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Frontispiece: Professor Emeritus Richard N. Bailey, OBE: 'in medio duorum' (Photo: Alison Bailey)

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CROSSING BOUNDARIES

Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Art, Material Culture, Language and Literature of the Early Medieval World

Edited by

ERIC CAMBRIDGE AND JANE HAWKES

Essays presented to Professor Emeritus Richard N. Bailey, OBE,
in honour of his eightieth birthday

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Front cover: Mosaic image of Edgar and the kings crossing the bar; modern public art in Edgar's Field Park, Chester (Photo: P. Everson)
Back cover: Taplow gold braid (Photo: Jane Hawkes)

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Preface

It is a great pleasure to be able to put on record our thanks to the contributors to this volume, not only for their good humour, patience and sustained commitment to the project, but also for having the courage to seize the opportunity to approach their chosen topics from what are sometimes unorthodox angles. If the results occasionally court controversy, so be it: that is precisely what a volume of this kind should do. Their willingness to take risks, and the wide range of the subject-matter of their contributions, is also an apt reflection of the breadth of interests and learning, and the originality of approach, of the honorand, Professor Emeritus Richard Bailey, OBE. Far more than that, it is an eloquent testimony to the considerable affection and respect in which he continues to be held by friends, colleagues and pupils alike, all of whom have benefited from his wise advice and acute criticism, generously proffered, over many years. We are delighted to dedicate this volume to him as a token of our thanks and appreciation.

Though the response to our request for contributions has been overwhelming, it has inevitably proved impossible for a number of friends, colleagues and pupils of the honorand to participate who, in other circumstances, would very much have wished to do so. They would, nevertheless, like to join us in celebrating the occasion of his eightieth birthday. They include: Peter Addyman; Coleen Batey; Carol Farr; Roberta Franks; Signe Fuglesang; Luisa Izzi; Susan Mills; the late Jennifer O'Reilly; Steven Plunkett; Julian Richards; the late Charles Thomas; Ross Trench-Jellicoe; Sir David Wilson; and Susan Youngs.

Finally, we take this opportunity to place on record our warmest thanks to the anonymous readers, and to the publisher for its support and guidance in facilitating the production of what has proved to be a technically complex volume.

Eric Cambridge and Jane Hawkes
January 2016

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Tailpiece: Richard Bailey launching 'Bede's Skull Exhibition' (2015), at the Bede Museum, Jarrow

Part II

Objects and meanings

In the second section of the volume our attention moves from stone carvings to the analysis and interpretation of artefacts in a range of other media, reflecting the wide range of Richard Bailey's own interests, shown by his publication of a series of fundamental studies of a number of key artefacts in wood, ivory, metal, and vellum.

We begin with reinterpretations of the iconography of two of the most famous wooden artefacts to have survived from late antiquity and the early Middle Ages. Éamonn Ó Carragáin reveals a hitherto unsuspected dimension of the iconography of one of Christendom's earliest surviving crucifixion images, carved on the great doors of the basilica of Santa Sabina in Rome, and offers a remarkable insight into the factors which shaped the beginnings of what would become the most emblematic of all Christian images. Jane Hawkes takes as her point of departure the pioneering identification by Richard Bailey of the fragments of a cross-inscribed board found in St Cuthbert's grave in the nineteenth century as probably the base of the saint's coffin; she proceeds to reconstruct a ground-breaking three-dimensional iconography of the whole deposit which relates the body of the saint to the reliquary in which it was enclosed.

Manuscripts are represented by Catherine Karkov's analysis of a well-known Canterbury manuscript of the late pre-Conquest period, the Harley Psalter. She probes the enigmatic iconography of its opening image of the Trinity, identifying a complex interaction, not only between text and image, but also between that initial image and others later in the manuscript and proposes a subtle contextualisation of the iconography in the concerns of the patrons who commissioned the work and of the community and the team of scribe-artists who produced it.

The remainder of this section is concerned with finds of metalwork from England ranging in date from the late eighth to the twelfth century. Leslie Webster provides the first full publication of a recently discovered piece of Mercian metalwork of spectacularly high quality. In a compelling analysis she probes issues of its symbolic significance as well as its practical function as a sword pommel, and argues that early medieval master smiths endowed high-status swords with a distinctive and sophisticated iconography of their own which we are only just beginning to understand and appreciate.

The next two papers are concerned with Viking-age finds from the Danelaw. A unique example in gold of a lozenge brooch from Norfolk forms the subject of James Graham-Campbell's study. The type clearly originates from Denmark, but he draws attention to an accumulating body of evidence for production sites in East Anglia, the only known place of manufacture outside of Scandinavia. This pattern can be paralleled in other types of personal adornment and is transforming our understanding of the manufacture and distribution of such items in the area of the Viking settlement in Britain. John Hines considers a very different type of artefact, a lead spindle-whorl from Lincolnshire, which preserves a remarkable runic inscription. He argues that this provides a hitherto wholly unsuspected insight into the survival of pagan beliefs which challenges conventional wisdom on the nature of Christianity in the late Viking Danelaw.

