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VI. LITURGICAL INNOVATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH POPE SERGIUS AND THE ICONOGRAPHY OF THE RUTHWELL AND BEWCASTLE CROSSES

Éamonn Ó Carragáin

In their papers in the present volume, Professors Cramp and Farrell have attempted to explicate the iconography of the Ruthwell cross-head by reference to evidence from art history, liturgy and patristic writings. In this paper, I shall argue that part of the sequence of panels on the shaft of the Ruthwell cross, and also the three figural panels on the Bewcastle cross, can best be understood in the light of liturgical developments in Northumbria in the early eighth century.[1] Firstly, I argue that the panels at the foot of the south face of the Ruthwell cross representing the annunciation and the crucifixion (see outline of the iconographical plan of the Ruthwell and Bewcastle crosses, below, p. 147) are best understood in relation to the introduction into Northumbrian liturgical practice of the feast of the annunciation on 25 March, the anniversary of the Crucifixion. Secondly, the panels on the north face of the Ruthwell cross and on the west face of the Bewcastle cross, representing John the Baptist bearing the Agnus Dei and (immediately below) Christ in majesty over the beasts in the desert, are best understood in relation to the introduction of the chant 'Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis' into the Roman Mass in the seventh century. The Paul and Anthony panel on the north face of the Ruthwell cross should also, I suggest, be related to the liturgy of the Mass. Thirdly, the erection of the Ruthwell and Bewcastle crosses may have been inspired by the new importance of the feast of the exaltation of the cross stemming from Pope Sergius's miraculous finding of a relic of the true cross in St Peter's in the year 701. I argue that the crosses reflect the keen interest in Roman liturgical developments which existed in early eighth-century Northumbria; and, finally, that the liturgical link between the annunciation and the crucifixion enables us better to understand the relation between the crucifixion poem inscribed on the Ruthwell cross (the ancestor of The Dream of the Rood copied in the tenth century into the Vercelli Book) and the iconography of the Ruthwell cross.

I

Perhaps the most illuminating discussion of the iconographical pattern of the Ruthwell cross is that by Dr. Saxl.[1a] One of the very few weaknesses of his argument is the absence of a convincing explanation for the presence on the cross of a crucifixion panel at the foot of the south face, under a panel representing the annunciation. He explained the crucifixion panel, not in relation to the panel above it, but in relation to the now obliterated panel at the foot of the north face. Saxl speculated that this panel may have represented the nativity, and wrote that "the nativity and the crucifixion. . . signify the beginning and end of Christ's incarnation."[2] Apart from the fact that this statement is not, strictly speaking, true (Christ's incarnation did not end with the cruci-

fixion), we do not have to rely on speculation as to what the obliterated panel may have represented to explain the presence and position of the crucifixion panel on the cross. An educated Anglo-Saxon of the early eighth century would have understood the crucifixion panel in relation to the annunciation panel directly above it on the south face of the cross: he would have known that the crucifixion took place on the anniversary of the annunciation, on 25 March. The crucifixion was liturgically celebrated on the moveable feast of Good Friday; but it was also associated with 25 March. For example, in its entry for 25 March, the Calendar of St Willibrord reads as follows: "Dominus crucifixus est: et sancti Jacobi fratris domini: et immolatio Isaac."[3] March 25 was held to be the anniversary of Christ's death as early as the second century: the tradition, which H. A. Wilson characterizes as "historical rather than liturgical in character,"[4] exemplified the principle that "omnia propriis locis et temporibus gessit salvator,"[5] or, as the Beowulf poet put it,

> sæla ond mæla; se geweald hafaþ
> þæt is soð metod.[6]

Christ's nativity was liturgically celebrated on the winter solstice of the Julian calendar, 25 December. It followed that his conception took place exactly nine months previously, at the spring equinox;[7] and Christ was believed to have died on the thirty-third anniversary of his conception, exactly thirty-two years and three months after his nativity.

From the eighth century onwards, this tradition was to be overshadowed by the celebration of the annunciation on 25 March; but throughout the Anglo-Saxon period the idea that the annunciation coincided with the anniversary of the crucifixion was a perfectly familiar one. The Old English Martyrology draws an extended parallel between Christ's conception and his death on the cross, in its entry under 25 March;[8] and it is clear that the idea that 25 March was the anniversary of the crucifixion was familiar to the majority of those who compiled the martyrologies which survive from the late Anglo-Saxon period.[9] The tradition long antedated the celebration of the feast of the annunciation in the western Church. The annunciation was slow to find acceptance in the west, largely because the feast was bound to fall almost always during Lent, and so could not properly be celebrated. The Council of Toledo, in 656 A.D., stated the problem in clear terms:

> Si nativitatis et mortis incarnati Verbi dies absque immutatione
> ita certus habetur, ut absque diversitate in orbe toto
> terrarum ab omni concorditer Ecclesia celebretur, cur non
> festivitas gloriosae Matris eius eadem observantia, uno simul
> ubique die, similique habeatur honore?[10]

The explicit statement that the coincidence of the annunciation and of the anniversary of Christ's death was acknowledged "throughout the world" is interesting. The Council of Toledo, however, decided that, since the feast could not properly be celebrated on 25 March because of the concurrence of the Lenten season, in Spain "ante octavum diem, quo natus est Dominus, genitricis quoque eius dies habeatur celeberrimus et praeclarus."[11]

The earliest surviving record of the celebration at Rome of the feast of the Annunciation occurs in the Liber Pontificalis, as part of a biography of Pope

Sergius (686-701). In the Liber Pontificalis account, we are told that Sergius instituted processions to celebrate four Marian feasts: the annunciation (25 March), the dormition of the Virgin (15 August), the nativity of the Virgin (8 September) and the presentation in the temple (2 February):

