CORA Cork Open Research Archive
Cartlann Taighde Oscailte Chorcaí

Title	Sources or analogues? Using liturgical evidence to date The Dream of the Rood
Authors	Ó Carragáin, Éamonn
Publication date	2010
Original Citation	Ó Carragáin, É. (2010) 'Sources or Analogues? Using Liturgical Evidence to Date The Dream of the Rood', in Keefer, S. L., Jolly, K. L. and Karkov, C. E. (eds)., Cross and cruciform in the Anglo-Saxon world: Studies to honor the memory of Timothy Reuter, Morgantown: West Virgina University Press, pp. 135-165. isbn: 978-1-933202-50-1.
Type of publication	Book chapter
Link to publisher's version	https://wvupressonline.com/node/79
Rights	© 2010 by West Virgina University Press. All Rights reserved. Cross and Cruciform in the Anglo-Saxon World is available from West Virgina University Press at https://wvupressonline.com/node/79
Download date	2026-11-01 23:54:07
Item downloaded from	https://hdl.handle.net/10468/15033

UCC
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

Sources or Analogues? Using Liturgical Evidence to Date *The Dream of the Rood*

Éamonn Ó Carragáin

I BEGIN with five general principles.

1. *The Dream of the Rood*, as we have it in the Vercelli manuscript, is a tenth-century poem. The *Dream* should be understood within an Old English verse narrative tradition of which three separate poems survive, now at Ruthwell, Brussels, and Vercelli. Each of these three poems has its own structure and coherence; and each is best understood in its immediate context which comprises, respectively, the eighth-century Ruthwell Cross; the eleventh-century Brussels Cross; and the late tenth-century Vercelli Book.[1] Thus a primary context for the *Dream* is provided by the interests of the person who copied that poem into the Vercelli Book.[2]

2. These three surviving poems are likely to be merely chance

1 See Éamonn Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood: Liturgical Images and the Old English Poems of the* Dream of the Rood *Tradition* (London: British Library Publications and Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2005), passim.

2 See Éamonn Ó Carragáin, "How did the Vercelli Collector interpret *The Dream of the Rood*?" in *Studies in Language and Literature in Honour of Paul Christophersen*, ed. Philip Tilling, *Occasional Papers in Linguistics and Language Learning* 8 (Coleraine: New University of Ulster, Department of English, 1981), 63–104.

survivals, fragments of a much wider tradition. It is probable that in Anglo-Saxon England there were other variant versions of such a popular poem, perhaps many of them. In suggesting that "the history that unites those three survivals must be one of movement and change that stretches the imagination," Kenneth Sisam gave this idea classic expression.[3] The surviving evidence probably gives us little idea of the original variety and plasticity of the text, whether in oral or written or sculpted versions. But we can get some idea of its extent when we compare those parts common to the Ruthwell poem and the Vercelli *Dream*.

3. Christians have always celebrated Easter, and soon celebrated Good Friday: they have been meditating for almost two millennia on the same great narrative. Thus, the more a poet or storyteller penetrates to the core of the Christian tradition, the more his or her poem will echo central Christian traditions of every other period. When we find a liturgical or devotional text from one period echoing a version of our poem, we must beware of arguing that that echo constitutes a source. The poet or liturgist may simply be doing what Christians have done for millennia: meditating on the Passion of Christ. To take one example: the poem composed at Poitiers by Venantius Fortunatus, *Pange Lingua*, was first incorporated into the Frankish Good Friday liturgies from the late ninth century.[4] It has remained part of the Latin western liturgy down to the present day. It was thus familiar to all those modern readers of *The Dream of the Rood* who were also familiar with modern Latin liturgies. The *Pange Lingua* provides many analogies with the Old English *Dream*: above all an epic sense that Christ's life and victory over death decided a great war between God and the Devil, and reversed the defeat caused by Adam's sin. But while the *Pange Lingua* certainly provides a good analogue for *The Dream of the*

3 Kenneth Sisam, *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford: University Press, 1953), p. 122.

4 See *Early Latin Hymns*, ed. Arthur S. Walpole (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), no. 33, pp. 164–73.

Rood, it is much less certain that it was a source for the English poet. Venantius Fortunatus avoids the central feature of the English narrative tradition, the ethical problem that the "Lord's word" (line 35b) requires the Rood to be the slayer of its Lord. In the *Pange Lingua,* Fortunatus does not see the role of the cross as problematic in any such way. For him, the cross, the nails, and Christ are, all three, "sweet" (*dulce lignum dulce clavo dulce pondus sustinens*). In the *Dream*, the Rood cannot move or bow as long as Christ still lives; in contrast, Fortunatus appeals to the cross to "bend your boughs, lofty tree, relax your taut fibers" ([*f*] *lecta ramos, arbor alta, tensa laxa uiscera*), precisely in order to lessen Christ's sufferings by gently supporting his living body. The contrast with the *Dream* is stark: there, it is only after Christ is dead that the Rood can bow, to present his body to his followers.

4. Even if there are similarities between a poem and a liturgical ceremony, it does not necessarily follow that the poem was inspired by, and post-dates, that ceremony. It is possible, and even likely, that poets and storytellers could anticipate features of the crucifixion story which were reflected in liturgies in later centuries. Ritual, because it is public and communal, is usually conservative; and liturgical innovations come usually in response to needs which people in community, including their poets and storytellers, have felt for generations, perhaps even for centuries. We should not be afraid to consider whether, even if there are parallels between a poem and a particular ceremony, the poem might have been composed earlier than the ceremony, and may have inspired a community to invent it, or to adopt it from elsewhere.

5. The last general principle follows from the third: when trying to date a poem, it is best to pay attention to its overall strategy rather than to individual passages which may provide specific parallels. The first priority is to find an historical context in which the original narrative may have been composed; then we can look at the surviving versions of the narrative, and see which aspects of each are likely to date back to the original creative context, and which are likely to be later modifications of the original narrative.

A comparison of the Ruthwell poem with the Vercelli *Dream* suggests that some features of the *Dream* post-date the Ruthwell Cross. The *Dream* reflects the work of a person who might be called the "*eall*-reviser."[5] He or she intensified the poem's emotional rhetoric, no doubt to encourage an emotional response to the narrative. We can possibly see the work of this reviser in lines 9–10 of the *Dream*: "beheoldon þær engel dryht / nes // ealle fægere þurh forðgesceaft,"[6] (All fair [creatures] throughout time and creation beheld the angel of the Lord there). The formula *fægere þurh forðgesceaft* would be metrically acceptable, and is probably early. It is possible that our hypothetical *eall*-reviser, in order to encourage the readers (including him- or herself) to respond to the text more emotionally, added the initial plural *ealle*. This addition was also metrically acceptable: *ealle* is here part of the initial lift, and is not stressed metrically. But the addition has given rise to some unnecessary emendations by modern editors. We will return to the first paragraph of the *Dream* later, to see how the phrase *engel dryhtnes* fits into the strategy of the poem.

It may have been the same *eall*-reviser who gave us the first three words of the verse "eall ic wæs mid strælum for wundod,"[7] where the Ruthwell Cross, at the beginning of its fourth *sententia*, simply has the phrase *miþ strelum giwundad*.[8] If so, the *eall*-reviser effected a major

5 For the hypothesis of an "*eall*-reviser," see Éamonn Ó Carragáin, "Crucifixion as Annunciation: the Relation of *The Dream of the Rood* to the Liturgy Reconsidered," *English Studies* 63: (1982), 487–505, at 499.

