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*The Eucharist in Pre-Norman Ireland: Liturgy,  
Practice, and Society*

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Ó fu-rócbath a chride, mac ríg na secht noebnime, do-rórtad fin fu roenu, fuil Críst  
triä geltoebu.

*[The King of the seven holy heavens, when his heart was pierced, wine was spilled  
upon the pathways, the blood of Christ flowing through his gleaming sides.]*

Blathmac Son of Cú Brettan

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Many works in the various fields of liturgy and history refer to a Celtic Rite that was supposedly in use in Ireland prior to the arrival of Normans in the twelfth century. The existence of this liturgical rite and its supposed suppression at the hands of the Normans are usually taken for granted in these works. However some modern liturgical scholarship has begun to question the importance (or even the very existence) of the Celtic Rite.

This thesis examines the actual evidence for the Eucharist in Pre-Norman Ireland. Unlike the other Celtic regions (Scotland, Wales, Brittany, etc.) it is possible to study the Eucharist in Ireland as there still exists enough textual and historical evidence for such a study.



The main contribution of this thesis is that it provides the first major analysis of Eucharistic practice in pre-Norman Ireland in over one hundred years. Great care has been taken to situate the evidence within both the historical and liturgical contexts that are sometimes ignored in secondary literature. Both the remaining ritual texts and other texts of the period that deal with the Eucharist are studied. In addition archaeological and iconographical elements are analyzed. This provides an up to date picture of the place of the Eucharist in Pre-Norman Ireland.

The results of this study seriously cast into doubt the nineteenth and early twentieth century claims of a separate Celtic Rite in Ireland. This, in turn, has its repercussions on the fields of the History of Early Christian Ireland and the study of medieval liturgy. Thus the ground is prepared for further study of medieval liturgy and the religious dimension of the Pre Norman period of Christianity and society in Ireland.

*Ideoque et nos tantam habentes circumpositam nobis nubem testium, deponentes omne pondus et circumstantes nos peccatum, per patientiam curramus propositum nobis certamen, aspicientes in ducem fidei et consummatorem Iesum, qui pro gaudio sibi proposito sustinuit crucem, confusione contempta, atque in dextera throni Dei sedet.*

(Ad Hebraeos 12:1-2)

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*Go méadaí Dia a stór.*

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## INTRODUCTION

In recent years there has been a renewed study of the place of the Church in society in Pre-Norman Ireland and also of various elements of Church organization itself. Parallel to this there has been a lot of academic work on the archaeology, art and architecture of this time-period. Compared with the great quantity of material published in these fields there has been very little study of the liturgy in early Ireland. Indeed, there has been minimal publication directly relating to the Eucharist in Pre-Norman Ireland since the 1881 publication of F. E. Warren's *The Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church*. This lack of scholarship is surprising; particularly when one considers that a great deal of both the extant historical source-texts and contemporary artefacts associated with this time-period in general (i.e., Penitentials, Monastic Rules, Saints' Lives, Eucharistic Plate, Manuscripts, Church Buildings, etc.) were originally associated with a Eucharistic context. This lack of study is all the more lamentable as such a rich ensemble of contemporary historical source material is not to be found in present-day Britain or the other "Celtic" regions of Europe.

Today, with more and more material being published on the different aspects of this time-period, there is now enough new scholarship and even some important new evidence unavailable to Warren to undertake a new study of the Eucharist in Pre-Norman Ireland. The goal of the present thesis is to undertake this study of the particularities of the Eucharistic liturgy in Pre-Norman Ireland, the social dimension

of the Eucharist, its treatment in art and architecture and in the spirituality of the people of the time, within the overall Western European cultural and liturgical context.

Chapter 1 will give a brief historical outline of the period, describing how Christianity came to Ireland and the situation of the Church prior to the Norman Conquest. Here the need for a more nuanced understanding of this time-period will be underlined, as many of the popular ideas of this period have recently been reconsidered and these have a bearing on the understanding of the ecclesial context of the Eucharist.

Chapter 2 will deal with the Western Catholic tradition of the Eucharist. A summary of the history of the Eucharistic celebration in the first four centuries and a description of the “shape” of the celebration as it would have been familiar to Patrick, Palladius and the other missionaries who brought Christianity to Ireland. It will continue with an outline of the gradual homogenisation of Western Eucharistic practice in the fifth to the twelfth centuries. The issue of popular participation in the Eucharist and the beginnings of popular devotional practices associated with the Eucharistic Celebration and extra-liturgical attitudes towards the Eucharistic Species will also be considered. This will act as a background with which the Irish evidence may be compared.

In Chapters 3 the textual sources for the understanding of the Eucharist will be studied. The main source is the *Stowe Missal* which dates to around the year 800. Another important source, which was unavailable to Warren, is the *Palimpsest Sacramentary* which was written in approximately 650. But the data from these

manuscripts needs to be supplemented by a myriad of other textual sources, including other liturgical books, Books of Gospels, Penitentials, Monastic Rules, homilies, legal texts and saints' lives. Many of these texts were not considered by Warren, who limited his study mainly to liturgical texts *per se* (and also was dealing with the whole liturgical experience of the time-period and not just the Eucharist). Today many of these texts are also more readily available, having been published in critical and translated editions. This allows for a new appreciation of the material and the light they cast on the Eucharist. This new synthesis of the eucharistic references from the literature of the Pre-Norman period as a whole will not only consider the various texts which Warren did not deal with (or did not know), but will also take advantage of some of the insights gained from the advances made by the sciences of Liturgical Studies and Liturgical Theology throughout the twentieth century. These advances are particularly important in regard to the scholarly treatment of the experience of the laity in the liturgy, as the over-clerical bias of earlier liturgical studies is less evident in contemporary scholarship.

Chapter 4 will examine the non-textual sources for the understanding of the Eucharist in Pre-Norman Ireland. This will include the study of the archaeological remains of church buildings and sites where the Eucharist was celebrated, and include an analysis of the relation of these elements to the greater "Monastic City" or ecclesiastical site and the stational dimension of the eucharistic rites celebrated there. As an appreciation of the physical objects used in the celebration is also very important for an understanding of the actual liturgical experience, those surviving artefacts which are associated with the Eucharistic Celebration, such as chalices

and patens, chrismals, reliquaries, etc. will also be studied. For this reason too this chapter will examine the iconographical sources, such as High Crosses, Manuscript Illustrations, Standing Stones and Iconographic Panels. In this sense it is hoped that the reader will be better equipped to approach the study of the Eucharist in Pre-Norman Ireland.

## CHAPTER 1

### THE IRISH CHURCH FROM ITS FOUNDATION TO THE NORMAN CONQUEST

#### **Introduction**

This chapter will set the historical stage for the study of the Eucharist in Pre-Norman Ireland. Liturgy cannot exist in a vacuum or even exclusively in texts. Unless the history and mindset of the people of the day is understood, there is little point in studying the Eucharist. Unfortunately there has been a tendency on the part of liturgical scholars to see Ireland as somewhat different to other places in Western Europe. Therefore it was thought that the normal rules of liturgical history did not apply there. Some more popular works have even imagined Ireland as “a Dark Age Hippy Colony inhabited by gentle gurus doing their own Christian thing far removed from the stultifying influence of sub-Roman bishops and their dioceses.”<sup>1</sup>

Although most serious authors have shunned such a facile view, many have, however, accepted the concept of a “Celtic Church.” But in recent years this concept has been called into question. The problem is that this is a very unclear concept. So when authors refer to a “Celtic Church” usually they have something in mind that is quite different to the reality:

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<sup>1</sup> Alfred J. Smyth, “The Golden Age of Early Irish Monasticism: Myth or Reality?” in Brendan Bradshaw and Dáire Keogh, eds., *Christianity in Ireland: Revisiting the Story* (Dublin: Columba, 2002), 21.

They imagine that there were common beliefs, common religious practices, and common religious institutions in Celtic countries, and that these were distinct from beliefs, practice and institutions in England and on the continent. They also imagine that the church in Celtic countries was distinctly saintly and monastic; moreover, it was individual, unorganized and the very opposite of Roman.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps the biggest fault of the proponents of a "Celtic Church" is a historical error in their premises. This so-called Church is not based in history and indeed most of the theories are "focussed in place rather than in time."<sup>3</sup> Today it is fortunate that many historians are studying Pre-Norman Ireland. Therefore it is possible to paint a clearer picture of the Church and her place in that society. Irish society was far from stagnant in this period; hence the presentation will focus on the various sub-periods from the coming of Christianity to Ireland until the coming of the Normans. This will help to situate the data in the rest of the thesis. This historical overview will show the development of the Church in Ireland. It should also show how Ireland was much more typical than has been often thought. While the succession of sub-periods have their differences, there is also a great deal of continuity. Older histories tend to emphasize the differences between Pre-Norman and Post-Norman Ireland (as well as, to a lesser degree, the differences in Pre-Viking and Post-Viking Ireland). While this work cannot deal with the Eucharist in Post-Norman Ireland, it is hoped that the historical background will point out many points of continuity between these periods. The Norman Conquest was to have profound consequences for the Church and her liturgy. But it is possible to see the seeds of many of the later changes already present before the Normans and it is possible that the Church

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<sup>2</sup> Wendy Davies, "The Myth of the Celtic Church" in Nancy Edwards and A. Lane, eds., *The Early Church in Wales and the West: Recent Work in Early Christian Archaeology, History and Place-Names*. Oxbrow Monograph 16 (Oxford: Oxbrow Books, 1992), 12.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

wouldn't have been that radically different in thirteenth century Ireland even if the Normans hadn't come. This element of continuity will be important in understanding the liturgical evidence.

Irish history has not been immune to polemics. Particularly confessional polemics arising from the Post-Reformation history of Irish Christianity have also affected the popular conception of the Church in Ireland both before and after the Norman arrival. In this context the differences between the Irish Church and her near neighbours is sometimes exaggerated. While there were differences, these differences were not as big as are often portrayed (nor for that matter were these differences perhaps any greater than the differences between any other two neighbouring regions in Europe of the time). Therefore the chapter will conclude with a brief examination of the two most contentious issues of Pre-Norman Irish Church history: the Easter Question and the Tonsure Question.

### **1.1 Ireland and her place in Europe prior to the coming of Christianity**

There is relatively little that can be said with certainty about Irish history prior to the coming of Christianity, indeed it would not be totally inaccurate to label this period simply as "prehistoric." As there is no evidence of insular written records for this period, historians are left with writings about Ireland in Classical sources and with archaeological evidence from Ireland itself.

This is further hindered by the fact that most references to Ireland in Classical authors are mainly in the name of completeness and not due to any real interest or

knowledge about Ireland.<sup>4</sup> In fact, only thirty-two classical authors mention Ireland. The oldest of these is in Rufus Festus Avienus' *Ora maritime* who is writing in the mid-fourth cent B.C. but may perhaps be drawing on fifth-century material.<sup>5</sup> Most of these are token references in geographical descriptions of the whole known world or in side references to Britain. Apart from the approximate geographical location of Ireland, the few other details which are learned from these fall more into the category of trivia than real history. Diodoru Siculus in the first century B.C. mentions that there are cannibals on the island of Ireland.<sup>6</sup> In his *Geography*, in 19 A.D., Strabo adds that these cannibals are also incestuous and his contemporary Pomponius Mela mentions in *De chorographia* that the island has a good climate for grain and cattle.<sup>7</sup> But there was little positive to be said about Ireland in these earliest written sources. Around 200 A.D. Solinus records that:

*Hibernia* is inhuman in the savage rituals of its inhabitants, but on the other hand is so rich in fodder that the cattle, if not removed from the fields from time to time, would happily gorge themselves to a dangerous point. On that island there are no snakes, few birds and an unfriendly and warlike people. When the blood of killers have been drained, the victors smear it on their own faces. They treat right and wrong as the same thing. There have never been any bees there, and if anyone sprinkles dust or pebbles from there among the hives, the swarms will leave the honeycombs.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Philip Freeman has collected all of the classical references to Ireland in his work, *Ireland and the Classical World* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2001). If this slim volume, of 32 entries and 168 pages, is compared to a similar book on the Jewish people, Menahem Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974, 1980), where there are 570 entries taking up 1324 pages of text, it can be seen that there was little real interest in Ireland.

<sup>5</sup> Freeman, *Ireland and the Classical World*, 28-33.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 45-46.

<sup>8</sup> "Hibernia inhumana incolarum ritu aspero, alias ita pabulosa, ut pecua, nisi interdum a pastibus arceantur, ad periculum agat satias. Illic nullus anguis. avis rara, gens inhospita et bellicose. Sanguine interemptorum hausto prius victores vultus suos oblinunt. Fas ac nefas eodem loco



St. Jerome (d. 420), one of the four Latin Doctors of the Church, adds the following about the Irish people:

Why should I speak of other nations when I myself as a young man in Gaul saw the *Atticoti* (or *Scoti*), a British people, feeding on human flesh? Moreover, when they came across herds of pigs and cattle in the forests, they frequently cut off the buttocks of the shepherds and their wives, and their nipples, regarding these alone as delicacies. The nation of the *Scoti* do not have individual wives, but, as if they had read Plato's *Republic* or followed the example of Cato, no wife belongs to a particular man, but as each desires, they indulge themselves like beasts.<sup>9</sup>

These quotations show that Ireland was of little importance and really not very well known in the Roman world. While there have been some archaeological finds in Ireland of Roman material,<sup>10</sup> these are not really very significant and not much can be implied from them:

In general, the archaeological evidence of Roman contact with Ireland agrees with the literary testimony of Roman trade with Ireland as well as Irish raids on Britain. Most artefacts of Roman origin occur on islands, in coastal areas, or in river valleys of the east coast facing Britain, locations naturally favoured by merchants for ease of access and relative security. As Tacitus says, it was the approaches and harbors that were known by merchants sailing to Ireland for commerce. The hoards of Roman coins in Ireland from the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. also correspond to the

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ducunt. Apis nusquam, advectum inde pulverem seu lapillus si quis sparserit inter alvearia, examina favos deserent." *Collectanea rerum memorabilium* 22.2-6. Latin and English translation in *ibid.*, 87.

<sup>9</sup> "Quid loquar de caeteris nationibus, cum ipse adolescentulus in Gallia atticotos (al. Scotos), gentem Britannicam, humanis vesci carnibus: et cum per silvas porcorum greges et armentorum pecudumque reperiant, pastorum nates et feminarum, et papillas solere abscindere, et has solas ciborum delicias arbitrary? Scotorum natio uxores proprias non habet: et quasi Platonis politiam legerit, et Catonis sectetur exemplum, nulla apud eos coniux propria est, sed ut cuique libitum fuerit, pecudum more lasciviunt." *Adversus Juovinianum* 2.7. Latin and English translation in *ibid.*, 99. It could be added in Jerome's defence that (even if his claims are historically mistaken and he probably never saw members of this group who ravaged Britain and not Gaul) he thought that his arch-rival Pelagius was of Irish stock and as part of this fight he felt the need to disparage the Irish. Also in this quotation Jerome wasn't particularly singling the Irish out for special treatment as he was one of the best practitioners of satire among all writers of Latin both Classical and Christian. J.N.D. Kelly, *Jerome. His Life, Writings and Controversies* (Peaboy, MA: Hendrickson, 1975) 26, 108.

<sup>10</sup> However for a more favourable summary of the material evidence see Catherine Swift, *Ogham Stones and the Earliest Irish Christians*. (Maynooth: The Cardinal Press, 1997), 3-11. This work's primary focus of Ogham Stones is also relevant to this discussion as the Ogham system is itself intrinsically linked to Roman culture.

literary evidence of Irish raids on late Roman Britain, but less-intrusive explanations these hoards, such as cached payments for mercenary services or the hasty departure of a local Roman merchant, are equally possible. The archaeological evidence cannot currently prove whether there were ever Roman traders residing in Ireland on a permanent basis, but such a presence cannot be ruled out.<sup>11</sup>

A linguistic theory is often advanced for stronger pre-Christian contact between Ireland and the Roman Empire. The argument is founded on a fairly complicated linguistic analysis of Latin loan-words in Early Irish, hinging on changes in pronunciation that Early Irish underwent around the time of the arrival of Christianity. The traditional hypothesis holds that these loan-words can be divided into two groups. The first of these is composed of Latin loan-words that were assimilated into Early Irish in the early fifth century, prior to the arrival of Christianity, the second came a century later, after Christianity was already established.<sup>12</sup> The existence of this group of pre-Christian loan-words is given as indisputable evidence of cultural contacts between Ireland and the Roman Empire and, in particular, with Roman Britain.<sup>13</sup>

While these contacts may well have existed and many of the Latin loan-words may well originate in this time, recent scholarship is more hesitant in dividing the corpus of loan-words so radically and dating them so specifically:

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<sup>11</sup> Freeman, *Ireland and the Classical World*, 12.

<sup>12</sup> Damian McManus, "The so-called *Cothrige* and *Pátraic* strata of Latin loan-words in early Irish," in Próinséas Ní Catháin and Michael Richter, eds., *Irland und Europa. Die Kirche im Frühmittelalter* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1984), 180-181.

<sup>13</sup> The secondary literature contains many examples of this theory being advanced, e.g. Charles Thomas, *Christianity in Roman Britain to AD 500*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1981), 295-306 and F.E. Warren, *The Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church*, with a monograph and updated bibliography by Jane Stevenson and a preface by Henry Chadwick (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1881: Second facsimile edition Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1987), xxxi.

levels of society.<sup>18</sup> But, unfortunately, these cannot provide all that much information about the people who manufactured them. One of the great unanswered questions of this time-period is when did Ireland become dominated by a Celtic culture, or when did the Indo-European language that was the ancestor of modern Irish start being spoken as the dominant language on the Island?<sup>19</sup>

Once again, a lack of written evidence hampers present day understanding. It is known that when Christianity was introduced, the Irish spoke a Celtic language. But not much else can be said. Caution must be exercised in examining the "Celticness" of early Ireland, as next to nothing is known about the culture of the Celts. Once again, there are some references in Classical authors, but these are very biased. Furthermore, still less can be said of the religious observances of the pre-Christian peoples of Ireland. Most of what is "known" today about the Druids is mere Victorian invention!<sup>20</sup>

## 1.2 St. Patrick and the 5<sup>th</sup> Century Origins of the Irish Church

I am very much in debt to God, who gave me so much grace that through me many people were born again in God and afterwards confirmed, and that clergy were ordained for them everywhere. All this was for a people newly come to belief whom the Lord took from the very ends of the earth as he promised long ago, through his prophets: *To you the nations will come from the ends of the earth and will say, "How false are the idols our fathers made for themselves, how useless they are."* And

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<sup>18</sup> Harold Mytum, *The Origins of Early Christian Ireland* (London: Routledge, 1992), 49.

<sup>19</sup> Harbison, *Pre-Christian Ireland*, 168-172.

<sup>20</sup> Stuart Piggott, *The Druids*, 2d ed. (London: Thames & Hudson, 1985), 123-182.

again: *I have made you a light for the nations so that you may be a means of salvation to the ends of the earth.*<sup>21</sup>

With the conversion of Ireland, Christianity had reached in the words of Patrick *ab extremis terrae*,<sup>22</sup> or as Columbanus (d. 615) would explain to Pope Boniface in the early seventh century that the Irish were “inhabitants of the worlds edge.”<sup>23</sup> This was the first time that the Latin Church expanded beyond the boundaries of the Western Roman Empire. How and when the first Irishman converted is shrouded in the mists of history, but it is certain that during the period of Late Antiquity a substantial Christian presence was born in Ireland. “In A.D. 431, however, there were Christians in Ireland. Who were they, where were they, and how did their conversion come about? Faced with these stark questions historians are bound to answer: we simply do not know.”<sup>24</sup>

But it is also precisely in this period that the Western Roman Empire supposedly fell, indeed, between 450 and 550 the population of Rome dropped from

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<sup>21</sup> “Quia ualde ‘debitor sum’ Deo, qui mihi tantam gratiam donauit ut populi multi per me in Deum renascerentur et postmodum consummarentur et ut clerici ubique illis ordinarentur ad plebem nuper uenientem ad credulitatem, quam sumpsit Dominus ‘ab extremis terrae’, sicut olim promiserat per prophetas suos: ‘ad te gentes uenient ab extremis terrae et dicent, “Sicut falsa comparauerunt patres nostri idola et non est in eis utilitas” et iterum ‘Posui te lumen in gentibus ut sis in salutem usque ad extremum terrae.’” St Patrick, *Confessio*, 38. English translation from Joseph Duffy, *Patrick in his Own Words* (Dublin: Veritas, 2000), 114-115.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> “Ultimi habitatores mundi,” *Epistula V 23* in G.S. M. Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera. Scriptorum Latini Hiberniae Volume II* (Dublin: School of Celtic Studies, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1957), 38-39.

<sup>24</sup> Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland 400-1200*, The Longman History of Ireland. (London: Longman, 1995), 17-18. Also cf. Jane Stevenson, “Ireland” in G.W. Bowersock, Peter Brown and Oleg Graber, eds., *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999).

half a million to only 50,000.<sup>25</sup> This was the time of the Barbarians when Rome itself was repeatedly invaded by Barbarian tribes. While this “fall” is of significance, there has been a tendency to exaggerate the contrast between the Romans and the Barbarians. Recent archaeological studies have pointed out that the Roman influence penetrated far within the Barbarian territories, creating “a world slowly penetrated, on every level, by Roman goods, by Roman styles of living and, eventually, by Roman ideas.”<sup>26</sup> Even from the point of view of economy, there seems to have been very little decline in the trade in the ancient world between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages.<sup>27</sup> On all the Western frontiers, the Barbarians became more and more Roman, while the Romans also adopted many of the Barbarian’s customs. Therefore, the “fall” of Rome was not the total collapse of a civilization as is often imagined:

The situation of the Roman West was more like that of modern Russia and Central Asia, after the devolution of the Soviet empire in 1989, than that of Europe during the horrors of World War II. What frightened contemporaries was not the prospect of endless “barbarian invasions.” It was the prospect of a power vacuum in their own region. Hence the speed with which “Romans” found themselves collaborating with “barbarians” – that is, with hard men of military background – to salvage what they could of the old order by creating local centers of strong rule. Local barbarian militias offered defence against further invasion. They maintained law and order. They patrolled the ever-relentless peasantry, who were often as alien and as potentially hostile to their own landlords as were any “barbarians.” These were the services which the new “barbarian kingdoms” of the West had to offer to the “Romans” who supported them.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity AD 200-1000*, 2d ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003), 21.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>27</sup> Very little remains to be said on this subject after consultation with the tome (1101 pages) by Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy. Communications and Commerce, A.D. 300 – 900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

<sup>28</sup> Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, 102.

Another popular modern mistake is to see these tribes as the ancestors of modern European nations. This is simply not true as even the tribes themselves were not ethnically defined. They were made up of soldiers and their dependents and it was allegiance to a chief and not ethnicity that gave belonging.<sup>29</sup> These tribes were not simply interested in rape and pillage, they were made up of people who needed to settle down and it just happened that this took place within the frontiers of what had been the Western Roman Empire:

This situation soon led them to compete with the *Romani* on their own terms. They quickly turned their military privileges into solid, Roman gains – land, gold, clients and slaves. They displayed their wealth through a Roman style of life. Far from remaining the fur-clad leaders of roving warrior bands (as Sidonius presented them), Visigothic and Burgundian noble men and women rapidly became indistinguishable from their upper-class Roman neighbors. Their Roman neighbors, in turn, rapidly adopted “barbarian” fashions of dress and self-display. Barbarians and Romans owned villas with identical mosaic floors. They were buried in identical marble sarcophagi. They rode to the hunt like any other villa owners – with flowing robes and trousers and with the Christogram branded for safety and success, on their horses’ rumps.<sup>30</sup>

Roman Britain was more than likely the source of the evangelisation of Ireland (there may also have been some interaction directly with the Gaulish Church, but it is hard to distinguish between the Churches of Britain and Gaul at this time). Britain was a Roman Colony from 43 AD to 410.<sup>31</sup> But, while there was a certain continuity of Roman civilization on the Continent<sup>32</sup> after the fall of Rome, this was not

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 104-105.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 103. However some modern historians would challenge this view and posit a more gradual transformation of British society.

<sup>31</sup> James Campbell, ed., *The Anglo-Saxons* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982), 8.

<sup>32</sup> By “the Continent” and “Continental” I mean “the mainland of Europe as distinct from the British Isles.” Judy Pershal, ed., *The New Oxford Dictionary of English* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), s.v. “Continent.”

as true of Roman Britain. While Roman Britain had had quite an impressive civilization with villas, walled towns and Hadrian's Wall, this economy was largely based on the Roman military, and when the legions left the economy more or less collapsed. Although taxation in kind may have existed for some time, coinage had disappeared by the early fifth century.<sup>33</sup> Many public buildings were abandoned.<sup>34</sup> Cultivated land may have reverted to wilderness and there was a general fall in population.<sup>35</sup> Archaeological study of post-Roman Britain has discovered a flattened landscape:

The towns stood largely empty, without coins and without extensive trade even in objects as simple to produce and to move around as pottery. Former luxury villas were turned into farmhouses. Wooden buildings replaced the stone halls of the Romans. Embattled hill-forts overlooked a countryside now defended by extensive earthworks erected as much against fellow-Britons as against invading Barbarians. Far from destroying Roman Britain, the Saxons slowly fought their way into a world which had already ceased to be "Roman" once its elites ceased to have a part in the massive tax structures set up by the late Roman state.<sup>36</sup>

Yet this Post-Roman Britain also had a significant Christian presence. In the period of Late Antiquity the Empire had been the medium for the spread of Christianity. After the Edict of Milan in 313, Christianity was not mandated but it soon became very popular.<sup>37</sup> The Empire's support of the orthodox and catholic synthesis of the Christianity of the Great Church was not simply a benevolent change of heart on the part of the Empire which had formerly persecuted

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<sup>33</sup> Nicholas Higham, *Rome, Britain and the Anglo-Saxons* (London: Seaby, 1992), 70.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>35</sup> Coincidentally climatic change seems to have accompanied both the Roman arrival in Britain and the Roman withdrawal contributing to a population growth at the start of the period of colonisation and shrinkage at the end of the period. *Ibid.*, 79-80.

<sup>36</sup> Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, 126-127.

<sup>37</sup> Owen Chadwick, *A History of Christianity* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1995), 58.

Christianity; it was rather a pragmatic admission of the success of Christianity in converting many people throughout the Empire and also a gradual understanding that monotheism was a better medium for the promotion, and indeed the expansion, of the Empire itself. This was seen particularly in the Eastern provinces that became the Byzantine Empire, but it is also a factor of the development of Christendom in the West.<sup>38</sup> In the Western provinces of the Empire of Gaul and Britain Christianity was gradually adopted. In this period the Church in these two countries was organized along similar lines, and the British bishops were in attendance at a number of early Continental Councils: "bishops from three British cities attended the Council of Arles in 314, British bishops were present at the Councils of Sardica in 347 and of Rimini in 359."<sup>39</sup>

This British Church survived the fall of the Empire and it proved vital enough to evangelise Ireland. In Britain itself, it is possible that the even the bulk of the population remained pagan well into the fifth century, but the Church survived as a continuity of the Roman province.<sup>40</sup> These first missionaries to Ireland, while possessing a Roman heritage, probably had a certain affinity for the cultural world they found in Ireland. Some aspects of the Irish culture may have been held in common with the sub-stratum of pre-Roman British culture which they still

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<sup>38</sup> Garth Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth. Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 85-93.

<sup>39</sup> Kathleen Hughes, *The Church in Early Irish Society* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1966), 21.

<sup>40</sup> Higham, *Rome, Britain and the Anglo-Saxons*, 214-216.



possessed themselves.<sup>41</sup> Nonetheless, the evangelisation of Ireland was most likely carried out by Roman Britons. In later centuries there was a tendency to emphasize their Britishness in contrast to the newer Augustinian<sup>42</sup> mission, and the British language came back into stronger use.<sup>43</sup> But at this stage, they still considered themselves to be Romans.

These missionaries made the important decision that the introduction of Christianity into Ireland was to be accompanied by the introduction of the Latin language as the language of the liturgy and the Scriptures.<sup>44</sup> This choice of Latin may further point to the Romaness of the British missionaries.<sup>45</sup> Historically there is a later precedent for the use of a local language in the introduction of Christianity as in the ninth century Sts. Cyril and Methodius translated the liturgy and the Scriptures into the language of the Slavic tribes that they were evangelising, inventing a new alphabet to aid them in their task.<sup>46</sup> However even if a new alphabet, Glagolitic, was invented and this was quite good for expressing Slavic sounds, in reality this

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<sup>41</sup> T.M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 202.

<sup>42</sup> Unless otherwise specified, in this work Augustine refers to St. Augustine of Canterbury and not St. Augustine of Hippo.

<sup>43</sup> T. M. Charles-Edwards, "The Christianities of the Celtic Peoples, 600-1100" (Forthcoming), 3.

<sup>44</sup> Marie Therese Flanagan, "The Contribution of Irish Missionaries and Scholars to Medieval Christianity," in Bradshaw and Keogh, eds., *Revisiting the Story*, 31.

<sup>45</sup> Modern language scholars point to a linguistic relationship between the Old Welsh that these British missionaries would have spoken and Old Irish. By the seventh century, the earliest time for which significant knowledge of these languages exists, they were mutually unintelligible. In the fourth and fifth centuries, as Irish and British Ogham texts testify, these languages were closer, but it is not possible to say to what degree they were mutually intelligible. However it is also true that at this time there was no concept of Celtic languages and the new "cultural zone" that was formed between the Irish and the British had to be founded on Latin as a common language of scholarship and liturgy and not on any common Celtic spirit. See Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, 239.

<sup>46</sup> Anthony-Emil Tachiaos, *Cyril and Methodius of Thessalonica. The Acculturation of the Slavs* (Crestwood, NY: SVS Press, 2001), 77-91.

alphabet had a very short life being replaced by a more mainstream, if misleadingly named alphabet of Cyrillic.<sup>47</sup> Also the evangelisation of the Slavs entailed a significant introduction of Byzantine culture and literature into a Slavic where, unlike the Irish experience, very little of the pre-Christian culture remained and the native literature was not nearly as significant as in Ireland.<sup>48</sup>

The introduction of Latin into Ireland would, in later centuries, prove to be of help in the evangelisation of other nations. The Irish had an advantage that Latin was never the vernacular, and while the various Continental groups who spoke Latin had already begun to see an onset of regionalisms that would lead to the modern Romance languages, they were unable to stand back and appreciate Latin for what it was. The appreciation of Irish scholars for the beauty of the Latin language as well as their work on Latin text books and general efforts to improve intelligibility and access to written works, was a great contribution to the "grammar of legibility."<sup>49</sup> This use of Latin, along with the new grammars, penitentials, law collections and other works were put to great use in the next generations for the evangelisation of

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 119-121. Ironically the Glagolitic alphabet remained in use only in Croatia which ended up as part of Western Christendom in the wake of the tragic East-West division of Christendom, and after the Council of Trent, Croatia was granted the privilege of translating the Tridentine Missal into Slavonic using this alphabet. This practice continued until the liturgical reforms of Vatican II.

<sup>48</sup> Helen C. Evans, "Christian Neighbors" in Helen C. Evans and William D. Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era A.D. 843-1261* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997), 272-279.

<sup>49</sup> Flanagan, "The Contribution of Irish Missionaries and Scholars to Medieval Christianity," 32.

other non-Roman people of the West such as the missions of St. Boniface (d. 755) in Germany or even the eventual evangelisation of Scandinavia.<sup>50</sup>

The first mention of Christianity in Ireland is a cryptic line of Prosper of Aquitaine's *Chronica minora* which informs that in 431 "Ad Scottos in Christum credentes ordinates a papa Caelestino Palladius Primus episcopus mittitur" ("Pope Celestine ordained Palladius and sent him to those Irish who were believers in Christ to be their first bishop.")<sup>51</sup> Later on, in his encomium on Pope Celestine, Prosper tells us that

He (Celestine) has been, however, no less energetic in freeing the British provinces from this same disease (the Pelagian heresy): he removed from that hiding-place certain enemies of grace who had occupied the land of their origin; also, having ordained a bishop for the Irish, while he labours to keep the Roman island catholic, he has also made the barbarian island Christian.<sup>52</sup>

Even allowing for some hyperbole, the claim that Celestine "kept the Roman isle Catholic and made the Barbarian isle Christian" would indicate some success for

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<sup>50</sup> John J. Contreni, "The Irish Contribution to the European Classroom," in *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Celtic Studies: Held at Oxford, from 10th to 15th July, 1983*. D. Ellis Evans, John G. Griffith and E.M. Jope, eds. (Oxford: Ellis Evans, 1986), 81-82. See J.N. Hillgarth, "Modes of Evangelization of Western Europe in the Seventh Century" in Próinséas Ní Catháin and Michael Richter, eds., *Ireland and Christendom: the Bible and the Mission* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta 1987), 311-331.