> Constituit autem ut diebus Adnuntiationis Domini, Dormitionis
> et Nativitatis sanctae Dei Genitricis semperque virginis
> Mariae ac sancti Symeonis, quod Ypapanti Greci appellant,
> letania exeat a sancto Hadriano et ad sanctam Mariam populus
> occurrat.[12]

The Liber Pontificalis does not say that Sergius himself instituted these feasts; only that he gave them a new solemnity. Duchesne concludes "qu'elles ont été établies à Rome dans le courant du septième siècle."[13] The Chronicon Paschale attests that the feast of the annunciation was already celebrated at Constantinople in the first half of the seventh century, and its institution was confirmed, during the reign of Sergius himself, by the Council "In Trullo" held at Constantinople in 691-2.[14] Pope Sergius was born in Sicily, but his family had come from Antioch in Syria.[15] It is natural, therefore, that feasts like the annunciation, which had long been incorporated into the eastern liturgies but had only recently been introduced into Roman usage, should have been emphasized by additional ceremonial during his pontificate. It may be supposed that the arguments which decided the Council of Toledo in 656 to reject the celebration of the annunciation on the anniversary of the crucifixion were not without weight in Rome forty years later; and therefore Sergius's action in ordering the same celebrations for the 25 March as for the other three Marian feasts, though it might not actually have instituted the feast of the annunciation in Roman observance, was probably decisive for its future survival.

Though the annunciation was already established in the eastern church, we can be pretty certain that the feast was not celebrated in England before the pontificate of Sergius - we have seen, for example, that the Calendar of St Willibrord makes no mention of it.[16] Nevertheless, the four festivals of the Blessed Virgin honoured by Sergius quickly became known in England. They are mentioned by Aldhelm, who died in 709;[17] and Abbot Sigbald, who died (after a long abbacy) in 772, introduced the observation of the four feasts into the monastery (dependent on Lindisfarne) which AEthelwulf later described in his poem De Abbatibus:

> sanctam cumque diem sacrauit uirgo Maria,
> qua uolitans caelos meruit penetrare per altos,
> uel qua presenti generata redditur orbi,
> uel qua prepulchrae susceptat gaudia uitae,
> uel qua celsithronum meruit generare tonantem,
> uel quacumque die, cum templi festa coruscant,
> omnibus his laetus nimium per gaudia sancta
> aurea dulcisonae restaurat munera mentis.
> ac fratres precibus mulcet sollempnia festa
> ad letos caelebrare pie genetricis honores.[18]

Thus, in the light of the documentary evidence adduced above, the best explanation for the juxtaposition of the crucifixion and annunciation panels at the foot of the south face of the Ruthwell cross is that the Ruthwell carvers

were also familiar with the recently introduced celebration of the annunciation on 25 March, and wished this example of the control of providence over times and seasons to be reflected on the cross. The inscription around the annunciation panel, which is still partly legible, may provide a confirmatory hint that the Ruthwell sculptors were thinking of liturgical practice. It begins 'INGRESSUS A[NGELUS],' and is almost certainly based on Luke i, 28;[19] this verse of St Luke's gospel recurs as an offertory antiphon for the feast of the annunciation in the earliest Roman antiphonaries which survive.[20]

II

Panels representing St John the Baptist holding the Agnus Dei occur both on the north face of the Ruthwell cross and on the Bewcastle cross; on both crosses, panels representing Christ being adored by the beasts in the desert occur immediately below the Agnus Dei panels. The recurrence of the Agnus Dei panels on the crosses, and the context within which they occur, can also be explained by reference to a liturgical innovation associated with the pontificate of Sergius. The Liber Pontificalis states that Pope Sergius "statuit ut tempore confractionis dominici corporis Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis a clero et populo decantetur."[21] This is the earliest reference to the Agnus Dei chant in the Roman liturgy of the Mass. It is possible that the Liber Pontificalis is over-simplifying the facts, and that Sergius did not so much introduce the chant as give it a new importance;[22] but as Jungmann remarks,

> even if it was not brought into Rome by Sergius himself, a Syrian by descent, still it was during the later seventh century, in the train of that great inrush of Greek clerics from the Eastern lands overrun by Islam, above all Syria; for it is manifestly an element from the Eastern liturgy. In the East it had become the practice since the sixth century to regard the breaking of the species of bread as a reference to our Lord's Passion and death.[23]

The phrase "a clero et populo decantetur" in the Liber Pontificalis is of great importance for the present argument. Professor Michael Dolley has stressed that "the Agnus Dei was very much a chant of the congregation as opposed to the celebrant, so that the innovation is one that could not fail to have been remarked by the people as a whole."[24] The Agnus Dei was just that kind of innovation in public worship which we might expect to find reflected on outdoor, public monuments such as the Ruthwell and Bewcastle crosses. There is good evidence that the Agnus Dei invocation had reached England as part of the Litany of the Saints, by the year 700; and that it was widely copied and became popular in private devotion.[25] In the liturgy of the Mass, as Jungmann remarks, the chant had a clear devotional function; it was "a reverential and, at the same time, humble greeting of Him who has been made present under the form of bread."[26] It was eminently suitable for engaging the attention of the congregation "tempore confractionis dominici corporis;" Jungmann is of the opinion that "originally the one simple verse was repeated as often as necessary,"[27] until the breaking of the species of bread and its distribution in Communion had been completed; it was only later, when the rite of fraction was rendered superfluous by the introduction of unleavened bread and small

particles, that the chant "gradually assumed the hallowed number three."[28] By means of the chant, the congregation proclaimed their recognition of Christ's presence under the species of bread; in particular, they proclaimed their recognition of Christ "in the breaking of bread," as the disciples at Emmaus had done: "Et factus est, dum recumberet cum eis, accepit panem et benedixit, ac fregit, et porrigebat illis. Et aperti sunt oculi eorum, et cognoverunt eum: et ipse evanuit et oculis eorum."[29] It is significant, therefore, that in both the Ruthwell and Bewcastle crosses, the Agnus Dei panel is juxtaposed to the panel in which "bestiae et dracones cognoverunt in deserto salvatorem mundi."[30]

