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Studies in honour of Basil Cottle

EDITED BY

MYRA STOKES AND T. L. BURTON

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A Liturgical Interpretation of the Bewcastle Cross

ÉAMONN Ó CARRAGÁIN

The present paper argues that the Northumbrian liturgy of the late seventh and early eighth centuries provides contexts within which the coherence of the Bewcastle Cross can begin to be appreciated. The Bewcastle monument is remarkable in its unstrained beauty. Compared with it, the Ruthwell Cross (erected by the same school of sculptors some thirty miles to the west) seems somewhat crowded, as though its designer wished to use every inch of surface to elaborate the theological ideas which preoccupied him.[1] The primary impression the Bewcastle Cross makes is one of balance: balance between the design of the two broad sides; between the two narrow sides (based on a different design principle from that of the broad sides); and between the three related figural panels on the broad west side.

I THE WEST SIDE

At present four panels survive on the west face of the Bewcastle monument (Plate 1). The lowest panel is separated from the two other figural panels by a panel of runic inscriptions, now almost all illegible. The inscription seems to have been commemorative and perhaps funerary, though it is not possible to identify with certainty the persons whose names have been preserved.[2] Above the runic panel we have two figural panels. It is likely that the designer of the

[1] I assume, following Professor Rosemary Cramp in her discussion of Bewcastle in Vol. II of the *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture* (forthcoming), that the Bewcastle monument was originally a cross, not a stele: the existence of a dowell for a (now lost) cross-piece has been recorded. I am grateful to Professor Cramp for allowing me to consult at proof stage what will be the standard account of the Bewcastle Cross; and I rely on its descriptions and judgements at several points in this article. I am also grateful to Professor Cramp for permission to print the plates, from photographs taken by Mr Tom Middlemass of the Department of Archaeology, Durham University. Dr David Howlett read this article in typescript and saved me from several errors.

[2] R. I. Page, 'The Bewcastle Cross', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 4 (1960) 36–57; Professor Page also discusses and transcribes the runes in Cramp, *Corpus*, forthcoming.

cross intended these to be seen as a pair: the close analogues for both which occur on the Ruthwell Cross were there given the same relationship to each other as at Bewcastle (I here assume that when the Ruthwell Cross was reconstructed in the nineteenth century the large upper stone was correctly fitted to the lower stone).

Each of the three figural panels at Bewcastle contains a standing human figure. Of these, only one (the figure of Christ in the second panel from the top) is nimbed. Each of the two standing figures without a nimbus bears a creature: a lamb (in the upper panel) and a bird (in the lower). The lamb in the upper panel is provided with a nimbus. It would seem that the only figures to be provided with a nimbus are figures of Christ, who is represented as the Agnus Dei in the top panel and as a majestic human figure in the panel immediately below. Between these two panels, the words '+ gessus kristtus' have been inscribed in runic letters: a title which could refer to either panel or to both.[3] All three panels combine human figures with non-human creatures. In the panels at top and bottom, the human figures bear the creatures, and by their gestures invite the onlooker to concentrate his attention on these creatures. In the top panel, the human figure points across his body with his right hand at the Lamb of God whom he cradles in his left forearm; in the bottom panel, the human figure stands in profile, with the upper part of the body turned back towards the onlooker so as to attract the viewer's attention to the bird which perches on his left forearm. In his right hand, this human figure bears a rod. In contrast, the two animals at the foot of the central panel bear aloft the figure of Christ, whose feet are planted firmly on their heads. These animals are anonymous: they cannot be identified with any particular species, and they have not been differentiated from each other; they form a pair. There seems to be no opposition or enmity between them and the figure of Christ. His right hand is raised in blessing. Whom or what does he bless? Perhaps the onlooker; or the animals who bear him aloft; or the closed scroll just below (his left hand holds the scroll close to the blessing right hand); and also perhaps the names inscribed in the panel immediately underneath. He is dressed in a cloak and (ecclesiastical?) pallium, not in the armour of a warrior. The outer paw of each animal points upwards towards the figure of Christ, presumably in reverent recognition. The inner paws (now damaged and worn) are crossed: enough remains to make it probable that they (like the inner paws of the beasts at Ruthwell) originally formed an 'X' pattern. As it occurs immediately below the feet of a figure which has the (runic) inscription 'Gessus Kristtus' just above its head, the 'X' pattern does not seem random. It provides a title for the human figure: the pair of animals are engaged in the

[3] É. Ó Carragáin, 'Liturgical Innovations Associated with Pope Sergius and the Iconography of the Ruthwell and Bewcastle Crosses' in *Bede and Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. R. T. Farrell, British Archaeological Reports 46 (Oxford, 1978), pp. 131–47, at p. 135.

act of recognizing Jesus as 'kristtus', the anointed one. The letter *Chi* was a major symbolic motif in insular art, and in closely similar visual puns 'X' patterns denote the title 'Christus' on two of the (ninth-century?) Irish high crosses at Kells (a Columban monastery, with strong connections with Iona).[4] At Ruthwell, a Latin inscription makes clear how the 'Christ over the beasts' panel was understood there: '+ IHS X[PS] IVD[E]X [: A]EQV[IT]A[TI]S : BESTIAE : ET : DRACON[ES] : COGNOUERVNT : IN DE : SERTO : SALVA[TO]REM : MVNDI :' ['[+] Jesus Christ the judge of equity. The animals and the serpents recognized the Saviour of the world in the desert'].[5] But even before this inscription was added to the panel, the crossed paws of the Ruthwell animals indicated that they recognized 'the Saviour of the world' as 'XPS', the anointed one. At Bewcastle, the juxtaposition of a panel in which a human figure points at the Agnus Dei and one in which beasts point at '+ gessus kristtus' suggests that the designer was interested in the symbolic and human forms under which Christ was to be recognized.

The most likely context for an interest in the recognition of Christ in symbolic and in bodily form is the Eucharist. Perhaps the oldest Christian liturgical theme preserved to us is that of Christ 'recognized in the breaking of bread'.[6] The figure who points to the lamb in the upper panel is usually identified as John the Baptist. The pointing hand is clearly designed, like the

[4] On the *Chi* and *Chi Rho* symbols in early insular art, see Suzanne Lewis, 'Sacred Calligraphy: the Chi Rho Page in the Book of Kells', *Traditio* 36 (1980) 139–59; also G. H. R. Horsley and E. R. Waterhouse, 'The Greek *Nomen Sacrum* XP- in Some Latin and Old English Manuscripts', *Scriptorium* 38 (1984) 211–30. It is likely that the name 'Christ' was understood in Northumbria in the eighth century to mean 'the anointed one'. During the ceremony on Holy Thursday of the blessing of the oil of chrism, the priest prayed publicly that the oil should be blessed by God through the power of Christ 'a cuius sancto nomine ch[r]isma nomen accepit': see the Gelasian Sacramentary, *Liber Sacramentorum Romanae Aeclesiae Ordinis Anni Circuli*, ed. Leo Cunibert Mohlberg (Rome, 1960), par. 388, p. 62; also the Sacramentary of Gellone, *Liber Sacramentorum Gellonensis*, ed. A. Dumas, 2 vols, CCSL 159 and 159A, Vol. 159, par. 623, p. 84. See further below, pp. 29–30. On 'X'-puns on the Kells crosses, see É. Ó Carragáin, 'The Meeting of St. Paul and St. Anthony: Visual and Literary uses of a Eucharistic Motif' in *Keimelia: Studies in Archaeology and History in Honour of Tom Delaney*, ed. Gearoid Mac Niocaill and Patrick Wallace (Galway, 1987), pp. 1–61 (at pp. 18 and 25).

[5] Text and translation adapted from E. Okasha, *Hand-List of Anglo-Saxon Non-Runic Inscriptions* (Cambridge, 1971), p. 110.

[6] See the Emmaus episode, Luke 24: 35; and St Paul's account of the Eucharist in 1 Cor. 11: 24. That the recognition of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharistic species was a matter of concern at Whitby in the late seventh century is made clear by the occurrence of the earliest version of the 'Miracle of St Gregory' in *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, ed. Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge, 1985), Chapter 20, pp. 104–9. See also X. Le Bachelet, 'Le vénérable Bède témoin de la foi eucharistique dans l'église anglo-saxonne', *Proceedings of the Nineteenth International Eucharistic Congress* (London, 1909), pp. 311–26.

crossed paws of the animals in the panel below, as a visual pun. It recalls a famous scriptural phrase: the thrice-repeated 'Ecce' ('behold') with which the Baptist recognizes Christ as the Lamb of God in St John's gospel (1: 29, 36): '*Ecce* Agnus Dei'. This visual pun had strong patristic authority. St Augustine emphasized that the word 'Ecce' implied the gesture of pointing, and saw in the implied gesture a sign that John the Baptist was uniquely close to Christ, and greater than all the prophets: 'to the prophets who went before, it was given to announce beforehand the things that were to come to pass concerning Christ; but to this man it was given to point him out with his finger' ['prophetis praecedentibus praenuntiare de Christo futura concessum est; huic autem digito ostendere'].[7]

I have argued elsewhere that there was a particular reason why John the Baptist, pointing to the Agnus Dei, should be given prominence on a Northumbrian cross at this period. A chant based on John 1: 29, 'Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis', had recently been introduced into the Roman liturgy of the Mass. It was sung by both clergy and people as the bread was broken for communion.[8] The breaking of bread was usually interpreted as a re-enactment of the breaking of Christ's body by the nails and spear on the Cross.[9] Liturgical readings for the ninth hour on Good Friday (the moment of Christ's death) included both Old and New Testament references to the Paschal Lamb (Exodus 12: 1–11; John 19: 36); and the Roman 'station' for Good Friday (i.e. the symbolically appropriate basilica at which the ceremonies of that day were enacted) was Holy Cross in Jerusalem.[10] The Bewcastle Cross therefore invites the onlooker to recognize Christ both in Eucharistic terms (in the words of the 'Agnus Dei' chant) and as sacrificed on the Holy Cross on Calvary (i.e. broken for men at Mass under the appearance of bread, as he had been sacrificed as the Paschal Lamb on the Holy Cross in Jerusalem).

