UNIVERSITY OF AGDER

THE EMERGENCE OF CHRISTIANITY WITHIN THE ANGLO-SAXON KINGDOM OF NORTHUMBRIA

AN EXPLORATION INTO ITS EARLIEST ROOTS AND AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE INFLUENCES IT HAD ON CULTURE IN THE REGION THEN AND TODAY

Margaret Maria Brenda Mjåland
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Universitetet i Agder

Fakultet for Humaniora og Pedagogikk
Institutt for moderne fremmedspråk og oversetting

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SUMMARIZING PRESENTATION

This thesis commences with a description of Pre-Roman and Roman Britain, to identify the people who lived in Northumbria and their background. The description then progresses with an explanation about the withdrawal of the Romans, and the state of affairs they left behind, giving also a reason for the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons.

Once this is established, the scene which the Anglo-Saxons meet on their arrival is depicted, and their subsequent settlement recounted. The Anglo-Saxons were a warlike people, so their belligerent activities suppressing the Celts, and the campaigning between themselves and the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms for supremacy, are disclosed, too.

Before progressing to the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity, it was necessary to divulge the kind of religion, customs, and culture they already possessed. The competition for lordship involved a high moral code of heroism, giving the poets material for their verse, so the use of heroic poetry is mentioned, too. The various attempts to convert the Anglo-Saxons are then described, and the role of Irish and Roman missionaries recorded.

The conversion of Anglo-Saxons to Christianity in the early seventh century coincided with the meeting of two traditions of Christianity in Northumbria, Celtic and Roman, which resulted in a church synod. The report on the Synod of Whitby occurs in the middle of this thesis, which is very appropriate. The decision of the Synod resulted in an important turning point within the Northumbrian Church, which involved conformity and cultural changes, too.

By far the most important development was the establishment of early Christian monasteries and other religious sites. The Northumbrian Church consisted of only a few great monasteries, but despite this disadvantage, these centres of learning succeeded in spreading literacy and education, and producing literature of a most incredible quality. An account about their founders and their daily lives is supplied, together with examples of some of the works that were produced. Finally, the beginnings of the parochial system are described, a modification which would indirectly influence the unification of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.

A new chapter focuses on Christian spiritual life, and the cult of martyrs and saints. Hagiographical studies of the two most prominent saints of Northumbria's 'Golden Age are provided. To conclude this study, the rich and abundant legacy of Anglo- Saxon Christian Northumbria is disclosed, and evidence of its continuing influence and impact is imparted.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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1.0   INTRODUCTION AND PRESENTATION OF THE THESIS

1.1   The Aim of the Study

The purpose of this study is primarily to investigate the foundations on which Christianity eventually took root in Anglo-Saxon Northumbria, in the seventh and eighth centuries. It will investigate the previous attempts and conditions of other missions. The study aims at providing and contributing information that will illuminate the pitfalls, adversities, and diversities that were encountered by those involved, before Christianity was more successfully established.

Furthermore, the intention is to examine the impact that Christianity had when and after it was introduced, and to explore some of the evidence of how it existed in the region. Finally I hope to contribute some examples of the prevailing presence and influence of Anglo-Saxon Christianity in today's Northumberland and Durham.

1.2   The Organization of the Work

The study has been organized as follows:

1.0 Introduction and Presentation of the Thesis

2.0 Changes before the Conversion to Christianity

3.0 The Conversion to Christianity

4.0 Cultural Changes in Northumbria

5.0 Saints and their Cults

6.0 The Legacy and Influences Today

7.0 Summary and Conclusion

1.3   Thesis

Christianity had been brought to the shores of Northumbria in Roman times, but when exactly is not known (Fairless 1994: 21). The Roman soldiers and their slaves who manned Hadrian's Wall came from all parts of the Roman Empire, so Christianity was known even if it existed as a minority religion. The persecution of Christians by various Roman emperors caused it to be an underground religion, too. The situation improved in 306 AD when

Constantine was declared emperor at York, because he converted to Christianity six years later. The edict of Milan in 313 AD, ordered by Constantine, gave Christians the same rights as other faiths.

While the early church in England disappeared with the departure of the Romans in the fifth century, Celtic Christianity flourished in neighbouring Scotland and Ireland. The Celtic monks made no attempt to aid their neighbours south of the Scottish border, or to save them from becoming heathen again. The early attempts at conversion had failed, and Christianity had not been firmly established. The few seeds that had been sown lay dormant.

Two crucial and almost consecutive transformations occurred – the invasion and settlement of the Anglo-Saxons, and the establishment of the Kingdom of Northumbria by the joining together of the kingdoms Bernicia and Deira. These two changes were of vital importance, and helped to pave the way for the re-awakening of Christianity. The establishment of a kingdom helped to unite the people, but a change of environment, however, was not the only catalyst required.

In 597 AD Augustine was sent by Pope Gregory 1 on a new mission to England. His success in the South of England was almost repeated in the North, when King Edwin of Northumbria, after marrying a Roman Christian princess, converted to Christianity and his people followed suit. The conversion of the region was short-lived, as the King was killed in battle in 632 AD. The Roman mission had collapsed in Northumbria after only six years.

In 635 AD the new King, Oswald, who was already a Christian, turned to Iona and the Celtic monks for help. Despite Christianity taking root, by a cruel twist of fate Edwin and Oswald represented different royal lineages within the kingdom, and these two lineages struggled continually for power within Northumbria. Equally important was that they represented also two strains of Christianity – Roman and Celtic – that had slightly different traditions. Problems were inevitable, but became more complicated when Oswiu succeeded Oswald as king. Oswiu, brought up in the Irish Celtic tradition, was married to Queen Eanflaed[1], a follower of the Roman tradition. Due to this alliance, both strains of Christianity and their different practices were represented at the Northumbrian royal court. At the Synod of Whitby in 663/ 664 AD religious differences were discussed, and a settlement was made in favour of the Roman tradition.

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[1] In the spelling of the personal names of Northumbrian Anglo-Saxon dignitaries, I have used one author's version (Fairless 1994: 103-110). My intention was to create simplicity, clarity and to prevent confusion. Many books are included in the bibliography, and the spelling varies depending upon the author. Another complication was that many names looked almost the same, yet were the names of entirely different personages.

This history of Northumbria illustrates how the presence of the right man or woman at the right time proved to be equally important whether they were kings like Edwin and Oswald, subjects as in the case of Coifi and Caedmon, or ecclesiastics such as Cuthbert and Wilfrid. Fate also played an important role, by bringing prominent and committed people together at the same period of time. Their goals in life and their fervour, whether it was due to the Christian call, ambition, or power, produced strong personalities, who guided the Kingdom of Northumbria towards a 'Golden Age'. From a modest beginning, this kingdom emerged to become one of the intellectual centres of Europe. It materialized from out of darkness, and seized the opportunity to create a new identity. Its illiterate, pagan, barbarian background was gradually left behind. The consequences of such a transformation can be almost fully contemplated through the legacy of Northumbria's culture.

1.4   Background for the Study

Jane Hawkes claims that:

> Northumbria … poised on the borderline between two cultural traditions - Roman and   Celtic – and with the crucial catalyst of Anglo-Saxon political power, became one of the greatest intellectual centres in the early medieval world (Hawkes 1996: Preface).

She further states (op.cit.) that its 'Golden Age' was due to 'a combination of political pre-eminence and religious transformation'.

Paul Cavill also maintains in his book *Anglo- Saxon Christianity* that:

> Anglo-Saxon Christianity was never a still backwater of spirituality, but was at the core of the culture, influencing it, and being influenced by it. Anglo-Saxon Christianity bred men and women of quite extraordinary holiness, but it never failed to deal with ordinary people as well. In the monasteries the sense of spiritual purpose and the need for physical work combined to give Anglo-Saxon Christianity a hard edge of pragmatism. It was theologically astute and orthodox, borrowing and developing centuries of church tradition. But it asked questions, sought answers, resolved difficulties, opposed errors, sent missions (Cavill 1999: xi).

Contrary to these positive remarks, the historian and author Paul Johnson, however, calls this period of time the 'Dark Ages' in his book *The Offshore Islanders – a History of the English people* (Johnson 1995: 3). He concedes that Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (*EHEP*) was 'perhaps the most remarkable work of the entire Dark Ages', but

still uses the same term 'Dark Ages'. The two expressions 'Golden Age' and 'Dark Ages' seem to contradict each other. This study, however, will aim at finding out if there is room for both claims, and if so, why.

1.5　Definitions and Clarification of Terms

1.5.1　Britain – England, Ireland and Scotland

Bede in his book *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* endeavours to give his readers accurate information by using specific geographical terminology about the whereabouts of Britain:

> Britain, once called Albion, is an island of the ocean and lies to the north-west, being opposite Germany, Gaul and Spain, which form the greater part of Europe, though at a considerable distance from them.[2]

The book was completed in 731 AD, and as this thesis is concerned with the same period of time, I will adopt Bede's expression, too.

England was divided among many small kingdoms such as Bernicia, Deira, Elmet, Hwicce, Mercia, East Anglia, Wessex and Sussex, but Bede treated England as a unit. When he wrote his book, the various kingdoms, however, had acquired many similar forms of administration, rule etc., so this uniformity perhaps encouraged Bede to choose a collective expression for the title of their history.

Bede also defines Ireland:

> Ireland is the largest island of all next to Britain, and lies to the west of it. But though it is shorter than Britain to the north, yet in the south it extends far beyond the limits of that island and as far as the level of North Spain, though a great expanse of sea divides them. (Ibid. : 10.)

Again Bede wishes to be as accurate as possible, which is quite a feat considering he rarely left the monastery at Jarrow after his admittance there as a small child. He must have had access to reliable information, and yet books were not easy to come by when he lived.

Scotland in the seventh century was not the size it is today. Northumbria stretched as far north as the lowlands of Scotland and the Firth of Forth (Edinburgh). In the north-west

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[2] Cf. McClure & Collins' edition of *EHEP* (1994: 9).

around Strathclyde (Glasgow) were Britons, and north of this again was Scotland, which was divided between the Picts of Pictland and the Scotia of a kingdom called Dalriada. The Scotia originally came from Ireland (Hibernia) between the second and fifth centuries (Sherley-Price 1995: 339).

1.5.2   Northumbria/Northumberland

Northumbria was the name of the Anglo-Saxon Kingdom, created by the uniting of two independent realms, Deira and Bernicia, which once were ruled separately. It included all the country east of the Pennines between the River Humber and Firth of Forth. Deira, the southern Kingdom, stretched from the Humber to the Tees corresponding roughly with today's Yorkshire. Her capital was at York.

Bernicia commenced at the Tees, and continued as far as the Lowlands of Scotland and the Firth of Forth. Its capital was Bamburgh, which was usually the seat of the senior Northumbrian king. Aethelfrith, the grandson of Ida, the first King of Bernicia, has been credited with uniting both realms in 593 AD (Stenton 1998: 75).

The Scots and Danes have been held responsible for reducing Northumbria to an earldom, an area equivalent to the counties of Northumberland and Durham today (Simpson 1991: 1). The Normans then divided this earldom into two. The area north of the Rivers Tyne and Derwent is known today as Northumberland, and stretches as far as the Scottish boundary. It is a county and no longer a kingdom. However, it is easy to mix the expressions as inhabitants of Northumberland are still called Northumbrians, and this expression is often used as an adjective, e.g. Northumbrian coastline.

1.5.3   Abbey, Priory and Monastery

It can be quite confusing and difficult to distinguish between the terms Abbey, Monastery and Priory. Abbey was a general term for any place occupied by a community of monks or nuns, who lived secluded from the world in order to devote their lives to prayer and godly works, e.g. Whitby Abbey. An abbey, which was a double-house, could have both men and women living there, and could be led by an abbess or an abbot. A priory such as Tynemouth Priory was a smaller abbey. A monastery usually had only monks living there, whereas a convent housed only nuns. The terms included all the buildings that were used, especially the church for worship. Some monasteries, however, were allowed to call

themselves abbeys because their leader was an abbot. All religious individuals who were living together had to obey a strict rule. This still applies in the Roman Catholic Church today, to those belonging to different religious orders

1.6 Plan and scope for the investigation

After giving an account of the pre-formative years, and then a description of Northumbria's dual emergence as a kingdom, I will explain about the inner tensions and struggle that faced the warrior kings, who established and sought to maintain the kingdom.

It would be insufficient and inaccurate to focus on this struggle for power alone, as life was much more than revenge and rivalry. It is necessary to include a portrait of Anglo-Saxon everyday life and culture, to show their influence on the inhabitants, and how external forces had a great influence on them, too.

I will then proceed with an account of the spread of Christianity in the area, including the missionary work of both the Celtic and Roman monks. I will include an explanation of the differences between the Celtic and Roman practices, which resulted in the Synod of Whitby in 663/664 AD.

In the discussion of the cultural changes that took place after the Synod, I will include a hagiographical study of the two most important Northern saints, the one revered and the other disliked as much then as today. I will include a description of the legacy which the region and other parts of Britain and Europe inherited.

The conclusion will be concerned with evidence of the cultural changes in Northumbria in the seventh and eighth centuries, and the effect on present day life.

2.0 CHANGES BEFORE THE CONVERSION TO CHRISTIANITY

2.1 The birth of a kingdom

2.1.1 Pre- Roman Britain

The Celts had gradually infiltrated England and Wales between the years 500-100 BC. This had not been an organized invasion, as the Pre-Roman Iron Age peoples did not arrive at the same time (Thomas 1971: 28). The Celts had originally been a group of Indo-European peoples who had a similar language, religion and culture, but they could hardly be regarded as a nation. Religion, or perhaps more correctly the Druids, gathered the peoples together. The Druids were both priests, teachers and advisers, and possessed much power. They controlled religion, forbidding any written language in order to protect their own authority. This meant that bards and poets were important and necessary, to ensure that culture was transmitted orally. There was a Celtic language (British) used in England, parts of Scotland and Wales consisting of different dialects (Thomas 1971: 28).

The Celts were great warriors, engaged as often in tribal warfare as in battles against non-Celts. They came from an area around the Danube basin[3]. They brought iron-making to Britain, forging their own weapons such as axes, spears and knives out of this hard metal. They had quite an advantage over the local inhabitants, who possessed bronze weapons.

The Pre-Roman state of Britain was such, that it was divided into several small kingdoms. The names of the tribes occupying the area to be named later as Northumbria were the Novantae, Dumnonii, Selgovae, Votadini, Brigantes and the Parisi (Morgan 1996: 25). The tribes were not free of social tension, so enclosed settlements were built in wood providing an element of security. Thanks to today's aerial photography, it is possible to identify the sites of some of their former settlements from the air. Literally hundreds of settlements cover the Northumbrian hills. Their temples, druid-circles, rock carvings and fortifications are still traceable. The wooden palisades that were built at first were replaced by wooden forts for added security, and many were placed along the length of the Cheviot Hills (Higham 1993: 10). The Romans named these people the 'Caledonians', which means the people of the woods.

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[3] In recent years there has been much discussion about the traditional view that the Hallstatt, La Tène and Belgae cultures invaded Britain. New studies, and discoveries in the 1960's and 1970's, have challenged this former standpoint, changing the picture from one of plundering Celts, to one of settlers arriving because of social-economic reasons (Potter & Johns 1992: 15-16).

The Votadini occupied the land beside the River Tyne when Agricola and his Roman forces reached the North. The Celtic nobility became romanized, and tried to rise to power again in the fifth century when the Romans left, but were no match for the Anglo-Saxons.

Celtic culture was weakened considerably during the Roman occupation. Wales and Ireland escaped Roman rule, so their Celtic culture remained intact.

2.1.2 Roman Britain

The Romans had attacked Britain in 55 BC, using a force of ten thousand men led by Julius Caesar (Burke 1985: 15). Caesar had a grudge to bear with one of the Celtic tribes, which had supported his adversary during the Gallic wars. Caesar's first attempt met with little success due to bad weather conditions at sea. His next campaign was almost another failure for the same reason, but he managed to overcome the bad weather and battle on. He managed to teach the Celts a lesson, they showed him respect, and they compensated him, but in the end the relationship between both parties became one of traders.

It was not until 43 AD, when the Emperor Claudius sent an army to Britain, that the proper invasion began. The Romans landed at Richborough in Kent[4], but their intention was to conquer, and occupy the whole of Britain. Apparently the Romans had a policy of 'divide and conquer', but in 71 AD this strategy backfired, and the major tribe of the North, the Brigantes revolted (Godfrey & Turnbull 1979: 190). There was a major battle at Scotch Corner, and the Brigantes were forced to retreat northwards. The Romans then focused their attention to conquering the North, and by 81 AD they had advanced into Scotland. Agricola, their leader and Governor of Britain, managed to press forwards as far north as the Moray Firth, and after four years managed to subdue the Caledonians. Gaining control over the Picts, however, was much more difficult. The peace that Agricola had secured did not last long and the Roman army had to withdraw first to the River Tweed. In 117 AD there was another revolt in the North, and the Romans retreated to the River Tyne area. The Roman army had had too much to control and supervise.

Hadrian was declared emperor the same year, and came to Britain to inspect the situation. He decided that a great defence wall, eighty Roman miles long, would have to be built. It reached the whole width of the country from the River Tyne to the River Eden. North of the Wall, and as far as the River Clyde and the Firth of Forth, the intervening land was

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[4] Potter & Johns 1992: 40. This traditional view that the Romans first landed in Kent has recently been disputed, due to lack of literary sources to support this idea, and questions arising about the size of a site needed to receive such a large army. The harbours at Chichester, Portsmouth and Southampton have been suggested as a more credible possibility.

occupied by the Novantae, Selgovae, Votadini and Dumnonii tribes (Jones & Mattingly 1993: 45). There were no Scots present in Britain at that time.

Along the wall, which had a height of six metres and a width of three metres, were placed seventy-nine milecastles and sixteen main forts. The forts housed between five hundred and one thousand men (Rowland 1999: 2-3). The following table gives both the Roman name and modern name of the forts, lined up along the wall from east to west (Jones & Mattingly 1993: 37).[5]

ROMAN NAME	MODERN NAME
1. Segedunum	1. Wallsend
2. Pons Aelius	2. Newcastle
3. Condercum	3. Benwell
4. Vindovala	4. Rudchester
5. Onnum	5. Halton Chesters
6. Cilurnum	6. Chesters
7. Brocolitia	7. Carrawburgh
8. Vercovicium	8. Housesteads
9. Vindolanda	9. Chesterholm
10. Aesica	10. Great Chesters
11. Magnis	11. Carvoran
12. Camboglanna	12. Castlesteads
13. Petriana	13. Stanwix
14. Aballava	14. Burgh- by- Sands
15. Congavata	15. Drumburgh
16. Maia	16. Bowness

Table 1

In the beginning there were regular skirmishes. However, from about 211 AD, there was a long period of peace. Roman soldiers were recruited from all over Europe, but local inhabitants soon became auxiliaries, too. The camps along the Wall became multi-national in origin, and different customs and religions were exchanged. Small civilian towns called 'Vicus' grew around the camps, and local girls began to marry the soldiers (Godfrey & Turnbull 1979: 196). Civilian settlements grew up at Corbridge, Chesterholm and Housesteads, camps along the Roman Wall. There followed periods of peaceful times until

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[5] The spelling of the Roman names can vary somewhat. For example the *Short Guide to the Roman Wall* (Rowland 1999) spells Vindovala= Vindobala; Onnum = Hunnum; Petriana= Ala Petriana. Camboglanna was sometimes called Banna, however, today it is known as both Birdoswald and Castlesteads.

296 AD, when the Roman Empire gradually met resistance in Europe, and Roman troops had to be withdrawn to fight the usurpers abroad.

The local inhabitants who had worked with the Romans, had already adopted their ways, and were romanized. They were more cultured than before, and used to a peaceful and well organized life. Threats, however, from Saxons and Irish pirates began to appear as early as 306 AD, followed by raids from the Picts, Scots and Saxons, in 343 AD. An attack in 367 AD involving Picts, Scots, Saxons and the Irish pirates was called the 'Barbarian Conspiracy'. The Romans experienced conspiracy among their own ranks, when a military commander called Magnus Maximus, declared himself as Emperor of Britain in 383 AD.

The tension and political unrest experienced in Northumbria would gradually grow, as Roman soldiers were forced to return to Europe and face the Goths, who had begun to attack Rome. The departure of the Roman Army happened gradually, the last Roman soldier being evacuated in 410 AD (Godfrey & Turnbull 1979: 197). Three and a half centuries of prosperity under the Romans was now about to change. The Romano-British were no longer as warlike, as they had been used to the Romans sorting out problems such as skirmishes and raids. They were given the advice to organize their own defence.

The tribes north of Hadrian's Wall consequently awoke again, and took advantage of the lack of defence. They soon started to attack and plunder again. The Roman departure had left the native gaelic-speaking Britons living beside Hadrian's Wall, defenceless to the Gaels of Ireland and the Picts from Scotland. These took advantage of the vulnerable situation, and frequently attacked the North. Scots from Ireland harried the western coast, while Saxon pirates started to appear from the south. The inhabitants living along or near to Hadrian's Wall were well and truly sandwiched in and suffered greatly.

2.1.3 Invasion of the Anglo-Saxons

The Dark Ages had begun. Orderly administration experienced under the Romans disappeared, and with the order, the culture (Mayr-Harting 1991: 13). It was almost impossible to keep records in such turbulent times; so we have very little definite knowledge about what actually transpired.

We do know, however, that in an attempt to re-impose authority, the Ancient British followed the example of the Romans, who in their time had recruited soldiers from tribes that had attacked Roman territory. British leaders had no alternative than to seek the help of non-Christian mercenaries from abroad. Shiploads of Saxons and Angles from Northern Germany, and Jutes originating from southern Denmark, soon landed in Britain. According to a ninth

century document, *Historia Brittonum,* the mercenaries were offered land in return for protection, but the alliance backfired, and the protectors became the attackers. Rather than help the British, the Anglo-Saxons seized the very land they had come to protect.

Gildas in *De Excidio Britanniae (the Ruin of Britain),* written in 535-550 AD, tells of the coming of the English (Fairless 1994: 2). The Venerable Bede also records these events in the first chapters of his book (*EHEP*). This book, however, was not completed until 731 AD, so Bede has perhaps used Gildas' version as a reliable source for his account. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,* started about 890 AD and attributed to King Alfred, provides a record of events in England from the beginning of the Christian era until 1154 (Drabble 1989: 17, 30). However, it more or less repeats Bede, who used Gildas' account (Fairless 1999: 4).

2.1.4   Politics and pagan kingdoms

Two brothers, Hengest and Horsa, said to be descendants of the pagan God Woden, were approached by the British King Vortigern and given a free hand (Sherley-Price 1955: 56). The pagan daughter of Hengist was married to Vortigern. They advanced north as far as the Humber and sent their sons, Octa and Abissa, to occupy the North Humber land. They were not the only mercenaries.

According to Bede, the Angles settled in East Anglia, the East Midlands and Northumbria. The Saxons seized land in Essex, Sussex, Middlesex and Wessex. The Jutes settled in East Kent, the Isle of Wight and Hampshire. By the end of the sixth century half of Britain had been invaded. These Germanic invaders started to shape kingdoms for themselves, fighting both the native Britons and themselves for land. They drove the Christian Celts westwards into Wales, or northwards into the highlands of Scotland.

The pirate settlements in the North had increased in number, but they lacked a leader. He arrived in 547 AD, with fifty ships and approached the Yorkshire coast, landing at Flamborough Head (Sherley-Price 1955: 333). Ida, the leader of the Angles, pressed northwards, crossing first the River Tees and then proceeding to establish the Kingdom of Bernicia in the land of the Ottadini. The Ottadini were then driven west into Cumbria.

The almost inaccessible crags of Bamburgh were chosen as the Royal stronghold and a wooden stockade built to strengthen the defence. A band of pagan mercenaries had put the area called the East Riding of Yorkshire under English control, and another band had established themselves at Bamburgh. There is very little historical evidence about these events.

2.1.5   Northumbrian Kings in the sixth and seventh centuries

The following lists of Northumbrian Kings will illustrate how treacherous the times were for rulers in the sixth and seventh centuries (Sherley-Price 1955: 333, 334). Few monarchs ruled for very long, and they were either killed in battle or murdered. Often the enemy who overtook the throne suffered the same fate as their predecessor, and it was not uncommon to die by the hand of the predecessor's son.

DATE	EVENT (Stenton 1998: 59,75, 76, 105)
547 AD	Ida became the first King of Bernicia and he ruled for twelve years.
560 AD	Bernicia fell into the hands of King Aelle; the first recorded King of Deira.
588 AD	King Aelle died, and King Aethelric of Bernicia acquired his kingdom
593 AD	Aethelfrith became King of Bernicia, and at a later date married Acha the daughter of Aelle, King of Deira. The two Kingdoms were united for the first time, and Aethelfrith became the first King of Northumbria.
597 AD	Pope Gregory 1 sent Augustine and a group of missionaries to Kent, where King Aethelberht had married Bertha, a Christian Frankish princess.

Table 2

In the seventh century the kingdom of Northumbria was the most powerful in the land. How this came about is not really known, as there are no complete accounts of the struggle and rise to power. There is no evidence of historic writing in Northumbria during the sixth century. This is one reason that the period is called 'The Dark Ages'. Historians in other words are left literally 'in the dark'.

DATE	EVENT (Stenton 1998: 79, 82)
604 AD	Oswald, son of Aethelfrith, was born.
616 AD	Edwin became King of Northumbria.
617 AD	Aethelfrith was killed in battle by King Raedwald of East Anglia.
619 AD	Edwin, King of Northumbria, married Aethelburh, daughter of the Kentish King Aethelbert, and his Christian, Frankish wife, Bertha.
633 AD	Edwin was killed in battle by King Penda of Mercia. Eanfrith became King of Bernicia. Osric became King of Deira.
634 AD	Oswald became King of Northumbria, after uniting the Kingdoms of Bernicia and

	Deira.
642 AD	Oswald was killed in battle by King Penda of Mercia. Oswiu became King of Bernicia. Oswine became sub- king of Deira.
651 AD	Oswine was murdered. Aethelwold became sub-king of Deira.
655 AD	Oswiu killed King Penda of Mercia.
670 AD	Ecgfrith took over as king.
685 AD	Aldfrith became king.