6 Folio 104v/13–4, *Dream*, lines 9b–10a. All quotations from the *Dream* are transcribed from the Vercelli Book. Facsimiles of the relevant folios may conveniently be found in Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, pp. 304–7, figs. 50–53. The folio and line-numbers are first given, and then the line-numbers usually used in modern editions.

7 Folio 105v/2, line 62b.

8 Quotations from the Ruthwell poem are taken from the transcript in Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, xxii–xxiii and xxvi–xxvii, figs. 1 and 3: here, fig. 3, vine-scroll with the second *titulus*, line 13.

change in the meaning of the poem. In the second Ruthwell *titulus*, it is Christ himself who is "wounded with lances [or arrows]," clearly, a metaphor which embraces both the nails which pierced his hands and feet and the spear which pierced his side.[9] Such a metaphor made sense in the Ruthwell poem, where in the next line Christ is described as *limwærignæ*. In heroic poetry, *wærig* can mean, metaphorically, not merely "weary," but "dead" or "brought to death"; and Christ was precisely *limwærig*, "brought to death by his limbs," when he was "wounded with lances," in the sense of being wounded in his hands and feet by the nails.[10] But it is the Rood which is wounded in the Vercelli *Dream*; indeed it had earlier said "on me syndon þa dolg gesiene opene inwid / hlemmas" (on me the wounds are to be seen, open wounds of malice.)[11] The *eall*-reviser seems likely to have given us yet another intensifying *eall*-phrase a few lines later: "eall ic wæs mid blode bestemed"[12] (I was all drenched in blood), intensifying Ruthwell's more laconic "*[i]c [wæs] miþ blodi bist[e]mi[d].*"[13] In such changes, we are perhaps moving away from Ruthwell's liturgical concentration on Christ to an increased devotional concentration on the cross in the Vercelli *Dream*.

The Ruthwell lines, "hweþræ þer fusæ fêârran kwomu // æþþilæ til anum ic þæt al bi[*hêâld*]"[14] (But eager ones came thither from afar / Noble ones came together. I beheld all that) have been changed in the Vercelli *Dream* to "hwæðere þær fuse feorran cwoman // to /

9 The syntax of this verse is discussed in Ó Carragáin, "The Ruthwell Crucifixion Poem in its Iconographic and Liturgical Contexts," *Peritia* 6–7 (1987–88): 1–71, at 27 and nos. 52–55, on 59–60.

10 *A Thesaurus of Old English*, ed. Jane Roberts and Christian Kay with Lynne Grundy, King's College London Medieval Studies XI, 2 vols (London: King's College, 1995), I:31–32, 02.02.03.02, and II:1144: *limwērig*: "state of being dead." I am grateful to Professor Jane Roberts for discussion of this word.

11 Folio 105r/21–22, lines 46–7.

12 Folio 105r/23, line 48b.

13 *Titulus* to the first vine-scroll, *Sententia* II, line 7.

14 *Titulus* to the second vine-scroll, *Sententia* III, lines 10–11.

þam æðelinge ic þæt eall be heold"[15] (But eager ones came thither from afar to the prince. I beheld all that). In the Ruthwell *titulus* there is a significant contrast between the *feorran* of line 10 and the *til anum* of line 11. The eighth-century poet may have recalled the contrast between "far" and "near" in Ephesians 2:13: *nunc autem in Christo Iesu vos qui aliquando eratis longe facti estis prope in sanguine Christi*, "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."[16] This Pauline contrast between "far" and "near" had for centuries been institutionalized in the Roman papal liturgy, where the pope and his clerics came in symbolic pilgrimage at the ninth hour on Good Friday to celebrate the death of Christ at *Hierusalem*, the basilica which in the Roman papal "stational" system symbolized Golgotha. But in the Vercelli *Dream* the older "feorran"–"til anum" balance is sacrificed to a new devotional emphasis on Christ as the young hero, "the prince" around whom his eager followers gather.[17]

The paired runic *tituli* to the vine-scrolls on the lower stone at Ruthwell are best seen as a distinct poem from the Vercelli *Dream*, and not simply as extracts from "the poem, which is preserved in toto in the Vercelli codex."[18] The Vercelli poem was equipped with a dream-vision frame, "of which there is no trace at Ruthwell."[19] While

15 Folio 105r/29–30, lines 56–57.

16 Robert(us) Weber, ed., *Biblia Sacra Vulgata*. 2 vols. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1969, repr. 1983); and *The Holy Bible,* Douay-Rheims Version (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1914). All scriptural quotations and translations come from these texts.

17 See the discussions in Ó Carragáin, "Ruthwell Crucifixion Poem," 25–26, and in *Ritual and the Rood*, pp. 180–83.

18 Meyer Schapiro, "The Religious Meaning of the Ruthwell Cross," *Art Bulletin* 26 (1944): 232–45, at 232 (reprinted in his *Late Antique, Early Christian and Medieval Art: Selected Papers* [London, 1980], pp. 150–76 [text] and 186–92 [notes], at p. 186, note 2). Such opinions were once common: see the survey in Éamonn Ó Carragáin, "The Ruthwell Crucifixion Poem," 3–4.

19 Éamonn Ó Carragáin, "The Necessary Distance: *Imitatio Romae* and the

some scholars have felt that much if not all of the dream-vision frame may have been added as late as the tenth century, liturgical evidence suggests that some versions of the dream-vision frame of the Vercelli poem existed as early as the end of the seventh century (perhaps a generation before the Ruthwell Cross) in sung, oral forms.[20] The first experience that shook me from my earlier belief that the dream-vision frame should be dated to the later period was the effort to draft, for submission to *Notes and Queries*, a short article on the following lines of the *Dream*: "Hwæðere ic / þurh þæt gold ongytan meahte // earmra ærgewin / þæt hit ærest ongan // swætan on þa swiðran healfe"[21] (However, through that gold I could perceive the former struggle of wretched ones, in that it first began to sweat on the right side). The article argued that the imagery of those lines was inspired by the antiphon *Vidi aquam*: "Vidi aquam egredientem de templo, a latere dextro. Alleluia. / et omnes ad quos pervenit aqua ista salvi facti sunt et dicunt Alleluia. Alleluia"[22] (I saw water coming from the temple, from its right side, Alleluia. / and all those to whom the water came were saved, and say "Alleluia, Alleluia").

From the mid-ninth century until the liturgical reforms of Vatican II, the antiphon was used for the solemn blessing before high mass on Sundays in Eastertide. At first, I could not trace this use further

Ruthwell Cross," pp. 191–203, *Northumbria's Golden Age*, ed. Jane Hawkes and Susan Mills (Stroud: Sutton, 1999), pp. 191–203 at 201; compare with the discussion in Ó Carragáin, "Ruthwell Crucifixion Poem," 14–15.

20 It is possible that Old English poems were simply transmitted orally, and not written down, until the ninth century; for a concise statement of the state of discussion, with bibliography, see Andy Orchard, "Oral-formulaic Theory," *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Michael Lapidge et al (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), p. 345.