The 'Christ over the Beasts' panel derives iconographically from Psalm

[7] *Augustinus: In Iohannis Evangelium Tractatus CXXIV*, Tractatus IV, par. 1; ed. R. Willems, CCSL 36, p. 31.

[8] É. Ó Carragáin, 'Liturgical Innovations', pp. 134–7; see also Ó Carragáin, 'Christ over the Beasts and the Agnus Dei: Two Multivalent Panels on the Ruthwell and Bewcastle Crosses', *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Culture*, ed. Paul E. Szarmach (Kalamazoo, 1986), pp. 377–403, at pp. 391–9.

[9] See J. A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 2 vols (New York, 1951–5), II. 301–3; and the Irish commentary on the Mass in the Stowe Missal, in *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*, ed. Whitley Stokes and John Strachan, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1901–3), II. 253, pars 11 and 12.

[10] See Michel Andrieu, *Les Ordines Romani du haut moyen âge*, 5 vols, Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense, Vols 11, 23, 24, 28 and 29 (Louvain, 1931–61), Ordo XXIII, Nos 11–12 (III. 270–1); and G. G. Willis, 'The Roman Stational Liturgy' in *Further Studies in Early Roman Liturgy*, Alcuin Club Collections 50 (London, 1968), pp. 1–88, at p. 46. The implications for Ruthwell of the Roman stational liturgy are worked out in É. Ó Carragáin, 'The Roman Liturgy and the Ruthwell Cross', forthcoming.

90: 13 (Vulgate numbering): 'Thou shalt walk upon the asp and the basilisk: and thou shalt trample under foot the lion and the dragon'. But the role of the beasts has in this panel (and in that at Ruthwell) been transformed: they appear not as images of evil but as images of conversion. As I have argued elsewhere, both panels seem designed to recall at once both Psalm 90: 13 and the Old Latin text of the Canticle of Habbakuk, where it is prophesied of Christ that 'you will be known in the midst of two animals' ['in medio duorum animalium innotesceris']. This canticle was sung every Friday at Lauds. Thus, for Bede, the canticle above all prophesied Christ's Passion, and he interpreted 'you will be known in the midst of two animals' as referring to the way in which both the divinity and the humanity of Christ could be recognized in the signs which occurred when he hung on the Cross between two thieves. But in the Old Roman liturgy of the early eighth century, the opening verses of the Canticle of Habbakuk were sung on Good Friday at the ninth hour, as the responsory after the first reading at Holy Cross in Jerusalem; and Psalm 90 was sung after the second reading. This panel then, like the panel above, invites the onlooker to recognize the union of humanity and divinity in Christ; and to remember that his majesty was paradoxically revealed to men as his body was raised up on the Holy Cross on Good Friday.[11]

It has been disputed whether the bottom panel (Plate 2) is secular or religious: it is the only figural panel of the three in which no nimbus occurs, and the costume of the standing human figure (calf-length robes and a large ruff-like collar) may possibly denote secular rather than ecclesiastical fashions.[12] In her extremely important forthcoming discussion of the problem, Professor Cramp comes cautiously to the following conclusion: 'on the whole, it seems more prudent to suppose that the figure is one of St John the Evangelist with his symbol the eagle, despite the lack of halo and the unorthodox posture'. I shall proceed on the hypothesis that the figure is John the Evangelist; its posture, though original, is relevant to what was known of that saint.[13] As Professor Cramp remarks (forthcoming), 'the man has long curling hair but the details of his face are difficult to distinguish and may have been recut. The eyes are very deeply hollowed but may not be in their original form.' Whatever the details of his face, his stance is remarkable. The feet and lower body are in full profile, facing right; the upper body turns outward, so that although the figure presents his right shoulder towards us he seems to gaze out past the bird directly at the onlooker. Professor Cramp's

[11] This paragraph summarizes the argument of Ó Carragáin, 'Multivalent Panels', pp. 383–90.

[12] These points are made by Cramp, forthcoming.

[13] John and the other evangelists are normally represented seated, writing their respective gospels; or, as in the case of St John in the Lindisfarne Gospels, displaying a scroll: see Janet Backhouse, *The Lindisfarne Gospels* (Oxford, 1981), p. 54.

remark that the figure is presented 'as though in arrested movement' is the key to understanding the panel. The figure is represented in the act of turning either from the bird (which he has, so to speak, been contemplating) to the onlooker or from the onlooker to the bird. On either interpretation, the man's turning stance can reasonably be construed as inviting the onlooker to gaze at the bird he holds. The importance of the bird is increased by making the body of the bird face outwards (the head of the bird is so worn that it is not clear whether it faced the onlooker or was turned towards the man). The way in which the stance of the human figure directs the onlooker's gaze to the bird seems theologically significant. Of the four evangelists, John was the great contemplative, who wrote of that 'which we have seen with our eyes, which we have diligently looked upon and our hands have handled' (1 John 1: 1–3).[14] The importance of seeing and contemplation is central to John's theology.[15] Images of seeing occur, for example, in the great Christological prologue with which his gospel opens, a passage in which the evangelist presents his namesake the Baptist as the first to proclaim Christ's eternal divinity in words:

> And the word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us; and we saw his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John beareth witness of him and crieth out, saying: 'This was he of whom I spoke: He that shall come after me is preferred before me; because he was before me.' (John 1: 14–15)

The contrast between the way John the Baptist stands, squarely facing the onlooker as though to confront him with the Agnus Dei, and the way the lower figure turns, directing the onlooker's gaze towards the bird, may imply a contrast between word ('ecce') and silent act ('seeing'), and so between the complementary roles of preaching and contemplation in bringing about conversion (*conversatio morum* was the second of the three solemn vows prescribed in the Benedictine Rule[16]). It was John the Evangelist who wrote 'My little children, let us not love in word nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth' ['Filioli mei, non diligamus verbo neque lingua, sed opere et veritate'] (1 John 3: 18).

The eighth-century Roman liturgy suggests a reason why John the Evangelist might be representd in isolation from his synoptic fellows, and why such centrality might be given to his symbolic eagle. Alone of the four evangelist-symbols, the eagle was seen to symbolize the new life promised to

[14] In the first of Augustine's sermons on John there is an extended account of John as contemplative: CCSL 36, pp. 1–6. (Biblical quotations in English are from the Douay Bible.)

[15] See *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* (Paris, 1937–), VIII, cols 192–247, under 'S. Jean l'Évangéliste', at cols 217–20.

[16] *The Rule of St. Benedict*, Chapter 58; ed. Justin McCann (London, 1952), p. 130.

the Christian. In the eighth-century liturgy, the catechumens preparing for baptism and the Eucharist (the sacraments they would normally receive during the vigil of Easter) participated, on an unspecified day during the fourth week of Lent, in an important ceremony in which the chief documents of the faith (the Our Father, the Creed, and the Four Gospels) were handed on to them. Homilies explaining these documents were prescribed: so important were these homilies considered that their text is preserved, not merely in the relevant Roman *ordines*, but also in eighth-century sacramentaries, the altar-books which preserved the canon, prefaces and variable prayers for Mass.[17]

We can be sure that the ceremony of the giving of the gospels ('traditio evangeliorum') was performed in Northumbria in the eighth century: Bede provides us with the two earliest unambiguous descriptions of the ceremony to survive from any source.[18] The ceremony was a dramatic event. In solemn procession, preceded by two candle-bearers and clerics bearing incense in thuribles, four deacons proceeded from the sacristy, each carrying a gospel book open at the beginning of a different gospel. Each gospel book was placed at a different corner of the altar, so that the congregation could gaze on them: the magnificent evangelist portraits and carpet pages which precede each gospel in early insular gospel books may thus have had a practical liturgical and catechetic function.[19] The beginning of each gospel was then read by the deacon to whom that gospel had been assigned. After each reading, the presiding priest read (and/or paraphrased in the vernacular?) the homily preserved in the sacramentaries. This taught the catechumens how the iconography of the appropriate beast illuminated the qualities of the gospel just read. The richness of the explanation of the final symbol, John's eagle, is particularly striking:

> Ioannes habet similitudinem aquilae, eo quod nimis alta petierit; ait enim: In principio erat Verbum et Verbum erat apud Deum et Deus erat Verbum. Hoc erat in principio apud Deum. Et David dicit de

[17] See Andrieu, Ordo XI: Vol. II, Nos 45–72, pp. 428–41; the Gelasian Sacramentary, ed. Mohlberg, pars 299–328, pp. 46–53; the Sacramentary of Gellone, ed. Dumas, CCSL 159, pars 534–64, pp. 65–73 and (another redaction of the homilies) pars 2262–98, pp. 321–30. These homilies are discussed by Pierre de Puniet, 'Les trois homélies catéchétiques du sacramentaire gélasien pour la tradition des évangiles, du symbole et de l'oraison dominicale', *Révue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique* 5 (1904) 505–21, 755–86; 6 (1905) 15–32, 304–18. See also de Puniet's article 'Apertio Aurium', in *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* [*DACL*] (Paris, 1907–53), I, Part 2 (1924), cols 2523–37.

[18] *Bedae Venerabilis Opera, Pars II, Opera Exegetica*, Vol. 2A: *De Tabernaculo, De Templo, In Esram et Nehemiam*, ed. H. Hurst, CCSL 119A, p. 89 (*De Tabernaculo*, II, lines 1846–55); and pp. 310–11 (*In Ezram et Nehemiam*, II, lines 924–7).

[19] As suggested by Patrick Simms-Williams in his review of Kathleen Hughes, *Celtic Britain in the Middle Ages*, in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 36 (1985) 306–9 (at p. 308).