The Bewcastle cross emphasizes the theme of 'recognition' in two ways. First, the runic inscription "+gessus kristus" has been placed on the cross between the Agnus Dei panel and the panel of Christ and the beasts: the implication is that Christ is to be recognized "in propria figura," as the beasts recognized him, and also as the Agnus Dei. Secondly, the panel at the foot of this side of the Bewcastle cross, which I take to be the unique representation of John the evangelist standing and bearing his eagle,[31] gives us the scriptural auctoritas for the Agnus Dei chant. The text chosen for the chant is found, not in the synoptic gospels, but only in the Gospel according to St John: "Altera die vidit Ioannes Iesum venientem ad se, et ait: Ecce agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccatum mundi."[32]

The presence on the Bewcastle cross, not merely of a panel representing John the Baptist carrying the Agnus Dei, but of a panel representing the evangelist who records the recognition of Christ as the Agnus Dei, may reflect a concern on the part of those who erected the cross that the significance of the Agnus Dei chant should be clearly understood. This point can be illustrated by reference to a theological controversy which may perhaps have influenced Sergius in his decision to introduce the Agnus Dei chant into the Mass. In 692, the Council "In Trullo" (held in Constantinople under the aegis of the Emperor Justinian II) forbade the representation of Christ under the image of a lamb.[33] Because the canons of the council failed to represent papal interests in various ways, Pope Sergius rejected them in toto. Louis Duchesne has suggested that Sergius may have inserted the Agnus Dei chant into the Mass at the fraction in order to emphasize that no less an authority than St John the Baptist had hailed Christ as the Agnus Dei: "Il n'est pas défendu de voir, dans ce décret de Sergius, une protestation contre le canon 82 du concile In Trullo, qui proscrivit la représentation symbolique du Sauveur sous forme d'agneau."[34] Here is a theological controversy about religious art which may have had a direct effect on liturgical practice, and thence inspired the iconographic programme of the Bewcastle cross. Considered as a unified sequence, the three panels on the cross suggest a clear theological statement, such as "we recognize Christ at the fractio under the figure of the Agnus Dei (top panel) even as the beasts recognized him in the desert (central panel); and our authority for this is none other than John the evangelist (bottom panel)." It is tempting, indeed, to read in the iconographic programme of the Bewcastle cross a clear statement of adherence to the papal position, and a rejection of canon 82 of the Trullan council. This temptation should, however, be resisted; even if Sergius's motive for inserting the Agnus Dei chant at the fraction was a polemical one (and for this we have only circumstantial evidence), the motive of the Bewcastle sculptors is much more likely to have been devotional and didactic.

They would surely have been more concerned to encourage a deeper understanding of and response to the liturgy of the Mass, than to refute the canons of the Trullan council.

On the north face of the Ruthwell cross, we again find not only John the Baptist and Christ over the beasts, but (at the top of the cross, in a small panel now mistakenly reversed)[35] a representation of St John the evangelist, bearing his eagle, and identified by the opening words of his gospel.[36] This panel, however, appears to have formed a programme consisting of the four evangelist portraits surrounding (on the centrepiece of the cross) either an Agnus Dei panel or a majestas domini (the programme of the north face of the crosspiece is discussed by Professor Cramp, above, pp. 118-130). It cannot, therefore, be argued that the portrait of St John the evangelist stands in the same relationship to the panels representing John the Baptist and Christ over the beasts as on the Bewcastle cross. The devotional significance of the two large panels is, however, clarified on the Ruthwell cross by the Latin inscriptions surrounding them. Of the inscription around the Agnus Dei panel, only one word survives with certainty, [A]DORAMVS: but it directs our attention to the devotional significance of the Agnus Dei chant in the Mass.[37] That the theme of "recognition" was intended by the Ruthwell carvers is made clear by the inscription around the panel representing Christ and the beasts, which emphasizes that the beasts "cognoverunt in deserto salvatorem mundi."[38] Nor do the two large panels stand in thematic isolation on the Ruthwell cross: as at Bewcastle, they are to be interpreted in relation to the panel below the one representing Christ and the beasts. At Ruthwell, this panel represents St Paul and St Anthony, and is inscribed '+ SCS: PAVLVS: ET: A . . . FREGER[VNT]: PANEM IN DESERTO:.'[39] Like the Agnus Dei panel, this Paul and Anthony panel is to be related to the 'confractio dominici corporis' of the Mass.