Table 3

Not only was the life expectancy of a Northumbrian king in the seventh century very short, but the likelihood of being killed in battle huge. Weak or strong, the kings had a price on their heads, and they lived by the motto kill or be killed.

In the words of Peter Hunter Blair:

The fates of Northumbrian kings seem totally lacking in the hallmark of any golden quality, telling of an age of violence, with short reins opening in triumph and ending in disaster (Hunter Blair 1996: 40).

This is another reason why this age was dubbed 'the Dark Ages'.

2.1.6 Dynasty strife in the eighth century

706 AD	Osred succeeded his father at the age of seven and there was civil war for a time.
716 AD	Coenred followed as king when Osred was killed. He ruled for only two years.
718 AD	Osric managed to rule for eleven years before he was slain in battle.
729 AD	Ceolwulf succeeded to the throne and was king for eight years, when he became a monk.
738 AD	Eadberht became king, ruled for twenty-one years, and then entered a monastery.
757 AD	Oswulf became king after his father, but was killed by his household one year later.
758 AD	Aethelwald Moll became king.
765 AD	Moll abdicated and Alhred took over.
774 AD	Alhred was expelled as king, and Aethelred I became his successor.

779 AD	Aelfwald I became king.
788 AD	Osred II ruled only two years, and then he was forced into exile in 792 AD.
790 AD	Aethelred I was restored to the throne for an additional six years.
796 AD	Osbald took over, but ruled less than a year.

Table 4

The Vikings had already sacked Lindisfarne in 793 AD, and looted the monastery with its great treasury of books and manuscripts. Any form of peace was completely shattered. After the heathens destroyed Lindisfarne, unrest and turmoil continued to be on the daily agenda. The raiders from the sea terrorized the inhabitants, but like the Saxons they eventually exchanged raids for settlement. The age of Anglo-Saxon kings ended in 978 AD. In typical fashion the king's son was murdered and a new king succeeded to the throne, but was later forced into exile.

Thirty-four Anglo-Saxon kings had ruled this new Dynasty, which eventually stretched from the Forth to the Humber, so it is almost unbelievable that under such disquieting conditions, Christianity was able to take a hold, and a literary culture developed.

At the time of King Edwin there were seven main Anglo- Saxon Kingdoms called the Heptarchy: Northumbria (including Deira and Bernicia), Mercia (including the Middle Angles), East Anglia, Essex (the East Saxons), Kent, Sussex (the South Saxons) and Wessex (the West Saxons). These were kingdoms supported by the aristocracy. Under the king there were two levels of aristocracy, both groups being freemen. The difference between them was measured in the amounts of land owned. There were *thegns* (upper class) and *ceorls* (lower class). Under these were slaves, so the Anglo- Saxon society had different social classes. At the top was the king, and the most powerful one became an overlord over all the kingdoms claiming the title *Bretwalda /Brytenwalda* –'Britain Ruler'. The first to achieve this were:

1. Aelle of Sussex.
2. Ceawlin of Wessex.
3. Aethelbert of Kent.
4. Raedwald of East Anglia.
5. Edwin of Northumbria.
6. Oswald of Northumbria.
7. Oswiu of Northumbria.

Table 5   (Bede named these seven in his *EHEP*).

The title of Overlord or even King had to be gained and then continually safeguarded. Power changed hands overnight. The above lists of the sixth and seventh century kings easily illustrate this.

The establishment of the Christian Church in both Northumbria and Britain generally was vulnerable to this constant change. Whether a kingdom was to be Christian or not, or if it already was Christian whether it could remain Christian for long, depended upon the ruling king's faith or feelings towards Christianity. The spread of Christianity and political power often went hand in hand.

2.2   Anglo-Saxon Culture

2.2.1   Everyday life

With the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons occurred a gradual change in culture. The Roman society was primarily urban, or as was the case in Northumbria, primarily military. The Anglo-Saxons saw no luxurious advantages in villas made of bricks and with tiled roofs, baths with under- floor heating, or well built streets and roads.

Saxon families settled on newly won farmland under the protection of chiefs and tribal rulers, and a strong feeling of kinship was gradually created. The Roman towns were ignored as the invaders did not have the means to run them. They were regarded with suspicion, being completely foreign to what the Anglo-Saxons were used to. Their lives centred on the farm and village, building small dwellings with wattle and daub walls and roofs thatched with straw. These were quite a contrast to the stone buildings of the Romans. The Anglo-Saxons lived in one room, which was used for living, cooking, eating, entertaining or sleeping in

Pagan Anglo-Saxon life was a matter of farming the forest clearings under the direction of kings' thegns, or princes. Freemen often worked in cooperatives and shared the work. They ploughed long, narrow strips of land, growing wheat, rye, barley and oats. Villages were built near natural resources, which could provide the villagers with what they needed. Their diet was of bread, milk, cheese, eggs, and occasionally meat. There was also the opportunity for fresh- water fishing, e.g. for eels.

The settlements were self -supporting, and it was the responsibility of the *thegns* in each area to carry out regular surveys to assess how much was being produced, and what the size of the task force was. The appointed Reeve or *gerefa,* was given the task of collecting such information. At the heart of each group of settlements was a *tun,* a kind of manor house

run by the *gerefa*. Here bills were paid for the hire of the land or *hide*. The king would send his official or visit the *tun* himself to check the running of things and to collect payments.

Depending upon mixed economies of agriculture, hunting and animal husbandry they became self-sufficient. They also had a system of money compensations called *wergeld,* for death, personal injury or theft.

2.2.2 Craftsmanship and trade

The Anglo-Saxons brought their own ideas, and skills with them (Wills 1950: 97). There were blacksmiths, *isernsmithas,* who had a busy livelihood making swords and lances. There was a steady trade in making nails, fish- hooks, horseshoes, spades, ploughs, and wagon wheels, as they were much needed commodities. Metalworkers were also in great demand as both men and women wore jewellery. Most jewellery was made of bronze, although gold or silver was used, too. Metalwork was often decorated with patterns.

There were also saddlers and shoemakers, *sceowyrthas*, selling their high quality wares. Shoes were made of cattle or deer hide. In the absence of currency, the people paid their rent and bills in kind. Failure to pay what you owed, could end in slavery until the bill was paid.

The Anglo-Saxons were also highly skilled in the art of weaving. Wool was spun into thread, which was used to make material for clothing and bedding. All these different imported crafts benefited and helped to educate the local population. Every single *ham* or *tun* had its own supply of craftsmen. Their knowledge of masonry can be appreciated in the old monasteries and churches that exist, and that can be seen today.

Carpenters, *treowyrthas,* were busy along the Tyne, and at seaports such as Berwick, Amble, Alnmouth and Newbiggin building their *scipu*. The acquisition of land and territory involved the work of maintaining and protecting it afterwards. Disputes, skirmishes and fighting were commonplace, and captives were often tortured with sadistic cruelty.[6]

The Anglo-Saxons were highly skilled in many and varied crafts. Just by studying those objects that have been found, in places where they have had settlements or burial places, it is possible to understand the extent of their technology. Many scholars, however, believe that the Anglo-Saxon farmers were generally illiterate, and that literature was the product of the Cathedral schools.

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[6] Bragg 1996: 572-576. The treatment of the monks of Lindisfarne, at the hands of the half-believing, half-pagan King Ecgfrith, because of their reluctance to follow the Roman rule advocated at the Synod of Whitby, clearly illustrates this cruelty.

2.2.3 Worship

The Anglo- Saxons were pagans when they came to Britain. They practised traditional polytheistic religions, worshipping gods of nature, and gods and goddesses thought to have the power to control everyday life. They believed in war-like gods who rewarded bravery and death in battle (Cavill 1999: 3). If a warrior needed strength in battle, he might pray to Tiw, the god of battle, or Woden, the god of war. Thunor, the god of thunder, and Frigg, the goddess of love, were also popular. The Anglo-Saxons also believed that they were descended from their gods.

If there was need for a good harvest, then villagers prayed to gods and goddesses of nature. There were gods for every need, and they ensured material success. Worship took place outdoors, often people met together in woodland groves. Offerings were made to the spirits of trees, springs and stones, which were held in great reverence. Prayers and charms were given to secure a desired outcome.

The Romano-British population that greeted the Anglo-Saxons was still in the process of becoming Christian, and they could not attempt to evangelize the pagans that arrived on their shores. Conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity began in Kent in 597 AD, but Christianity did not take hold in northern Britain until the Irish missionaries from Iona, began to visit in the seventh century.

2.2.4 Life and death

The kings were powerful and could accumulate land, riches and territory. Ownership could change hands very quickly. Those in power needed to protect their wealth and possessions by having a large and strong army. The army needed to be paid, so it was important to win in battle and that the spoils of war were enough to go around. Success was guaranteed by having sufficient arms, and weapons had to be bought and paid for.

At the end of a battle the warriors would return to the Royal hall and celebrate. They would eat and drink mead, receive their share of the booty, listen to heroic verse about former battles and the battle of the day, and pledge allegiance (Cavill 1999: 3). This community spirit was essential for the preservation of power and the morale of the group. The king was expected to be a lavish host. Such treatment gave his followers a feeling of security and that all was well. The warrior tradition was brought into England with the Anglo-Saxons themselves. The king was essentially a war leader, and was expected to provide opportunities for plunder and glory. Those who failed to provide land and rich booty were often killed.

The new religion, Christianity, was regarded as being too gentle and mild for warriors. Mercy and love did not appeal to them, because it was not manly enough. A Christian king of East Anglia, Edmund, who had begun to pardon his enemies, was murdered by the Danes, another pagan Germanic people.

2.2.5 Death and burial

The earth has preserved a store of information about the Anglo-Saxon culture, and to acquire this, archaeologists have searched in the barrows/chambers that have contained the Anglo-Saxon dead. There are certain peculiarities that determine that these are Anglo-Saxon. Graves belonging to Celts or Romans usually stood alone and on their own or with not more than two or three others, and were the resting places of distinguished people. The placing of Anglo-Saxons graves formed a regular cemetery, where people from the same district were buried near each other.

It was the practice of other races to lay the body on the ground and build a chamber and mound above it. The Anglo-Saxons laid the deceased in a deep grave before they constructed the barrow. The body was usually stretched out on its back, but sometimes placed in a sitting position. The size of the barrow depended upon the importance of the deceased. The dead were buried with their personal possessions such as jewellery, tools and weapons. Articles of personal adornment were many. Brooches and buckles made of bronze have been found. Rings, necklaces, or beads made of amber or glass, combs made of bone and hairpins have been stored. As pagans the Anglo-Saxons believed these objects were precious to the deceased and useful in the afterlife.

If the person had belonged to the aristocracy, then they would be buried in a main grave. Wealthy Anglo-Saxon graves which have been discovered and opened have revealed several bodies around the main grave, suggesting that wives and favourite servants have been buried at the same time and quite possibly alive. This tells us about the expectations of the Anglo-Saxons regarding the afterlife, and also the kind of hierarchy that existed. The amount of weapons (shields, swords and spears) in a grave told of the status of the deceased. A warrior would have many weapons buried with him, and a tribe member perhaps just one sword.

The Anglo-Saxons had a fatalistic outlook on life. Fate, *wyrd*, dictated who would live and die, and what sort of life that person would experience. Everyday life was often one of blood feuds, wars and death. The bereaved deeply mourned their loved ones, friends, and family who were suddenly taken from them. Death might have been quick, but burial was an

organized and serious affair. Elegies and songs were composed to express the loss of the bereaved, and the deceased were honoured by the way they were buried. The Anglo-Saxons disposed of their dead either by cremation or burial. When cremation was used, the ashes were deposited in highly decorated urns, and then later buried in cemeteries, as was the practice.

Converted Christian Anglo-Saxons were buried lying full length and without grave goods (Thomas 1971: 106). Christianity introduced the concept of 'you can not take it with you'. It took some time, however, before their former highly regarded practice was set aside and deposits in graves disappeared. It was also Christian practice to lay the dead in their graves east-west, with the head facing west. Graves were often marked, and some had stone slabs with the names of the deceased inscribed in Latin (Thomas 1971: 106).

Today we know much more about Anglo-Saxon culture because of the discovery and then excavation of these cemeteries, and also how present burial practices have developed. Life expectancy was not great in Anglo-Saxon times, and this was the case for peace-loving monks, too. The monastery cemetery at Wearmouth, tells us that the average life-span was thirty years (Hunter Blair 1996: 153).

3.0   THE CONVERSION TO CHRISTIANITY

3.1   Early Celtic Christianity

We do not have any certain information as to when or how the earliest Christianity came to Britain and was introduced to its original inhabitants. The faith of the British and Irish peoples, known as Celtic Christianity, had grown from many sources. The Celtic-speaking British were overcome by the Romans who invaded in 43 AD (Wood 2006: 7). However, they had had contact with Christianity independent from the Romans, proving that Christianity had reached them from other routes, e.g. trade routes from the East (Thomas 1971: 88). Furthermore, the Celtic church was not an identifiable organization. It was led by abbots not bishops, and was monastic in nature, copying the example of the Desert Fathers, who fled the temptations of Egyptian cities in the third century. Celtic Christianity was strong in Ireland, and prospered because the island had never been invaded by the Romans. It spread from here to south-west Scotland with Irish missionaries.

3.2   Early Roman Christianity

Christianity was introduced to Britain during the Roman occupation, but it did not lead to a mass conversion. This is understandable as the Romans had their own gods, and evidence of this worship has been found on former sites of Roman stations along Hadrian's Wall, e.g. the Statue of Fortuna at Birdoswald (Rowland 1999: 46) and the Temple of Mithras at Carrawburgh (Simpson 1991: 19). There were Christian slaves and converts, but it was illegal to be a Christian, until Emperor Constantine himself was converted in 313 AD, and the Edict of Milan was passed, allowing freedom of worship (Thomas 1971: 72). He adopted the Christian faith for the whole of the Roman Empire. The following year, in 314 AD, Britain was represented at the Council of Arles by three bishops from York, London and Lincoln. This suggests that there could have been a structured church with existing dioceses. The first British martyr, St. Alban, had been also recorded (Fairless 1994: 20). For the rest of the fourth century two things happened that were interrelated. Christianity began to expand at the same time as the Roman military strength gradually weakened.

The evidence of Christianity before the Angles came to Northumbria is minimal, and suggests that it was a minority religion. Signs of a church dedicated to St. Martin, and a cemetery, have been found near Brampton on the Stanegate, a Roman road from Corbridge to Carlisle (Rowland 1999: 44). At Corbridge, small objects such as a ring with Chi-Rho motif, and fragments of third century glassware bearing the Christian fish motif (Fairless 1994: 22)

have been found. Further south in Yorkshire at the Roman excavation site Catterick (Fairless 1994: 22), there have been discovered a sandstone block and a glass bottle bearing the Christian Chi-Rho symbol (derived from the first letters in the Greek word *Christos).*

After 450 AD, there were no more traces of Christianity for over a hundred years. The Pagan Anglian period is believed to have been from about 400-650 AD.

3.3   The Irish mission on Iona

In the year 565 AD St. Columba and twelve monks sailed from Ireland to Scotland and founded a monastery on Iona, an island off the west coast of Scotland (McClure & Collins 1994: 386). Their intentions were to convert as many as possible to Christianity. Columba was forty years old and had already spent his life setting up monastic centres of learning in Ireland. Columba's form of monasticism became linked with that of Ninian, a monk who had founded a monastery and school at Whithorn in Galloway two hundred years earlier. Ninian was born in 360 AD, and had been made a bishop by the Pope at a young age. On his return from Rome he had visited Martin of Tours. Greatly influenced by him, he established a monastery of the same kind. Columba's Celtic form of monasticism was different from that of Ninian's, but they were compatible.

In 597 AD, some thirty years after Columba's arrival on Iona, another missionary landed in Britain, this time in Kent. St. Augustine had been sent to Britain by the newly elected Pope Gregory, who was greatly concerned with the pastoral and missionary work among the heathens. He would bring with him the Roman form of Christianity.

3.4   The Roman Catholic Mission of St. Augustine in Kent

The country in the South was gradually re-converted after St. Augustine's arrival from Rome. He was sent on a mission by Pope Gregory to convert the pagan Angles into Angels (Cavill 1999: 17). He was advised to convert kings and noblemen, in the hope that their subjects would follow suit. Augustine chose the kingdom of Kent first, because King Aethelbert was married to Bertha, a Christian princess from Gaul. This choice of tactics seemed wise, as both the king and his followers did convert. Pope Gregory continued to give St. Augustine advice on how best to establish the Church, but it was not always easy or so simple to carry out papal instructions. The pagan Anglo-Saxons had erected temples to worship and to offer gifts to the spirits of trees, springs and stones. Their gods had travelled with them to Britain, and their presence gave them security in an otherwise insecure world. How could the unknown Christian God compete with their native gods and goddesses?

The Anglo-Saxons were a nation of warriors, who honoured heroism and bravery. Physical fighting against an enemy or loss of life in battle earned the prize of heaven. Avenging the violent death of a family member was compulsory, and a question of duty. The Christian message of 'turning the other cheek', and of 'forgiving your brother', must have been completely foreign to such blood-thirsty men and women.

Their ideals were high, each warrior chief demanding of his men unbending loyalty, and unflinching bravery whatever the odds. Self-sacrificing fidelity was a kind of parallel with Christ's ultimate act, but the idea of the chief offering himself for his subjects, as Christ did for mankind, would have been repugnant. The Crucifixion and death of Christ on the cross represented defeat and shame, not victory and glory. Christ would have been regarded as a weak figure, a complete contrast to their mighty leaders. His triumph on the Cross would have been an act they would initially have failed to understand.

Finding common ground on which to start to establish the Church would have been far from easy. On the occasions the monks recited from their daily *Psalter*, there is the chance that they may have been met with more understanding from their converts. The psalms they chanted from the Old Testament in the *Bible* would have had more appeal, as God is presented here as being powerful, and stronger than any other god and full of vengeance, as illustrated by Psalm 143.

Psalm 143 (Lauds Week 4, Tuesday), is a psalm for victory and peace, but also very warlike (*Psalter*. Collins 1983: 267):

> *Blessed be the Lord, my rock*
> *who <u>trains my arms for battle</u>,*
> *who <u>prepares my hands for war</u>.*
>
> *He is my love, <u>my fortress</u>;*
> *he is my <u>stronghold</u>, my saviour,*
> *<u>my shield</u>, my place of refuge.*
> *He <u>brings peoples under my rule</u>.*
>
> *Lord, what is man that you care for him,*
> *mortal man, that you keep him in mind;*
> *man, who is merely a breath*
> *Whose life fades like a shadow?*

> *Lower your heavens* and *come down;*
> *touch the mountains; wreathe them in smoke.*
> *Flash your lightnings; rout the foe,*
> *shoot your arrows and put them to the flight* …

This was a God of power and might, in the eyes of the Israelites of the Old Testament, and would appear equally so for the Anglo-Saxon Christians. The monks, however, chanted in Latin and so what they sang would have to be translated.

In many of the Psalms, the Israelites cry out to God asking Him to intercede on their behalf, and punish their enemies. The Anglo-Saxons were no strangers to conflicts with neighbouring tribes, so the canticle from the Book of Jeremiah chapter 14, v 17-21 (Lauds, Friday week 3), would be easy for converts to identify themselves with:

> *... If I go out into the field,*
> *behold those slain by the sword!*
> *And if I enter the city,*
> *behold the diseases of famine* … (*Psalter*. Collins 1983: 223).

This is a lament of the people in time of famine and war, an everyday situation familiar to the Anglo-Saxons. The Anglo-Saxons, however, did not cry to their leader to avenge them. On the contrary, they carried out this exercise themselves, and for their leader. Being a very pragmatic people, they chose a god to worship who guaranteed success in battle. The tales, however, about the Old Testament kings such as Saul and David, and their battles against the enemies of God, would suit the ears of the Anglo-Saxons. They themselves fought with the gods against giants.

The Pope advocated caution and respect when his missionaries confronted followers of an established religion, even though it was heathen. Familiar practices and habits would be just as dear and as important to the heathens, as Christian practices were to Christians. The removal of something already giving security and meaning to their lives could cause many reactions – refusal, anger, animosity, hostility and mistrust. The damage could be irreparable, and jeopardize the whole mission. As faithful followers of a religion, they showed that they had the ability to worship, and therefore could be faithful Christians, too. The message of Christ was to be told as was intended, but the Pope gave orders that pagan temples could be converted into Christian ones, and that pagan celebrations could also be adapted into Christian

celebrations. A new way of thinking could arise from the old, instead of it being set aside. Religion as a means or a system which explained life, was important to both pagan and Christian. The spirit and the heart of the Anglo- Saxons could be won over, even if initially it was the material benefits they considered most. The Christian message might be understood gradually.

3.5   Roman Christianity and the conversion of King Edwin

Edwin is remembered as the first Christian King of Northumbria. His conversion required the persuasion of both man, and divine intervention by God, not only once but thrice. The first time took place when Edwin was a young prince and a fugitive on the run. He sought refuge from his foe Aethelfrith, at the court of Raedwald, King of the Angles. Aethelfrith found out, and tried to bribe and then threaten the Anglian King into handing Edwin over. Edwin was warned by a friend, and he ran off into the night. An extraordinary thing happened next. Edwin sat alone in the dark trying to plan his next course of action, when he was approached by a stranger who asked him three questions:

What would he give for safety?

What would he give for kingly power?

What would he give for eternal salvation?

When Edwin replied 'Lifelong allegiance', the stranger then placed his hands on his head. Edwin was to remember this sign, act and conversation at a later date, and then undertake what he had promised. Meanwhile Raedwald's wife had found out what her husband had intended, and her anger at such a proposition, changed his mind and his support. Aethelfrith became the victim instead, and was killed in battle by Raedwald, who had taken up Edwin's cause. Edwin became King of Northumbria.

Shortly after this event, a Roman mission was sent to the North when King Edwin of Northumbria married Aethelburh, a Christian princess of Kent. Before their marriage Edwin had promised to allow her to continue practising her Roman Catholic faith, and also to consider converting himself. The Christian princess was accompanied by Paulinus to the royal residence at York. However, despite the presence of her chaplain and his ardent missionary work, a whole year passed without Edwin committing himself. He did not refuse, but needed a push in the right direction. An attempt by the West Saxons on Easter Day to assassinate him helped to do this. One of his loyal nobles named Lilla took the deadly knife-blow intended for the king, and Edwin was saved (McClure & Collins 1994: 86).

The queen gave birth to a daughter on the same day, and Edwin, who was both relieved and full of gratitude, was said to have been persuaded by Paulinus to give thanks to the Christian God. Edwin also promised to baptise his daughter Eanflaed on Whit Sunday, if the true God would give him a victory over the West Saxons. After Eanflaed was baptised, the king received instruction by Paulinus. Still Edwin wavered, and it was not until the monk placed his hands on the king's head that Edwin remembered a promise of long ago.

The missionary work of Paulinus had been a battle in itself, but it was far from over. Edwin needed double reassurance, and consulted his pagan high priest Coifi and his noblemen for advice. Coifi was already disillusioned and disappointed by their pagan gods, as they had not favoured him particularly despite his loyal service. Coifi advised Edwin that it was time to try something new. One of the noblemen agreed, and his famous response is recorded by Bede in *EHEP*:

> This is how the present life of man on earth, King, appears to me in comparison with that time which is unknown to us. You are sitting feasting with your ealdormen and thegns in winter time; the fire is burning on the hearth in the middle of the hall and all inside is warm, while outside the wintry storms of rain and snow are raging; and a sparrow flies swiftly through the hall. It enters in at one door and quickly flies out through the other. For the few moments it is inside, the storm and wintry tempest cannot touch it, but after the briefest moment of calm, it flits from your sight, out of the wintry storm and into it again. So this life of man appears for a moment; what follows or indeed what went before, we do know not at all. If this new doctrine brings us more certain information, it seems right that we should accept it (McClure & Collins 1994: 95).

There was much agreement, but one more act was made to mark that Christianity had replaced the worship of pagan gods. Coifi mounted a stallion, and rode to the pagan shrine, where he desecrated it by hurling a spear inside, making it unfit for worship. As high priest, he was forbidden to ride a war horse or carry weapons. His defiance demonstrated that he had turned his back completely on paganism, and his dramatic deed marked the decision of many (McClure & Collins 1994: 96).

On Easter Day, 627 AD, King Edwin and his followers were baptised in a wooden chapel at York. Paulinus persuaded Edwin to replace the chapel with a stone basilica, matching churches of the continent. More baptisms followed in the River Glen, near the royal palace of Ad-gefrin (Yeavering). Paulinus and his assistant used thirty-six days to instruct and baptize converts. Whether it was due to their personal conviction, or the king's wishes, or a combination of both, nevertheless, thousands were converted. Their dislike of the ambiguities

of life, and their longing for immortality made Christianity attractive. Paulinus is to be admired for his zeal and perseverance when instructing his pagan audience. He had been issued with a mammoth task, as Christian doctrine would have seemed completely foreign to the people, and would have needed explanation, interpretation and translation.

Edwin's change of conviction was not altogether noble, rather more self-centred. He was a king of his time, having all his thoughts concentrated on the struggle for power. Anyone who threatened his kingdom was the enemy. The foe Edwin usually fought against was pagan, so he was regarded as a saint and martyr when he was killed at the Battle of Hatfield Chase, six years later.