For the final paper in this section we move into the post-Conquest period with Helen Gittos, who scrutinises a group of enigmatic inscribed lead plaques, probably of twelfth-century date, from the abbey of Bury St Edmunds. She decodes the text borne by these objects to suggest that they performed a liturgical function in rituals associated with dying monks, and perhaps also with their burial. As documentary evidence of such practices is lacking we are entirely reliant on interpreting the objects themselves, so her analysis has arguably also given birth to a new sub-discipline, the archaeology of liturgy.

7

The Santa Sabina crucifixion panel: 'between two living creatures you will be known' on Good Friday, at 'Hierusalem' in fifth-century Rome

Éamonn Ó Carragáin

Among his many services to scholarship, Richard Bailey has written an excellent paper on the early medieval interpretations of the Old Latin text of the Canticle of Habakkuk.[1] He makes good use of vernacular glosses to confirm how the Canticle was interpreted in Anglo-Saxon England. He argues, convincingly, that Bede refers to the Canticle and to its use at Lauds on Fridays in his prose *Life* of Cuthbert. Bede tells how Cuthbert, staying at Coldingham, was observed by one of the brethren going down to the sea-shore to stand up to his neck in the sea for an all-night vigil of prayer. At daybreak, Cuthbert returned to the shore, knelt down, and resumed his prayer. While he knelt in prayer, 'two four-footed creatures which are commonly called otters' came out of the sea. Lying down on the sand before the kneeling saint, they 'began to warm his feet with their breath and sought to dry him with their fur'. When they had finished their service to Cuthbert, 'they received his blessing and slipped away into their native waters'.[2] Unlike the other lives of Cuthbert, Bede's prose *Life* specifies that, directly after the beasts had recognised and warmed him, Cuthbert 'forthwith returned home and sang the canonical hymns with the brethren at the appointed hour'.[3] At the hour of sunrise, the appointed liturgical office would have been Lauds; and, as Bede himself points out in his commentary *In Habacuc*, it was customary to recite the Canticle at Lauds, the 'morning praises', each Friday, the day in which Christ's Passion was accomplished.[4] Bailey agreed that the Canticle of Habakkuk, as interpreted by Bede, is relevant, not only to our understanding of this episode in the prose *Life* of Cuthbert, but also to the Bewcastle and Ruthwell crosses. On each of these eighth-century monuments there is a panel representing Christ acclaimed by two animals. The inscription to the Ruthwell panel calls them 'beasts and dragons',[5] and says that they 'recognised in the desert the saviour of the world'.[6] But they are anonymous beasts, in the sense that scholars have not been able to identify them with any particular species. They 'recognise the Saviour of the world' by crossing their paws to form the symbol (*Chi*) for the title 'Christ'. This iconography is highly original, and is found nowhere else except on those two related Northumbrian monuments. The two beasts are placed under the feet of the majestic Christ, in a clear reminiscence of the widespread iconography of Psalm 90:13.[7] However they are not the evil beasts (asps, basilisks, lions or dragons) of Psalm 90; instead, they acclaim Christ as the Messiah by forming with their paws the first letter of his messianic title in Greek, '*Christos*' ('the anointed one'). Their acclamation of Christ is consistent with the helpful cosying up of the otters (in Bede's prose *Life* of Cuthbert), to the saint who has been chilled by his long vigil. It is reasonable to suppose that Bede's account of Cuthbert's otters, and the sculptors at Ruthwell and at Bewcastle, were each independently inspired by the same ideas and texts.[8] In effect, the Bewcastle and Ruthwell sculptors have converted their beasts from evil to good; this highly original transformation seems designed to fuse a recollection of Psalm 90 with a recollection of the 'two living creatures' (*dua animalia*) of the Old Latin version of the Canticle of Habakkuk.[9]

At the beginning of his paper, Bailey writes that 'the sceptic might also observe that, if this [*in medio duorum animalium innotesceris*] *were* such a popular concept, why is there seemingly no evidence for it in continental art?'[10] Here I argue that a libretto, partially based on the opening verses of the Canticle of Habakkuk, and sung at the ninth hour on

Good Friday as a tract or responsory chant,[11] also provides a context within which one of the earliest surviving Roman representations of the Crucifixion may be understood. This is a panel at the top left-hand corner of the wooden door at Santa Sabina on the Aventine Hill in Rome (Fig. 7.1).

At present placed at the top left-hand corner of the wooden door, the Santa Sabina crucifixion panel appears as the first of a row of four small panels; together these span the width of the door. Directly underneath, there is a series of four larger (that is, taller) panels. This pattern is then repeated: the panels of the third row on the door are small; those of the fourth row are large. A final pair of small figural panels, placed at present on the left and right sides of the door with two blank panels between them, completes the present arrangement of figural panels. Directly under this row comes a row of four blank large panels, and then, at the bottom of the door, a row of four blank small panels. The door now has eighteen figural panels in all, eight large and ten small. Towards the bottom, there are ten blank panels, four large and six small. It is certain that originally there were more figural panels, which presumably became damaged and had to be replaced by blanks; in her standard study of the door, Gisela Jeremias argues convincingly that originally there was a Jonah cycle, now lost.[12] Thus the present arrangement of panels on the door, even that of the top row of small panels, is possibly not the original one. However, it is also possible that the present arrangement may partly preserve the original one. We shall return to this question later.