> persona Christi: Renovabitur sicut aquilae juventus tua, id est Iesu Christi Domini nostri, qui, resurgens a mortuis, ascendit in caelos. Unde iam vobis conceptis praegnans gloriatur Ecclesia omni festivitate votorum ad nova tendere christianae legis exordia: ut, adveniente die venerabilis Paschae, lavacro baptismatis renascentes, sicut sancti omnes mereamini fidele munus infantiae a Christo Domino nostro percipere. Qui vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum.[20]
>
> [John the evangelist has the likeness of an eagle, because he sought out very elevated things. For he affirms: 'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.' And David says of the person of Christ: 'Your youth will be renewed like the eagle's' (Ps. 102: 5), that is, like that of Jesus Christ our Lord, who rising from the dead ascended into heaven. Whence, now that you have been conceived, the pregnant Church rejoices on each festival of vows to strive forward [*tendere*: perhaps 'to strain, stretch' (as in childbirth); or 'to bring (you) forward'] to the new beginnings of the Christian law, so that, when the solemn Passover day comes, you, born to new life from the laver of baptism, may be worthy to receive, like all the saints, the faithful gift/responsibility of a [new] childhood from Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.]

The progression of ideas in this paragraph is of the greatest interest. The eagle, who of all birds flies highest, is first seen as an appropriate symbol of the sublimity of John's gospel, the only gospel to trace back the existence of Christ the Word to the beginning of time, and to explore in detail the relations of God the Father and his Word. Then the eagle is associated with Christ himself, who rose from the dead to new life in heaven. But the point of the comparison between the eagle and the resurrected Christ is to emphasize that the catechumen will also rise to new life. The homily uses the striking and beautiful image of gestation to link the two ways in which the catechumens are promised new life. The Church is seen as joyfully pregnant, awaiting the birth of the catechumens from the baptismal font in a few weeks' time, at the Easter vigil. The reference to 'omni festivitate votorum' presumably refers to the various ceremonies of the Lenten catechumenate, such as the ceremony at which this passage was read. It could perhaps be paraphrased 'on each festival on which you make your vows'. These festivals formed, as it were, stages in the gestation of the catechumens in the womb of the Church; the catechumens, transformed into neophytes, would be spiritually reborn from the virginal font of baptism during the Easter vigil.[21] The homilist's stress on the new birth given to 'all the saints', in the immediate context of the standard

[20] I quote the critical text of de Puniet, *RHE* 5 (1904) 515–16.

[21] See Michel Dujarier, 'Le catéchuménat et la maternité de l'église', *La Maison-Dieu* 71 (1962) 78–93.

closing 'Qui vivit' formula with its reference to Christ living and reigning for eternity, suggests that he identifies the life given at Easter with the eternal life already given to the saints: for him the baptismal rebirth of the catechumens during the vigil of Easter Sunday looks forward to the final rebirth of all the Church into the eternal Sabbath of the Heavenly Jerusalem. The homilist had strong patristic authority for such a view: both Augustine and Cassiodorus in their commentaries on Psalm 102: 5 also identify the renewed life of the eagle with life after death and the Eucharistic banquet which prefigures that life.[22]

As interpreted for the catechumens and the congregation in the *Traditio Evangeliorum* ceremony, St John's eagle was much more significant than any of the other evangelist beasts. Those who planned the Bewcastle Cross could have found the homily in the most authoritative liturgical documents available to them: Gelasian sacramentaries (which they very probably used), or Roman *ordines* for the catechumenate.[23] Sculptors and designers would surely have found it striking that the Lenten liturgy included a discussion of the evangelist symbols. The Bewcastle designer was correct not to provide the eagle with a nimbus: that would have destroyed the symbolic multivalence of the image. At Bewcastle the bird can stand as a symbol for the evangelist and his insights; for eternal life; for the catechumen awaiting baptism; and for the Christian longing for eternal life—as well as for Christ himself, the first-born of those that sleep. The most remarkable fact about this multivalence is that the various perspectives of the image do not contradict each other in any way, but enrich each other. The evangelist's turning stance invites the onlooker to concentrate on a profoundly rich image of the 'very elevated things' ['nimis alta'] to be found in his gospel, and promised by the Church in her liturgy.

The rod held by St John the Evangelist is symbolically interesting. The image of the rod [*virga*] was an important image in the psalms for the discipline which led to Christ's kingdom ('the rod of thy kingdom is a straight rod' ['virga recta est, virga regni tui'], Ps. 44: 7;[24] 'thy rod and thy staff: they

[22] See below, p. 25. Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, ed. J. Fraipont, CCSL 40, p. 1459 lines 16–48 and p. 1461 lines 41–8; Cassiodorus, *Expositio Psalmorum*, ed. M. Adriaen, CCSL 98, p. 915 lines 75–86.

[23] For a list of surviving early Anglo-Saxon Gelasian sacramentaries, see Klaus Gamber, *Sakramentartypen. Versuch einer Gruppierung der Handschriften und Fragmente bis zur Jahrtausendsende*, Texte und Arbeiten 49–50 (Beuron, 1958), pp. 60–4; and Helmut Gneuss, 'Liturgical Books in Anglo-Saxon England and their Old English Terminology' in *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies Presented to Peter Clemoes on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Michael Lapidge and Helmut Gneuss (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 91–141 (at pp. 99–102).

[24] I quote this verse in the *Psalterium Romanum* version, as it is inscribed on the flowering rod held by Christ as Wisdom in Oxford, Bodleian MS Auct F. 4. 32, f. 1r: see *Saint Dunstan's Classbook from Glastonbury*, ed. R. W. Hunt (Amsterdam, 1961), p. vi; and E. Temple, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts 900–1066* (London, 1971), No. 11, p. 41, and Illus. 41.

have comforted me' ['virga tua, et baculus tuus, ipsa me consolata sunt'], Ps. 22: 4)[25] as well as being on occasion a symbol of Christ himself ('there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse' ['egredietur virga de radice Jesse'], Isaiah 11: 1; 'a star shall rise out of Jacob, and a sceptre [rod] shall spring up from Israel' ['orietur stella ex Jacob, et consurget virga de Israel'], Numbers 24: 17).

St John seems to be represented as having raised the bird from a T-shaped perch, visible under the saint's arm. It may not be too fanciful to suggest that here, as in the pointing finger of John the Baptist and the crossed paws of the beasts who adore Christ, we have a visual pun. The Hebrew letter *thau* is the sign placed on the foreheads of those chosen from the midst of Jerusalem to become members of the new Israel (Ezechiel 9: 4). *Thau*, the final letter of the Hebrew alphabet, signified God, like the Greek letter *Omega*. Hebrew *thau* was identified with Greek *tau*: and Ezekiel 9: 4 finds its New Testament fulfilment in the sign of the one hundred and forty-four thousand (Apoc. 7: 3), who in St John's Apocalypse follow the lamb and who (together with the four evangelist-beasts) surround his throne 'having his name and the name of his Father written in their foreheads' (Apoc. 14: 1). The signing of the forehead in the Apocalypse apparently refers to early Christian baptismal usage: the first Christians were signed on the forehead with a *tau*, the name of Yahweh. The *tau* naturally became associated with the Cross (written both as + and as X), the sign of the Son of Man; signing with the cross was central to Christian rites of initiation.[26] The *tau* sign leads us back to baptism, the context already suggested by the bird, and to St John the Evangelist, author of the Apocalypse.

Is this lower panel related to the two figural panels above it? Canon 82 of the Quinisext Council, held at Constantinople in 691–2, had ordered that

[25] The 'rod' of Psalm 22 is particularly relevant, in view of the close association between this psalm and baptism: cf. its use by Ambrose, quoted below, pp. 25–6. In the Neapolitan liturgy, Psalm 22 was the first text solemnly 'handed on' to the catechumens. It seems likely that a Neapolitan list of festivals existed in Northumbria (perhaps at Monkwearmouth-Jarrow); and that such a list formed the archetype behind the references to the lectionary according to the use of Naples found in several insular gospel books (including the Lindisfarne gospels and the Durham gospels) which passed through Northumbrian scriptoria in the late seventh and early eighth centuries. See A. Dondeyne, 'La discipline des scrutins dans l'église latine avant Charlemagne', *Révue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique* 28 (1932) 5–33 and 751–87 (at pp. 19–21); and *The Durham Gospels: Durham Cathedral MS A. II. 7*, ed. Christopher Verey and others, Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile 20 (Copenhagen, 1980), pp. 26–8.

[26] See Jean Daniélou, *Primitive Christian Symbols* (London, 1962), pp. 136–45, and *The Bible and the Liturgy* (Notre Dame, 1966), pp. 54–69; Hugo Rahner, '*Antenna Crucis*, V: Das mystische Tau', *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 75 (1953) 386–410. On the signing of the catechumens, see Ordo XI, pars 1–30: Andrieu, II. 417–25.

Christ should no longer be represented as a lamb.[27] It ordered that he should in future be represented only as a human figure. Because this council infringed papal prerogatives in various ways, Pope Sergius rejected its canons; and it may have been in the context of this iconographic controversy that Sergius introduced the 'Agnus Dei' chant into the Mass.[28] Awareness of such matters could well have made Anglo-Saxon clerics (who were in contact with Roman liturgical developments) interested in the ways in which symbolic creatures like the lamb and the eagle could express different aspects of Christ's nature and ministry. There is at Bewcastle a pleasing balance between, on the one hand, the top and bottom panels in which the two saints recognize Christ under the symbolic form of creatures, and, on the other, the central panel in which two creatures recognize Christ in human form.