21 Folio 104v/20–22, lines 18–21a.

22 Michel Andrieu, ed., *Les Ordines Romani du haut moyen âge,* Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense, 11, 23, 24, 28, 29; 5 vols (Louvain: Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense, 1931–61), III:365–66 (*Ordo* XXVII, No. 77). The antiphon is based on Ezekiel 47:1–2.

back than the Carolingian period, and so the first version of the paper submitted to the *Notes and Queries* editor, Eric Stanley, stated that these lines must have been composed in the ninth century or later.[23] But before the article went to press, Andrieu's edition of the *Ordines Romani* taught me that the *Vidi Aquam* antiphon was much older than I had suspected,[24] and that its older uses were much more relevant to the echo of the antiphon in the *Dream* than the later ones. From the sixth century, the antiphon was sung in the Roman liturgy during the solemn papal vespers of Easter week, when, in the middle of the ceremony, the pope and his clerics went in procession from the font in the Lateran baptistery to the nearby chapel of the Holy Cross.[25] From the font to the cross; from baptism to eucharist: nothing could be more relevant to the opening vision of the *Dream* nor to the iconography of the Ruthwell Cross. The evidence led to the conclusion that lines 18–21 of the *Dream*, which do not appear on the Ruthwell Cross, might be as old as it is, or even older. This evidence forced me to modify my conclusions drastically, and the short paper appeared in 1983.[26]

Other pieces of disturbing evidence of an early version of the *Dream* kept turning up. I had long been impressed with the comparison, at lines 90–94 of the *Dream*, between the cross and Mary. I found that 25 March had, from early Christian times, been seen as the anniversary of Good Friday, long before the annunciation began to

23 In this erroneous opinion, I was relying on the Carolingian (and later) monastic use of the antiphon in Carolingian Europe for blessing the cloisters with holy water before the solemn community mass on Sundays; this use is first found in St. Gall: see Adolph Franz, *Die kirchlichen Benediktionen im Mittelalter*, 2 vols (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1909), I:633.

24 See OR XXVII, No. 77 in n. 22, above.

25 See the survey of scholarly discussion of the antiphon and its early date in Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, p. 175, n. 147.

26 See Éamonn Ó Carragáin, "Vidi Aquam: the Liturgical Context of *The Dream of the Rood* 20a, 'Swætan on þa swiðran healfe'," *Notes and Queries*, n.s. 30 (1983): 8–15 at 11.

be celebrated on the same day. Perhaps the early singers, who clearly intended to retell the crucifixion as a dramatic encounter (as the first Ruthwell *titulus* makes clear), intended to reshape the gospel accounts of the Passion so as to recall the dramatic encounter between Mary and Gabriel at the annunciation? The problem with any such theory was, of course, that in the *Dream* the comparison between the cross and Mary does not appear in the Ruthwell *tituli*, but forms part of the dream-vision frame. Nevertheless, the Ruthwell iconography already links the cross and Mary closely. The iconographic program of the first broad side at Ruthwell begins at the bottom of the shaft with an annunciation panel, and proceeds to a visitation panel on the first side of the upper stone. As the iconographic program of this high cross begins by celebrating the stages of Christ's incarnation, it is apparent that the links between incarnation and Passion were from the beginning an important preoccupation of the Ruthwell designer.[27] The Ruthwell Cross is to be dated to the first half of the eighth century. Its sophistication indicates a learned monastic commissioner: perhaps someone in the circle of Bishop Acca of Hexham, Bede's bishop and close scholarly collaborator. Towards the end of the eighth century or even as late as the beginning of the ninth, that is, some sixty years or more after the cross was originally erected, a later generation added a crucifixion scene below the annunciation on the base of the first side of the Ruthwell Cross: this made the visual connection between annunciation and Passion still more clear.[28] But to link incarnation and Passion was vital to seventh- and early eighth-century theology. This period saw the struggle against Monotheletism, the heretical theory that Christ did not have an independent human will. Against Monotheletism, it was vital to stress both that Christ had a full human will and therefore genuine human courage, and also that his will was never in conflict with the divine will in which he also shared. Christ's human will was incorruptible,

27 See Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, chs. 2 and 3, passim.

28 Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, pp. 211–13.

and always coherently united to the divine will, because he had been born incorruptibly from the Virgin Mary.[29] At the annunciation the Virgin Mary encountered an archangel whose name indicated the significance of the role he played in human history. The name "Gabriel" meant *fortitudo Dei*, "the courage or strength of God" and, as Bede expressed it (following Gregory the Great):

> Gabriel namque fortitudo Dei dicitur. Et merito tali nomine praefulget qui nascituro in carne Deo testimonium perhibet. De quo propheta in psalmo: "Dominus," inquit, "fortis et potens dominus potens in proelio." Illo nimirum proelio quo potestates aerias debellare et ab earum tyrannide mundum ueniebat eripere:
>
> [For Gabriel is called the courage [or strength] of God. And it is fitting that he should be resplendent in such a name, who gives testimony that God is about to be born in the flesh. The prophet had spoken about this in the psalm: "The Lord is strong and powerful, the Lord is powerful in battle" [Ps. 23:8], in that very battle in which He came to defeat the powers of the air and to rescue the world from their tyranny.][30]

If Gregory the Great, followed by Bede, stressed that the incarnation involved a revelation of God's courage and strength, the English poet was to transform this patristic topos into a highly original narrative which showed that Christ's heroic humility was supremely expressed in Christ's heroic decision to embrace his death upon the Rood.

It is clear that the Ruthwell runic *tituli* were an original feature of the Ruthwell Cross, and were edited for the cross with great care and sensitivity. This fact poses an urgent question: what sort of text

29 See Michael Hurley, "Born Incorruptibly. The Third Canon of the Lateran Council, A.D. 649," *The Heythrop Journal* 2 (1961): 216–36; see also Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, p. 82.

30 "Bede, *Homeliarum Euangelii Libri II*, ed. David Hurst, CCSL 122 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1955), p. 15.

were these Ruthwell *tituli* edited *from*? The first clue is provided by their immediate context on the cross. These *tituli* were provided for two great matched images of the Tree of Life. The centrality of the Tree of Life to the Ruthwell Cross has been memorably expressed by Jennifer O'Reilly:

> In a single unifying image the sculptural decoration of the narrow sides reveals Christ to be the Tree of Life, that is, the axis at the centre of the world joining heaven and earth and providing spiritual food and healing for all. The Tree rises the height of the towering shaft on both sides and is shown in the form of a rooted vine-scroll filled with diverse creatures feeding on its fruit. It regenerates a Mediterranean image of the incorporation of all the faithful members of the Church into the sacramental and the glorified body of Christ (John 15. 1–5; 6. 56). The form and iconography of the Ruthwell Cross, its Christology and use of the written word show the Anglo-Saxons to be a people engrafted into the universal Church and familiar with its Romanized culture but also highly creative in adapting its conventions and integrating elements from their own tradition.[31]

If so, it is likely that the Ruthwell *tituli* were carefully edited from a song (which, apart from the Ruthwell excerpts may have been passed on solely in oral tradition down to the ninth or even to the tenth century) to which the images of the "Tree of Life" were central: that is, a song which already began with some version of lines 1–33 of *The Dream of the Rood*. A further implication is that, if the original English verse narrative were inspired by the Gregorian and Bedan vision of Christ coming *ad debellandas aerias potestates*, "to defeat the powers of the air," it is likely to have included lines such as

31 Jennifer O'Reilly, "The Art of Authority," *After Rome: the Short Oxford History of the British Isles*, ed. Thomas Charles-Edwards (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 140–89, at p. 153.

geseah ic weruda / god
þearle þenian þystro hæfdon
bewrigen mid wolcnum / wealdendes hræw .
scirne sciman sceadu forð eode .
wann / under wolcnum weop eal gesceaft
cwiðdon cyninges fyll / crist wæs on rode[32]

[I saw the God of armies terribly serving; the darknesses had enveloped the Ruler's body in clouds. The shadow overcame the bright shining [body], and struggled under the clouds. All creation wept, lamented the fall of the king: Christ was on the Rood.][33]