The death of Edwin was a great setback for the Church in Northumbria, and it seemed very likely that Northumbria could revert to paganism again. Christianity was too new and had not such a firm grip on its converts. Its establishment had been short-lived, and the situation was made worse, when Edwin's young widow, Queen Aethelburh fled and returned to Kent, taking Paulinus with her. One heroic deacon named James, the former assistant to Paulinus, was all that remained behind to help the new Roman Catholic community to survive.

Northumbria was ruled by two kings, one in Deira and the other in Bernicia. The reigns of Osric and Eanfrith were short-lived. Northumbria, however, reverted to paganism before many people were killed by Cadwallon, King of Gwynedd.

3.6   Celtic Christianity and the conversion of Northumbria by Aidan

The real conversion of Northumbria was due to the efforts of Celtic missionaries from Iona. When Edwin slew Aethelfrith many years earlier, the dead king's sons Eanfrid, Oswald and Oswiu, and daughter Ebbe had to flee and look for asylum (Hawkes 1996: 35). A conquering king often exterminated all the members of the defeated enemy, to reduce the possibility of revenge at a later date. These children were Edwin's nephews and niece, but they wisely removed themselves from court. They took refuge with the Irish monks of Iona, who both educated them and taught them about the Christian faith. In Northumbria Edwin's children were also Christian, but they received instruction from the monks of Rome. The Christian Church was one at the time and the Christian message the same. There were already differences in practice, however, and these differences would clash and become more apparent at a later date.

When the princes Eanfrith and Osric were killed, the throne belonged to Prince Oswald. He decided to become King of Northumbria and raised an army to confront King

Cadwallon. The armies met at a place called Heavenfield. On the eve of the battle Oswald had a wooden cross erected to show that he fought as a Christian. Cadwallon was killed in battle, and Oswald recovered the whole of Northumbria.

Oswald set about restoring Christianity, too. Once he was settled at court in Bamburgh, one of his first actions was to invite missionaries from the Celtic monastery of Iona, just off the west coast of Scotland. It was not surprising that it was from Iona, so familiar to him from childhood, that he requested help. Oswald did not seek the help of Paulinus for another reason. If he did this, then Paulinus, who was also Bishop of York, might request that King Edwin's son, Oswine, be made king. Oswald, however, did have a genuine intention to convert his people, and his role as a Christian king cannot be underestimated. The king had real power over others, and if a mission was to succeed, his support was needed. The hostility of a king could have the adverse effect and result in failure.

The approach of the missionary was important, too. The first monk that had been sent had been stern and unbending, so returned after making no headway. Another monk, by the name of Aidan, hearing of his brother's failure came with advice, and then was sent instead (Hawkes 1996: 42). Conversion involved a change from one thing to another. If it required that everything from the past had to be discarded, then such a request could easily be met with fear and reluctance, reducing the chances of a conversion. Change was usually a personal decision and a choice for something better. The converted needed to find this out themselves, and not have the decision thrust upon them. Leaving one belief behind to embark on something new could be made easier, if some of the old and familiar were incorporated in the new, and also appreciated for its contribution.

Aidan arrived, using a different approach. He was considerate, chose simple methods, and was interested in coming in contact with and talking to people. He preferred to walk for this reason, and seldom rode a horse. Gradually, he won respect as he gave the impression of being genuine, interested, and approachable. Aidan evangelised the people of Northumbria, by preaching the gospel in a down-to-earth manner. He used stories from the Bible that they could easily understand, and which they could associate themselves and their daily lives with. He did not use the language of scholars, but kept his message clear and simple. He recognized and respected his listeners, and met them at their level, taking into account also their barbaric customs. They would never have accepted rebuke or reprimand. The first monk sent from the monastery of Iona had failed, perhaps because he had never considered the needs, or the circumstances of his converts.

Aidan was requested by King Oswald to found a monastery, and he chose a site on the island of Lindisfarne. The Celtic monks had already consecrated him as bishop in 635 AD, before he left Iona. He was not to go to York, but to continue the work of Paulinus from Lindisfarne. Aidan was to found a community identical to the one from which he had come. Lindisfarne was a wise choice, as the mainland was only two miles away, and could be easily reached at low tide. When Lindisfarne became an island again at high tide, it also became a haven, providing peace and solitude for the monks at prayer and work. There was also the advantage of having the royal palace of Bamburgh, and the protection of the king nearby.

Aidan and his monks used Lindisfarne as the base for their mission. They carried out their mission at low tide, when they could walk over to the mainland, returning before high tide. King Oswald often accompanied Aidan when he was preaching. Aidan spoke the language of the Irish monks which Oswald knew so well, and Oswald who was bilingual, translated while Aidan preached.

3.7   Contrasts and conflicts between Roman and Celtic Christianity

The spread of Christianity brought the Roman and Celtic Churches into direct conflict with each other. The Celtic tradition that antagonized the admirers of Rome was not heretical, but the Celtic church[7] differed from Rome in the way its monks tonsured their heads and in its reckoning of the date of Easter. The chief criticism was about its organization, because Rome wanted uniformity. Within the bounds of the Roman Empire, the Church was organized in the same fashion as in political life. Each city had its bishop, and each province its metropolitan. The Bishop of Rome was the head of the hierarchy because the leader of the apostles had died in the city, but also because of Rome's long political supremacy.

The Christianity of Ireland was neither territorial nor episcopal. It was more tribal, reflecting the clans of Ireland rather than the highly centralized Roman Empire. It was also monastic, every Celtic monastery being independent and run by its abbot. In Ireland, where the Celtic monastery originated, the abbot would have been more important than a bishop, and treated like the chieftain of a tribe. The abbots of Iona were known to have originated from the same family as Columba. St. Aidan introduced the rule of Columba at Lindisfarne, as did his successor Eata, who was also used to this discipline at Melrose, where he had lived before.

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[7] Joyce Toynbee maintains that the use of the expression 'Celtic Church' is inappropriate, and suggests that the term 'Church in Celtic-speaking Britain' is more suitable, because there was no difference between both churches in creed or origin (Thomas 1971: 75).

The Celtic monks had no interest in fine buildings. Their monastery would consist of a wooden church surrounded by a circle of beehive huts made of intertwined wattle covered with plaster of clay. Their roofs would be thatched. The trappings of religion, with stone churches adorned with glass windows and rich tapestries, were irrelevant.

The Rule of Columba was strict as regards personal discipline. The monks spent much of the day in prayer following the seven offices Nocturnes, Matins, Terce, Sext, Nones, Vespers, and Compline. They also spent a lot of time in prayer and study in their own cells. They fasted regularly, especially on Wednesdays and Fridays until 3 p.m, and ate one meal a day in Lent. Their diet was frugal, eating meat only on feast days and drinking only milk and water. The Rule of Benedict, which the Roman tradition was acquainted with, was similar. The periods of abstinence that the Celtic monks observed could take extreme forms. Their tradition of asceticism could be traced back to the early desert hermits of Egypt, who not only lived solitary lives, but practised extreme forms of self-mortification, cf. St Simeon the Stylite who perched atop a column for thirty-five years.

The Celtic monasteries were not closed communities like those of the Benedictines. The monks travelled around preaching and teaching what they themselves had studied and learnt. The Benedictine monks spent many hours in prayer, but were also expected to work in the fields to produce food, so that the monastery was self-sufficient. The Celtic lack of system and order, which irritated the advocates of the Roman practice so much, could not be said to have had a detrimental effect on their spiritual fervour or humility. It might seem unjust and unkind if today's modern readers came to the conclusion that the Irish monks had lived after a moral code rather than one just created through intellect, but quite understandable.

Ironically, the kingdom of Kent was the only exclusive conquest of Rome. All the other kingdoms of the Heptarchy were converted wholly or in part by the efforts of the Celtic monks. Northumbria was converted by St. Aidan. The brothers St. Chad and St. Cedd, who were trained by St. Aidan in the Celtic/Irish tradition, became the founding fathers of Christianity in Mercia and East Anglia. St. Cedd went further south and worked among the eastern Saxons (today's Essex). East Anglia was evangelized directly from Ireland, too, by St. Fursey. From the walls of Iona and those of her daughter houses was sent a succession of saints and missionaries, who were the chief instruments in the evangelization of England.

Although the early missionaries to England were all monks, they originated from two distinctly different places. As mentioned earlier, their respective customs and traditions were sometimes different, so controversy was bound to arise, as in the case of the date of Easter, within the church of Northumbria. Two methods were applied to calculate Easter, one

originating from the Irish tradition, and the other from the Roman. The matter had to be resolved, and a Synod was called in 663/664 AD. The question that had appeared and that required an answer also concealed another more serious one. What form of Christianity should prevail in Britain, the Celtic or the Latin?

3.8 Synod of Whitby

Northumbria, which housed the two rival ecclesiastical parties in its own royal family, was the obvious place to host a meeting to discuss and make a decision to end the dispute. Oswiu, the king, called a meeting of both the nobility and ecclesiastical representatives to pronounce a final decree. The Synod met at Whitby, one of the dual monasteries in Northumbria in 663/664 AD. It was run by the Abbess Hilda, of the Royal house of Deira. Trained in the Celtic tradition, it was obvious which party she would support. Others who were present and who favoured Celtic Christianity were Bishop Colman, Aidan's successor at Lindisfarne, and Cedd, missionary bishop of the East Saxons.

Queen Eanflaed, whose teacher had been Paulinus, was still a supporter of Roman Christianity, as was the king's son Alchfrid. They were joined by Agilbert, the Bishop of Essex and James the Deacon. He had accompanied Paulinus on his missions in Northumbria at the time of King Edwin. When Paulinus and the royal court had fled to the south after Edwin's death in battle, James the Deacon had remained in Northumbria. He still was, however, a loyal supporter of the Roman tradition. The last and most important champion for the Roman cause was a young abbot and friend of King Alchfrid, named Wilfrid of Ripon.

The supposed question to be decided upon was the exact date of Easter and the precise cut of the tonsure, two controversies seemingly trivial and easy to settle. They represented the great fundamental rivalries of nationality and tradition. A Roman monk shaved the crown of his head leaving a circle of hair that symbolised Christ's crown of thorns. The Celtic monk shaved the front of their heads from ear to ear. The tonsure itself did not mean much, but as this had been the practice of St. Columba and a long line of Irish saints, it was greatly revered by the Celtic monks. Added to this was the contrast between the Roman and Celtic spirit and ideals.

It is, therefore, easier to understand the unrelenting fidelity of Colman, Bishop of Lindisfarne, who represented the Celtic tradition. He began the discussion about the method used to determine the date of Easter. He explained that his usage was based upon that which he had received from his elders when he himself became bishop. They in turn had preserved

everything they had received from their forefathers. Their methods for calculating Easter could be traced to St. John.

Unfortunately, Colman was no match for the eloquent and self-confident Wilfrid representing the Roman tradition. Wilfrid replied that the Easter they observed was the same as that celebrated by all of Rome where the Apostles Peter and Paul had taught, suffered and were buried. He added that Africa, Asia, Egypt, Greece, all of Christendom celebrated Easter at the same time except the Picts and Britons, who adamantly maintained their own opinion. Wilfrid deliberately compared the preference of a small number on a remote island with that of the Universal Church throughout the world, to ridicule their steadfastness.

Wilfrid yielded to Colman's claims about the piety of St. Columba, but cruelly added that St. Columba's simple soul was also misguided. Lacking both charity and sympathy towards his opponent, Wilfrid advanced in his attack by reminding Colman, the king, and those present of St. Peter's supremacy as Prince of the Apostles. When the king questioned Colman about this, Colman humbly acknowledged that Christ had given the Keys of Heaven to Peter. No such power had been bestowed upon Columba. King Oswiu made his choice, and Northumbria was to follow the Roman tradition in the future.

3.9   The triumph of Roman Christianity and the aftermath of success

The decision of the Council of Whitby was understood differently by the interested parties. Wilfrid interpreted it as meaning that the English Church had fully accepted the supremacy of Rome. Bishop Colman respected his own country's customs, and resigned his see at Lindisfarne and returned to Iona. He carried with him the bones of St. Aidan. He was followed by those monks who were unable to sacrifice their Celtic identity for Roman tradition (Baring-Gould 1999: 54). Eventually they returned to Ireland.

Many of the other leaders present thought that by agreeing to a change in the calculation of Easter and shaving the heads of their monks the Roman way, this would bring them in line with Rome. Wilfrid never really understood that the Northumbrians could respect Rome, yet at the same time wished to rule themselves and not have decisions made for them. King Oswiu probably never dreamt what the full effects would be. Before the Council of Whitby, the Northumbrian Church had been an autonomous body, independent of any control. Now it fell under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who in turn owed allegiance to Rome.

So what did this choice of King Oswiu involve? A new archbishop had recently been appointed. Theodore of Tarsus toured the country with the intention of bringing order and

discipline into the English Church. There was no doubt that in time England and its kingdoms would become united ecclesiastically. As a consequence of this, the kingdoms were gradually able to unite also politically. Order and system were introduced in the Church. Culture was able to be shared and spread, as letters were more easily transmitted, literature written, art and ideas exchanged. The unity and the chance of organization gave the Church the strength and power to protest against tyranny and misrule and to create more law and order.

Valuable elements were renounced, however, and lost. Roman splendour was to supplant Celtic simplicity. The same fidelity, love, fervour, simplicity and unselfishness of the Celtic teachers of the seventh century have never really been reproduced since.

The Synod might have been a turning point for the 'English Church', but it was definitely not the end of Celtic Christianity, as some of the most famous texts in our possession today prove. *The Lives of St. Columba*, *St. Patrick* and *St. Brigit* were not written until after the Synod.

Relationships between Anglo-Saxon and Celtic Christians could be fraught on a higher level, but there were still links. Anglian students continued to study in Ireland, and Northumbrian culture was still influenced by Celtic traditions. This is evident in the Lindisfarne Gospels and the Ruthwell Cross. In 1789 AD a Cross Shaft was discovered near the ruins of the old church commonly called 'Woven's Church' at Alnmouth. What is interesting about this cross shaft is that it has the maker's name carved on it in Anglo-Saxon capitals and runes: MYREDAH MEH WORHTE: Myredah (Muiredach) made me. The cross can be dated to the ninth century, long after the Synod of Whitby.

There can be an element of truth in believing that the English Church never really wanted any interference from Rome.[8] By being at the centre of Rome's campaign to conform, both the Celtic Irish Church and the English Church suffered and previous goodwill took a knock.

Bede, however, has a more optimistic outlook, and informs us how Nechtan, the King of the Picts, first sought the help of Abbot Ceolfrith of the monastery of St. Peter and Paul, Wearmouth, as he was concerned about the religious practices in his kingdom (McClure & Collins 1994: 276). Ceolfrith sent him a lengthy letter taking pains to not only answer the king's questions, but also to explain the reasons for his answers. The result of his letter was

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[8] This was certainly made quite clear during the reign of Henry VIII. Even today, because the sovereign is the head of the Church of England, it is difficult for a member of the Royal Family to marry a Roman Catholic.

that it both delighted and relieved the king, who immediately reformed his nation by submitting it to the practices of the Roman Church.

Not long after this, in 716 AD, Egbert persuaded the monks of Iona to accept the decisions of the Synod of Whitby, so change and conformity were gradually taking place (McClure & Collins 1994: 287

4.0   CULTURAL CHANGES IN NORTHUMBRIA

4.1   Language

4.1.1   Foreign influences on language

4.1.1.1   Roman influence

The Romans conquered Britain in 43 AD, and found a people possessing a language and customs similar to the Gauls. Celtic is an Indo- European language, and the first known to have been spoken in England (Baugh 1960: 49). When the Romans left Britain in 410 AD, Latin was much used, especially by the Romano- British upper class and town dwellers. Otherwise, Latin was not widespread, so its chances of surviving the Anglo-Saxon invasion were minimal. The number of Latin words that are present in the English language today, which have originated from Roman Britain, are exceptionally few (Baugh 1960: 93). Celtic has survived in Cornwall, Wales (Cymric), and Ireland (Gaelic) and Scotland (Gaelic), because of those Celts who escaped the Anglo-Saxon raiders by taking refuge there.

4.1.1.2   Anglo-Saxon influence

As the Anglo- Saxons spread across England in the years 449- 580 AD, they superimposed their Germanic language on their colonies. There were many different tribes, who formed twelve kingdoms, all speaking different dialects mutually understood. Gradually the different varieties consolidated, and Old English in the period from 450-1150 AD, evolved. There were four main dialects: Northumbrian and Mercian originating from the Anglians; Kentish from the Jutes; and West Saxon in Wessex, Essex and Sussex, where the Saxons settled.

4.1.1.3   The influence of Christianity

English began as a pure Germanic language, but in 597 AD, Augustine landed in Kent, and began the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity. The Irish Church did the same in Northumbria. This resulted in a considerable influx of Latin words. The German language did not have an equivalent for all these Christian concepts, so the Anglo-Saxons borrowed heavily from Latin. Words such as abbess, altar, angel, bishop, chalice, hymn, mass, minister, monk, nun, relic and verse were adopted into the language. Greek vocabulary such as psalms, apostle, pope, and school were also included, via Latin

4.1.2   Foreign influences on place-names

The investigation of place-names helps to provide us with the reason why a place received its name. It can also un-earth information about the local history, about the people who lived there during a particular period of time, and also their reasons for settling there. A picture of the culture of the inhabitants and their traditions can be gradually built.

4.1.2.1   Celtic place-names

The Celts came with the first place-names we know of in Northumbria, however, there are very few. This is understandable as before they arrived, there were no towns or villages, just farms and tiny settlements. Primitive societies had little need for differentiating place-names. The Celts built hill forts, but in general had no great material civilisation. The Celts were the first to work the land and to provide permanent dwelling places. The names given to inhabited places were connected to the hills, rivers and valleys where they laboured (Beckensall 2004: 17-50), e.g.

Aln - pre-Roman river name (Alaunos 150AD; Alne 730AD).
Cheviot - is such an extremely old name, that the meaning is unknown (Chiuiet 1182).
Kielder - is a British name with a strong resemblance to the Celtic-Welsh name *Caled-dwfr* meaning 'wild water'.
Till - is a Celtic river name, perhaps related to the Welsh word- 'to flow'
Tweed - is another Celtic river name meaning 'powerful'.

Table 6

4.1.2.2   Roman place-names

The Romans brought Latin names, which they gave to their forts along Hadrian's Wall. These names, however, have long disappeared and have been replaced with others owing little resemblance to their former names, e.g. Newcastle was named Pons Aelli (Hadrian's Bridge), after Emperor Aelius Adrianus, and Segedunum is now known quite simply as Wallsend, because the wall ended there. Corbridge is perhaps one exception, as its name could have come from the nearby Roman munitions station called Corstopitum, or it could also have acquired its name from its river, the River Cor.

Generally, the Romans added Latin endings to existing Celtic names as with London (Londinium), but such Latinised forms were soon wiped out when the Romans made their retreat from Britain.

4.1.2.3 The first period of Christian place-names

After the fall of Rome, Christianity survived in the Celtic world. The oldest Christian place names are found mostly in areas where the first missionaries worked and lived. Depending upon the region, the Celtic word for church was *eglos/ egles*. *Ecles was* derived from the Latin word *ecclesia* meaning a body of Christians or church. *Egles* was again a derivation of *ecclesia* and the result of how the Picts and Britons mistakenly heard the Latin pronunciation (Low 2000: 122).

Place names such as:

Eccles Cairn lies north of the English-Scottish border.
Ecclesmachan is situated on the outskirts of Edinburgh, in Scotland.
Eaglesham lies to the west of East Kilbride, in Scotland.
Gleneagles lies south-west of Perth, in Scotland.
Egglescliffe lies south of Stockton-on-Tees.
Eggleston is situated east of Middleton-in-Teesdale.
Eccles lies north-east of Kelso, near the English-Scottish border.

Table 7

Other areas of Celtic Britain used the words *lan/llan* for church:

Lanteglos, lies west of Bodmin Moor, in Cornwall.
Lanivet, lies south of Bodmin, in Cornwall.
Llanelli, lies on the coastline of Carmarthen Bay, in Wales.
Llandovery lies on the edge of the Brecon Beacons, in Wales.

Table 8

4.1.2.4 Anglo-Saxon place-names

Almost all Northumbrian place-names came into being with the Anglo-Saxon invaders. They preferred to replace existing names, and not adapt them (Higham 1993: 100, 101).[9] Early Anglo-Saxon place-names indicated pagan worship of *Tiw, Odin/ Woden, Thor /Thunor* and *Friga*. In Northumberland, however, I have not been able to find any place-names with these prefixes. There are some examples much further south in the country:

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[9] This is why there are so few *ecles* place-names surviving in Northumbria. The largest concentration is in West Yorkshire and Lancashire.

Fryup, in Teeside, means marshy enclosure of *Friga.*
Fridaythorpe, also in Teeside, bears the name of *Friga*, who was the wife of Woden/Odin.
Goodmanham, was a former place of heathen worship, and the place where the heathen priest Coifi is said to have desecrated his own temple, when he converted to Christianity.
Great Tew, north of Oxford, is named after *Tiw*, one of the most ancient Saxon Gods
Wednesbury, north of West Bromwich, bearing the name of *Woden.*
Wednesfield, north of Wolverhampton, is also named after *Woden,* the greatest and most popular God of the Saxons.
Thursden, lies east of Burnley, and is named after *Thor*.
Thurstonland, south of Huddersfield, carries *Thor's* name.

Table 9

It has been suggested that Gateshead on the south bank of the Tyne has been the site of a pagan festival, and has received its name from the ritual of decapitating goats, which were then offered to the pagan gods.

The seventh century saw the emergence of a common language, English, but also the gradual organization and administration of the Church. Charters and deeds were drawn up and boundaries had to be documented. In order to do this, places would have had to be named. Ninety-five per cent of the place-names that exist in Northumberland today have been Anglo-Saxon villages, and bear the affixes:

tun - Ashington, Cramlington.
ham - Bellingham, Eglingham, Whittingham
wic - Alnwick, Berwick
botl **-** Harbottle, Wallbottle
burgh **-** Bamburgh after Queen Bebba

Table 10

The Anglo-Saxons gradually created their own terms, and a few are:

burn, means stream:

Brinkburn (Brinkeburne 1188) can mean Brynca's stream or steep slope (brinca), by a stream.
Simonburn (Simundeburn 1299) means Sigmund's stream.
Otterburn (Oterburn 1217) means otter's stream.

Table 11

dun, means hill:

Dunstanwood (Dunstanwode 1268) means wood by a rocky hill.
Earsdon (Erdisduna 1198) means Eanred's or Eored's hill.

Table 12

ham, means estate, home, manor or village:

Edlingham (Eadwulfincham 1050) means Eadwulf's homestead.
Ovingham (Ovingeham 1238) means Ofa's people's home.
Whittingham (Hwittincham 1050) means the homestead of Hwita's people.

Table 13

hurst, means wooded hill:

Longhirst (Langherst 1200) means long wooded hill.
Moralhirst (Mirihildhyrst 1309) means a pleasant wooded slope.

Table 14

ton, means fenced area:

Choppington (Cebbington 1050) was the settlement of Ceabba's people.
Edington (Ydinton 1196) means the settlement of Ida's people.
Ellington (Elingtona 1166) means the settlement of Ella's people.
Longframlington ((Fremelintun 1166) means the settlement of Framela's people.

Table 15

wick, means dwelling or farm:

Abberwick (Alburwic 1170) means the dwelling of Alu(h)burgh.
Brotherwick (Brotherwyc 1242) means the farm of Brodor.
Cheswick (Chesewic 1208) means a cheese farm.
Keepwick (Kepwike 1279) means Kepe's dwelling.

Table 16

worth, means homestead:

Aldworth (Aldwurth 1120) means Ealda's homestead.
Killingworth (Killingwrth 1242) means Cylla's people's homestead.
Warkworth (Werceworthe 1050) means Werce's settlement.

Table 17

Anglo-Saxon place-names were imposed on areas of settlement, and showed the ownership of homesteads and cultivated land. Having plundered to obtain the land, the Anglo-Saxons would have been anxious to secure it by naming it.

4.1.2.5   The second period of Christian place- names

After the re-introduction of Christianity, the Church began to influence place-names again. Christian place-names from the Anglo- Saxon period are the most common. In most cases the Christian element was added to an earlier name. Some had the prefix *Kirk, Monk, Nun*, *Prest* or *Holy* added to them:

Kirkcudbright means Cuthbert's church. The town bearing this name, lies north of the Solway Firth, and near Whithorn.
Kirkham means the village that had a church.
Kirkoswald means Oswald's church. This village lies south of Brampton.
Kirknewton (Niweton 1336) means a new homestead with a church.
Kirkwhelpington (Welpington 1176) means Hwelp's people's settlement. The church was added later.
Monkseaton (Seton Monachorum 1380) means a settlement, beside the sea, belonging to the monks.
Nunwick (Nunewic 1166) means a nun's dwelling.
Preston (1198) means a priest's farmstead.
Holystone (Halistane 1242) means holy stone[10]. It was the site of a Benedictine monastery.
Holywell (Halewell 1218) means holy spring.

Table 18

New villages that came into existence could be given names to tie them to the nearest religious house. e.g. 'Whitechapel' means a 'white chapel'. Existing villages could have the word 'church' or 'chapel' added to their name.

e.g. 'Chirton' can mean 'a church built on a piece of land, or settlement (tun)'.

Shrines or other holy places could be marked by adding the prefix 'stok/stoc'

e.g. 'Stockton' means 'a piece of land belonging to a monastery'; 'Stocksfield' means 'a field belonging to a holy place'.