In the crucifixion panel, Christ is a majestic and heroic figure: a mature and well-built man, naked except for a narrow loin-cloth. He has a full beard and long flowing hair, like that of the bearded philosopher-Christ in the early fifth-century apse of Santa Pudenziana, Rome.[13] The artist has expressed his importance by making him much taller than the two younger-looking, beardless men, each clad in a narrow loin-cloth, who flank him to left and right. The background of the panel is filled with rectangles clearly intended to represent the stones of a wall. A raised structure is embedded in the wall, but does not otherwise interfere with our view of it. The structure has three peaks, shaped so as to suggest three gable ends; on the 'gable' to the viewer's left, a small curved arch suggests a window. By superimposing the outlines of gable ends on the wall, the artist has emphasised the parallelism between the two thieves: each of them is, like Christ himself, framed by a separate gable. He has also emphasised the contrast between Christ and the two thieves: Christ is so tall as to fill the central gable, while the head of neither thief reaches to the lower horizontal border of his gable. Christ's greater size was appropriate: in early Christian narrative and exegesis, Christ, because he embodied divine and human natures, was seen as *ut gigas* ('like a giant'), who 'rejoices to run his course'.[14] All three men seem fully alive, with open eyes. Their faces show no signs of suffering; Christ in particular seems calm and majestic.[15] The small young man on Christ's left hand (on the viewer's right), who is slightly taller than his fellow to the viewer's left, seems positively joyful. In the panel, there is no reference to the other human figures recorded by the Gospels, and in later tradition, as being present at the Crucifixion. There is no wound on Christ's side (as he is fully alive, he could not yet have been wounded by the spear; that wound was inflicted to ensure, and demonstrate, his death).[16] There is no sign of a spear-bearer, nor a sponge-bearer, nor the other women or men in the fifth-century British Museum ivory or in the late sixth-century Rabbula Gospels.[17] All three figures look somewhat to their right, towards what, from the onlooker's perspective, appears as the left side of the door. All three also have their arms extended to left and right; but the arms are bent, not strained or stretched out. This is in striking contrast to the fifth-century British Museum ivory, where the triumphant Christ has his arms stretched out rigidly by the nails which pierce his open hands. Were it not for the clear references to crucifixion, which we will now examine, scholars might well have interpreted the pose of all three figures (arms extended to left and right, but bent and not rigidly stretched out) as the *orans*-pose, the classic ancient attitude of prayer. Indeed, scholars have recently suggested that the Santa Sabina artist may have been partially inspired by early Christian depictions, in the catacombs and on sarcophagi, of the Hebrew children in the fiery furnace: threefold *orantes*, male figures, and types of the death and Resurrection of Christ.[18]



Fig. 7.1 Crucifixion, door panel, Santa Sabina, Rome (Photo: Jane Hawkes)

Whatever the sources of its inspiration, there is no doubt that this is a crucifixion panel. The designer and carver have provided unmistakeable references to the Crucifixion, though they have not attempted any realistic representation of it. The open palm of Christ's left hand is nailed to a very short horizontal plank, but the plank is not continued to fill the

space over his bent left arm (between his left shoulder and left hand). The same is true of Christ's right side; his right palm is nailed to an exiguous plank, which is lower than, and thus not in line with, the plank behind Christ's left hand. The artist has made no effort to angle the two tiny planks, to which his hands appear to be nailed, so as to represent a convincing cross-piece. There is no sign of the upright of a cross above Christ's bearded head, which is framed by the central 'gable'. Christ seems to stand on the ground, not to hang on a cross. There are no signs of nails in his feet; however, just under Christ's feet, a slight wedge-mark in the lower border of the panel may refer to the upright of his cross. It would seem that the artist primarily intended to emphasise Christ's gesture of prayer, and that he has sacrificed any effort to represent a realistic crucifixion to this concern.

The references to crucifixion are more definite in the case of the two young men who flank Christ. The uprights of their crosses are visible behind their heads: the upright is particularly plain over the head of the smaller of these figures (to the left of the panel, on Christ's right hand). Their feet, like Christ's, are at ground-level. However, the wedge-like marks under their feet, on the lower border of the panel, are clearer than that under the feet of Christ, and may well have been intended to refer to the uprights of their crosses or to *suppedanea*. Their cross-pieces are also more convincing than in the case of Christ; however, the plank to which one palm of each flanking figure is nailed never forms a straight line with the plank to which his opposite palm is nailed. In the case of all three figures, we have references to crucifixion rather than a convincing representation of it.