<sup>51</sup> Jacques-Paul Migne, ed., *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina* (Paris: Garnier, 1844-1855), 51:595 (N.B. all subsequent references to this work will use the abbreviation PL). English translation from James F. Kenney, *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland I: Ecclesiastical* (New York: Columbia: 1929; Reprint Dublin: Four Courts Press: 1993), 165, n. 40.

<sup>52</sup> "Nec uero segniore cura ab hoc eodem morbo Britannias liberauit, quando, quosdam inimicos gratiae solum suae originis occupants etiam ab illo secreto exclusit Oceani, et ordinato Scotis episcopo, dum romanam insulam studeat seruare catholicam, fecit etiam barbaram christianam." PL 51:271, *Contra Collatorem*, 21. English translation from T. M. Charles-Edwards, "Palladius, Prosper, and Leo the Great: Mission and Primatial Authority" in David N. Dumville, ed., *St. Patrick, AD 493-1993* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 1993), 1.

Palladius' mission. In the mid-eighth century Bede repeats the same information<sup>53</sup> without adding much new information. Little else is known about Palladius, and in later centuries, when Patrick was the undisputed national patron saint, Palladius' presence in the ancient histories was explained by conveniently making him a disciple of Patrick, and even the traditional 432 date for the arrival of Patrick (a mere year after Palladius' arrival) may well have been invented by later Patrician hagiographers to dispose of Palladius as quickly as possible.<sup>54</sup>

Today it must be admitted that Palladius was a true historical character.<sup>55</sup> Indeed some modern scholars have even gone so far as to attribute Papal backing to his mission. It is claimed that Pope St. Leo the Great (d. 461), a friend of Prosper of Aquitaine, takes credit for the evangelisation of Ireland on behalf of the papacy, a mere decade after Celestine's dispatching of Palladius. This is an interesting theory that could well be true given the political and social situation of Rome reeling from sackings and facing the rising prestige of Constantinople, however it seems difficult to prove its historical accuracy.<sup>56</sup> However, Columbanus, who in the early seventh

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<sup>53</sup> *Ecclesiastical History*, i.13 "Cuius anno impeii octauo Palladius ad Scottos in Christum credentes a pontifice Romanae ecclesiae Celestino primus mittitur episcopus." "In the eighth year of his reign Palladius was sent by Celestinus the pontiff of the Roman church to the Irish believers in Christ to be their first bishop." Text and translation from Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors, eds., *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, i.13, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1969), 46-47.

<sup>54</sup> Thomas O'Loughlin, *Celtic Theology. Humanity, Word and God in Early Irish Writings* (London and New York: Continuum: 2000), 25-26.

<sup>55</sup> However perhaps one trace of Palladius' pre-Patrician mission is in an eighth century life of Ailbe of Emly. Ailbe is said to have arrived in Ireland before Patrick and to have been endorsed by Palladius (and naturally later on also by Patrick). *Vita S. Albei*, cols 29-30 (Heist, *Vitae SS Hib.*, p. 125). Cited in T. M. Charles-Edwards, introduction to in Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, ed., *Prehistoric and Early Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), lxxvii.

<sup>56</sup> Charles-Edwards, "Palladius, Prosper, and Leo the Great," 1-12.

century is much closer to Palladius' time than ourselves,<sup>57</sup> can speak of the Irish as having been evangelised directly by Rome:

For all we Irish, inhabitants of the world's edge, are disciples of Saints Peter and Paul and of all the disciples who wrote the sacred canon by the Holy Ghost, and we accept nothing outside the evangelical and apostolic teaching; none that has been a heretic, none a Judaizer, none a schismatic; but the Catholic Faith, as it was delivered to you first, who are the successors of the holy apostles, is maintained unbroken.<sup>58</sup>

Whatever may be the case of Palladius, and barring some significant discovery of new evidence there can only remain some tantalizing theories, St. Patrick holds pride of place as the Apostle of Ireland. Today St. Patrick is one of the most popular saints among English-speaking Catholics, and the folklore and festivity surrounding his person is so great that one would be forgiven for thinking that "Patrick has been so buried by the hagiographers, so shamrock-laden by the cultural politics of defining Irish identity that for many he has become an almost mythical figure."<sup>59</sup> However two documents written by Patrick himself are still extant. Even if these leave many gaps in their biographical presentation, it is still the case that, "Patrick is the *only* citizen of the late Roman Empire to have been taken prisoner by marauding raiders, sold into slavery, and who lived to tell the tale in written form."<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 213.

<sup>58</sup> "Nos enim sanctorum Petri et Pauli et omnium discipulorum divinum canonem spiritu sancto scribentium discipuli sumus, toti Iberi, ultimi habitatores mundi, nihil extra evangelicam et apostolicam doctrinam recipiens; nullus hereticus, nullus iudaeus, nullus schismaticus fuit; sed fides catholica, sicut a vobis primum, sanctorum videlicet apostolorum successoribus, tradita est, inconcussa tenetur." *Letter 5,3* in Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, 38-39.

<sup>59</sup> O'Loughlin, *Celtic Theology*, 25.

<sup>60</sup> Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland*, 23.

The more important of these is St. Patrick's *Confessio*, the earliest extensive work of Latin literature to survive that was written outside the frontiers of the Empire.<sup>61</sup> Here he narrates his life and tells of his mission in defence against critics. Briefly put Patrick was a British Christian who was born around the year 400. His father Calpornius was a deacon, and his paternal grandfather Potitus was a priest. In his youth Patrick was a nominal Christian, but was more interested in pursuing unnamed pleasures than developing his faith. However at sixteen he was kidnapped by Irish pirates and brought to Ireland where he was sold as a slave. (At this time Irish pirates were able to raid the crumbling fringes of the Roman Empire and Patrick's fate was a fairly common one.) As a slave Patrick was sent to work as a shepherd. Here he spent his servitude in total isolation tending sheep. In this utter abandonment, he repented of his former way of life and learned to call upon the Lord. After six years he had a vision that told him to escape, and so, with the help of a few miracles, he made his way home. A few years later he was plagued by dreams of the pagan Irish inviting him back to evangelise them. Despite the fact that he was now about thirty years old and had missed out on a serious academic formation and against the better judgment of many of the *seniores*, Patrick was ordained a bishop and sent to the Irish.<sup>62</sup> He spent the rest of his life establishing the Church in Ireland.

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<sup>61</sup> Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, 131.

<sup>62</sup> Traditionally most authors have portrayed Patrick as being somewhat uneducated and claim that his Latin is rustic and lacking in literary style and sophistication. However a recent work by David R. Howlett challenges these assumptions and proposes that, in fact, he was an accomplished author with a full grasp of Latin style. See *The Book of Letters of Saint Patrick the Bishop* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1994).

Regardless of how much actual missionary work Patrick did, how many Churches he founded and the probable existence of some Irish Christians prior to his mission, it is very important to stress that Patrick was *recognized* by the Irish as their patron saint. Already in the seventh century there was a widespread cult of Patrick, not only in the churches he founded, but also throughout the whole of Ireland.<sup>63</sup> However, it is also significant that some other important early sources simply don't mention Patrick:

Columbanus, for example, says that Ireland has kept the Catholic faith 'just as it was first handed down by you, that is, by the successors of the holy apostles'. But he makes no mention of the apostolic role of Patrick in bringing the faith to Ireland. Bede seems to have known nothing about Patrick, since he is not mentioned either in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, or in his Martyrology. The single reference to Patrick in Adomnán's *Life of St. Columba*, written about 690, will hardly allow any inference to be drawn. But this silence on the part of a handful of major writers does not, it seems to me, invalidate other early evidence that the cult of Patrick existed outside the *familia* of Armagh.<sup>64</sup>

Here there is a danger of becoming caught up in the polemics surrounding Armagh's claim of metropolitan status in the seventh century basing its claim on being the See of Patrick.<sup>65</sup> Nonetheless, other early sources not associated with Armagh also attribute to Patrick the foundation of the Irish Church as a whole.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 183.

<sup>64</sup> Richard Sharpe, "St. Patrick and the See of Armagh," *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 4 (Winter 1982): 37.

<sup>65</sup> Armagh's claim was hampered by the fact that it did not actually possess the corporal remains of Patrick and had to rely on "the possession of the *insignia* of the saint, and the acquisition of relics from Rome in the 630s of the apostles Peter and Paul and the martyrs Stephen and Lawrence and a linen cloth stained with the blood of Christ." Nancy Edwards, "Celtic Saints and Early Medieval Archaeology," in *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West* edited by Alan Thacker and Richard Sharpe (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002), 239.

<sup>66</sup> Sharpe, "St. Patrick and the See of Armagh," 39.

Notwithstanding the widespread cult of Patrick there is no trace of his connection with Armagh, still less of an Armagh primacy, until the seventh century. From that time, Patrician hagiography allows us to see the Patrick legend shift from a generalized cult to gain a focus on Armagh. In the same period, Armagh can be seen rising to power for reasons other than hagiological. Political alliances may have played an important part. But the real key to the rise of Armagh lies in the success of the *Liber Angeli* in proclaiming its metropolitan status, and especially in the ecclesiastical politics behind the establishment of the *paruchia* of Patrick outlined for us in that text and in Tírechán's *Collectanea*. Likewise, Muirchú's propagation of the legend embellished Patrick's story, but was not fundamental to Armagh's power. Likewise, Muirchú's rejection of the Ulaid and his leanings towards the Uí Néill fell in line with ecclesiastical developments already in train.<sup>67</sup>

Whatever may be said about the success of Patrick's evangelisation, or even of evangelisation in general in Ireland in this period, it is difficult to say how long it took for Ireland to become even nominally Christian.<sup>68</sup> Yet, from an archaeological point of view judging on the basis of material culture, the sixth century, coming straight after one of the traditional dates for Patrick's death in 493, marks a radical change in Ireland:

What caused Ireland after AD 500 to become so different from before was the new religion and with it the institution of the church. Even though many were not initially converted, the whole nature of society was transformed; the change was far more than just one of religion. Indeed, archaeologically most of the change seems to be related to settlement, subsistence agriculture and technology. The old order was completely revolutionized in all aspects of life.<sup>69</sup>

Traditionally this change has been attributed to acculturation associated with the arrival of technology and farming innovations that accompanied the

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>68</sup> The *First Synod of Patrick* which dates to sometime in the sixth century, portrays a world where Christians and pagans are living together and where the Church feels a certain need to legislate against Christians becoming too involved with their pagan neighbours. Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law*, Early Irish Law Series Volume III, (Dublin: School of Celtic Studies Dublin Institute for Celtic Studies, 1998), 40.

<sup>69</sup> Mytum, *The Origins of Early Christian Ireland*, 21.



Christianisation of Ireland.<sup>70</sup> It is probable that Britain was the source for this acculturation. However, a number of causes other than Christianisation have been posited. Among these, refugees fleeing from the end of the Roman Empire, slave raiders, Irish mercenaries returning from service abroad and bonds of kinship with Irish colonists in Britain have all been cited.<sup>71</sup> Mytum offers the following summary of the evidence:

The evidence from archaeology and history suggests that contact between Ireland and Britain came in many forms during the crucial fourth and fifth centuries. Actual trade was slight and raiding, however great, could not provide a suitable context for cultural assimilation. Mercenary service in Britain may have led to some transfer of ideas, perhaps even Christianity, and though the mercenaries do not appear to have been very numerous, they may have been powerful enough to create an impact. Of greater importance were the Irish migrations possibly into Cornwall, certainly into north Wales and, largest of all, south-west Wales. The links between these groups and their homelands provided a vehicle along which ideas could travel. That links were maintained can be archaeologically recognised by the spread (in whatever direction) of ogham inscriptions, and is also historically attested. The most important of these ideas, and probably the earliest, that was transferred to Ireland was Christianity. It is also likely that a few missionaries made their own way to Ireland from the main centres of Romano-British Christianity independent of the Irish settlements; this, at least, is the story of Patrick. He had, albeit by force, been taken there and saw the potential for conversion. The role of missionaries may have been much less than some historians have assumed, however, and Patrick may not have been typical. For most of those living in western Britain exposure to Ireland must have been through social and kinship links.

Thus, the two main forces for external change, which ran in parallel and were largely interwoven, were contacts between Irish groups each side of the Irish Sea, and Christian missionaries, either British or Irish in origin. Both these forces led to change in all the subsystems – ideology, society, subsistence, technology and exchange.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> For more on the role of agriculture in early Ireland see Fergus Kelly, *Early Irish Farming*, Early Irish Law Series Vol. 4 (Dublin: School of Celtic Studies, Dublin Institute for Celtic Studies, 2000) and the helpful summary in Nancy Edwards, "The Archaeology of Medieval Ireland, c. 400-1169: Settlement and Economy," in Ó Cróinín, ed., *Prehistoric and Early Ireland*, 261-275, n.b. 275.

<sup>71</sup> Mytum, *The Origins of Early Christian Ireland*, 23-36.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

Material remains from Iron Age Ireland point to a high level of technological development. But these techniques, more often than not, were used to produce high class luxury objects that were probably status symbols for the elite. In the early Christian period "craft production turned away from limited, individual works to mass produced goods."<sup>73</sup>

### **1.3 The Church in 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Centuries, Monasticism and Church Organisation**

#### **1.3.1 Monasticism in Ireland**

Traditionally historians of the Church in early Ireland have tended to place a great emphasis on the Monastic characteristics of the Pre-Norman Irish Church. The theory is that in this period the earlier episcopal and proto-diocesan structure of the Church (based on each *túath* having its own Church under its own bishop) was replaced by a Church dominated by monastics where the bishops were reduced to the state of chaplains for these monastics. In addition the monastic structure itself was subject to a certain amount of secularization with the role of the abbot often becoming a hereditary office that could be held by a lay-abbot or *coarb*. Any work dealing with the Irish Church in the Pre-Norman period written before the mid-1980's would express this view. But today scholarship is taking a more nuanced view.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>74</sup> One particular article has added a much needed counterbalance to the over-emphasis on the monastic dimension of the Church in the Pre-Norman period; Richard Sharpe, "Some Problems

Notwithstanding this necessary clarification, monasticism was indeed an important dimension in the Church at this time. Christianity had taken root in Ireland during the period that monasticism was being introduced into the West in general. Patrick's *Confessio* does bear witness to the fact that as part of his evangelisation work he valued consecrated virginity. He says that "the sons and daughters of Scoto-Irish chieftains are seen to be monks and virgins dedicated to Christ."<sup>75</sup> In the face of his critics, Patrick takes this as proof that an authentic Church has been founded in his Irish mission. Much is also made of the heroic quality of Irish monasticism in comparison to the more tame Benedictine variety. Prior to the arrival of the Cistercians in the twelfth century very few monasteries in Ireland followed the Rule of Benedict.<sup>76</sup> But, even though the Benedictine form of monasticism has been the most influential type of monasticism in the history of Western Christianity, this form does not constitute the unique or even the original form of Western monasticism. Authors, particularly of popular works, often point to the similarities between Irish and Egyptian monasticism, and to claim that Ireland was really an example of Eastern Christianity in the Western fringes of Europe.<sup>77</sup> Christian

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Concerning the Organization of the Church in Early Medieval Ireland," *Peritia* 3 (1984): 230-270. His intuitions have been further developed and elaborated in Colmán Etchingham, *Church Organisation in Ireland AD 650 to 1000* (Maynooth: Laigin Publications, 1999, reprinted 2002).

<sup>75</sup> "Filii Scottorum et filiae regulorum monachi et uirgines Xpisti esse uidentur." St Patrick, *Confessio*, 41, as translated by Duffy, *Patrick in his Own Words*, 118-119.

<sup>76</sup> John Watt, *The Church in Medieval Ireland*, 2d ed. (Dublin: UCD Press, 1998), 42. For a somewhat over-enthusiastic examination of the early evidence of a Benedictine presence in Ireland, see Colmán Ó Clabaigh, "The Benedictines in Medieval and Early Modern, Ireland," in Martin Browne and Colmán Ó Clabaigh, eds. *The Irish Benedictines. A History* (Dublin: Columba, 2005), 79-1212.

<sup>77</sup> Thomas Cahill, *How the Irish Saved Civilization: The Untold Story of Ireland's Heroic Role from the Fall of Rome to the Rise of Medieval Europe* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 180; and George Telepneff, *The Egyptian Desert in the Irish Bogs: The Byzantine Character of Early Celtic Monasticism* (Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 1998). Unfortunately the opinions expressed in these unacademic works are sometimes accepted by scholars in other disciplines!

monasticism in general had its origins in the deserts of Egypt and Palestine.<sup>78</sup> When monasticism spread to Gaul, to Rome and to the rest of the Western Church it spread from these desert roots. While monasticism flourished in the desert it was soon introduced to cities and their neighbouring countryside in both the Latin West and the Byzantine East. Many famous people went to find Christ in the desert. In the West St. Jerome and, in particular, St. John Cassian (d. 435), were the most influential. When Cassian returned from the Egyptian deserts he settled in France and through his writings his version of Egyptian monasticism became very well known in the West.<sup>79</sup> His influence and the influence of other monastic saints, such as St. Martin of Tours (d. 397),<sup>80</sup> found a ready seedbed in Ireland.<sup>81</sup> This form of

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Besides this many would hold that it is a misconception (usually held by Western Christians) to try to divide Christianity into two halves: "Eastern and Western. "In reality, Christianity is better divided into three "halves:" Western (Roman Catholic and Protestant), Byzantine Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox (Alexandrian, Syrian, Armenian, etc.). For a general outline of the varieties on non-Western Churches cf. Ronald G. Roberson, *The Eastern Christian Churches. A Brief Survey*, 5th ed. (Rome: Edizioni Orientalia Christiana, 1995), for the liturgy in particular, see Paul Meyendorff, "Origins of the Eastern Liturgies" *St. Nersess Theological Review* 1:2 (1996): 213-221.

<sup>78</sup> For an accessible account of the beginnings of monasticism, see Derwas Chitty, *The Desert a City: An Introduction to the study of Egyptian and Palestinian Monasticism under the Christian Empire* (Crestwood, NY: SVS Press, 1966). However it would be somewhat simplistic to accept that monasticism developed from the experiences of one or two men in one country. In a recent work William Harmless rejects this "big bang theory of monastic origins" proposing a more varied development of monasticism from a number of sources, places and influences after the Peace of Constantine, *Desert Christians. An Introduction to the Literature of Early Monasticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 418, see 417-448. The gradual development of "normative" monastic and ascetical practice from an initial epoch of surprising variety has also been traced by Susanna Elm in 'Virgins of God.' *The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 373-385.

<sup>79</sup> Early Egyptian monasticism had two main founders, St. Antony the Great and St. Pachomius. But while there are many similarities in their conception of monasticism, there are some significant variations and it would seem that, despite his claims to have travelled all over Egypt, he was in fact ignorant of Pachomian form of monasticism. It is also necessary to remember that Cassian's goal was not that of a sociological study of Egyptian monasticism, but, taking advantage of his recollections of his sojourn in Egypt twenty years previously, to renew monasticism in the Gallican Church of his day, see Robert Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West: The Origins of the Divine Office and its Meaning for Today*, 2d ed. (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press: 1993), 58.

<sup>80</sup> However Martin of Tours popularity in early Ireland might also be due to the fact that he combined " the roles of monk and bishop," a combination that was not typical of his time. Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 410.

pre-Benedictine Western monasticism was not as structured as the Benedictine form.<sup>82</sup> There was discipline and many monastic rules did exist, these rules were interpreted by the abbot who felt free to “mix and match” rules, compose new ones or adapt old ones to their particular foundation and indeed to each particular monk.

The fact that the Irish Church was initially a Church without martyrs caused the great monastic founders such as Columba (d. 597), Columbanus and Brigid<sup>83</sup> to take the martyrs' place in popular religiosity and imagination.<sup>84</sup> But there is little in Irish monastic observance that could be termed totally unique. However certain elements are stressed: Irish monasticism tended to be more ascetical, at least when judging it on a comparison between the various Irish rules and that of Benedict. The

<sup>81</sup> E.g. Cassian's *Collationes* is the work that has had by far the most influence on Columbanus' corpus. See Claire Stancliffe, "The Thirteen Sermons Attributed to Columbanus and the Question of their Authorship," in Michael Lapidge, ed., *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings*. Studies in Celtic History XVII (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1997), 105, 126, 167, 172. Basil and Cassian, both recommended by the Rule of Benedict's last chapter, were both read at Iona which situates that monastery closer to mainstream Western monasticism than often thought. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 287.

<sup>82</sup> However the view of Benedictine monasticism as an Order with a fixed immobile observance is anachronistic in this time-period. It wasn't until the Benedictine monastic federations of Cluny and, in particular, Cîteaux, that there begins to be a Benedictine Order. Earlier monasteries used the rule but adapted it to their purposes, e.g. some Benedictine authors like to claim St. Bede as an early member of their order, but while Jarrow might have known and even used the Rule of Benedict, it could not be described as a Benedictine monastery, Benedicta Ward, *The Venerable Bede*. Outstanding Christian Thinkers Series. Brian Davies, series ed. (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1990), 9.

<sup>83</sup> Although the cult of Brigid was to become one of the most important of the early Irish saints, indeed holding pre-eminence among female saints (even if there is scant evidence for her life from contemporary sources) and her foundation of Kildare rivalled Armagh for supremacy in the Irish Church, nevertheless nuns or female monastics were somewhat of a rarity in Ireland. Judging by the remaining textual, archaeological and other historical evidence there are very few traces of female monastic foundations in Pre-Norman Ireland. It is known that Patrick was very heartened by the fact that many women, even noble women, vowed themselves to virginity and there are a number of lives of holy women. But while a number of female religious houses did exist, and even the unusual feature of mixed monasteries of both monks and nuns (the most famous of these foundations was St. Brigid's monastery in Kildare which also had the unique feature that the female element had priority over the male), the number of these monasteries is relatively few in comparison to male houses in Pre-Norman Ireland. Dianne Hall, *Women and the Church in Medieval Ireland, c. 1140-1540* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2003), 64-66.

<sup>84</sup> Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland*, 162.

Irish monasteries also became centres of learning in Ireland itself and of evangelisation in Britain and the Continent. Sometimes these tendencies of Irish monasticism have been exaggerated, secondary literature oftentimes basing itself on the idealistic analysis of John Ryan, (who accepted the later medieval lives written about saints of this period literally).<sup>85</sup>

In keeping with the principle that there should be "nothing harsh, nothing burdensome," these duties were to be none too onerous. The word "mortification" is studiously avoided. In the matter of diet, St. Benedict allows each monk a pound of bread daily, two dishes of cooked food, and a third of fruit or young vegetables, a menu that would have shocked the Fathers of the desert and have sounded incredible to Irish ears. He allows also more than half-a-pint of wine every day. During the greater part of the year his monks enjoyed more than eight hours of unbroken sleep every night; during the summer months five or six hours by night, and a siesta by day. Not only a blanket, but a mattress, coverlet and pillow were permitted, so that the monk could rest in comfort. New clothes are to be provided before the old ones are worn out. Clothes are to fit properly and must be warmer in winter, lighter in summer. Two cowls or cloaks, a liberal supply of shoes, socks and similar articles were also added, in contrast with the utter poverty and nakedness which was the Egyptian (and the Irish) ideal. The elements of monasticism preserved by the Saint are all traditional. Thus he draws on the writings of Cassian and St. Basil, the monastic letter of St. Augustine, the Apophthegmata or Sayings of the Fathers, the Latin translation of the rule of Pachomius, and other early sources in the composition of his Rule. Having however, deliberately discarded eremitical life, severe bodily austerities, individualistic spirituality and prolonged psalmody, and centralized organization after the Pachomian model, St. Benedict in his Rule is said rightly by Dom Butler to represent less a development than a revolution.<sup>86</sup>

Although the newer Benedictine form of monasticism gained ground over the more traditional Irish form on the Continent as early as the seventh century, in Ireland the traditional monastic observances were maintained until the twelfth

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<sup>85</sup> Colmán Etchingham, "The Ideal of Monastic Austerity in Early Ireland," in Jacqueline Hill and Colm Lennon, eds., *Luxury and Austerity. Historical Studies XXI. Papers Read Before the Twenty Third Irish Conference of Historians Held at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, 16-18 May, 1997* (Dublin: UCD Press, 1997), 16.

<sup>86</sup> John Ryan, *Irish Monasticism: Origins and Early Development*, 2d ed. (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1972), 410-411.

century.<sup>87</sup> While the Rule of Benedict may not have had a great influence in Ireland itself,<sup>88</sup> this can by no means be taken to imply the somewhat romantic rejection of its "moderation" in favour of heroic Celtic penitential fervour, even if such a rejection was indeed perceived by earlier generations of historians. When examining the case of Columbanus<sup>89</sup> it seems that from a very early date the monasteries founded by him were using both his Rule and that of Benedict.<sup>90</sup> Indeed Charles-Edwards has gone so far as to state that "Columbanian monasteries were the principal agents by which the Rule of St. Benedict was spread in Western Europe before the Carolingian period."<sup>91</sup>

While the Rule of Benedict is one of the monastic rules that has had most popularity and is in use down to the present day, there has always been a need for renewal in religious life. Most of the various reforms of Benedictine monasticism, the Cluniacs and the Cistercians in particular, tended to increase the ascetical character of the monasteries. While "pure" Benedictine monasticism never took root in Ireland and Ireland maintained the strongest non-Benedictine monastic tradition in the West

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 412-413.

<sup>88</sup> The exception to this being the *Scottenkloster* movement of Benedictine monasteries which recruited Irish vocations for service in Benedictine monasteries in the Germanic regions. Tomás Ó Fiaich, "Irish Monks in Germany in the Late Middle Ages" in W.J. Shiels and Dianna Wood, eds. *The Churches, Ireland and the Irish. Papers read at the 1987 Summer Meeting and the 1988 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 89-104.

<sup>89</sup> Columbanus is a major figure for two reasons. First, he is the greatest of the *perigrini* who left Ireland for continental Europe. In Britain there were other major figures, in particular Columba of Iona and Aidan, the bishop of the Northumbrians; but amongst those Irishmen who went to the continent, such as Fursa, none had so great an influence as Columbanus. Secondly, his writings, taken together with the Life by Jonas constitute the only body of evidence about Irish monasticism before the late seventh century that is both varied in content and considerable in extent. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 344-345.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 387.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 384, also see, Dábhí Ó Cróinín, "A Tale of Two Rules: Benedict and Columbanus," in Browne and Ó Clabaigh, eds. *The Irish Benedictines*, 11-24.

for most of this period, eventually the more rigorous Cistercian form of Benedictine monasticism was to flourish in Ireland.

On the level of Pastoral Care (which will be treated in more detail below) there is also evidence that sacramental ministry was the domain of non-monastic clergy.<sup>92</sup> In some of the Penitentials monks are forbidden from administering Baptism. The sixth century Penitential of Finnian, perhaps the oldest Irish Penitential, instructs that "Monks, however, are not to baptize, nor to receive alms. Else, if they do receive alms, why shall they not baptize?"<sup>93</sup> It is interesting to note that in this text alms or tithes go hand in hand with pastoral care, that those who accept financial support are obliged to provide pastoral care. It is significant that this ban was reiterated over five hundred years later by Gille of Limerick: "it is not the task of monks to baptize, to give communion or to minister anything ecclesiastical to the laity unless, in case of necessity, they obey the command of the bishop."<sup>94</sup> In liturgical studies the fact of repeated legislation against a practice or abuse is often regarded more as evidence that the condemned abuse was what was actually happening rather than not the "correct" observance!<sup>95</sup> However, it is also the case that these texts do point to an ideal model of the Church whereby pastoral care (at

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<sup>92</sup> Patrick J. Corish, "The Pastoral Mission in the Early Irish Church," *Léachtaí Cholm Cille 2* (1971): 8-9.

<sup>93</sup> "Monochi autem non debent baptizare neque accipere elimosinam. Si autem accipiant elimosiam, cur non baptizabunt?" Penitential of Finnian, 50 in Ludwig Bieler, ed., *The Irish Penitentials*. *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* Volume IV, 2d ed. (Dublin: School of Celtic Studies, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1975), 92-93.

<sup>94</sup> "Non est monachorum baptizare, communicare, aut aliquod ecclesiasticum laicis ministrare nisi forte cogente necessitate imperanti episcopo obedient," *De statu Ecclesiae* 45-48 in John Fleming, *Gille of Limerick (c.1070-1145). Architect of a Medieval Church* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), 148-149.

<sup>95</sup> Paul Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship. Sources and Methods for the Study of Early Liturgy*, 2d ed. (London: SPCK, 2002), 18-19.



least to those who reciprocated financially) was provided by a non-monastic clergy under the direction of a bishop.

On a final note, it is perhaps necessary to further temper Ryan's exuberant praise of the harsh asceticism practiced in Ireland. It is true that many of the monasteries are in very isolated places, and today the thought of sleeping in the remaining monastic cells even in the summer, never mind the damp Irish winter, is quite unattractive. But it cannot simply be held that all Irish monks were perfect ascetics. Many of the more important monks came from noble families and oftentimes did not fully renounce the privileges to which nobility entitled them.<sup>96</sup> The archaeological excavations at Iona and other early monasteries have found a lot of bones of meat that was at variance with the culinary prescriptions of the various monastic rules.<sup>97</sup> The Penitentials also paint a picture of monastic piety in total variance with the polished images from the later Saints' Lives:

In addition to lesser infringements of the rule, there are provisions for monks who defame, assault, or steal from their brethren, who commit homicide, who become so drunk that they vomit the host or are unable to sing the psalms, who are guilty of immodesty when bathing, or of a remarkable range of sins of the flesh involving heterosexual, homosexual and bestial practices which are treated in unparalleled detail –detail which, indeed, is so graphically illustrative of the sexual offences possible in an early Irish monastery that successive editors of the Old Irish version declined to translate it into English.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Popular hagiography attributes St. Columba's foundation of Iona to a penance of exile imposed on him due to the battle of Cúl Dremne he instigated, and his missionary work among the Scottish tribes being due to the obligation to win as many souls for Christ as the thousands that fell in the battle. Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland*, 60.

<sup>97</sup> Kathleen Hughes and Ann Hamlin, *The Modern Traveller to the Early Irish Church*, 2d. ed. (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), 38-39. However for a less critical analysis of the archaeological evidence of the diet at Iona, compare with Finbar McCormick, "Iona: the Archaeology of the Early Monastery," in Cormac Bourke, ed., *Studies in the Cult of Saint Columba* (Dublin, Four Courts Press, 1997), 54-60.

<sup>98</sup> Etchingam, "The Ideal of Monastic Austerity," 17-18.

By the seventh century Christianity had gained cultural ascendancy and dominated Irish society and at this time Ireland was “a highly inegalitarian society.”<sup>99</sup> Although any study of pre-Christian Irish society is hampered by a lack of contemporary written texts, it would seem that Christianity did not disband the hierarchical structure of pre-Christian Irish society but rather inserted itself into and modified this pre-existent structure. Ecclesiastics were given a high grade in this society; this was undoubtedly influenced by the above-mentioned fact that many prominent ecclesiastics were also members of royal families and prominence in the Church became associated with prominence in society in general.<sup>100</sup>

### 1.3.2 Irish Ecclesiastical Scholarship in the 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> Centuries

A particular feature of the early Irish Church was the place it gave to learning. Again it would seem that this “new religion” did not, in fact, reject the “old learning.” While there is no contemporary evidence for a pre-Christian priestly class, it is often assumed that these were the forerunners of the *filí* or bards. The evidence for the *filí* is from the seventh century and thus post-dates the introduction of Christianity. In these earliest texts they are a high class people of vernacular learning, law, histories and genealogies. They are fully incorporated into the now-Christian society and, like the clergy, they are subject to monogamy thus forming a quasi-clerical caste.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 124.

<sup>100</sup> For an attempt to analysis the complicated and often contradictory evidence of Irish society, see *ibid.*, 124-144.