The decisive reason why I have come to suspect that the dream-vision frame may go back to songs sung in the late seventh or early eighth centuries is that monastic liturgists of that early period seem to have been perfectly aware that the coincidence of annunciation and Passion on 25 March was not a mere conceit or coincidence, but led naturally to an awareness of central facts about the theology of the Passion of Christ. To see the Passion in the context of the incarnation, and so to stress the unity of Christ's life, from incarnation to ascension to the anticipated return in glory or *parousia*, was central to the way Holy Week was celebrated in that early period. They stressed this unity in various ways. In the first place, the early liturgy had already placed at the center of Holy Week the most profound scriptural expression of

32 Folio 105r/25–29, lines 51b–56.

33 The translation here is one of several possible translations suggested by the manuscript punctuation and word-division. For a discussion of how the counterpointing of punctuation and word-division suggests several complementary (not contradictory) interpretations of this passage, see Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, pp. 317–18. It has been suggested that an early version of the phrase *weop eal gesceaft* lies behind the fragmentary inscription [-]*dægisgæf*[-] on the upper stone: see Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, fig. 1 on xxii, p. 48, and n. 173 on p. 72.

the unity between incarnation and Passion, the early Christian hymn quoted by St. Paul about C.E. 55 in his epistle to the Philippians. Philippians 2:5–11 formed the epistle for the sixth Sunday of Lent, the beginning of Holy Week (later Palm Sunday). It celebrated Christ as the model for the Christian life: "hoc enim sentite in vobis quod et in Christo Iesu" (For let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus"). The collect for that Sunday, still used as such in the Book of Common Prayer, reads that Christ "haste sente our sauior Jesus Christ, to take upon him oure fleshe, and to suffre death upon the crosse, that all mankynde shoulde folwe the example of his greate humilitie."[34] That model united incarnation and Passion as a single expedition, as a single expression of heroic humility: Christ

qui cum in forma Dei esset
non rapinam arbitratus est esse se aequalem Deo
sed semet ipsum exinanivit formam servi accipiens
in similitudinem hominum factus
et habitu inventus ut homo
humiliavit semet ipsum factus oboediens usque ad mortem
mortem autem crucis
propter quod et Deus illum exaltavit (Philippians 2:6-9a)

[Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:
But emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men,
and in habit found as a man.
He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross.
For which cause, God also hath exalted him [...]]

34 *The First Prayer Book of Edward VI* (London: n.p., 1549): for further discussion and a facsimile of this collect, see Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, pp. 362–63.

That epistle was recalled throughout Holy Week, in particular by a series of antiphons which began *Christus factus obediens*, "Christ became obedient." But it was recalled in a remarkable way on Wednesday in Holy Week, when the Roman stational mass (which the Pope celebrated, on the same day each year, at particular basilicas called "stations") was at Sancta Maria on the Esquiline Hill. In the early Roman papal liturgy, this basilica was the symbolic equivalent of Bethlehem: indeed, from the mid-seventh century it was believed that, as its major relic, this basilica possessed the crib in which Christ was born. The introit for the mass of Wednesday in Holy Week reshapes three verses from Philippians 2:5–11, the epistle for the previous Sunday, so that we move from glory to suffering and back again to glory. The introit thus provides an analogue for the structure of *The Dream of the Rood*, in which we move from glory (lines 1–27) to the suffering of the Passion (lines 28–77) and back again to the glory of the cross (lines 78–156). In the following transcript of the antiphon, the scriptural verses (out of sequence, as 10–8–11) are marked, so that the reader can see how the antiphon transforms the original sequence of scriptural verses:

> Ant[iphona]. [10] In nomine Domini omne genu flectatur caelestium terrestrium et infernorum [8] quia Dominus factus oboediens usque ad mortem mortem autem crucis [11] ideo Dominus Ihesus Christus in gloriam Dei Patris. [Psalm] Domine exaudi et clamor
>
> [*Ant[iphon]*]. [10] In the name of the Lord every knee shall bow, of those in heaven and those on earth and those under the earth; [8] because the Lord was made obedient unto death, even the death of the cross [11] and therefore the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father. [*Psalm*] Lord hear me: and let my cry [come unto you].][35]

35 The psalm reference is to Ps. 101. See René-Jean Hesbert, ed., *Antiphonale Missarum Sextuplex* (1935; reprint Rome: Herder, 1985), no. 96, pp. 92–93.

The mass for Wednesday in Holy Week contains a number of other striking parallels to the imagery of the *Dream*. These have been more fully examined elsewhere,[36] but two are particularly striking, and may be briefly mentioned. The first Old Testament reading (Isaiah 62:11–63:7) presents Christ's approach to Calvary as a royal *adventus*, a king's triumphal advance into his city, Jerusalem. The Isaiah lection begins by promising "the daughter of Zion" that her salvation is coming; as the Virgin Mary was seen as "the daughter of Zion" *par excellence*, it is clear that the papal station at the basilica of Sancta Maria determined the choice of this lection. It consists of a dramatic dialogue between the hero-king and those who see his triumphant advance:

> [62:11] Ecce Dominus auditum fecit in extremis terrae; dicite filiae Sion: ecce salvator tuus venit, ecce merces eius cum eo et opus eius coram illo; et vocabunt eos Populus sanctus, Redempti a Domino; tu autem vocaberis: Quesita civitas et non Derelicta. [63:1] Quis est iste qui venit de Edom tinctis vestibus de Bosra, iste formosus in stola sua gradiens in multitudine fortitudinis suae? ego qui loquor iustitiam et propugnator sum ad salvandum.
>
> [Behold, the Lord hath made it to be heard in the ends of the earth. Tell the daughter of Zion: Behold, thy Savior cometh. Behold, his reward is with him and his work before him. And they shall call them: The Holy People, The Redeemed of the Lord. But thou shalt be called: A city, sought after and not forsaken. [63:1] Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bosra, this beautiful one in his robe, walking in the greatness of his strength? I that speak justice and am a defender to save.]

This dramatization of a heroic *adventus* was chosen as a prelude to the gospel of the mass, the Passion according to St. Luke (Luke 22: 1–23: 53). This is the only Passion-narrative which gives an account of the

36 Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, pp. 311–16.

encounter between Jesus and the women of Jerusalem: it is clear that the papal station at Sancta Maria determined the choice of the gospel:

> Conversus autem ad illas Iesus dixit Filiae Hierusalem nolite flere super me Sed super vos ipsas flete et super filios vestros . . . quia si in viridi ligno haec faciunt in arido quid fiet.
>
> [But Jesus, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me; but weep for yourselves and for your children . . . for if in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?"]

The English *Dream*-poet retells the crucifixion in a startlingly new narrative, as a confrontation between the Rood and Christ. The dramatic narrative recalls the annunciation, in which Mary encountered *fortitudo Dei* in Gabriel. But to link incarnation and Passion in this way was also to recall central aspects of the early Roman liturgy of Holy Week: the links made between incarnation and Passion in the epistle for the Sunday before Easter (Philippians 2:5–11) and in the papal station at Sancta Maria on Wednesday in Holy Week. That mass presented Holy Week as a re-enactment of the incarnation, in which Christ had come to Mary like an advancing warrior-king. If, during that mass, Christ was seen as a green tree cut down, the mass enables us to understand why the *Dream*-poet presents the Rood also as a guiltless green tree, cut down by its enemies:

> þæt wæs geara iu . Ic þæt gyta geman .
> þæt ic wæs aheawen holtes on ende
> astyred of stefne minum . Genamon me ðær strange feondas
> geworhton him þær to wæfersyne heton me heora wergas hebban
>
> [That was long ago (I still remember it) that I was cut down at the edge of a wood, removed from my root. Strong enemies seized me there, made me into their spectacle, told me to raise aloft their criminals.][37]