Which of these young men is the good thief, and which the bad? In her careful examination of the panel, Jeremias does not even raise the question.[19] Dina Tumminello is equally meticulous, but her approach is different. She rejects, as inappropriate to these malefactors, any suggestion that the gestures of the thieves should be seen as gestures of prayer.[20] She makes a detailed case that the figure on Christ's left (to the right of the panel) is the good thief: he is the taller of the two flanking figures; he looks towards Christ; and the gesture of his arms is closer to that of Christ. Tumminello emphasises that, on Christ's right (to the left of the panel), the bad thief obstinately looks away from Christ; she sees his gaze as 'filled with hatred'.[21] I do not wish to challenge these careful observations; Tumminello has demonstrated that the two flanking figures are not identical, but are contrasted to a certain degree. She may be correct in arguing that the more cheerful young figure to the right of the panel is the good thief. But I doubt that the sculptor intended the distinction between good and bad thieves to be an important feature of his panel. Against Tumminello's interpretation, it might be objected that the 'good thief' is on Christ's left, not on his right; and that Christ looks away from the 'good thief' and towards the 'bad thief'. The artist seems more intent on emphasising that both thieves face the same way as Christ (somewhat towards the left of the panel) than on accentuating the contrasts between the two thieves. Jeremias has convincingly argued that the Santa Sabina artist probably had few models, if any, to go on. She suggests that the commissioner, and the artist, were unsure of how to proceed, and were experimenting with concepts for which they did not know any accepted and traditional iconography.[22] After all, Luke's Gospel is the only one to describe a sharp contrast in attitudes between the 'good' (repentant) thief and the 'bad' (unrepentant) one.[23] Mark simply relates that Christ was crucified between two thieves, one to his left and the other to his right (15:27–8). Matthew states that both of the thieves cursed Christ (27:38, 44), and makes no distinction between them. John does not refer to the thieves at all. In the final years of the fourth century, in other words, one, or at most two, generations before the Santa Sabina door was made, Jerome reconciled the apparent contradiction between Matthew, where both thieves curse Christ, and Luke, where the good thief repents, by arguing that both thieves at first cursed Christ, but that then the good thief was converted to believe in Christ by the darkness over all the earth, and the miracles that took place while Christ was on the Cross.[24]

Tumminello interestingly suggests that the artist intended the wall with rectangular 'stones', which covers the back of the panel, to emphasise that Calvary, where the crucifixions took place, was just outside the walls of Jerusalem.[25] If the designer or artist intended to emphasise the walls of Jerusalem, they may possibly have intended the panel to recall such passages as Hebrews 13:12–14:

> Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people by his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore to him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For, we have not here a lasting city: but we seek one that is to come.[26]

Whether that is so, we shall see that to recall Jerusalem, in relation to Calvary, had a precise significance in terms of the liturgical landscape of fifth-century Rome.

At the end of the fourth century, Jerome commented on the phrase *In medio duorum animalium cognosceris* ('you will be known in the midst of two living creatures'), a phrase from Habakkuk 3:2 in the Old Latin translation of the Greek Septuagint.[27] Jerome himself, working directly from the Hebrew, had translated the phrase differently: '*in medio annorum notum facies*' ('in the midst of the years thou shalt make it [thy work] known'). However Jerome, aware that the older Latin translation from the Greek had been consecrated by many years of Christian devotional and liturgical use, saw it too, and not just the Hebrew original, as inspired. He therefore provided a rich and multi-layered interpretation of the Old Latin phrase:

> And so, disturbed by wonder, I burst out in fear in praise of you, saying 'you will be known in the midst

> of two living beings'. These are interpreted as the two Seraphim in Isaiah [6:2], and the two cherubim described in Exodus [25:18], who look towards each other, and who have the [place of] oracle between them, in Isaiah [cf 6:2] veiling the Lord's head and feet. [It is said that] in the present age these fly, and that one calls out the mystery of the Trinity to the other; and that one of them who is called 'burning' is sent, and comes to earth, and cleanses the lips of the prophet, and says 'I am come to cast fire on the earth. And what will I, but that it be kindled?' [Luke 12:49]. This is how others interpret it, and use many texts of scripture to justify that interpretation. But the simple interpretation, and the opinion of the common people, understands it as referring to the Saviour, who may be recognized as crucified between two thieves. Those who interpret the text better, say that the Saviour is to be understood and believed in [the midst of] the primitive Church, which was called together from the circumcision [i.e., from the Jews] and from the foreskin [i.e., from the Gentiles], [Christ] surrounding himself on this side and on that by two peoples. There are those who understand the two living creatures as the two Testaments, Old and New, who are truly living and full of life, who [can be said to] breathe [the Spirit], and in the midst of which the Lord may be known.[28]

The most striking thing about Jerome's interpretation is that he cites the 'opinion of the common people (*opinio uulgi*)'. Why should the common people have any such opinion? Furthermore, Jerome agrees that their opinion, even if a simple one, is basically correct. Jerome preferred to see more historically wide-ranging dimensions in the phrase, but these interpretations also concentrate on how the Saviour is to be recognised in history: in the midst of the primitive Church called out from Jews and Gentiles, and in the correspondences between the [Hebrew] Old Testament and the [Greek] New; it is by relating those two complementary revelations that the Lord is to be known and believed.