St John's eagle, with its baptismal contexts, provides what might be called a prelude to (and to some degree a significant contrast with) the theme of the Eucharistic presence of Christ which seems to be reflected in the upper two panels. As we have seen, the text 'your youth will be renewed like the eagle's' (Ps. 102: 5) was used to link the eagle both with Christ and with the catechumen. The psalm refers to the legend that, when the eagle grows old, its hooked upper beak grows down over its lower beak so that the bird cannot open its mouth and begins to starve. It therefore rubs its beak on a rock so as to wear away the dangerous hook. Then it can feed, and its youth and plumage are renewed. This legend is told in their commentaries on Psalm 102: 5 by both Augustine and Cassiodorus (see above, p. 23 and note 22). For them, Christ himself is the rock against which the eagle rubs his beak to attain renewed life (cf. 1 Cor. 10: 4). Both Augustine and (more briefly) Cassiodorus bring out the Eucharistic possibilities of the legend of the eagle whose renewal depends on his ability to eat. But, in order to understand the progression between the lower panel of the Bewcastle Cross, on the one hand, and the two upper panels, on the other, the use of Psalm 102: 5 by St Ambrose is particularly illuminating. In each of his two explanations of the initiation ceremonies of the Easter vigil, Ambrose uses Psalm 102: 5 to explain why the catechumens, once they have been baptized and have received from the bishop the seal of the spirit (confirmation), proceed directly to receive communion:

> Signauit te deus pater, confirmauit te Christus dominus et *dedit pignus* spiritum *in cordibus tuis*. . . . His abluta plebs diues insignibus ad Christi contendit altaria dicens: *Et introibo ad altare dei, ad deum qui laetificat iuuentutem meam*. Depositis enim inueterati erroris exuuiis, renouata in aquilae iuuentutem, caeleste illud

[27] Charles Joseph Hefele, *Histoire des conciles*, trans. Henri Leclercq, 11 vols (Paris, 1907–52), III, Part 1, p. 573.
[28] Ó Carragáin, 'Liturgical Innovations', pp. 134–5.

> festinat adire conuiuium. Venit igitur et uidens sacrosanctum altare conpositum exclamans ait: *Parasti in conspectu meo mensam.* Hanc loquentem inducit Dauid dicens: *Dominus pascit me et nihil mihi deerit. . . . Virga tua et baculus tuus ipsa me consolata sunt. . . .*[29]
>
> [God the Father has marked you with his seal, Christ the Lord has confirmed you and sent his Spirit into your heart as a pledge. . . . Thus washed and rich in its adornments, the people proceeds eagerly to Christ's altars saying: 'And I shall go in unto the altar of God, to God who gives joy to my youth' (Ps. 42: 4). It has put aside the husk[30] of ancient error, its youth is renewed like the eagle's, and it hastens to approach that heavenly banquet. It comes then, and seeing the holy altar prepared for it, exclaims: 'You have prepared a table before me' (Ps. 22: 5). David has this people speak when he says: 'The lord feeds me, I shall not want. . . . Your rod and your staff have comforted me . . .' (Ps. 22: 1, 4).]

The way in which Ambrose brings out the dramatic implications of the renewal of the eagle's youth may provide us with an analogue for the way in which, on the Bewcastle Cross, the designer has kept the lower panel distinct from the two upper panels, while suggesting visual links between them: the new life of baptism was seen to lead naturally to a hunger for union with Christ in the Eucharist. The opening words of the runic inscription on the panel which separates the lower figural panel from the two upper ones fortunately survive. In view of the emphasis in the figural panels on rebirth to eternal life, and on Christ's divine nature, it is particularly appropriate that the opening words of the runic inscription refer to the monument as '+ [þ]is sigbecn' ['this token of victory', 'this victory-memorial'].[31]

All the panels seem designed to be multivalent; it is clear that the scene in which John the Baptist hails Christ as 'Agnus Dei' is associated not only with the breaking of the bread at Mass but also (through its scriptural context) with baptism. The documents which Northumbrian communities would have used when planning the Easter liturgy are likely to have reflected Roman use. References in these documents to the topography of Rome, and in particular to that of the Lateran, the Pope's cathedral church, had to be explained before a

[29] *Ambroise de Milan: Des Sacrements, Des Mystères, Explication du symbole*, ed. Bernard Botte, Sources chrétiennes 25 (Paris, 1980), pp. 178–80 (*De Mysteriis*, 42–3); cf. p. 104 (*De Sacramentis*, IV. 7).

[30] *exuuiis*: both 'clothing', and 'skin': perhaps a reference at once to the snake shedding its skin, and also to the catechumens putting aside their clothes before entering the font.

[31] Page, in Cramp, forthcoming. It is interesting that the fragmentary inscription recorded from the now-lost head of the cross apparently refers also to Christ's power: 'ricæs dryhtnæs' ['of a powerful Lord']. See Page, 'Bewcastle Cross', pp. 38 and 56.



1. Bewcastle Cross: west face.



2. Bewcastle Cross: St John the Evangelist.



3. Bewcastle Cross: east face.



4. Bewcastle Cross from the south-west.

Northumbrian community could have worked out its own version of the Roman liturgy. Explanations could have come from various quarters: from the accounts of those who had been to Rome, such as (to go no further) Bede's abbots Benedict Biscop, Ceolfrid and Hwætberht; occasionally from visiting authorities such as John the Archicantor of St Peter's, who taught the liturgy in Northumbria in 679–80;[32] from *libelli* or booklets which put into writing the Roman way of doing things (*ordo Romanus*) for particular seasons; and also from authoritative Roman documents such as the *Liber Pontificalis*, the official collection of papal biographies, known to and used by Bede.[33] In its account of Pope St Sylvester (AD 314–35) the *Liber* describes the golden statue of the Agnus Dei which stood in the font in the baptistery of St John Lateran. It stood at the foot of a porphyry column, and from it baptismal water poured into the font. On the right side of the lamb stood a statue of Christ, five feet in height, made from pure silver; on the left a matching silver statue of St John the Baptist, bearing a scroll with the inscription 'ECCE AGNUS DEI, ECCE QVI TOLLIT PECCATA MVNDI'.[34] An awareness of the existence of such statues at the Lateran baptistery at Rome may perhaps have encouraged patrons to provide representations of John the Baptist and the Agnus Dei at other sites associated with baptism. Even more interesting is the architectural setting provided by Pope St Hilarius (AD 461–8) for the Lateran baptistery. The *Liber* says that Hilarius erected three chapels, dedicated respectively to St John the Baptist, St John the Evangelist and the Holy Cross, all covered in silver and precious stones, as part of a unified building programme to adorn the baptistery:

> Hic fecit oraturia III in baptisterio basilicae Constantinianae, sancti Iohannis Baptistae et sancti Iohannis evangelistae et sanctae Crucis, omnia ex argento et lapidibus pretiosis.[35]

The chapels were evidently erected to provide a suitable setting for the Easter

[32] On John the Archicantor, see the references in *Venerabilis Bedae Opera Historica*, ed. Charles Plummer, 2 vols (Oxford, 1896), II. 484, s.v.; John's authorship of the baptismal *Ordo* XI, first proposed by Carlo Silva-Tarouca, 'Giovanni "Archicantor" di S. Pietro a Roma e l'"Ordo Romanus" da lui composto', *Atti della pontificia accademia di archeologia*, 3rd series, 1 (1925) 160–219, was rejected by Andrieu, *Ordines*, III. 6–15; but has been strongly defended by S. J. P. Van Dijk, who demonstrates that the *ordo* shows signs of having been compiled in St Peter's in the 670s: 'The Urban and Papal Rites in Seventh and Eighth-Century Rome', *Sacris Erudiri* 12 (1961) 411–87 (at pp. 455–65).

[33] On Bede's use of the *Liber*, see Plummer, I. li, note; II. 14, 82 and 84.

[34] Louis Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis* (2 vols, 1886–92), reprinted with an additional volume, *Additions et corrections de Mgr L. Duchesne*, ed. C. Vogel, 3 vols (Paris, 1981), I. 174 (text), 192 (notes). *DACL*, II Part 1, col. 411, gives a hypothetical reconstruction of the statues.

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conferrings of baptism and confirmation. Entering the baptistery from the basilica, the baptismal procession of catechumens, sponsors and clerics would have encountered first the pair of chapels dedicated to the two Saints John: the chapel dedicated to St John the Baptist stands on the left of the font, that dedicated to St John the Evangelist on the right. The vaults of both chapels were decorated by Pope Hilarius with mosaics representing the Agnus Dei surrounded by symbols of the four gospels.[36] The third chapel, that of the Holy Cross, was the most important of the set, as it became the *consignatorium* of the Lateran basilica: the place in which confirmation was conferred by the Pope who signed the neophytes, fresh from their baptism, with the sign of the cross in chrism on their foreheads.[37] The neophytes finally returned to the basilica itself for the rest of the Easter vigil ceremonies, which included their receiving the Eucharist.

Thus the architectural setting for Christian initiation in the Roman liturgy encouraged the association of St John the Baptist with St John the Evangelist, and of both with the Holy Cross. The link between these three ideas becomes more striking when we realize that in the eighth century the post-baptismal catechesis of the neophytes at Rome included processions designed to fix in the imagination this sequence of chapels and the sequence of liturgical events with which they were associated. Easter week was a period of intense catechesis. Such ceremonies were not, of course, arranged simply, or even primarily, for the neophytes: at this period infant baptism had for long been the norm at Rome (but hardly at Bewcastle). In the persons of the neophytes and their sponsors, the whole congregation re-enacted in Easter week their original initiation into Christianity. A special sermon on this theme was preached at Mass each day. Vespers was a particularly solemn ceremony during this week. The neophytes gathered at St John Lateran, and the Pope himself presided over the ceremonies, which were designed as a re-enactment of the solemn initiation ceremonies of the vigil of Easter.[38] So that the stages of initiation could be 'revisited', the Vespers ceremony was divided into several 'stations'. The first three psalms, with the canticle (the Magnificat), were sung in the basilica itself. Then the neophytes, accompanied by the Pope and

[36] Philippe Lauer, *Le palais de Latran* (Paris, 1911), figs 19 and 20 and pp. 56–7. The mosaic in the chapel of St John the Evangelist still exists; the mosaic in that of St John the Baptist was destroyed in the eighteenth century, but is known from earlier drawings.