<sup>101</sup> Kelly, *Early Irish Law*, 43-51.

Patrick wrote in a rustic Latin,<sup>102</sup> but now a few generations later, many Irishmen were fluent in the Latin language, building up great repositories of learning. The masters of both the clerical and the *filis'* schools occupied one of the higher levels of society and while many positions did not transfer between one *túath* and another that of the priest and *fileadh* did.<sup>103</sup> This allowed for a very fruitful scholarly dialogue from which both benefited and gave the Irish ecclesiastical schools a big boost at a time when Continental Europe was at a low ebb. Bede records how the Irish opened their schools to English students:

At this time there were many in England, both nobles and commons, who, in the days of Bishops Finan and Colman, had left their own country and retired to Ireland either for the sake of religious studies or to live a more ascetic life. In the course of time some of these devoted themselves faithfully to the monastic life, while others preferred to travel around the cells of various teachers and apply themselves to study. The Irish welcomed them all gladly, gave them their daily food, and also provided them with books to read and with instruction, without asking for any payment.<sup>104</sup>

Not only did the Irish monasteries open their schools to foreign students but many monks also left Ireland to go to the Continent. There they were very influential in the establishment of new monasteries, for example, in one reckoning the number of monasteries in seventh century Gaul increased from 220 to 550 mainly due to the

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<sup>102</sup> However compare this view with the exalted view of Patrick's linguistic and general academic formation in Howlett, *The Book of Letters of Saint Patrick the Bishop*.

<sup>103</sup> This may have contributed to the *peregrinatio* of many Irish clerics outside Ireland as if they had merely moved from one *túath* to another they would have kept the status that they were liable to lose abroad. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 103.

<sup>104</sup> "Erant ibidem eo tempore multi nobilium simul et mediocrium de gente Anglorum, qui tempore Finani et Colmani episcoporum, relicta insula patria, uel diuinae lectionis uel continentioris uitae gratia illo secesserant. Et quidam quidem mox se monasticae consuersationi fideliter mancipauerunt; alii magis circueundo per cellas magistrorum lectioni operam dare gaudebant. Quos omnes Scotti libentissime suscipientes, uictum eis cotidianum sine pretio, libros quoque ad legendum et magisterium gratuitum praebere curabant." *Ecclesiastical History*, iii. 27, Colgrave and Mynors, 312-313.

Irish influence.<sup>105</sup> In the early ninth century, Irish monks and scholars, poets, astronomers and grammaticians played a major role in Charlemagne's court and in the general flourishing of learning in his kingdom. But this was not an exclusively Irish phenomenon, here it must be admitted that the rosy picture of the Irish being almost the exclusive architects of the Carolingian reform is somewhat exaggerated.<sup>106</sup> Indeed Alcuin of York (d. 804) was by far the most famous and influential of the scholars in his court. The Irish did however form an important part of his court. But, here again, it is not an exclusively Irish or "Celtic" particularity, it is rather a contribution of both Irish and English monks to the empire of the Franks.<sup>107</sup> Not only in the liturgy but also in the field of Canon Law is the idea of a Carolingian dominance of official texts somewhat mistaken; recent studies show that throughout the Carolingian area of influence, including the centre of their empire and even Rome itself, that versions of the Irish canon law collection *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis* circulated with great influence and under many forms.<sup>108</sup> Even if the Irish scholars were not always the most brilliant, their importance seems to have been due to strength of numbers rather than exceptional scholarship:

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<sup>105</sup> Flanagan, "The Contribution of Irish Missionaries and Scholars to Medieval Christianity," 37. For an enthusiastic view of the extent of the Irish ecclesiastical diaspora throughout modern France, Germany and the Low Countries see Róisín Ní Mheara, *In Search of Irish Saints. The peregrinatio Pro Christo* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1994).

<sup>106</sup> The classic exposition of this view can be found in Ludwig Bieler, *Ireland Harbinger of the Middle Ages* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 115-136.

<sup>107</sup> For more information on this topic see Mary Garrison "The English and the Irish at the Court of Charlemagne" in *Charlemagne and his Heritage: 1200 Years of Civilization and Science in Europe* vol. 1, ed. P. Butzer, M. Kerner and W. Oberschelp (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), 97-123. For another view that gives more importance to the specific Irish contribution to the Carolingian empire see Michael Richter, "Das irische Erbe der Karolinger" in *ibid.*, 79-96.

<sup>108</sup> Roger E. Reynolds, "Unity and Diversity in Carolingian Canon Law Collections: the case of the *Collectio Hibernensis* and its derivatives," in Uta-Renate Blumenthal, ed., *Carolingian Essays: Andrew W. Mellon Lectures in Early Christian Studies* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1983), 134-135.

It has been remarked that among foreign scholars working in Francia, the Irish greatly outnumbered the contingents from England, Lombard Italy and the remnants of Visigothic Spain. Moreover, by the end of John Scottus' life, Canterbury, the archiepiscopal see of southern and midland England, could hardly find a single scribe competent in Latin. The deficiencies of Canterbury in the late ninth century corroborate Alfred's complaints about education in southern England. The achievements of the finest scholars, such as John Scottus, are necessarily exceptional. What is striking about early Irish Latin culture, and thus the Irish contribution to the Carolingian Renaissance, is its strength in numbers. As the annalistic obits for *scribae* and *sapientes* suggest, most, if not all, major churches, and also many middling communities, sustained an independent capacity to give instruction in Latin and in exegesis. Scholars were relatively thick on the ground because it had become par of the status of a church to have a good scholar, and because scholarship conferred high status on individuals.<sup>109</sup>

### 1.3.3 The Structure of the Church in Seventh Century Ireland

While monasticism was a very important element in the Church in Ireland at this time,<sup>110</sup> it has been shown above that there has been a proclivity to overemphasize this element when dealing with this period. As was also seen already, there is a certain lack of evidence about the beginnings of the Irish Church. This lack is compounded by an even greater lack of information about the British Church at this time. The Irish Church was probably formed on a fairly mainline basis with bishops in charge of the Church (even if the first real evidence for Irish bishops comes from the seventh century).<sup>111</sup> But as there was probably no single authority who could control either the evangelisation of the whole island or the establishment

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<sup>109</sup> Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 592; see Contreni, *The Irish Contribution to the European Classroom*, 79-90.

<sup>110</sup> Monasticism also played a great role in the Church in the rest of Western Europe throughout the period covered by this thesis. Such figures as Gregory the Great and Benedict, Martin of Tours and Bernard play leading roles. Here too monastics were often played more important roles than many bishops, and the monastic *familiae* of Cluny and Clairvaux were much more significant than any of the Irish examples.

<sup>111</sup> Sharpe, "The Church in Early Medieval Ireland," 239.

of the Church it is probably best to agree with Sharpe that “the Irish church may have reached its developed form by degrees, without ever having been deliberately organized. It is not necessary to suppose that the church was structured by any policy or according to any model.”<sup>112</sup>

The crux of the question is whether or not a monastic element swamped an earlier diocesan structure so that “in early Ireland the monastic groupings replaced the dioceses altogether.”<sup>113</sup> This has been the predominating view until recent times. But “the distinction of two systems is the work of modern historians: the Irish church knew only one. There were indeed monasteries and non-monastic churches, but they fell within one and the same system.”<sup>114</sup> Much has been made of the fact that Ireland being outside of the empire lacked the centres of population that had been common in the Roman territories. This supposedly impeded the erection of dioceses which were usually centred in these Roman towns, so that a diocesan structure parallel to the civic administration of the Empire emerged.<sup>115</sup> The predominant theory was that the Irish Church gradually became centred on the new monasteries and that the bishops were sidetracked until the reforms of the twelfth century:

In the beginning St. Patrick established a church governed by bishops and organized in territorial dioceses. At some point – and the dating has differed quite widely – this

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<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 240.

<sup>113</sup> Tomás Ó Fiaich, “The Beginnings of Christianity. Fifth and Sixth Centuries,” in T.W. Moody, and F.X. Martin eds., *The Course of Irish History*, 4th ed. (Lanham, MD: Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 2001), 46.

<sup>114</sup> Sharpe, “The Church in Early Medieval Ireland,” 263.

<sup>115</sup> Peter L’Huillier, *The Church of the Ancient Councils: The Disciplinary Work of the First Four Ecumenical Councils* (Crestwood, NY: SVS Press, 1996), 115-119.

pattern was overtaken by the spread of monasteries and monastic federations. The date for this development which has won widest acceptance is during the late sixth and seventh century. In the late seventh century the surviving churches of episcopal origin busily reorganized themselves, giving up their territorial diocesan interests (and, by implication, their connexion with the *túath*) and acquiring instead dispersed proprietary interests, in some cases extending over much of Ireland. From then the church was dominated by monasticism until the twelfth century, when reformers reinvented dioceses. The formation of parishes followed on from the establishment of dioceses.<sup>116</sup>

This was how many modern scholars understood the Church in pre-Norman Ireland. It is still often cited even in more respectable works as an example of "Celtic Christianity." However this traditional model is no longer sustainable. Kathleen Hughes initially modified it and then questioned it in a posthumously published work and Patrick Corish also called it into question by adding the important dimension of pastoral care to the study.<sup>117</sup> Therefore it is the view of the present work that there was no "Celtic Church":

It is patently obvious that there was no single institutional structure encompassing the churches of all, or most, Celtic countries at any point in the early middle ages. There was no head of this church; there was no general council; there was no policy-making body regulating church affairs; there was no ruler who might be thought to guarantee orthodoxy, as late Roman and then Byzantine emperors tried to do.<sup>118</sup>

However it would likewise be an error to see the Church in Pre-Norman Ireland as being a monolithic homogenous institution, or even to see it as being part of an even bigger and totally unchanging and unvaried structure of Western

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<sup>116</sup> Richard Sharpe, "Churches and Communities in Early Medieval Ireland: Towards a Pastoral Model" in John Blair and Richard Sharpe, eds., *Pastoral Care before the Parish* (Leicester University Press, Leicester 1992), 98.

<sup>117</sup> Kathleen Hughes, *The Church in Early Irish Society* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1966), 44-110 and "The Celtic Church: Is This a Valid Concept?" in P.P. Sims-Williams, ed., *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies 1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 1-20. Patrick J. Corish, *The Christian Mission. A History of Irish Catholicism 1/3* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1972).

<sup>118</sup> Davies, "The Myth of the Celtic Church," 14.

Christendom. As every other region in the West at the time, the Church in Ireland did have some regional variations (although because Irish society had its own unique structure, the regional variations in the Church structure within this society can sometimes seem greater than they in fact were). No one could debate the important role of monasticism in Ireland at this time, one might even go as far as to class the Irish Church as being "unusually monastic."<sup>119</sup> However, this monasticism did not affect the fundamental character and constitution of the Church. In fact, there is no evidence that the bishops were in any way sidetracked at this time:

There is no evidence that bishops were marginalized in a church which had become predominately monastic by the eighth century, if not earlier. It was, in fact, the bishop not the abbot, who continued to epitomise the highest ecclesiastical status. The status of any church was determined by the highest ranking clerical grade attached to the church in question and the highest ranking clergyman was, of course, the bishop. The authority and privileges of a church were a function of its status. In addition to the supreme legal standing and real power which episcopal rank alone could bring to a church, bishops controlled the pastoral ministry. Moreover, in his role as the typical presiding judge or judge of appeal in ecclesiastical cases, the bishop personified the exercise of jurisdiction, in the strict sense, at the highest level. Furthermore, it is apparent that episcopal jurisdiction was, in fact, territorial both in conception and in practice. The evidence for all of this is to be found in a variety of sources: Hiberno-Latin canon law compiled in the early eighth century, vernacular law tracts of seventh-to-eighth-century and later date, hagiography of seventh-century and later date and the annals from the seventh century to the tenth.<sup>120</sup>

The episcopacy did not lose any status in Ireland at this time. It is true that there were important monastics and many of these may have had a higher personal status than some of their contemporary bishops, but this is neither particular to Ireland nor to this period of history. There was an important integration of the Church into the civil society in Ireland at this time, this is particularly shown in the

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<sup>119</sup> T. M. Charles-Edwards, "The Christianities of the Celtic Peoples, 600-1100," 19.

<sup>120</sup> Colmán Etchingam, "Bishops in Ireland and Wales in the Early Middle Ages: Some Comparisons," 14-15. Also see Etchingam, *Church Organisation*, chapters 4 and 5.



important role that the Irish language assumed as a literary language parallel to Latin even as "the normal written language of the clergy."<sup>121</sup>

While the bishops maintained their important role,<sup>122</sup> the conditions in Ireland did necessitate some individual Irish adaptations (as the conditions in every other country likewise necessitated some local adaptations). The scarcity of population centres did give a certain prominence to the larger monasteries which sometimes might even have constituted what could be classed a "monastic city."<sup>123</sup> Certain monastic federations did also develop such as Armagh and Kildare and, in particular, the Columban federation of Iona, Kells and Derry. While today it is possible to maintain the important role of bishops in the Irish situation, thus negating that earlier model of a "Celtic" Church in Ireland which lacked episcopal authority,<sup>124</sup> it would also be untrue to postulate a model of exclusively episcopal power. The fact that the monastic "cities" might have been population centres<sup>125</sup> and many people

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<sup>121</sup> Sharpe, "The Church in Early Medieval Ireland," 268. While the written use of the vernacular may have been unique to Ireland, the use of the vernacular as the regular spoken language of the clergy was not that unusual, see Hillgarth, "Modes of Evangelization," 312-131.

<sup>122</sup> "Si quis aduena ingressus fuerit plebem non ante baptizat neque offerat nec consecrat nec ecclesiam aedificet nec permissionem accipiat ab episcopo, nam qui a gentibus sperat permissionem alienus sit." "if a new-comer joins a community, he shall not baptize, or offer the holy sacrifice, or consecrate, or build a church, until he receives permission from the bishop. One who looks to a layman for permission shall be a stranger." *The First Synod of Patrick*, 24 in Ludwig Bieler, ed., *The Irish Penitentials*, 58-59. Hughes places this text in the sixth century (*The Church in Early Irish Society*, 50) whereas Etchingham places it in the seventh (*Church Organisation*, 59-60). Irregardless of whether it is of sixth or seventh century origin it does accentuate the important role of the bishop as the overseer of pastoral care at least in the mind of those who drafted this document.

<sup>123</sup> Catherine Swift, "Forts and Fields: A Study of Monastic Towns in Seventh and Eighth Century Ireland" *The Journal of Irish Archaeology* IX (1998) 105-123. This topic will be further dealt with in Chapter 4.

<sup>124</sup> Even though some earlier work disputes the existence of a Celtic Church while maintaining the minimal role of the episcopacy in Ireland at this time, see Hughes, "The Celtic Church: Is This a Valid Concept?" 1-20.

<sup>125</sup> The theme of "monastic cities" and the various interpretations given to them will be dealt with in Chapter 4.

who were not, strictly speaking, monks lived in these centres. These monastic tenants or *manaig*, were initially under the authority of the abbot who had authority over them as a secular lord might have. But as the monasteries grew, it became impractical for an abbot to rule the whole city and so (in Sharpe's view) a new office emerged, that of a secular *coarb* who governed the *manaig* and the monastic properties. There was a separation of roles between the civil and the religious, even though the confusion of terminology caused difficulties for interpretation as the *coarb* often retained the title of "abbot" while the true abbot, who ruled the monastic community, adopted a different title. Therefore rather than seeing great changes in the church, it might be better to see continuity:

that the early Irish church was multi-faceted: it combined clerical and monastic dimensions with a third aspect, the management of temporalities. A single, integrated, eclectic model of organisation, encompassing diversity in theory and practice, was thus postulated. Continuity and accommodation over the longer term, rather than change and confrontation at identifiable chronological horizons, were the salient features.<sup>126</sup>

Indeed the *coarb* seems to be of greater concern for modern scholars than the actual Christians of Pre-Norman Ireland. Also as regards this thesis and the study of Pastoral Care in general there is really no evidence which suggests that the political role of the *coarb* had any detrimental effect on church life in general, and the term is hardly to be found in the literature of the period which is mainly devotional.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Etchingam, "Bishoprics in Ireland and Wales in the Early Middle Ages," 13 Also see Sharpe, "The Church in Early Medieval Ireland," 260-267 and Etchingam, *Church Organisation*, 23-31.

<sup>127</sup> Sharpe, "The Church in Early Medieval Ireland," 269.

Traditionally, the *Céli De* (or Culdee) phenomenon was seen as a reform movement which swept through the Church in Ireland in the eighth and ninth centuries as a way of reinvigorating the ascetical dimension of a monastic structure which had become too worldly.<sup>128</sup> This reform movement, centred on the figure of St. Maelruan and monasteries in Tallaght and Finglas, sought to cultivate a coenobitic type of monasticism where the monk became a *Céli De*, that is, a friend (or even spouse) of God. Modern studies, however, point out that the *Céli De* were more mainstream than once thought.<sup>129</sup> Far from being a rigorist movement which sought isolation from a corrupt Church, the conclusion of modern studies is quite different. A recent study basing itself on the modern reappraisal of Church Organisation concludes that:

The *Céli De* were not ascetical reformers. The reform theory stands in large measure upon a narrow interpretation of a few passages in a single *Céli De* text that are deemed to be critical of the established churches, while it fails to take into consideration the whole corpus of extant *Céli De* writings which demonstrate not only respect for religious contemporaries and high regard for the older monastic houses of Ireland, but also an abiding concern for pastoral care, liturgy, devotion and other matters touching on the religious life.<sup>130</sup>

This more nuanced understanding of the *Céli De* as an attempt at finding a more personal relationship with God rather than being an early religious order with exceptionally ascetical practices will be important in the interpretation of the

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<sup>128</sup> E.A. D'Alton "Culdees" in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume IV, (New York: Macmillan, 1908). See Peter O'Dwyer, "Celtic Monks and the Culdee Reform," in James P. Mackey, ed., *An Introduction to Celtic Christianity* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995).

<sup>129</sup> Etchingam, *Church Organisation*, 348-355.

<sup>130</sup> Westley Nicholson Follett, *Monastic Devotion in Ireland: The Celi De Movement in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries*. (Unpublished PhD Thesis University of Toronto, Canada: 2002), 4.

evidence in chapter 3 as many of the texts that will be examined were associated with the *Céli De* to some degree or another.

On another level, it is also important to remember that the Church in Ireland was not as isolated as is often thought. There was a clear consciousness throughout the West of the importance of being Roman, and this played no little part in the local Church's self-understanding:

We should not think of Ireland and Britain simply as distant "peripheries" being drawn, ineluctably, into uniformity with a "center" placed in Rome. Many Irishmen and Saxons carried within them a "Rome in the mind." These "Romans" (as they called themselves) often strove to bring that distant Rome to their own region. They did this through the transfer of relics, through styles of art and building, and through following distinctive ecclesiastical customs. But they did this very much on their own terms. Their efforts were perceived as having brought to their own region a "microcosm" which reflected, with satisfactory completeness, the "macrocosm" of a worldwide Christianity. They did not aim to subject the "periphery" of the local Christianities to a "center" situated in Rome, as would happen in a later period under the ambitious popes of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Rather, they strove to cancel out the hiatus between "center" and "periphery" by making "little Romes" available on their home ground.<sup>131</sup>

In the mid-seventh century, Armagh was conducting a great campaign to have herself recognized as the Rome of Ireland. As she was particularly hampered by the lack of the body of Patrick, she placed great emphasis on the fact that she possessed the relics of both Peter and Paul.<sup>132</sup> In fact the tendency of identification with Rome was a factor throughout the Christian world, Constantinople was deliberately built as a new Rome.<sup>133</sup> There is also some suggestion that the High

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<sup>131</sup> Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, 15.

<sup>132</sup> Charles Doherty, "The Basilica in Early Ireland", *Peritia* (1984) 3, 310.

<sup>133</sup> Joseph Alchermes, "Constantinople and the Empire of New Rome" in Linda Safran, ed., *Heaven on Earth. Art and the Church in Byzantium* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 17-20.

Crosses may have paralleled the tombs that Irish pilgrims would have seen in Rome and thus have been a way of forming a *local* Rome at home.<sup>134</sup>

### 1.3.4 The Development of Pastoral Care in Seventh Century

#### Ireland

Pastoral care (*cura animarum*) is one of the principal reasons for the Church's existence. The Church is made up of individual believers who contribute to and avail of the Church's pastoral services. But in scholarship this most basic of facts has often been overlooked and "remarkably little scholarly attention has been devoted to the mechanics of this most basic of relationships between church and society in early medieval Ireland."<sup>135</sup> This neglect hampers scholarship in its access to the most basic understanding of the Church in Ireland at this time and it could even be posited that such scholarship is irreparably damaged by this lack.<sup>136</sup>

Pastoral care and the popular participation in the liturgy by the laity are subjects that are not often studied and modern scholarship and ancient sources tend

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<sup>134</sup> Dorothy Hoogland Verkerk, "Pilgrimage *Ad Limina Apostolorum* in Rome: Irish Crosses and Early Christian Sarcophagi," in Colum Hourihane, ed., *From Ireland Coming. Irish Art from the Early Christian to the Late Gothic Period and its European Context* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 9-26.

<sup>135</sup> Colmán Etchingham, "The Early Irish Church: Some Observations on Pastoral Care and Dues," *Ériu* 42 (1993) 99.

<sup>136</sup> Sharpe, "The Church in Early Medieval Ireland," 251. Also see the *status questionis* as presented in Colmán Etchingham, "Pastoral Provision in the First-Millennium: a Two-Tier Service?" in Raymond Gillespie and Elizabeth FitzPatrick, eds., *The Parish in Medieval and Post-Medieval Ireland. Community, Territory and Building*. Group for the Study of Irish Historic Settlement Monographs (Dublin, Four Courts Press, 2006), 79-82. Also see Adrian Empey, "The Layperson in the Parish: the Medieval Inheritance, 1169-1536" in Raymond Gillespie and W.G. Neely, eds., *The Laity and the Church of Ireland, 1000-2000. All Sorts and Conditions*. (Dublin: Four Courts, 2002), 7-48. Although this author does treat the role of the laity, for the most part, he deals with the period after the Norman conquest of Ireland.

to concentrate on clerics, monastics and nobles.<sup>137</sup> Therefore this is not an easy subject, but one that merits attention as modern history and liturgical works are beginning to give this area its due importance.<sup>138</sup> Once again, lack of evidence of popular religion hampers study of this subject, but one area is a little more open, that of early Irish laws. By looking at these laws of the time a society can be glimpsed where "just as observance of treaty and contract were thought of as a bulwark against man-made social catastrophe, the render of dues to the church was envisaged as a quasi-contractual guarantee of divine benevolence manifested in the cosmic order."<sup>139</sup>

One of the first characteristics of Pastoral Care in Ireland at this time is the multiplicity of actual church buildings. Many churches dot the landscape dating from this early period with more than two hundred and fifty known churches dating to the period prior to 800, this being more than all of England or any comparable area on the Continent.<sup>140</sup> By the end of this period there was a huge multiplicity of churches so that so that it could be said:

Perhaps the completion of field surveys for the whole country, and the still more remote time when this evidence will have been assimilated, we can give some quantitative expression to this organization on the basis of placename evidence. Ireland has 2,428 civil parishes, but its townland names include 2,890 names in *cell*, more than 900 names in *cluain* and an uncounted number of other ecclesiastical types, including *domnach*, *sendomnach*, *senchell*, and later types such as *teampull*.

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<sup>137</sup> For an interesting analysis of monastic devotion and austerity in general in Ireland prior to the eighth century see Follett, *The Celi De Movement*, 40-129.

<sup>138</sup> E.g. Robert E. Taft, "Home-Communion in the Late Antique East," in Clare V. Johnson, ed., *Ars Liturgiae: Worship, Aesthetics and Praxis. Essays in Honor of Nathan D. Mitchell* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2003), 1.

<sup>139</sup> Etchingham, "Pastoral Care and Dues," 102.

<sup>140</sup> Sharpe, "Towards a Pastoral Model" 89.

These names and the unsurveyed field monuments bear witness to what in its time was one of the most comprehensive pastoral organisations in northern Europe.<sup>141</sup>

While not everyone would agree with this analysis,<sup>142</sup> and the study of these buildings is significantly hampered by a serious lack of archaeological excavations,<sup>143</sup> nevertheless, the sheer volume of church buildings would suggest a proximity of the Church to a significant part of society as a whole.

A consideration of legal texts provides some idea as to the use of these churches. These texts portray an ordered society with rights and obligations from both the Church and the *túath*. This mutual relationship basically says that in return for "baptism and communion and praying for the dead and mass from each church for all according to what is proper to their religion, with preaching of the Word of God to all who may listen to it and fulfil it," the church was entitled to, 'their grant, their tithe, their first fruits and their firstlings and their *audacht*, their *imnae*."<sup>144</sup>

For the Church the principal concern is that the *túath* provide sufficient contributions and tithes so that the Church can continue its mission.<sup>145</sup> This mission was not simply the support of the clerics and ecclesiastical properties, but also

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>142</sup> To balance Sharpe's grand vision of this multiplicity, it must also be stated that these churches are notoriously hard to date, that, as Sharpe himself admits, they are unsurveyed and, therefore, need to be properly excavated so that their true function (i.e. pastoral or devotional) and age can be determined. See Etchingam, *Church Organization*, 289.

<sup>143</sup> While a complete archaeological survey of all these churches has not been carried out at this time (nor is such a survey likely in the near future), however much work has been done on individual sites and this will be analyzed in Chapter 4.

<sup>144</sup> "A nubarit , a ndechmad, a primite 7 a primgeine 7 a nudacht, a nimna." D. A. Binchy, *Corpus Iuris Hibernici*, (Dublin, 1978) 529.5-24, quoted in Etchingam, "The Early Irish Church," 102.

<sup>145</sup> It is worth noting that "the archaeological evidence suggests that in the pre-viking period wealth was concentrated mainly in the hands of the many royal families." Edwards, "The Archaeology of Medieval Ireland," 292.

involved a lot of care for the poor in society.<sup>146</sup> For the *túath* there is a concern for pastoral care.<sup>147</sup> One of the most important documents for the study of this period is the *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*. This collection originated in Ireland at the end of the seventh or the start of the eighth century. However scholars have been divided as to whether it was a collection originating from the winning side of the Paschal Controversy to preserve their teaching or simply a pastoral collection to provide ease of access to the Church's answers to particular problems at a time when canon law collections were becoming too complicated.<sup>148</sup> While *Hibernensis* does mention bishops and other ecclesiastics, most of the vernacular material deals with the priest and his ministry.<sup>149</sup>

Of this vernacular material the *Ríagail Phádraic*, a law document probably originally written in the eighth century, is perhaps that which is most significant for the study of pastoral care. This testifies to the same basic concept as *Hibernensis* vis-à-vis the importance of the *túath* as the centre of pastoral care. For this reason it mandates the ordination of a bishop for each *túath*.<sup>150</sup> It is his duty to ensure the

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<sup>146</sup> There has been little work done on this topic in Ireland, and even though many significant differences would have existed between Ireland and France, an idea of the Church's role in the care of the poor in this period can be gleaned from Henry Beck, *The Pastoral Care of Souls in South East France During the Sixth Century*. *Analecta Gregoriana* 51 (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian Press, 1950), 317-344.

<sup>147</sup> While most accounts refer to men giving donations, women also were active donors of all manner of goods, services and monies to various ecclesiastical projects; see Lisa Bitel, "Women's Donations to the Churches in Early Ireland," *JRSAI* Vol 114 (1984): 5-23.

<sup>148</sup> Henry Bradshaw, *The Early Collection of Canons Known as the Hibernensis: Two Unfinished Papers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1893), 7. For background on this collection and on its influence in the Carolingian territory see, Reynolds "Unity and diversity," 99-135.

<sup>149</sup> Charles-Edwards, "The Pastoral Role of the Church in the Early Irish Laws," 73.

<sup>150</sup> "Prímepscoep cecha túaithe accu fri huirdned a n-óessa gráid, fri coisecrad a n-eclas, 7 fri hanmchairdes do flaithib 7 do airchindc[h]ib, fri nóemad 7 bencachad a clainde iar mbathius." "Each tribe [is] to have a chief bishop for the ordination of their clergy, for the consecration of their churches, and for the spiritual guidance of princes and chieftains, for the sanctification and blessing of their



physical structure of the diocese so that “each church [is] to have its oratory and its burial ground purified, and that altar has its proper fittings always in readiness for the ordained.”<sup>151</sup>

Perhaps the idea of the altar having the proper fittings “in readiness for the ordained” might imply that there is not a regular Eucharistic celebration in these churches. So later on the *Ríagail Phádraic* mandates that the bishop make sure that there “be an offering of the body of Christ on each altar.”<sup>152</sup> This mandate for pastoral care goes hand in hand with the collection of dues, so that “any church in which there is no service to *manach* tenants for baptism and communion and the singing of the intercession; it is not entitled to tithes or to the heriot cow or to a third of [each] bequest.”<sup>153</sup> A little further on it outlines the service due the *manaig* along with the cleric’s other responsibilities:

He selects a surety on their behalf from the *manaig* of each church which is his responsibility, with respect to a proper stipend, comprising price of baptism and the due of communion and [of?] chanting the requiem of all the *manaig*, with respect to the living and the dead and mass every Sunday and every chief solemnity and every chief festival and celebration of every canonical hour and singing the three fifties every canonical hour, unless instruction or spiritual direction, i.e. unction and baptism prevent him.

If indeed it be on account of the scarcity of ordained men in the *túatha* [it is lawful?] that there be three churches or four in the cure of each ordained man, provided he can offer communion and baptism there for the souls of all and mass on solemn days and feast-days on their altars.

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offspring after baptism.” *Ríagail Pátraic* 1 in J. G. O’Keeffe “The Rule of Patrick,” *Ériu* 1 (1905): 218, 221.

<sup>151</sup> “Is é [episcop] timairg for cech eclais co raib a durrthech 7 a relec hi nglaine 7 co raib in altóir cona haidmib ar c[h]inid óessa gráid dogrés.” *Ríagail Pátraic* 6 in *ibid.*, 219, 222.

<sup>152</sup> “Go raib idbairt chuirp Críst for cech altóir.” *Ríagail Pátraic* 7 in *ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> “Ocus nach eclas oc ná bé túara manach do baithis 7 comna 7 gabáil écnairce ní dlig dechmad ná train n-ímnai.” *Ríagail Pátraic* 8 in *ibid.*

These are the counter-obligations to the ordained man, i.e. a worthy day's ploughing each year with its seed and land and a half measure of clothing as a mantle, or a shirt or a tunic. A meal for four at Christmas and Easter and Pentecost.<sup>154</sup>

In this text Mass and the reception of Communion are indeed mentioned and the priest must sing the Liturgy of the Hours (although it is not clear if he does this alone or with the laity in attendance), Baptism, care of the dying and spiritual direction are also considered to be necessary. Here the concern is more with a regular sacramental and prayer life being carried out by the priest (who was perhaps alone or only accompanied by a few people attending) rather than the reception of Communion in isolation. Mention of Communion being "offered" does not necessarily imply that everybody present actually received and still less that everybody in the locality attended.<sup>155</sup>

It is also worth noting that while having the presence of a functioning church was important to the *túath*, this called perhaps for more priests than were available and may have contributed to a clergy shortage. The provisions for one priest to look after up to four churches means that at least some times a church may have been

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<sup>154</sup> "Aitire dogó fria láim de manchaib cech eclaisi bes fora chubus fri túarustul cóir eter lóg mbaithis 7 téchta comna 7 gabáil écnairce ne n-uile manach eter biu 7 marbu 7 oiffrend cecha domnaig 7 cecha prímsollamain 7 cecha prim-féile 7 ceileabrad cecha tráthq do chétal, mani thairmesca forcetul nó anmchairdes .i. ongad 7 baithis. Má beth trai do húaithe ind áessa gráid lasna túatha, cia beit trí hecailsi nó a cethair for cubus cech fir gráid acht rosó command 7 baithius do anmain cháich 7 oiffrend hi sollamnaib 7 féilib for a n-altóir. It é a frithfolaidi-seom dond fir gráid .i. lá air n-indraic ceich bliadna cona sil 7 a ithir 7 a lethgaból étaig do brutt nó do inur. Pruind chethruir ar notlaic 7 chaisc 7 chingcís." Ríagail Pátraic 12-14 in *ibid.*, 219. English translation from Etchingham, "Pastoral Care and Dues," 108.