In the early fifth century, a few decades before the construction of the Santa Sabina door, St Augustine would once more record this popular interpretation. Unlike Jerome, Augustine would place the various interpretations on the same level; he evidently saw them as equally valid:

> Again, in his prayer, combined with a song, to whom but the Lord Christ is Habakkuk speaking when he says, 'Lord, I heard your discourse, and I was afraid: Lord, I considered your works, and I was filled with dread'? For can this represent anything but the indescribable amazement aroused by the foreknowledge of a new and sudden salvation for mankind? 'Between the two living creatures you will be recognized' can surely only mean between the two covenants, or between the two thieves, or between Moses and Elijah conversing with him on the mountain.[29]

The popular interpretation, Jerome's *opinio uulgi* (which to Jerome seemed merely a *simplex interpretatio*, but caused no difficulty to Augustine), was firmly based on the liturgical praxis of the Western Latin Church. In Rome, from the fourth century (and probably well before) a closely related phrase, '*in medio duorum animalium innotesceris*', was sung on Good Friday, at the beginning of the solemn ceremony commemorating the moment of the Lord's death on the Cross between two thieves. Liturgical historians generally accept that the most solemn liturgical occasions are the most conservative: thus it is likely that the readings and chants for Good Friday are very ancient. There was no Mass on Good Friday, because the ceremonies at the moment of Christ's death preserved the customs of a time before the Eucharist was celebrated on weekdays. Instead, at the ninth hour on Good Friday, the traditional hour for the commemoration of Christ's death, people came together in the various ancient churches of the city, for services of readings and prayer: the word '*synaxes*' (gatherings) is used for such non-eucharistic services. Of these gatherings, the most important was naturally the *synaxis* at which the Bishop of Rome, the Pope, presided. By tradition, the pope presided at the basilica of 'Hierusalem', which in modern times has come to be known as 'Santa Croce in Gerusalemme'. 'Hierusalem' stood within the imperial property known as the Sessorian Palace. The basilica was particularly associated with Helena, the mother of Constantine, who was believed to have brought back to Rome relics of the Passion and of the True Cross, and deposited them in this basilica; hence the name 'Hierusalem'.[30] The basilica came to be seen as the symbolic counterpart, in Rome, of Calvary.[31]

Detailed accounts of the papal Good Friday ceremony at 'Hierusalem' have survived, not from the fifth century, but from the eighth.[32] Scholars agree that the readings and chants of that ceremony are unlikely to have changed much since the fourth and fifth centuries; indeed, because the ceremonies on the most solemn feasts were usually the most conservative, the readings and chants may predate the time of Constantine. The papal ceremony of readings at 'Hierusalem' began abruptly. There was no entrance chant or *introit*. A subdeacon ascended the ambo and, without even identifying the book to be read, began to intone a passage from the prophet Hosea (6:1–6). When read on Good Friday, the opening verses must have been seen to emphasise the unity of the sacred Triduum, the three days (Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Easter Sunday) which culminated in Christ's Resurrection. The lection implies that, by repentance and by participation in the Triduum, the whole congregation, now

gathered at 'Hierusalem', will partake not only in Christ's death, but also in his rising to new life:

> Come, let us return to the Lord;
> For it is he who has torn, and he will heal us:
> He has struck down, and he will bind us up.
> After two days, he will revive us,
> On the third day he will raise us up that we may live before him.[33]

After this first reading, the choir intoned a tract or responsory chant, once more taken from the prophets. The libretto of the chant was loosely based on the opening verses of the Old Latin version of the Canticle of Habakkuk, but also diverged somewhat from it;[34] liturgical scholars are agreed that this chant (which may have originated outside of Rome) is probably one of the most ancient surviving Latin chants of the Western Church:[35]

> RESP[ONSORY] (GRAD[UAL]): Lord, I heard your tidings and was afraid
> I considered your works and grew fearful.
> V[ERSICLE]: Between two living beings you will become known
> When the years draw nigh you will become known,
> When the time comes you will be revealed.
> V[ERSICLE]: When my soul is deeply troubled by him,
> I will remember mercy.
> God will come from Lebanon,
> And the holy one from the shaded, thickly-wooded mountain.
> V[ERSICLE]: His majesty has covered the heavens,
> And the earth is full of his praise.[36]

It is likely that Jerome's *opinio uulgi*, and Augustine's recording of the tradition, are both inspired by this chant, sung at the most solemn moment of the liturgical year, the moment of Christ's death on the Cross. It is equally likely that our Santa Sabina panel was primarily designed to recall what Jerome called the '*opinio uulgi*'. The designer and artist were not primarily concerned with realism; that is, with representing the details of the Gospel narratives. It is possible that, as Tumminello has argued, one of the thieves was intended to be seen as 'good' and the other as 'bad'. However, the way in which the panel is designed suggests that the designer and artist subordinated such considerations to a more central intention: to recall the Good Friday chants, and with them the *opinio uulgi* (an opinion shared by Augustine and well-known to Jerome), that, between the two thieves, the natures of Christ were revealed, and he was to be recognised. Designer and artist seem to have been careful to ensure that any individuation of the two thieves should not interfere with their essential similarity, as it were; that even if the designer and artist wished to recall Luke's vivid scene of the repentant thief, they ensured that such a recollection would not overshadow Isaiah's prophecy recalled, not only in Luke's Gospel, but also in the Vulgate text of Mark:

> And with him they crucify two thieves: the one on his right hand, and the other on his left. And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith: *And with the wicked he was reputed.*[37]