4.2   Literature

A considerable amount of the extant literature from the Anglo-Saxon period is Christian in character, as most of it was the work of monks. Some monasteries, such as Bede's, had a vast library with books imported from Europe, which covered every topic also of a secular nature. Such collections gave readers the opportunity to widen their knowledge of

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[10] The prefix 'Holy' can be Christian in origin, but the Anglo-Saxon word ' halig' has pagan connotations.

the outside world. Bede, after reading such books employed his own astute, intelligent and philosophical mind to write his own scientific work *De Natura Rerum* about the laws of nature (Ward 1998: 13).Within its fifty chapters, there is information about a variety of topics from the signs of the Zodiac to precipitation. Bede's studies were not just confined to the phenomena of nature, but he also discoursed on spelling, the rules of metre, and on music.

Another source of Old English secular literature was found at the courts of the nobility, who employed their own scribes to write poetry and riddles for entertainment as illustrated below:

A riddle about salt -
once I was water, full of scaly fish;
But, by a new decision fate has changed
My nature: having suffered fiery pangs,
I now gleam white, like ashes or bright snow (Mayr- Harting 1991: 202).

The nine herb charm –
These nine are powerful against nine poisons.
A snake came writhing, and it bit a man.
Then Woden took nine glory- twigs,
and struck the serpent so that it fell into nine parts.
There apple and poison brought about
That she never would live in the house (together).
Chervil and fennel, the very powerful pair,
(are) the herbs the wise Lord created
holy in the heavens, when he hung.
He made and sent them into the seven worlds,
to wretched and happy, a remedy for all.
This one keeps off pain, this attacks poison,
This is powerful against three and against thirty,
against enchantment of evil beings (Cavill 1999: 153).

A recipe -
For dropsy, take dry dog's excrement and make it into a
drink; it cures one suffering from dropsy (Cavill 1999: 154).

Scribes were also employed to act as accountants and solicitors to keep the affairs of the aristocracy in order. Documents, manuscripts and texts required proper storage, and libraries provided this. The literature which has survived today has probably been housed this way. The quantity that still exists is not large, but enough to indicate the nature of that which was likely to have been produced, had nothing been lost due to the passage of time or raids on monasteries.

Anglo-Saxon literature originated as an oral tradition, and was transformed by Christianity into a written culture. Although they belonged to a heathen culture, the Anglo-Saxons had already developed their own techniques of alliterative verse. This verse revealed their reflections on life, their joys, fears and ambitions. The conversion of the Anglo-Saxons had important implications for the development of the vernacular literature. They inherited the Christian Latin culture in the same way that many realms in Europe had done, but with a difference. They used their own forms of poetry and prose to praise God and their newly adopted faith. When Archbishop Theodore died in 690 AD, the epitaph on his tomb had as many as thirty-four heroic verses (McClure & Collins 1994: 246).

4.2.1 Christian poetry

Old English poetry was an oral craft and Anglo-Saxon culture had a rich culture of story telling. The poet or *scop* was accompanied by a harp and had the role of a minstrel. The Christian message could be carried to ordinary illiterate people by means of religious folk ballads. Use of the vernacular was seen as the only way to reach people at large

4.2.1.1 Caedmon

Caedmon is claimed to be the father of Old English poetry. The names of most Old English poets are unknown, but Caedmon who had been an ordinary herdsman, is famous. One reason for this is that there were no other Anglo-Saxon religious poets before Caedmon. Another equally significant reason is that the Venerable Bede included Caedmon in his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (McClure & Collins 1994: 215, 216). Caedmon and his poetry must have impressed him, too.

During an evening of celebration, it was an Anglo- Saxon tradition to pass the harp round the mead hall. Caedmon, who felt that he could not sing, saw the harp gradually approaching where he was sitting and left. The same night he dreamt that God requested him to sing a song about Creation. He began to sing verses in praise of God's creation, verses that he had never heard before.

Abbess Hilda heard about the gift he had received from God, and gave orders that Caedmon was to be instructed in sacred history. First he was instructed in the Old Testament and Gospel stories, and afterwards had to rehearse them, as he could not read. Caedmon's special gift could be used to deliver the Christian message in a medium and language which the ordinary working Anglo-Saxon could understand, their mother tongue, not Latin. After attending and committing to memory the Mass, and the Hours (Nocturnes, Matins, Terce, Sext, Nones, Vespers and Compline), Caedmon could render his own interpretation to others. He sang about the Creation, the Exodus, the Incarnation, the Passion, the Resurrection, Ascension, Pentecost, and the Apostles. The text known as *Caedmon's hymn* was translated into Latin by Bede and included in his *EHEP* (McClure & Collins 1994: 215). The following version of the poem is written in three languages (private copy Margaret Mjåland), one in Latin, another in Anglo-Saxon (Old English), and the third in Modern English, all giving praise to God and His Creation:

Nunc laudare

debemus auctorem regni

cælestis, potentiam Creatoris, et

consilium illius, facta Patris

gloriæ; quomodo ille, cum sit

ærternus Deus, omnium

miraculorum auctor exstitit;

qui primo filiis hominum

cælum pro culmine tecti,

dehinc terram custos humani

generis omnipotens creavit.

Laudate Dominum.   (Latin by the Venerable Bede)

Nu we sculon herigean heofonrices weard,

meotodes meahte ond his modgeþanc,

weorc wuldorfæder, swa he wundra gehwæs,

ece drihten, or onstealde.

He ærest sceop eorðan bearnum

Heofon to hrofe, halig scyppend;

þa middangeard moncynnes weard,

ece drihten, æfter teode

Firum foldan, frea ælmihtig   (Old English)

 Now must we praise
the <u>Guardian of heaven</u>, the
might of the Lord and His
intentions, the work of the <u>Father of
Glory;</u> for He, eternal Lord, order'd
each wonder; He, <u>first Creator</u>, made
heaven above as a roof for the children
of old; the <u>Eternal Lord</u>, the <u>Holy
One, Guardian of Mankind</u>, created
this middle-earth as a country for
men.
Praise the <u>Almighty</u>.   (Modern English by R. Barker)

Just in the few lines quoted above it is easy to identify one of the techniques often employed in the making of Anglo-Saxon poetry, and that is the one of variation. Seven different descriptions of God can be found in nine lines of verse. The quantity of the different expressions emphasizes the enormity of God. These lines are the only ones modern scholars accept as being the work of Caedmon. Other manuscripts are ascribed to the school of Caedmon. There are four long poems previously ascribed to Caedmon (the Genesis, the Exodus, Daniel, Christ and Satan) published in the Junius manuscript (found in the Bodleian Library).

Bede was obviously convinced of the authorship, as he lists as being topics of Caedmon's poems themes concerned with the Last Judgement, Heaven and Hell (McClure & Collins 1994: 216). Christianity was not just a way of life; it was life, for such a deeply religious man like Caedmon, who only sang of sacred subjects. A poem called *The Dream of*

the Rood has also been accredited to Caedmon. Written in Anglo- Saxon, it is contained in a volume of Anglo-Saxon readings called the Vercelli book, housed in a cathedral library in Northern Italy.

Another reason for the poem to be linked with Caedmon is that some of the poem is inscribed in runes on the Anglo-Saxon cross at Ruthwell.[11]

It is incredible that a man with such a humble background could produce such beautiful texts. His songs show how the ballad culture of the Anglo-Saxons was employed to preach the Gospel of Christ, and when this form of address took place.

4.2.1.2   Cynewulf

Cynewulf, was a much later poet, and there is very little known about him. The poems *Elene* and *The Fates of the Apostles* are ascribed to him, because he has signed them. His personal signature is woven in the form of runes near the end of his poems. We are not certain when or where he lived, but it is assumed that he came from Mercia and lived at the end of the eighth century/ early ninth century.

The verse form that evolved for Old English poetry was an alliterative line of four stressed syllables and an unfixed number of unstressed syllables. Lines were end-stopped and without rhyme. Other English poems included saints' lives such as Cynewulf's *St Juliana,* or Bede's *Life of St. Cuthbert* in verse.

4.2.1.3   *The Dream of the Rood*

The poem *The Dream of the Rood* consists of one hundred and fifty-six lines, and is one of the earliest Old English poems made. It is preserved in the tenth century Vercelli book, composed of a collection of religious verse and prose. Scholars are still unsure as to when the poem itself was written. The poem, as the title suggests, is about a dream where the dreamer not only has a vision of the very cross (the Rood) on which Christ was crucified, but a conversation with the cross, too. It can be divided into three parts:

1. The Dreamer's initial reaction to the vision of the Cross.
2. A lament by the Rood describing the Crucifixion, and its own terrible implication in the killing of God's son.
3. The Dreamer's own conversion and decision to seek the salvation of the Cross.

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[11] Discussed later (See: 6.3.3).

The poem is an excellent example of the assimilation of Anglo-Saxon heroic themes with Christian ones, e.g. the Crucifixion is depicted as a battle, and both the Cross and Christ as victorious warriors. The author has recreated the Crucifixion story in both theological and heroic terms. The author, and the audience he was writing for, was used to heroic literature. The poet uses heroic conventions to relate the biblical story and make it acceptable, but the content of the poem indicates that the poet must have had some knowledge of theology and church liturgy, too. For this reason the poet Caedmon has been suggested as a likely author.

ANGLO-SAXON THEMES	TEXT
The Rood is brought to life and tells its story almost in the form of a riddle.	'That was a long time ago - I can still remember it - when I was cut down at the edge of the wood, removed from my stem'.
Like a warrior wishing to avenge his lord.	'I could have killed all the enemies'.
The young hero strips as the warriors did before battle. He reigns from the Cross. The title, God almighty, is used to honour the hero.	'Then the young hero who was God almighty stripped himself, strong and resolute; he (willingly) climbed up on the high gallows, brave in the sight of many when he wished to redeem humanity'.
Together both Christ and the Cross are wounded and abused. They stand unflinching despite the most terrible odds.	'They abused us together'.
The body of Christ is removed in preparation for burial, and the Cross feels neglected, alone and overseen.	'There they took almighty God down …. The warriors abandon me'.
This was the end.	'We were buried in a pit'.
The loyal Cross is retrieved, remembered and honoured. It is raised, like Christ.	'They adorned me with gold and silver'. 'glorious now, I tower under the heavens'.

Table 19

CHRISTIAN THEMES	TEXT
The arrest of Christ in Gethsemane. His cruel trial and scourging. The release of Barabbas.[12] The 'Via dolorosa' or way to Golgotha.[13]	'There strong enemies seized me, made me a spectacle for themselves, ordered me to raise up their criminals; warriors carried me on their shoulders until they set me up on a hill'.
The death of Jesus on the cross.	'I saw the surface of the earth shake'.

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[12] Matthew 27: 26-31.
[13] Mark 15: 21.

The veil of the temple was torn in two. The earth shook.[14]	
The act of nailing Christ to the Cross.[15]	'they pierced me with bloody nails'.
One of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear and blood and water came out.[16]	'blood spouted from the warrior' side'.
They laid Christ's body in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock.[17]	'the warriors made him a grave, carved it out of bright stone'.
Christ's resurrection on Easter day.[18] His Ascension into heaven.[19]	'He tasted death there, yet the Lord rose again … he then ascended to the heavens'.

Table 20

This part of the poem follows the liturgy from Holy Thursday to early Easter Sunday morning, called the Easter Triduum, which relates the passion, death and resurrection of Christ. In addition to biblical themes, it is also possible to identify parts of the Catholic liturgy from the Good Friday Mass, when the Cross is venerated. The priest presents the Cross saying, 'This is the wood of the Cross, on which hung the Saviour of the world', and the congregation answers, 'Come let us worship', before they individually honour the cross.

The poem ends with the Dreamer converted to a better life. He realizes that no ordinary battle has been won, but a once for all victory for mankind, that guarantees salvation:

> '*May the lord be my friend,*
> *he who here on Earth once suffered,*
> *on the hanging tree for human sin,*
> *he ransomed us and gave us life,*
> *a heavenly home*'.

The Cross, once feared as a torturous weapon, had been transformed, and had become a symbol of hope. The Dreamer in his colloquy tries to encourage others to turn from fear of the harrowing of hell, and instead to reach out for the hope offered to him and everyone else. 'The pragmatic, grounded, worked out, thoughtful spirituality' of the poem might be recognized and appeal to the would-be Anglo-Saxon Christian convert (Cavill 1999: 108).

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[14] Matthew 27: 51.
[15] Mark 15: 25.
[16] John 19: 34.
[17] Mark 15: 46.
[18] Luke 24: 5.
[19] Luke 24: 51.

4.2.2   Christian prose

Anglo-Saxon Christian literature was greatly influenced in an indirect way, by Archbishop Theodore of Canterbury. Before he arrived, the first kings of England followed their European contemporaries in their attempt to secure Christian realms belonging to the Christian Empire of the Carolingians. Latin was seen as being the appropriate language of the Church. Theodore, who came from Tarsus in Eastern Europe, understood Latin and Greek, but also spoke and used his native tongue. He encouraged others to do so, too. Bede in his *EHEP* finds it unique that Tobias, a pupil of Theodore, was as proficient in his own language as Latin and Greek and comments on it (McClure & Collins 1994: 247). It was obviously something unusual.

Although few laymen could read Christian literature, one person who could was all that was needed, and then the words could be re-told to many afterwards. The Anglo-Saxons saw it as their obligation to enlighten their society by using the vernacular, whereas in Europe they were afraid that it was a show of disrespect to use a common language for Christ's words, and to allow them to become available to just anyone. The Anglo-Saxons were the first to help their subjects to read without having to learn Latin.

4.2.2.1   *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, and other works of Bede

The author of this outstanding work was Bede, a monk of Jarrow-Wearmouth monastery, born in 672/673 AD. Bede was fifty-nine years old when he wrote his history, and had already become famous for his writings. He completed this first history of England in Latin, in 731 AD. It consisted of one volume, divided into five books or periods, describing the ecclesiastical and political life of England. The King of Northumbria had heard so much about Bede's history that he asked to see it. When he had done so, and had returned it, Bede added a preface to the existing work, dedicating it to King Ceolwulf (McClure & Collins 1994: 3).

Bede depicted the history of his own race, and also immortalised the world of the Anglo-Saxon Christians and saints. However, he not only told the story of seventh century England, and the story of her conversion from paganism to Christianity, but took his readers on a long vivid journey, through the halls of the kings in the case of Edwin (McClure & Collins 1994: 95), the cells of the monks such as Cedd (McClure & Collins 1994: 148), and sometimes the wooden huts of the peasants (McClure & Collins 1994: 126), to give a correct portrayal of the impact of Christianity on the lives of the inhabitants. Any understanding of English history in this period is almost dependent upon the *EHEP*.

The triumph of Christianity over heathenism was inevitable in Bede's eyes, and only to be expected, as this was the result of God's plan to save mankind. It is important to remember that *EHEP* was written by a monk who had a Christian message to convey. At the beginning of his book, he regards the invasion of the Anglo-Saxons as God's punishment on those who had given up their faith. However, the pagan Anglo-Saxons change their role after their conversion, and can be compared with God's chosen people. History had a goal, which was the kingdom of heaven.

When he constructed his *EHEP,* Bede used an analogical approach to convey his message. Bede saw the history of the English people as part of the history of the world. God had created His world in six days, so Bede consequently divided world history into six ages. This theory Bede explained in *De Temporum Ratione* (Ward 1998: 114-116). Five ages had already passed, and the sixth age was the age he and the Anglo-Saxons were living in. The five books of his *EHEP* represented the five ages that had already passed, and the sixth age was the time in which the author was composing his *EHEP*.

The author compiled his five books in such a way, that the history that was being re-told, had parallels in biblical history. God's people in Bede's lifetime, resembled God's chosen people in the Bible. God had created both groups.

BOOK	SUBJECT MATTER	BIBLE PARALLEL
Book 1 or the first age.	The background and geographical positioning of Britain. The Romans defeated and occupied Britain. The history of Christianity in Britain before the death of Gregory the Great. The baptism and re-birth of the English.	The Creation story in Genesis. The Fall of Adam (man) in Genesis. The infancy of Man represented in the period from Adam to Noah.
Book 2 or the second age.	The first faltering steps of the English Church and its generation of converts. Literature and music were introduced. The conversion of King Edwin and the north, until Edwin was slain in battle. Penda, the pagan king of Mercia overthrew Northumbria, and Christianity was abandoned.	The childhood of God's chosen people, during the period from Noah to Abraham. Language was invented. The Flood and its catastrophic consequences.
Book 3 or	The Christian prince Oswald claimed the throne of Northumbria.	A new beginning. The period from Noah to King David.

the third age.	King Oswald invited Aidan, a monk from Iona, to evangelize among his people. Christian renewal under St. Aidan. Peace and prosperity under King Oswald. Monastic life flourished. The Synod of Whitby. The death of King Penda. Plague struck the English.	The adolescent years of God's people Puberty was reached. The people increased their numbers. Saul became King. The nation grew and prospered. David killed Goliath. Saul became jealous of David's popularity. Saul committed suicide after being defeated in battle.
Book 4 or the fourth age.	Theodore, the newly appointed Archbishop of Canterbury, and his companion Hadrian, visited Britain and instructed the English churches in Catholic doctrine. The Church was established and organized. Education and learning took root. The rash campaign of Ecgfrith against the Picts, and his death in battle. King Hlothere was killed by his nephew. The monastery at Coldingham was destroyed by fire. The life and death of Cuthbert. Miracles occurred near Cuthbert's shrine.	The age of maturity under King David. A Golden Age of peace and prosperity under the rule of King David and King Solomon. Idolatry was introduced because of Solomon's numerous foreign wives. Laxity and degradation grew. Eight of nineteen kings were killed. The Israelites forgot Yahweh (God). The Prophets Elijah, Amos and Hosea, warned about the wrath of God. 'God's chosen people', lost their king, land and temple. The Exile in Babylon.
Book 5 or the fifth age.	Tobias and Albinius, acknowledged as men of great learning. The first English missionaries Egbert, Wilfrid and Willibrord. Increased common language. Ill portents in the sky over Lindisfarne before the Viking attack. The state of affairs in England. A united Church looks to the future. Summary of the whole five books.	Old age was reached. Influence of scribes and wise men. Misfortune and persecution prevailed. Persian domination. Common language (Aramaic) adopted. The return from exile. Isaiah's lamentations, and his prophecy of a Messiah. The advent of Christ.

Table 21

It is not difficult to recognize the Old Testament parallels that Bede used in the layout of his *EHEP*. Bede's reprimands or warnings at the end of each book, resembled those of an Old Testament prophet. The whole volume was cleverly and meticulously organized. Knowing this, does not mean that Bede's story is to be viewed with scepticism, and not to be believed. It just means that the reader should be aware that the author had a purpose in writing

his work, and did not merely write down a detailed account of past events. Bede saw history as morality taught by examples. He believed that when the actions of good men and their rewards were re-told, the audience would be inspired to imitate them in the hope of similar glory, especially if it was also known what trials the evil and wicked endured. Bede's aim was to bear witness to the message of Christ, not to explain the political, social or economic evolution of Britain.

Bede, however, is more accurate than many of his contemporaries, as they would have most likely only considered and written about the deeds of the clergy or aristocracy. By including descriptions of Anglo-Saxon life outside the monastery's walls, and explaining how disputes were settled at all levels, Bede provided equally important information about the culture.

It is perhaps much more difficult for today's readers to accept all the miracle stories included in his history. It was, however, an undoubted fact that saints in his day could work miracles. St. Cuthbert, St. Oswald or any of the other saints could have possessed the gift of healing, even though natural causes were at work. Their intuition was well trained, too, as they were often hermits living alone with God and his creative works. In the eighth century, people lived in a world where miracles were accepted, and belief in them was needed.

Bede took pains to obtain the fullest and the best information available to him. When describing the period up to when the English were converted, he had to rely on written sources. Bede was born one hundred and twenty-five years after Ida the Anglian landed in Northumbria, seventy-five years after St. Augustine landed in Kent, forty-five years after Paulinus baptized King Edwin at York, and eight years after the Synod of Whitby, so much had occurred. After these periods, he could use eye-witness accounts. Where the history of Northumbria is concerned, it was relatively easy for him to collect and to sort out the information he had acquired. In the case of the other English Kingdoms, he was reliant on the help of the ecclesiastics living in the various realms. The Abbot Albinius of Canterbury supplied him with records of the history of Kent (McClure & Collins 1994: 358). Nothelm, a monk of London who later became Archbishop of Canterbury, searched the papal archives at Rome to find documents mentioning the mission to England (McClure & Collins 1994: 359). He found letters of Pope Gregory 1, which referred to St. Augustine's mission, and these would have supplied important authentic material. Bede's quest for accurate information was quite exceptional and his research went far afield, even though he remained in his cell in his monastery, and continued to write. Bede consulted people whom he regarded as reliable

sources, from every part of England. His aim was to find out how their region had been evangelized. Remarkably enough, the response was considerable, and many wished to help.

At the end of his history, when he has reached his own times, Bede added a few facts about himself. It is all we know about the life of this great scholar. Bede, who wrote so much about others, perhaps found it inappropriate as a monk to write about his own acts and deeds. He also gave a list of his works up to that date (McClure & Collins 1994: 294, 295). His first books were probably written to supply the needs of his pupils, as they would have needed teaching in the art of writing, correct spelling and grammar.

Despite the demands of the monastic life, he had produced an enormous collection of literature. It included studies of most of the Old Testament, a commentary on St. Mark, one on St. Luke, the Acts of the Apostles and the Book of Revelation. He had also written studies on the Tabernacle and its vessels, the priest's vestments, an allegorical interpretation of the building of the Temple together with the halting-places of the Children of Israel. He had copied all that was available about St. Paul and St. Augustine. Bede was a walking encyclopaedia, and had mastered nearly all the learning that was possible for him at that time.

In addition to this, he wrote two lives of St. Cuthbert, one in prose and the other in verse, and produced hymns and prayers. His sermons were invaluable, too, as they explained about church doctrine and interpreted passages from the Bible for his monastic audience. Bede's scholarship was enormous and covered the whole scope of contemporary knowledge. This is a remarkable achievement for a person who had never travelled much, and who had remained within the walls of his monastery most of his life. Bede is renowned for his work as a church historian, but within much of this written work, he reveals the knowledge that he had acquired about natural science. He knew that the moon influenced the tides, and understood the movement of the sun. He realized that the earth was a sphere. He established the terminology AD, to measure time after the birth of Christ. Bede sums up his life in a sentence:

> From then on I have spent all my life in this monastery, applying myself entirely to the study of the Scriptures; and, amid the observance of the discipline of the Rule and the daily task of singing in the church, it has always been my delight to learn or to teach or to write (McClure & Collins 1994: 293).

Benedict Biscop could never have foreseen that the young boy, who had had his books placed within easy reach, would devote the rest of his life to one of reading, writing and learning.

Bede could almost be acclaimed to have been a visionary, when he titled his work *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, and wrote it as if the English were a single people. They were definitely not politically, but in the eyes of an ecclesiastic they were perhaps seen as a single people before God.

Bede devoted his life and work to God, and ended his historical work with a prayer to Christ, the 'Fountain of all Wisdom,' who had graciously allowed him to drink at the spring of all knowledge and share His mystery. Knowing this, Bede approached the Source of never ending mercy once again, and asked that one day he might meet and live with Christ for ever (McClure & Collins 1994: 295). This prayer of trust and hope, at the end of Bede's history, perhaps reminded readers that Bede had not just re-told past events. Christ's example of selfless love and dedication had been Bede's inspiration, while writing his ecclesiastical history. Bede had had a vocation to deliver the Christian message, and the written word was the medium and the tool he had employed to fulfil his mission.

Bede had easy access to the well-stocked library in the monastery at Jarrow. Works of theologians such as Ambrose, Augustine and Jerome were near at hand and could be easily consulted. Bede, who had a thirst for knowledge and truth, may well have read their theological commentaries. At the same time, he had the opportunity to see how these scholars had presented and structured their work, and to learn some of their techniques. Bede was a remarkable writer, and the way he fashioned his ecclesiastical history lay down ground rules for others to follow.

In 1899 AD, Bede was given the title '*Doctor of the Church*' by Pope Leo XIII. He was usually known by the title '*Venerable*', and this was equally fitting as it meant 'worthy of honour' (Adam 2006: 102).

4.2.2.2   *The Codex Amiatinus*

The Codex Amiatinus is a huge one-volume bible. It was made by Bede's community at the double monastery of Jarrow-Wearmouth. The work is written in a special script called 'English uncial', which was developed from that used in fourth-century Europe when writing out texts in book form. Although the monks inhabited a monastery on the north-east coast of England, they were not so isolated from Europe, or other parts of Britain as could be imagined. The establishment of Christianity had resulted in the availability of two strong influences, one Celtic, and the other Mediterranean.

St. Paulinus, Abbot Ceolfrith, and especially St. Wilfrid and Benedict Biscop should be given credit for establishing ties with European culture. Their frequent visits included the purchases of numerous books to fill the libraries at Jarrow and Wearmouth for the monks to consult and copy. St. Aidan and the monastery in Iona brought Irish culture to Northumbria.

Help came also from another source. The exiled and illegitimate son of King Oswiu, may have seemed to be insignificant when he ascended the throne after Ecgfrith; however, he was to inspire the monasteries in Northumbria a great deal. Aldfrith had had an Irish education at Iona, and had developed a love of books and scripture (McClure & Collins 1994: 222). His eyes were then turned to the new literature that was arriving from the continent. Aldfrith lived at the same time as Wilfrid and Bede, and shared their love of learning. Northumbria was fortunate to have a king who wished to share his interest with his subjects. He sponsored monasteries, libraries and the acquisition of books.

With such a generous sponsor the libraries soon flourished, and the monks were inspired to produce their own copies of the bible. Not only did they copy the texts, but they learnt the different techniques required to produce the script, too. The insular majuscule script was an import from Ireland, and the insular script was introduced from the Mediterranean countries (Backhouse 1999: 22). The monastery at Jarrow-Wearmouth used these sources of inspiration and produced a script with their own characteristics. This was a remarkable achievement for a monastery not long founded and from a race of Christians not long converted. The 'darkness' of their age could be said to have been 'illuminated' with the 'gold' of their manuscripts and books. It was in such a setting that the *Codex Amiatinus* was made.