<sup>155</sup> The idea that the fact that Mass being celebrated being more important than the actual reception of Communion will be examined more fully in Chapter 3, as well as the possible connection between the "meal for four at Christmas and Easter and Pentecost" and communitarian reception of Communion at these times

left without any pastoral care,<sup>156</sup> yet this was a serious obligation of the priest who “was to do penance if he was absent on one Sunday, and to be degraded if he missed two or three.”<sup>157</sup>

The picture painted by the *Riagail Pátraic* is borne out in other documents. In the *Bretha Nemed Toisech* which was composed in Munster in roughly the second quarter of the eighth century, and is written in Old Irish lists the faults which disqualify a church so that it reverts to its original donor:

What are the disqualifications debasing a church? It is not difficult: being without baptism, without communion [*chomna*], without mass [*oifrend*], without praying for the dead, without preaching, without penitents, without the active life, without the contemplative life; water through it onto the altar, driving guests away from it; disobedience, misappropriation, private property, complaining, providing for clients; an ex-layman tending it, a young boy in its stewardship, a nun announcing its canonical hours; reddening it with blood, putting it under a lord, going to it after plundering, its being diminished through supporting women, increasing debts on it, wearing it away with sin, giving it as payment to a lord or a kin.<sup>158</sup>

Once again the presence of a priest who prays for the dead and offers the other elements of pastoral care is important and if the Church doesn't provide this the church building reverts to its original donor.

While all of these documents point to a Church with a structure in place to provide the necessary pastoral care, it could also be inferred that the great attention paid to detail in the matters of tithes and offerings to the Church, and the fact that

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<sup>156</sup> It could be that this group of churches constituted a *túath*, so that this petty kingdom would fall within the pastoral ministrations of a single priest or bishop. Etchingam, “Pastoral Provision in the First-Millennium,” 84.

<sup>157</sup> Sharpe, “Towards a Pastoral Model,” 82 (citing *Hibernensis* ii, 25).

<sup>158</sup> “Coteat mífolad dóertho ecalso? Ní hansae: buit cen bathais, cen chmnai, cen oifrend, cen immon n-anmae, cen phrecept, cen áes n-aithrige, cen achtáil, cen teor; uisce tree for altóir, esáin oíged úaidi; nac, díchmairc, sainchron, fodord, frithairle chéile; athláech inna hairitiu, gillae inna ferthigsiud, caillech do fócrú a tráth; a fodergad co fuil, a cor fo flaith, a tascnam iar fogail, a fothlae fo mnáib, mórad fiach fuiri, a fochnam co peccad, a fochraic do flaith nó fini.” *Bretha Nemed Toisech* I.6 in Liam Breatnach, “The First Third of *Bretha Nemed Toisech*” *Ériu* 40 (1989): 10-11.

there was somewhat of a shortage of parochial clergy, might also point to a church that had some difficulty in providing all the pastoral care necessary.<sup>159</sup> This would have led to the curses on those who failed to provide adequate pastoral care:

For no soul will dwell in heaven which has not been baptized with a lawful baptism before everything, so that for that reason it is an obligation incumbent on all the souls of the men of Ireland together with their rulers and their nobles and the heads of churches that there should be baptism and communion and the singing of prayers for the dead in every church for proper monks (*manaig*). For an unmitigated curse and malediction will be directed from Patrick and all the saints of Ireland against every ruler and against every monk who does not enforce upon his own particular church that there be within it baptism and communion and singing of prayers for the dead.<sup>160</sup>

These nuances would somewhat modify Sharpe's enthusiastic vision of Ireland as having "the most comprehensive pastoral organisations in northern Europe."<sup>161</sup> Another concern that could be expressed is that the evidence seems to point to two groups within the laity: those within territories with strong connections to the Church who received some pastoral care and those who lived in other territories and these may well have received very little pastoral care of any type:

The idea that the church depended on the goodwill of secular lords for the wider levy of ecclesiastical dues is perfectly consistent with the main thesis of this paper, which is that what evidence there is relating to regular pastoral care and dues suggests that, while in theory bearing on the populace at large, they are likely to have applied consistently only to those over whom the church exercised direct authority, namely its *manach*-tenants. The corollary, hinted at in the Tallaght documents and elsewhere, is that much of society was regarded as almost beyond redemption and

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<sup>159</sup> Corish, "The Pastoral Mission," 20.

<sup>160</sup> "Ar ní fuil aitreb nime do *anmain* duine nad baithister o baithus dligthech re *cech* rét, conid aire *forta* *anmanda* fer *nerenn* cona *flaithib* 7 a *naircheaib* 7 a *nairchindchib* co raib baithius 7 comna 7 gabail écnairce o *cech eclais* do *manchaib* techtaib; ar as ocrit 7 miscad *patraic* co *noemaib erenn* for *cech flaith* 7 for *cech manach* na *timaig fora eclais saindiles* baithius 7 *comnai* 7 gabail *ecnoirce inti*." D. A. Binchy, *Corpus Iuris Hibernici. Ad Fidem Codicum Manuscriptorum Recognovit* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1978) 6:2129, lines 32-37. English translation from Charles-Edwards, "The Pastoral Role of the Church in the Early Irish Laws," 70.

<sup>161</sup> Sharpe, "Towards a Pastoral Model," 109.

not a part of the truly Christian elite. It therefore seems quite possible that the complaints of Giraldus Cambrensis and Bernard of Clairvaux cited at the outset represent more than the rhetoric of those with an axe to grind.<sup>162</sup>

Another factor in the study of Pastoral Care is the general lack of fervour. In the texts that do speak of the Eucharist, the emphasis is not on reception of the Eucharist by the laity, but on making sure that Mass was offered. A man who became a priest was embarking on a dangerous career. It was fearful to approach the altar and say the fearful prayer and, judging by the evidence of the Penitentials, some of the clergy were far from being pillars of virtue. Their bad example combined with this fear may help understand the shortage of priests that some areas experienced. The other important element of pastoral care was the end of life; viaticum was more important than a life spent in regular reception of Communion.<sup>163</sup>

#### **1.4 The Irish Church in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries and the Viking Raids**

The ninth and the tenth centuries were a time when the Vikings had a great influence on the history of Europe as a whole. The Vikings came from present day Scandinavia and, as they had remained outside the Roman Empire, they had not yet accepted Christianity. Their small bands of fierce warriors played a big role in the

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<sup>162</sup> Etchingam, "Pastoral Care and Dues," 118.

<sup>163</sup> Etchingam, *Church Organisation*, 290-318. The penitential texts which are the basis for this interpretation will be examined in Chapter 3.

battles and wars of Continental Europe which eventually led to the fall of the Carolingian empire.<sup>164</sup>

The ninth and the tenth centuries also saw the Viking invasions of Ireland. At this time the monasteries of Ireland provided the best targets due to the absence of big centres of population in the country. Some monasteries were also rich and due to the lack of a good road system tended to be located close to the sea or rivers. Hence the Viking raiders found rich pickings here.

A naval force of the Norsemen sixty ships strong was on the Bóinn, and another one of sixty ships on the river Life. Those two forces plundered the plain of Life and the plain of Brega, including churches, forts and dwellings.<sup>165</sup>

From the beginning of the ninth century the annals contain many reports of attacks on monasteries. However some contemporary historians point out a past tendency to perhaps overemphasize the Viking destruction based on a somewhat simplistic use of Annals. Not every raid and destruction of a monastery in this time reported by the annals can be attributed to the Viking raiders. There are also many unidentified raids and burnings by the Irish themselves, "where actual churches are mentioned [as being burned], 43 were perpetrated by the Irish, 14 by Scandinavians

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<sup>164</sup> Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, 467

<sup>165</sup> "Longas tre-fhichet long di Norddmannaibh for Boinn; longas .ii. tre-fhichet long for abaind Liphí. Ro slatsat iarum in di longais-sin Magh Liphí & Magh m-Bregh eter cealla & dune & treba. Roiniudh re feraib Bregh for Gallaibh ec Deoninni i Mughdornaibh Bregh conid-torchradar se fichit diibh." *The Annals of Ulster* 837 §3 in Seán Mac Airt and Gearóid Mac Niocaill, eds., *The Annals of Ulster to A.D. 1131. Part I Text and Translation* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1983), 294-295..

and there are four cases of both being involved. There are a further 6 cases of violence where no information is given about the perpetrators."<sup>166</sup>

While the earliest Viking raids may have been indiscriminate attacking any monasteries that they may have happened to find, it would seem that by the mid-ninth century the Viking raiders, unsurprisingly, tended to select more powerful and therefore richer monasteries.<sup>167</sup> Through the ninth century Vikings became less likely to actually burn the church buildings and seem to be more interested in plundering than destroying and may even have developed a reluctance to burning (perhaps so as to allow the monastery to rebuild and restock in preparation for a later raid).<sup>168</sup> While the Vikings may have stolen artefacts from Irish monasteries and churches, during this time-period Irish liturgical plate was more marked by excellence in workmanship and intricacy of programming and design than by the actual quantity of precious metal used. Some of the most valuable of the Irish objects may have been next to worthless as scrap metal and the Vikings often re-used the Irish workmanship on liturgical objects as jewellery. There is even some archaeological evidence that suggests that the Vikings may have been importing silver into Ireland in the late ninth and early tenth centuries.<sup>169</sup> Here, also, it needs to be remembered that many of the monasteries most prized possessions were in the

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<sup>166</sup> Conleth Manning, "References to Church Buildings in the Annals," in Alfred Smyth, ed., *Seanchas. Studies in Early and Medieval Irish Archaeology, History and Literature in Honour of Francis J. Byrne* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), 49.

<sup>167</sup> Colmán Etchingham, *Viking Raids on Irish Church Settlements in the Ninth Century: A Reconsideration of the Annals*, Maynooth Monograph, Series Minor I (Maynooth, 1996), 32-33.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 45-47.

<sup>169</sup> Graham-Campbell, James A., "The Viking-Age Silver Hoards of Ireland," in Bo Almqvist and David Greene, eds., *Proceedings of the Seventh Viking Congress*, (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy 1976), 39-74.

form of relics and had basically no monetary value (although there are also cases of Vikings taking such items and holding them for ransom). The other items that were of interest to the raiders were slaves and even livestock:

It is clear that the annals offer persuasive evidence that captives rather than metalwork or other movable goods are likely to have been the main attraction for ninth-century Scandinavian raiders of churches. Apart from considerations already discussed, the overall figures are worth emphasizing. Of the thirty-six reports of raids (not including CGG [*Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib*]) which give some detail of the incident, captives are recorded in seventeen. Individual items of ecclesiastical metalwork or other venerated objects are mentioned in, at most, six incidents (in two along with captives and in one together with a cattle-prey).<sup>170</sup>

After about a generation of these raids that resulted in a great deal of destruction of monasteries and their possessions,<sup>171</sup> the Vikings changed their tactics. They began to base themselves in Ireland itself and to build fortified towns, from where they could mount their raids. Apart from any religious impact, these towns were to have a monumental effect on Irish history. Up until now Ireland had no true towns or cities and the Vikings introduced a new form of society. The Vikings founded the modern Irish cities of Dublin, Waterford and Limerick at this time and, introduced into Ireland a new model of coastal, trade-oriented settlement.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Etchingam, *Viking Raids on Irish Church Settlements in the Ninth Century*, 44.

<sup>171</sup> Although, it must also be pointed out that the two great Eucharistic chalices that are now in the National Museum in Ireland, seem to have been hidden for safekeeping precisely during the period of the Viking, or Viking-inspired, raids (and then not found until our own days) and so we could paradoxically owe some of our best evidence for early Irish Eucharistic devotion to these raids!

<sup>172</sup> Liam de Paor, "The Age of the Viking Wars. 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Centuries," in Moody and Martin, eds., *The Course of Irish History*, 76. The fact that the Vikings did not conquer bigger territories in Ireland can probably be attributed to the fact that they only needed trading and more efficient raiding and not to their being unable to. Bart Jaski, "The Vikings and the Kingship of Tara," *Peritia* 9 (1995): 314.



The new Viking presence arrived at a time when the native Irish kingdoms were at war with each other. It must be remembered that while Ireland (and the Irish colonies in Scotland) were a cultural whole, a religious whole, and more or less operated under a common legal code, they were not a single political unit. Society was made up of many petty-kingdoms, where some kings were more powerful than others and exercised a kind of jurisdiction over these others. But while sometimes a king could claim to be High King over all Ireland, in reality his power over the other kings remained quite tenuous. The Viking presence added a new element to the political make-up of Ireland, thus upsetting the fragile co-existence that had existed between these kingdoms.<sup>173</sup>

While, as modern historians point out, the Irish Church and society received obvious benefits from their contact with the Vikings, it would likewise be a mistake to downplay the harshness of that contact. On a number of levels, the Irish Church suffered. The Christianisation of a nation is never complete and undoubtedly there are plenty of examples of unchristian behaviour in Ireland prior to contact with the Vikings. However, it is also true that by the ninth century a certain Christianisation had indeed taken place and the Church was having a calming influence on Irish society as a whole, perhaps the best known example of this is the *Cáin Adomnáin* promulgated in 697 in order to protect non-combatants from violence in time of war.<sup>174</sup> The Christianisation of Ireland had been a gradual purification of morals and

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<sup>173</sup> Corish, *The Christian Mission*, 60. The role of the Vikings with particular reference to the succession of the kingship of Tara has been fully developed in Jaski, "The Vikings and the Kingship of Tara," 310-351.

<sup>174</sup> For more on this important *Cáin* see Thomas O'Loughlin, ed., *Adomnán at Birr, AD 697. Essays in Commemoration of the Law of the Innocents* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2001).

a transformation of society as a whole. The evangelisation took place on a long-term basis,<sup>175</sup> hence the cultural tragedy of the Viking invasions so that the by contact with the Vikings "the Christian values of the Irish had become notably coarsened."<sup>176</sup>

While there may have been cultural benefits from contact with the Vikings, there was also cultural destruction, Alfred Smyth points out that "it only took one Northman [...] to torch an undefended monastic library which had taken two and a half centuries to accumulate, or to slay a monastic scholar who carried that accumulated wisdom in his or her head."<sup>177</sup> The other negative effect of the Viking incursions on Ireland, which is often overlooked, is that prior to their coming the Irish area was much bigger. The Irish saw themselves as living *ab extremis terrae*,<sup>178</sup> at the end of the world. While it would be wrong to imagine an Irish empire, there was a significant Irish presence outside Ireland. This presence was not only in Scotland and the Isle of Man, but also in the Scottish islands and other islands in the North Sea. Diucul (d. c. 835) the monk can mention Irish monks living in the island of Thule six days sail to the North of Britain where "not only at the summer solstice, but in the days round about it, the sun setting in the evening hides itself as though behind a small hill in such a way that there was no darkness in that very small space of time, and a man could do whatever he wished as though the sun were there, even

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<sup>175</sup> It is not known if this long-term evangelization was planned or if it simply happened that long-term gradual efforts bore more fruit.

<sup>176</sup> Corish, *The Christian Mission*, 61.

<sup>177</sup> Alfred P. Smyth, "The Effect of Scandinavian Raiders on the English and Irish Churches: A Preliminary Reassessment," in Brendan Smith, ed, *Britain and Ireland 900-1300. Insular Responses to Medieval European Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 4.

<sup>178</sup> St Patrick, *Confessio*, 38, in Duffy, *Patrick in his Own Words*, 115.

remove lice from his shirt."<sup>179</sup> He also mentions that two days sail from Britain "there is another set of small islands, nearly all separated by narrow stretches of water; in these for nearly a hundred years hermits sailing from our country, Ireland, have lived. But just as they were always deserted from the beginning of the world, so now because of the Northman pirates they are emptied of anchorites."<sup>180</sup> Even as far away as Iceland archaeological remains of Irish monastic settlements have been found.<sup>181</sup> This was the world of Brendan the Navigator (d. 575) who embarked on a mythical voyage to a far off land at the world's end, and this land was already inhabited by Irish monks! Here the significance is not whether an Irishman managed to beat a Viking as the first European to set foot in the new World, neither is it the size of these Irish presences abroad. The central issue is that world's end belonged to the Irish and the Vikings changed this. This psychological loss of this supremacy as the Vikings displaced these remote Irish outposts was probably a cruel blow for the Irish religious psyche.

On other, more tangible, levels, the Irish benefited from Viking war techniques and adopted Viking armaments and ships. The Irish kings often regarded each other as bigger threats than the Vikings and would even enlist Viking allies in their battles against each other (although they tended to drop these alliances as soon as

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<sup>179</sup> "Non solum in aestiuo solstitio sed in diebus circa illud in uspertina hora occidens sol abscondit se quasi trans paruulum tumulum, ita ut nihil tenebrarum in minimo spatio ipso fiat, sed quicquid homo operari uoluerit uel peduculos de camisia abstrahere tamquam in presentia solis potest." *Liber de Mensura Orbis Terrae* viii, 11 in *Dicuili Liber de Mensura Orbis Terrae*, J.J. Tierney, ed. (Dublin : Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1967) 74-75.

<sup>180</sup> "Illae insulae sunt aliae paruulae, fere cunctae simul angustis distantes fretis; in quibus in centum ferme annis heremitaie ex nostra Scottia nauigantes habitauerunt. Sed sicut a principio mundi desertae semper fuerunt ita nunc causa latronum Normannorum uacuae anchoritis." *Liber de Mensura Orbis Terrae* viii, 15 in *ibid.* 76-77.

<sup>181</sup> Kristján Ahronson, "Further Evidence for a Columban Iceland: Preliminary Results of Recent Work," *Norwegian Archaeological Review*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (2000): 117-124.

the battle was over).<sup>182</sup> On a cultural level, Viking metalwork and design were combined with the native Irish to produce such masterpieces as the Cross of Cong and the Viking decorative animal heads became a distinctive feature of the Hiberno-Romanesque architectural style.<sup>183</sup> But by the Battle of Clontarf, both sides were using the same armaments, and while the Vikings left many permanent marks on Irish society, culture, art, and even on a linguistic level, in the end these were only marks and not an abiding cultural influence.<sup>184</sup>

Besides this, the Vikings did not remain as foreigners forever. Over time they were Christianised and absorbed into Irish society. By the late tenth century Irish kings managed to sack Dublin and the other Viking camps. In 1014 the Vikings made a last stand at the Battle of Clontarf, allying themselves with some Irish Kings and bringing in many reinforcements from the Scottish isles, but Brian Boru defeated them, and from this point the Vikings were assimilated into Irish society.<sup>185</sup> But their Christianisation was gradual and the Irish Vikings were only Christianised after their independence was over and this Christianisation generally came through contact with other Vikings who had converted in Viking settlements outside Ireland.<sup>186</sup> The

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<sup>182</sup> Jaski, "The Vikings and the Kingship of Tara," 318.

<sup>183</sup> Tadhg. O'Keeffe, *Romanesque Ireland. Archaeology and Ideology in the Twelfth Century*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003), 38. However, it is also worth noting that native Irish artisans refrained from using Viking motifs and forms in their work until the eleventh and twelfth centuries, perhaps due to a hesitancy to assume artistic ideas from their enemies, see Hilary Richardson, "Visual Arts and Society," in Ó Cróinín, ed., *Prehistoric and Early Ireland*, 711.

<sup>184</sup> de Paor, "The Age of the Viking Wars," 79.

<sup>185</sup> Some modern historians debate the actual significance of the Battle of Clontarf, claiming that it was an insignificant skirmish rather than a defining battle, and pointing out that both Irishmen and Vikings fought on both sides, but for the purposes of this thesis 1014 can mark the end of the period of greatest Viking influence. For more opinions on the Battle of Clontarf, see, Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland*, 266-268.

<sup>186</sup> Corish, *The Christian Mission*, 78.

Hiberno-Viking cities also were absorbed into the Irish political system and even opened foreign trade opportunities to local Gaelic Irish rulers. Over-lordship of these cities passed between Irish Kings who sought to dominate them and their "maritime hinterland" and Viking Islesmen of the Isle of Man and the Scottish isles who desired to maintain a foothold in Ireland.<sup>187</sup>

It would also be untrue to suggest that the Viking invasion led to the downfall of traditional Irish society. If anything it was an impulse to reform. At this stage the Irish adopted stone as a building material. There is no clear link between the adoption of stone and the Vikings, although one is tempted to think of the monks contemplating the burned ruins of their wooden monasteries and deciding that it was worth the effort to use more stone in their construction as it is more fire-resistant and offers a better defence against attack. Another aspect of this cultural exchange was the flourishing of Irish ecclesiastical art. While Irish kings fell in battles against the Vikings, nonetheless their kingdoms continued to exist. Far fewer English or Scottish kings fell in battle, but the advent of the Vikings in Britain caused many of their small kingdoms to totally disappear. Many Irish monasteries were burned and pillaged, yet monasticism continued in Ireland, even in the areas that were occupied by the Vikings.<sup>188</sup> At this time the presence of the Irish missionaries on the Continent and men of learning in the royal courts of Europe was at its highpoint, with such individuals as Sedulius Scottus (d. c. 860) and Johannes Eriugena (d. c. 877) being actively involved in Charlemagne's ecclesiastical reforms. Church organization and

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<sup>187</sup> Séan Duffy, "Irishmen and Islesmen in the Kingdoms of Dublin and Mann, 1052-1171," *Ériu* 42 (1992): 94

<sup>188</sup> Peter O'Dwyer, *Céli Dé: Spiritual Reform in Ireland, 750-900*, 2d ed. (Dublin: 1981), 29.

hierarchy didn't suffer from these troublesome times, but again showed themselves capable of adapting to the situation. Donnchadh Ó Corráin insists that this resilience is due to the strength of the Irish:

The leaders of the Irish Church were aristocrats with close ties to the dominant dynasties and were inured to power struggles (clerical as well as lay) and to the violence that accompanied them. This will have conditioned their reaction to the Viking raids: they trusted in God and in their own strength, for they knew God helped those who helped themselves. In institutional terms, the Vikings fell on no simple and unworthy monkdom but on a confident Church organization determined to defend itself.<sup>189</sup>

## **1.5 From the Battle of Clontarf to the Coming of the Normans**

### **1.5.1 Contact with Canterbury**

By the mid-eleventh century (if not a century earlier), the Vikings no longer posed a threat to the Irish Church or society as a whole. As has been examined above, they contributed to the development of urban life and introduced some technical advances in craftwork and even warfare. This time-period is often eclipsed by the Norman invasion of Ireland and seen simplistically as a time of ferment that prepared for this invasion. However, now Irish society progressed towards the concept of unitary kingship, i.e. having the whole island subject to one High King, and even developed a native form of feudalism. But both these developments

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<sup>189</sup> "Viking Ireland – Afterthoughts" in Howard Clarke, Máire Ní Mhaonaigh and Ragnall Ó Floinn, eds., *Ireland and Scandinavia in the Early Viking Age* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998), 431.

remained somewhat conceptual as no single individual or family managed to successfully remain as High King.<sup>190</sup>

Prior to the Norman invasion of Ireland, came their conquest of England in 1066. This was to have a significant effect on Ireland also, as it marked somewhat of a distancing from the English Church. From the time of Patrick there were close contacts with the British Church and over the course of the next centuries there was a lot of interchange between the Irish and British Churches, with sections of the north of England being evangelized by the Irish.<sup>191</sup> Even with the Anglo-Saxon Church of St. Augustine (d. 604) there was a good deal of contact.

The works of Bede made pre-conquest monks always conscious of Ireland: the feasts of Patrick and Brigid were universal in their houses, and the world of their learning was still that of Aldhelm and Boniface, the world of history, hagiography, game, grammatical puzzles, metres, ornamental cosmography, computistics and the monastic classics, high among them Smaragdus, with his devotional grammar. Older scholars used to pronounce the end of Irish influence on English learning and devotion at the Synod of Whitby. Edmund Bishop thought he saw it waning in the early ninth century, but Dr. Hughes has recently shown in her O'Donnell lectures how strong it then remained, by a study of Irish prayers and devotions in ninth and tenth century English prayer books [ . . . ] On both sides of a pre-conquest England however there is every reason to feel that there was much contact between the two countries: on the West Saxon, Old English side with its great traditionalism and continued re-reading of the works of Bede, Aldhelm and the Irish scholars: on the Scandinavian-Danish side with the Norse court at Dublin, and the cities of the Ostmen in which Iceland and Ireland formed part of a single world. Both sides of course intermingled with each other, as they did in Ireland. Godwine's wife belonged

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<sup>190</sup> Patrick Corish, *The Irish Catholic Experience. A Historical Survey* (Wilmington DL: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1985), 36.

<sup>191</sup> Throughout this period many Irish seemed to have recognized a certain pre-eminence in Canterbury for the Church in Britain. Certain famous archbishops, such as Theodore (d. 690), naturally received the respect of the Irish. But, at times, there seems to be more than devotion to individual prestigious archbishops, and the See of Canterbury in and of itself demanded a certain respect from the Irish. See, Marie-Therese Flanagan, *Irish Society, Anglo-Norman Settlers, Angevin Kingship. Interactions in Ireland in the Late Twelfth Century*. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1989), 43-44.

to the house of Canute, and it will be remembered how often members of his house took refuge in Dublin, but his daughter was married to Edward the Confessor.<sup>192</sup>

After the Norman, William the Conqueror, became King of England in 1066 he quickly established a Norman hold on the upper levels of the English Church.<sup>193</sup> Many of the top ecclesiastical appointments were filled by Normans and this all happened at a time when England had become richer and more populated than Ireland. As England assumed a role in the new European order the insular "Micro-Christendom" no longer had the same significance, and, hence, Irish Churchmen and the Irish Church itself was less esteemed and, indeed, less understood in England.<sup>194</sup>

Therefore, these Hiberno-Viking contacts may have had something of an archaic vision as the main Viking influence in the kingdoms of York and Northumbria had been in the ninth and tenth centuries.<sup>195</sup> In fact, and after the middle of the tenth century the idea of a unified Viking kingdom of Dublin and York was a dream that had faded and Viking influence was waning in both islands.<sup>196</sup> By the eleventh century, the power structure had changed in England. After 1066 William the Conqueror brought Lanfranc (d. 1089), who had already been very close to him when he was abbot of Bec, to act as Archbishop of Canterbury and bring the English

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<sup>192</sup> Denis Bethell, "English Monks and Irish Reform in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries," *Historical Studies*, Vol. 8 (1971): 117.

<sup>193</sup> Campbell, *The Anglo-Saxons*, 229-231.

<sup>194</sup> Bethell, "English Monks and Irish Reform," 125.

<sup>195</sup> Aubrey Gwynn, *The Irish Church in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, ed. Gerard O'Brien (Dublin, Four Courts Press, 1992), 54.

<sup>196</sup> Jaski, "The Vikings and the Kingship of Tara," 338.



Church in line with Norman practice.<sup>197</sup> The Hiberno-Vikings of Dublin could well have decided to retain their relationship with the See of Canterbury partly due to their past activities in that part of England, partly because they were operating outside the ecclesiastical organization of Gaelic Ireland and would have had difficulty in having their candidate consecrated in Ireland. In 1074 when the Hiberno-Viking city of Dublin needed to consecrate a monk called Patrick to succeed their dead bishop they contacted Lanfranc the archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>198</sup> When Lanfranc received their petition he was happy to oblige. However, he obliged their candidate to take an oath of obedience to himself and his successors as bishops of Canterbury, and had him take this oath as the man who was to succeed *ecclesia Dublinensis quae Hiberniae insulae metropolis est*.<sup>199</sup> The idea of Dublin being anything other than an upstart city of "Foreigners," never mind being the *Metropolis Hiberniae* would have been totally surprising to everybody in Ireland!

While all the details of this recourse to Canterbury are not clear, more modern scholarship has pointed that it does seem that the Hiberno-Vikings were not acting totally independently from the native Irish power structures. Toirdelbach Ua Briain (d. 1086), king of Munster, and overlord of Dublin at this time, would have had to grant his approval to the plan.<sup>200</sup>

As time progressed England was getting richer and more integrated in the Continental Church and society. St. Anselm (d. 1109), the successor of Lanfranc,

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<sup>197</sup> Gwynn, *The Irish Church in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, 68-69.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>200</sup> Flanagan, *Irish Society*, 17.

was not as demanding as his predecessor. In 1096 he was asked to consecrate Bishop Samuel for the See of Dublin and Bishop Malchas for the Viking See of Waterford (again it can be implied with the consent of both Toirdelbach Ua Briain and also Muirchertach Ua Briain, another claimant to the high-kingship of Ireland).<sup>201</sup> In doing this he used the title of *totius Britannias primas* which was designed not to give offence to the Irish bishops.<sup>202</sup> In a letter sent back with Bishop Samuel, in 1096, he writes to king Muirchertach Ua Briain:

Anselm then enumerates the same abuses as Lanfranc had enumerated in his letter written twenty years earlier. Marriages are dissolved without any just cause; wives are exchanged; marriage is contracted without rebuke within the forbidden degrees of kindred; bishops, who should be an example to others of canonical observance, are consecrated by a single bishop, and in places which are not suitable for consecration (*aut a solis episcopis aut in locis ubi ordinari non debent consecrantur*) Anselm ends his letter with an urgent appeal to the Irish king to remedy these abuses, first taking counsel with good and wise men in his kingdom.<sup>203</sup>

But Anselm had his own difficulties with the Norman politics of England and spent some time in exile in France. While he was away, Bishop Samuel started to assert his independence in ways which were to worry Anselm. After Anselm returned to Canterbury he wrote a letter to Samuel in 1101. This letter outlines the abuses that Samuel was guilty of. Samuel had given away vestments, ornaments and books, probably missals, that Lanfranc had given to his predecessor. He had driven away a community of Benedictine monks who had been serving in his cathedral and Samuel had had his cross carried before him in procession on his

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<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>202</sup> Gwynn, *The Irish Church in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, 83.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

journeys; this worried Anselm because this was the prerogative of an Archbishop who had received a Pallium from the Pope.<sup>204</sup>

The fact that Gille (d. 1145), bishop of the Hiberno-Viking city of Limerick was not consecrated by Anselm (in spite of their personal friendship) is another factor that would detract from the older view of the link with Canterbury being an archaic hold over of the Hiberno-Vikings.<sup>205</sup> In 1121, when the fortunes of Canterbury were at a particularly low ebb due to a setback in its power struggle with York, another Irish bishop elect, Gréne of Dublin, presented himself for episcopal ordination at Canterbury. While this might have been a boost to Canterbury's morale, it is also significant as evidence that the Irish treated Canterbury as a reference point in the controversies over diocesan boundaries and disputed candidates at this time. Twenty years later, in 1140, Patricius was ordained in Canterbury for the disputed see of Limerick.<sup>206</sup>

### 1.5.2 Irish Renewal Movements

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries there were a number of Reforming Synods in Ireland.<sup>207</sup> While many details about these Synods remain somewhat

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<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, 110-111.

<sup>205</sup> Anselm *Epistola XXXI* in Fleming, *Gille of Limerick*, 166-169.

<sup>206</sup> Flanagan, *Irish Society*, 29-31. For an examination of the relationship between Canterbury and Irish Reform movement see Marlin Brett, "Canterbury's Perspective on Church Reform and Ireland, 1070-1115," in Damian Bracken and Dagmar Ó Riain-Raedel, eds., *Ireland and Europe in the Twelfth Century. Reform and Renewal* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), 13-35.

<sup>207</sup> It is worth noting that, with the exception of the work of Bishop Gille of Limerick, there is very little reference to the Eucharist throughout this period until the end of the Norman domination. The abuses pointed out mainly have to do with marriage laws, the protection of the Church's economic and political welfare and the structuring of dioceses.

unclear, there was certainly a dimension of an impulse for reform coming from the outside and another from the inside.<sup>208</sup> Unfortunately, even if quite a bit was written by Irishmen in these centuries, they were more interested in dealing with their past rather than their present; “this was the age of the great compilations of early literature, of laws and genealogies, of the writing of the history of Ireland’s struggle with the Vikings, or the lives of long dead saints. It is true that some native writings on the reform survive, but these are slight and few, and for the most important period there are great lacuna in the annals.”<sup>209</sup> So it is not surprising that history has tended to neglect this reform movement. Yet, even if history and even their own contemporaries have neglected them, there was still an important reform movement in twelfth century Ireland, and, thanks to chance preservation and the interest shown by their foreign contemporaries something is known about the leaders of this movement:

But the Irish monks who transcribed or translated these older *Lives* in the twelfth century seem to have been curiously indifferent to the revival of monastic fervour that was taking place in their midst. From Malachus of Lismore and Celsus of Armagh to Gelasius of Armagh and Lawrence of Dublin and the Cistercian Felix of Ossory, it would be possible to construct a litany of Irish monastic and episcopal saints of the twelfth century whose life-work was in fact the renewal of older ascetical traditions. Yet no Irish narrative has come down to us from that century to tell the story of their lives. What should we know of Malachy, were it not for Bernard’s eloquence? What should we know of Laurence of Glendalough and Dublin, were it not for the anonymous work of a French Augustinian canon from Eu?<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> Gwynn, *The Irish Church in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, 49, 84.