To conclude: modern art historians have been fascinated with the Santa Sabina crucifixion panel because it is among the earliest surviving representations of Christ's Crucifixion. As we shall see, this fascination has led them to interpret the panel too much in isolation from the neighbouring small panels on the top row of the door, and to concentrate on the ways in which the panel anticipates, or fails to anticipate, features of later crucifixion scenes (such as representations of the good and bad thieves). This concentration has prevented them from appreciating how the panel, placed as it is at the opening of the iconographic programme, suggests a perspective within which the whole door may be read. The designer of the Santa Sabina door, and the artist who sculpted the panel, were primarily interested in the Crucifixion, not as an event to be literally described by piling on details from the Gospel narratives, but as an epiphany of how Christ's nature, as God and as man, was revealed 'in the midst of two living creatures' at the very moment in history when 'he was reputed with the wicked'. The panel refers to the Crucifixion indeed; but the artist sees Christ's death primarily in the terms in which it was made present to Christian communities in fifth-century Rome – through the communal actions and the liturgical chants of the Easter Triduum. In the fifth century, as we have seen, the Good Friday readings and chants placed the commemoration of Christ's death firmly within that wider context. It was in the whole Easter Triduum, enacted and experienced as a unified event, that Christ's nature and triumph was understood to be revealed.

The present position of the panel, at the beginning of the iconographic programme of the door, is appropriate, and may possibly be original. Famously, Christianity is a religion of the codex, and it is normal to begin reading the page of a book at the top left-hand corner. In the top row of small panels on the Santa Sabina door, our crucifixion panel (at the left corner) is balanced by a panel representing Christ as acclaimed by, and between, two disciples (the fourth small panel, at the right corner). Jeremias has convincingly identified those two disciples as Peter and Paul (Fig. 7.2).[38] What is of great interest is the similarity of design between this panel, at the top right corner of the door, and the crucifixion panel at the top left corner. Each of the panels is a 'figure of three'; the three 'gable ends' in the crucifixion panel, which emphasise the relationships between Christ and the two malefactors, have a close visual parallel in the palm trees which mark out the spaces between Christ and the flanking disciples, Peter and



Fig. 7.2 Christ between Peter and Paul, door panel, Santa Sabina, Rome (Photo: Jane Hawkes)



Fig. 7.3 Women at the Sepulchre, door panel, Santa Sabina, Rome (Photo: Jane Hawkes)

Paul. The two small panels at the centre of the top row are thematically relevant to these flanking panels at the upper corners of the door. The panel immediately to the right of the crucifixion panel refers to the Resurrection: on Easter morning, the holy women encounter the angel at the empty tomb of Christ (Fig. 7.3).[39] Together, these two panels represent the Easter Triduum, from Good Friday to Easter Sunday: the progression from the first to the second recalls the first Good Friday lection from Hosea, which we have already quoted: 'after two days, he will revive us, on the third day he will raise us up that we may live before him'.[40] The third panel in the first row of small panels represents the Epiphany: the three wise men from the East acclaim Christ, shown forth to them by his mother Mary (Fig. 7.4).[41] In short, if the crucifixion panel implies a discussion of the ways in which Christ is revealed and recognised, this discourse is continued and developed in the other three panels of the top row on the door.

The audience in fifth-century Rome is likely to have been more responsive to the rich and complementary levels



Fig. 7.4 Adoration of the Magi, door panel, Santa Sabina, Rome (Photo: Jane Hawkes)

of scriptural symbolism than most modern scholars, who sometimes have that sort of imaginative agility trained out of them. We have seen how both Jerome and Augustine, in their interpretations of the '*in medio duorum animalium*' phrase, thought nothing of jumping, in what to most of us would seem an arbitrary fashion, between what we are trained to think of as widely different situations and ideas. The same fifth-century flexibility in linking various levels of symbolism together is implied at the basilica of Santa Sabina, in close proximity to the great wooden door. On the interior of the entrance wall, that is, just over the inner side of the great wooden door, the famous mosaic dedicatory inscription is placed: it consists of seven lines of verse.[42] The fourth and central line has seven words, and the fourth or central word in that line is the name 'PETRVS'. This name primarily refers to the priest Peter of Illyria who founded the basilica with its decorations 'which you admire'.[43] The inscription states that, through his Christian virtues ('he was generous to the poor and harsh on himself'), Peter of Illyria was 'worthy of such a great name':[44] the inscription explicitly compares the generous priest to St Peter himself. But that is not all. To the left of the inscription stands a lady, entitled 'the Church from the Circumcision'.[45] To the right of the inscription a matching lady is entitled 'the Church from the Gentiles'.[46] This is the very theme to which, as we have seen, Jerome refers when interpreting '*in medio duorum animalium*': 'those who interpret the text better, say that the Saviour is to be understood and believed in [the midst of] the primitive Church, which was called together from the circumcision [i.e., from the Jews] and from the foreskin [i.e., from the Gentiles], [Christ] surrounding himself on this side and on that by two peoples'.[47] The two ladies add an essential layer of symbolism to the verse inscription placed between them. The flanking ladies add a further, wider implication to the poem's explicit comparison between Peter of Illyria and his great namesake: they imply that in the life and death of



Fig. 7.5 Early Medieval Rome Study Group, Rome, September 1994 (Photo: Niamh Whitfield)

Peter of Illyria, who 'fleeing the joys of this life, deserved to hope for the future [life]',[48] as in the life and death of St Peter, and in the basilica 'which you admire',[49] and where the people of God can now gather, Christ is to be known: as he was to be seen at the moment of his heroic death on the Cross, and also in the primitive Church, which, through the Spirit, he called together out of the Jews and the Gentiles.