In the Vita Sancti Pauli, the two hermits break a heaven-sent loaf between them as the solution to a competition in humility: St Paul had insisted on St Anthony's right to divide the bread, as guest, and St Anthony had urged that St Paul, as the senior of the two, should divide it.[40] A passage in Adamnan's life of St Colmcille implies that the "confractio dominici corporis" was, at least at Iona, carried out as a "co-fractio" performed by two priests breaking the species of bread between them, and that this rite was symbolic of the harmony that should exist within a monastic community. Adamnan tells us that a bishop from Munster visited Iona, and humbly concealed his episcopal rank. Thus, when (as visitor) he was invited to celebrate Mass, he called on St Colmcille to assist him at the fractio 'as two presbyters together'; but the saint had perceived that the visitor was a bishop, and insisted on him breaking bread alone, "according to the episcopal rite":

> Nam alia die dominica a sancto jusus Christi corpus ex more conficere sanctum advocat, ut simul quasi duo prespiteri dominicum panem frangerent. Sanctus proinde ad altarium accedens repente intuitus faciem ejus sic eum conpellat: 'Benedicat te Christus, frater. Nunc scimus quod sis episcopus: quare hucusque te occultare conatus es, ut tibi a nobis debeta non redderetur veneratio?' Quo audito sancti verbo humilis perigrinus valde stupefactus Christum

> in sancto veneratus est. Et qui inerant praesentes nimis ammirati glorificarunt deum.[41]

It is surely not unreasonable to argue that in this episode Adamnan presented St Colmcille and the bishop from Munster as re-enacting the contest in courtesy and humility between St Paul and St Anthony. St Colmcille's remarkable insight had found a reason for granting the bishop the honour of breaking the consecrated bread for the whole community. Besides being evidence for the rite of co-fractio at Iona,[42] the passage implies that the rite was itself seen as a commemoration of the fraternal virtues of St Paul and St Anthony, the models for Celtic monasticism. In Adamnan's mind, the co-fractio of the Mass and the contest in courtesy between St Paul and St Anthony were associated. For those who erected the Ruthwell cross, the way in which St Paul and St Anthony "fregerunt panem in deserto" would have recalled the way in which (at least in Iona and probably in monasteries related to it) the "confractio dominici corporis" was enacted in the Mass.

The three large central panels on the north face of the Ruthwell cross form a triptych of thematically related scenes. The central panel of the triptych, Christ over the beasts, represents in propria figura "Iesus Christus Iudex AEquitatis," and explicitly states the theme which unifies the triptych: "bestiae et dracones cognoverunt in deserto salvatorem mundi."[43] As Saxl has pointed out, the panels above and below this central panel are related to it by the theme "in deserto"; but besides being associated with the desert, and so with eremetic monasticism, the figures of John the Baptist holding the Agnus Dei and of Paul and Anthony together breaking bread are associated with the "confractio dominici corporis" in the Mass. The upper panel reflects the recently-introduced Roman chant for the confractio, "Agnus dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis"; the lower panel reflects the way in which, at the identical moment of the Mass, a co-fractio was enacted in some monasteries following Celtic customs.

It is possible to see, in the pattern of the triptych of panels, an eirenic intention. One element of the devotional meaning of the triptych is surely that monasteries of both the Celtic and the Roman observance, however differently they celebrated the Eucharist, agreed in recognizing Christ, like the disciples at Emmaus, in the breaking of bread. Though it may be significant that the Agnus Dei panel (recalling the new Roman chant) is given the place of honour at the top of the triptych, this monument on the borders of Northumbria seems to emphasize what the Celtic and Roman traditions had in common, rather than what held them apart. Similarly, at the foot of the south face of the cross, the juxtaposition of the crucifixion and annunciation panels had emphasized the date, 25 March, which both Celtic and Roman traditions agreed was the date on which Christ had been conceived and died.[44] The Ruthwell cross may be taken as evidence that the Easter controversy of the preceding century was no longer a living issue, and that at least one patron familiar with both Roman and Celtic liturgical traditions felt it more important to stress those elements on which the universal Church was agreed, though its rites might vary - in the words of the Council of Toledo in 656, what "absque immutatione ita certus habetur, ut absque diversitate in orbe toto terrarum ab omni concorditer Ecclesia celebretur."[45]

III

It is possible that, in addition to those I have just discussed, a third liturgical innovation associated with Pope Sergius may have influenced those who erected the Ruthwell and Bewcastle crosses - the celebration of the feast of the exaltation of the cross. In the words of the Liber Pontificalis,

> Hic beatissimus vir in sacrario beati Petri apostoli capsam argenteam in angulo obscurissimo iacentem et ex nigridine transacto annositatis nec si esset argentea apparente, Deo ei revelante, repperit. Oratione itaque facta, sigillum expressum abstulit; lucellum aperuit, in quo interius plumacium ex holosirico superpositum, quod stauracin dicitur, invenit; eoque ablato, inferius crucem diversis ac pretiosis lapidibus perornatam inspexit. De qua tractis IIII petalis in quibus gemmae clausae erant, mire magnitudinis et ineffabilem portionem salutaris ligni dominicae crucis interius repositam invenit. Qui etiam ex die illo pro salute humani generis ab omni populo christiano, die Exaltationis sanctae Crucis, in basilicam Salvatoris quae appellatur Constantiniana osculatur ac adoratur.[46]

Once more, the biography of Sergius in the Liber Pontificalis is the earliest evidence we have for the celebration of a feast at Rome; once more, the feast has been brought into Roman usage from the East;[47] and, though the Liber Pontificalis does not say that Sergius instituted the feast, it clearly implies that his discovery of the relic of the True Cross in the Vatican gave the celebration of the feast a new solemnity at Rome. The feast was soon known in England. Bede knew and used the Liber Pontificalis,[48] and paraphrased its account of Sergius's find in the Chronicle appended to his De Temporum Ratione, under the year 701.[49] As long ago as 1905, Aloys Brandl suggested that The Dream of the Rood might have been inspired by news of Sergius's vision and the resulting veneration of the Cross; he pointed out that monks from Jarrow were in Rome in 701, so that the news could not have taken long to reach Northumbria.[50] Whatever we think about Brandl's theory about the origin of the Ruthwell cross crucifixion poem (the Ruthwell cross does not provide direct evidence that the poem had the form of a 'Traumgesicht' at this early period), it is not unlikely that the idea of erecting the magnificent stone crosses at Ruthwell and at Bewcastle should have been suggested by an increased devotion to the feast of the exaltation as a result of recent developments in Rome.