37 Folio 105r/5–8, lines 28–31: translation mine.

The mass for the Wednesday in Holy Week was certainly celebrated before the seventh century, and lines 28–33a of the *Dream* do not occur on the Ruthwell Cross. The close parallels between those lines and the mass enable us to see that the later seventh-century Vatican liturgist (perhaps John the Archcantor), who explicitly linked annunciation and Passion in his mass for March 25 (*Adnuntiatio Domini et Passio Eiusdem*), understood that such a concept would lead them into the heart of the Easter mystery which depended on seeing Christ's life as a unity. If the cross, like Christ, is a green tree struck down, then the identification between what happens to Christ and what happens to the Rood in *The Dream of the Rood* is even closer than scholars have previously seen it to be. This identification was probably inspired by early Christian liturgy and iconography, which regularly presented the glorified cross as a symbol of Christ.[38]

The mysterious and riddling opening vision, which so closely identifies the cross as a symbol of Christ, also introduces the figure of the Dreamer. An Old English dream-vision song, which dramatized the relevance of the Rood's narrative to the fate of an individual soul, would have appealed to English monastic audiences in the final decades of the seventh century and in the first decades of the eighth. At the end of his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Bede gives us a remarkable set of three eschatological visions, and tells us that they all took place well within the period of his own lifetime. The first is the monk Haemgisl's account of Dryhthelm's vision of the other world, which Bede tells us came to him from the circle of King Aldfrith (d. 704) and Abbot Æþelwold of Melrose.[39] This is directly followed by the second vision which the impenitent thane of King Cenred of Mercia (704–709) had of the angels who showed him an "exceedingly small" book of his good deeds, and an enormous and heavy book of his sins: Bede tells us that he got this story from Bishop Pehthelm of Whithorn who had been a pupil of the poet Aldhelm at Malmesbury and, as

38 Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, pp. 189–95 and 228–36; see also pls. 6–10, and figs. 41–43.

39 *HE* 5:12, pp. 488–89, especially pp. 496–99.

Bishop of Whithorn (731–5), was (like Bishop Acca of Hexham) a possible commissioner of the Ruthwell Cross.[40] The third vision, which immediately follows, tells of a man known to Bede himself: an impenitent monk who, before he died of despair, had a premonitory vision of the hell which awaited him.[41] It has recently been shown that these three eschatological visions circulated as a separate group of devotional texts.[42]

A monastic milieu with a taste for such urgent visions could well have also admired (and needed) a more optimistic vernacular song, in which a Dreamer tells of "the best of dreams, which [he] dreamed about midnight, when bearers of voices were at rest," and sees a wonderful tree which provides him with a pledge of salvation. Bede's circle was certainly fascinated by one famous midnight vision of the cross, that of Constantine: we know that Abbot Adomnán of Iona, and later Bede himself, reshaped the story of King Oswald's victory at Heavenfield (C.E. 634), won in the sign of the cross, in increasingly Constantinian terms.[43] Bede, indeed, went so far as to interpret Oswald's victory in terms of the Good Friday liturgy of his own day, imagining that Oswald cited the Latin introductory formula for the solemn universal prayers recited at the ninth hour on Good Friday: *Flectamus omnes genua* "Let us all bend the knee." It was only at the end of the seventh century that veneration of a cross, or of a cross-reliquary, had been introduced into the Roman

40 *HE*, 5:13, pp. 498–503: see also Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, pp. 282–98.

41 *HE* 5:14, pp. 502–505.

42 Paul Gerhard Schmidt, "Bède et la tradition des récits visionnaires," *Bède le Vénérable entre tradition et postérité / The Venerable Bede, Tradition and Posterity*, ed. Stéphane Lebecq, Michel Perrin and Olivier Szerwiniack (Lille: Ceges – Université Charles-de-Gaulle – Lille 3, 2005), pp. 260–66.

43 Jennifer O'Reilly provides a fine comparison between the accounts of Oswald's victory by Adomnán and by Bede: "Reading the Scriptures in the Life of Columba," *Studies in the Cult of Saint Columba*, ed. Cormac Bourke (Dublin: Four Courts, 1997), pp. 80–116, at pp. 81–85.

synaxes on Good Friday at the ninth hour. In Oswald's day, no one had yet linked the Good Friday universal prayers with public prayer around a cross (in the "Gelasian" rite, followed in basilicas run by priests) or a cross-reliquary (in the "Gregorian" ceremony, followed by the papal court at the basilica called "Hierusalem").[44] Bede imagined Oswald's action in terms of the liturgy as practiced at Wearmouth-Jarrow in the early eighth century, during the abbacy of Hwætberht.[45]

The fact that Bede often refers to his abbot as "Eusebius" also provides eloquent testimony to the fascination with Constantine's vision of the cross at Wearmouth-Jarrow during Hwætberht's abbacy.[46] But Hwætberht-Eusebius was a good Latin poet, and the collection of Latin *enigmata* attributed to him includes a *De Cruce*.[47] It has long been recognized that there is a close parallel between one of the paradoxes in this Latin riddle, "Dampnauique uirum, sic multos carcere solui" ([One] man I condemned and so I released many from prison),[48] and the third of the paradoxes through which, in *The Dream of the Rood*, the Rood explains its history to the Dreamer:

44 See *Liber Sacramentorum Romanae Aeclesiae Ordinis Anni Circuli (Cod. Vat. Reg. lat. 316 / Paris Bib. Nat. 7193, 41/56) (Sacramentarium Gelasianum)*, ed. Leo C. Mohlberg, Peter Siffrin and Ludwig Eisenhöfer, 3rd ed., rev. by Ludwig Eisenhöfer, Rerum Ecclesiastarum Documenta, Series Maior, Fontes, 4, (Rome: Herder, 1981), Section XLI, nos. 395–418, pp. 64–67; for the papal stational ceremony, see Andrieu, *Les Ordines Romani*, Ordo XXIII, nos. 11–19, pp. 270–71.

45 For Bede's account of Oswald's victory, see *HE* 3: 2, pp. 214–17. On Bede's phrase *Flectamus omnes genua* as a citation of the Good Friday *flectamus genua* formula, see Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, pp. 231–32.

46 For a list of the passages in which Bede refers to his abbot Hwætberht as "Eusebius," see *Collectiones Aenigmatum Merovingicae Aetatis*, ed. Francois Glorie CCSL 133 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1968), at p. 146.

47 "Riddle 17": CCSL 133, Part I, 227.

48 *De Cruce*, line 4: CCSL 133, Part I, 227; Daniel G. Calder and Michael J.B. Allen, trans., *Sources and Analogues of Old English Poetry* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1976), p. 55.

iu ic wæs geworden wita heardost .
leodum la/ðost ærþan ic him lifes weg
rihtne gerymde reordbe/rendum."[49]

[Long ago I had become the hardest of tortures, most hateful to human beings, before I opened the true way of life to all those who can speak.]

A similarly close parallel has been recognized between the first of the *Dream*'s set of paradoxes:

Nu þu miht gehyran hæleð min se leofa
þæt ic bealuwara weorc gebiden hæbbe
sarra sorga is nu sæl cumen
þæt me weorðiað wide ond side
men ofer moldan ond eall þeos mære gesceaft .
gebiddaþ him to þyssum beacne,[50]

[Now can you hear, beloved warrior, that I have endured the work of criminals, terrible sorrows. Now has the time come that humans throughout the earth, and all this glorious creation, honor me; they pray to this symbol,]

and a riddle known as *De Cruce Christi* by Tatwine: "Lege fui quondam cunctis iam larbula seruis; / Sed modo me gaudens orbis ueneratur et ornat" (Once, because of the law, I was a spectral terror to all slaves; / but now the whole earth joyfully worships and adorns me).[51] Tatwine was Archbishop of Canterbury from 731, and died in 734. He was thus an exact contemporary, of the same generation, as Hwætbert-Eusebius (who died about 750), Acca of Hexham (d. 740),

49 Folio 105v/21–23, *Dream*, lines 87–89. Translation mine.
50 Folio 105v/15–18, *Dream*, lines 78–83a. Translation mine.
51 Tatwine, *De Cruce Christi*, lines 2–3: CCSL 133, Part I, 176; see the remarks by Maria de Marco in the introduction to that volume, xiii. Trans. Calder and Allen, *Sources and Analogues*, p. 56.