<sup>209</sup> Bethell, “English Monks and Irish Reform,” 111; see Marie-Therese Flanagan, “Irish Church Reform in the Twelfth Century and Áed Ua Cáellaide, Bishop of Louth: an Italian Dimension,” in M. Richter and J.-M. Picard, eds., *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies Presented to Proinséas Ní Chatháin* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2001), 104.

<sup>210</sup> Gwynn, *The Irish Church in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, 193.

In the eleventh century the papacy inaugurated the new office of "permanent legates, resident in the transalpine countries" after 1073.<sup>211</sup> Even though all six legates appointed to Ireland in the twelfth century were in fact Irish bishops themselves, nonetheless, they helped give an international papal dimension to the Irish synods and provided a focal point around which reform minded factions could rally.<sup>212</sup> It would also be untrue to assume that there was no contact between Ireland and Rome between the tenth and twelfth centuries, in fact, there are thirteen separate references to pilgrimages to Rome in the Annals starting in the year 927 until 1175.<sup>213</sup> It even seems that there was an Irish monastery in Rome itself as the *Annals of Inisfallen* for 1095 note that "Eógan, head of the monks of the Gaedil in Rome" died.<sup>214</sup> These contacts would have provided an opportunity for churchmen that were so inclined to have contact with the policies and customs being observed in the Eternal City.

Yet this Roman dimension was not the only dimension that these Synods had, indeed there were some that still showed individual Irish characteristics:

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<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., 117-154. However, Gwynn's identification of Mael Muire Ua Dúnáin as the first Papal legate has been recently challenged as resulting from an overdependence on the late and, at times, unreliable Annals of the Four Masters. This would imply that Gille of Limerick may well have been the first Papal Legate and that the Synod of Cashel, the first of the Irish reforming Synods took place without an official papal representative. See Donnchadha Ó Corráin, "Mael Muire Ua Dúnáin (1040-1117), Reformer," in Pádraig de Brún, Seán Ó Coileáin and Pádraig Ó Riain, editors, *Folia Gadelica. Essays Presented by Former Students to R. A. Breatnach, M.A., M.R.I.A.* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1983), 48.

<sup>213</sup> Peter Harbison, *Pilgrimage in Ireland, The Monuments and the People* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1992), 30-31.

<sup>214</sup> "Eogan, cend manach na Gaedel h-i Roim." *The Annals of Inisfallen* 1095 §13 in Seán Mac Airt, ed., *The Annals of Inisfallen (Ms. Rawlinson B. 503)* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1951), 251-252.

The composition of the Irish synod shows that the contrast between an episcopal and a monastic church is too simple. True, unlike its Frankish counterpart of the sixth and seventh centuries, the Irish synod was not confined to bishops. Yet neither was it confined to the heads of great monastic churches. Instead, the synod shows us an Irish Church which allowed for several sources of authority: the orders of a bishop; the prestige which flowed from being the abbot of a major community; the learning of the scribe and the scholar; the asceticism of the anchorite. Because it allowed for distinct sources of authority deployed by men of equal rank, it was obliged to give to the synod an even more central position than in Francia or in England. Only by focusing these different authorities in the one institution could cohesion be maintained.<sup>215</sup>

The Irish Church was in need of re-organization. Throughout the history of the Church in every place and time there is a certain ebb and flow in the balance of power and influence between various dioceses and charisms. Many factors, including socio-economic and even political factors, play their part here. Ireland at the turn of the second millennium was no different. The fortunes of different dioceses and local churches changed, and as secular power became more centralized, so did that of certain Churches. As can be seen above, there was always an episcopacy and, if anything the reforms did not have to face the problem of a Church with too few bishops, but rather a Church that had too many!<sup>216</sup> The establishment of set diocesan boundaries was the goal of the reform movement:

What the twelfth-century synods in Ireland sought to achieve was the acceptance of an immutable blueprint of diocesan boundaries and episcopal seats. In keeping with the broader reformist programme of freeing the church from secular political interference, it was intended that the spheres of ecclesiastical jurisdiction should be altogether immune from the vagaries of secular politics. In fact, however, there were significant piecemeal changes to the diocesan map during the twelfth century – as Simms showed in the case of Clogher – and, as we have seen, the scheme of Ráth

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<sup>215</sup> Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 277. The pre-Augustinian British Church may well have had similar structures, see Charles-Edwards, "The Christianities of the Celtic Peoples," 6.

<sup>216</sup> Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 272. Once again, this superabundance of bishops may also have been the case in the pre-Augustinian British Church, see Charles-Edwards, "The Christianities of the Celtic Peoples," 5.

Bresail in 1111 was radically restructured at Kells and Mellifont, 41 years later. Such changes were often manifestly determined by political reality, just as fluctuations in the ecclesiastical balance of power seem to have been before the twelfth century.<sup>217</sup>

The first important Synod is the Synod of Cashel held in 1101.<sup>218</sup> As with the other Synods there remains somewhat sketchy evidence of what actually took place here. It seems that this synod did not tackle the issue of the re-organization of diocesan boundaries, but rather dealt more with the protection of the church's rights against secular powers' demands for tax and tribute, an attempt to regulate marriage laws and struggle against simony when dealing with ecclesiastical appointments.<sup>219</sup>

But, perhaps, the main significance of this Synod was the fact that it was to be the first in a series of reforming Synods in which the Irish hierarchy decided that reform was necessary and that they, together with the papal legate, ought to achieve this reform by themselves. Their actual reforms seem to be in accordance with the recommendations of Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, a quarter of a century earlier, yet they made no appeal to Anselm, the contemporaneous illustrious Archbishop of Canterbury, who had also expressed an interest in Irish affairs. This seems to point to a deliberate exclusion of Canterbury from this reform programme.<sup>220</sup> This tension also possibly explains the fact that Anselm, who had

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<sup>217</sup> Colmán Etchingham, "Episcopal Hierarchy in Connacht and Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair," *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society*, Vol. 52: (2000): 18.

<sup>218</sup> Our evidence for these Synods is patchy, we do not have complete acts for them and there is even some confusion over dates and places. It is also sure that more Synods and meetings of bishops took place than are normally covered in the history books, e.g. Martin Holland, *The Synod of Dublin in 1080* in Seán Duffy, ed., *Medieval Dublin III: Proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin Symposium 2001* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2002), 81-94

<sup>219</sup> Gwynn, *The Irish Church in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, 155-179.

<sup>220</sup> O'Keeffe, *Romanesque Ireland*, 45

consecrated Samuel of Dublin and Malchas of Waterford (both Viking Sees), was not invited to consecrate Bishop Gille of Limerick (another Viking See) in 1102.

The next important Synod was that of Ráth Bresail (near Cashel) in 1111, and by this time Bishop Gille was the papal legate. Gille's work at this Synod did result in some liturgical provisions which will be examined in Chapter 3. In an interesting development the Synod of Ráth Bresail was presided over by Cellach Ua Sínaig. Cellach was the lay-abbot of Armagh, the *comarba Pátraic* or heir of St. Patrick. He had been influenced by the general reforming mentality and was himself ordained a bishop. This was a very important step as for generations laymen had held this post.

While this Synod was very important there is again a great lack of first-hand accounts of the synodal acts. But the lists of the dioceses that were recognized at this Synod survives; the Synod split Ireland into two provinces with Armagh having primacy over the thirteen sees in the north and Cashel having primacy over the twelve in the south. This arrangement may reflect the lines of organisation of the English Church based on a primacy for Canterbury and York.<sup>221</sup> But it is also quite likely that this two-fold division (and also the later four-fold one) was due to "a degree of political gerrymandering" to fashion the Church structures on a parallel to political ones.<sup>222</sup>

In 1024, the young Máel Maedóc, better known as St. Malachy of Armagh (d. 1148), succeeded Cellach as Archbishop of Armagh. Malachy, a member of the Uí

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<sup>221</sup> O'Keeffe, *Romanesque Ireland*, 47.

<sup>222</sup> Katherine Simms, "The Origins of the Diocese of Clogher," *Clogher Record* Vol X, No. 1 (1979): 187.



Sínaig family that had supplied the *comarba Pátraic* for generations, entered the ancient monastery of Armagh in his youth. He was formed in the ancient Irish monastic tradition, but Malachy was to become a zealous proponent of Continental Christianity. During his time in office he travelled widely throughout Ireland reforming the Church. One of his most significant contributions is that he introduced the Cistercian Observance of the Rule of Benedict to Ireland. He had met St. Bernard of Clairvaux (d. 1153) on one of his trips to Rome and the two became very close friends.<sup>223</sup> Malachy himself desired to enter Clairvaux as a Cistercian but Bernard refused to accept him as he considered his mission in Ireland to be too important. Malachy left four of his own monks from Armagh at Clairvaux, who with eight French Cistercians founded the first Irish Cistercian Monastery at Mellifont, Co. Louth in 1142. Cistercian foundations spread like wildfire throughout Ireland and this could be seen as the beginning of the end of traditional Irish Monasticism. Although not as well known historically the Augustinian Order of Arrouaise was also introduced by Malachy.<sup>224</sup> Although it has been neglected by scholars, the

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<sup>223</sup> Malachy had gone to Rome in the hope of receiving two pallia from the Pope for the Archbishops of Armagh and Cashel to have the Synod of Ráth Bresail ratified by the Pope. But the Pope was unhappy with the state of affairs in Ireland perhaps due to the fact that Dublin was omitted from the list of archdioceses and instructed that the Irish bishops meet again to sort out any disputes on the diocesan structure and send a united request to him.

<sup>224</sup> No Irish source mentions Malachy's connections to this (or the actual introduction of this particular form of Augustinian observance). But a statement by Gaultier, abbot of Arrouaise, suggests that Malachy visited their abbey in 1179: "Sanctae memoriae Malachias, Hiberniensium archiepiscopus, per nos iter faciens, inspectis consuetudinibus nostris et approbatis, libros nostros et usus ecclesiae transcriptos suam in Hiberniam detulit, et fere omnes clericos in episcopalibus sedibus et in multis aliis locis per Hiberniam constitutos, ordinem nostrum et habitum et maxime divinum in ecclesia officium suscipere et observare praecepit," PL 217:68. It is worth noting that, in contrast to his contacts with the Cistercians, Malachy simply brought the rule and other written documents back to Ireland and no monks from this foundation came to introduce them, see J. P. Dunning, "The Arroasian Order in Medieval Ireland" *Irish Historical Studies* Vol. IV No. 16 (1945): 299-300.

Augustinians were perhaps even more influential than the Cistercians.<sup>225</sup> Oftentimes these new foundations replaced the older native foundations, so much so that one could legitimately ask whether existing monasteries adopted new rules as a type of juridical fiction that allowed them to continue as before albeit with a new rule or charter.<sup>226</sup> If an existing group of monastics adopted the Rule of St. Augustine this could represent the best of both worlds, given that "the Rule carried the authority of a man of great sanctity, an intellectual heavyweight and one of Christendom's most revered figures, but, as it was not the written word of Augustine himself, a certain latitude was permissible in the practice of it."<sup>227</sup>

On the internal level of the Irish Church, the Augustinians may have been more important than the Cistercians, particularly for the preservation of traditional Irish monastic practices, and the Cistercians were to become allied with the Anglo-Norman faction of the Church in the following centuries.<sup>228</sup> But Bernard of Clairvaux's friendship with and esteem for Malachy were to have their own historical

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<sup>225</sup> For more on this Observance, see Sarah Preston, "The Canons Regular of St. Augustine: the Twelfth Century Reform in Action," in Stuart Kinsella, ed., *Augustinians at Christ Church: The Canons Regular of the Cathedral Priory of the Holy Trinity Dublin* (Dublin: Christ Church Cathedral Publications, 2000), 23-40

<sup>226</sup> Fifty-seven of the ninety-six new Augustinian and thirteen of the thirty-four Cistercian monasteries of the twelfth century occupied sites formerly occupied by Celtic monasteries. Geraldine Carville, *The Occupation of Celtic Sites in Medieval Ireland by the Canons Regular of St. Augustine and the Cistercians*. Cistercian Studies Series Number 56 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1982), 1-2. Carville also notes how the Augustinian monasteries were more likely to be located close to centres of population so as to be able to engage in ministerial duties, p. 92.

<sup>227</sup> Tadhg O'Keeffe, *An Anglo-Norman Monastery. Bridgetown Priory and the Architecture of the Augustinian Canons Regular in Ireland* (Kinsale: Cork County Council/Grandon Editions, 1999), 107.

<sup>228</sup> From a liturgical point of view, many Augustinian houses took part in pastoral care, but unlike the Benedictines and Cistercians they had no peculiar liturgical usages so that "the liturgical Use of an Augustinian church was scarcely distinguishable from 'secular' Use," J. Harper, *The Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy from the Tenth to the Eighteenth Century*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 30.

importance. "Bernard expressed what he called his special friendship with Malachy by always wearing Malachy's vestments when he celebrated Mass and was buried in them, electing interment alongside the Irishman."<sup>229</sup>

The most famous work on Ireland and her Church in the twelfth century is Bernard's *Vita Sancti Malachiae Episcopi* which has lionised Malachy's role in this history.<sup>230</sup> However in this panegyric for his friend Bernard paints a very bleak picture of religious life in Ireland. He informs the world that:

Once he had begun to exercise his office the man of God realized that he had been sent not to men but to beasts. Never had he known such men, so steeped in barbarism; never had he found people so wanton in their way of life, so cruel in superstition, so heedless of faith, lawless, dead set against discipline, so foul in their life-style; Christians in name, yet pagans at heart. They gave no tithes, no first-fruits; they did not contract legitimate marriage nor make confession; there was neither penitent nor confessor to be found. There were few to minister at the altar. But what need was there of more where the small showing among the laity was practically idle? There was no hope of a harvest they might reap among so good-for-nothing a people. In the churches there was heard neither the preacher's voice nor the singer's chant.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> John A. Watt, "The Irish Church in the Middle Ages," in Bradshaw and Keogh, eds., *Revisiting the Story*, 47.

<sup>230</sup> This is not to doubt that his role was important and maybe even preeminent; but he was by no means the only reform-minded bishop at this time, other bishops may have been as involved, see Flanagan, "Irish Church Reform in the Twelfth Century," 94-104.

<sup>231</sup> "Cum autem coepisset pro officio suo agere, tunc intellexit homo Dei, non ad homines se, sed ad bestias destinatum. Nusquam adhuc tales expertus fuerat in quantacunque barbarie: nusquam repererat sic protervos ad mores, sic ferales ad ritus, sic ad fidem impios, ad leges barbaros, cervicosos ad disciplinam, spurcos ad vitam: christiani nomine, re pagani. Non decimas, non primitias dare, non legitima inire conjugia, non facere confessiones; poenitentias nec qui peteret, nec qui daret, penitus inveniri. Ministri altaris pauci admodum erant. Sed enim quid opus plurimum, ubi ipsa paucitas inter laicos propemodum otiosa vacaret? Non erat quod de suis fructificarent officiis in populo nequam. Nec enim in ecclesiis aut praedicantis vox, aut cantantis audiebatur." *Vita Sancti Malachiae Episcopi*, VIII, 16 in J. Leclercq and H. M. Rochais, eds., *Sancti Bernardi Opera*. Vol. 3. *Tractatus et Opuscula* (Rome: Editiones Cisterciensis, 1963), 325. English Translation from Robert T. Meyer, trans. and ed., *Bernard of Clairvaux. The Life and Death of Saint Malachy the Irishman* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1978), 33-34.

It would be unfair to claim that Bernard had no knowledge of affairs in Ireland, he did know Malachy and must have had some knowledge of the local Irish affairs from him, he also had lived with the four Irish monks that Malachy left with him for training as Cistercians. However, Bernard never visited Ireland himself and there would be a natural tendency to exaggerate the situation in Ireland so as to paint his friend in the best light. Furthermore he needed to support nascent Cistercian foundations in Ireland which faced many difficulties in their first years with the French monks sent to found Mellifont returning to France, as one modern historian (who also happens to be an Augustinian friar) pointed out, "Cistercian asceticism had its limits!"<sup>232</sup> But regardless of its truth, the *Vita Sancti Malachiae Episcopi* was widely read, especially in the Norman circles of Nicholas Breakspear (the future Pope Adrian IV, d. 1159) and the others who would promote the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland partly in a desire to reform Christianity there.<sup>233</sup>

Although St. Malachy died in 1148, the Synod of Kells, in 1152, could be said to be the culmination of his life's work. There had been a lot of political manoeuvring since the Synod of Ráth Bresail and the twenty-five See division was enlarged to thirty-six. This included some Sees suppressed by the earlier Synod and the erection of some small new Sees. The campaigns for the elevation of certain Churches to diocesan status included a liberal patronage of the arts, some of the most famous examples of Hiberno-Romanesque architecture and works of

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<sup>232</sup> F.X. Martin, "Ireland in the Time of St. Bernard, St. Malachy, St. Laurence O'Toole," *Seanchas Ard Mhacha. Journal of the Armagh Diocesan Historical Society* 15 (1992), 34.

<sup>233</sup> Gwynn, *The Irish Church in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, 301-302. For a study on Bernard's actual opinion of Ireland see Diarmuid Scully "The Portrayal of Ireland and the Irish in Bernard's *Life of Malachy: Representation and Context*," in Bracken and Ó Riain-Raedel, eds., *Reform and Renewal*, 239-258.

ecclesiastical art may have been commissioned as parts of these campaigns.<sup>234</sup> A typical example of this is the famous Cross of Cong:

The manufacture of [the Cross of Cong] is usually connected with the annalist's report that in 1123 Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair, described as 'king of Ireland', was granted – by the papacy? – a fragment of the cross of Christ, then on circuit in Ireland, and that Tairdelbach had it enshrined at Roscommon. This is consistent with the inscription on the cross itself. The significance of the artefact in the present context is that it can be seen as both a reliquary and a processional cross, suitable to be borne before a high ecclesiastical authority, specifically an archbishop or metropolitan. This symbolism is striking in view of its date, since no Connacht archbishop had been recognised at the Synod of Ráth Bresail in 1111, its bishops being allocated instead to the province of Armagh.<sup>235</sup>

Four Archdioceses were formed with Dublin and Tuam joining Armagh and Cashel.<sup>236</sup> Cardinal Paparo, the first non-native papal legate to Ireland who was present at the synod presented the four new Irish archbishops with their *pallia*. One notable achievement of this Synod was the successful integration of the Hiberno-Viking Sees with the Irish.<sup>237</sup>

### 1.6 The Twelfth Century Conquest of Ireland by the Anglo-Normans

In 1066 when William the Conqueror invaded England he did so in a very ordered way enlisting recruits from France, Germany and other parts of Europe. However, the entry of the Normans into Ireland was a haphazard affair.<sup>238</sup> In the

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<sup>234</sup> O'Keeffe, *Romanesque Ireland*, 180, Watt, *The Church in Medieval Ireland*, 14.

<sup>235</sup> Etchingham, "Episcopal Hierarchy in Connacht," 22-23.

<sup>236</sup> O'Keeffe, *Romanesque Ireland*, 49.

<sup>237</sup> Watt, *The Church in Medieval Ireland*, 26.

<sup>238</sup> F.X. Martin, "The Normans: Arrival and Settlement, 1169-c1300," in Moody and Martin eds., *The Course of Irish History*, 95.

case of England, in spite of all the organisation, its invasion had not been an easy matter. William did manage to subdue the local rulers, but a generation after the Conquest the majority of the people living in England were Britons, Anglo-Saxons and Vikings and not Norman. When William died he was succeeded by his son Henry I; after the death of Henry I in 1135, the English crown was contested. Henry II eventually won the crown, but not without aid. Among his allies were David I of Scotland, and an Irish king, Diarmait Mac Murchada (d. 1171), whose kingdom was centred on Ferns, Co. Wexford, along with the Hiberno-Vikings of Dublin, who joined the coalition under Mac Murchada's influence.<sup>239</sup>

Mac Murchada had enemies in Ireland, in particular Tiernán O'Rourke of Breifne (who was not only Mac Murchada's political enemy, but perhaps also a bitter personal foe as O'Rourke's wife, Dervorgilla is said to have eloped with Mac Murchada). In 1166 O'Rourke managed to outmanoeuvre Mac Murchada and Mac Murchada fled into exile to Bristol. He eventually found his erstwhile ally King Henry II and asked him for help. Even though Henry II was in France and actually spent little time in the English part of his domain (he also ruled big areas of present-day France), he had already shown interest in Ireland<sup>240</sup> and had obtained the bull *Laudabiliter* from Pope Adrian IV in 1155, but had been unable to act on it.<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> Martin, "Ireland in the Time of St. Bernard," 18. For more on the life of Mac Murchada see the recent biography: Nicholas Furlong, *Diarmait King of Leinster*. 2d ed. (Cork: The Mercier Press, 2006).

<sup>240</sup> Perhaps this interest was partly motivated by a desire to control all commerce in the important trading area of the Irish Sea, see Benjamin T. Hudson, "The Changing Economy of the Irish Sea Province: AD 900-1300," in Smith, ed, *Insular Responses to Medieval European Change*, 64-66.

<sup>241</sup> Martin, "The Normans: Arrival and Settlement," 95-97.

Mac Murchada swore fealty to Henry II in return for the latter's help in regaining his kingdom. Henry was not really in a position to help him directly, but promised that he would help him in the future. He also gave him letters urging his subjects in England to come to the aid of Mac Murchada. No allies were forthcoming in England, but Mac Murchada was lucky enough to recruit some helpers in Wales. Principal among these was Richard FitzGilbert de Clare (d. 1176), better known as Strongbow, one of the most powerful Norman leaders in Wales.<sup>242</sup> These were Cambro-Normans, descended from Norman warriors who had taken local Welsh wives. Many in Wales had supported the other claimant to the throne against Henry II and although they had subsequently given their loyalty to Henry, they were still held in suspicion by the king.<sup>243</sup> They saw the Irish adventure as their chance to redeem themselves. Mac Murchada also promised them the town of Wexford, which was not his to give, but whose Hiberno-Viking inhabitants had supported his enemies in their attacks against him.<sup>244</sup>

In 1167 Mac Murchada returned to Ireland with three hundred Norman warriors. With their help he managed to retake his own kingdom. The rest of this history is quite complicated, with the Normans arriving in waves, and although at times the Irish seemed poised to defeat them, in fact, the Norman invaders always managed to triumph. A second group arrived in 1169 and conquered Wexford, the other Irish kings made peace with Mac Murchada, allowing him to form a kingdom of

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<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>243</sup> At the time of Mac Murchada's request, Strongbow's lands in Wales and England had been sequestered by the King. Flanagan, *Irish Society*, 118, see 112-136.

<sup>244</sup> Martin, "Ireland in the Time of St. Bernard," 22-23.

Leinster to the South of Dublin on condition that he would send away his Norman allies. But instead a new wave of Normans arrived under Strongbow a few months later, and this army succeeded in conquering Waterford and Dublin confirming Mac Murchada as one of the most powerful kings of Ireland, in return Mac Murchada gave Strongbow his daughter's hand in marriage and designated him his heir.<sup>245</sup> Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair, high king at the time, besieged Strongbow and his garrison in Dublin in 1171. But Strongbow managed to break the siege and defeat Ruaidrí's army. This was a very significant defeat as the high king has humiliatingly failed to assert his lordship over Strongbow.<sup>246</sup>

While Henry II may have been happy to let some of his minor lords risk their lives in a precarious mission in Ireland, once they had established the beginnings of a potentially strong kingdom in Ireland, he came to Ireland in person in 1171 to remind them where their loyalties ultimately ought to lie. This trip was a triumph for Henry as not only the Normans, but also the Irish and the Hiberno-Vikings did him homage.<sup>247</sup> Regardless of the importance that would be given to this act in later times, it is not known what importance these Irish nobles gave to this act of homage, and whether they saw this as legally binding on themselves or their successors, nor is it clear what was understood by Henry himself.<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Martin, "The Normans: Arrival and Settlement," 101-103. It has often been pointed out that Mac Murchada did not have the legal right to designate Strongbow to succeed him. However in a detailed study Flanagan has shown that this offer may not have been as untraditional as once thought, *Irish Society*, 79-111.

<sup>246</sup> Flanagan, *Irish Society*, 168.

<sup>247</sup> Martin, "The Normans: Arrival and Settlement," 103.

<sup>248</sup> For a discussion of the issues involved, see Flanagan, *Irish Society*, 167-228.



An indication that this matter did have an importance for Henry was the fact that he engaged in negotiations with Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair, who although he had met with Henry in his trip to Ireland, had refused to swear loyalty to him at that time. These negotiations culminated in with the signing of the Treaty of Windsor between Henry II and Ua Conchobair. In this treaty Ua Conchobair swore loyalty to Henry and promised to collect tribute for him in Gaelic Ireland. In return Henry recognized Ua Conchobair as High King of Ireland (i.e. the part of Ireland which had not been occupied by the Normans) and undertook that the Normans would take no more territory from the Irish.<sup>249</sup> This treaty probably expressed the intentions of both parties but it did not have any lasting impact. Ua Conchobair had a tenuous grip on the high-kingship and was unable to pass on his high-kingship to an heir or to collect the tribute due to Henry.<sup>250</sup> Not only was Henry unable to prevent individual Normans in Ireland from carving out new territories for themselves, but he continued to grant lands in the Gaelic territories to his followers.<sup>251</sup> This relentless occupation continued so that by 1250, a mere eighty years after the first arrival of the Normans, over three-quarters of Ireland was under Norman domination.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, 229-272.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*, 272.

<sup>251</sup> Martin, "The Normans: Arrival and Settlement," 105.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

### 1.6.1 The background of *Laudabiliter* and the integration of the Irish Church into the Anglo-Norman Church structure

Part of the justification for the Norman invasion of Ireland is that the project had papal support. In 1155 Pope Adrian IV in his bull *Laudabiliter* granted Henry II permission to enter Ireland on his behalf:

You have manifested to us, indeed, most beloved son in Christ, that you desire to enter into the island of Ireland, in order to subject the people to the laws and to weed out the vices that have there taken root, and that from every home you are willing to make an annual payment to St. Peter of one *denarius*, and to preserve the law of the churches in that land wholly and completely. We, therefore, confirming your pious and praiseworthy desire with the favour it deserves, and granting a favourable assent to your petition, are well pleased that you should enter that island, for the enlargement of the boundaries of the Church, for the restraining of vice, for the correction of morals and the planting of virtues, for the growth of the Christian religion. [You should] accomplish there the things that look to the honour of God and to that land's own salvation. And may the people of that land receive you with honour, and venerate you as their lord.<sup>253</sup>

On one level this was surprising as the Council of Kells had a mere three years earlier confirmed the Irish Church on a good path towards a fuller integration in the current renewal of the Western Church. This Synod had been attended by Cardinal Paparo who would have brought a favourable report to Rome. While somewhat distant from the centres of Western Christianity, Irish ecclesiastics were still common enough outside of Ireland. There was an Irish monastery in Rome itself

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<sup>253</sup> "Significasti siquidem nobis, fil in Christo carissime, te hibernie insulam ad subdendum illium populum legibus et vitiorum plantaria inde extirpanda velle intrare et de singulis domibus annuam unius denarii beato Petro velie solvere pensionem et iura ecclesiarum illius terre illibata et integra conservare. Nos itaque pium et laudabile desiderium tuum cum favore congrugo prosequentes et petitioni tue benignum impendentes assensum, gratum et acceptum habemus ut pro dilatandis ecclesie terminis pro vitiorum restringendo decursu, pro corrigendis moribus et virtutibus ingrediatis, pro Christiane religionis augmento, insulam illam ingrediatis et que ad honorem Dei et salutem illius terre spectaverint exequaris, et illius terre populus honorifice te recipiat et sicut dominum veneretur." *Laudabiliter* as in Maurice P. Sheehy, ed., *Pontifica Hibernica. Medieval Papal Chancery Documents Concerning Ireland 640-1261* Vol. 1 (Dublin: Gill, 1962), 16. English translation my own.

and this was also the time of the *Schottenkloster* movement, the Irish mission to Germany (which reached as far as Kiev) which started in 1076 and lasted until 1497.<sup>254</sup> These Irish contacts with the Continent, along with the presence of a native reform movement which followed closely on those contemporary Continental lines, ought to encourage a reconsideration of the long-held view of an Irish Church in dire need of outside assistance:

We may have accepted too easily the notion that by the mid-twelfth century Ireland was the only remaining part of Christendom where the reform movement had still to penetrate and that the papacy was faced with conditions in Ireland which were unique in Europe in 1172. There were other peripheral areas where local custom was as firmly, if not more entrenched and where a diocesan structure was to be set up even later than in Ireland. Norway is a country which may be compared usefully with Ireland in the twelfth century. A significant number of letters of Alexander II to the Norwegian church survive. They reveal an understanding of, and sympathy for, local conditions which went so far as to allow Norwegians a dispensation to fish for herring on Sundays, if the weather conditions were favourable. The papacy faced anomalies similar to those in Ireland in Poland, Hungary, Sweden and Scotland also. It would be wrong to assume that Alexander II had become so despairing of the conditions in the Irish church in 1172 as to see in Henry II's intervention in Ireland as the only remaining means of achieving effective reform.<sup>255</sup>

The role of various Churchmen in this whole enterprise is somewhat ambiguous. It is not clear to what degree Adrian IV was influenced in his decision to promulgate the bull *Laudabiliter*.<sup>256</sup> On the one hand, surely Cardinal Paparo would have briefed him on the Synod of Kells which had already worked towards achieving the reforms requested by *Laudabiliter* and removed any need for Henry II to enter Ireland. The pope had himself, prior to his election, spent two years as legate in

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<sup>254</sup> Ó Fiaich, "Irish Monks in Germany in the Late Middle Ages," 89-104.

<sup>255</sup> Marie-Therese Flanagan, "Hiberno-Papal Relations in the Late Twelfth Century," *Archivium Hibernicum*, Vol. 34 (1977), 56.

<sup>256</sup> On the debate on the authenticity of *Laudabiliter* and for a detailed analysis of the document see Watt, *The Church in Medieval Ireland*, 28-40.

Norway helping to organize the Church there along the same lines as Paparo had in Ireland.<sup>257</sup> The entrusting of Ireland to Henry was given using the Papacy's authority which came from the Donation of Constantine, a document that modern scholarship dates as an eighth century forgery which purports to be a grant from the emperor Constantine of a lot of territorial power to Pope Sylvester and his successors, including among many other entitlements, authority over all islands.<sup>258</sup> While Henry did not reject this commission, it would seem that he did not ask for it, and perhaps the bull was written at the instigation of the Archbishop of Canterbury who had been denied any role in the Irish reforming synods and whose secretary was part of the delegation from the English Church that travelled to Rome to congratulate the new pope and were charged with the delivery of the bull to Henry.<sup>259</sup> Perhaps it is also significant that in his 1171 visit to Ireland, one of Henry's first acts was a prolonged visit with bishop Christian of Lismore. Christian was the papal legate, and had been the abbot of the Cistercian abbey of Mellifont and was one of the monks that Malachy had left at Clairvaux to be trained by Bernard. He had been appointed legate by Pope Eugene III (d. 1151), some twenty years earlier both Christian and Eugenius had served as novices together in Clairvaux under St. Bernard.<sup>260</sup>

By the eleventh century the Church played an important role in the power-structure of Ireland. So much so that "ecclesial endorsement arguably was as

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<sup>257</sup> Gwynn, *The Irish Church in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, 225.

<sup>258</sup> John van Engen, "Donation of Constantine" in *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*.

<sup>259</sup> Corish, *The Irish Catholic Experience*, 37.