IV

As Professor Rosemary Cramp has put it, "we must . . . think of the earliest sculpture as a direct reflection of monastic culture."[51] Stemming from such a culture, we might expect the Ruthwell and Bewcastle crosses to reflect the opus dei, the public worship of the monastic community, as well as (or even rather than) devotional themes based on written texts.[52] It is to be expected that Northumbrian monuments of this period should reflect recent developments in the Roman liturgy. Both Eddius Stephanus (the biographer of St Wilfrid), and John, the arch-cantor of St Peter's at Rome, taught liturgical chant in Northumbria in the late seventh and early eighth centuries;[53]

and it is not impossible that ivory or metal plaques, brought from Rome during the many visits of Benedict Biscop, Wilfrid and other Northumbrian monks, provided models for some at least of the panels on the Ruthwell and Bewcastle crosses.[54] St Wilfrid of York had occasion to visit Rome several times, both in his youth and during his troubled episcopacy;[55] while his friend and patron, king Caedwalla of Wessex, was baptized by Pope Sergius and died at Rome.[56] Benedict Biscop, abbot of Monkwearmouth-Jarrow, visited Rome six times between 653 and 686;[57] although Sergius seems to have come to Rome from Sicily as late as the reign of Pope Adeodatus (672-6), and to have been ordained priest as late as June 683,[58] he would already have been appointed "prior cantorum" during Benedict Biscop's last visit to Rome (685-6).[59] Ceolfrid (who succeeded Benedict Biscop as abbot) visited Rome with his predecessor in 678, and was on his way to Rome when de died at Langres in 716.[60] Ceolfrid sent a mission (which included Hwætberht, who was to succeed him) to Rome in 700-701, to procure from Pope Sergius the privileges for Monkwearmouth-Jarrow which Pope Agatho had granted to Benedict Biscop;[61] and a letter of Sergius to Ceolfrid is extant.[62] Of Ceolfrid's successor, Hwætberht, Bede wrote (in a passage stressing his suitability for the position of abbot) that

> scribendi, cantandi, legendi ac docendi fuerat non parua exercitatus industria. Romam quoque temporibus beatae memoriae Sergii papae accurrens, et non paruo ibidem temporis spatio demoratus, quaequae sibi necessaria iudicabat, didicit, descripsit, retulit.[63]

Hwætberht was typical of Northumbrian monastic culture not only in combining an interest in learning with an interest in the liturgy ("cantandi"), but also in seeing Rome as the source from which whatever was necessary for the monastic life was to be learned, copied or brought back to Northumbria.

It is tempting but dangerous to argue that the close contacts between Monkwearmouth-Jarrow and Rome during the lifetime of Sergius prove that the Ruthwell and Bewcastle crosses, which reflect a knowledge and interest in Roman liturgical observance, were produced by monks from Monkwearmouth-Jarrow. The figure of Wilfrid alone should be enough to remind us that other Northumbrian centres were in close contact with Rome during this period. Nevertheless, Professor Rosemary Cramp's suggestion ("not . . . a proven or even provable theory") that the Ruthwell cross carvers might have been trained at Monkwearmouth-Jarrow[64] fits very well with the argument of the present paper (see also the remarks of Professor Cramp, above, pp. 118-30, and Professor Farrell, above pp. 96-117). As the Sergian liturgical innovations seem to have spread to Northumbria in the first half of the eighth century, the present argument reinforces the accumulating evidence that the Ruthwell and Bewcastle crosses were erected within that half-century (700-750).[65]

The three liturgical innovations which, I have argued, are reflected in the iconography of the Ruthwell cross do not interfere with the devotional programme of the cross, but instead reinforce and enrich it.[66] The surviving panels of the north face of the cross-shaft all refer to life "in deserto." As Dr Saxl has remarked, "the accumulation of scenes related to desert life on the front of the Ruthwell cross can . . . hardly be ascribed to chance."[67] The inscriptions for the "Agnus Dei triptych" emphasize the theme, and it is

continued by the panel underneath the "triptych," which represents Mary and Joseph carrying the Christ-child across the desert of Sinai into Egypt.[68] Awareness of the liturgical associations behind the "Agnus Dei triptych" in fact gives new force to the devotional theme of eremetic life "in deserto" by focussing attention on the central event in the life of a monastic community, one might almost say its raison d'être: participation in the Eucharist. The panels on the opposite (south) face of the cross seem to be unified by the theme of response to Christ. This theme is clearly seen in the panel representing the cure of the blind man; Saxl is surely right in suggesting that "in this miracle is symbolized . . . the divine power of illuminating a believing soul."[69] The panel directly above represents the woman who was a sinner anointing Christ's feet; and it has been generally agreed that this represents the next stage in the Christian life, conversio morum springing from repentance and penance.[70] The panel above, whether it represents the Visitation[71] or, as has recently been suggested, Martha and Mary,[72] clearly continues the themes of response to Christ and the stages of the Christian life; a theme which is brought to moving resolution in the figures of the archer and the bird at the head of the cross (I agree with Professor Farrell's interpretation of these panels, above, pp.96-117). The crucifixion and annunciation panels, at the foot of the cross, fit into the devotional programme of the south side as a whole - provide, in more senses than one, a fitting basis for the programme. The salvation of all Christian souls depended fundamentally on Mary's uncomprehending but obedient reception of Gabriel's message at the annunciation, and on the cross's uncomprehending but obedient bearing of its Lord to his death thirty-three years later: a theme most movingly expressed in the Ruthwell cross crucifixion poem, inscribed in runic letters on the narrow sides of the cross, and in its descendant, The Dream of the Rood in the Vercelli Book (950-1000).