Pehthelm of Whithorn (d. 735), and Bede (d. 735). In the *Dream*-poem, the set of three paradoxes (lines 78–89) is carefully structured to prepare for the comparison between the honor given to the Rood (above all hill-trees) and the honor given to Mary (above all women). The unique narrative of the *Dream*, and of the Ruthwell poem, was designed to retell the crucifixion as a confrontation between Christ and a horrified cross, and it is likely that from the beginning of the tradition, the English singers intended their audiences to see the parallels (and significant contrasts) between the dilemma of the Rood, which saw itself commanded to kill its Lord, and the dilemma of Mary who, exactly thirty-four years before, saw herself apparently commanded to break her vow of perpetual virginity so that Christ could be born of her womb.[52] Such highly original parallels between the Rood and Mary correspond to important christological and liturgical developments in the late seventh and early eighth centuries, developments of which Bede and his circle were certainly aware.[53] The fact that the very paragraph of the *Dream* which compares the Rood to Mary should also closely parallel riddle-poems by these two early eighth-century English monastic poets, each known to Bede, makes it likely, not merely that the explicit comparison between the Rood and Mary goes back to the earliest songs in this English narrative tradition, but that some sung version of the whole paragraph (*Dream*, lines 78–94) may go back to the beginning of the tradition. That would imply that there were some early songs in

52 From the late fourth century, theologians were agreed that Mary had taken a vow of perpetual virginity. This meant that at the annunciation Mary was placed briefly in a serious dilemma; until Gabriel reassured her, it seemed that she must break that vow in order to become a mother: see Augustine, *Sermon* 51:18 (PL 38–39:343); *Sermon* 215: 2 (PL 38–39:1073); *Sermon* 291: 5–6 (PL 38–39:1318–19); the theme is discussed in Kim Power, *Veiled Desire: Augustine's Writings on Women* (London: Continuum, 1995), pp. 181–82, 293. For further references to Mary's dilemma (in Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine and Bede), see Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, p. 86, and n. 45 on p. 113.
53 See Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, especially chs. 2 and 5.

which the cross explained its experience to the audience; and that the Ruthwell designer edited his or her version from a longer song in which the narrative was already adapted to the needs of individuals facing death and Judgment Day.

The paragraph of the *Dream* in which the Rood is cut down and buried (lines 73b–75) by the same enemies who originally cut it down as it grew when a green tree at the edge of a wood (lines 28–33a) may also be a feature of the earliest songs. The paragraph continues the close identification between the experience of Christ and that of the cross, which we have seen to be a central theme of the opening vision and of the beginning of the Rood's speech (*Dream*, lines 1–33). The Rood tells how its enemies cut it down at the edge of a wood, like Christ "the green tree" (Luke 23:31, intoned, as we have seen, on Wednesday in Holy Week.)[54] Christ's fate fulfilled the prophecy of Habbakuk, part of the chant with which the Roman synaxis at the ninth hour on Good Friday began: "Deus de Libano veniet / et sanctus de monte umbroso et condenso"[55] (God will come from Lebanon, and the holy one from the shaded, thickly-wooded mountain). Now, after his friends have buried the dead Christ in a sepulcher in the earth (*moldærn*, line 65b), its enemies bury the Rood, suddenly and with shocking violence:

> þa us man fyllan ongan .
> ealle to eorðan þæt wæs egeslic wyrd
> bedealf us man on deopan seaþe
> hwæðere me þær dryhtnes þegnas freondas gefrunon
> gyredon me golde ond seolfre
>
> [Then they began to fell us all to the earth: that was a terrible experience! We were buried in a deep pit; but then

54 See Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, pp. 3 and 311–13.

55 Canticle of Habbakuk: text from the Vespasian Psalter (Canterbury, ca. 700), Henry Sweet, ed., *The Oldest English Texts,* EETS o.s. 83, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1885), p. 407. On the canticle, its chants and its liturgical uses, see Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, pp. 184–85 and notes.

> the followers of the Lord, his friends, heard [of me]: they adorned me with gold and silver.][56]

Some sung version of this passage is likely to have featured in a seventh- or early eighth-century version of the narrative. The feast of the Invention of the Cross (3 May) was celebrated in some presbyteral basilicas at Rome (but not in the papal rite at the Lateran) in the generation before 650, even earlier than the development of the feast marking the Exaltation of the Cross (14 September).[57] The earliest gospel lection for the Invention naturally centered, like the narrative of the *Dream*, on the burial and finding of a treasure: "Simile est regnum caelorum thesauro abscondito in agro quem qui invenit homo abscondit et prae gaudio illius vadit et vendit universa quae habet et emit agrum illum" (The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field: the man who finds it hides it, and then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field).[58]

A little later in the seventh century, when the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross began to be introduced into some Roman basilicas, initially the lection for the Invention was at times read on the new feast. The earliest Roman gospel-lection list dates from about 645, and in this list, 14 September is still simply the feast of the early martyrs

56 Folio 105v/11–14, lines 73b–77. Translation mine.

57 See the discussion in Antoine Chavasse, *Le Sacramentaire Gélasien (Vaticanus Reginensis 316): sacramentaire presbytéral en usage dans les titres romains au VIIe siècle*, Bibliothèque de théologie IV: Histoire de la théologie 1 (Paris and Tournai: Desclée, 1958), pp. 350–64. He points out that the earliest Roman formularies for the feast contain several clear references to the legend of St. Helena's finding of the True Cross (*Acta Cyriaci: Acta Sanctorum* Maii, I: 445–48), the Latin translation of which was certainly known at Rome from the early sixth century, when abridgements of the first edition of the *Liber Pontificalis*, drafted by this period, paraphrase the legend: *Le Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Louis Duchesne (Paris, 1892), reprinted with a third volume, *Additions et corrections de Mgr L. Duchesne*, ed. Cyrille Vogel (Paris: De Boccard, 1955–57), I: 74 and 167; see the discussion in Chavasse, *Le Sacramentaire Gélasien*, p. 353.

58 Matt. 13:44.

Cornelius and Cyprian. But after the gospel lection for that feast (Luke 11:47–54), some early manuscripts add the note "et ipsa die exaltatio scae crucis si uelis [other MSS: si uis] require euangel. ad legend. de sca cruce: Simile est regnum caelorum thesauro abscondito in agro"[59] (And on the same day [14 September] the Exaltation of the Holy Cross: if you wish, look up the gospel to be read on the Holy Cross: "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field").

This note certainly goes back to the seventh century, when 14 September was still primarily "natale sci Corneli et sci Cypriani." It implies that it is still the personal choice of the celebrant (*si uelis, si uis*) whether instead to celebrate the new feast of the Exaltation, and which gospel to read: the feast has not yet been "officially" or traditionally assigned a gospel of its own.[60] It was only at the end of the seventh century that Pope Sergius ensured that the Exaltation of the Cross would henceforth be universally celebrated in the western Church.[61] Sergius made the feast "official" by a public act of dramatized theology. The official account of his life in the *Liber Pontificalis* tells that "by God's revelation," in the sacristy or reception hall of St. Peter's basilica (outside and to the left of the entrance to the basilica), Sergius found a silver casket lying in a very dark corner: so tarnished was it that it was not even clear that it was of

59 *Das römische Capitulare Evangeliorum: Texte und Untersuchungen zu seiner ältesten Geschichte*, ed. Theodor Klauser (Münster: Aschendorff, 1971), p. 38, note to no. 198.