[37] Andrieu, Ordo XXXB, No. 52, note (III. 473), identifies the *consignatorium* of the Lateran as 'sans doute' the chapel of the Holy Cross. This chapel was separated from the baptistery itself by a little courtyard. See Lauer, *Latran*, pp. 57–61; *DACL*, II, Part 1, cols 382–469 under 'baptistère', especially cols 408–11 and the plan of the baptistery and chapels at col. 412 (*DACL* summarizes Lauer). The chapel of the Holy Cross was destroyed by order of Sixtus V (1585–90).

[38] The fullest account of the processions at Vespers on Easter week in the eighth century is in Andrieu, Ordo XXVII (III. 362–72); see also Ordo XXXB (III. 475–7).

clergy, proceeded to the baptistery. The neophytes proceeded into one of the two chapels dedicated to St John, the one known as 'St John *ad vestem*', before revisiting the scene of their confirmation, the chapel of the Holy Cross. There the final psalms were sung, and a collect said.[39]

The repetition of these ceremonies each evening in Easter Week (except on Friday, the octave of Good Friday, when Vespers was celebrated at the basilica of Holy Cross in Jerusalem)[40] must have linked the idea of Christian initiation very firmly with the topography and iconography of the Lateran baptistery and of the set of chapels which surrounded it. If a patron anxious to produce his own version of the *ordo Romanus* wished to associate his great cross with the idea of Christian initiation, he could hardly have done so more strikingly than by providing on the cross an iconographic analogue of the way in which, at the baptistery of the Lateran, the mother church of Christendom, St John the Baptist, St John the Evangelist and the Holy Cross were associated in a sequence at once architectural, iconographic and spiritual. The culminating chapel in the Lateran set, the chapel of the Holy Cross, would have its analogue at Bewcastle in the shape of the monument itself. The chapel could also have been recalled by the central figural panel at Bewcastle. The chapel of the Holy Cross was as we have seen the *consignatorium*, where the neophytes were signed with the sign of the cross in the oil of chrism. At Bewcastle the animals, with their crossed paws, hail Jesus as 'kristtus', 'the anointed one'. But the ceremony of consignation or confirmation symbolized the full union between the neophytes and Christ. In it they, like him, became 'anointed ones', sharing through his Spirit in his priesthood and kingship. This point is made very concisely by Isidore of Seville:

> Chrisma Graece, Latine unctio nominatur; ex cuius nomine et Christus dicitur, et homo post lavacrum sanctificatur. Nam sicut in baptismo peccatorum remissio datur, ita per unctionem sanctificatio spiritus adhibetur; et hoc de pristina disciplina, qua ungui in sacerdotium et in regnum solebant, ex quo Aaron a Moyse unctus est.[41]

[39] Andrieu, Ordo XXVII, no. 76 (III. 364–5 and notes). While proceeding from the baptistery to the chapel of the Holy Cross, the neophytes sang the antiphon 'Vidi aquam egredientem de templo, a latere dextro', which refers to the wound in Christ's right side. For a possible reminiscence of this antiphon, see É. Ó Carragáin, '*Vidi Aquam*: the Liturgical Background to *The Dream of the Rood* 20a, "Swætan on þa swiðran healfe" ', *Notes and Queries* 228 (1983) 8–14.

[40] Andrieu, Ordo XXVII, no. 92, note (III. 371).

[41] *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum Libri XX*, ed. W. M. Lindsay, 2 vols (Oxford, 1911), I, Bk. VI. xix. 50–1. On Christian initiation in this period, see Lionel L. Mitchell, *Baptismal Anointing*, Alcuin Club Collections 48 (London, 1966), pp. 80–171; and J. D. C. Fisher, *Christian Initiation: Baptism in the Medieval West*, Alcuin Club Collections 47 (London, 1965), pp. 78–87.

> ['Chrism' in Greek is called 'anointing' in Latin; from 'chrism' we get the name 'Christ', and by it man is sanctified after the [baptismal] laver. For just as remission of sins is given in baptism, so the hallowing of the spirit is added through anointing. This comes from the ancient custom of anointing into priesthood and into kingship, according to which Aaron was anointed by Moses.]

The iconographic fact that the animals on the centre panel are transformed and converted versions of the evil animals of Psalm 90: 13 thus takes on a more profound and specifically liturgical significance. The references in this central panel to the idea of conversion, to the unity between the animals (with their crossed paws) and Gessus Kristtus, and to the Eucharistic recognition of Christ on the Holy Cross 'in medio duorum animalium' all suggest that the panel is thematically as well as spatially central to the cross. It sums up all the themes of liturgical initiation reflected in the figural programme of the west side.

II THE EAST SIDE AND THE INSCRIPTIONS ON THE NARROW SIDES

One of the most striking visual characteristics of the Bewcastle monument is the structural balance between the figural programme on the west side and the single massive scroll which covers the east side (Plate 3). The scroll has eight volutes, and one creature feeds from a berry-branch in each of the lower seven of them; the topmost volute, uninhabited, rounds the pattern off with a knot of foliage. Its designer emphasized the unity of the panel by making the seven creatures face alternately left and right. The fourth and fifth of the creatures (reading from the bottom) are birds. The fourth (the central creature in the sequence of seven) is notably different from the three animals below it, which have fantastic tails merging into the scroll pattern itself. The body of the bird is realistically represented. Unlike all the other creatures in the scroll, it faces the spectator; but the bird's head is turned to its right, so that the right–left alternation between the creatures is preserved. Professor Cramp calls the bird 'thrush-like': but I am inclined to wonder whether it may have been placed where it is to remind the onlooker visually of the bird held by John the Evangelist in the lower panel of the west side. The designer has certainly placed at the centre of his scroll a motif which helped him to unify visually the two major faces of the monument.

The structural balance between the scroll and the Christological panels on the west face may be significant. If the upper two figural panels are unified by the idea that the body of Christ is to be recognized under symbolic forms, and

in particular in the breaking of bread in the Eucharist, then the structure of the monument suggests that we should seek the significance of the scroll in Eucharistic images for the blood of Christ. The fact that all seven creatures are engaged in the act of feeding from the bunches of grape-like berries is interesting: the idea of 'feeding' was naturally central to the Eucharist. It seems on balance more likely that the scroll was symbolic than that it was merely decorative: in view of the virtuosity of the symbolism on the west side, the Bewcastle designer is unlikely to have planned the east side as simply a fine design, vacant of symbolic function. However, the great scroll is clearly not a naturalistic vine, nor are the berry-bunches naturalistic bunches of grapes. The seven creatures rear themselves among its branches as though it were a tree.[42] But the scroll lacks any naturalistic 'trunk': it clings vine-like to the 'trunk' of the monument itself. By his combination of grape-like berry bunches, tree-like foliage, and a clinging vine-like volute structure, the Bewcastle designer may have wished his scroll to combine the concepts of 'tree' and 'vine', and to suggest that the scroll was at once a symbol of the Cross, and something clinging to, hung from, the trunk of the Bewcastle Cross.

From the earliest Christian times, Christ's Cross was seen as a symbol of Christ's glorified body. This idea stemmed from the tradition that the Cross was the Sign of the Son of Man, which would appear in the East to announce Christ's return in glory to judge mankind.[43] In addition, the Cross was seen as the tree of life, the antitype of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil through which man had been expelled from paradise, and a symbol of the regeneration of the cosmos which was achieved through Christ's victory in death.[44] It is possible that the Bewcastle monument as a whole was conceived of as like a tree (it is certainly tall and tree-like). The emphasis on the Eucharistic recognition of Christ in the upper panels of the west side suggests that the monument as a whole might have been conceived as a symbol of Christ's body. The feeding creatures may indicate that the scroll also represented a regained paradisal state, in which men and animals could again be reconciled as at the beginning of man's history (cf. Isaiah 11: 6–9 and

[42] See W. G. Collingwood, *Northumbrian Crosses of the Pre-Norman Age* (London, 1927), Chapter 6 'The Tree of Life', pp. 39–55.

[43] Matthew 24: 27; Eric Peterson, *Frühkirche, Judentum und Gnosis: Studien und Untersuchungen* (Rome, 1959), pp. 15–35; Barbara Raw, '*The Dream of the Rood* and its Connections with Early Christian Art', *Medium Aevum* 39 (1970) 239–56 (at pp. 242–3).

[44] E. O. James, *The Tree of Life: an Archaeological Study* (Leiden, 1966), pp. 161–2; *The Dream of the Rood*, ed. M. J. Swanton (Manchester, 1970), pp. 42–52. I am grateful to my colleague Dr Jennifer O'Reilly for help with the symbolism of the tree of life, as well as with all aspects of crucifixion iconography.

65: 25), with the blessed Christian souls symbolized by feeding creatures. This theme is also reflected in the two converted beasts who recognize 'kristtus' in the central figural panel of the west face. Confirmation of such paradisal symbolism is perhaps to be found in the design of the narrow sides of the cross. Professor Cramp justly draws attention to the masterly variety in the decorative panels (which include interlace patterns and foliage scrolls) on these sides. None of these panels is inhabited by creatures, but the narrow sides are 'inhabited' in another way: between some of the panels runes have been inscribed. Weathering has rendered illegible the two runic inscriptions on the south side. At the top of the north side, the *nomen sacrum* '[ge]ssu/s' can be made out above the highest surviving panel (presumably it originally occurred just under the crosspiece). The name 'kynibur*g' is inscribed above the lowest panel on this side. The recurrence of the *nomen sacrum* may perhaps provide a hint of confirmation that the cross itself was seen as among other things a symbol of the glorified Jesus. 'kynibur*g', a feminine name, looks like a commemorative inscription: perhaps the name of a patroness or of an abbess. The embedding of this name (and the lost inscriptions on the south side may have provided other names) among decorative panels may possibly provide a hint of the symbolic meaning of the feeding creatures who, in a paradisal setting, inhabit the great scroll on the east side.