V

I shall conclude this paper by suggesting a close thematic link between the iconography of the south face of the Ruthwell cross and the crucifixion poem inscribed in runic letters on the narrow sides of the cross. In a poem clearly descended from the Ruthwell cross crucifixion poem, The Dream of the Rood, we are explicitly invited to compare the glory given to the cross with that given to Mary:

> Hwæt, me þa geweorðode wuldres Ealdor
> ofer holmwudu, heofonrices Weard,
> swylce swa he his modor eac, Marian sylfe,
> ælmihtig God, for ealle menn
> geweorðode ofer eall wifa cynn.[73]

As I shall argue in another paper,[74] in The Dream of the Rood the crucifixion is presented in terms reminiscent of the annunciation (a link suggested by the coincidence of both events on 25 March). In that poem, Christ does not bear his cross to Calvary: the cross is already standing there when it sees Christ hastening to mount upon it. This departure from the scriptural accounts of the crucifixion is not arbitrary: it enables the cross to dramatize its experience of the crucifixion in terms reminiscent of Mary's incomprehending obedience at the annunciation. Such a presentation is also found in the Ruthwell cross

crucifixion poem. Like Mary, who was troubled at the Angel's greeting ("turbata est ...", Luke I, 29) and did not understand what the Lord demanded of her ("Quomodo fiet istud . . . .", Luke I, 34) the cross in the Ruthwell poem is represented as troubled yet obedient: "buga (ic ni dorstæ),"[75] "hælda ic ni dorstæ," þic pæt al biheald. saræ ic wæs miþ sorgum gidroefid."[76] Isidore, Gregory and Bede saw Christ's action at the annunciation as an heroic defeat of the powers of darkness:

> 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.[77]

Similarly, in the Ruthwell cross crucifixion poem Christ appears as an heroic figure, "god almeȝttig," "modig fore (allæ) men," "riicnæ kyninc heafunes hlafard," who, instead of being led to the cross, approaches it and mounts it of his own will "þa he walde on galgu gistiga." This presentation of Christ is not at all reminiscent of the liturgy of Good Friday, in either the eighth or the tenth centuries; but it is remarkably close to Bede's description of Christ's action at the annunciation. The opinion of Professor Schapiro, that in the iconography of the Ruthwell cross "we find little that pertains directly to the poem"[78] stands in need of reconsideration. The recently-introduced feast of the annunciation on the anniversary of the crucifixion may have inspired the Ruthwell carvers, not merely to juxtapose crucifixion and annunciation panels on the south face of the cross, but to inscribe on the east and west faces part of a (recently composed?) poem in which the crucifixion is presented in terms reminiscent of the annunciation. Sergian liturgical innovations, indeed, may have inspired both the erection of the Ruthwell cross and the composition of the crucifixion poem inscribed upon it; in which case lines 90-94 of The Dream of the Rood, which explicitly link the cross with Mary, preserve a traditional interpretation of the poem familiar to the carvers of the Ruthwell cross.[79] Cross and poem stem from a single milieu: that of monastic devotion within a liturgical context.

NOTES

1. I wish to thank various scholars who read versions of this paper in typescript and who offered me helpful comments on its argument; in particular Malcolm Parkes, C.J.E. Ball, Gerald Bonner, John Braidwood, Rosemary Cramp, Michael Dolley, W.G. East, R.T. Farrell, Henry Mayr-Harting, Alastair Minnis, Jane Roberts and Patrick Wormald.

1a. F. Saxl, "The Ruthwell cross," Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes 6 (1943), 1-19.

2. Saxl, "Ruthwell cross," p. 5.

3. The Calendar of St Willibrord, ed. H.A. Wilson, Henry Bradshaw Society 55 (London, 1918), fol. 35v (plate III), p. 5 (transcription), and pp. 24-6 (notes). Wilson dates the calendar between 701 and 709 (pp. x-xi). The reference to Isaac is in another, later hand.

4. Wilson, Calendar of St Willibrord, p. 24. For a survey of the tradition, see V. Loi, "Il 25 Marzo data pasquale e la cronologia Giovannea della Passione in età patristica," Ephemerides Liturgicae 85 (1971), 48-69.

5. Ambrosiaster, Quaestiones Veteris et Noui Testamenti, Quaestio iv, ed. A. Souter, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum 50 (Vienna, 1908), p. 100, as quoted in Loi, "Il 25 Marzo data pasquale," p. 53.

6. Beowulf, 1610b-11; Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records IV, ed. E.V.K. Dobbie (New York, 1953), p. 50.

7. See Bedae Opera de Temporibus, ed. C.W. Jones (Cambridge, Mass., 1943), Introduction, pp. 6-7. Bede, who knew that the spring equinox fell on 21 March, nevertheless remarked that many and wise authorities held the other view: "multorum late et sapientium seculi, et Christianorum sententia claret" - De Temporum Ratione XXX, ed. Jones, p. 235.

8. The old English Martyrology. ed. G. Herzfield, Early English Text Society o.s. 116 (London, 1900), p. 48. Celia Sisam, "An early fragment of the Old English Martyrology," Review of English Studies, n. s. 4 (1953), 209-20 (at 217) has argued that this is a Mercian text which circulated in the south of England from the late ninth century.

9. See F. Wormald, English Kalendars before A.D. 1100, Henry Bradshaw Society 72 (London, 1934). Only one of the nineteen calendars printed by Wormald explicitly indicates the coincidence: Salisbury, Cathedral Library MS 150, fol. 4r: "EQVINOCTIVM. Conceptio Sanctae Marie. Crucifixio domini" (Wormald, English Kalendars, p. 18). Fifteen of these calendars, however, implicitly indicate the coincidence, by noting "Resurreccio domini" under 27 March: see, for example, Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Digby 63, fol. 14v (Wormald, English Kalendars, p. 4). Only three of the calendars printed by Wormald make no reference to the tradition (see Wormald, pp. 32, 158 and 256).

