pp. 72 and 82-94; Duhr, J. (1937-) in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité I* (Paris), columns 580-625 under *Anges* (especially columns 593-6); and Leclercq, H. in *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, I, columns 2080-2161, under *Anges*, (especially section xv, 'Les anges psychopompes', columns 2130-41).
31. See Willard, R. (1935), pp. 82-94, 'The Angels of Death' (note 30 above).
32. According to the normal eschatology of the Vercelli texts (such as that found, for example, in the verse text *Soul and Body I*) the soul would be brought to Heaven or Hell at death, and would be reunited with its body at the Last Judgement; body and soul would then return to the place assigned to them for eternity.
33. See the recurrence of homilies describing the parting of the soul and the body in the collection: Homilies IV, IX and XXII.
34. The loss of a leaf after fol. 83 has deprived us of the description

- of the judgement of the souls. As the three other versions of the Latin *Apocalypse of Thomas* are independent translations, we cannot reconstruct the Vercelli text with any accuracy. See Förster, M. (1955), 'A New version of the Apocalypse of Thomas in Old English', *Anglia*, 73, pp. 6-37, and Gatch, M.McC. (1964), 'Two uses of Apocrypha in Old English Homilies', *Church History*, 33, pp. 371-391. A modern English translation of the Latin text is to be found in James, M.R. (1969), *The Apocryphal New Testament*, corrected reprint, (Oxford), pp. 555-562.
35. Roberts, J. (1970), 'An Inventory of Early Guthlac Materials', *Medieval Studies*, 32, pp. 193-233, see especially p. 203.
 36. Roberts, J. (1977), 'St. Bartholomew's Day: A Problem Resolved?', *Medium Aevum*, 46, pp. 16-19, see especially p. 18.
 37. See fol. 133v/2-6, *Elene* 1315-21.
 38. Gonser, P. (1909), *Das angelsächsische Prosa-Leben des heiligen Guthlac*, *Anglistische Forschungen*, 27, (Heidelberg), p. 133, emends the final sentence quoted to 'for hwan sceolon ge mid eowrum leasum beotungum me bregean?'.
 39. Isidore of Seville, *Sententiarum Libri Tres*, II, xii, 1 (PL, lxxiii, 613), as quoted in Defensor, *Liber Scintillarum*, vi, 21, edited by Rochais, H. (1957), *Defensoris Liber Scintillarum*, *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina*, 117, (Turnholt).
 40. Scragg (1973), p. 203 (note 7 above).
 41. *Ibid.*, p. 205.
 42. Sisam (1976), p. 39 (note 7 above).
 43. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
 44. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
 45. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
 46. The abbreviation *g* is used for final *-ge* in 'gebringe', 106r/21: but there are only 12 examples of this abbreviation for final *-ge* in the whole manuscript (examples listed by Sisam, p. 24, note 6). The *f*-shaped *y*, common in five homilies (listed by Sisam (1976), p. 23) is sporadic elsewhere; little significance can be attached to its appearance in *Soul and Body I* or to its absence from *The Dream of the Rood*.
 47. Sisam (1976), p. 28.
 48. There are 7 on fol. 101v; 18 on fol. 102r; 19 on fol. 102v; 11 on fol. 103r; 8 on fol. 103v; 9 on fol. 104r; an average of 11 per page. I am grateful to Mr M.B. Parkes, who pointed out to me the increased incidence of *punctus* on fol. 105r.
 49. For a discussion of the meaning and use of the word *fitt(e)* see Ó Carragáin, É (1975), pp. 268-281 (note 8 above).
 50. There was room for it; on the line immediately above, the word 'gastas', also of six letters, is written entirely above the blank space after the *positura* at the end of line 16 of the page.
 51. *Soul and Body II*, lines 24-9; Krapp, G.P. and E.V.K. Dobbie edd. (1936), *The Exeter Book*, *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, III (New York), p. 175.
 52. Krapp, G.P. ed (1932), *The Vercelli Book*, *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, II (New York), p. 126.
 53. *Ibid.*, p. 126.
 54. Listed by Krapp (1932), p. 126, note to line 27.
 55. For example Krapp (1932), p. 130. This interpretation has recently been revived by Helder, W. (1975), 'The *Engel Dryhtnes* in *The Dream of the Rood*', *Modern Philology*, 73, pp. 148-150.
 56. Bolton, W.F. (1968), '"The Dream of the Rood" 9b: "Engel" = "Nuntius"?', *Notes and Queries*, 213, pp. 165-166; Swanton, M. (1970), p. 103 (note 27 above); Pickford, T.E. (1976), 'Another Look at the *Engel Dryhtnes* in *The Dream of the Rood*', *Neophilologische Mitteilungen*, 77, pp. 565-568.
 57. I use 'time and creation' to translate 'forðgesceaft' which, as Swanton (1970), p. 104 remarks, 'is used to mean both "creation, the created world" ... and "future destiny or state"'.
 58. 'Non sunt legendae in tumultu, sed in quiete, nec cursim et velociter, sed paulatim cum intenta et morosa meditatione.' - Schmitt, F.S. ed. (1958-1961), *Sancti Anselmi Cantuariensis Opera Omnia*, III (of 6 vols.), (Edinburgh), p. 3; translated by Ward, Sr. B. (1973), *The Prayers and Meditations of St Anselm* (Harmondsworth), p. 89: in her introduction Sr Benedicta has an excellent discussion of how St Anselm's meditations are the culmination of earlier monastic traditions.
 59. For a facsimile of one of these (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Auct. F. 4./32, fols. 10-18, containing a homily on the Invention of the Cross), see Hunt, R.W. (1961) (note 16 above); see also Bischoff, B. (1956-1957), 'Über gefaltete HSS. vornehmlich hagiographischen Inhalts', *Bulletino dell' Archivio paleografico*, n.s., II-III, pp. 93-100; and Robinson, P.R. (1978) (note 9 above).
 60. John xix, 16-18 (Douay version).
 61. Woolf, R. (1958), 'Doctrinal Influences on *The Dream of the Rood*', *Medium Aevum*, 27, pp. 137-153, see especially p. 146.
 62. Ó Carragáin, É. (1982), 'Crucifixion as Annunciation: the Relation of *The Dream of the Rood* to the Liturgy Reconsidered', *English Studies*, 63.
 63. Herzfield, G. (1900), *The Old English Martyrology*, EETS o.s. 116 (London), p. 48.
 64. 'Potestates aerias debellare et ab earum tyrannide mundum uenicebat eripere': Hurst, D. ed. (1955), Bede, *Homeliarum Euangelii Libri II*,

Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, 122 (Turnholt), p. 15; Bede is drawing on Gregory, *XL Homiliarum in Evangelia*, Book II, Homily xxxiv; *PL*, lxxvi, 1251.

65. Lindsay, W.M. ed. (1911), *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum Libri XX*, I (of 2 vols.), (Oxford), Book VII, chapter v 'De Angelis', sections 10-11.
66. Thorpe, B. ed. (1844-46), *Homilies of Aelfric*, I (of 2 vols.), Aelfric Society, (London), pp. 194-196.
67. Morris, R. ed. (1967), *The Blickling Homilies*, EETS o.s. 58, 63 and 73, reprinted as one volume (Oxford), p. 9.
68. As distinct from the feasts from Ash Wednesday to Pentecost, centred on Easter and thus determined by the phases of the moon.
69. See Ker (1953) (note 3 above), no. 309, arts 7 and 8 (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 340); no. 48, art. 7 (Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 198).
70. Such as the complex theological ideas discussed by Woolf (1958) (note 61 above).