The 'kynibur*g' inscription, the lost inscriptions on the south face, and the names which seem once to have been inscribed on the panel on the west face, taken together, may indicate that for its original designers their 'sigbecn' was considered to be not only an *arbor vitae* (tree of life) but also a form of *liber vitae* (book of life), recording the most important benefactors and members of a community in such a way as to encourage prayers for their souls. Page (in Cramp, forthcoming) records that the penultimate line of the long inscription on the west face includes the runes '[.]gebid[.]', which as he points out may be a form of the verb *gebiddan*, 'to pray'. Such a list, ending with a request for prayers for the souls of those listed, would here have appeared in a most appropriate iconographic setting. It made sense to commemorate the dead between the eagle (which symbolized the promised renewal of youth after death) and the great image of Christ in Judgement, with his right hand raised in blessing and his left hand holding a scroll: presumably the sealed scroll, the *liber vitae agni* (Apoc. 13: 8; 21: 27), which only he can open. The custom of recording the benefactors and prominent members of a Christian congregation in a *liber vitae* grew out of the early Christian custom of recording such names on the reverse of ivory diptychs. Thus the combination of a commemorative inscription with appropriate iconography is of great antiquity. Diptychs were still used in the Roman Mass, at the commemorations of the living and the dead in the canon, up to the twelfth century. It is possible that such liturgical use of diptychs may have inspired the designer to combine figural panels (referring to eternal life, Judgement, and the Lamb) with a panel of runes in a

single unified sequence balanced against the *arbor vitae* of the east side.[45] It seems reasonable to suggest that the feeding animals on the east side, and the names of Anglo-Saxon personages on the other sides, alike symbolize the hope of eternal life.

But the Cross, as well as being a paradisal and eschatological symbol, was also the gallows on which Christ hung, and on which his blood ran. It was possible, therefore, to see the Bewcastle monument as at once the tree of life, a symbol of the body of Christ, and also as a cross *on* which the body of Christ was raised and *on* which the blood of Christ had run. This ambivalence is fully developed in the Ruthwell Cross and poem, which dramatizes the way in which the Cross receives Christ, and the way in which it hands on Christ to his followers. But the same ambivalence seems implied by images at Bewcastle of Christ's body (images *on* the cross) and by the suggestions of grapes (which creatures feed on) and of a clinging vine in the great scroll on the east side. In his hymn 'Crux benedicta nitet' Venantius Fortunatus combines the ideas that the Cross is the tree of life, and that Christ is the vine who hanging on the Cross provided new wine for mankind:

> fertilitate potens, o dulce et nobile lignum,
> quando tuis ramis tam noua poma geris. . . .
> appensa est uitis inter tua brachia, de qua
> dulcia sanguineo uina rubore fluunt.
>
> [You are powerful in your fruitfulness, O sweet and noble tree, seeing that you bear such new fruit in your branches. . . . hanging between your arms is a vine, from which sweet wines flow red as blood.][46]

If Venantius's poem does indeed provide an analogue for the symbolism of the scroll on the Bewcastle Cross, then an interest in the Eucharistic presence of Christ, body (recognized in the breaking of bread) and blood (received in the wine), unites the west and east faces of the monument.

[45] On the *liber vitae*, see further Philippians 4: 3, Apoc. 17: 8, 20: 12, 15 and parallels. The iconography and symbolism of scrolls are discussed by Hans-Jörg Spitz, *Die Metaphorik des geistigen Schriftsinns*, Münstersche Mittelalterschriften 12 (Munich, 1972), pp. 41–6, under 'Buchrolle'. See *DACL* III, Part 1, cols 1045–94 under 'Diptyques (Liturgie)', especially section iv, 'Le Liber Vitae', cols 1055–6; on the Roman use of diptychs, cols 1063–8 (esp. 1067), and cols 1074–81. For recent studies of the liturgical uses of diptychs, see A. G. Martimort, *The Church at Prayer, II: The Eucharist* (Shannon, 1973), pp. 127–9, 147–52 and 164–7.

[46] Lines 9–10 and 17–18; quoted from *Early Latin Hymns*, ed. A. S. Walpole (Cambridge, 1922), pp. 179 and 181. Walpole (p. 181) cites a parallel from Ambrose, *De Fide*, I, Chapter 20, par. 135, PL 16, col. 559A, where Christ is described as 'the new drink brought down from heaven to earth . . . who just like the grape on the vine, hung in the flesh from the wood of the Cross'.

III THE SUNDIAL ON THE SOUTH SIDE

We can be sure that the present orientation of the Bewcastle Cross is original, because a sundial is preserved on the south side (Plate 4). Although several pre-Conquest sundials have been preserved, this is the only one to have survived on a cross. A sundial must have had practical uses, particularly for any community which recited the liturgical hours. But (especially in the case of liturgical objects) practical uses need not preclude symbolic meaning. The presence of a sundial complements the iconographic structure of the Bewcastle Cross in several ways. As we have seen, the figural panels on the west side are best explained in terms of the Roman liturgy of Holy Week and Easter. But Easter was calculated with reference to the sun's course: it fell on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox. The equinox was theologically vital in the calculation of Easter. In his open letter (AD 707–10) to Nechtan, king of the Picts, Abbot Ceolfrid of Monkwearmouth-Jarrow explained why:

> We are commanded to keep the full moon of the Paschal month after the vernal equinox, the object being that the sun should first make the day longer than the night and then the moon can show to the world her full orb of light, because 'the Sun of righteousness with healing in his wings' [Malachi 4: 2], that is, the Lord Jesus, overcame all the darkness of death by the triumph of His Resurrection. So, ascending into heaven, he made His Church, which is often typified as the moon, full of the light of inward grace, by sending His Spirit down upon her. This plan of our salvation is what the prophet had in mind when he said, 'The sun was exalted and the moon stood in her order.'[47]

Ceolfrid writes that anyone who does not wait until after the equinox to celebrate Easter 'agrees with those who trust that they can be saved without the grace of Christ . . . and who presume to teach that they could have attained to perfect righteousness even though the true Light had never conquered the darkness of the world by dying and rising again': in other words, he is guilty of Pelagianism.[48] But in the same letter, Ceolfrid had already directed Nechtan and his people to look at a sundial if they wanted to confirm the fact that the equinox fell on 21 March: 'as we can also prove by inspecting a sundial' ['ut etiam ipsi horologica inspectione probamus'].[49] Ceolfrid's letter seems to be the earliest statement of the importance of the sundial for determining the equinox in a document emanating from

[47] *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969), 5: 21, p. 545. 'The sun was exalted' is verse 11 of the old Latin version of the Canticle of Habbakuk sung at Lauds on Fridays.

[48] Ibid. On this reference to Pelagianism, see D. Ó Cróinín, ' "New Heresy for Old": Pelagianism in Ireland and the Papal Letter of 640', *Speculum* 60 (1985) 505–16 (at pp. 515–16).

[49] Ibid., pp. 542–3.

Monkwearmouth-Jarrow. In AD 703, when he composed *De Temporibus Liber*, Bede was still under the impression, like all western computists before him, that (Chapter 7) the Julian calendar corresponded with scientific fact when it placed the equinox on 25 March;[50] but in texts later than Ceolfrid's letter, Bede states in three separate places that the sundial confirms 21 March as the equinox.[51] Bede himself may possibly have drafted the letter to Nechtan for Ceolfrid, his abbot.[52] The inspection of sundials may have been merely a literary topos: C. W. Jones points out that, as the equinox had in fact moved forward to 17 March by Bede's time, Bede's advice cannot be based on acute observation of a sundial.[53] Therefore I do not wish to argue that at Bewcastle the sundial was put to practical use to calculate Easter or the equinox (Easter tables would have been less troublesome and more reliable). But the stress in Northumbrian literary texts on the *theological* importance of the fact that the sun (symbol of Christ) had to achieve ascendancy over winter darkness (in the equinox) before Easter could be celebrated, and their interest in sundials as instruments which track the sun's course, suggest that the Bewcastle designer might have incorporated the sundial into the design of his 'sigbecn' for symbolic reasons.

The sundial has been carefully incorporated into a panel of foliage, so that the dial is 'attached like a large leaf to the stem and sprouting from above [the sundial] is a large berry branch' (Cramp, forthcoming). The panel might be termed a 'time-tree', with the sundial as its fruit. Such an idea made liturgical sense. On the second Sunday in Advent (a day on which the Roman station was at Holy Cross in Jerusalem) the gospel (Luke 21: 25–33) told of 'signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars' and of 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud, with great power and majesty'. In these verses, flowering foliage acts as a reminder that God's kingdom is at hand:

> See the fig tree and all the trees: when they now shoot forth their fruit, you know that summer is nigh. So you also, when you shall

[50] *Bedae Opera de Temporibus*, ed. C. W. Jones (Cambridge, Mass., 1943), pp. 297 and 127.

[51] *De Temporum Ratione*, Chapter 30, 'horologica consideratione docemur' (Jones, p. 237); and Chapter 38, 'horologii lineis in terra, quae necessaria quaerit, apprehendat' (Jones, p. 251); *Epistola ad Wichthedum* (AD 725–31), par. 12 'quod et inspectione horologica et aperta ratione probabitur' (Jones, p. 325). See also Plummer, II. 333.

[52] Plummer, II. 332. Colgrave and Mynors (p. 534 n. 1) suggest that Bede may have re-edited the letter for publication in his history, so this reference to the sundial may date from the 730s, not from two decades earlier.

[53] Jones, p. 127. On the difficulty, but possibility, of using a sundial for this purpose, see Kenneth Harrison, *The Framework of Anglo-Saxon History* (Cambridge, 1976), p. 43. Jones (loc. cit.) points out (following Adamnán, *De Locis Sanctis*, 13) that the equinox could also be determined by observing the shadow of a tall object: this suggests another way in which a tall cross might trace out patterns which reflected the liturgical symbolism of the sun's course.