10. As quoted in H. Jugié, "La première fête mariale en Orient et en Occident, l'Avent primitif," Echos d'Orient 22 (1923), 129-52 (at 144); see also H. Leclercq in Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie (Paris, 1907) I, columns 2241-67 under Annonciation (column 2243).

11. Jugié, "La première fête Mariale," pp. 144-5.

12. L. Duchesne, Le Liber Pontificalis, 2 vols. (Paris, 1886-92) I, 376.

13. Duchesne, Liber Pontificalis I, 381.

14. See I. Cecchetti, "L'annunziazione: il racconto biblico e la festa liturgica," Bollettino Ceciliano (Turin) 38 (1943), 46-8 and 98-114 (at 103); see also Leclercq DACL, column 2244.

15. Duchesne, Liber Pontificalis I, 371.

16. Its absence in St Willibrord's Calendar is all the more striking when we consider that the three other Marian feasts mentioned in the Liber Pontificalis account quoted above are all entered in the calendar: see Wilson, Calendar, pp. 21, 36-7 and 39.

17. Aldhelm, "In Ecclesia Mariae a Bugge Exstructa," lines 59-65, ed. R. Ehwald, Aldhelmi Opera, MGH Auctores Antiquissimi XV (Berlin, 1919), p. 17. See H. Mayr-Harting, The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England (London, 1972), pp. 189 and 308.

18. AEthelwulf "De Abbatibus," ed. A. Campbell (Oxford, 1967), lines 460-9, pp. 37-9.

19. See E. Okasha, Hand-List of Anglo-Saxon Non-Runic Inscriptions (Cambridge, 1971), p. 111.

20. Antiphonale Missarum Sextuplex, ed. R. J. Hesbert (Brussels, 1935), no. 33, pp. 42-5; see also the Office antiphons printed (from eleventh-century manuscripts) in Corpus Antiphonalium Officii, ed. R. J. Hesbert and R. Prevost, 6 vols. (Rome, 1963) III, nos 3339-40, p. 284, and I, no. 51, pp. 124-5.

21. Duchesne, Liber Pontificalis I, 376.

22. See E. Bishop, Liturgica Historica (Oxford, 1918), p. 145.

23. J.A. Jungmann, The Mass of the Roman Rite (London, 1959) p. 485. J.A. Jungmann, Missarum Sollemnia, 4th ed., 2 vols. (Freiburg, 1958) II, 412-23, gives the references to primary sources omitted in the abridged English edition.

24. M.Dolley, "The nummular brooch from Sulgrave," England Before the Conquest, ed. P. Clemoes and K. Hughes (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 333-49 (at 344). Professor Dolley is here discussing the introduction of the variant dona nobis pacem in the late tenth century, but the principle is valid for the introduction of the chant in its original form.

25. See E. Bishop, "The Litany of the Saints in the Stowe Missal," Liturgica Historica (Oxford, 1918), pp. 137-64 (especially pp. 143, 147-8).

26. Jungmann, The Mass of the Roman Rite, p. 486.

27. Ibid., p. 487.

28. Ibid., pp. 486, 488.

29. Luke XXIV, 30-1; italics mine.

30. See Okasha, Handlist, p. 110, for a full transcript of the inscription.

31. Saxl,"Ruthwell Cross," p. 9, n. 6, states that "for the standing evangelist with his symbol no Mediterranean model has come to my knowledge"; Rosemary Cramp, Early Northumbrian Sculpture (Jarrow Lecture 1965), p. 8, suggests that the Bewcastle carver had adapted a seated evangelist portrait to a standing position. It might be suggested that the reason for this adaptation was to make the lower panel fit better in style with the standing figures of the middle and upper panels on the cross shaft.

32. John I, 29; it should be noted that the precise formula ("qui tollis peccata mundi, . . . miserere nobis") comes not directly from St John's Gospel, but via the liturgical chant, "Gloria in excelsis Deo." See F. Cabrol, in Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie I (Paris, 1907), under Agnus Dei, columns 965-9 (column 966).

33. The eighty-second canon of the council, together with a Latin translation, is available in C. Kirch, Enchiridion Fontium Historiae Ecclesiae Antiquae, ninth edition (Freiburg in Breisgau, 1965), p. 610.

34. Duchesne, Liber Pontificalis I, 381.

35. See R.T. Farrell, above, pp. 96-7.

36. See R. Cramp, above, p. 118.

37. For a recent speculation on the nature of the complete inscription around the panel, see D. Howlett, "Two panels on the Ruthwell cross," Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes 37 (1974), 333-6 (at 334). I had discussed an early form of the present paper with Dr Howlett in 1971; and he agrees with me that the panel is to be associated with Pope Sergius's introduction of the Agnus Dei into the Mass (pp. 333-4).

38. Okasha, Handlist, p. 110.

39. Ibid., p. 110.

40. St Jerome, Vita Sancti Pauli, PL, xxiii, 17-28 (column 25).

41. Adamnan's Life of Columba, ed. A.O. Anderson and M.O. Anderson (London, 1961), p. 304.

42. The rite of co-fractio was not invariably practised when two presbyters were together; the Andersons, in their edition of Adamnan's Life, p. 124, point out that on other occasions "Columba appears to have celebrated the Mass alone." L. Gougaud, "Les rites de la consécration et de la fraction dans la liturgie celtique de la messe," Proceedings of the Nineteenth Eucharistic Congress (London, 1909), pp. 348-61, has warned against generalizing too widely on the basis of this episode about the general practice of co-fractio in Celtic lands (pp. 360-1).