<sup>260</sup> Marie-Therese Flanagan, "Henry II, the Council of Cashel, and the Irish Bishops" in *Peritia* 10 (1996): 186-187.

important for aspirants for the high-kingship as military success."<sup>261</sup> Many of the bishops endorsed the trip of Henry II to Ireland and swore oaths of loyalty to him in the Council at Cashel in 1172, perhaps in the hope that his intervention would foster a good climate for ecclesiastical reform. This endorsement came at an important time for Henry who was still held in low esteem by the pope due to the murder of Thomas Becket. It was also to the advantage of Pope Alexander III who in 1159 had succeeded Adrian IV, and was also in a precarious position due to the challenge of an anti-pope backed by the German Emperor Frederick Barbarossa (d. 1190), one of the most powerful leaders in the West. Alexander needed to be able to reconcile with Henry so as to avoid Henry uniting with Fredrick against him. Henry's trip to Ireland provided an opportunity with potential benefit for himself, Alexander and the Irish bishops. Whether or not the Irish bishops benefited from this in the long run is still open to debate.<sup>262</sup>

Another factor that points to the involvement of Churchmen in the chain of events that led to Norman domination of Ireland, is the religious character of Mac Murchada. He was an active promoter of the Augustinian Canons of Arrouaise founding three houses for their nuns, an abbey in Ferns and a priory in Dublin. He also managed to have his brother in law, Lawrence O'Toole, installed as archbishop of the Hiberno-Vikings at Dublin, thus facilitating further integration of this See into the native Irish Church.<sup>263</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, 193.

<sup>262</sup> Flanagan traces the various problems and background of the 1172 Council of Cashel in *ibid.*, 184-211.

<sup>263</sup> Martin, "Ireland in the Time of St. Bernard," 19-21.

The influence of the new religious orders was not a negligible feature of the Church in Ireland in the period following the Norman invasion. As these new religious realities were founded around the same time as this invasion, obviously they had not been a feature of the Church in Pre-Norman Ireland. St. Dominic died in 1221 and the Dominicans reached Ireland by 1224.<sup>264</sup> St. Francis died in 1226 and the Franciscan order reached Ireland by 1231.<sup>265</sup> Both of these Orders came to Ireland from England, although the Franciscans enjoyed more autonomy whereas the Dominicans were part of the English province. While in the upheavals which followed the Norman invasion, some traditional Irish monasteries were destroyed, "this new class of Irish landowner [i.e. the Normans] seem to have founded more religious houses than they ravaged."<sup>266</sup> A notable feature of Christianity in both the Norman and Gaelic sections of Ireland in the thirteenth century was the very high number of religious houses belonging to these new religious orders that were founded:

By 1230 the number of religious houses for men, of all orders, in Ireland was about two hundred of which one hundred and twenty were of Irish foundation and eighty, Anglo-French. Comparable figures for Scotland and Wales were forty-six and thirty-three respectively. The comparison no doubt reflects differences in respective sizes of population. But it certainly indicates how substantial had been the progress of the reform movement in Ireland.<sup>267</sup>

The friars carried on the tradition of the Cistercians of bringing Irish pastoral practice into line with those on the Continent. Their widespread distribution

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<sup>264</sup> Watt, *The Church in Medieval Ireland*, 62.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

throughout both Norman and Gaelic Ireland, and the fact that, unlike the Cistercians, they concentrated on pastoral work, meant that they had a great influence on the religious practices of the population at large. It is to be assumed that the Franciscan friars played the same role in Ireland as they did elsewhere in Europe in the spread of a standardized form of the Roman Rite in the liturgy.<sup>268</sup>

Another element in the gradual assimilation of the Irish Church into a more Continental model was the anglicization of the episcopate. By 1254 almost one third of the dioceses were occupied by foreign-born prelates, and sixteen of the twenty-three native-born bishops were to some degree beholden to the English crown for their episcopal nomination.<sup>269</sup>

Nevertheless this assimilation was never complete and tensions did arise in Ireland between Gaelic and Anglo-Norman factions in the Church. In what is usually called the "Conspiracy of Mellifont" some of the Irish Cistercian houses broke away from obedience to the Norman centre of the Order in France in the first half of the thirteenth century.<sup>270</sup> There was also a more scandalous event in the General Chapter of the Irish Franciscans held in Cork in 1291, here the Irish brethren felt discriminated against by their Anglo-Irish brethren and a vicious fight broke out in which at least sixteen people were killed.<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>268</sup> Stephen J.P. Van Dijk and Joan Hazelden Walker, *The Origins of the Modern Roman Liturgy: the Liturgy of the Papal Court and the Franciscan Order in the Thirteenth Century* (Westminster, MD: Neuman Press, 1960) 358-411.

<sup>269</sup> Watt, *The Church in Medieval Ireland*, 87-89,

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*, 53-59. Also see, Barry W. O'Dwyer, trans. and ed., *Stephen of Lexington, Letters from Ireland 1228-1229* Cistercian Fathers Series: Number 28 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Press, 1982) 5-6

<sup>271</sup> Watt, *The Church in Medieval Ireland*, 78-84.

Reference will be made to the liturgical aspect of this period in the later chapters of this thesis. Suffice it to say here that this period marks the end of most of the particularly native traditions surrounding the Eucharist. But the Church did continue in Ireland and despite the above-mentioned difficulties the Church managed to successfully adapt to the new socio-political situation. While divisions remained it would likewise be false to portray this period as having two separate ethnic Churches and not a single Irish Church, a member of the Western Church:

That there were differences between the two [groups] because of their different cultures and social organisation can hardly be denied. Nor can it be denied that the two communities never achieved that integration which alone would have brought lasting peace. Nor can it be denied that, on occasions, discrimination between the two nations reached scandalous proportions. Nevertheless there was no duality in Christian essentials: in the faith professed, in its sacraments administered, in the liturgy practiced, in acknowledgement of the authority of the See of Peter and common membership of the universal church. And here was no lack of leadership seeking a *modus vivendi* in common Christian purpose. I believe this was achieved to a degree which strengthened the Irish church when the great challenge of Protestantism came to be met.<sup>272</sup>

## 1.7 Polemics

Early Irish Christianity is very much indebted to British Christianity. Although the study of early British Christianity is still quite hampered by the lack of documentary or physical evidence, it is most likely that the early British Church was very similar in its theology, discipline and liturgy to the Church of Gaul. Yet Roman Britain was the Westernmost province of the Roman Empire. It is not known how

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<sup>272</sup> Ibid., 56.



Christianity reached the province but Christianity had been well implanted there by 406, the year the Roman legions withdrew from Britain.<sup>273</sup> This led to Britain becoming ever more cut off from the Continent. However this isolation was never complete and the British Church did manage to survive without the protection of the legions. Nonetheless, without Roman protection, Saxon tribes arrived in Britain and these were not Christian. While the Church was not destroyed by these newcomers neither was it strong enough to convert them. So a new hybrid Roman British-Barbarian society developed where Christian and Roman elements existed alongside pagan Saxon ones.<sup>274</sup> There was a natural struggle between the Romanised Britons and the new arrivals. This struggle might help to explain the hesitancy of the newer Saxon tribes in accepting Christianity.

While Ireland did not fully become even nominally Christian until the seventh century, from the time of Palladius and Patrick and the other missionaries, there was a slow but sure acceptance of Christianity. This eventually led to the development of a new Christian commonwealth in the British Isles. To use Brown's term this was a "Celtic Mediterranean" made up of the original British Christians, and the two Celtic peoples: the Irish (including the inhabitants of their Scottish territories) and the Welsh.<sup>275</sup> While these peoples held in common many aspects of their culture, Christianity was an important part of the glue that bound them together. Even if the Irish and the Welsh were both Celtic peoples, speaking Celtic languages, these

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<sup>273</sup> Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, 125-126.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*, 129-130.

languages were probably mutually unintelligible and recourse had to be made to Latin as a common tongue.<sup>276</sup>

This is the context needed to understand Augustine of Canterbury's mission. There was a strong Christian presence on the British Isles when Augustine arrived. But while Ireland was basically fully Christian (at least in the nominal sense), Christianity in Great Britain was concentrated in the Western and Northern parts of the island. Mercia and Northumbria (most of present-day England) were Saxon and still pagan. But while these pagans were hesitant to accept Christianity from their British or Irish neighbours, they were not as hesitant about Augustine who represented the old order of Rome and its Empire and the prestige of the Pope:

To adopt Christianity from the outside (indeed, from Rome itself) was to give the fragile Saxon kingdoms, the "Nation of Thugs," a triumphal new charter for their occupation of Britain. Yet, in parts of western Britain, Saxon kings and magnates may well have received their Christianity from neighbouring British princes, whose courts they often frequented, as exiles and temporary allies. But no glory was attached to remembering gifts from the "Welsh," the *wealh*, the "foreigners" *par excellence*. Up to the 630's, at least, the Celtic kingdoms of western Britain remained formidable. They were not always in retreat. Any debt incurred to them for the "gift" of Christianity was best left forgotten.<sup>277</sup>

St. Bede the Venerable is a very important historical witness to this time. However, it would be overly simplistic to treat his works as one would treat those of a modern historian. Bede's main historical work is his *Ecclesiastical History of the*

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<sup>276</sup> Ibid, 239.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid, 344. For a fuller treatment of the link between what was to become the "English" Church and nation and Rome see Nicholas Brooks, "Canterbury, Rome and English Identity" in Julia M.H. Smith, *Early Medieval Rome and the Christian West. Essays in Honour of David A. Bullough* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 221-247.

*English People*. This book, which he completed in 731,<sup>278</sup> is as much a work of theology as what is understood today as history. Bede is not simply recounting facts as they happened, he is, in fact, constructing a theological view of reality. This view is intent on justifying the superiority of the English Nation<sup>279</sup> and their Church and the work, therefore is biased, and biased in particular against the Irish. The *Ecclesiastical History* is founded on the patristic view of history as having six ages, the sixth age being the age of the Church. His *Ecclesiastical History* is set in this last age. In this project he followed the example of Eusebius:

But unlike Eusebius, Bede did not summarize this salvation history in order to show its continuity with the early Church, his concern was with one nation only. It was 'a history of the Church of our island and race', an account of a single nation, the English, a new generation of the people of God, being prepared, by reading this work itself as well as by other means, for the last 'age' of heaven, the kingdom of God.<sup>280</sup>

In this project, the earlier ages have to be inferior. British Christianity prior to the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons was somehow inferior to the later missionary work in the kingdom of Kent carried out by St. Augustine, these new missionaries were "much worthier heralds of the truth."<sup>281</sup>

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<sup>278</sup> *Ecclesiastical History*, v.23, Colgrave and Mynors, 560-561.

<sup>279</sup> Indeed, the argument can be made that Bede invented the very concept of "Englishness," and that prior to his theological project, Britain contained a number of different peoples, and that it is only with Bede that we have the intellectual underpinnings for England as a nation! Ward, *The Venerable Bede*, 143.

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>281</sup> "Digniores memoratae praecones ueritatis." *Ecclesiastical History*, i.22, Colgrave and Mynors, 68-69. Conversely, however, one could also note that the litany of saints at the start of the Eucharist in the Stowe Missal contains the names of Augustine's three immediate successors at Canterbury, but he himself is absent from the list. Archdale A. King, *Liturgies of the Past* (London: Longmans, 1959), 264-265.

Another element that helps in understanding Bede's vision is the fact that he did not write from Canterbury, the centre of St. Augustine's mission, he wrote from Northumbria in present-day North Eastern England. This area was the most powerful Anglo-Saxon kingdom in seventh century England, and, while part of the Augustinian mission, it was also an area that had originally been partly evangelised by Irish Celtic missionaries. Bede was also a monk in the new monastery of Jarrow, and, although this monastery was an important part of the Augustinian mission, it had been established in the shadow of the older monastery of Lindisfarne founded by the prestigious St. Aidan (d. 651) as a missionary outpost of Iona to the Saxons and Angels.<sup>282</sup> In his writings Bede cannot but admire many of the Celtic missionaries, men such as Aidan<sup>283</sup> and Fursey (d. c. 650),<sup>284</sup> not to mention the giant St. Columba,<sup>285</sup> but in the end his world-view leads him to the conclusion that prior to Augustine's arrival "in Ireland, as well as in Britain, the life and profession of the people was not in accordance with church practice in many things."<sup>286</sup> Some modern authors have held that Ireland was indeed rife with Pelagianism and other lines of thought that were condemned by mainstream Christianity as heretical.<sup>287</sup> But as so

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<sup>282</sup> William H. Marnell, *Light from the West. The Irish Mission and the Emergence of Modern Europe*. (New York: Crossroad, 1978), 56-62.

<sup>283</sup> *Ecclesiastical History*, iii.5, Colgrave and Mynors, 226-229.

<sup>284</sup> *Ecclesiastical History*, iii.19, *ibid.*, 268-277.

<sup>285</sup> *Ecclesiastical History*, iii.4, *ibid.*, 220-225.

<sup>286</sup> "Siquidem ubi Scottorum in praefata ipsorum patria quomodo et Brettonum in ipsa Britannia, uitam ac professionem minus ecclesiasticam in multis esse cognouit." *Ecclesiastical History*, ii.4, *ibid.*, 145-147.

<sup>287</sup> Michael W. Herren and Shirley Ann Brown, *Christ in Celtic Christianity: Britain and Ireland from the Fifth to the Tenth Century* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2002). Herren and Brown postulate a Pelagian Church in the Celtic areas. While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to consider these claims, our general conclusions do not agree with Herren and Brown, as there is simply not enough evidence to be able to build a full blown Pelagian Church in the British Isles.

little real evidence exists of real heresy in early Ireland, it is hard to maintain this thesis. An early Irish translation of Bede's Ecclesiastical History has actually edited out the sections where Bede deals with heresy and from this "it emerges clearly from the Irish Bede that the heresies which were so crucial to the author of the History were of minimal interest or of no interest at all to the Irishman who translated him some two hundred years later."<sup>288</sup>

While much has been written on this period, one needs to tread warily when dealing with it as so much of the evidence is directly dependent on Bede. According to Bede, St. Gregory the Great (d. 604) had given St. Augustine very liberal prescriptions on dealing with the existing Christians in Britain.<sup>289</sup> Yet St. Augustine pushed for uniformity in Church discipline and practice. There was some resistance to Augustine's programme of uniformity and this resistance crystallised around two central points: the Paschal Controversy and the Celtic Tonsure.<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>288</sup> Próinséas Ní Catháin, "Bede's Ecclesiastical History in Irish", *Peritia* 3 (1980): 130

<sup>289</sup> *Ecclesiastical History*, i.27, Colgrave and Mynors, 80-83. This section is quoted in Chapter 2.

<sup>290</sup> The topic of Baptism is another controversy that is raised by Bede among others, but this problem was never really as grave as the others. According to Bede this is one of the objections that Augustine had to British practice, although Bede does not tell us what the difference was between the manner of Baptism of the British bishops and "the rites of the holy Roman and apostolic Church," ("iuxta morem sanctae Romanae et apostolicae ecclesiae.") *Ecclesiastical History*, ii.2, Colgrave and Mynors, 138-139. Warren was of the opinion that the "Celtic Church" baptized with a single immersion, but he can only point out that the surviving fonts seem to be designed for immersion without any textual evidence that single immersion was ever the case. Indeed the rite of Baptism in the *Stowe Missal* is a mixture of Roman and Gallican elements and prescribes a triple immersion or aspersion. Not surprisingly Warren dismisses this as being due to "Roman influence." Warren, *The Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church*, 64-66. In the eleventh century Lanfranc complained to the High King of Ireland that the Irish baptized without using any chrism *Ep. as Tirdelvac*, Op. p. 320, ed. Ben. cited in Warren, *The Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church*, 65. Later on St. Bernard echoes these charges in his *Vita Malachiae* III.7, when he states that the Sacrament of Confirmation had fallen into disuse in Ireland. But we have no proof that these claims were well founded. Once again the *Stowe Missal* prescribes the use of chrism three times during the ritual of Baptism. And the *Letter to the Soldiers of Croticus 2*, from the pen of St. Patrick himself attests to the use of Chrism at baptism! However, it cannot be denied that olive oil, the basic ingredient for the making of Chrism,

### 1.7.1 The Easter Controversy

The calculation of the date of Easter is one of the problems that Christianity is struggling with to this very day. The modern Western mind has difficulty understanding the importance Christians of the first Christian millennium gave to celebrating Easter on an exact date.<sup>291</sup> This was one of the issues that the early Church struggled with most<sup>292</sup> and the First Ecumenical Council at Nicea treated the problem, although it didn't end debate in the matter.<sup>293</sup> In the wake of Nicea, a new formulation for the calculation of Easter developed and this was probably the calculation that Augustine brought with him from Rome. However British and Irish

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would have had to have been imported into Ireland. It must also be noted that the history of the Sacrament of Confirmation is a particularly thorny issue, and there is no evidence that its history was any less confusing in Ireland than anywhere else in the West. Gabriele Winkler "Confirmation or Chrismation? A Study in Comparative Liturgy" in Maxwell E. Johnson, ed., *Living Water Sealing Spirit. Readings on Christian Initiation* (Collegeville: Pueblo, 1995), 202-218.

<sup>291</sup> Indeed, in the wake of the Arian controversy Christmas has supplanted Easter as the premier Christian feast in the popular mind of modern western Christians. Joseph A. Jungmann, *Pastoral Liturgy* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1962), 48-58.

<sup>292</sup> Many of the first Christians celebrated Easter on the same day as the Jewish Passover regardless of the day of the week it fell on. But gradually most Christians moved their celebration to the Sunday after this date, and labelled the other practice as heretical and those who observed it were called Quartodecimans. Even though this controversy had centred more in the East than the West, later on some polemicists were to label the Irish manner of the calculation of Easter as Quartodeciman. However, this label was totally false as all parties in Ireland celebrated Easter on Sunday, see H. Thurston, "Easter Controversy," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. V, (New York: Macmillan, 1908), 229. These accusers mistakenly believed that the Irish were Quartodecimans who celebrated the Paschal Vigil not on Sunday but on the same night that the Jews celebrated their Passover. Anyone who held this view "was pre-empting the pasch and, by the same token denying the efficacy of the Resurrection as the true instrument of man's redemption." Dáibhí. Ó Cróinín, "New Heresy for Old: Pelagianism in Ireland and the Papal Letter of 640," *Speculum* 60/3 (July 1985): 516.

<sup>293</sup> For an analysis of the calculation of Easter at Nicea see L'Huillier, *The Church of the Ancient Councils*, 19-26.

Christians were using an earlier system to calculate the true date of Easter and, in all likelihood, this formula also had come from earlier Roman traditions.<sup>294</sup>

With Britain being made up of a number of smaller kingdoms, the conversion of the whole kingdom took place after the solemn Baptism of the King or chieftain; sometimes not only the king but the whole court and the nobles would be Baptised together. And the most solemn occasion for this Baptism was on Easter Sunday.<sup>295</sup>

This may well be the reason why the Easter Controversy came to the fore in mid Seventh century England where different missionaries vied for the conversion of various nobles. These very public Baptisms, like that of King Edwin of Northumbria in 627, took place on Easter and whether the date of Easter was calculated in the traditional British and Irish manner or the newer Roman manner betokened nearly as much as the actual fact of acceptance of the Christian Faith:

For the first Anglo-Saxon Christians, Easter was the central point of the year, the moment when by baptism they entered into the new life in Christ about which they had heard from the missionaries sent from Rome and from Ireland. It was not to them an arbitrary date but the pivot of the whole of the cosmos, the central moment when reality was revealed in the face of Jesus Christ. Here evangelical doctrine, corporate liturgy and inner devotion were united, and in this unity they discovered also their oneness with the Church in other times and places. That the missionaries who preached the Gospel to them should differ about the date on which this Paschal mystery should be celebrated was both confusing and scandalous; where external

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<sup>294</sup> "Les Églises bretonne et irlandaise avaient emprunté à Rome, avec l'ancien cycle de 84 ans, les réglés en usage avant 343 et d'après lesquelles les termes de Pâques étaient compris entre le XIV<sup>e</sup> et le XX<sup>e</sup> du mois lunaire et d'autre part entre le 25 mars et le 21 avril." H. Leclercq, "Paques" in DACL XIII, 1495. See also the analysis of the various means of calculation in Ó Cróinín, "New Heresy for Old," 505-516.

<sup>295</sup> N.B some voices in current liturgical scholarship are beginning to challenge the view that the Paschal Baptism was the norm in antiquity. Paul Bradshaw, "*Diem baptismo sollemniorum*: Initiation and Easter in Christian Antiquity" in Johnson, ed., *Living Water Sealing Spirit*, 147. However it is probable that Easter was chosen for the prestige Baptisms of eighth century England.

practice was not something separate from internal faith, the implications of such division were in no way trivial.<sup>296</sup>

For all the parties involved in this debate the issues were in no way trivial. It was not simply a problem of astronomical cycles but behind lay biblical exegesis.<sup>297</sup> The Irish prided themselves on their biblical scholarship, in particular that of the Old Testament and therefore it was not seen as a quibble about some obscure point, but rather an issue on which hung all of their exegesis and their theology.<sup>298</sup> Resentment towards the newer method of calculating the date grew. This led to open dissention between the two parties. The Irish side centred on the famous abbey of Iona.

The issue was eventually settled in the Council of Whitby in 664. This Council was not simply a matter of the Romans ganging up on the ignorant Celts. Whitby was a convent recently founded by the Anglo Saxon princess Hilda who had had important contacts with both parties. Indeed it could be said that "almost everyone in Whitby had close and friendly contact with both Roman and Irish missionaries."<sup>299</sup> Also all parties considered a unity of practice to be an absolute need, for them differences in practice could only lead to differences in dogma. Everyone present at the Council could have agreed with Bede's position that "those who served one God should observe one rule of life and not differ in the celebration

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<sup>296</sup> Benedicta Ward, *High King of Heaven. Aspects of Early English Spirituality*. Cistercian Studies Series Number 181 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1999), 17.

<sup>297</sup> Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 396.

<sup>298</sup> Ó Cróinín, "New Heresy for Old," 516.

<sup>299</sup> Ward, *High King of Heaven*, 22.



of the heavenly sacraments, seeing that they all hoped for one kingdom in heaven."<sup>300</sup>

But the victory of the Roman party at Whitby was a hollow victory. By the time of the Council the issues were already old. The problem of the two manners of calculation had already come about in the lifetime of Columbanus who was already dead for half a century. Columbanus had clashed with the local Gallic bishops over the date of Easter.<sup>301</sup> He never changed his position, indeed, he addressed letters to two successive Popes trying to bring them to change back their calculation to his own,<sup>302</sup> but sometime after his death Luxeuil and his other foundations conformed to the local usage. This controversy did serve to bring the matter to the forefront in Ireland and, by the time of Whitby, many in Ireland had also started to follow the Roman calculation.<sup>303</sup>

In the aftermath of the Synod of Whitby, there was not a split between the Irish and English Churches, rather there occurred divisions within both of the individual Churches with some in both Ireland and England refusing to accept the Roman manner of calculation of Easter.<sup>304</sup> But in the long term even Iona and the

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<sup>300</sup> "Eos qui uni Deo seruirent unam uiuendi regulam tenere, nec discrepare in celebratione sacramentorum caelestium, qui unum omnes in caelis regnum expectarent." *Ecclesiastical History*, iii.25, Colgrave and Mynors, 298-299.

<sup>301</sup> The accusation was even made that Columbanus and other Irish churchmen were Quartodecimans. But this is totally untrue as, unlike the Quartodecimans, their Easter was always celebrated on Sunday. See H. Thurston, "Easter Controversy," 229, also see Daniel P. Mc Carthy and Aidan Breen, *The Ante-Nicene Christian Pasch. De Ratione Paschali. The Paschal Tract of Anatolius, Bishop of Laodicea* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003), 175-177.

<sup>302</sup> Perhaps the lack of a reply from Gregory the Great to Columbanus may even show a tacit papal support of Columbanus' person and mission, even if Gregory knew that he could not agree with him on that point. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 370.

<sup>303</sup> Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, 362-363.

<sup>304</sup> Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 321.

other outspoken critics of the Roman method conformed to the Roman usage, and, in general, a certain closeness remained between the Irish and English churches:

Every student of history knows of the close relations which existed between the English and Irish churches before the Synod of Whitby. My readers will be familiar with much, of not all, of the evidence for continued contacts in the late seventh, eighth and early ninth centuries, for all the material I have used is published and most of it has been discussed. Nevertheless, I hope it may be useful to have the references put together. They demonstrate the intimacy and frequency of contacts and serve to put other problems into focus: when, for instance, we see English foundations flourishing in Ireland or an Irishman as master of an English scriptorium, then disputes about the provenance of certain manuscripts appear in a rather different guise. Much of the material relates to Ireland and Northumbria; but there is also a considerable amount about Ireland and the great central area of England, little about the south. This may be partly due to the distribution of historical records during the period under review.<sup>305</sup>

### 1.7.2 Tonsure

The Tonsure Controversy is closely related to the Easter Controversy, although it is even more difficult for modern people to understand the importance given to it in the first millennium:

In an almost totally illiterate society, the precise nature of visible gestures and the precise timing of festivals spoke volumes. Conflicts over fully visible practise counted for more than any conflict over ideas. Styles of hair had never been neutral. All over Europe, and not only in the British Isles, each hairstyle made a clear declaration of identity distinguishing laity from clergy, warrior from farmer, "Roman" from barbarian.<sup>306</sup>

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<sup>305</sup> Kathleen Hughes, "Evidence for Contacts between the Churches of the Irish and English from the Synod of Whitby to the Viking Age," in P. Clemoes and K. Hughes, eds., *England before the Conquest. Studies in Primary Sources presented to Dorothy Whitelock* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 49.

<sup>306</sup> Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, 360-361.

In Ireland the tonsure was performed by shaving the front half of the head from a line from ear to ear, rather than in the centre of the head as on the Continent.<sup>307</sup> However this "*excentricité proper au clergé celtique*"<sup>308</sup> (eccentricity proper to the Celtic clergy) was treated at the time as a very important difference. Today it is difficult to trace the exact roots of the Irish usage, although in the past a number of scholars dubiously tried to attribute the practice to a continuation of Celtic druidic usage (in agreement with the polemical references to this tonsure as having originated with Simon Magus), however the evidence is tenuous. Others see it as being merely another example of the Irish tendency to preserve older traditions.<sup>309</sup>

According to the Irish, this usage had been passed down to them, through France, from the Apostle St. John. According to Bede, Augustine and his companions found it scandalous attributing its style to Simon Magus, whereas they attributed their traditional Latin tonsure as coming directly from St. Peter himself in imitation of the crown of thorns. Whatever Augustine's true opinion, by the eighth century the tonsure issue had become entwined with the Easter question<sup>310</sup> and, for Bede at least, the Roman Tonsure was a touchstone of Orthodoxy. He will condescendingly concede that the mere wearing of the Irish tonsure doesn't

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<sup>307</sup> For an idea of what this tonsure would actually have looked at see the Symbol of St. Matthew from the Book of Durrow (Dublin, Trinity College, MS A.4.5, fol 21b) reproduced in Bernard Meehan, *The Book of Durrow. A Medieval Masterpiece at Trinity College, Dublin.* (Dublin: Townhouse, 1996), 34 with a detail of the head on page 35.

<sup>308</sup> H. Leclercq, "*Tonsure*" in DACL XV, 2440.

<sup>309</sup> For a summary of the various arguments see Edward James, "Bede and the Tonsure Question," *Peritia* 3 (1984): 86-87.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

guarantee that a man will be “dammed” but for Bede that man’s immortal soul is in danger.<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>311</sup> *Ecclesiastical History*, v.22, Colgrave and Mynors, 552-555.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE EUCHARIST IN THE CHRISTIAN WEST TO THE TWELFTH CENTURY

#### Introduction

Alongside the historical introduction it is likewise very important to place the study of the Eucharist in Pre-Norman Ireland in the context of the liturgical history of the West in general during this time. The Eucharist developed from the experience of the early Church and throughout the Pre-Norman period all Christians would trace their Eucharistic practice back to the person of Jesus Christ and the Last Supper as recounted in the Synoptic Gospels and the First Letter to the Corinthians.<sup>312</sup>

Modern liturgists and biblical scholars would attribute the development of the Eucharist to more diverse sources and see a certain plurality of Eucharistic practice in the Pre-Nicene Church. Nonetheless by the fifth century and the evangelization of Ireland a certain common “shape” of the Eucharistic Liturgy had developed, so that the general structure of the rite was common throughout virtually all of Christendom.

While this “shape” was common in both East and West, the concrete application of the “shape” was different in different areas and these regional variations, usually centred on a pre-eminent see, were to come to be known as rites.<sup>313</sup> Most traditional studies of the liturgy in the pre-Carolingian West presume

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<sup>312</sup> For a modern treatment of the New Testament evidence on the Eucharist see Jerome Kodell, *The Eucharist in the New Testament* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1988).

<sup>313</sup> The advent of the printing press has had a huge effect on the uniformity of the liturgy reducing local liturgical variants to a minimum. It would be anachronistic to expect to find identical liturgical books in use in even two churches in the same town never mind two churches hundreds of

the existence of a number of Latin rites, Roman, Ambrosian, Gallican, Hispanic (or Mozarabic), North African and Celtic. In the nineteenth century, in particular, it was supposed that a Celtic liturgy existed in Ireland and other areas under Celtic influence. In 1881 F. E. Warren published the definitive work on the subject, *The Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church*. This work is exceptionally well researched and even today, over one hundred and twenty years later, has yet to be surpassed. But, for all his scholarly acumen, Warren had a major shortcoming, he:

had a special interest in the early Irish and Anglo-Saxon Churches. That interest reflected a frequent concern of one important stream in the tradition of Anglican divinity, current since Archbishop Matthew Parker and his manuscript-collections, namely a desire to find a catholic Church-life and order which were nevertheless independent of Roman control and centralizing.<sup>314</sup>

This desire to “find” a type of proto-Anglicanism in early Ireland coloured Warren’s work. Warren was by no means the only one to “discover” an ancient Celtic liturgy that reflected a Church ordered in the way he thought best. Most scholars of the period saw in the early Irish either proto-Anglicans or an early example of ultramontane Roman Catholics,<sup>315</sup> but most scholars were in agreement that the early Church in Ireland had its own rite and that this Celtic Rite was supposedly different to the other Western liturgical rites.

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miles apart in this period. See Cyrille Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy. An Introduction to the Sources*, trans. and ed. William Storey and Niels Rasmussen (Portland, OR: The Pastoral Press, 1986), 4-5. Most modern works hesitate to give a definition of exactly what a rite is, but it could be generally defined as “the manner of performing all services for the worship of God and the sanctification of men.” Adrian Fortescue “Rite” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* Volume XIII, (New York: Macmillan, 1908), 64. A more specific definition could be “a coherent, unified corpus of liturgical usages followed by all churches within a single ecclesiastical conscription,” Robert F. Taft, *The Byzantine Rite: A Short History* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 24. Although when applied to the Gallican Rite this definition needs to be qualified as this area is quite large and the lack of metropolitan sees make the “ecclesiastical conscription” somewhat fluid.

<sup>314</sup> Chadwick, preface to *Liturgy and Ritual*, vii.

<sup>315</sup> Kevin Collins, *Catholic Churchmen and the Celtic Revival, 1848-1916* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003), 29-31.

But more modern studies tend to see far fewer Western Rites; already writing shortly after World War II, Jungmann divided Western Liturgy into two groups, the Roman/African and the Gallican. He then divided the Gallican into four sub-groups: pure Gallican (Franco-German), Celtic, Mozarabic and Ambrosian.<sup>316</sup> Today modern scholarship would tend to agree with his fundamental intuition, and this thesis also agrees with this division of liturgical rites and will attempt to show that the Church in early Ireland was using the Gallican Rite, or at least a local sub-group of this Rite. However dealing with the Gallican Rite is always somewhat nebulous. This is because, despite the vast geographic area which used this liturgical Rite, so few sources have survived. The lack of evidence has even led some scholars to propose that "there was no Gallican rite as such - a Mass rite formalized and imposed. Nevertheless one can speak of Gallican liturgy and thereby include the many and diverse forms of 'Gallican' types which abounded in the Frankish lands during the late seventh and eighth centuries."<sup>317</sup> Yet it can still be maintained that there was the necessary degree of uniformity in the non-Roman rites of the West to assign them all to the same family.<sup>318</sup>

This chapter will study the development of the "shape" of the Eucharist in the early Church and the probable form of this "shape" as Christianity was introduced into Ireland. The particular liturgical developments on the Continent in the period

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<sup>316</sup> Joseph A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite, its Origins and Development* (Missarum Solemnia) (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1951), 1:44-48.