> see these things come to pass, know that the kingdom of God is at hand. Amen, I say to you, this generation shall not pass away till all things be fulfilled.[54]

The image of the Son of Man coming in power and majesty occurs next to the sundial at Bewcastle (see Plate 4, which shows the relation of the sundial to the design of the west side). The dial is placed at the level of Christ's shoulder, and the foliage on which the dial 'grows', sprouting at the level of Christ's waist, spreads aloft to slightly below the level of the Agnus Dei cradled on the arm of John the Baptist. An onlooker proceeding sunwise from the south side of the cross to the west, or looking at the cross from the south-west, might associate the sundial-tree with either or both of these figural panels. But the liturgical year linked the births of Christ and of John the Baptist by means of the sun's course. Christ was conceived (25 March: VIII Kal. Aprilis) and born (25 December: VIII Kal. Ianuarii) on 'the growing days' ['diebus crescentibus'], the spring equinox and winter solstice which marked the stages by which the sun overcame darkness. The Baptist was conceived six months before Christ (Luke 1: 36), and his vocation was to go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways (Luke 1: 76); he was not himself the Light, but was to give testimony concerning the Light (John 1: 8–9). The Baptist's prophetic role was built into the liturgical year: his conception (24 September: VIII Kal. Octobris) and birth (24 June: VIII Kal. Iulii) were celebrated on the 'lessening days' ['diebus decrescentibus'], the autumnal equinox and summer solstice; for in John's gospel (3: 30) John the Baptist said of his relationship with Christ that 'he must increase; but I must decrease'.[55] It made symbolic sense to place a sundial as near as possible to paired representations of Christ and John the Baptist, whose advents marked into balanced quadrants the solar cycle incorporated into the liturgical year.

IV THE BEWCASTLE CROSS AND THE RUTHWELL CROSS

In her forthcoming study of the Bewcastle Cross, Professor Cramp comes down cautiously in favour of the Bewcastle Cross's having been erected before the Ruthwell Cross. At Ruthwell we find extended statements of several ideas that are briefly stated, or implied, at Bewcastle. Variants of the upper two

[54] On the eighth-century use of the lection, see Theodor Klauser, *Das römische Capitulare Evangeliorum*, 2nd edn (Münster, 1972), p. 43 (No. 239); p. 89 (No. 264), etc. On the station on this Sunday at Santa Croce, see Willis, 'The Roman Stational Liturgy', p. 83. For the idea that flowering foliage heralds the Last Judgement, see *The Seafarer*, ed. I. L. Gordon (London, 1960), pp. 39–40, lines 48–52.

[55] See Augustine on John 3: 30, Tractatus XIV, CCSL 36, p. 144, lines 23–5; Bede, *In Lucae Euangelium Expositio*, ed. D. Hurst, CCSL 120, p. 30, lines 439–54; Alcuin on John 3: 30 follows Augustine, and sums up the topos in the phrases 'diebus crescentibus . . . decrescentibus', PL 100, col. 787D; Alcuin is copied by Pseudo-Bede, PL 92, col. 676D.

panels at Bewcastle recur at Ruthwell. Their Eucharistic significance is confirmed by the context given them at Ruthwell, where the panel representing Christ over the beasts appears between an Agnus Dei panel (above) and a panel representing Saints Paul and Anthony breaking bread in the desert (below). At Ruthwell as at Bewcastle St John the Baptist cradles the Agnus Dei in his left arm, and points him out with his right hand: Augustine's 'huic autem digito ostendere' is relevant to both crosses.[56] Eucharistic ideas unite all the panels of this side at Ruthwell. It is striking that, in contrast with Bewcastle, there is on the Ruthwell Cross no inscription commemorating benefactors. The Ruthwell designer did not take up the Bewcastle idea of the *liber vitae*, but concentrated on exploring the idea that Christ was to be recognized in the Eucharist.

Presumably the sequence of Eucharistic panels originally faced west at Ruthwell, as the figural panels still do at Bewcastle. This would be liturgically appropriate. If Mass were ever celebrated at either cross these panels, facing west, would have been visible to a celebrant and congregation, who would have faced east so as to be correctly oriented for the Eucharistic sacrifice. That tall crosses were closely associated with altars in eighth-century Northumbria is made clear by Aethelwulf's *De Abbatibus* (written AD 803–21), which describes a marvellous cruciform church seen in a midnight dream:

> ast pauimenta domus medii sub culmine templi
> aurea mirifice portabant munera mense.
> crux ueneranda nitens precelso stipite surget
> uertice de mense nimium candente smaragdo.
> aurea cum gemmis flammescit lammina fuluis.
>
> [The floor of the building beneath the mid-point of the temple roof bore the weight of golden offerings on a wondrous table. A holy cross rose up shining upon a very long stem from the top of the table, and (upon it) emeralds shone full bright. Golden plating blazed there (set) with dark-hued gems.][57]

[56] See above, p. 18. Paul Meyvaert, 'An Apocalypse Panel on the Ruthwell Cross', *Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, ed. Frank Tirro (Durham, North Carolina, 1982), pp. 3–32, argued that at Ruthwell the Agnus Dei is held by God the Father, not by John the Baptist; but this was convincingly refuted by George Henderson, 'The John the Baptist Panel on the Ruthwell Cross', *Gesta* 24 (1985) 1–12, who also demonstrates the Eucharistic significance of the sequence of panels on the (originally) west face at Ruthwell (pp. 4–8).

[57] Text and translation from *Aethelwulf 'De Abbatibus'*, ed. Alastair Campbell (Oxford, 1967), lines 721–5 (*carmen* xxii), pp. 56–7; Campbell comments on the similarity between this vision and *The Dream of the Rood* (p. 56, n. 2). Otto Nussbaum, *Der Standort des Liturgen am christlichen Altar vor dem Jahre 1000: eine archäologische und liturgiegeschichtliche Untersuchung*, Theophaneia, No. 18, 2 vols (Bonn, 1965), I. 431–2, explains this and other passages within the developing relationship of cross to altar: great crosses, or crosses on high stands, were erected *behind* altars at this period; the custom of placing crosses *on* the east side of the altar table began c. AD 1000.

When a little later Aethelwulf describes another visionary altar, the standard of a tall cross again towers over it ('quae crucis excelse porrexit uertice signum').[58] The existence of panels at the foot of the west side of both the Ruthwell and Bewcastle Crosses suggests that their designers did not envisage a permanent structure standing in front of either monument: we should perhaps think of the use of a portable altar, on a table erected either to one side, or else one to two metres in front of the crosses so that none of the panels would have been obscured from the celebrant's eyes. In the latter case, congregations would see the crosses rising behind the altar-tables 'precelso stipite . . . uertice de mense'. If Mass were ever celebrated at the Bewcastle Cross, the panel of runic inscriptions on the west face of that monument could have been put to liturgical use. I wish to emphasize that the text on the panel clearly was not designed to be read out at Mass. It seems to have begun with some such words as 'this victory sign was set up by . . .', and to have ended with a formula such as 'pray for their souls'. The inscription was in English, not Latin, and in runes (with their associations of secrecy and mystery), not Roman letters. The key to the possible symbolic use of the panel may lie in a characteristic of the Roman Mass. In the Celtic and Gallican Mass the commemorations of the living and dead took place during the offertory (before the preface) and the diptychs containing the names of the living and dead were solemnly read aloud. But in the Roman Mass these commemorations had been since the sixth century incorporated into the canon, or central action, of the Mass; and consequently the names of the living and dead were not usually read aloud. Instead, the priest usually commemorated them implicitly, by pausing at the appropriate points of the canon for a moment of mental prayer while gazing at a diptych or at a *liber vitae*.[59] At a Mass near the Bewcastle Cross, the priest and congregation could make an implicit commemoration of all their benefactors (not just those actually listed on the cross) by simply glancing at the cross for a moment of silent prayer at the appropriate moments of the canon. The very inaccessibility of runic script could have contributed to its symbolic value: a Latin inscription, in Roman letters, would have focused attention too exclusively on a limited number of names. The runic panel may have been valued not simply because it preserved the names of certain well-known people, but also because it suggested the deeper mystery of the *liber vitae*, a mystery also suggested by the closed scroll in Christ's left hand in the panel just above. The Irish Stowe Missal refers to the full *liber vitae* which

[58] *De Abbatibus*, ed. cit., line 737, p. 59. Cf. the Bewcastle inscription 'þis sigbecn': 'becen' often glosses *signum* in the Lindisfarne and Rushworth glosses (Bosworth-Toller, *Supplement*, p. 64 under *beacen*).

[59] On the Celtic use, see F. E. Warren, *The Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church* (Oxford, 1881), pp. 105–6. For the Roman and Ambrosian uses see *DACL*, III, Part 1, cols 1063–8 (especially col. 1067); and section xi, 'La place des diptyques à la Messe', cols 1074–81; also Martimort, pp. 149–50 and 165–6.

only Christ can read: in its prayers over the offerings it distinguishes between the loved ones whose names the priest recites, and those whose names he does not recite, but who are recited by Christ in the book of eternal life ('pro anima[b]us carorum nostrorum .n. et cararum nostrarum quorum nomina recitamus et quorumcumque non recitamus sed a te recitantur in libro vitae aeternae').[60] Similarly, the Durham *Liber Vitae* (London, BL MS Cotton Domitian VII, begun in the ninth century) was, it seems likely, always kept on the high altar so that celebrants could, by glancing at the manuscript each day for a moment of mental prayer at the appropriate parts of the conventual Mass, implicitly commemorate all the members and benefactors of the community.[61]

I have suggested that the John the Evangelist panel at Bewcastle is to be associated with the catechumenate and baptism. At Ruthwell a whole side of the cross (the side which presumably faced east originally) was devoted to images which recall the Lenten catechumenate. On it we have panels representing the Blind Man (lection for the Wednesday of the fourth week in Lent) and the conversion of Mary Magdalene. Above and below them appear panels representing the Visitation and the Annunciation, which are to be understood in the light of the idea that the catechumenate was a period of spiritual gestation, an imitation by the catechumen of Christ's own virginal birth (see above, p. 22). The importance of the spring equinox (symbolized by the Bewcastle sundial) is at Ruthwell indicated by the juxtaposition of Crucifixion and Annunciation panels at the foot of the originally east side. Both Crucifixion and Annunciation were understood to have taken place on 25 March (the spring equinox in the Julian calendar), thirty-three years apart.[62] The side appropriately culminated with a panel representing an eagle perched on a branch of berries (grapes?). This eagle provides a highly appropriate transition to the second half of the Ruthwell programme, the Eucharistic images of the west side. We have seen St Ambrose (as well as St Augustine and Cassiodorus) stress that the eagle of Psalm 102: 5 must be hungry when he can open his beak again, like the catechumen who after gaining new life in baptism hastens to the Eucharistic feast. The climax of the Eucharistic programme, on the crosshead of the west side at Ruthwell, was apparently a set of all four evangelist symbols, who probably surrounded an

[60] *The Stowe Missal*, ed. George F. Warner, 2 vols, Henry Bradshaw Society 31–2 (London, 1906–15), II. 9; also printed in Warren, pp. 232–3; Warren's note 41 (on pp. 257–8) lists Gallican references to the *liber vitae*.