After ruling the monastery for thirty-five years, Ceolfrith felt that both he and his monks were in need of spiritual renewal. He decided to visit Rome, and it is believed that he took with him a gift for the Pope. It was a large and beautifully written copy of the whole Bible in Jerome's translation (McClure & Collins 1994: 339).

Ceolfrith became ill on the journey, and died at Langres, in Haute-Marne, France. He was buried in the local church, and the monks split into two groups, one party returning to deliver the news of Ceolfrith's death, and the other continuing on their journey to Rome, taking the Bible with them. It then disappeared from sight until the nineteenth century when it was found in Florence. It had become the property of the monastery of Monte Amiato in the Central Apennines, from which the Bible derives its name (Webb & Farmer 1988: 34).

Much discussion arose concerning authorship, which school of learning the Bible originated from, and how it arrived in Florence. Researchers believe that the Bible, which was

written in Italian style, had also a distinct 'English uncial' script and this could be traced back to the monastery of Jarrow- Wearmouth (Backhouse 1999: 22).

Furthermore, Bede's *Life of the Abbots* recorded how Abbot Ceolfrith had ordered three Bibles to be made. One was for the monastery at Jarrow, another for Wearmouth, and the third for the Pope. Finally, the dedicatory inscription that Ceolfrith made to the Pope was to be found in the Bible and was also recorded in *Life of the Abbots*.

Today the Bible has great value to students studying different versions of the Bible, and for those studying culture both in Northumbria and Europe.

4.2.2.3 *The Stonyhurst Gospel*

The Stonyhurst Gospel is a tiny manuscript copy of St. John's Gospel. The monks at the twin monasteries of Jarrow and Wearmouth, have supposedly been the artists and authors of this illuminated gospel. It is believed to have been made as a gift for the monks at Lindisfarne, on the occasion of the elevation of St. Cuthbert's body in 698 AD. The Gospel of St. John had played a significant role in the life of St. Cuthbert, so this may account for the kind gesture.

When the Vikings began to invade Lindisfarne in 793 AD, perhaps this is also why the gospel was placed in St. Cuthbert's coffin together with other valuables and relics. After increased attacks, the monks abandoned the island taking the saint's coffin with them. The chances of everything being destroyed during their flight were great. The monks were forced to move continually, and it was not until 995 AD that they built a simple shelter for St. Cuthbert's body at Durham, and then a small church. The tiny gospel, measuring three and a half by five inches, was later discovered in 1104 AD, when St. Cuthbert's tomb was opened in order to place all the relics in their final resting place in the new and unfinished Cathedral of Durham (Hawkes 1996: 82). It was so cherished and revered because of its proximity to Cuthbert's relics, that anyone coming in contact with it, was expected to fast first and wear an alb (Bonner, Rollason, Stancliffe 1998: 460).

This small gospel still has its original binding in goatskin, the front of which has been carved with curvilinear and geometric patterns. Almost hidden, in the centre of the decoration, is a tiny heart, symbolizing the message of love found in the Gospel of St. John. This small treasure reveals the extent of Northumbrian Anglo-Saxon craftsmanship, and is the property of Stonyhurst College Library, but is on loan at the moment to the British Library.

4.3   Monasteries, religion and learning

The Old English word for monastery was *mynster* (Mayr-Harting 1991: 244)*.* In the early centuries of Anglo-Saxon Christianity there were obviously no parish churches, so the monasteries became the centres for pastoral care, and were led by a bishop. Men and women who entered the monasteries, devoted their lives to God in several ways. They spent their days in prayer, the reading of the Bible and studying the scriptures, and learning the liturgy. They also had other duties like farming to provide food. Some, if they were specially gifted, copied parts of the Bible in Latin, and illustrated biblical manuscripts. However, the monasteries promoted not just an ascetic life. The monks were used as missionaries, and served the local people.

The monks were usually approached by the leader or *gesith* of a village and invited to preach (Mayr-Harting 1991: 246). These contacts were extremely important for the spreading of Christianity. In 597 AD when missionaries arrived in England from Europe, there were no schools. The schools that were then established were primarily to train future clergy, and to ensure the spread of Latin Christianity.

During the Anglo-Saxon period, education was therefore the responsibility of the Church, and the monasteries encouraged learning. Children intended to be priests or monks were admitted to monasteries, where they were taught how to read and write Latin.

Women had the same opportunities as men. There were 'double houses' or monasteries for men and women, and these were often run by women, not men. The abbey at Whitby is one good example. They were initially places of prayer, and the method of instruction was by catechism. The *Psalter* and daily prayers were repeated orally, and committed to memory.

The following four monasteries all enjoyed royal patronage. St. Aidan founded the monastery at Lindisfarne in 633 AD, with funds given to him by King Oswald. St. Hilda successfully founded a monastery at Hartlepool, and was then given a gift of ten hides[20] of land from King Oswiu, after his victory at the Battle of Winwaed in 655 AD, to finance a new abbey at Whitby. The monastery at Wearmouth, founded in 673 AD, was financed by a grant given by King Ecgfrith. Finally, the foundations of Hexham Abbey were laid in 672 AD, on land given to St. Wilfrid by an East Anglian benefactress, Queen Aethelthryth, when she married King Ecgfrith.

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[20] A hide of land was the amount of land needed to support one family.

4.3.1   Lindisfarne

Lindisfarne or Holy Island, is situated on the north-east coast just a few miles south of the River Tweed. The name is derived from 'lindis' and 'faran'. 'Lindis' was an element of the earlier name for North Lincolnshire (Lindsey).'Faran' was the Saxon word for travellers. King Edwin had been the political overlord of Lindsey, but otherwise, the connection between the name of the island and Lindsey is unknown.

St. Aidan founded the mission at Lindisfarne in 633 AD, with funds given to him by the Christian King Oswald. Oswald wished his people to accept the new religion, and to forsake their old pagan customs. St. Aidan established a monastic community with Celtic customs and the Rule of Iona – an austere and ascetic life, as was usual in the Celtic Church. The monastery was a mere stockade type enclosure with a collection of primitive huts and a small oratory. St. Aidan also built a school to teach missionaries the Anglian tongue, so it would be easier for them to communicate and evangelize the whole of Northumbria. Aidan was the first of sixteen bishops of Lindisfarne, the most famous being Cuthbert. For a century and a half after Aidan settled on the island, life ran its normal peaceful course.

In 793 AD, however, the Danes landed, and plundered the monastery of its treasures of silver and gold, and burnt it to the ground. Cuthbert's coffin was left undisturbed, and ten years later the monastery was re- built. Repeated attacks, and fear of the Danes, had reduced the community numbers and left the monastery inhabitable. In 875 AD Lindisfarne was abandoned for two hundred years, and the monastery became a ruin.[21]

Of the Anglian monastery at Lindisfarne, nothing survives, except a collection of inscribed stones. One is a tombstone depicting on one side a band of Northumbrian warriors, swords and battle-axes in hand, and wearing pleated kilts (Hawkes 1996: 109). On the opposite side of the stone, are two figures kneeling before a cross with the sun and moon above. This stone is said to portray the Northumbrians before and after their conversion to Christianity. The existence of the sun and moon alongside the cross, illustrates how pagan ideas were condoned and incorporated into Christianity.

St. Cuthbert's coffin and his pectoral cross can be seen in Durham Cathedral. The *Lindisfarne Gospels* are currently in the possession of the British Library, where they will no doubt remain for safe-keeping.

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[21] The ruins of a priory church which we can see today are from a priory church started in 1093 AD.

4.3.2 Jarrow and Wearmouth

These twin monasteries were established by Benedict Biscop, a Northumbrian nobleman, who chose to enter the Church rather than pursue a political career in the service of King Oswiu (Mayr-Harting 1991: 153). As a seasoned traveller, who had already made several pilgrimages to Rome, Benedict Biscop was asked to accompany Theodore of Tarsus, the newly appointed Archbishop of Canterbury to England.

Arriving in Canterbury in 669 AD, Benedict remained there for two years officiating as Abbot for the monastery of St. Peter and St. Paul. He then made a trip to the Continent where he succeeded in procuring a large collection of books, before he returned to Northumbria in 672 AD. The king gave him a large piece of land, and Benedict set about building a monastery, which he furnished expensively, equipping its library with his enormous book collection. He furnished the monastery with expensive furnishings, and equipped its library with an enormous collection of books. The monastery was lavished with expensive glass, and stone-masons and glass-makers were imported from France, to build a beautiful church building created to the glory of God.

The monastery, dedicated to St. Peter, was completed in 674 AD, and Benedict set out to make this impressive edifice into a great cultural centre, too. A new pilgrimage to Rome resulted in the acquisition of a choirmaster to give the monks a musical education. Bede tells us that Benedict Biscop introduced the Roman mode of chanting, and had been allowed by the Pope to bring back John, the lead singer of the choir in St. Peter's Rome (Webb & Farmer 1988: 190). Interestingly, Bede makes no mention of Wilfrid's journey fourteen years earlier to Canterbury, to bring the choirmaster Eddius Stephanus to his monastery at Ripon, to instruct the monks in Gregorian chant.

King Ecgfrith was so delighted with Benedict Biscop's monastery, that he donated more land for another monastery to be built. The new monastery was to be situated on the banks of the River Tyne at Jarrow, only seven miles from Wearmouth. It took only one year to complete, and was dedicated to St. Paul in 682 AD. The monk Ceolfrith, who had travelled with Benedict overseas, was put in charge. In the beginning, Ceolfrith had only seventeen companions, one of which was a young boy called Bede. Benedict soon set out for Rome again, his fifth and last journey to buy books and everything needed to equip his new foundation. He left the monastery at Wearmouth in the hands of Abbot Eosterwine.

When Benedict Biscop died in 690 AD, Ceolfrith took over the responsibility of both monasteries. Determined that the monks of both monasteries should receive the latest education, he doubled the number of books in both houses, among them two copies of St.

Jerome's Latin translation of the Bible. During his abbacy, the monks produced three complete Bibles, written in uncial script. One of these Bibles called the *Codex Amiatinus* can be found today in Florence.

4.3.3   Hexham Abbey

The Romans had had no settlement at Hexham, probably because it was badly situated in terms of defence. In Saxon times, however, it became a thriving town. Its earliest name *Hagustald* (Graham 1992: 2) was Anglo-Saxon. The Northumbrian Queen Aethelthryth, favoured Wilfrid, Bishop of York, and gave him large areas of land near the town. This was about 672 AD (Hawkes 1996: 66), less than ten years after the Synod of Whitby. Queen Aethelthryth wanted to make Hexham a centre of Christianity, and Wilfrid, sharing her view decided to found a Benedictine monastery there. He had a vision of a great church built in Roman style. The resulting layout of the Church had many similarities with the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, and also the basilican churches, which Wilfrid had previously seen in Europe. Its original size is uncertain, but it was dedicated to St. Andrew. Wilfrid made several trips to Rome and returned both with books for study and relics of St. Andrew, which were later housed in the crypt. He also brought craftsmen from Rome to work on the building. When St. Andrew's was finished, it was the fifth English church to be built in stone.

Wilfrid also built two small chapels dedicated to St. Peter and St. Mary, and these were incorporated in the main Church at a later date. The monastery followed the rule of St. Benedict, which meant a life of devotion, labour and study.

At this point, I would like to compare some of the Anglo-Saxon monastic buildings being built in Northumbria. The twin monasteries of Jarrow and Wearmouth were equipped in the same luxurious fashion as Wilfrid's monasteries were at Ripon and Hexham, with imports from Rome and the Continent to clothe their interiors and libraries. At Lindisfarne and Melrose the monks were also interested in scholarship and learning, but they deliberately resisted the accumulation of wealth. They were still content with Celtic simplicity, preferring the more spartan interior of their own church and dwellings, to the extravagance of luxurious trappings sometimes found in other monasteries.

The adjustments that took place within the Northumbrian Church while adapting from a Celtic to a more Roman tradition, were fraught with painful compromises. During the conversion and transformation from paganism to Christianity, something similar had occurred and been experienced.

4.3.4 Whitby Abbey

The founder of this abbey, Hilda, was born in 614 AD. She was the great niece of the King of Northumbria, and daughter of Edwin's nephew Herwic. Her father had lived in exile, however, Hilda and her family lived under the protection of King Cerdic of Elmet. The household would have been pagan, where perhaps idols were worshipped. Her father was later poisoned, so Hilda and her sister were brought up in an environment managed and run by women. This would have been a useful experience, as Hilda later became responsible for running a monastery.

Hilda may have spent time at King Edwin's court and been influenced by him. King Edwin decided to become a Christian when Hilda was thirteen years old, and was baptized by Paulinus (Hawkes 1996: 49). Unfortunately Hilda was only nineteen years old when King Edwin was killed battle at Hatfield Chase. Queen Athelburh escaped to her native Kent, with Paulinus, while others sought refuge at Bamburgh from Penda, the pagan King of Mercia.

Despite an environment of battles and fierce fighting, Hilda sought another way of life for herself, and decided to become a nun. She prepared herself to enter the same convent as her sister at Chelles in Northern France; however, St. Aidan asked her to stay behind in Northumbria, and to found her own monastery instead (Hawkes 1996: 49). Her first monastery was built near the River Tees, in the vicinity of today's Sunderland.

In 649 AD, she became the Abbess of Heretu (Hartlepool) monastery. Eight years later, King Oswiu gave her land to build an abbey, this time at Streoneshalch (Whitby)[22]. Whitby Abbey, perched on steep cliffs jutting out into the North Sea, was strategically secure and virtually inaccessible, which was important for a community of monks and nuns, wishing to occupy their time with more peaceful pursuits such as prayer. Hard practical work, such as raising timber buildings and digging wells to provide water, and preparing fields to grow crops, was necessary, too. The Abbey would have aimed at being self- sufficient.

By 657 AD Hilda had created an abbey and a seat of learning for both men and women. Books had been imported from Europe to ensure that the scriptures could be learnt in Latin and Greek. The native language, Anglo-Saxon, was also used when writing poetry. Both culture and heritage were preserved in the monasteries, while wars and battles raged outside.

In 664 AD, Whitby Abbey was chosen to house a Synod which was to determine whether the Northumbrian Church should follow Celtic or Roman Rule. Hilda's community was Celtic in spirit, but had little option than to accept the Synod's decision, when it voted for

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[22] Streoneshalch was later renamed Whitby by the Danish Vikings.

Roman rule. The Abbey, however, grew in great numbers, kept the ideals of the Celtic church and led a life of simplicity, poverty, chastity and obedience. Clergy were trained, children educated, adults trained as preachers, scribes were trained to copy manuscripts, and a library was gradually filled with books. No fewer than five Whitby monks became bishops. Fighting may have continued on outside; however, culture and heritage were preserved and contributed to making the 'Golden Age' possible.

Other members of the Northumbrian Royal Family such as Eanflaed, the widow of Oswiu, and Aelffled, her daughter, were also called to be nuns and Abbesses of Whitby (Hawkes 1996: 49). When the first Viking attacks began, they sacked the monasteries especially situated on the northern coastline. The Danes destroyed the abbey in 867 AD, but the Normans re-built some of it in 1078 AD.

4.4 The Parochial System

Before Theodore became Archbishop of Canterbury, churches had been built, but without a system. The organization was still in an experimental stage. The incomes to fund eventual churches came from dues and endowments. Churches and monasteries were often regarded as the property of their founder. Bede expressed his fears in his *Epistle to Bishop Edgar,* when he suggested that they could also have been founded in order to evade royal dues, or to provide positions for members of a family. An influential person could beg lands from the king, under pretence of setting up a monastery, so there was the risk that they filled the house when it was established with family and friends, some of whom continued to live secular lives, and not the kind of lives more fitting for a monastery (McClure & Collins 1994: 344, 345). The establishment and acceptance of church or cloister life was far from easy..

There is little evidence that an organised church existed before 700 AD. There were some churches, but still not in all parts. The churches had been built on old sites used for Christian worship in the past, and gradually became regarded as parish churches. These sacred places had previously had no building, and sometimes only a cross had sufficed to mark the spot where services would be held. Now a central church would have responsibility for the smaller churches in the surrounding district. In this way the basic structure of the English Church gradually developed. Priests were subordinate to their bishop, and bishops to their primate. The first Archbishop of York was inaugurated in 735 AD (Hunter Blair 1996: 117).

Theodore reduced the size of those bishoprics which were too large to administer efficiently. Bede must have experienced the same problem, as in his letter to Bishop Egbert,

Bede mentions that it must have taken the Bishop a whole year to visit and preach to his parishioners, because the villages were so far apart (McClure & Collins 1994: 345).

Smaller bishoprics also reduced the risk of the clergy being tempted to acquire too much power and wealth. Theodore created more dioceses and bishops, and then Synods began to be held to improve the management and organization of church life. The people benefited, as there various spiritual and bodily needs were easier to identify, and then be attended to. Monks and clergy, who had been lazy or self-indulgent, were chastised and given the chance to reform their ways. The church was quicker to unify and organize itself, than the kingdoms. The rapid growth of the church, especially monastic life, had another positive side. It was also instrumental in achieving a high level of education and learning, and improving literacy.

5.0   SAINTS AND THEIR CULTS

Christians have always gathered at the graves of holy people, to remember them and their deeds. The determination of whether that person was holy, i.e. a saint, was different in Anglo-Saxon times compared with today. The Early Church did not possess a central body of authorized persons to examine the sanctity of a person. The decisions were made locally, and it was not until the twelfth century that a commission was established within the Roman church.

The declaration of a saint today is usually a lengthy process involving many theologians, who investigate a proposal that the deceased person has been holy. The signs of a person's sainthood, however, were much the same in the seventh and eighth centuries as in the twenty-first century:

1. The person involved had been someone who had led an exemplary Christian life.
2. They had owned the gift of healing, and there was proof of such a grace.
3. Miracles had occurred after their death, perhaps at their graveside, or after contact with something they had used.
4. The saint could be relied upon to help as much through prayer, as they had done previously through conversation when alive.
5. A person who had died a martyr's death was immediately declared a saint.

The Roman Catholic Church today still declares saints; however, there are many stages involving careful scrutiny of information before sanctity is announced. The two final phases are called beatification (after one miracle is experienced that cannot be explained), and finally canonization (after an additional miracle is procured through intercessions to the saint). The Anglo-Saxon Church had a form of canonization called elevation. The body of the deceased was elevated and lifted above ground. This usually took place several years after the person had been buried and after miracles were said to have occurred. The coffin was opened and the bones washed and laid to rest in the coffin again. 'Only those honoured by a burial above ground in the church were considered worthy of a liturgical cult' (Farmer & Webb 1988: 21).

5.1   Hagiography

Hagiography is a literary genre, employed in the composition of a work intending to portray someone's sanctity. The hagiographer highlights those elements in their subject's life

which make him/her a saint. Hagiography was popular in early mediaeval times, but is still in use today.

The stories that circulated about the saints, and miracles they or their relics had achieved, were recorded by the hagiographer. The author's task, however, was not to write a biography or a religious epic, but to compose a portrait of a person who had led such an exemplary Christian and virtuous life, that he 'put on Christ'.[23] The hagiographer wished to demonstrate how the saint had imitated the life of Christ or other holy people, and to encourage listeners or readers of his hagiography, to follow suit. The Church taught that all Christians were called to holiness: 'Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect'.[24] This belief is still Catholic doctrine today:

> … the holiness of the People of God will grow in fruitful abundance, as is clearly shown in the history of the Church through the lives of so many saints.' (Chapman 1999: 438).

The way to holiness could be difficult to pursue as it involved renunciation and spiritual battle; however, the saints were proof that it was not impossible. Their lives were an example to follow on the road to salvation. The saints were both models and also intercessors. It was very important that the hagiographer drew attention to this fact, and also that the saint's work still continued after the grave, and that they could be turned to for help. Hagiographies can therefore be said to have had a spiritual, pastoral and pedagogical purpose.

The primary literary pattern for the hagiographer was the Bible, because the saint had followed the example of Christ's life or other biblical persons. The structure of the *Life* of a saint was important, too, and had certain rules to follow concerning the choice of material that was to be included:

1. There was often a prophecy at the time of birth about the saint's future life, or signs which indicate an extraordinary future.
2. As a child, the saint was frequently seen as someone special, possessing certain gifts such as seeing visions or hearing heavenly voices.
3. At an early age they were often called to the religious life, where they developed a piety and insight which confirmed the earlier prophecy of them being a person chosen by God.

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[23] Galatians 3: 27.
[24] Matthew 5: 48.

4. The saint was often very humble and meek, leading a life of self-denial. They preferred the ascetic life, the lonely battles against spiritual forces, and the companionship of God to fame.

5. The saint was very reluctant to accept a higher appointment such as Bishop, Abbot or Abbess. Some, however, were also opposed, but their endurance shamed their opponents.

6. They frequently predicted their own death, and prepared for it by seeking solace. They might engage in the reading of scripture, complete a literary work, or instruct their disciples. Their last words were always holy and their death peaceful.

7. After the death of the saint, miracles often occurred at their graveside, or beside their relics.

Due to their similar construction the *Lives* sound much alike. Most hagiographers impress upon their readers that they have endeavoured to write a truthful and honest account.

5.2   Lives of Saints

The *Lives* of the saints were therefore important pieces of Anglo-Saxon literature. They were written about a person who had lived a remarkable holy life. After their death, their words and deeds, especially the miraculous, were recorded. Miracles were not just wonders, but signs of a greater truth, God's intervening action and love. Miracle stories at the graveside of the saint, or accounts of healing which had occurred beside their relics, were always included in the hagiography. The feast day of the particular saint was celebrated on the anniversary of the saint's death, birthday to eternal life. Crowds of people would accumulate at the shrine of a patron saint like St. Cuthbert, and the *Life* read.

Both pagans and Christians seemed to draw comfort from prayers said at the grave-side of these remarkable men and women. In 934 AD Aethelstan visited St. Cuthbert's temporary grave at Chester-le-Street to pray for his help and victory before invading Scotland (Wood 2006: 152). Twenty years later in 954 AD, the Norwegian Viking and last King of Northumbria, Eric Bloodaxe, followed Aethelstan's example, and visited St. Cuthbert's grave before facing Earl Maccus, at the Battle of Stainmore (Wood 2006: 188). Eric Bloodaxe was pagan or semi-pagan most of his life, yet in times of dire need he was not hesitant in asking a Northern saint for help.

The *Lives* were often instrumental in establishing a cult connected with the saint, and their existence often coincided with the commencement of the process, which investigated possible sainthood, before an official declaration could be made. There were numerous *Lives*

written. The following table provides the names of the saints, who have had their lives portrayed in this way, and they are:

LIFE	AUTHOR
1. *Life of St. Anastasias.*	1. Bede.
2. *Verse Life of St. Cuthbert.*	2. Bede.
3. *Prose Life of St. Cuthbert.*	3. Bede.[25]
4. *Life of St. Felix.*	4. Bede.[26]
5. *Life of St. Felix.*	5. Paulinus of Nola.
6. *Life of Ceolfrith.*	6. Anonymous.
7. *Life of Columba.*	7. Adamnan (McClure& Collins 1994: 386).
8. *Life of St. Cuthbert.*	8. Anonymous.
9. *Life of Bishop Wilfrid.*	9. Eddius Stephanus.
10. *Life of Willibrord.*	10. Alcuin (McClure & Collins 1994: 413).

Table 22

5.3   Hagiographical studies of St. Cuthbert and St. Wilfrid

5.3.1   Sources and their biases

St. Wilfrid and St. Cuthbert are the only two men in the seventh century Church whose life story, written by a contemporary, has survived. Both saints were born in 634 AD, and they contributed much to the Northumbrian Church during their lives, albeit in much different ways. The two hagiographers I will discuss are the Venerable Bede, who wrote about St. Cuthbert, and Eddius Stephanus, who described the life of St. Wilfrid.

Apart from the Venerable Bede, there was an anonymous monk at Lindisfarne who knew Cuthbert, and wrote his *Life of Cuthbert* about ten years before Bede's version. Bishop Eadfrith of Lindisfarne, commissioned the scholar Bede, for the task of writing about Cuthbert. Bede modified the anonymous monk's version first in verse, and then in prose, and also included Cuthbert in his own book, the *EHEP* (McClure & Collins 1994: 223-233; 236, 237). He mentions Wilfrid in his historical work, too.

Eddius Stephanus had known St. Wilfrid personally for about forty years. Brought from Canterbury to teach Gregorian chanting at Ripon, he had become Wilfrid's choir cantor

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[25] These first three *Lives* were written by Bede (McClure & Collins 1994: xvii), but were not his own composition.

[26] Here again Bede has rewritten and modified someone else's work, improving the quality and content of the text (Ward 1998: 97).

(McClure & Collins 1994: 173). Bishop Acca of Hexham, and Abbot Tatbehrt, had ordered him to write *The Life of Wilfrid*. Stephanus as a personal friend of Wilfrid, may have already planned to do so, too. Wilfrid was a great saint and worthy of a hagiography; however, his aloofness and haughty personality, had often deprived him of the same amount of love and affection that Cuthbert had been awarded. Wilfrid was held in great esteem by his own monks at Ripon, many felt that he had been unjustly treated or misunderstood. This is evident in Eddius' life story, as he defends Wilfrid as much as he praises him, and his loyalty is unquestionable. Eddius had to rely on information from others, for example Bishop Acca, and to add strength to his acclamation of Wilfrid at the beginning of his eulogy, Eddius borrowed ideas from the author of an earlier life of St. Cuthbert. Eddius was a scholar, but his work cannot be compared with that which the genius Bede produced. Bede, however, must have used Eddius' *Life of Wilfrid* as one of his sources when writing about Wilfrid in his *EHEP*, as Eddius had completed his version ten years earlier. Bede and Stephanus are therefore two authors with two different approaches to their subject matter. Bede's work is pure hagiography, whereas Eddius' book is full of biblical analogies, pious interjections and often lapses into an account of Wilfrid's achievement.