60 At this early stage, the Invention of the Cross on 3 May also seems to have been a matter of private choice: there is no entry for that day in the list of gospel-lections from which we have transcribed the note on "euangl. ad legend. de sca cruce."

61 From this period, the feast of the Exaltation, firmly established in the papal rite, gets a new lection, John 3:1–15: see Klauser, *Das römische Capitulare Evangeliorum*, p. 84, no. 223; see also Chavasse, *Le Sacramentaire Gélasien*, p. 359. As Chavasse points out (p. 364) the mass of the Invention of the Cross (3 May) would only enter the papal liturgy, as distinct from the presbyteral liturgy ("Gelasian"), when the use of Romano-Gallican liturgical books was imposed on Rome in the post-Carolingian period.

silver. After praying, Sergius opened the reliquary and in it, under a silk cushion called *stauracis* ("of the cross"), he found a cross, "very ornate with various precious stones." Dismantling this cross, the pope "found placed inside a wonderfully large and indescribable portion of the saving wood of the Lord's Cross." Though Sergius had found the reliquary at St. Peter's, he assigned to it a liturgical function at St. John Lateran, the basilica which functioned as the cathedral of Rome: "From that day, for the salvation of the human race, this is kissed and worshipped by all Christian people on the day of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in the basilica of the Saviour called Constantinian."[62] It is significant that this episode should be recorded in Sergius' official biography, since it makes some important points about the Roman and western cult of the cross. The feast of the Exaltation of the Cross might have been a recent import from the East, but Sergius's actions here make clear that at Rome, the cult of the cross was so ancient as to have been forgotten: covered over by the grime of ages, as it were, and consigned to a dark corner of St. Peter's treasury (like the reliquary which Sergius was inspired to find). Sergius ensured that the veneration of the cross would be understood as reviving an ancient Roman cult of the cross. The retelling of the episode is inspired by such scriptural episodes as the finding of the lost "book of the law" in the Temple at Jerusalem by Hilkia the High Priest (the word *pontifex*, which was often used as a papal title, is found in the Vulgate at II Kings 22:8–13), by the gospel parable of the treasure hidden in the field (Matthew 13: 44), and of course by the legendary finding of the True Cross by St. Helena, mother of Constantine. Bede knew of the legend that St. Helena had brought back relics of the True Cross to Rome from Jerusalem: in a list of basilicas that the Emperor Constantine built which was included in the chronicle appended to his *De Temporum Ratione*, Bede (relying

62 *The Book of Pontiffs (Liber Pontificalis): the Ancient Biographies of the First Ninety Roman Bishops to AD 715*, trans. Raymond Davis, Translated Texts for Historians 6 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), p. 88.

on the *Liber Pontificalis*) records "item basilica in Palatio Sosoriano, quae cognominatur Hierusalem, ubi de ligno crucis Domini posuit" (a basilica in the Sessorian Palace, which is known as Jerusalem, where he deposited some of the wood of the Lord's Cross).[63] Bede also paraphrased, in slightly shortened form, the account in the *Liber Pontificalis* of how, "by divine revelation," Sergius found in the sacristy of St. Peter's "a silver chest" in which was "a cross adorned with diverse precious stones," and within that, the "piece of the salvific Cross of the Lord, of marvelous size," which is venerated each year at the Lateran on the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross.[64] There is no doubt that if in this early period an English song presented the Rood as telling a terrible story of how its enemies cut it down and buried it in a deep pit on Good Friday evening, the early singer(s) would be expected to refer, however briefly, to the happy ending which so fascinated early Anglo-Saxon pilgrims to Rome: how this precious object, indeed "a treasure hidden in a field," was found by its "friends" and "adorned with gold and silver" (*Dream*, lines 75–77). By publicizing his finding of the relic at St. Peter's, and associating it with the celebration of the new Exaltation feast at the Lateran, Pope Sergius had established, for the Western Church and for England, two vital facts: first, that at Rome, the city of Constantine's victory at the Milvian Bridge, the cult of the Holy Cross was so ancient that its origins had been lost in the mist of history. Secondly, Sergius's find closely associated the new Roman papal feast of the Exaltation (14 September) with the existing feast of the Invention of the Cross (3 May), already celebrated in some Roman presbyteral basilicas though not in the papal liturgy at the Lateran. For an early English poet to emphasize that "friends of the cross" had discovered and

63 *De Temporum Ratione*, ch. 66, s.a. 4290: Bede, *Opera Didascalia 2*, ed. Charles W. Jones, CCSL 123B (Turnhout: Brepols, 1977), 509, para. 417. Translation from Faith Wallis, ed. and trans., *Bede: the Reckoning of Time*, Translated Texts for Historians 29 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), pp. 212–13.

64 *De Temporum Ratione*, ch. 66, s.a. 4652: Bede, *Opera Didascalia*, 2; CCSL 123B, 529–30.

adorned the buried cross was an appropriate response to that which united the two late seventh-century Roman feasts of the Cross: not only the presbyteral feast of the Invention (3 May) but also the new feast of the Exaltation (14 September), celebrated within the papal liturgy at the Lateran.

Such vivid English vernacular songs may possibly have influenced the Good Friday liturgy of late tenth-century Winchester. Jennifer O'Reilly saw a significant parallel between the narrative of the *Dream* and the liturgy of the Benedictine Revival. As she saw, in the *Dream:*

> The Creator of the cosmos is hung on a manmade object. After the Crucifixion, the wood of the Cross is felled for the second time, buried, like Christ, and then raised up. At the end of the Good Friday *Adoratio Crucis* in the *Regularis Concordia* there is provision for an additional participation in and re-enactment of the sacred drama. The ceremonial cross was "buried" in or near the altar, to be raised up on Easter Sunday.[65]

Sarah Larratt Keefer has carefully traced the increasingly elaborate, mimetic Good Friday liturgical ceremonies from the eighth to the eleventh centuries, centered on the Veneration of the Cross. She shows that, to represent the burial of Christ on Good Friday evening, some continental monasteries placed a consecrated eucharistic host in a "tomb" at the conclusion of the veneration ceremonies. But in England, in the *Regularis Concordia* and ceremonies based on it, the veneration ceremony ended by placing a wooden cross in the "tomb," not a eucharistic host.[66] The English ceremonies are distinctive and

65 Jennifer O'Reilly, "The Rough-Hewn Cross in Anglo-Saxon Art," *Irish and Insular Art, 500–1200*, ed. Michael Ryan (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1987), pp. 153–58 at 157.