<sup>317</sup> Gregory Woolfenden, "The Medieval Western Rites" in Jones, et. al., *The Study of Liturgy*, rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 273.

<sup>318</sup> Gregory Woolfenden, has agreed with me that while the Gallican Rite "does seem to be a name that covers a multitude of customs that resembled one another more than they resembled Rome," that nonetheless it does remain as a separate Rite as enough of a commonality remains in these regions for them to be classed as a single rite (personal communication 3 October, 2002).

directly covered by this thesis will also be studied, as the context within the Irish evidence of the next two chapters must be understood. As liturgy is so much more than rubrics and other liturgical laws, the second part of the chapter will examine how the Eucharist might actually have been lived by the lay-faithful at this time, vis-à-vis the reception of Communion, the gradual loss of understanding of the liturgical language and the beginnings of extra-liturgical devotion to the Eucharistic Species.

## 2.1 The Development of the Shape of the Eucharist

The Christian celebration of the Eucharist is grounded in the person of Jesus Christ. The natural place to look for the origins of this ritual are in the Last Supper that Christ celebrated with his disciples “on the night before he was betrayed.” The first modern students of liturgy in the eighteenth century therefore tried to get back to the ritual of that night. When faced with the present variety of Eucharistic rites, the presumption was made that these had developed from a single common Eucharistic Liturgy of Apostolic times.<sup>319</sup>

Great credence was given by these earlier authors to a text from *De Traditione Divinae Missae*, which purported to be by Proclus, a mid-fifth century bishop of Constantinople.<sup>320</sup> In this text “the author explained that the earliest apostolic liturgies had been very long but were deliberately abridged in later centuries in order to retain the participation of less fervent generations of

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<sup>319</sup> For a summary of this material see Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship*, 1-6.

<sup>320</sup> This text is available in PG 65: 849-852.



Christians.<sup>321</sup> However, although this text was of great help in making sense of the various data of liturgical history, unfortunately it was the work of a sixteenth century forger!<sup>322</sup> This, and further study which showed how the various liturgical texts did not seem to have a common textual history and that it was impossible to reach an Apostolic text of the Eucharistic Liturgy, caused somewhat of a crisis in scholarship.

Dom Gregory Dix, an Anglican Benedictine, stepped in to fill this gap with his very influential book, *The Shape of the Liturgy*.<sup>323</sup> While he rejected the idea of a common Apostolic Liturgy, Dix replaced this with an Apostolic “shape” of the Eucharistic liturgy that would have been common to all of the earliest Christians. Dix stated that “there is even good reason to think that this outline-the Shape-of the Liturgy is of genuinely apostolic tradition.”<sup>324</sup> He assumed that the first part of the Eucharistic Liturgy, which centred on Scripture readings, was imported into early Christian Liturgy from the Jewish synagogue service which the apostles would have been familiar with. He provided a useful schema of this “original unchanging outline of the Christian synaxis everywhere”:

1. Opening greeting by the officiant and reply of the church.
2. Lesson.
3. Psalmody.
4. Lesson (or Lessons, separated by Psalmody).

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<sup>321</sup> John R. K. Fenwick, *Fourth Century Anaphoral Construction Techniques*, Grove Liturgical Studies 45 (Bramcote, Nottingham: Grove Books, 1986), 4.

<sup>322</sup> For details of this forgery see F. J. Leroy, “Proclus «De Traditione Divinae Missae»: un Faux de C. Palaeocappa.” *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 28 (1962): 288-299.

<sup>323</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 2d ed. (London: Dacre Press, 1945; reprint with an introduction by Simon Jones, London: Continuum, 2005).

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

5. Sermon.
6. Dismissal of those who did not belong to the church.
7. Prayers.
8. Dismissal of the church.<sup>325</sup>

To this was joined the second part of the celebration, or the Eucharist proper, which derived its "shape" from the Apostles' experience of the Last Supper with Jesus:

The last supper of our Lord with His disciples is the source of the liturgical eucharist, but not the model for its performance. The New Testament accounts of that supper as they stand in the received text present us with what may be called a 'seven-action scheme' of the rite then inaugurated. Our Lord (1) took bread; (2) 'gave thanks' over it; (3) broke it; (4) distributed it, saying certain words. Later He (5) took a cup; (6) 'gave thanks' over that; (7) handed it to his disciples, saying certain words. We are so accustomed to the liturgical shape of the eucharist as we know it that we do not instantly appreciate the fact that it is not based on this 'seven-action scheme' but on a somewhat drastic modification of it. With absolute unanimity the liturgical tradition reproduces these seven actions as four: (1) the offertory; bread and wine are 'taken' and placed on the table together. (2) The prayer; the president gives thanks to God over the bread and wine together. (3) The fraction; the bread is broken. (4) The communion; the bread and wine are distributed together.

In that form and in that order these four actions constituted the absolutely invariable nucleus of every eucharistic rite known to us throughout antiquity from the Euphrates to Gaul.<sup>326</sup>

Most studies from the mid-twentieth century onwards presuppose this format as proposed by Dix, and a linear model of Eucharistic development from Jewish meal prayers to the Roman Canon is assumed.<sup>327</sup> When exceptions to this development are found (such as the prayer in the *Didache* which today is generally accepted as being a Eucharistic prayer, but which lacks reference to the Last Supper and deals with the cup before the bread) earlier studies thought of them as

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<sup>325</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>327</sup> Perhaps the most popular and influential example of this is the work of Louis Bouyer, *Eucharist, Theology and Spirituality of the Eucharistic Prayer*, translated by C. Quinn, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968).

being aberrations or eccentricities of individual Churches that bore little relation to this linear development.<sup>328</sup>

One of the oldest descriptions of a Christian Eucharist is that of St. Justin Martyr. Writing an *Apologia* or Defence of the Christian Religion to the Emperor Antoninus Pius around the year 155, he describes a Christian Eucharistic Celebration for the Emperor. While this description may be slightly modified or simplified for a non-Christian to understand due to the nature of this work of defence, it is nonetheless of great importance in the History of the Eucharist. Justin, being not only a learned man, was also a well travelled one and it is likely that he drew on his knowledge of many Churches in this description.

On the day called Sunday an assembly is held in one place of all who live in town or country, and records of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read as time allows.

Then, when the reader has finished, the president in a discourse admonishes and exhorts (us) to imitate these good things.

Then we all stand up together and send up prayers; and as we said before, when we have finished praying bread and wine and water are brought up, and the president likewise sends up prayers and thanksgivings to the best of his ability, and the people assent, saying the Amen; and the (elements over which) thanks have been given are distributed, and everyone partakes; and they are sent through the deacons to those who are not present.

And the wealthy who so desire give what they wish, as each chooses; and what is collected is deposited with the president.<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>328</sup> Jungmann in his highly influential work concludes that the prayer of the *Didache* is "hardly likely" refers to a Eucharist. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 1:12. For a more modern treatment of the Eucharistic Prayer of the *Didache* see Paul F. Bradshaw, *Eucharistic Origins*, Alcuin Club Collections 80 (London: SPCK, 2004), 24-42. This debate is still a hot topic in current Sacramental Theology and many theologians were surprised by the Vatican's 2001 official recognition of the validity of the Eucharistic prayer of *Addai and Mari* as used by the Assyrian Church. This ancient Eucharistic Prayer has no institution narrative and so many traditional theologians would have held that it was simply invalid. For more information on this current debate see, Robert F. Taft. "Mass Without the Consecration? The Historic Agreement on the Eucharist between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East Promulgated 26 October 2001," *Worship* 77 no. 6 (November 2003): 482-509.

Traditionally this line of development continued with the Eucharistic Prayer found in the Ancient Church Order<sup>330</sup> known as the *Apostolic Tradition*. If the description of the Liturgy as found in St. Justin is important, perhaps the biggest building block in the theories of a pre-Constantinian four action shape was the Liturgy described in the document known as the *Apostolic Tradition*.<sup>331</sup> This was attributed to Hippolytus of Rome. Hippolytus was the head of a house church in the city of Rome in the early third century, and he opposed Pope Callistus, due to his laxity and he even went so far as to set himself up as an "antipope" in opposition to him.<sup>332</sup> For scholars this provided a type of Holy Grail, a third century document by a very educated Roman cleric who had strong tendencies to retain archaic elements in the liturgy. This Order never actually treats a regular Sunday Eucharist, but it does give an example of a Eucharistic Prayer to be prayed by a newly ordained bishop:

And when he has been made bishop, all shall offer the kiss of peace, greeting him because he has been made worthy.

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<sup>329</sup> "Die qui dicitur solis omnium qui in urbibus et in agris habitant, in unum fit conventus et commentarii apostolorum vel scripta prophetarum leguntur, quoad tempus fert. Deinde, ubi lector desiit, antistes oratione admonet et incitat ad haec praeclara imitanda. Postea consurgimus simul omnes precesque fundimus; atque, ut supra diximus, ubi precari desiimus, panis affertur et vinum et aqua, et antistes preces una cum gratiarum actionibus pro viribus sursum mittit, et populus acclamat dicendo Amen; eaque, de quibus gratiae acae sunt, cum unoquoque communicantur et iis, qui absunt, per deacons mittuntur. Divites autem, quibus placet, pro suo quisque arbitrio quod visum est largiuntur, et quod colligitur apud antistitem deponitur." *First Apology* 67.3-6 in Anton Hänggi and Irmgard Pahl, *Prex Eucharistica. Textus e Variis Liturgiis Antiquioribus Selecti* (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse, 1968), 70-73. English translation from R.C.D. Jasper and G.J. Cuming, *Prayers of the Eucharist. Early and Reformed*, 3d ed. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990), 29-30.

<sup>330</sup> For more on this genre of liturgical document see Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship*, 73-97.

<sup>331</sup> See, for example, Bouyer, *Eucharist*, 158-182.

<sup>332</sup> For background to the figure of Hippolytus see Allen Brent, *Hippolytus and the Roman Church in the Third Century. Communities in Tension before the Emergence of a Monarch-Bishop* (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

*Then the deacons shall present the offering to him; and he, laying his hands on it with all the presbytery, shall say, giving thanks:*

The Lord be with you.

*And all shall say:*

And with your spirit.

Up with your hearts.

We have (them) with the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord.

It is fitting and right.

*And he shall continue thus:*

We render thanks to you, o God, through your beloved child Jesus Christ, whom in the last times you sent to us as saviour and redeemer and angel of your will;

who is your inseparable Word, through whom you made all things, and in whom you are well pleased.

You sent him from heaven into the virgin's womb; and, conceived in the womb, he was made flesh and manifested as your Son, being born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin.

Fulfilling your will and gaining for you a holy people, he stretched out his hands when he should suffer, that he might release from suffering those who have believed in you.

And when he was betrayed to voluntary suffering that he might destroy death, and break the bonds of the devil, and tread down hell and shine upon the righteous, and fix a term and manifest the resurrection,

he took bread and gave thanks to you, saying, 'Take, eat; this is my body, which shall be broken for you.' Likewise also the cup, saying, 'This is my blood, which is shed for you;

when you do this, you make my remembrance.'

Remembering therefore his death and resurrection, we offer to you the bread and the cup, giving you thanks because you have held us worthy to stand before you and minister to you.

And we ask that you would send your Holy Spirit upon the offering of your holy Church; that, gathering them into one, you would grant to all who partake of the holy things (to partake) for the fullness of the Holy Spirit for the confirmation of faith in truth;

that we may praise and glorify you through your child Jesus Christ, through whom be glory and honour to you, to the Father and the Son with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and to the ages of ages. Amen.<sup>333</sup>

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<sup>333</sup> English translation from Jasper and Cuming, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, 34-35. N.B. there is no original language quotation as there are many problems with the original language of the *Apostolic Tradition* which will be dealt with below.

In order to understand the issues surrounding this Eucharistic Prayer and whether or not it represents the traditions of the Church of Rome in the third century it is helpful to look at the modern history of this document. The Ancient Church Order known as the *Apostolic Tradition* was probably originally written in Greek and various translations of it (Bohairic Coptic, Sahidic Coptic, Arabic and Latin) were discovered mainly in Egypt in the nineteenth century. While very interesting in their own right, these documents did not generate any undue attention. However in 1906 it was suggested that this document might in fact be the lost work, named the *Apostolic Tradition*. This work was known from an inscription purportedly of a list of the works of Hippolytus of Rome found on a statue (wrongly) identified as Hippolytus.<sup>334</sup> The idea of this being an early third century Roman document by an author who favoured old usages as opposed to the innovations of Pope Callistus was of great popular appeal in the scholarly community. As there was no complete manuscript, and only small fragments of the original Greek text were ever discovered, various reconstructions were made of the document were prepared. These involved a high degree of reconstruction and, unfortunately, the resulting reconstruction suffered from certain tendencies of the editors to find a pristine Roman liturgy.<sup>335</sup>

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<sup>334</sup> Maxwell E. Johnson, "The Apostolic Tradition," in Geoffrey Wainwright and Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, eds. *The Oxford History of Christian Worship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 34,

<sup>335</sup> Although this thesis does not deal with contemporary liturgy it is interesting to note that the recent liturgical renewal of the Eucharistic Prayer in the Roman Catholic Church as well as the liturgical adaptation made by most of the mainline Protestant churches were inspired by this document. The Roman Canon had been in use in the Roman liturgy for well over a millennium and was thought to be untouchable by many. But the fact that there was now proof that a different canon had been in use in Rome in the early third century cleared the way for a much needed liturgical

But not all scholars accepted this attribution and in a series of articles Marcel Metzger developed the idea that the *Apostolic Tradition* does not result from a single hand but is, in fact, a piece of living literature. He points out many examples of doublets and inconsistencies to suggest that this document is in fact a composite work.<sup>336</sup> In a recent edition Bradshaw and a number of other scholars collaborated and produced an interlinear version of the *Apostolic Tradition* which didn't attempt to reconstruct an "original" version of the document (as all other major editions have done) but presented the reader with the complex situation of the textual family of the Order.<sup>337</sup> Their conclusion is that the document must be treated with a certain hesitation, as it is more a living literature than a true text and that it contains a mixture of material from different places and times and while the central core may well be from the mid-second century, the present family of texts seems to have been assembled in Egypt or some other Eastern centre in the middle of the fourth century.<sup>338</sup> Whether or not one accepts all the conclusions of Bradshaw et al. one must rethink the earlier theories of the development of the Eucharist and treat all books dealing with the earliest history of the Eucharist written in the twentieth century with a certain hesitancy when dealing with the *Apostolic Tradition* and linear

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reform, and even if it is based on a false premise on the authenticity of this document, this was truly a *felix culpa*.

<sup>336</sup> Marcel Metzger, "Enquêtes Autour de la Prétendue «Tradition Apostolique» *Ecclesia Orans* 9 (1992): 7-36; "A Propos des Règlements Ecclésiastiques et de la Prétendue *Tradition Apostolique*." *Revue des Sciences Religieuses* 66 (1992): 249-261. Also see Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship*, 82-83.

<sup>337</sup> Paul F. Bradshaw, Maxwell E. Johnson and L. Edward Phillips, *The Apostolic Tradition: A Commentary* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2002).

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.*, 14-15.

models of Eucharistic development.<sup>339</sup> As many books on liturgy and a multitude of other theological literature follow the linear model, and have now all been called into question, in a recent article Bradshaw has humorously suggested that

As a result of the great advances that have been made in liturgical scholarship in the last few decades, we now know much less about early eucharistic worship than we once thought that we did. Indeed, it sometimes appears that if things keep on their present rate, it is possible that we shall soon find that we know absolutely nothing at all: for a large part of what current research has achieved has been to demolish theories that had been built on unreliable foundations.<sup>340</sup>

If one accepts the very persuasive arguments that the document known as the *Apostolic Tradition* does not originate in third century Rome with Hippolytus, and that the *Didache* is in fact a Eucharistic Prayer, then the theories of Dix and earlier generations of scholars are hard to maintain. Another criticism that Bradshaw will level at Dix's "shape" is that the proposed dependence of the first part of the Christian Eucharist on the Synagogue liturgy is quite tenuous given that little is

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<sup>339</sup> The scholarly community has generally accepted the conclusions of the authors of the new edition of the *Apostolic Tradition*. However one exception is Alistair Stewart-Sykes whose recent edition continues the traditional attribution of the document to Hippolytus (*Hippolytus On the Apostolic Tradition: An English Version with Introduction and Commentary*, Crestwood, NY: SVS Press, 2001). A helpful comparison between the two editions is provided by John F. Baldovin, in "Hippolytus and the *Apostolic Tradition*: Recent Research and Commentary" in *Theological Studies* 64 (2003): 520-542. Also the debate continues in a number of articles in the same edition of *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*: J.A. Cerrato "The Association of the Name *Hippolytus* with a Church Order, Now Known as *The Apostolic Tradition*," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 48 no. 2-3 (2004): 179-194; Paul F. Bradshaw "Who Wrote the *Apostolic Tradition*? A Response to Alistair Stewart-Sykes," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 48 no. 2-3 (2004): 195-206; Allen Brent "St. Hippolytus, Biblical Exegete, Roman Bishop, and Martyr," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 48 no. 2-3 (2004): 207-232 and Alistair Stewart-Sykes, "*Traditio Apostolica*, The Liturgy of Third-Century Rome and the Hippolytean School, or *Quomodo Historia Liturgica Conscribenda Sit*," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 48 no. 2-3 (2004): 233-248. However in the opinion of the author of this thesis, the debate seems to have been won by Bradshaw et al.

<sup>340</sup> Paul Bradshaw, "Continuity and Change in Early Eucharistic Practice: Shifting Scholarly Perspectives," in R.N. Swanson, ed., *Continuity and Change in Christian Worship. Papers Read at the 1997 Summer Meeting and the 1998 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1999), 1.



known about early Jewish liturgy, and that it is doubtful if there was a common structure of first century Jewish Synagogue for the first Christians to copy.<sup>341</sup>

A significant contribution to the debate on the earliest form of the Christian Eucharist has been made by Andrew McGowan. McGowan has studied the earliest accounts of the Eucharist, in particular looking at the forms that did not fit into the linear development, such as some early references to groups of Christians who celebrated using water and not wine. In dealing with this early period he adds the important clarification that

The eucharist was eventually not a substantial meal but token in nature does not mean that it was always so. Liturgical historians have often tended to see the earliest eucharists as specific acts involving token foods within a meal, perhaps in part because of squeamishness about the possibility that the eucharistic bread and wine might have been eaten in substantial quantities. There also seems to be some difficulty in imagining even that bread and wine or water were in fact the typical, central, or only food and drink of a meal, at least for the majority of the people; hence their use is taken to be odd, and necessarily sacramental in a somewhat anachronistic sense.<sup>342</sup>

In addition he also points out that the earliest Christian Eucharists were as likely to be based on pagan meals as Jewish meals. In the first Christian centuries it would have been hard to make a clear-cut distinction between religious and secular meals as elements of the prevailing pagan religions pervaded most "normal" meals.<sup>343</sup> McGowan then fits the first Christian Eucharists neatly into the template of

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<sup>341</sup> Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship*, 122. For a summary of the various critiques on Dix's "shape," as well as some defence of the older theory, see Jones, introduction to Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, xiv-xxviii.

<sup>342</sup> Andrew McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists. Food and Drink in Early Christian Ritual Meals* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 11

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

these pagan meals and goes as far as to claim that “only the actual prayers used in the meal really depart radically from the expectations of pagan dinners.”<sup>344</sup>

While the critiques of Bradshaw and McGowan ought to be duly taken into consideration and while it would be a mistake to try to “situate all extant examples of later Christian rites and prayers within a single line of development;”<sup>345</sup> nonetheless I disagree with their overly cautious view. In all of the polemics there seems to be a fascination in proving that we can say little or nothing about early liturgy and that perhaps they are falling into what Robert Taft calls the “pick-a-century” game.<sup>346</sup>

Although many variants do exist and it is impossible to fit all of the evidence into a very neat progression, nonetheless “it is certainly true that the liturgical skeleton provided by Justin is discernable in every Christian tradition thereafter.”<sup>347</sup> I would agree with Bradshaw that the earliest Eucharistic prayers seem to have been composed in the Jewish manner “of combining smaller units together that was at the heart of many ancient compositions.”<sup>348</sup> While the most ancient Eucharistic Prayers may lack the institution narrative, this element seems to have soon come to form the centre of most Eucharistic Prayers. The structure and basic content of the Eucharistic Prayers developed in different places in a more or less parallel fashion.

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<sup>344</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>345</sup> Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship*, 140.

<sup>346</sup> Robert Taft, “Response to the Berakah Award: Anamnesis,” in *Beyond East and West*, 2d ed. (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale Press, 1997), 291. Also note that Stewart-Sykes accuses Bradshaw of becoming overly enamoured with pure liturgy of third century diversity and thereby pushing the so-called fourth century “golden-age” back a century. Alistair Stewart-Sykes “The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship,” *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 48 no. 2-3 (2004): 325.

<sup>347</sup> Johnson, “The Apostolic Tradition,” 52. Even Bradshaw will admit that this may have taken place, albeit in very general terms, “long before” the fourth century. Bradshaw, *Eucharistic Origins*, 146.

<sup>348</sup> Bradshaw, *Eucharistic Origins*, 122.

Undoubtedly there were real differences, and maybe even radical differences, in the ways that the Eucharistic prayer was structured in different Churches (and maybe even between different celebrants in the same Church). But I agree with Bouley when he speaks of a “basic unanimity” in this period. While there was a lot of freedom and the celebrant was not tied to a text there was a definite commonality to most of the prayers so that it could be said in general about any Eucharistic Prayer that “its *animus*, its spirit, fundamental direction and most basic content were one.”<sup>349</sup>

## 2.2 The Solidification of the Shape of the Eucharist in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries

The general acceptance of Christianity after the Edict of Milan in 313, was also to influence profound changes in the liturgy. In these centuries “the basic structure of the Eucharistic liturgy developed in a remarkably similar fashion throughout the Christian world.”<sup>350</sup> There was also a great push for uniformity in the liturgy in the fourth century leading to what has been called the “Fourth Century Homogenization” of Christian liturgy.<sup>351</sup> There were a number of causes for this. Not least of these was the start of pilgrimages to Jerusalem where pilgrims from various regions came together and various liturgical practices spread to different places from

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<sup>349</sup> Allan Bouley, *From Freedom to Formula. The Evolution of the Eucharistic Prayer from Oral Improvisation to Written Texts* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1981), 89-90.

<sup>350</sup> John F. Baldovin, “The Empire Baptized,” in Wainwright and Westerfield Tucker, eds. *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*, 84.

<sup>351</sup> Paul Bradshaw, “The Homogenization of Christian Liturgy – Ancient and Modern,” *Studia Liturgica* 26 (1996): 6-9.

Jerusalem itself as well as many others passing from one local Church through Jerusalem to other local Churches. Another major factor in the standardization of liturgical practices was the struggle to define and defend orthodoxy against the new heresies. This was the period of great Councils and these councils provided a forum for bishops to exchange ideas on the liturgy and liturgical practices, but they also were instrumental in the abandonment of freer forms of expression in liturgical prayers so that the presider would not be accused of heresy, which might have been possible as the earlier freer versions of prayers may have been open to a number of interpretations. In this period there was also a need to confront certain pagan practices that the multitudes of people coming into the Church brought with them. Paradoxically, this was also accompanied by the assimilation of many pagan elements into Christian liturgy as Christians “were now followers of a legitimate and respectable religion, a *cultus publicus* that sought the divine favour in order to secure the well-being of the state.”<sup>352</sup> In this period there was also a marked professionalization of the clergy who dominated the liturgy as it increasingly became a public affair.<sup>353</sup>

As history is never neat, this process of “homogenization” also carried within it the beginnings of the differentiation of the various liturgical families. Taft has made an important contribution in the analysis of this phenomenon with his theory of “soft points:”

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<sup>352</sup> Bradshaw, *Eucharistic Origins*, 139.

<sup>353</sup> Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship*, 220.

The period of the unification of rites, saw a filling in of the basic common outline of the Eucharist at the three "soft points" of the service: (1) before the readings, (2) between the word service and the eucharistic prayer, and (3) at the communion and dismissal that follow this prayer. In the primitive liturgy these were points of action without words: (1) entrance into the church; (2) the kiss of peace and transfer of gifts; (3) the fraction, communion, and dismissal rites.

As ceremonial and text rush in to fill the vacuum at the three action points of the liturgy, thus overlaying the primitive shape with a "second stratum" of introit, preanaphoral, and communion rites, a contrary movement is provoked. The liturgy, thus filled out, appears overburdened and must be cut back. What characterizes this next step is the abandonment of the former respect for this primitive shape. For it is universally verifiable that the elements thus reduced or suppressed are ever the later additions, but elements of the original core: the Old Testament lessons, the responsorial psalmody between the readings, the prayers after the readings, the kiss of peace, and so forth.<sup>354</sup>

In other words as the Liturgy developed a common form in most Churches the creative juices did not stop there. There was also a desire to fill in the blank spaces leaving no quiet moments in the rite. This eventually led to some older and more important elements being eliminated or cut down in favour of these newer elements. But perhaps more significantly these modifications were different in the different Churches and led to a partial obscuring of the shape as regional variants were introduced. The most important of the Western modifications was the introduction of the offertory procession.

Uniquely Western Latin practice as distinguished from that of the Eastern tradition, is generally acknowledged to have originated in the Roman provinces of Africa and taken the form of an offertory procession. This ritual act, which was an extension of the earlier practice by which the faithful brought bread and wine for use in the eucharistic celebration, was in vogue in third-century North Africa, and possibly in Rome. In the fourth century, it was in use in Milan, Aquileia, as well as in Spain. The custom was for the faithful to carry bread and mixed wine to the altar, and from these offerings the priest selected what was required for the eucharistic consecration, the rest being distributed in favor of the needy. These offerings by the faithful were conceived as the expression of their co-offering of the eucharistic sacrifice with and through the presiding bishop or presbyter. The meaning of this

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<sup>354</sup> Robert Taft, "The Structural Analysis of Liturgical Units: An Essay in Methodology," in *Beyond East and West*, 201-202.

practice derives from the understanding of the celebration as a constellation of prayers and actions in which each participant had a role to play in the realization of the one sacrificial worship.

This ante-Nicene practice, received in other Western churches beginning in the fifth century, gradually took on a new meaning accompanied by corresponding external changes. In the new (Western) environment, alongside the bread and the wine, other gifts of value were added. Obviously the symbolism of the old offertory procession was no longer functioning undisturbed. Whereas the original communality of the gifts signalled a communal act in which the differentiation of the offerers is not expressed, the new practice of offering a variety of gifts underscored the individuality of the offerers. The theological outlook that exercised considerable influence on the development of the new practice was the understanding of the eucharistic worship as a unified sacrificial act performed by the priest on behalf of the community and in the name of Christ. The offering of gifts was considered to be the extension of the desire of the faithful to participate in the celebration—which in the West came to be seen increasingly, eventually even primarily, as act of the priest – by adding a kind of sacrifice of their own.<sup>355</sup>

At the end of this section it is probably best to emphasize that despite the emergence of a clear “Shape” and of the homogenization of the liturgy, that the liturgy was still far from identical in each and every church in a given region. A certain orality remained in the celebration of the liturgy in all of its various settings. Tom Elich points out that throughout the period prior to the invention of the printing press that “it was normal for much of the Middle Ages to experience the liturgy without relying on the book at every moment. It was used only when necessary. Having the book and knowing how to read it is one thing; feeling constrained to read from it is another.”<sup>356</sup> He also postulates that the many examples from the High Middle Ages of ordination and novitiate requirements for the memorization of substantial passages of scriptural and euchological texts, when considered together with the records of episcopal visitations to rural parishes which often lament the

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<sup>355</sup> Edward J. Kilmartin, *The Eucharist in the West. History and Theology*, ed. Robert J. Daly (Collegeville, MN, The Liturgical Press, 1998), 110.

<sup>356</sup> Tom Elich, “Using Liturgical Texts in the Middle Ages,” in Gerard Austin, ed., *Fountain of Life in Memory of Niels K. Rasmussen, O.P.* N.P.N. Studies in Church Music and Liturgy. (Washington D.C.: The Pastoral Press, 1991), 71.

sometimes total lack of liturgical texts in a given parish would lead him to conclude that often the Eucharist was celebrated by "illiterate rural clergy using only a small number of memorized texts."<sup>357</sup>

### 2.3 The Development of the Gallican Rite and its Probable Use in Ireland

When dealing with the Latin West, there was a certain plurality of liturgical rites, given that Western Liturgy was probably "the outcome of a varied growth from a common base,"<sup>358</sup> but most of the West celebrated using some form of the Gallican Rite.<sup>359</sup> But, due in particular to the lack of survival of hymnographical texts, it would be almost impossible to reconstruct a full "Gallican" liturgy from the remaining manuscripts. Pinell points out that not all Churches had "the same luck" when it came to establishing their own rites.<sup>360</sup> The Gallican Rite was the rite used in the area of present-day Europe composed by France, Germany and the Low Countries,

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<sup>357</sup> *Ibid.*, 76, see 74-77.

<sup>358</sup> A.A.R. Bastiaensen, "The Beginnings of Latin Liturgy," *Studia Patristica* 30 (1993): 290.

<sup>359</sup> King rightly points out that the term "Gallican" can refer to as many as five different types of liturgy: "(1) The rite existing in Gaul before the reforms of Pepin and Charlemagne; (2) the Roman rite as altered and enriched in Gaul and Germany by the Carolingian school of liturgists; (3) a French use introduced by the Normans into Apulia and Sicily; (4) the Franco-Roman rite, which, at the instigation of Pope St. Gregory VII (1073-85), supplanted the Mozarabic rite in Spain at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century [...]; (5) the liturgical books in many of the dioceses of France in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which, in defiance of the Tridentine regulations, had been altered by the bishops, were known as 'Gallican' or 'neo-Gallican.'" *Liturgies of the Past*, 77. (I would add a sixth possible usage: the liturgical uses of some of the "Western Rite Orthodox" groupings, see Gregory Woolfenden, "Western Rite Orthodoxy: Some Reflections on a Liturgical Question," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 45: 2 (2001): 163-192.) The multiplicity of meanings can be confusing and, in this section, "Gallican" can be taken to signify King's first meaning, "the rite existing in Gaul before the reforms of Pepin and Charlemagne." However, as will be explained in this section, we believe that this was a rather broad liturgical category that was in use in much of the non-Roman west, including the British Isles.

<sup>360</sup> Jordi Pinell i Pons, "History of the Liturgies in the Non-Roman West" Chap 11 in Ansgar J. Chupungco, ed., *The Pontifical Liturgical Institute, Handbook for Liturgical Studies*, Vol. 1, *Introduction to the Liturgy* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1997), 180.

as well as Britain and, I would hold, Ireland. The greatest period of liturgical creativity of the Gallican rite took place between the end of the fifth and the beginning of the sixth centuries.<sup>361</sup> But the Rite would not survive in the long term probably due to the fact that no local metropolitan see was able to command lasting influence over this area.<sup>362</sup> It is likely that the Hispanic (or Mozarabic) rite of Spain had a common origin with the Gallican rite, namely some liturgical traditions from the East and Italy but especially North Africa.<sup>363</sup>

However, the Hispanic Rite, which developed later than the Gallican Rite in the sixth and seventh centuries was to have a more sustained and stronger development, perhaps due to the fact that this rite was centred successively on three different Iberian metropolitan sees: Tarragona, Seville and Toledo.<sup>364</sup>

There is a great similarity, or even identity, between the structure and content of the Ordinaries of the Gallican Mass and the Hispanic Mass, regardless of some elements introduced later in the Hispanic that were not of the same origin. In the Ordinary we should highlight the composition of the eucharistic anaphora, consisting of three variable pieces, in addition to the song of the *Sanctus* and the narration of the institution, which are invariable. The African anaphora probably had the same structure.<sup>365</sup>

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<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

<sup>363</sup> Jordi Pinell i Pons, "Gallicana (Liturgia)," in Angelo Di Berardino, ed. *Diccionario Patristico y de la Antigüedad. Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum – Roma* (Salamanca: Ediciones Sigueme, 1991), 1:911. However cf. Johannes Quasten, "Oriental Influence in the Gallican Liturgy," *Traditio* Volume 1 (1943): 55-78. Here Quasten argues, unsuccessfully in my opinion, for an Eastern and, in particular, Syriac, origin for the Gallican rite. Duchense argues for Milan being the "principal centre" of the genesis of the Gallican Rite. He assumes that the Ambrosian and Gallican liturgies are one and the same thing in the early period and that both came into contact with the Roman liturgy at different times and in different ways explaining the later differences between them. Louis Duchense, *Christian Worship: its Origin and Evolution. A Study of the Latin Liturgy up to the Time of Charlemagne*. M.L. McClure, trans., 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (London: SPCK: 1919), 86-05.