[61] A. J. Piper, 'The Libraries of the Monks of Durham' in *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts and Libraries: Essays Presented to N. R. Ker*, ed. M. B. Parkes and A. G. Watson (London, 1978), pp. 213–49, at p. 237. See *The Oldest English Texts*, ed. Henry Sweet, EETS OS 83 (1885), pp. 153–66; and *Liber Vitae Ecclesiae Dunelmensis: A Collotype Facsimile*, ed. A. Hamilton Thompson, Surtees Society 136 (1927).

[62] The Ruthwell crucifixion poem reflects the same idea, presenting the dilemma of the Cross, when Christ wishes to ascend upon it, in terms reminiscent of Mary's dilemma at the Annunciation: cf. Ó Carragáin, 'Liturgical Innovations', pp. 140–1.

image of Christ (perhaps as Agnus Dei, perhaps in human form).[63] Of the four evangelists, St John and his eagle were given the highest place at the top of the cross, 'eo quod nimis alta petierit'. In this position, John and his eagle are balanced against the eagle on the branch (on the opposite side). With his more extensive programme, the Ruthwell designer could represent two matched (and, to a certain degree, contrasted) eagles, and so articulate the multivalence of the eagle symbol (evangelist-symbol, catechumen, Christ): a multivalence already implicit in the unique and moving image at Bewcastle. Finally, inhabited scrolls, on the model of the great scroll on the east face of Bewcastle, cover the two narrow sides of the Ruthwell Cross. But around the scrolls the designer left broad margins; and on the margins a poem in English was inscribed in runes. The poem emphasizes the complete pouring out of Christ's blood, in such phrases as 'they mocked the pair of us together; I was drenched with blood pou[red from the man's side]':

> bismæradu ungket men ba ætgadre ic waes miþ blodi bistemid
> bi[goten of þæs guman sida]. . . .[64]

The imagery of the Ruthwell poem may help us to understand the symbolic meaning of the scrolls around which it was inscribed; if so, it also helps us to understand the great Bewcastle scroll.[65]

V THE BEWCASTLE CROSS AND THE LITURGICAL YEAR

It is natural to suppose that the designer of a great public monument like the Bewcastle Cross would have intended his monument, which would be in place at all times of the year, to be appropriate to the liturgy of every season. Liturgical action itself would have determined which of the various potential symbolic dimensions of a text were relevant on a particular day. Texts which were used daily or weekly must have been particularly familiar, and so particularly important in interpreting the cross. The 'Agnus Dei' chant recalled a solemn moment in daily Mass, the moment of communion. The Mass is an especially interesting context for elements of a high cross, as it made present each day Christ's sacrifice on the Cross on Good Friday. John the Baptist, hailing Christ as the Agnus Dei, was prominent in the weeks after

[63] Rosemary Cramp, 'The Evangelist Symbols and their Parallels in Anglo-Saxon Sculpture' in R. T. Farrell (see note 3 above), pp. 118–30.
[64] I quote from D. Howlett, 'A Reconstruction of the Ruthwell Crucifixion Poem', *Studia Neophilologica* 48 (1976) 54–8.
[65] For a full interpretation of the Ruthwell poem, see Ó Carragáin, 'The Ruthwell Crucifixion Poem in its Iconographic and Liturgical Contexts', to appear in *Peritia* 5 (1987 for 1986).

Christmas, the season of Epiphany.[66] Psalm 90 was sung every night at Compline; and the canticle of Habbakuk was sung every Friday morning at Lauds. On the first Sunday of Lent, the texts of the Mass summed up the major themes of the following season: the sung texts were all drawn from Psalm 90, while the gospel (Matthew 4: 1–11) told of the temptations of Christ by Satan in the desert, in which the Messianic images of Psalm 90 (quoted by the devil, who is rebutted by Christ) are triumphantly fulfilled. The Bewcastle Cross must have been seen as especially relevant to the liturgy in the final weeks of Lent. On the fourth Sunday the Roman station was at Holy Cross in Jerusalem; the gospel (John 6: 1–14, the feeding of the five thousand) combined the Lenten theme of the desert with the Eucharistic theme of spiritual food.[67] The Roman stational practice affected the texts sung at Mass on the fourth Sunday in Lent: the introit began 'Laetare Jerusalem', and references to Jerusalem dominated the Mass for the day.[68] It was within the fourth week in Lent, as we have seen, that the catechumens were presented with the gospels and told of the eagle image. John the Evangelist was particularly important in the final weeks of Lent, when extracts from his gospel were read daily at Mass.[69] The Passion according to St John was, of course, the one read at the moment of Christ's death, at the ninth hour on Good Friday. On Good Friday the Roman station was again at Holy Cross in Jerusalem; and the neophytes and their sponsors went again in procession to that basilica for Vespers on the Friday after Easter, to commemorate the octave of Good Friday (see above, p. 29). On Good Friday, as we have seen, Psalm 90 and the Canticle of Habbakuk, familiar from daily or weekly use throughout the year, were at the moment of Christ's death brought into close and significant juxtaposition. We have seen that the imagery of the Bewcastle Cross was particularly involved with the initiation rites of the Easter vigil, and with the catechesis of the neophytes during Easter week; these initiation rites

[66] Bede, *Homeliarum Euangelii Libri II*, ed. D. Hurst, CCSL 122, Book 1, Homilies 14–17; see the analytical table in the introduction, p. xi. Note that John the Baptist is also prominent immediately before Christmas, in the gospels of the third and fourth Sundays of Advent: Klauser, p. 43 (Nos 240, 241); p. 89 (Nos 265, 266), etc.

[67] Klauser, p. 21 (No. 74); p. 67 (No. 85), etc.

[68] The Northumbrian liturgy was almost certainly not 'stational' in the Roman sense of having an elaborate tradition of episcopal processions to particular sites on specific feasts; but Northumbrian clerics must have known of the Roman stations, and if so would have appreciated their symbolic importance: in particular, how the stations determined the texts sung at various feasts. The stational churches are usually recorded in the gospel *capitula* printed by Klauser; they are often noted in antiphonaries, as in *Antiphonale Missarum Sextuplex*, ed. R. Hesbert (Brussels, 1935), No. 60 (fourth Sunday in Lent), pp. 74–5, 'STATIO AD HIERUSALEM'; they are described in the surviving *ordines*, e.g. Andrieu, *Ordo* XXIII (III. 269–73) for Good Friday and Holy Saturday. G. G. Willis, 'Roman Stational Liturgy', discusses Santa Croce at pp. 40, 45, 56–7 and 83.

[69] Klauser, pp. 21–4, Nos 72–90, etc.

could be repeated (when need arose) at Pentecost. On 14 September, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (which had recently been given added honour by Pope Sergius I after his rediscovery in the sacristy of St Peter's of a lost relic of the True Cross) is likely to have emphasized once more the devotional relevance of a high cross.[70] Finally, on the second Sunday of Advent the Roman station was again held at Holy Cross (see above, p. 35), and references to Jerusalem again dominated the Mass, as on the fourth Sunday of Lent.

All the feasts mentioned above are major ones; they must have been celebrated by any reasonably well-run ecclesiastical establishment, however small. Bewcastle may possibly have been a station for preaching, the celebration of Mass, and the administration of the sacraments, staffed by one or more Mass-priests: there was an early tradition of the use of free-standing crosses to mark such mission-stations in Northumbria.[71] The appearance of a commemorative inscription in English on the cross may possibly indicate an *Eigenkirch* or foundation belonging to an aristocratic family.[72] The list I have given of possible liturgical contexts for the Bewcastle Cross is not exhaustive; but it is enough to show that the monument could from season to season, in unison with the ceremonies of the liturgy, take on new meanings and new emphases. The liturgy of Northumbria in the early eighth century provides contexts within which the multivalent but profoundly coherent symbolism of the Bewcastle Cross can begin to be understood.

[70] Ó Carragáin, 'Liturgical Innovations', p. 138.

[71] On the use of outlying 'little monasteries', *monasteriola*, for mission purposes, see John Godfrey, 'The Place of the Double Monastery in the Anglo–Saxon Minster System' in *Famulus Christi*, ed. Gerald Bonner (London, 1976), pp. 344–50. Godfrey emphasizes the use by St Cuthbert of free-standing crosses 'each surrounded by a fence or hedge and covered by a thatched roof' as stations for preaching, and thus presumably for celebrating Mass and administering the sacraments (p. 348).

[72] In view of the English runic commemorative inscriptions on the cross, and of the absence of Latin except for the *nomina sacra* (in striking contrast with the Ruthwell Cross), the sort of aristocratic monastery described by Patrick Wormald, 'Bede, "Beowulf" and the Conversion of the Anglo–Saxon Aristocracy', in Farrell, pp. 32–90 (at pp. 49–58), is possibly indicated. Bede's account of the proliferation of monasteries in the early eighth century (*HE* 5: 23; Colgrave and Mynors, pp. 560–1) may be relevant to Bewcastle, and in particular the monastery (with abbot Eanmund, its aristocratic founder) described by Aethelwulf in *De Abbatibus* (esp. *carmina* i–vii).