The present argument suggests that the crucifixion panel, properly placed at the beginning of a whole 'page' of sculpted images in which Christ is to be known, functions as the initial 'sentence' of a fitting prologue to the whole Santa Sabina door. The prologue is now provided by the close progression between the four small panels at the top of the door. It is possible that this prologue, which announces a major theme in the panels of the door, was designed already in the fifth century. However, it would appear that this theory is now impossible to prove, and must remain a speculation. It is beyond the scope of the present paper to explore the ways in which the theme of epiphany or recognition is developed throughout the figural panels of the door, though it is of interest to note in passing that the panels include a representation of the Prophet Habakkuk.[50] But future scholars of the door might, when exploring its iconography, take as their motto a further sentence of Jerome's interpretation of *in medio duorum animalium*: 'There are those who understand the two living creatures as the two Testaments, Old and New, who are truly living and full of life, who [can be said to] breathe [the Spirit], and in the midst of which the Lord may be known'.[51] After all, Christ himself had famously proclaimed that 'I am the entrance door, the way in'.[52]

Envoi (Fig. 7.5)

I hope that this contribution will remind Richard of a sunny afternoon in September 1994, when a group of (generally) vigorous, fit and (in varying degrees) distinguished medievalists trudged up the Aventine Hill. We had just visited the basilica of Santa Maria in Cosmedin in the Schola Graeca, which was once a *xenodochium* (building intended for the reception of pilgrims), between the Tiber and the Palatine hill. There, Rosemary Cramp had startled and delighted us by pointing out that the dimensions and layout of that early medieval basilica were similar to those of the monastic church

at Jarrow. Fortified by such authoritative evidence of how relevant the city of Rome could be to the world of Bede, the group then skirted the Circus Maximus and trudged up the Aventine to the basilica of Santa Sabina, where we admired and discussed the famous fifth-century wooden entrance door, and the splendid interior. That week, and subsequent publications (not least those of Richard Bailey) which built on the experience of Rome, were helpful in forming the modern scholarly consensus among Anglo-Saxonists that to understand the ecclesiastical cultures of Anglo-Saxon England, and in particular that of eighth-century Northumbria, the fascination in these cultures with the churches and liturgies of Rome needs to be taken into account.[53]

Notes

1 Bailey 2011.

2 Bede, *VCP* 10: duo … quadrupedia quae uulgo lutraeae uocantur … anhelitu suo pedes eius fouere coeperunt … percepta ab eo benedictione patrias sunt relapsa sub undas (Colgrave 1940, 188–91).

3 Bede, *VCP* 10: canonicos cum fratribus ymnos hora competente compleuit (Colgrave 1940, 190–1).

4 Bede, *In Habacvc,* Incipit (Hudson 1983, 381; trans. Connolly 1997, 65).

5 bestiae et dracones.

6 cognoverunt in deserto salvatorem mundi.

7 Quacquarelli 1975.

8 Henderson 1999, 206; see Stancliffe above, 3–14, Fig. 1.1.

9 See Ó Carragáin 1986; 2005, 201–8.

10 Bailey 2011, 244; phrase from Habakkuk added. I offer this short paper in gratitude for Richard's presentation of important new evidence to confirm that the Canticle is relevant to Northumbrian art and hagiography, and for his continued support and friendship over many years.

11 Hornby 2009, 118–19.

12 Jeremias 1980, 16, 47.

13 Tiberia 2003, 26–33.

14 Psalm 18:6: In sole posuit tabernaculum suum et ipse tamquam sponsus procedens de thalamo suo exultavit ut gigas ad currendam viam suam. The motif is discussed by Ó Carragáin (2013, 257–60).

15 Jeremias 1980, 61. See also Foletti & Gianandrea 2015.

16 Cf John 19:34; Hausherr 1963.

17 Such early crucifixion scenes are reproduced in Tumminello 2003, 10–12.

18 Sheckler & Leith 2010.

19 Jeremias 1980, 60–3.

20 Tumminello 2003, 13.

21 Ibid., 14.

22 Jeremias 1980, 62–3.

23 Luke 23:33, 39–43.

24 Jerome, *In Mathevm* IV, 27, 44 (Adriaen & Hurst 1969, 272–3). This and other passages in Jerome and Ambrose are discussed by Courtray 2009, 105–16. Kelly (1975, 222), dates the commentary to AD 398.

25 Tumminello 2003, 14.

26 propter quod et Iesus ut sanctificaret per suum sanguinem populum extra portam passus est. Exeamus igitur ad eum extra castra inproperium eius portantes. Non enim habemus hic manentem civitatem sed futuram inquirimus.

27 The meaning of the phrase is discussed by Bailey 2011, 245–8; see also Ward 1993. Kelly (1975, 161), dates Jerome's translation of, and commentaries on, the Old Testament to AD 392–406.