Bede never warmed towards Wilfrid. His description of him is distant and indifferent. It is difficult to get a true picture of Wilfrid because of the brevity of Bede's description of him, and the obvious bias of Eddius. When Wilfrid is elected as bishop in 664 AD, Eddius is full of praise describing Wilfrid's qualities (Webb & Farmer 1988: 116, 117), whereas Bede briefly refers to him as 'the priest Wilfrid' (McClure & Collins 1994: 163). Bede regarded Wilfrid as an eminent prelate, whereas he considered Cuthbert to be a holy bishop with a completely different focus on life.

When describing the events of the Synod of Whitby, Bede justified the Northumbrian monks of the Celtic tradition by explaining that 'the sole concern of these teachers was to serve God and not the world, to satisfy the soul and not the belly'.

Bede was equally emphatic when he said:

'They were so free from all taint of avarice that none of them would accept lands or possessions to build monasteries, unless compelled to by the secular authorities' (McClure & Collins 1994: 161).

These words clearly illustrate what Bede admired, and what he disapproved of. Bede criticized much of what Wilfrid represented, but his words were said in a more indirect

manner. Bede was able to discern which work of Wilfrid had been beneficial to the Church, and to render him respect for this.

In his *EHEP* Bede includes the following epitaph over Wilfrid's grave (McClure& Collins 1994: 274).

> *Here lie great WILFRID'S bones. In loving zeal*
> *He built this church, and gave it Peter's name,*
> *Who bears the key's by gift of Christ the King;*
> *Clothed it in gold and purple, and set high*
> *In gleaming ore the trophy of the Cross;*
> *Golden the Gospels four he made for it,*
> *Lodged in a shrine of gold, as is their due.*
> *To the high Paschal feast its order just*
> *He gave, by doctrine true and catholic,*
> *As our forefathers held; drove error far,*
> *And showed his folk sound law and liturgy.*
> *Within these walls a swarm of monks he hived,*
> *And in their statutes carefully laid down*
> *All that the Fathers by their rule command.*
> *At home, abroad, long time in tempests tossed,*
> *Thrice fifteen years he bare a bishop's charge,*
> *Passed to his rest, and gained the joys of Heaven.*
> *Grant, Lord, his flock may tread their shepherd's path!*

This verse epitaph was not in *The Life of Wilfrid,* so it has been implied that it was Bede who was the author. This is a feasible suggestion, as Eddius Stephanus would have used much more loving words. When writing about Wilfrid's death, Eddius depicted a highly dramatic scene, where the focus was upon the sadness and tears of those who were present, and the loving devotion of Wilfrid's monks, who chanted and prayed for their dear bishop, (Webb & Farmer 1988: 178).

The epitaph, however, is cleverly written; Wilfrid's accomplishments are woven into the text, and they pay tribute to him. The epitaph is not a declaration of love, but the words that are chosen, do him justice. Details about Wilfrid the builder, the cleric, the loyal defender of the Roman party and Catholic dogma, are recorded within a setting of power and golden

wealth. Bede was known for his love of accuracy when writing texts, so this fact strengthens the assumption that Bede could be the author.

Nothing charitable or humane is included in the tribute, so it is doubtful that Eddius was the author. Wilfrid is credited with establishing a monastery likened to a beehive. The monks are schooled in Church law, liturgy and doctrine, and busily occupy themselves in this way. The author seems to emphasize here Wilfrid's obsession for ensuring the correctness of Church administration.

Wilfrid did have a human side to him and it is Eddius who provides this information. Before his death, Wilfrid visited his people for the last time, travelling far and wide to say farewell. He certainly put his house in order, making sure that his monks and those he was responsible for were taken care of (Webb & Farmer 1988: 175-179). Some of his inheritance was to be put aside to pay clergy that the monks might have to negotiate with. This is an odd request, but perhaps the advice of a priest who has sadly experienced that such means were necessary.

Hagiographical study of St. Cuthbert

Hagiographical points	Life of St. Cuthbert[27]	Biblical parallel
1. An exceptional child. The first prophecy.	Cuthbert had a lowly start to his life, even though his family was of relatively high birth. Legend says that already as a child Cuthbert was destined to become a monk. Bede begins his Life of Cuthbert, when the saint is eight years old, and a playful youngster. Bede includes the remark of one of Cuthbert's young friends, who rebukes him for boisterously joining in the games. The infant's words become prophetic when he says to Cuthbert, 'How ill it befits you to play with children, you whom the Lord has marked out to instil virtue into your elders' (44).[28]	'when I was a child I used to talk like a child, and see things as a child does'. 'now that I have become an adult I have finished with all childish ways'.[29]
2. A miraculous sign The saint was called by	On the eve of St. Aidan's death, 17 year old Cuthbert, was minding sheep on the Lammermuir hills, overlooking the island of Lindisfarne. He saw a	The Annunciation. The Angel Gabriel visited Mary,

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[27] Included in Webb and Farmer's edition *The Age of Bede,* 1988.

[28] Page references will be written like this, and are from Webb and Farmer's edition of *The Age of Bede,* 1988.

[29] 1Corinthians 13: 11.

God, chosen, and blessed for his vocation.	host of angels in the sky that carried off a soul to heaven, and he took this as a sign from God. Bede says that Cuthbert was 'moved by this vision to give himself to spiritual discipline in order to gain eternal happiness with the mighty men of God', and similarly 'he set about thanking God and … exhorted his companions to praise Him' (48).	saying: ' Rejoice you who enjoy God's favour'.[30]
3. The call to holiness was responded to. Cuthbert's high degree of holiness is recognised.	On hearing about St. Aidan's death, Cuthbert decided to enter a monastery, choosing the monastery at Melrose. A priest called Boisil greeted him like an Old Testament prophet, and said: 'Behold the servant of the Lord' (50).	Mary's response to the Angel Gabriel was: 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word'. [31]
4. The total commitment to spiritual life and duty was made. The characteristic of self-denial began to take form.	Cuthbert served under Abbot Eata at Melrose (Hawkes 1996: 61). He was eager, attentive, and learnt to follow the Rule of St. Benedict. He was content and enjoyed the life he led in the monastery. His natural gifts of communication were used to preach the Christian message to others. Cuthbert was an enthusiastic preacher, who radiated the words of the Gospel in which he so strongly believed. He followed Abbot Eata to Ripon, where he officiated as steward, a task Cuthbert excelled at. He cared for and welcomed every guest, saw to their every need ensuring their well-being. He unwittingly entertained an angel, and his hospitality was rewarded with a gift of heavenly bread. (52)	Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, and instituted the feast of the Eucharist on the evening before he died, seeing to their bodily and spiritual needs.[32]
5. Cuthbert was spared to serve God.	On Wilfrid's return from the continent, he was given the monastery at Ripon and its lands by King Alchfrith. Abbot Eata, Cuthbert and the other monks were driven out of Ripon, and sent back to Melrose. Cuthbert developed the plague, but he recovered miraculously (53).	

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[30] Luke 1: 38.
[31] Luke 1: 38..
[32] John 13:1-16; Luke 22: 17-21.

6. The eager and willing pupil was schooled. A second prophecy.	Boisil contracted the disease, too, and before he died he sent for Cuthbert. They read a seven- part commentary of St. John's Gospel together, reading and discussing one part each day. Boisil used this Gospel of love, to instruct and inspire Cuthbert into focusing his own life on work through love (54). It was an introduction into how Cuthbert was to live in the future. Boisil also revealed to Cuthbert that he would become bishop one day.	Christ instructed His disciples before his death[33]
7. Reluctance and anguish at the prospect of becoming a Bishop.	Cuthbert reacted to the news as follows: 'If I could live in a tiny dwelling on a rock in the ocean, surrounded by swelling waves, cut off from the knowledge and sight of all, I would still not be free from the cares of this fleeting world, nor from the fear that somehow the love of money would snatch me away'(54).	St. Paul's sermon about love[34] - 'if I have prophetic powers and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge and …'
8. The saint 'put on Christ'.	Cuthbert became Prior of Melrose, and by his good example and charity, gave advice and instruction to the monks on how to direct their lives. Ordinary people trusted him, too, as he accepted people as they were, and sought out those who were supposedly difficult and obstinate. He travelled all over the region, often by foot, administered to the poor, and those who lived in fear because of superstition. He freed them from idolatry, and was driven by his ardour to save souls.	Christ toured villages and countryside, trying to help as many he could.[35]
9. The saint was put to the test.	Cuthbert became Prior of Lindisfarne, after the Synod of Whitby. He was given the difficult task of helping the monks to iron out their Roman-Celtic differences. His diplomatic qualities were put to full use as he strove to unite the community. He created a new Rule of Life taken from the best rules he knew, invited discussion, but left the room if voices were raised. His peaceful manner gradually won, and the community returned to normal life again.	

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[33] John 13: 31-36.
[34] 1. Corinthians 13: 2, 3.
[35] Matthew 9: 35-37.

10. A hermit existence of prayer and solitude was sought. The lover of mankind became greatly loved, too.	Cuthbert longed for more time to devote his full attention to God. He was given permission to live on the more remote island of Greater Farne and moved there in 676 AD (Hawkes 1996: 61), with only the birds and seals as his companions. The fame of his holiness and wisdom spread, hundreds visited him. They sought the guidance of the man to whom they could open their hearts and who had always time to listen.	Jesus and his disciples retreated to a deserted place. Crowds followed after. Jesus was full of compassion and began to teach them.[36]
11. The reluctant servant graciously bowed to the will of God.	In 684 AD, Cuthbert received a visit from the King and Bishop Trumwine, as a new Bishop of Hexham was needed. Cuthbert had already revealed his feelings about such an office, to a trusted friend, Aelfflaed, daughter of Oswiu, and Abbess of Whitby. He escaped the appointment and Bishop Eata accepted instead. Cuthbert was then persuaded to take over Eata's vacant see at Lindisfarne, and consecrated as bishop at York, on Easter Day 685 AD. He was attended by Archbishop Theodore and six other bishops (Baring-Gould 1990: 61). Cuthbert could never have totally refused God's offer of a new way to serve Him (75).	The mutual love between the Son and the Father conquered Christ's anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane.[37]
12. The servant predicted his own death and sought solace. Recognition of an exceptional person that had lived.	Cuthbert's episcopate lasted only two years. His failing health allowed him to return to Farne to prepare himself for his own death. He gave Herewith instructions about a simple grave and burial. After three weeks of temptation and suffering, Cuthbert died on 20 March 687 AD. Torches were immediately lit to signal to the monks of Lindisfarne, and the neighbouring countryside, that their beloved saint had died (89-92).	Christ's own suffering on the Cross. The centurion acknowledged the Son of God. Christ's burial.[38]

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[36] Mark 6: 30-34.
[37] Mark 14: 33-37.
[38] Mark 15: 33-39. 46, 47.

13. Miracles at the shrine.	Cuthbert was buried beside the high altar at Lindisfarne. His fame brought many pilgrims to the church, seeking the same comfort at his grave, as they had sought when he was alive. A young demoniac was cured by a lotion made of soil and the water used to wash Cuthbert's body (95).	Christ cured the blind man of Bethsaida.[39]
14. Proof of heavenly virtue.	In 698 AD, eleven years later, Cuthbert's coffin was opened and his body found to be incorrupt (96-98).	The empty tomb.[40]

Table 23

A century after St. Cuthbert's death the Vikings struck Lindisfarne, the first place to be raided. After several more raids, the community decided to leave Lindisfarne, taking their most precious belongings with them. The monks eluded the Vikings by being constantly on the move. Cuthbert's body was eventually laid to rest in Durham. Over this deeply loved saint was built the Cathedral of St. Mary and St. Cuthbert, and his body was then laid in a shrine so pilgrims could visit it. The spot is marked by a stone slab in the floor inscribed with the name Cuthbertus, and a little chapel built around it for prayer and meditation. The simplicity of his grave is in keeping with the nature of Cuthbert himself.

5.3.3   Hagiographical study of St. Wilfrid

Hagiographical points	*Life of Wilfrid*[41]	Biblical analogy
1. A portent or sign from God, heralded the birth of a special child.	When Wilfrid was born in 634 AD, his birthplace was consumed by flames which were impossible to extinguish. Equally remarkable, was that they neither burnt nor harmed anyone (106).[42]	A star leads the Magi to Christ's birthplace.[43]
2. An early awareness of God and a call to serve Him.	Born into a noble Anglo-Saxon family, connected with the Northumbrian court, Wilfrid was trained for the life of a nobleman. King Edwin had been baptised by Paulinus in 627 AD, so religion and royalty influenced Wilfrid from an early age. He was quick to learn, intelligent and obedient. Only	Jacob receives Isaac's blessing.[44] The willingness and

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[39] Mark 8: 22-27.
[40] Mark 16: 4-7.
[41] Included in Webb and Farmer's edition of *The Age of Bede,* 1988.
[42] Page references will be written like this, and are from Webb and Farmer's edition of *The Age of Bede,* 1988.
[43] Matthew 2: 9,10.
[44] Genesis 27: 27-30.

Rejection of worldly position.	fourteen years old, Wilfrid decided upon a life in the service of God. He received his father's blessing, and then approached the Christian Queen Eanflaed for her help. Wilfrid was sent to the nearby monastery at Lindisfarne for his schooling, and was a willing and eager pupil.	obedience of Samuel.[45]
3. The servant sought heavenly not worldly treasure. A hint of sanctity was made.	Wilfrid had a longing to see and to learn. His intellect had gained him favour with the Queen, so the following year he accompanied Benedict Biscop on his journey to Rome. He stayed with the Bishop of Lyons, both on the outward and return journey. He refused the Bishop's gift of part of Gaul to rule. Dalfinus was martyred, but Wilfrid was spared, as his attackers recognized traces of his holiness. Wilfrid had become acquainted with the practices of the Latin Church, the rules and customs of the Benedictine monastery traditions, the richly decorated stone churches and beautiful music and rich liturgy during his six years in Europe. He had also received the papal blessing and tonsure (111-113).	Christ's promise of everlasting life for those who renounce family and friends to follow Him.[46]
4. The servant was blessed with new found knowledge.	Wilfrid returned to Northumbria with an admiration for everything Roman. The King's son, Alchfrid, raised in the traditions of his mother's church, shared Wilfrid's enthusiasm. Alchfrid had founded a religious house at Ripon, run by Celtic monks from the monastery at Melrose, but had Wilfrid installed as Abbot on his return to Northumbria. Alchfrid intended to introduce the Roman custom there. He also chose Wilfrid to be the spokesman of Rome at the Synod of Whitby. At the Synod Wilfrid used dogma to justify his claim, and showed little empathy or respect for the Celtic monks who had taught him and were his senior. Their firm, meek approach, could not match the eloquence of Wilfrid. The Synod favoured Wilfrid', but he had succeeded in alienating many.	Solomon was blessed with wisdom[47] (Knowledge cannot be compared with this)

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[45] 1 Samuel 3: 19.
[46] Matthew 19: 29, 30.
[47] 1 Kings 3: 11.

	The Northumbrian bishopric fell vacant and Wilfrid was chosen to lead the episcopate centred in York. Preferring to be consecrated as Bishop in Gaul rather than Northumbria, Wilfrid left for Europe, but remained there for two years. He returned to find himself deposed. Chad had been consecrated as Bishop in 666 AD. Wilfrid appealed to Rome and regained his see for nine years. Wilfrid repaired the church at York and built a church at Ripon in 672/3 AD (and later at Hexham). Built in stone, it was modelled and luxuriously furnished like the great churches he had seen in Europe (123).	Solomon built a temple to the glory of God.[48]
5. The servant persevered in the face of adversity. A miracle occurred. A prophetic sign.	In 678 AD Wilfrid fell from power and was banished from Northumbria. He turned his energy to missionary work in Friesland. An unusually large catch of fish coincided with the time of Wilfrid's arrival, and convinced some of his holiness, so they converted (132).	Solomon lost his kingdom. Peter and Andrew were called to become 'fishers of men'.[49]
6. The servant was sustained by faith during adversity and hardship. Charitable acts were rewarded by God who grants miracles.	In 680 AD he returned to Northumbria vindicated by Papal decree. King Ecgfrith flouted the decision of the Holy See, and imprisoned Wilfrid. The queen took Wilfrid's reliquary and used it as a necklace. Wilfrid comforted and encouraged his brethren instead, and cured the sheriff's wife. His pitch-black dungeon did not prevent him from prayer and worship. His cell was suddenly lit up by God, and his chains fell off him (144,145).	The persecution of the disciples was foretold by Jesus.[50] Peter was delivered from prison.[51]
7. The shame and dishonour that was endured, was rewarded with the salvation of souls.	In 680 AD Wilfrid was exiled, and spent five years converting the South and the West Saxons. An unceasing persecution, stirred up by Ecgfrith, followed him wherever he went. King Aethilwalh of Sussex took pity on him, and allowed Wilfrid to settle on Selsey, among the heathens. Here, the eloquence of God's apostle converted many.	God loves justice and hates wrong-doing.[52]
8. The servant met adversity, but	Ecgfrith was killed in battle, and Wilfrid was called back from exile by the new king, Aldfrith. Ripon,	

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[48] 1 Kings 8: 12-14.
[49] Matthew 4:19.
[50] Mark 13: 9-14.
[51] Acts 12: 6-8.
[52] Isaiah 61.

concentrated on his call.	Hexham and the see of York are restored to him. Aldfrith had spent many years at Iona, so Wilfrid's negative attitude towards Celtic tradition, soon antagonized the new king. Wilfrid was banished again, and spent ten years in Mercia as bishop of Leicester. He founded monasteries in Mercia and Kent, where he found favour with King Wulfhere and the pious King Egbert. His ability to cooperate with the Kings of Mercia and Kent was perhaps easier, because they followed the Roman tradition.	
9. The perseverance and restraint of the righteous was rewarded. A prophecy and a promise. His opponent was shamed.	In 702 AD Wilfrid was dispossessed at the Council of Austerfield. He made a third journey to Rome to appeal and won his case. On the return journey, he became seriously ill. He received a visitation from St. Michael bearing a message from the Virgin Mary. Wilfrid would recover and live four more years of life. As thanks, he had to build a church in her name. Aldfrith would not receive him, and ignored the papal decree. However, he became seriously ill and before his death he relented (171).	Israel's deliverance from Egypt was assured.[53]
10. After many years of tribulations, the faithful servant of God was justified. Divine intervention. Peace was restored.	The Synod of Nidd held in 706 AD, eventually decided Wilfrid's future. The papal decrees were firm, but were accepted. The late king had requested that his son and heir have Wilfrid reinstated. When Bamburgh had been attacked after Aldfrith's death, the nobles had vowed to God that if He helped them against their enemies, then they also would restore Wilfrid to his episcopal office and monasteries. The enemy miraculously had retreated (171).	The suffering servant will be restored.[54]
11. Death was imminent, so the servant put his affairs in order, and primed his pupils.	Wilfrid returned to Hexham to administer the diocese, and built a church dedicated to St. Mary. He experienced peace and royal favour once again. St. Michael promised a four-year reprieve from his illness. In 707 AD Wilfrid had a sudden attack again. He recovered, but remembered his predicted death and began to prepare himself for this. He	

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[53] Exodus 6: 6-8.
[54] Isaiah 52: 13-15.

	carefully instructed his monks on the running of the various houses. The King of Mercia sought Wilfrid's advice about the monasteries he had established in his kingdom. Wilfrid travelled far and wide to organize the future administration of his See and landholdings.	
12. The demise of a servant of God. Signs of sanctity Miracles.	Wilfrid reached the monastery at Oundle where death overcame him. As he blessed his brethren for the last time, the sound of birds in flight was heard. Miracles began to occur. The withered hand of a nun was cured after it had come in contact with a relic of Wilfrid. The monastery was spared during an arson attempt and a rainbow appeared in the sky (178 -182).	A woman was healed by touching the cloak of Jesus.[55] The sign of God's covenant with earth.[56]

Table 24

Each of the formulaic features of hagiography has a symbolic meaning, some in relation to miracles or statements in the Bible.

5.4   Ascetic or noble clerics?

Cuthbert and Wilfrid were both saints. Cuthbert was the recluse, concerned with and devoted to the saving of his own soul and the souls of others. He was the saint of the cloister and retreat. Wilfrid was the statesman concerned with debate and the affairs of the church, and the saint of the mission field. They were completely different, and a gulf apart considering their drive, even if their goal to serve God, the Church, and man was the same.

Wilfrid, as Bishop of York, was powerful enough to overshadow both his secular (the King and Queen) and ecclesiastical (Archbishop of Canterbury) superiors. He had been highly successful as a patron of the arts and as a missionary, but as a bishop with a diocese to administer, he seemed to accumulate more enemies among the people he worked with and was supposed to guide.

When entering the County of Durham today, a road sign welcomes travellers to '*Durham, the County of the Prince Bishops'*. Although this term was not applied when Wilfrid lived, it well befits his love of wealth and luxurious adornment. His churches at Ripon and Hexham may have been of stone, and built like basilicas, but neither became important centres of learning. Wilfrid liked to surround himself with pomp and ceremony, and used this

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[55] Mark 5: 28.
[56] Genesis 9: 17.

extravagance to impress those of importance. He was adviser and confidant of kings, and used this position for the benefit of the Church. He saw how important their benevolence was. In his will, Wilfrid requested that some of his possessions be used to buy the friendship of kings.

Wilfrid not only befriended kings, but also their queens, and profited considerably from these alliances, too. Queen Eanflaed gave him the means to travel to Rome in his youth. Queen Aethelthryth generously donated land on which Wilfrid could build Hexham Abbey. Queen Ermenilda of Mercia was his trusted friend, while the Abbess Aelfflaed of Whitby came to Wilfrid's aid at the Council of Nidd, by persuading the Northumbrian lords to restore some of his former bishopric to him. This enabled Wilfrid to live peacefully the last four years of his life.

Cuthbert was a complete contrast to the aristocratic Wilfrid. Cuthbert was happiest living as a recluse, but was still loved and approached for help. Seeking financial support and sponsorship would have been distasteful to him. The Abbess Aelfflaed was convinced of his holiness. When she herself had been ill, she had prayed to God for something belonging to Cuthbert to hold so that she would be cured. When Cuthbert sent her suddenly a linen cincture, she knew her wish had been granted. Her belief in Cuthbert was confirmed twice, as not only was she cured, but also one of her nuns, who had been dangerously ill before she had come in contact with the cincture.

Cuthbert preferred the solace of the small island of Farne to prepare himself for death, and hoped to be buried there. He was dismayed by his monks who persuaded him to choose Lindisfarne instead. He can be said to have had the same strain of Christianity as St. Aidan, and St. Francis of Assisi.

Wilfrid's strength lay in his relentless determination to bring order and seemliness into the Church. He believed that its growth depended upon the possession of endowments. The estates the Church acquired, however, were also used as his own. As Wilfrid prospered in wealth and achievement, his popularity dwindled. He was brave and stood up against the King, faced his critics and refused to admit error or accept defeat. He possessed an indomitable spirit, and as a missionary he was equally brave. His power and authority could be questioned, but not his sincerity and personal holiness.

In his book about Anglo- Saxon Northumbria, Rowland suggests that 'Cuthbert represents the spirit and traditions of the Celtic Church,' whereas 'Wilfrid the organisation and church buildings of Rome' (Rowland 1994: 28). This might seem an accurate and fair description, but it would be wrong to omit that both were great saints. They were not perfect people, and had weaknesses and failings like all men, because they were human. What set

them apart from others was that despite opposing traits in their character, their positive side managed to subdue their negative. When serving their Creator, they opened their hearts to Him in everything they did. God's will became apparent in them, while they carried out His work. The acts of the saints, which were loved and admired, and which the faithful wished to imitate, reflected God.

6.0   THE LEGACY AND INFLUENCES TODAY

6.1   Architecture and art

6.1.1   Anglo- Saxon Churches

The Anglo-Saxons began to build their churches of stone, because they found that the material was more lasting than wood. There were many stone quarries, e.g. at Corbridge and this is why the Tyne Valley has so many churches with Saxon stone towers. Anglo- Saxon towers, arches, carvings are to be found in many Northumbrian village parish churches today:

St. Cuthbert's Church, Bellingham

This church was named after St. Cuthbert, as it had once been a temporary resting-place for his body, during the Viking attacks on Lindisfarne (Simpson 1991: 9). Many of the other churches in Northumberland carry the saint's name for that same reason. A pathway behind the churchyard leads to St. Cuthbert's well, which contains water claimed to have healing powers. When visiting this church last year, one of the parishioners explained that water from the well (locally referred to as Cuddy's well) has been used at baptisms.

St. Andrew's Church, Bywell

It has a Saxon tower which is probably the best preserved in Northumberland. It is possible to see a large collection of cross-slabs. As the graveyard is circular in shape, there is the possibility that the church could have been built on a pagan enclosure.

St. Peter's Church, Bywell

This church has Saxon features, including the windows in the north wall of the nave. It was here that Egbert was consecrated Bishop of Lindisfarne in 802 AD.

St. Mary and St. Cuthbert's Church, Chester-le- Street

The original Anglo-Saxon Church, built in 883 AD, housed the shrine of St. Cuthbert, before his body was finally laid to rest in Durham Cathedral. Part of the church is now a museum.

St. Edwin's Church, Coniscliffe

This is one of the only two churches in the UK dedicated to the Northumbrian Saint and King, Edwin. Inside the church, set into the North wall, is a stone called 'the Saxon stone'.

St. Andrew's Church, Corbridge.

