

= James the Deacon =

James the Deacon ( Latin : Iacomus Diaconus ; died after 671 ) was a Roman deacon who accompanied Paulinus of York on his mission to Northumbria . He was a member of the Gregorian mission which came to England to Christianize the Anglo @-@ Saxons from their native Anglo @-@ Saxon paganism , although when he arrived in England is unknown . After Paulinus left Northumbria , James stayed near Lincoln and continued his missionary efforts , dying sometime after 671 according to the medieval chronicler Bede .

= = Life = =

James was presumably an Italian , like the other members of the Gregorian mission . The dates of his birth and of his arrival in Britain are unknown . He went with Paulinus to Northumbria accompanying Æthelburh , sister of King Eadbald of Kent , who went to Northumbria to marry King Edwin . Traditionally this event is dated to 625 , but the historian D. P. Kirby argues that the mission to Northumbria probably happened before 619 .

Edwin died in battle at Hatfield fighting against Penda of Mercia and Caedwalla in 633 . Edwin had been the main supporter of Paulinus ' mission , and with his death , a pagan backlash set in . Paulinus fled to Kent , along with Æthelburg and Edwin and Æthelburg 's daughter Eanflæd . James , however , remained behind in Northumbria and continued missionary efforts . James ' efforts were centred in Lincoln , at a church that Paulinus had built there , the remains of which may lie under the church of St. Paul @-@ in @-@ the @-@ Bail . This was in the dependent kingdom of Lindsey , where Paulinus had preached prior to Edwin 's death , and it was reconquered by one of Edwin 's successors , Oswald of Northumbria in the 640s .

Bede writes that James lived in a village near Catterick , which " bears his name to this day " . He reports that James undertook missionary work in the area and lived to a great age . During the reign of King Oswiu of Northumbria , James attended the royal court , for he celebrated Easter with Oswiu 's queen , Eanflæd , Edwin 's daughter . Both James and Eanflæd celebrated Easter on the date used by the Roman church , which led to conflicts with Oswiu , who celebrated Easter on the date calculated by the Irish church . These dates did not always agree , and was one of the reasons that Oswiu called the Synod of Whitby in 664 to decide which system of Easter calculation his kingdom would use .

James was present at the Synod of Whitby , according to Bede 's account of events there . Bede states that after the synod , and the return of Roman customs , James , as a trained singing master in the Roman and Kentish style , taught many people plainsong or Gregorian chant in the Roman manner .

James ' date of death is unknown , but Bede implies that he was still alive during Bede 's lifetime , which presumably means that he died after Bede 's birth , sometime around 671 or 672 . This would mean that he was at least 70 years old at his death . It has been suggested that James was Bede 's informant for the life of Edwin , the works of Paulinus , and perhaps for the Synod of Whitby . The historian Frank Stenton calls James " the one heroic figure in the Roman mission " . This reflects the fact that many of the Gregorian missionaries had a habit of fleeing when things went wrong .

After his death , James was venerated as a saint . His feast day is 17 August ( Catholic ) or 11 October ( Anglican ) .