43. Okasha, Handlist, p. 110.

44. March 25 is usually noted as the anniversary of the crucifixion in early Irish martyrologies. See The Martyrology of Tallaght, ed. R. I. Best and H. J. Lawlor, Henry Bradshaw Society 68 (London, 1931), p. 27; The Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee, ed. W. Stokes, Henry Bradshaw Society 29 (London, 1905), p. 101. The Martyrology of Gorman, edited by W. Stokes Henry Bradshaw Society 9 (London, 1885), p. 63.

45. See above, p. 132.

46. Duchesne, Liber Pontificalis I, 374.

47. Ibid., I, 379; E. Bishop, Liturgica Historica, p. 145.

48. See M. W. L. Laistner, "The Library of the Venerable Bede," in Bede: His Life, Times and Writings, ed. A. H. Thompson (Oxford, 1935), p. 265; J. D. A. Ogilvy, Books Known to the English 597-1066 (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), pp. 193-4.

49. PL 90, col. 569.

50. A. Brandl, "Zum ags. Gedichte 'Traumgesicht vom Kreuze Christi,' ". Sitzungsberichte der königlich preussischen Akademie (1905), pp. 716-23. See The Dream of the Rood, ed. M. Swanton (Manchester, 1970), p. 48.

51. Early Northumbrian Sculpture (Jarrow, 1965), p. 7.

52. Such as, for example, the Bedan parallels suggested by Howlett, "Two panels," p. 335.

53. See Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica, ed. C. Plummer (Oxford, 1896) II, 118-119.

54. See the list of pictures and "sanctarum imaginum" given by Bede, Historia Abbatum, chapters vi and ix (Plummer I, 369 and 373).

55. The Life of Bishop Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus, ed. B. Colgrave (Cambridge, 1927), chapters v, xxix-xxxii, 1-1v.

56. Bede, Historia Ecclesiastica V. 7; Plummer I, 292-4; II, 278-82; Eddius Stephanus, Vita, chapters xli-xlii.

57. See Bede, Historia Abbatum, ii-vii, Plummer I, 365-71 (text); II, 356-61 (notes).

58. Duchesne, Liber Pontificalis I, 377.

59. Ibid., I, p. 371.

60. Bede, Historia Abbatum, vii, xv and xxi-xxiii, Plummer I, 370, 379 and 385-6 (text); II, 361, 365 and 369-70 (notes).

61. Bede, Historia Abbatum, xv; Plummer I, 380 (text); II, 365 (notes).

62. See Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents relating to Great Britain and Ireland, ed. A. W. Haddan and W. Stubbs, vol. 3 (Oxford, 1881), pp. 248-50.

63. Bede, Historia Abbatum, xviii; Plummer, I, 383.

64. Early Northumbrian Sculpture, pp. 10-11.

65. See A. S. C. Ross, "The linguistic evidence for the date of the 'Ruthwell cross,' " Modern Language Review 28 (1933), 145-55; A. Campbell, Old English Grammar (Oxford, 1959), p. 4 note 2; E. Mercer, "The Ruthwell and Bewcastle crosses," Antiquity 38 (1964), 268-76 (at 270).

66. I agree in general with the interpretations of the iconographic programme put forward by Saxl, "The Ruthwell Cross,"; by M. Schapiro "The religious meaning of the Ruthwell cross," Art Bulletin 26 (1944), 232-45, and by R. T. Farrell, above, pp. 96-119.

67. Saxl, "Ruthwell Cross," p. 5.

68. Okasha, Handbook, p. 111.

69. Saxl, "Ruthwell Cross," p. 3.

70. See Schapiro, "Religious Meaning," p. 237.

71. Saxl, "Ruthwell Cross," p. 4; Schapiro, "Religious Meaning," p. 238.

72. Howlett, "Two panels on the Ruthwell cross," p. 334.

73. The Dream of the Rood, ed. M. Swanton (Manchester, 1970), lines 90-4.

74. "Crucifixion as annunciation: the relation of The Dream of the Rood to the liturgy reconsidered, "to appear in a festschrift to honour Professor Paul Christophersen.

75. The words in brackets in this and the following quotations from the Ruthwell cross poem are not now legible, and have to be reconstructed from the Vercelli text. I have followed D. Howlett, "A reconstruction of the Ruthwell Crucifixion Poem," Studia Neophilologica 48: 1 (1976). I am grateful to Dr Howlett for giving me a pre-publication typescript of this article.

76. For further consideration of this point, see my forthcoming article "Crucifixion as annunciation."

77. Bede, Homeliarum Euangelii Libri II, ed. D. Hurst, Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina 122 (Turnholt, 1955), Homily no. 3, pp. 14-20 (at 15). See also Gregory the Great, XL Homiliarum in Evangelia, Book II, Homily xxxiv, PL, 76, col. 1251, and Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum Libri XX, edited by W. M. Lindsay, 2 vols (Oxford, 1911) I, Book VII, Chapter v "De Angelis," 10-11.

78. Schapiro, "Religious Meaning," p. 232.

79. Rosemary Woolf has argued that "that part of the poem which follows the description of the crucifixion must surely be a later addition by a writer of the school of Cynewulf" - "Doctrinal Influences on The Dream of the Rood," Medium AEvum 27 (1958), 137-53 (at 153 note 34). This may be so; I merely believe that later revisers or readers were aware of, and sympathetic to, earlier traditions of interpreting the poem, and attempted to clarify and express the poem's sententia in the light of these traditions.