This beautiful church was built as a monastery using stone from the nearby Roman Wall. It has existed since the late seventh century, and was built by monks sent by St. Wilfrid for this purpose. Records show that a bishop was consecrated here in 786 AD. The Saxons had difficulty at first in constructing arches out of stone, so one arch is carved out of one whole piece. Another is much older, as it was first erected as a Roman gateway at the nearby fort Corstopitum in 150 AD. The Saxons dismantled it, transported and reassembled it as an arch in the church. On one of the window sills it is still possible to see the Saxon name YRIC carved in the stone.

St. John the Baptist's Church, Edlingham

The foundations of this church are Anglo-Saxon, as is the west wall.

St. Maurice's Church, Eglingham

The chancel arch is all that remains of this Saxon church, as this Border church has often been the target of Scottish raiders. The monastery at Lindisfarne was granted the hamlet of Eglingham, by King Ceolwulf, when he became a monk at that monastery in 737 AD (McClure & Collins 1994: 358).

St. John the Evangelist's Church, Escomb.

The whole of this church is Anglo-Saxon, and was built around 675 AD. It is the most important of all the churches I have listed. It is not only one of England's earliest churches, but it is also the most complete and whole. Much of the stone is from Roman sites, and was used by the Anglo-Saxons to build the chancel arch. The circular design of the churchyard is typically Celtic.

St. Paul's Church, Jarrow.

The dedication stone of Bede's monastery, dated 23rd April 685, can still be seen in St. Paul's Church today. It can be quite difficult to find the actual church today, as St. Paul's is situated on the southern bank of the River Tyne. The industrial setting of today is in huge contrast to that of Bede's day. The church is a sooty black, and swamped by the nearby heavy industry and petrol storage tanks. This is not much of a tribute to the monastery of the monk known as, *'Father of English history'*.

Parts of the priory church of the first abbot Ceolfrith still stand. It is possible to see the nave of the first Saxon church. The small rounded windows in both north and south walls are original, too. The oldest coloured window glass in Europe has been placed in a window of the chancel, after it was found among the ruins of the refectory. Benedict Biscop had imported glassmakers from Europe when the twin monasteries at Wearmouth and Jarrow were being built, and glassmaking soon became an important industry at Jarrow.

Bede's relics have been removed from the monastery, and now lie in a special tomb in Durham Cathedral.

The Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Lindisfarne.

The architecture of this church belongs to the Saxon, Norman and Early English periods. It is situated beside Lindisfarne priory, but is interesting itself. It stores a facsimile of the Lindisfarne gospels, and icons of St. Aidan and St. Cuthbert. Placed in one of the church aisles, is a life-size wooden statue of the monks carrying the coffin and relics of St. Cuthbert. In the churchyard outside is a statue of St. Aidan, who is carrying a lighted torch in his hand, to light up the way for the pagan people who walked in darkness.

St. Peter's Church, Monkwearmouth.

This church was part of the twin monastery which was founded in 674 AD by Benedict Biscop. (St. Paul's Church in Jarrow built in 684 AD is the name of the other). There are still fine examples of Anglo-Saxon sculpture to be seen, including grave-markers.

St. Mary's Church, Norton.

This is a Saxon church that despite its age still has an almost complete crossing tower. It is a perfect example of a church built in a cruciform plan.

St. Hilda's Church, South Shields

This church was rebuilt by the Normans, as the original church built in 647 AD, was sacked by the marauding Danes in the ninth century.

The Church of St. Michael and All Angels, Warden.

This church was originally erected on the site of an oratory built by St. John of Beverley in the year 700 AD. Some early remains are still to be seen, such as the church tower, and a hammerhead cross, which is standing in the churchyard.

<u>St. Bartholomew's Church, Whittingham.</u>

This church was originally Anglo-Saxon, and resembles a fortress church with its thick walls. The quoins, which are well preserved, are the best of the Anglo-Saxon elements to be seen there.

This is quite a list of churches possessing Anglo-Saxon elements, some having much more than others. They are situated in the former Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Northumbria, however, which covered a vast territory, so their number is not surprising.

6.1.2 Monasteries and Cathedrals

The monasteries and cathedrals started during the Anglo-Saxon period have withstood the ravages of time, Viking invaders, the Dissolution Act of 1536 AD and the Reformation (Woodward 1997: 10). Whether they are in ruin or they stand whole, they still bear witness of the message of their Founder and founders. Their beauty and craftsmanship call out to new generations, who are presented with new challenges to the Christian faith. The questions that were posed to the Anglo-Saxon missionaries and saints are equally relevant today as they continue to haunt mankind – What is life about? Why are we here? Why is there suffering? The same answers and solutions are still sought today, but these monuments of a bygone age, speak of survival. Out of a seemingly Dark Age they arose, nurtured by the Christian message of faith, and hope in the future.

6.1.2.1 Hexham Abbey

When a visitor enters Hexham Abbey today, there is very little remaining of the Benedictine abbey that Wilfrid founded. In 681 AD it received the status of a cathedral. However, in 1113 AD it was refounded as an Augustine priory. The added night stair is a reminder of this role. The night stair was built in the thirteenth century. With the dissolution of the monasteries in the sixteenth century, it became the parish church of Hexham. Today the building is known as Hexham Abbey.

The Frith Stool, or St. Wilfrid's throne, is a solid block of sandstone. It tells us of two functions – as a seat of sanctuary and as a bishop's seat. The word *'frith'* in Anglo-Saxon means peace and a Frith stool was a 'chair of peace'. Many main churches had these, and they were placed near the altar. Fugitives escaping from arrest could seek sanctuary until a trial was arranged for them, by placing their hand on a frith stool. They were more in use in Europe, but Wilfrid, who had made different journeys to Rome through Gaul, could easily have seen one and been taken with the idea.

At the time that St. Andrew's Church was built, Wilfrid was Bishop of York, and then later he was both Abbot and Bishop of Hexham (*Hagustald*), so he would most likely have used this as his bishop's throne or 'cathedra'. Of the furniture, only the frith- stool remains from the Saxon period.

The crypt is the oldest part of Hexham Abbey. It was built in the seventh century as part of St. Andrew's Church, and had four chambers – a chapel, an ante-chapel and two side passages (Graham 1992: 4). The chapel is approx 4m by 2,5m, and has a height of 3m, so is not very large. The ante-chapel is even smaller, and both chapels are barrel-vaulted. All the stones are Roman, because some have inscriptions in Latin. Hexham was not a Roman fort and lay south of Hadrian's Wall, so perhaps the stone was taken from the nearby Roman Bridge. The reason why the crypt is so special, is that it is one of only six known Anglo-Saxon crypts in England. It had remained hidden until 1725, and was re-discovered by workmen digging new buttresses for the Abbey.

There are three staircases; two were for the faithful, and one for priests. Ten years ago during a personal guided tour of the crypt, I noticed how cramped it was even for the few who were allowed to enter it. The simplicity of the chapel was such that even the Celtic monks of Lindisfarne would have accepted this part of the Abbey.

The stone cross dedicated to Bishop Acca can be seen near the entrance of today's Abbey. Acca succeeded Wilfrid as abbot and Bishop of Hexham. During a visit to Hexham Abbey earlier this year, I discovered that there were actually two crosses. Both had marked the position of Bishop Acca's grave. The taller one had been placed at the head of the grave, and the smaller one, which was the height of a normal gravestone, at the foot.

Bishop Acca was Bishop of Hexham from 709 AD to 732 AD. During the years that he led the community of Hexham, he adorned the church with sculpture, gathered sacred relics, which he placed in specially built side-chapels, and created a library of sacred books (McClure & Collins 1994: 275). He also had a skilled teacher of Gregorian chant brought from Kent, so Acca made a large contribution towards establishing Hexham Abbey as a place of learning.

Bishop Acca, the theologian and musician, has been honoured by having his grave marked. Although he had travelled much and accompanied the ageing Wilfrid, Acca had not been dazzled by Europe in the same way as Wilfrid. Acca had spent most of his ministry in Northumbria, content to work among and serve his native people, and they loved him for it.

The two crosses are now well worn and weathered. The inscription was unreadable, and nearly a metre of the shaft of the taller one, was missing. Despite this it was easy to see

and trace the intricate vine scroll pattern on them. The vines interlaced and encircled leaves and fruit. The craftsmen who had devotedly carved them, have given a vivid interpretation to Christ's words in the Gospel of St. John 15, 'I am the vine, and you the branches. He, who dwells in me, as I dwell in Him, bears much fruit; for apart from me you can do nothing'.

When Wilfrid started to build his monastery, his Northumbrian followers knew nothing of such alien craftsmanship in stone. Acca's Cross, built fifty years later, is also proof of how quickly they learnt, and of the zeal and joy they had acquired as Christians.

There are examples of Saxon stone carvings in the recesses of the walls of the nave which was re-built in 1908. Anglo-Saxon stones were found because of the renovations. The Abbey has had various extensions during its lifetime, and these stones have gradually collected. Even though they are damaged, some have patterns on them or are coloured, showing that at one time the walls had colourful patterns. One stone has a rosette design on it, of thirteen petals around a petal centre, others grave-marker crosses on them, or carving that shows they have been part of a cross shaft.

Wilfrid had a vision to build a place of worship, education and culture here, and this is something which occurs today. The present Abbey community organizes church services, concerts and lectures, continuing Wilfrid's intention.

6.1.2.2   Durham Cathedral

Durham Cathedral was built primarily to revere God and St. Cuthbert, and on 11 August 1093 AD, the foundation stones of the present cathedral were laid. A wooden church had first been built to house Cuthbert's relics, but this was replaced by a stone Saxon Church in 999 AD. St. Cuthbert was already famous before his shrine was built at Durham. The opening of his coffin in 698 AD had revealed the incorrupt body of Cuthbert giving him immediate sainthood. Before the saint's relics were laid to rest in the cathedral, his coffin was opened again in 1104 AD, and a sixth century manuscript of St. John's gospel found. When the coffin was opened yet again in 1827 AD, further relics of St. Cuthbert came to light, such as his pectoral cross and a portable altar, both of which can be seen in the Cathedral today. However, more interesting than these was an additional skull, now believed to be that of St. Oswald.

The building of such a magnificent cathedral ensured that Cuthbert would be remembered, and his final resting-place visited, which it still is. Pilgrims daily visit the grave of '*Cuthbertus'* lying behind the high altar, together with a shrine dedicated to St. Oswald. At the western end of the cathedral, in the Galilee Chapel, lies the grave of another important and

outstanding saint. On a dark blue marble slab, is written in Latin the words, '*Hac sunt in fossa Baedae venerabilis ossa',* which translated means: 'Here in this tomb are the bones of the Venerable Bede' (Adam 2006: 1). Strangely enough, St. Wilfrid is not afforded much of a dedication.

Many of the saints connected with the church in Northumbria have been honoured here. Along the southern aisle of the nave in Durham Cathedral are six stained-glass windows dating from 1875 AD. The different scenes illustrate important people connected with the establishment of the Northumbrian Church. These are:

The Venerable Bede (672-735)

St. Benedict Biscop   (628- 690)

St. Cuthbert, Bishop of Lindisfarne (685-687)

St. Aidan, Bishop of Lindisfarne (635-651)

St. Paulinus, first Bishop of York, who baptised King Edwin in 627 AD.

Coifi, the pagan high priest, who converted to Christianity

There is also a stained-glass window to honour St. Gregory, including an inscription of his alleged comment on seeing fair-haired Angle slaves for sale in a market '*not angles but angels /Non angle seed angelic*'.

6.1.2.3   York Minster

King Edwin, who summoned a council at Goodmanham near York, was eventually convinced by his councillors and chief priest Coifi, that Christianity was beneficial to the Royal house of Northumbria. Shortly afterwards in 627 AD he was baptised at York in a wooden church that he had ordered to be built. There was a royal seat at York, which lay in Deira, but many of Edwin's subjects were baptised at another royal centre, Yeavering in Bernicia. A stone church was started in York, but left unfinished when Edwin was killed in battle in 632 AD and heathenism returned. All trace of his church at York disappeared.

About eight years later, King Oswald restored Christianity in Northumbria and had a stone church dedicated to St. Peter built on the same spot. However, the new missionaries were to come from Ireland and Iona, so Lindisfarne replaced York as the centre of church life. It was not until St. Wilfrid was restored as Bishop of York in 662 AD, that the church was repaired and refurbished as a Minster. The Saxon Minster was destroyed by Normans.

The Norman Minster, which can be seen today in York, was begun about 1080 AD. Unlike the Cathedral at Durham, the present Minster at York has little dedicated in remembrance of the Northumbrian saints. In the crypt there are paintings above the altars,

which depict the Roman missionary Paulinus, the Christian Northumbrian King Edwin and also St. Hilda, Abbess of Whitby Abbey (Brochure from York Minster). The cover of the font commemorates King Edwin's baptism, for which the first Minster was built, but otherwise there is little immediate evidence, which is rather strange. York was an important centre both for the Northumbrian kings and his bishops.

The town of York has hosted many important Christians, most notably the Emperor Constantine. It was during a visit to York that he was proclaimed Roman Emperor, in 306 AD. Six years later he was able to declare Christianity a permitted religion of the Empire. The theologian Alcuin, who was born in 735 AD, was educated at the cloister school of St. Peter's (Hawkes 1996: 102). There is, however, very little mention of this prominent figure also. Most of the focus in this Cathedral is on events occurring after it was built, i.e. from the period of the Normans to the present day.

6.2   *Lindisfarne Gospels*

The Lindisfarne Gospels (LG) were made on the island of Lindisfarne, to honour St. Cuthbert, and to glorify God. The book was handwritten in Latin, and the text a copy of St. Jerome's Vulgate version of the Gospels of the four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John (O'Sullivan & Young 1995: 53). It is difficult to decide on an exact date, but it is believed that the *LG* were compiled after Cuthbert's death in 687 AD, but before the death of its artist and illuminator, Eadfrith, Bishop of Lindisfarne, in 721 AD. It is known that Bishop Eadfrith granted a request in 698 AD to have Cuthbert's coffin removed from his stone sarcophagus, and placed at the right side of the altar, for a further veneration. The remains were found to be incorrupt, and this would have been seen as a sign of Cuthbert's saintlihood. Such a revelation was likely to have promoted a Cult of Cuthbert, and caused the *LG* to be made.

The *LG* are a masterpiece of Northumbrian art, but before explaining why, it is also important to consider two significant pieces of information that their existence reveals. Firstly, it shows that Cuthbert was a greatly loved and highly regarded saint, and therefore must have been an exceptional person to have warranted such a tribute. Secondly, it emphasizes how the innovative and gifted artist, Eadfrith, had fully committed his body, soul and all the gifts and talents that God had provided him with to create a work that would honour Cuthbert and the Master they both served. His deed of love and adoration resulted in a work of outstanding beauty. He owned the same spirit as producers of icons, who meditate and seek God's guidance, while they paint.

The Gospel pages are so detailed, and illuminated with such intricate patterns, that they show how their production has involved patience, perseverance, painstaking work and careful planning in order to create such symmetry, harmony and beauty. They were well-structured and composed, beginning with St Matthew:

CONTENTS	DESCRIPTION
Jerome's letter to Pope Damasus. This letter takes on a new and introductory role, becoming a declaration of the intention of the author and makers of the manuscript. Prologue.	'Novum opus facere me cogis ex veteri' translates as 'out of something old, you compelled me to make something new.'
The Eusebian Canon tables.	These are named after the fourth century theologian Eusebius who devised them. They facilitated the location of parallel passages to be found in the other gospels.
Introduction to the Gospel according to St. Matthew.	
Three highly decorated and illuminated pages.	Firstly, a full-page miniature of St. Matthew who is seated and writing in a book. He is accompanied by his own symbol, a winged man. A figure, perhaps Christ, is watching him behind a veil. Secondly, a page of elaborate ornament structured around an ornamented cross. Thirdly, the opening words of the text in decorated capitals. The initial letter is much larger and grander than the others, almost becoming a picture in itself.
List of liturgical readings.	These indicated which passages had been chosen for use in the Church's liturgy.
List of feast days.	These told when, and which Saint or special occasion was to be celebrated, and which biblical text was considered suitable to use.

Table 25

The other Gospels followed after St. Matthew's Gospel, and had the same form. The majority of the pages were hand-written text and unadorned; however, fifteen were completely covered with ornamentation to mark special divisions in the work.

The illuminated pictures of the other evangelists portrayed them as seated figures, but otherwise they were different. Mark writes on a single sheet of vellum, and his symbol is that of a lion, whereas St. Luke is writing on a scroll, which is lying across his knees, and his symbol is that of a calf. St. John, however, is not writing at all, but holds a scroll with the intention of showing its contents. He faces the reader, and with his direct opening words, reveals to his audience a concrete reality: 'In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God and the Word was God …'[57]

Of all the evangelists, it was John who wrote with the purpose of revealing, witnessing and proclaiming who Christ was. His symbol is that of an eagle, an ethereal creature which scans the heavens. This is a fitting symbol for St. John, whose gospel can be likened to a meditation on Christ, and whose lofty words contain such deep and veiled meanings.

The writing at the top of each portrait is in Latin and tells us what each symbol is. Greek is used to introduce each evangelist, and saint (O hagios):

SYMBOL	LATIN		SAINT	GREEK
Man	hominis		Matthew	Mattheus
Lion	leonis		Mark	Marcus
Calf	vituli		Luke	Lucas
Eagle	aequilae		John	Iohannes

Table 26

In the tenth century, a priest belonging to the community at Chester-le-Street, named Aldred, added a 'gloss' between the original lines of Latin text (O'Sullivan & Young 1995: 52). This was a translation from Latin to Anglo-Saxon, an act which added to the value of the manuscript, because it also gave information about the written language of that time. Aldred added a personal note too, called a colophon, where he records and confirms the names of the people involved in the creation of the *LG* volume. He tells us that Aethelwold was responsible for making a binding for the Gospels in leather, while Billfrith the Anchorite adorned the binding with gold and precious stones. Aldred confirms that Eadfrith was the scribe. It is not difficult to imagine the industry of the monks involved; however, the application of their relatively new talents, together with their dedication, is to be marvelled at. They utilised the artistic skills they had acquired from Celtic, Anglo-Saxon, and Mediterranean sources and created something unique (Hawkes 1996: 90, 91). Almost every part of the gospels showed

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[57] The opening words of the Gospel according to St. John, Prologue 1a.

the amalgamation and transformation of ideas, whether it was in the script, illumination, or the geometric patterns used:

Anglo-Saxon(Germanic)	Celtic (Irish)	Mediterranean – Italian/Gallic
	Insular majuscule script (used in the main text). Half-uncial script Insular miniscule (used by Aldred in his gloss).	The text was copied from an Italian original, brought to Lindisfarne, perhaps on loan from the Jarrow- Wearmouth monastery library.
Interlaced zoomorphic or animal designs of dogs, were often seen in Anglo-Saxon metalwork.	Spiral, curvilinear patterns have parallels with Celtic metalwork, e.g. the Tara brooch.	Uncial script was developed in the fourth century (often used in headings).
The birds used in the decoration were quite ferocious looking, with sharp talons and long pointed beaks.	Red dots were used to emphasize the outlines of initial letters. These are similar to punch marks in the metal used to decorate the Ardagh Chalice.	The gospel text is divided into two columns, as in late antique Italian manuscripts.
The ribbon interlace work used in the St. Mark carpet page, is similar to that carved on the stone panels of the cross at Bewcastle.		The canon tables are arranged in arcades which was a typical Italian technique. The columns, however, are decorated with geometric motifs.
		The figures of the four evangelists have been adapted from Mediterranean models. The figure of St. Matthew, resembles that of Ezra in the Codex Amiatinus. The cat, forming the margin of St. Luke's initial page, is similar to a Siamese cat.

Table 27

Eadfrith had deftly employed all the different artistic techniques and skills, which he had acquired, and compiled his own interpretation when writing and illuminating the manuscript. It is estimated that he would have needed two years to completely focus on such an intricate work. The *LG* is the first surviving insular manuscript to have used birds as a major motif in the decoration. Perhaps birds and animals were used because they were

especially dear to St. Cuthbert, and because there was such an abundant bird life on all the Farne Islands.

Also, never before had such a wide range of pigments been used to illuminate a work. Colours were produced from animal (insects), mineral (copper, lead) and plant (grass, flowers) sources found locally and as far away as the Himalayas. The miniature portraits of the evangelists were an original idea, too, because in manuscripts previously produced, the evangelists had been represented by only their symbols.

The whole production of the Gospels was a costly affair, as two hundred and fifty-nine leaves of prepared vellum were needed as writing material. A double sheet of vellum was the equivalent of one cow, so several herds of cattle would have been required. Perhaps the king donated some from his own herd, as the Royal seat at Bamburgh was nearby. Making the Gospels demanded a skilled and laborious craft. The vellum had to be carefully prepared, and then ruled between prick-marks to ensure that the lines of the text would be straight. Trial patterns were made by the scribe, especially before making ornamented pages, where perfect symmetry was the aim. The pens made of goose quills or reeds were the cheapest commodity needed, as there were plenty of geese and reeds in the vicinity. Ink was made from soot mixed with egg-white.

The completed works were for ceremonial use, and would have been used placed beside St. Cuthbert's shrine. In 793 AD the first Viking attack disrupted everything, and the Gospels had to be hidden, as such a treasure would have been snatched away immediately. The Lindisfarne Gospels, and the coffin containing the bones of St. Cuthbert, were removed from Lindisfarne, and shared the same fate of being constantly hidden or moved, until a shrine dedicated to St. Cuthbert in Durham Cathedral was completed. The relics of Eadbert, Eadfrith, and Aethelwold, Bishops of Lindisfarne, after Cuthbert, had also shared his coffin.

The Gospels remained in Durham until the Reformation, when Henry VIII's commissioners removed them, and took them to London. The richly jewelled binding disappeared, but who, when, and where it was removed, is not known. The Gospels are now in the possession of the British Library, but this location has now been contested by the Northumbrian Association, which has petitioned to have the *LG* returned to the North. If the Gospels were returned to the North, then they could be given a place beside the shrine of St. Cuthbert, on view to all pilgrims as they were initially intended. An allegedly unique facsimile of the *LG* was made and given to Lindisfarne and Durham Cathedral by the British

Library as a peace offering. However, it was later discovered that nine hundred other copies had been made at the same time and sold at £10,000 a piece.[58]

Other manuscripts that are closely linked to the *LG* are the *Durham* and *Ecthernach Gospels,* linked because they also are believed to have been made at Lindisfarne. Another example of Northumbrian art that has survived, is the magnificent Franks Casket made of whalebone. It, too, consists of a fusion of ideas. These are displayed in the narrative scenes that have classical, Anglo-Saxon and biblical sources. There are decorated panels portraying the sack of Jerusalem in 70 AD, the legend of Romulus and Remus, the story of Weland the Smith, and the Adoration of the Magi. Anglo-Saxon runes are used as borders around the panels, and some captions are in Latin.

6.3   Stone Crosses

It was the custom of Christian Anglo-Saxons to erect not a church, but a Holy Cross dedicated to God on the estates of their nobles. These were beautifully carved and adorned, and lifted on high for the common use of prayer. At first they were made of wood, but by the eighth century they were made out of stone (Mayr-Harting 1991: 248). Examples of such crosses can be found in Northumbria and Scotland today. No two are ever alike. Some are quite simple in design and character, whilst others are beautifully carved with vine scrollwork chiselled out of stone, revealing their Christian heritage. Others have carved beasts on them with their tails interlacing, or their tails are wound around the creature's body as an indication of more pagan beliefs. Each cross is a silent witness of the skill and faith of the craftsman, who has created it from his own ideas, thoughts and talent, mingled with that he has met, or acquired during his life.

The crosses also illustrated the development in skill and art possessed by the Anglo-Saxons. They had combined the art of their own culture with that of the Celts and the Continent. Themes and symbols from Jewish tradition, Christian history or Anglo-Saxon legend could be carved on the different faces of the stone cross shafts. Some stone crosses were illuminated and brightly coloured and resembled the processional crosses used to lead church services. The high stone crosses were spokesmen for the Christian faith, and carried just as strong a message as the wooden cross did that Oswald had erected at the Battle of

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[58] (www.northumbrianassociation.com/lindisfarne).

Heavenfield. Oswald, having been schooled at Iona, would have been acquainted with the Irish tradition of erecting high crosses.

The pagan Saxons had worshipped stone pillars, and had had a tradition of raising a kind of totem pole on sites of ritual importance (Hawkes 1996: 96). To help them in their conversion, the Christian missionaries deliberately erected stone pillars, but had carved on them the figures of Christ and His Apostles. These carvings were the textbooks of the time. They illustrated both the Gospel history, and taught and told the story of the Cross. The missionaries used them (much in the same way as picture books are used today for those who are unable to read themselves) to explain the story of redemption. This enabled the simple, uneducated minds of the ordinary people to grasp and remember the message that the monks were teaching them.

As not every Anglo-Saxon Christian lived near to a church in the eighth century, missionaries travelled around and preached to the faithful who met up beneath these Stone Crosses, or perhaps celebrated Mass (Backhouse 1999: 75). The Crosses were placed at natural meeting points such as near to harbours or along the straight roads previously made by the Romans (Mayr-Harting 1991: 248). They were easy to see as some were as much as 5 metres in height (Hawkes 1996: 100).

At the turn of the eighth century, fragments of Christ's Cross were found in Rome (Hawkes 1996: 96). News of such a miraculous event must have spread to the Anglo-Saxon Church in Britain. Perhaps it swayed the minds of disbelievers and influenced the newly converted. The incredible find was celebrated, and then not surprisingly marked as a feast day in the Anglo-Saxon Church calendar. Saint Helena, the mother of Constantine and a devout Christian, had previously searched and found the fragments in Jerusalem, bringing them afterwards to Rome during the fourth century. A church later named 'Santa Croce in Gerusalemme' was built at her request to house the relics, and they can still be seen there today.

The Cross soon began to play an extremely important role. It was held in great reverence and esteem. When the parents of St. Willibald offered him to God as a boy, they chose the site of a High Cross to formalize the act (Mayr-Harting 1991: 248).