28 Jerome, *In Abacvc* II, iii, 2: Vel certe admiratione turbatus, in laudes tuas trepidus erumpo dicens: *In medio duorum animalium cognosceris* … Quae quidem et duo Seraphim in Esaia [6:2], et duo Cherubim, scribi interpretantur in Exodo [25:18], quae contra se respiciunt, et in medio habent oraculum; et in Esaia velantia caput et pedes Domini [cf 6:2], in praesenti tantum saeculo uolent, et alter ad alterum mysterium inclament Trinitatis, et mittatur unus de Seraphim, quod interpretatur ardens, et ueniat in terram et mundet prophetae labia, et dicat: *Ignem ueni mittere super terram, et quam uolo ut ardeat* [Luke 12:49]. Hoc aestimant alii, et ad hanc interpretationem multis scripturarum utuntur testimoniis. Porro simplex interpretatio, et opinio uulgi de Saluatore intellegit, quod inter duos latrones crucifixus agnitus sit. Qui autem melius, hoc dicunt, quod in prima Ecclesia quae de circumcisione fuit, et de praeputio congregata, duobus populis se hinc inde cingentibus, intellectus sit Saluator et creditus. Sunt qui duo animalia, duo intellegant testamenta, nouum et uetus, quae uere animantia sint, quae uitalia, quae spirent et in quorum medio Dominus cognoscatur (Adriaen 1970, 620–1; my translation).

29 Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* XVIII, 32: In oratione autem sua cum cantico cui nisi Domino Christo dicit: *Domine, audiui auditionem tuam, et timui; Domine, consideraui opera tua, et expaui?* Quid enim hoc est nisi praecognitae nouae ac repentinae salutis hominum ineffabilis admiratio? *In medio duorum animalium cognosceris* quid est nisi aut in medio duorum testamentorum, aut in medio duorum latronum, aut in medio Moysi et Heliae cum illo in monte sermocinantium? (Dombat & Kalb 1955, 623; trans. Bettenson 1972, 800). The passage is discussed in Bailey 2011, 382, n. 623.

30 On the basilica, see now Cavallaro 2009 and the essays in Cassanelli & Stolfi 2012.

31 See Baldovin 1987, 136, 148, 155.

32 On these Good Friday ceremonies, see Ó Carragáin 2005, 180–222.

33 Hosea 6:1–3: venite et revertamur ad Dominum. Quia ipse cepit et sanabit nos percutiet et curabit nos vivificabit nos post duos dies in die tertia suscitabit nos et vivemus in conspectu eius…

34 See Righetti 1959–69, 2, 221–31; Bernard 1996, 142–52; McKinnon 2000, 282, 288; and Hornby 2009, 17–22, 118–27.

35 On the early dating, see Righetti 1959–69, 2. 222–3; McKinnon 2000, 357–8; Hornby 2009, 9–11.

36 RESP. GRAD. Domine audivi auditum tuum et timui consideravi opera tua et expavi. V. In medio duorum animalium innotesceris dum adpropinquaverint anni cognosceris dum advenerit tempus ostenderis. V. In eo dum conturbata fuerit anima mea misericordiae memor ero. Deus a Libano veniet et sanctus de monte umbroso et condenso. V. Operuit caelos majestas ejus et laudis ejus plena est terra. (Hesbert 1985, 94–5, No. 78a; my translation).

37 Mark 15:27-28: Et cum eo crucifigunt duos latrones unum a dextris et alium a sinistris eius. Et adimpleta est scriptura quae dicit et cum iniquis reputatus est. Verse 28, with its prophecy based on Isaiah 53:12, is an interpolation from Luke 22:37. The interpolation, and hence the prophecy, was accepted in the Vulgate text of Mark.
38 Jeremias 1980, 77–80, pl. 67.
39 Ibid., 63–5, pl. 53.
40 Cf Hosea 6:2, quoted above, n. 33.
41 Jeremias 1980, 48–50, pl. 41.
42 The verse inscription is quoted, translated and analysed in Ó Carragáin 2008, 53–4. See Brandenburg 2005, 174–7, 301, figs 92a–b; Higgitt 2003.
43 haec qvae miraris.
44 pauperibvs locvples sibi pavper; vir nomine tanto dignvs.
45 ec[c]lesia ex circvmcisione.
46 ec[c]lesia ex gentibvs.
47 Above, n. 28.
48 praesentis fvgiens mervit sperare fvtvrvm.
49 Above, n. 43.
50 Jeremias 1980, 45–7, pl. 38.
51 Jerome, *In Abacvc* II, iii, 2 (quoted above, n. 28). I have inserted the words 'the Spirit' into my translation, because Jerome's punning phrase *quae spirent* is clearly intended to be read as multivalent: Jerome sees that the Old and New Testaments are alive and 'can be said to breathe' precisely because the Holy Spirit speaks through them.
52 John 10:9: ego sum ostium.
53 For a fine recent example, see Tinti 2014. The 1994 group included Richard Bailey, Rosemary Cramp and the late Jim Lang; also Jennifer and Terry O'Reilly, Damian Bracken, Jane Hawkes, Charles Doherty, Niamh Whitfield, Pat Wallace, Siobhán Cuffe Wallace and Tomás Ó Carragáin.

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