66 Sarah Larratt Keefer, "The Performance of the Cross in Anglo-Saxon England," *Cross and Culture in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Karen Louise Jolly, Catherine E. Karkov and Sarah Larratt Keefer (Morgantown: West Virginia

original, in that they use a cross to represent the body of Christ. As Keefer has shown, it is impossible at the present state of research to be certain whether this English variant was invented at Winchester at the time of the *Regularis Concordia*, or whether the Winchester monks adopted a variant they found elsewhere, perhaps importing the rite from the customary of some continental monastery. Whether they invented the cross-burial themselves or got it elsewhere, it is possible that the Winchester monks found such mimetic symbolism attractive and acceptable because they were already familiar with sung (or, by the tenth century, perhaps written) versions of the original English vernacular song which we know as *The Dream of the Rood*. We have seen that a central feature of that poem, from the opening vision onwards, is a close identification of the Rood and Christ.[67]

One of the strongest reasons for thinking that the vernacular songs, from which the Ruthwell designer edited the two runic *tituli*, may have included a dream-vision frame which was in some sense the ancestor of the surviving *Dream of the Rood* is the coherence of that poem's strategy. By linking the Rood and Mary, and so emphasizing that the crucifixion should be seen in the context of the incarnation as well as of the *parousia* or Second Coming, the *Dream* insists that Christ's life must be seen as a unity. Christ first appears in the poem "hastening with great valor" (*efstan elne mycle*) because he has a great cosmic expedition to perform. As the poem reminds us, this expedition led him from heaven to take on humanity in the Virgin's womb (*Dream*, lines 90–94); after his victory on the cross, to triumphantly bring joy to those who "suffered burning" in the underworld (lines 148b–9); to return to heaven with those human souls he has won from the devil (lines 150–6); and, in the future, to return in glory to judge humankind (lines 103b–21). It is likely that the earliest songs in the tradition included a reference to Christ's descent into hell: the motif was central to the Roman and orthodox arguments against

University Press, 2007), pp. 203–41 at 217–41.

67 Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, pp. 189–95 and 228–36; pls. 6–10, and figs. 41–43.

Monotheletism; thus the earliest western representations of the descent into hell come from Rome, and are dated to the early eighth century.[68] It is no coincidence that it is from this period that formulae such as *discendit ad inferos*, "he descended into the lower world," are found in an insular credal formula (in the Antiphonary of Bangor, dated to 680–91).[69] To stress the unity of Christ's achievement, rather than isolating individual episodes such as the sufferings of Good Friday, is characteristic of earlier forms of Christian liturgy. It is given memorable expression in the Ambrosian Advent hymn *Intende qui regis Israel*, also known from the first line of its second stanza as *Veni Redemptor gentium*. This hymn was incorporated into the Old Hymnal and was therefore sung by Bede and his contemporaries; like the *Dream*, it stresses that Christ's expedition, which spanned the whole cosmos from heaven to hell and back, needed to be swift (*alacris*):

v. Procedens de thalamo suo,	Going out from his bridal chamber,
pudoris aula regia,	The royal hall of modesty,
gemine gigas substantiae	A giant of twin substance,
alacris ut currat viam.	so that he may run his swift course:
vi. Egressus eius a patre,	His going forth is from the Father,
regressus eius ad patrem,	His return is to the Father,
excursusque ad inferos,	and his expedition is to hell,
recursus ad sedem Dei.	His return is to the seat of God.[70]

68 See Anna D. Kartsonis, *Anastasis: the Making of an Image* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 58–64; Erik Thunø, *Image and Relic: Mediating the Sacred in Early Medieval Rome*, Analecta Romana Instituti Danici, Supplementum 32 (Rome: Bretschneider, 2002), pp. 107–10; see also Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, p. 324 and pl. 13(d).

69 See F. E. Warren, ed., *The Antiphonary of Bangor*, 2 vols., HBS 4 and 10 (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1893), II: 21, no. 35, and the account of the descent into hell in the hymn *Praecamur Patrem*, II:5–7, no. 3, at stanzas xxxiii–xxxviii); see also J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (London: Longman, 1972), pp. 398–420 at 402.

70 Helmut Gneuss, *Hymnar und Hymnen im englischen Mittelalter; Studien zur Überlieferung, Glossierung und Übersetzung lateinischer Hymnen in England. Mit*

The reference in stanza v to Christ's "bridal chamber" (*thalamus*) is important. This was imagined through an identification, inspired by the Latin texts of Psalm 18, between Christ and the sun's daily course. The final lines of the *Dream* (lines 150–6) sum up Christ's cosmic expedition by citing and providing a punning English equivalent for the syntactic wordplay which associates God and the sun in Psalm 18. In Christian discourse, the syntax was seen to refer to the incarnation and life of Christ, the light of the world. It is impossible to miss the similarity between *Se sunu* ("the Son") and *seo sunne* ("the sun"), once we notice the reference to this psalm:

> [6] In sole posuit tabernaculum suum et ipse tamquam sponsus procedens de thalamo suo
> Exultavit ut gigans ad currendam viam: [7] a summo caelo egressio ejus et occursus ejus usque ad summum ejus nec est qui se abscondat a calore ejus.
>
> [He hath set his tabernacle in the sun; and he, as a bridegroom coming out of his bride chamber hath rejoiced as a giant to run the way. His going out is from the end of heaven, and his circuit even to the end thereof; and there is no one that can hide himself from his heat.][71]

Apart from Psalm 18 and the Ambrosian hymn *Veni Redemptor Gentium*, the stress on the unity and swiftness of Christ's expedition may owe something to another very important early text, the preface for the Easter vigil mass which has survived in the Old Gelasian sacramentary. This prose poem was chanted by the liturgical celebrant at the most solemn moment of the liturgical year; it was certainly well known in seventh- and early eighth-century Northumbria. Like the final lines

einer Textausgabe der lateinisch-altenglischen Expositio hymnorum (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1968); Inge Milfull, *The Hymns of the Anglo-Saxon Church: A Study and Edition of the 'Durham Hymnal'* (Cambridge, 1996).

71 Latin text of the Old Roman psalter from London, Britiish Library, MS Cotton Vespasian A. i, Henry Sweet, *Oldest English Texts*, p. 209.

of the *Dream*, the preface fuses the resurrection of Christ and his triumphant ascension into a single image: his return to his homeland with the souls he has won from hell. Like the *Dream* too, its theology is early, and profoundly Johannine in the way it closely associates Christ's raising on the cross with his exaltation and glorification:

> Adest enim nobis optatissimum tempus, et desideratae noctis lumen aduenit. Quid enim maius uel melius inueniri poterit, quam domini resurgentis praedicare uirtutem? Hic namque inferorum claustra disrumpens, carissimam nobis hodie suae resurrectionis vixillam suscepit atque hominem remeans inuidia inimici deiectum mirantibus intulit astris.
>
> [For the best of times has come to us, the light of the night we longed for. What greater or better could be found, than to proclaim the power of the Lord in his resurrection? For he, breaking apart the prisons of the underworld, takes up today the most precious standard of his resurrection; and winning back humankind whom the enemy's hatred brought low, carries them to the stars who look on in awe.][72]

72 See Mohlberg et al., *Liber Sacramentorum Romanae Aeclesiae (Sacramentarium Gelasianum)*, no. 457, lines 18–24 on p. 75; see also *Corpus Praefationum*, ed. Eugène Moeller, 5 vols., CCSL 161–161/D (Turnhout: Brepols, 1980-81), no. 17 (text at CCSL 161A (1980), p. 7; textual apparatus at CCSL 161B (1980), p. 9). A good analysis of this preface will be found in Martin Herz, *Sacrum Commercium: eine Begriffsgeschichtliche Studie zur Theologie der römischen Liturgiesprache*, Münchener Theologische Studien, II. Systematische Abteilung 15, (Munich: Fink, 1958), pp. 228–39; see also Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, pp. 289–91. The close association throughout St. John's Gospel between Christ being "raised aloft" on the cross, and his being "raised up" from the dead and "exalted" into heaven is fully examined by Wilhelm Thüsing, *Die Erhöhung und Verherrlichung Jesu im Johannesevangelium*, Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen, vol. 21, 3rd ed. rev. (Münster: Aschendorff, 1979).