I have chosen to focus on three crosses because they are the most known, and they were probably among the first to be erected in the eighth century. There are some similarities in their carving, which suggests that the stone masons could have belonged to the same school of stone carvers, or belonged to one that had good connections with the same source, e.g. the

monastery of Wearmouth-Jarrow (Hawkes 1996: 2, 6, 100). Their uses, however, differed and their decoration, too.

6.3.1 Bewcastle Cross

The Bewcastle Cross stands in the churchyard at Bewcastle in Cumberland. It was carved by the Angles of Northumbria. There is a description in runes, which reads 'Of the powerful Lord', as well as stone panels depicting St. John the Baptist and Christ in Majesty standing over two beasts. The Ruthwell Cross also includes these two scenes, so in this way they are similar (Hawkes 1996: 101). It is thought that this cross, however, had a dual function. It was firstly instructive, because of the religious scenes carved in the stone panels. Secondly, it was also commemorative, as the runes on the cross list the names of people to be remembered, and one stone panel depicts a non-biblical figure holding a bird of prey (Hawkes 1996: 101). The Cross is covered with geometric and figural decoration of a high standard. The cross is also impressive, because it shows how far Anglo-Saxon stone masonry had developed and the standard it had achieved. The masons must have had help with developing the design, a design clearly influenced by Mediterranean art forms.

6.3.2 Rothbury Cross

This cross was made to stand in a Church, and the Anglo-Saxon shaft can be found in the Church of England Church, All Saints, at Rothbury today. The shaft is used as a base for the font. The head of the shaft is in the Museum of Antiquities in Newcastle. Two sides of the shaft are carved with decorative geometric patterns. The third portrays a lion whose tail is entwined with those of other wild beasts, forming a 'Tree of Life' motif. On the fourth shaft there is carved the Ascension scene, where Christ's body is supported by the hands of angels and the heads of the apostles.

The Cross carved harmoniously with a combination of Celtic, Anglo-Saxon, Mediterranean and biblical motifs, has the important message of salvation to tell, and is carefully composed. The symbols indicate the promise of salvation through the sacraments. The same liturgical function is provided today, by using the shaft as the base of a baptismal font. The Sacrament of Baptism opens the door to salvation. At the foot of the shaft is a scene carrying the solemn warning of damnation (Hawkes 1996: 101).

6.3.3 Ruthwell Cross

The Ruthwell Cross, one of the oldest preaching crosses, lies in East Dumfriesshire, which for a time was part of Northumbria. Scenes from early Christian history are carved and portrayed on the shafts of the cross, such as the Holy Family's flight into Egypt, depicted in the second panel. These are surrounded by carved bands with sentences in Latin describing them. The lowest panel is too defaced to determine the subjects. A third panel shows the monastic saints Paul and Anthony, breaking bread together (Hawkes 1996: 100). The fourth panel shows Christ treading under his foot the heads of swine. Finally, at the top of the Cross can be seen the figure of St. John the Baptist with the Paschal Lamb. On the opposite side of this shaft, the panels depict the Annunciation, the Visitation, and other scenes from the Gospels. There are panels depicting the washing of Christ's feet, and the healing of a man born blind. Together, the carvings teach a lesson about redemption, and salvation through the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation and Holy Communion. The other two shafts display beautifully stone-carved scrollwork.

In addition to Latin texts, there are five stanzas of an Anglo- Saxon poem of exceptional quality, *'The Dream of the Rood'*, claimed to be the first known religious poem and prayer in English.[59] Some of the lines match the poem with similar title included in the Vercelli book. It is the story of the crucifixion told by the cross itself. It narrates its own woeful tale, from the time it was an ordinary tree growing in a wood, until the crucifixion is complete and Christ's body is taken down from the cross. The poem is written in runes. Runes or *Futhark* were letters in an alphabet used by the Anglo-Saxons and one of their earliest forms of writing. The letters were supposed to have a magical meaning and were used in charms and spells (Palgrave 1998: 121). The runes inscribed along the edges of the cross describe the writer dreaming of the cross speaking to him.

This Anglo-Saxon poem, telling about the Crucifixion of Christ, together with the stone panels depicting scenes from His life, emphasizes the liturgical purpose of the whole Cross. It proclaims the message of salvation. Salvation came through the sacraments, and also through the greatest sacrament, Christ himself.

Finally, at the head of the cross was supposedly a runic inscription which when translated meant,' *Caedmon made me'*. The Cross is now well weathered, so the runic letters are indecipherable, and the claim cannot be proved. The east face of the cross shows

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[59] See 4.2.1.1 Caedmon.

distinctive plant and animal forms. There is a runic poem inscribed on the margins. The west face of the cross resembles designs of gripping beasts found on crosses.

6.3.4   Recently Discovered Stone Cross

One of the most remarkable stone crosses I have actually seen, I came across by chance in the summer of 2007. Stopping at an unusual craftsman's shop situated in a fairly desolate spot, near Teviot, I saw the head of a beautifully carved stone cross placed in an alcove. It was in such good condition that I imagined it to be a replica, but it was not. The owner explained that stone crosses had often been hid along the Scottish borders, and were consequently in good condition having escaped the usual weathering that would have occurred if they had been left to stand outdoors.

Examining the cross, I realised it was not Christ who hung on it, but Odin, and that his ravens, Hugin and Mugin, were placed at his right hand and on his left. On the other side there was a Christian motif of the Paschal lamb inscribed on it. This cross had apparently been used to convert the Vikings in much the same way as stone crosses with familiar motifs had been used to convert the Anglo- Saxons. Scenes from familiar and well known legends were placed side by side with those from the Gospels. The ritual of re-telling well-loved stories continued, including those from both old and new sources.

This amalgamation of pagan and Christian elements can often be seen in the Anglo-Saxon art and literature that was produced. The sagas, for instance, take on a new form when the warrior kings take on a Christ-like character, and Christ is seen in the same light as a Germanic hero (Mayr- Harting 1991: 220).

6.4   Names

6.4.1   Saints' names and their influence today

6.4.1.1   Church names

The names of the Northumbrian saints who were active during Northumbria's Golden Age are still much in use today, enabling their memory and what they achieved to be kept alive. Just reading *The Northern Catholic Calendar for 2005,* it is possible to find churches, schools and colleges dedicated to these wonderful saints. The calendar covers the Catholic diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, so does not include the whole of Northumbria. Areas of land north of Berwick, west of Haltwhistle, and south of Hartlepool are excluded. The list of

church names compiled below, mentions also the date of their consecration. This proves that churches in fairly recent years (1850- 2001) have still been named after these same saints.

It is said that there are at least forty churches within the boundary of eighth century Northumbria, dedicated to St. Cuthbert alone. These mark the places where the community of Lindisfarne stopped with St. Cuthbert's coffin and body, while they evaded the plundering Vikings. Each stopping place became a point for pilgrims to visit and a Church was built there.

6.4.1.1.1   Roman Catholic Church names:

St. Aidan, Holy Island, Northumberland (1958).
St. Augustine, Darlington, County Durham (1783-1826).
St. Bede, Stockton on Tees, Cleveland (1951).
St. Benedict Biscop, Monkwearmouth, Sunderland (1960).
St. Columba, Wallsend, Tyne and Wear.
St. Cuthbert, Hartlepool, Cleveland (1928).
St. Hilda, Southwick, Sunderland (2001).
St. John of Beverly, Haydon Bridge, Northumberland (1984).
St. Ninian, Wooler, Northumberland (1856).
St. Oswald, Bellingham, Northumberland (1965).
St. Oswin, Tynemouth, Tyne and Wear (1871).
St. Paulinus, Bishop Auckland, County Durham (1938).
St. Wilfrid, Haltwhistle, Northumberland.

Table 28

The Church of England also has churches named after Northern saints as shown by listings in the Northumberland telephone directory. Their dates of consecration were not included.

6.4.1.1.2   Church of England Church names:

St. Aidan, Bamburgh, Northumberland.
St. Bede, Blyth, Northumberland.
St. Cuthbert, Bellingham, Northumberland.
St. Cuthbert, Norham, Northumberland.
St. Hilda, Hedgefield, Northumberland.
St.Mungo, Simonburn, Northumberland.

| St. Oswald, Halton, Northumberland. |
| St. Oswald, Heavenfield, Northumberland. |
| St. Oswin, Wylam, Northumberland. |

Table 29

6.4.1.2 School names:

| St. Aidan Secondary School, Sunderland. |
| St. Augustine Primary School, Darlington, County Durham. |
| St. Bede Primary School, Sacriston, County Durham. |
| St. Benedict Biscop Comprehensive School, Bedlington, Northumberland. |
| St. Chad Primary School, Witton Park, County Durham. |
| St Columba Primary School, Wallsend, Tyne and Wear. |
| St. Cuthbert High School, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear. |
| St. Oswald Primary School, Whiteleas, South Shields, County Durham. |
| St. Wilfrid, Middle School, Blyth, Northumberland. |

Table 30

6.4.1.3 Names of Colleges connected to Durham University (AA 2002: 67, 81):

| St. Bede (Men's college). |
| St. Chad (theology college, Church of England). |
| St. Hild (Women's college). |

Table 31

6.4.1.4 Names of streets on housing estates:

In the more secular world the Northern Saints have not been forgotten either. Housing estates have chosen their names for their streets (AA 2002: 67, 81)

e.g. In Gateshead, a suburb on the south side of the Tyne:

| St. Aidan's Street, Gateshead. |
| St. Bede's Drive, Gateshead. |
| St. Cuthbert's Place, Gateshead. |
| Lindisfarne Drive, Gateshead. |
| Yetholm Road, Gateshead. |

Table 32

e.g. In Wallsend, a suburb of Newcastle, on the North Tyne:

Lindisfarne Place, Holy Cross, Wallsend.
St. Bede's Crescent, Holy Cross, Wallsend.
St. Cuthbert's Road, Holy Cross, Wallsend.
St. Hilda's Avenue, Holy Cross, Wallsend.
St. Oswald's Road, Holy Cross, Wallsend.
Whitby Gardens, Holy Cross, Wallsend.

Table 32

6.4.1.5   Pilgrimage routes:

6.4.1.5.1   St. Cuthbert's Way

St. Cuthbert's Way is a modern sixty-two-mile route for pilgrims on foot, from Melrose Abbey on the Scottish borders to Lindisfarne Island off the Northumbrian coast. The route links several places connected with St. Cuthbert's life story. It starts at Melrose where Cuthbert began his ministry as a monk, and ends at Lindisfarne where he was first buried. The initiative to organize this trail came from the various councils and tourist boards on both sides of the English-Scottish border, because the need people had to follow in the footsteps of St. Cuthbert continued into the twenty-first century.

Pilgrims had already flocked to Lindisfarne soon after Cuthbert's death; especially after miracles stories connected with his person became known. His tomb at Lindisfarne was a holy place and one to be visited. Carefully waiting for the tide to retreat, the faithful crossed from the mainland to Holy Island as the island was later named in order to be near his grave. In 698 AD it was decided to elevate his body. It was the usual practice to dig up the mortal remains of holy people after a period of years, wash the bones and then place them in a place where they could be venerated. When Cuthbert's grave was opened, his body was seen to be intact. This and the miracles that had occurred were the signs that the monk was a saint. His body was now washed, dressed in new clothing and placed within the Church for everyone to see. His shrine became one of the most visited in Europe before the Viking attack in 793 AD. St. Cuthbert's body was moved all over Northumbria, and hidden from the Vikings. The Lindisfarne community, who followed with Cuthbert's coffin, finally chose a strategically safe place at Durham to house it. Their temporary wooden church was replaced by a stone Saxon church in 999 AD, but on 11 August 1093 AD the foundation stone for the great Cathedral built over Cuthbert's resting-place, was laid. Pilgrims have continually visited his grave since.

The saintly Cuthbert has influenced people in many ways. His pilgrims have found him to be a good example to follow. Those that choose to walk along St. Cuthbert's Way are not guaranteed that they walk on his path, but they can be assured that the paths he used and theirs will cross. Cuthbert travelled long distances and covered wild and unfriendly areas of Northumbria in order to evangelize and reach all people. His mission took him everywhere.

He sought the same desolate regions for himself, to be near God, and to find the solace which was so necessary for him. Modern pilgrims perhaps choose to walk St. Cuthbert's Way for this same reason. While travelling among the scarcely populated Eldon and Cheviot Hills, the pilgrim would not find it difficult to associate themselves with Cuthbert, and his thoughts about the Creator he loved, praised, and followed.

6.4.1.5.2 St. Oswald's Way

St. Oswald's Way is another pilgrimage route that guides pilgrims on a walk from Lindisfarne to Heavenfield, which lies beside the tiny village of Wall, near Hadrian's Roman Wall. These two spots were very significant places for St. Oswald. It was at Heavenfield in 634 AD, that he defeated King Cadwallon in battle. Oswald confronted him with just a few men, but also with a tremendous faith (McClure & Collins 1994: 111). Before the battle Oswald had a wooden cross erected, and his army knelt down to pray while he called on God to help them. With a small band of warriors, Oswald fought against an enormous army and won. This was deemed a miracle, and Heavenfield has been revered as a sacred place ever since.

A year later, in 635 AD, Oswald asked the monks at Iona for help to convert his people, and Aidan arrived in Northumbria. He chose Lindisfarne as the site for his community and evangelized from there.

King Oswald was killed himself in battle seven years later, but not before he helped and accompanied Aidan with his work as a missionary. Together, they covered many miles of Northumbrian countryside in order to evangelize. The ninety-seven-mile St. Oswald's Way, is a good indication of this.

The route is divided into six parts, with the first part following the coastline:

1. Lindisfarne- Bamburgh
2. Bamburgh- Craster
3. Craster- Warkworth

The second half of the journey goes inland from:

4. Warkworth- Rothbury

5. Rothbury- Kirkwhelpington

6. Kirkwhelpington-Heavenfield

St. Oswald's Way is not as well known as St. Cuthbert's Way, perhaps because he had been a King. However, Oswald's generosity and piety was recorded in the *EHEP* (McClure & Collins 1994: 119). When a crowd of hungry people approached his court begging for alms, Oswald had immediately ordered the food which was waiting to be served, to be given to the crowd, and the silver dishes broken up and distributed among the poor. Aidan witnessing such compassion, had proclaimed that the generous hand of Oswald should never '*wither with age*'. Aidan's prayer came true, because when Oswald later was killed in battle, his hand and arm were severed from his body. They were later recovered and put in a silver casket which was placed in St. Peter's Church at Bamburgh (McClure & Collins 1994: 119). The relics remained incorrupt, confirming Oswald's saintliness.

Oswald was already considered a saint, because of his martyrdom at Maserfelth, at the hand of the heathen King Penda of Mercia. A cult soon came into being, despite his body being dismembered and his body parts being buried in different places. Miracles were said to have occurred at the spot where he was killed, later called Oswetry (Oswald's tree). The same claim was made about Heavenfield. Oswiu recovered Oswald's head, and had it placed in St. Cuthbert's coffin. When the monks left Lindisfarne during the raids of the Vikings, the skull shared the same fate as Cuthbert's bones, before being laid to rest in Durham Cathedral (Hawkes 1996: 35).

The warrior King Oswald no doubt appealed to the newly converted Anglo-Saxons, not because he had lost his life in battle, but because he had won so many battles and had succeeded in making Northumbria the most prominent kingdom of the Heptarchy. He had also been Bretwalda. The life story of Oswald was one of an old Germanic hero, and also that of a Christian saint. During the transition period from paganism to Christianity, it is likely that legends about him included both ingredients. Stories about this Anglo-Saxon king could gradually change from one of a warlord and his thegns, to one of Christ and his apostles. Oswald is remembered today because he welcomed Christianity to his kingdom

6.4.2 English personal names

Every man or woman had one name, a personal name, and these were chosen from a limited supply of generally accepted words. Compound personal names were names with an extra element such as – beorht (bright) or –burh (fortress) added:

Name	Meaning first element	Meaning second element
Æthelbeorht	'noble'	'bright'
Cuthbeorht	'famous'	'bright'
Æthelburh	'noble'	'fortress'

Table 33

There were no surnames before the Normans invaded England in 1066 AD.

6.4.3   Names of the days of the week

A few of the main Saxon gods are remembered in the days of the week:

Tiwesdæg named after Tiw, became Tuesday.
Wodnesdæg named after Woden or Odin, became Wednesday.
Dunresdæg named after Thor or Thunor, became Thursday.
Frigesdæg named after Frigg, the wife of Woden, became Friday.

Table 34

Sunday and Monday are called after the sun and moon, the gods of day and night representing light and dark. Saturday is called after Saturn, the god of agriculture.

The Angles and Saxons brought with them to Britain, a language that was the forerunner of modern English. The Angles of Denmark gave England its name 'Angle Land'.

7.0   SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

When the Roman legions left Britain at the beginning of the fifth century to defend Rome, and their other territory under threat on the Continent, they left behind a civilized and partially Christianized country. With no legions to defend them, post-Roman Britain lay open to attack from Picts and Scots waiting for the first opportunity to strike, and pounce they did. The strategy employed by King Vortigern to defend his realm, was the hiring of Germanic mercenaries to fight against his adversaries, but this backfired when the defenders became the attackers.

The Germanic invaders originating from Southern Denmark and Northern Germany also settled, and Britain was engulfed by a people used to an essentially warlike life-style. The new-comers were pagans, and had little regard for civilization, so the infra-structure established by the Romans disappeared. However, the Angles and Saxons gradually conquered different parts of Britain, and established Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, one of which was Northumbria.

Between the seventh and the eighth centuries, and for a period of approximately one hundred and fifty years, it can be said that Northumbria experienced relative stability. This is taking into consideration the years prior to the period, and those immediately afterwards. The rulers of this age had achieved a peace and equilibrium that had long been absent, and which would be greatly missed in the century that followed. Social conditions and the economy of the area had improved, and a new culture began to re-emerge.

Conversion to Christianity was attempted again, generally through the aiding and abetting of the royal courts, but it did not have an immediate effect, as it involved a long process. To begin with, the religious beliefs and practices of the people, whether king, *thegn*, *ealdormen*, *ceorl*, or slave, differed very slightly from that of their pagan ancestors.

At first the people collected under free-standing crosses, and read the Christian message carved in runes in the stonework. The Irish and Roman missionaries soon discovered, however, the importance of delivering the message of the Gospel in the vernacular. After doing this, their message was more easily understood and accepted.

The Synod of Whitby focused on the differences between the Irish and Roman traditions, and the wish for uniformity. However, the role of the missionaries and the monks were not so unlike, as they were driven by the same vision, social consciousness and the desire to save souls. Fortunately, traditions of great variety and richness came together, and the joint faith and determination of the monastics created the Anglo-Saxon Church.

Churches, and especially monasteries were gradually built, and these became centres of learning. The words that had been previously spoken by missionaries were written down in Latin by monks, and illuminated manuscripts were copied and produced. Laws were documented for the first time. Art and literature flourished, and the amount and quality of that which was produced was considerable. The flame of Christianity created an atmosphere of light and hope in the region, igniting the hearts of many, and producing saints great and small.

Fortunate circumstances, opportunity, the proximity and influence of other peoples, the zeal and faith of individuals, all combined to rekindle the dimmed embers of earlier Christianity in the region. The sparks that were re-ignited, gradually illuminated and removed the dark shadow that had threatened Christianity, and at the same time brought about a transformation in the Anglo-Saxon culture. These two areas of change and conversion occurred almost simultaneously, and influenced and inspired each other. Sometimes there was the entwining of ideas, where the spirit of Christianity was expressed in German forms. Anglo-Saxon commitment and high standard of behaviour fused with Christian devotion and self- sacrifice, and created something new, Anglo-Saxon Christianity.

The eighth century drew to a close, and in 793 AD Vikings attacked Lindisfarne, and less than a year later the monastery at Jarrow. The one hundred years that followed were uneasy years for monks and the population. People were constantly on the move, and fortunately, church treasure and that which was precious, was hidden. That, which has been preserved, shows the wonderful revival of culture that Northumbria experienced. Anglo-Saxon Northumbria, inspired by Irish, Roman, Mediterranean and Middle-Eastern art, created their own interpretation, and what emerged was so unique that the expression 'Golden Age' is truly deserved.

The harsh times, where lives were cheap, can understandably be named the 'Dark Ages'. However, the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons, and the emergence of Christianity in Northumbria, shows a 'Golden Age' existed, too. As Charles Thomas aptly puts it:

> Christianity, from Roman to Viking times, was not just a religion that happened to survive. It was a code of ethics, a way of life, literature, education, the commemoration of the dead, a major import customer, a tenurial power, a social system, a patron of pure and applied arts, a missionary society and so much else beside (Thomas 1971:71).

The inhabitants of Northumbria have made great progress and have met many challenges, since the days of the Anglo-Saxons. They were first put to the test when the

Vikings invaded. The invasion and conversion resembled in many ways that of the Anglo-Saxons, but the plunderers were more ferocious, ruthless and shocking as they attacked monasteries not the people. This time Christianity in the region did not buckle under, but stood its ground taming and converting the Vikings. Christianity was preserved for the future, and has continued to sustain and strengthen the people of Northumbria, when under threat of attack or defeat.

Today the face of the region has changed. Towns and cities have emerged, where even two centuries ago there were only small scattered villages with few inhabitants. The population has increased enormously, especially in the Tyne and Wear area. Woods and pastures have been invaded with heavy industry, and replaced with numerous buildings in the pursuit for material progress. The quest for material gain tempted Anglo-Saxon and Viking, and the same temptation exists today, but once possessed this is often seen to be not enough. The overcrowded conditions of life uncover the value of silence. The moorland areas of the Roman wall region, the vast and half-empty beaches of the north-eastern coastline, the remote havens of Lindisfarne and the Farne islands, beckon the weary city-dweller and offer tranquillity and peace.

Wherever the traveller roams, he will eventually come across a village with its own parish church, most likely bearing the name of one of the north-eastern saints. If inquisitive, the traveller's questions about the saint will usually produce a quick answer, from parishioner or villager. Even a child can answer, and if asked where the knowledge was obtained, then the reply is often, "at school". The Anglo-Saxon saints still inspire the region, and are remembered today. Their former dwelling-places, monasteries and shrines, whether intact or in ruins, are sought out and visited regularly, and bear witness of their continuing influence. Northumbria's 'Golden Age' had a short life-span, but it was adequate enough to bring about a provident change in faith and culture, and however big or small this was, the change continues to echo over the region today.

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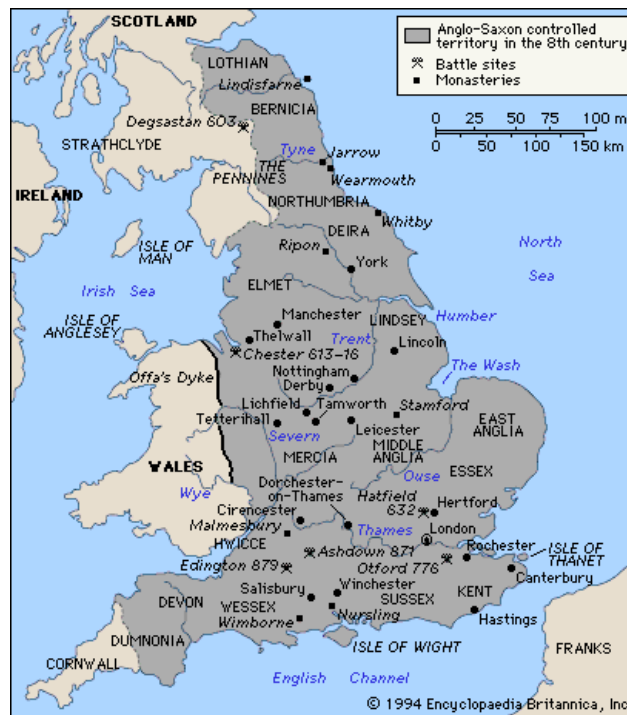

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APPENDIX

MAPS

Map of sixth century Britain

Anglo-Saxon territory in the eighth century

PHOTOGRAPHS:

(Margaret Mjåland)

Statue of St. Aidan, Lindisfarne

Ruins of Lindisfarne Priory and stone crosses.

Wooden statue of monks carrying St. Cuthbert's coffin

St. Mary's Church, Lindisfarne

Facsimile of the Lindisfarne Gospels

St. Mary's Church, Lindisfarne

Interior of St. Paul's Church, Jarrow

Re-construction of an Anglo-Saxon farm-building

From Bede's World, Jarrow, Northumberland

Ruins of Tynemouth Priory

Ruins of Melrose Abbey

STONE CROSSES

Bewcastle Cross, Cumbria

Graveyard St. Oswald's Bellingham

Market cross Kirkoswald

Hexham Abbey and Market Cross

ST. CUTHBERT

This Northern sea of ours you knew,
this island set apart
where once you dwelt in quietness,
this Eden of the heart;
knew the gulls' way,
knew the wind's way,
knew the secrets of the sea
and the Lord walked there in the evening
as of old in Galilee.
Yet no one is an island of empty desolate shores,
but the death of each one lessens me
and the life of each restores.

Then from that island's solitude,
a neighbour's call you heard:
'Come over now and help us
Who hunger for God's word.'
In that word's strength,
in the gospel's power,
you left that tranquil place:
God's traveller, God's journeyman
on your pilgrimage of grace.
For no one is an island of empty desolate shores,
but the death of each one lessens me
and the life of each restores.

Our Northern land of changing skies
which blossomed in your care
is blessed in your memory
and strengthened by your prayer.
With our mind's truth,
with our heart's love,
through joy and fear and pain
to the faith you gave, to the hope you lived
we bind ourselves again.
For no one is an island of empty desolate shores,
but the death of each one lessens me
and the life of each restores.   Kevin Nichols, 2000.

The pilgrim's route from Lindisfarne and to the mainland.

'QUO VADIS?'