<sup>364</sup> Pinell, "History of the Liturgies in the Non-Roman West," 187.

<sup>365</sup> Gabriel Ramis, "The Eucharistic Celebration in the Non-Roman West" in Ansgar J. Chupungco, ed., *The Pontifical Liturgical Institute, Handbook for Liturgical Studies*, Vol. 3, *The Eucharist* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, A Pueblo Book, 1999), 259.



The common origin of the Gallican and Hispanic rites is important for our considerations.<sup>366</sup> The theory of a common origin is fairly modern, whereas earlier authors tended to see these Rites as totally independent. But as there were some common characteristics in liturgy in Ireland and Iberia, regions that were supposedly separated by Gaul which was using a different Rite, this led to some interesting theories being formulated to explain this commonality. Edmund Bishop, one of the pioneers of modern liturgical scholarship, has famously pointed out the existence of certain "Spanish Symptoms" in Irish liturgical material.<sup>367</sup> The most important example of this is the presence of the Creed in the Stowe Missal. This has led scholars to trace the use of the Creed in the Roman Mass from the East to Spain through Ireland to Alcuin and Charlemagne.<sup>368</sup> But it is probably futile to look for direct liturgical connections between Ireland and Spain. It is quite possible that some Irish ecclesiastic did find his way to Spain and back or vice versa, but this was hardly the basis for major liturgical exchanges. It is far more probable that these "Spanish symptoms" can be explained in a different way, that of a shared basis for the Gallican and Hispanic Rites. As there is fragmentary evidence for the Gallican Rite it is quite possible that some elements are preserved only in Spanish and Irish material but that this is due to a common origin and not any particular Spanish elements in Irish practice.<sup>369</sup>

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<sup>366</sup> W. S. Porter, *The Gallican Rite* (London: Mowbray: 1958), 10.

<sup>367</sup> Edmund Bishop, *Liturgia Historica. Papers on the Liturgical and Religious Life of the Western Church* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1918), 165.

<sup>368</sup> Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 1:469

<sup>369</sup> Marc Schneiders, "The Origins of the Early Irish Liturgy", in Próinséas Ní Chatháin and Michael Richter, eds., *Ireland and Europe in the Early Middle Ages: Learning and Literature*

Perhaps the greatest feature of the Gallican Rite was its flexibility. Together with the Hispanic Rite it shared the tendency to “compose the Eucharistic Prayer from variable euchological texts.” This meant that the Gallican Rite “was largely composed of variables, with a small number of fixed formulas.” So that while the general shape of the Eucharistic rite would have been fairly common throughout the Gallican region “there would have been considerable variations in the different provinces.”<sup>370</sup> However the Hispanic Rite perfected this technique whereas the Gallican Rite remained at an earlier level of developments lacking the sophistication of the Hispanic synthesis.<sup>371</sup> Due to its unfinished state the Gallican rite never managed to become codified in its liturgical books.<sup>372</sup>

It is interesting that Alan Bouley in his work that extols the improvisation of the early Church’s euchological traditions, preferring the “freedom” of the early Church to the “formula” of later ages, has to admit defeat when dealing with the Gallican liturgical tradition. He sees how the Gallican Eucharistic texts remain “unfinished” and lacking in “vigour.”<sup>373</sup> His overall summary of this rite is worth quoting:

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(Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta 1996), 80. However, cf. Michael Curran, *The Antiphony of Bangor* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1984), 151. Here Curran traces 4 definite and 15 possible Spanish prayers in the *Antiphony of Bangor*, perhaps suggesting stronger Irish-Spanish links. Although considering that this book comes from an Irish centre in the North of Italy (and if the 15 possible identifications are, in fact, true), this could suggest a Spanish-Ambrosian link.

<sup>370</sup> King, *Liturgies of the Past*, 183.

<sup>371</sup> “Comporre la prece eucaristica con testi eucologici variabili.” Jordi Pinell i Pons, “La Liturgia Gallicana,” in Salvatore Marsilli. ed., *Anàmnesis. Introduzione Storico-Teologica della Liturgia*, Vol 2, *La Liturgia, Panorma Storico Generale* (Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1978), 66, English translation my own.

<sup>372</sup> Jordi Pinell i Pons, “Hispanica (Liturgia),” in Di Berardino, ed. *Diccionario Patristico y de la Antigüedad*, 1:912.

<sup>373</sup> Bouley, *From Freedom to Formula*, 192.

The fact that extemporization probably lasted longer in the west was not a boon to the development of eucharistic liturgy. Many of the eucharistic texts of Spain and Gaul (there are exceptions) stand in mute testimony to a freedom that had probably begun to go astray when the prayers were improvised and was carried even further when they came to be written. All things considered, the supplantation of the eucharistic formularies of the other western churches by the Roman canon with its few variable parts was far from being a disaster. The Roman anaphora, a unique prayer combining eastern fixity and western variability, was hardly perfect, but it was better than much of what it replaced.<sup>374</sup>

This rite was eventually to give way to the Roman Rite. But if the Roman and Byzantine rites can be described as “mongrels” in their development,<sup>375</sup> the Gallican Rite was probably never celebrated in a “pure” form. While Charlemagne’s programme of reform did include a clear Romanising dimension in its dealings with the Church and liturgy, there is abundant testimony to borrowings from Roman material well before Charlemagne.<sup>376</sup> Indeed to a certain degree the argument could be made that the Gallican Rite (as well as the Hispanic rite) was perhaps structurally inspired by the Roman Rite with its variable preface before the canon. However, the Gallican usage also included variable sections before and after institution narrative.<sup>377</sup>

The actual celebration probably lasted between one and two hours,<sup>378</sup> while the structure or shape of the Gallican rite probably looked something like this:

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<sup>374</sup> Ibid., 250.

<sup>375</sup> Robert Taft, “Sunday in the Byzantine Tradition,” in *Beyond East and West*, 51.

<sup>376</sup> Cyrille Vogel, “Les Échanges Liturgiques Entre Rome et les Pays Francs Jusqu’à l’Époque de Charlemagne,” in *Le Chiese nei Regni dell’Europa Occidentale e I loro Rapporti con Roma fino all’800. Settimana di Spoleto 7*, Vol. 1 (Spoleto, 1960), 198.

<sup>377</sup> Pinell, “Gallicana (Liturgia),” 1048.

<sup>378</sup> Beck, *The Pastoral Care of Souls in South East France*, 128.

- The Three Scriptural Readings (Old Testament, Epistle and Gospel)
- Chants and Prayers (including a Psalm, and the *Benedictus*: the Canticle of Zechariah in Gaul or the *Gloria* in Spain, the *Trisagion* and a triple *Kyrie*, the *Benedicite*: the Song of the three young men and sometimes a diaconal litany...)
- A Homily
- The Dismissal of the Catechumens and Penitents.
- The Eucharistic synaxis, which was composed of about ten variable prayers, including
  - the *praefatio missa*
  - 2 prayers of intercession: the *praefatio* and its *collectio*.
  - the Dyptiches or *nomina* and their prayer, the *post-nomina*.
  - the prayer of the *pax*
  - the Eucharistic prayer, the *contestatio* (or *immolatio*) and the *Sanctus*
  - the *post sanctus* prayer (or the *Vere Sanctus*)
  - the institution narrative (the *Qui pridie*)
- the *Pater* (with its introduction and embolism)
- A lengthy episcopal blessing of those who would receive Communion
- the 2 Post-Communion prayers.<sup>379</sup>

A central problem for our consideration is if this was the Rite that was brought to Ireland in its evangelisation in the fifth century. Today very few liturgical manuscripts survive from ancient Ireland. An additional difficulty in the study of liturgy in early Ireland, in particular in the earlier centuries, is that if there is scant manuscript evidence for Irish liturgical practices in the Pre-Norman period, there is virtually no extant manuscript evidence for British liturgy in the same period.<sup>380</sup> However there is a very good possibility that the early Church in Ireland was British in its character. St. Patrick was British as were many of the first evangelists of

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<sup>379</sup> Matthieu Smyth, *La Liturgie Oubliée. La Prière Eucharistique en Gaule Antique et dans l'Occident non Romain* (Paris, Les Éditions Du Cerf, 2003), 24. For a detailed reconstruction of a typical celebration of Sunday Mass in South East France in the sixth century (based mainly on the homilies of the bishops of the period, local Councils and the *Expositio Antiquae Liturgiae Gallicane*) see Beck, *The Pastoral Care of Souls in South East France*, 136-150. This very thorough reconstruction is of particular note as it uses exclusively South Eastern French material. However the approach, while interesting, is dated precisely because it does not use any Irish material! Another very detailed reconstruction can be found in Smyth, *La Liturgie Oubliée*, 183-225. Here Smyth makes use of all available sources including much Irish material.

<sup>380</sup> Thomas, *Christianity in Roman Britain*, 83-84.

Ireland.<sup>381</sup> In Chapter One we have examined the possibility that the early Irish Church may have owed somewhat more than is usually credited to Palladius' Roman-sponsored mission.<sup>382</sup> This might lead to the question of whether early Irish liturgy might have owed something to Roman liturgy given that Roman liturgy was to be one of the hallmarks of the later Roman Mission to Canterbury.<sup>383</sup> But Palladius was sent to Ireland from France and not directly from Rome like Augustine so it is far more likely that he would have introduced some form of the Gallican Rite as was practiced in fifth century Gaul. It is likewise probable that any British missionaries would have used the Gallican Rite – with no evidence to the contrary and given that the rest of the Church structure in Britain tended to be similar to Gaul it must be assumed that the Gallican Rite was the form of the liturgy in use in Britain, and would have been introduced by any British missionaries in Ireland.

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<sup>381</sup> Stevenson, *Liturgy and Ritual*, xxx.

<sup>382</sup> Charles-Edwards, "Palladius, Mission and Primatial Authority," 7.

<sup>383</sup> This reliance on Roman liturgical practice in the formation of the English Church was in contrast to the very liberal prescriptions which Bede reports Gregory the Great giving to Augustine in his dealings with the pre-existing Christians and their liturgical uses: "Interrogatio Augustini: Cum una sit fides, sunt ecclesiarum diuersae consuetudines, et altera consuetudo missarum in sancta Romana ecclesia atque altera in Galliarum tenetur? Respondit Gregorius papa: Nouit fraternitas tua Romanae ecclesiae consuetudinem, in ua se meminit nutritam. Sed mihi placet ut, siue in Romana siue in Galliarum seu in qualibet ecclesiae aliquid inuenisti, quod plus omnipotenti Deo possit placere. sollicite eligias, et in Anglorum ecclesia, quae adhuc ad fidem noua est, institutione praecepua, quae de multis ecclesiis colligere potuisti, infundas. Non enim pro locis res, sed pro bonis rebus loca amanda sunt. Ex singulis ergo quibusque ecclesiis quae pia, quae religiosa, quae recta sunt elige, et haec quasi in fasciculum collecta apud Anglorum mentes in consuetudinem depone." "Augustine's second question. Even though the faith is one are there varying customs in the churches? and is there one form of mass in the Holy Roman Church and another in the Gaulish churches? Pope Gregory answered: My brother, you know the customs of the Roman Church in which, of course, you were brought up. But it is my wish that if you have found any customs in the Roman or the Gaulish church or any other church which may be more pleasing to God, you should make a careful selection of them sedulously teach the Church of the English, which is still new in the faith, what you have been able to gather from other churches. For things are not to be loved for the sake of place, but places are to be loved for the sake of their good things. Therefore choose from every individual Church whatever things are devout religious, and right. And when you have collected these as it were into one bundle, see that the minds of the English grow accustomed to it." *Ecclesiastical History*, i.27, Colgrave and Mynors, 80-83.

In my opinion, the most persuasive piece of evidence for the non-existence of a separate Celtic Rite is the controversy over the *Bobbio Missal*. This missal (now in Paris, Biblio. Nat., *codex lat.* 13246)<sup>384</sup> was formerly to be found in the library of the North Italian monastery of Bobbio which was founded by St. Columbanus.<sup>385</sup> It is an interesting manuscript which may have been written as early as the seventh century and combines the functions of Sacramentary and Lectionary as well as containing a "plethora of miscellaneous material."<sup>386</sup> But while most older authors tend to classify this manuscript as belonging to the so-called Celtic Rite,<sup>387</sup> more recent authors classify it as Gallican.<sup>388</sup> But the best solution to defining the liturgy of this missal is to see in it an example of the Gallican Rite which at an early date was becoming Romanised:

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<sup>384</sup> Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 323. For a detailed history and analysis of the opinions of various scholars on the Bobbio Missal see Yitzhak Hen, "Introduction: the Bobbio Missal – from Mabillon onwards" in Yitzhak Hen and Rob Meens, eds., *The Bobbio Missal. Liturgy and Religious Culture in Merovingian Gaul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1-7.

<sup>385</sup> While Columbanus was Irish, it seems that either his foundations adopted the local liturgy of the place or, perhaps, that the liturgy that Columbanus would have been familiar with in Ireland would not have been radically different from the Gallican Rite as he found in the Continent. A study of the remaining manuscripts from the Columban foundation of Luxeuil indicates that the liturgical works are Gallican: "studies of the Luxeuil Lectionary, the *Missale gothicum* and the *Missale gallicanum vetus*, all written at Luxeuil or in an affiliated centre, demonstrate how predominantly Gallican liturgical usage was. Any Insular features occurring at Luxeuil are incidental." Rosamond McKitterick "The Scriptoria of Merovingian Gaul: A survey of the Evidence" in H.B. Clarke and Mary Brennan, eds., *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism* (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports International Series, 1981), 185.

<sup>386</sup> Yitzhak Hen and Rob Meens, "Conclusion" in Hen and Meens, eds., *The Bobbio Missal*, 219.

<sup>387</sup> E.g., Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 1:45; Henry Jenner, "The Celtic Rite," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* Volume III, (New York: Macmillan, 1908), 496; and Gougau "Celtiques (liturgies)" in F Carol. and Henri Leclercq, eds., *Dictionnaire D'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie*, Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané., 1922:ii/2: 2971; henceforth cited as DACL.

<sup>388</sup> Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 323-234; Bernard Botte, *Le Canon de la Messe Romaine. Édition Critique, Introduction et Notes* (Louvain: Abbaye de Mont César, 1935), 11; Woolfenden, "The Medieval Western Rites," 266; Bouyer, *Eucharist*, 319. Interestingly Smyth (*La Liturgie Oubliée*, 108-113.) does not seem to come down on either side of the line, as he finds the eclectic composition of the book to be too haphazard to attribute it to the Gallican sphere of influence, and he suspects that it was written in the North of Italy under Irish influence, however he does use the evidence from it in the rest of his book when trying to reconstruct the Gallican Rite!

If one is convinced that the liturgy of Frankish Gaul is a mere derivative of the Roman rite, and that it represents a stage of chaos and anarchy in the development of western liturgy, then the Bobbio Missal is indeed a hybrid specimen, not at all representative of the so-called 'Gallican' rite. It has too much that is Roman incorporated into its prayers, indeed more than in many of the liturgical manuscripts known to us from Merovingian Gaul. But, if one is willing to accept the view that Merovingian Gaul was a fertile centre of liturgical activity, things might look rather different. The composer of the Bobbio Missal picked and mixed various prayers which he found in his sources, arranged them according to his peculiar needs, changed and altered their language whenever he felt it necessary and even added new prayers which were most probably composed by Merovingian authors, if not by the compiler himself. Roman prayers, then, were only one sort of bricks used by the compiler of the Bobbio Missal in constructing this remarkable sacramentary, and choosing these Roman prayers was only part of the creative process. Viewed from that perspective, the Bobbio Missal can clearly be regarded as an extraordinary witness to the vitality and richness of Merovingian liturgy.<sup>389</sup>

While the *Bobbio Missal* was definitely not written in Ireland or, for that matter, is probably not very indebted to Ireland in any way, the fact that it was typical for the Gallican liturgy implies that similar books could well have been in use in Ireland. In the next chapter the various Irish evidence will be studied, and it will be seen how the Irish *Palimpsest Sacramentary* of Munich can be considered among the best examples of the early Gallican liturgy<sup>390</sup> and the *Stowe Missal* as a perfect example of a later Gallican type of Missal which has accepted many Roman elements including the Roman Canon.<sup>391</sup>

An area that will require future study is the links between Irish liturgy and various North Italian liturgies. North Italy was particularly rich in liturgical creativity in the period of late antiquity, due to the political situation caused firstly by the imperial

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<sup>389</sup> Hen, "The Liturgy of the Bobbio Missal," in Hen and Meens, eds, *The Bobbio Missal*, 150.

<sup>390</sup> Alban Dold and Leo Eizenhöfer, *Das Irische Palimpsestakramentar im CLM 14429, Der Staatsbibliothek München* (Beuron: Beuronener Kunstverlag, 1964).

<sup>391</sup> George F. Warner, ed. *The Stowe Missal: MS. D. II. 3 in the Library of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin* (Suffolk: The Henry Bradshaw Society – The Boydell Press, originally published as two volumes in 1906 (Vol. I) and 1915 (Vol. II), Reprinted in One Volume 1989).

residence in Milan and later by the Byzantine Exarch in Ravenna.<sup>392</sup> The metropolitan sees of this region were also lucky in having liturgically prolific and important bishops such as Ambrose (d. 397) in Milan, Peter Chrysologus (d. ca. 451) in Ravenna, Chromatius (d. 388) in Aquilea, Zeno (d. 372) in Verona.<sup>393</sup> These left a wealth of liturgical material that is today only beginning to be studied (and the resulting modern studies will probably need even more time for translation from Italian to other modern languages). However, in time all of these local uses were gradually replaced by the Roman Rite with only the Ambrosian rite being preserved, largely because of the prestige of St. Ambrose whose name it bore. The liturgy of Milan was notable for its vigils and songs. Particularly non-biblical songs, which were foreign to Roman liturgical tradition, were to be important in the Ambrosian Rite (the use of hymns in the Irish Church will be treated in Chapter 3). It is also likely that there was contact between these North Italian liturgical traditions and Irish ecclesiastics. It is often overlooked that Columbanus was active in the North of Italy as well as present day France and Switzerland. Here he would have encountered Northern Italian liturgical traditions. Indeed his monastery of Bobbio was to have the effect of introducing Gallican liturgical practices into the North of Italy, with some modern scholars even blaming Columbanus for personally being responsible for the

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<sup>392</sup> These Northern Italian connections with the Imperial Court in Byzantium may also have facilitated a certain Eastern influence on the Ambrosian Rite in the fifth and sixth centuries. Achille Triacca, "La Liturgia Ambrosiana," in Marsilli, ed., *Anàmnesis*, 95-96. This, in turn, might have provided one avenue for some of these Eastern elements to find their way to Ireland. Indeed Duchense would see these Eastern connections as having provided the whole basis for the creation of the Gallican Rite. Duchense, *Christian Worship*, 91-95.

<sup>393</sup> Achille Triacca, "Liturgia Ambrosiana," in D. Sartore, Achille M. Triacca and Juan María Canals, eds., *Nuevo Diccionario de Liturgia*, 3d ed. (Madrid: San Pablo, 1996), 55-56.



corruption of the liturgical purity of the region.<sup>394</sup> But it is also quite possible that certain Ambrosian texts and practices were adopted by Columbanus and other Irish ecclesiastics and brought back to Ireland.<sup>395</sup> While there had been little modern work on the connections between Irish and Ambrosian Eucharistic practice, a recent work dealing with the Liturgy of the Hours has found that the *Antiphonary of Bangor* has a number of prayers from North Italian sources (although he identifies many more prayers of Spanish origins) and that “the structure of lauds at Bangor also appears to be more closely modelled on the Ambrosian morning office than on that of Arles.”<sup>396</sup>

Once again, it needs to be stressed that at this time in Ireland (or for that matter in any given region) one would not find liturgical books that were identical to those in use in any other part of Europe.<sup>397</sup> A church used the books that it had and even if there were more up to date versions available, it is more than likely that the old version would be retained as most churches found it very hard to afford new manuscripts. We must remember that books were extremely important, and very expensive. The vellum used was difficult to manufacture and expensive to the degree of making it almost impossible for a private individual to own a book. The lives of the Irish saints are full of stories of how the saint miraculously saved a book

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<sup>394</sup> *bid.*, 56.

<sup>395</sup> Triacca, “La Liturgia Ambrosiana,” 97.

<sup>396</sup> Curran, *The Antiphonary of Bangor*, 194.

<sup>397</sup> Speaking of Western Europe as a whole in the sixth to the eleventh centuries Vogel reminds us that “a variety of ritual descriptions could coexist in regard to the same *actio liturgica* at the same period and in the same locality, even if they were of different ritual and cultic backgrounds,” *Medieval Liturgy*, 137.

after it had fallen in water,<sup>398</sup> some attribute St. Columba's founding of Iona as being due to a penance imposed on him after he caused a war over a book!<sup>399</sup>

Only very rarely and for a very good reason would a book be discarded. If a book was found wanting it might be slightly altered or recycled as a palimpsest. At the same time, the Irish had no problem in making modifications to the liturgy and adding material that they found interesting. While Bishop's label of "the Irish eclectic, or tinkering, method in liturgy"<sup>400</sup> might be a bit harsh, at the same time we do witness a certain admixture of liturgical materials.<sup>401</sup> But particularly regarding the adoption of Roman elements, history would show that the Gallican area as a whole was apt to dabble in this "Irish eclectic method."<sup>402</sup> In summary, this thesis proposes that the origins of Irish liturgy and its later history was much more typically mainstream than has often been thought.

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<sup>398</sup> See, for example, "Fecht náon dia raibhe Cáioimhgin ag gabail a trath ro thuit a psaltair uadh isin loch. Ro gabh sniomh 7 toirrsi mor-adbal é. Ocus do raidh an taingel fris: 'nár bhad brónach' ar sé. Tainc an dobhrán iaramh go Caoimhgin, 7 tucc an tsaltair leis as iochtar an locha gan báthiad line no litre." "One time when Coemgen was reciting his hours, he dropped his psalter into the lake; and a great grief and vexation seized him. And the angel said to him: 'Do not grieve.'" said he. Afterwards an otter came to Coemgen bringing the psalter with him from the bottom of the lake, and not a line or letter was blotted (*lit.* drowned)." "Life of Coemgen (I)" ix. 14 in Charles Plummer, ed. and trans., *Bearha Náem nÉrenn. Lives of the Irish Saints Edited from Original Manuscripts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1922, 1968), 1:127. English translation from *ibid.*, 2:123.

<sup>399</sup> For these legendary accounts on the reasons for Columba's exile for Christ in Scotland see Martin McNamara, *Psalter Text and Psalter Study in the Early Irish Church AD. 600-1200* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1973), 210-213.

<sup>400</sup> Bishop, *Liturgica Historica*, 166.

<sup>401</sup> Stevenson, *Liturgy and Ritual*, lxx.

<sup>402</sup> Indeed, prior to the official promotion of Roman practices by Charlemagne, Vogel sees a lot of evidence of "private initiatives," whereby various private individuals such as pilgrims or clerics and monastics who journeyed to Rome brought Roman books and traditions back to France particularly in the period after the mid-seventh century. Vogel, "Les Échanges Liturgiques," 293-295.

## 2.4 The Journey of the Roman Rite over the Alps and the new Liturgical synthesis

As the Gallican rite was developing, in Rome two factors of liturgical history are noteworthy: the Roman Canon and Ritual Splendour. At this time some new studies on the origins of the Roman Canon are necessary, particularly in light of the reversal of scholarly opinion on the Roman third-century origins of the *Apostolic Tradition*.<sup>403</sup> Modern studies of the Roman Canon have still to be undertaken. The enigmatic text was to have great popularity and success but as regards its origins, specialists remained somewhat baffled:

When we compare this text [*the Roman Canon*] directly with the other anaphoras, we can only feel an exasperating sense of helplessness, for the Roman Canon shows no kinship with any of the structures of the other liturgical families. It is a text different from every other and is not reducible to any of the structures known to us today.<sup>404</sup>

But while the Roman Canon was to have great success being imported wholesale into most other Western Liturgies,<sup>405</sup> the other element of Roman liturgy which impressed Northern Europeans and visitors from the Gallican area was the ritual splendour of the Roman Church. The legalisation of Christianity came in the fourth century at exactly the same period as the Roman Empire was shifting its

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<sup>403</sup> Jungman's magnum opus of *The Mass of the Roman Rite* still remains an excellent resource. However he is dealing with the history of the Canon after it was formed, and his work on the early liturgy is not the most up to date.

<sup>404</sup> Enrico Mazza, "The Eucharist in the First Four Centuries" in Chupungco, ed., *The Eucharist*, 52.

<sup>405</sup> The tiny vestiges of the Hispanic liturgy celebrated in a handful of Spanish churches, were the only other Western example of a Eucharistic Prayer for about one thousand years. J. Bohajar, "Liturgia Hispana," in Sartore, Triacca and Canals, eds., *Nuevo Diccionario de Liturgia*, 958-960.

centre from Rome to the new purpose-built capital city of Constantinople.<sup>406</sup> As the empire gradually became more concerned with the Eastern provinces, the Bishop of Rome (and Western bishops in general) took on some of the civil and judicial roles that formerly were reserved to the Emperor. It is not surprising that certain elements of court ceremonial were to enter the liturgy. In Rome, in particular, the Papal liturgy was to become quite ceremonialised.<sup>407</sup>

The aspect of stational liturgy in the Irish context will be examined particularly in Chapter Four. But here it is important that this form of liturgy was popularised in the West copying the Roman experience in this time. In stational Liturgy the liturgical celebration is not confined to the church building but “spills over” into the environs. John Baldovin defines stational Liturgy as:

A service of worship at a designated church, shrine, or public place in or near a city or a town, on a designated feast, fast, or commemoration, which is presided over by the bishop or his representative and intended as the local church’s main liturgical celebration of the day.<sup>408</sup>

The Papal Mass as celebrated in Rome was extremely influential in the West. Pilgrims and visitors to Rome were impressed by the intricate ceremonial and this led to the creation of a new type of liturgical document: the *Ordines Romani*.<sup>409</sup>

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<sup>406</sup> Chadwick, *A History of Christianity*, 106-115.

<sup>407</sup> Theodore Klauser, *A Short History of the Western Liturgy, An Account and Some Reflections*, 2d ed. trans. J. Halliburton (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 32-37.

<sup>408</sup> Baldovin, *The Urban Character of Early Christian Worship*, 37.

<sup>409</sup> A good introduction to the *Ordines Romani* can be found in Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 135-224. More recent reflections on this type of literature can be found in Éric Palazzo, *A History of Liturgical Books. From the Beginning to the Thirteenth Century*, Madeleine Beaumont, trans. A Pueblo Book (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1998), 175-185. Michel Andrieu, *Les Ordines Romani du haut Moyen Age* (5 vols. Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense 11, 23, 24, 28, 29; Louvaine: Spicilegium, 1931ff) provides the best modern critical edition of the *Ordines Romani*. For an

Other liturgical texts contained very little instruction, but were mainly made up of prayer texts. The *Ordines* were to be descriptions of the ceremonies of the rite as opposed to the texts and were to be used either by a Master of Ceremonies or as a text to form clerics.<sup>410</sup> The different *ordines* describe different liturgical rites and were initially compiled in Rome starting in about the year 700 and taken back across the Alps to the Gallican area. Once there the various *ordines* were gradually gathered together to form collections that described a number of different rites.<sup>411</sup>

While the *ordines* are very important for the history of Roman liturgy, in fact, none of the extant manuscripts were written in Rome itself. As no other local Church in the West could celebrate the same type of stational liturgy as Rome with her multiplicity of churches and sacred sites, all of these collections, to a greater or lesser degree, were adapted to the new circumstances.<sup>412</sup> These documents bear witness to a complicated papal liturgy which was imitated throughout the West, and while not exactly replicated in every parish church (or even in the great monastic and cathedral churches) it was nonetheless the goal to which they aspired.<sup>413</sup> The adoption of a Roman ceremonial, albeit in a modified form, along with the gradual adoption of the Roman Canon is the pre-eminent way in which the Roman liturgy travelled north of the Alps. In all likelihood this form of liturgy was also of influence in Ireland as it would have come both directly from Rome itself where some Irish

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examination of how a Papal Roman Eucharist would have appeared at around the year 700, see Klauser, *A Short History of the Western Liturgy*, 59-72.

<sup>410</sup> Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 138.

<sup>411</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>412</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

<sup>413</sup> Marcel Metzger, "The History of the Eucharistic Liturgy in Rome" in Chupungco, ed., *The Eucharist*, 125-128.

ecclesiastics did travel and from the Gallicanised forms of Roman ritual which would have been used in Gaul.<sup>414</sup>

While many significant elements of the Roman Rite were being gradually adopted throughout the local Churches using the Gallican Rite, when Charlemagne was on the throne of what was to become the Holy Roman Empire in the late eighth and early ninth centuries liturgical orthodoxy and correctness was one of his policies of governance. He had seen that liturgical correctness was desirable as it could also encourage a sense of stability in society in general, and the “creation of a better Christian society, whose salvation is assured, and thereby ensures the salvation of the king.”<sup>415</sup> Two of his advisers in particular were to have a great influence in liturgical matters, Alcuin of York and Theodulf of Orléans (d. 820), these helped Charlemagne to reform the liturgical practices of his domain.<sup>416</sup> As part of this policy he requested a typical Roman sacramentary from Pope Hadrian, which was thought to be composed by Gregory the Great. The pope, after a delay of a number of years, sent a Roman Sacramentary commonly known as the *Hadrianum*.<sup>417</sup> However this Sacramentary was not from the time of Gregory (it was probably from the reign of Pope Honorius I, d. 638) and it proved to be very unsuitable for use as its usages reflected the papal stational liturgy of Rome and it lacked a lot of material necessary for cathedral and parish worship. In order to render it usable for non-papal liturgies

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<sup>414</sup> A number of different names are given to this new liturgy, including “Gallican Roman,” “Frankish Roman” and “Romano Frankish,” I follow Porter in the use of “Gallicanised Roman.” See Porter, *The Gallican Rite*, 54.

<sup>415</sup> Yitzhak Hen, *The Royal Patronage of the Liturgy in Frankish Gaul. To the Death of Charles the Bald (877)* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Henry Bradshaw Society/The Boydell Press, 2001), 68.

<sup>416</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>417</sup> For information on this Sacramentary, see Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 80-85, Palazzo, *A History of Liturgical Books*, 50-54.

St. Benedict of Aniane (d. 821) composed a *Supplement* to the *Hadrianum*.<sup>418</sup> To do this he used material from sources that were already in use in the Frankish territories. The resulting liturgy was “an amalgam of late eighth-century Roman material, older practices thought to be Roman, and indigenous Frankish-Gallican prayers.”<sup>419</sup>

Traditionally scholars have said that this new amalgam of Roman and Gallican elements was imposed on all of his realm by Charlemagne.<sup>420</sup> However recently Hen has challenged this view, pointing out that we have no record that Charlemagne ever imposed the use of this Sacramentary. The project seems to have been given a cold shoulder by Alcuin, Charlemagne’s chief liturgist. There is no record that Benedict of Aniane received a royal commission to write his *Supplement*, and that there is plenty of evidence of the continued use and copying of older Sacramentaries throughout Charlemagne’s reign even in ecclesiastic centres that were clearly linked with his liturgical reforms.<sup>421</sup>

However whether or not the traditional view is to be held, in one form or other the Roman and Gallican rites fused in the areas to the North of the Alps. Most ecclesiastics thought that they were using pure Roman liturgy, but their adaptation of the Roman books for use in these areas actually necessitated the use of many prayers of the older Gallican books. So while the shape of the rite may have been Roman, and the Roman Canon became the exclusive Eucharistic Prayer of these

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<sup>418</sup> See Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 85-92, Palazzo, *A History of Liturgical Books*, 52-54.

<sup>419</sup> Hen, *The Royal Patronage of the Liturgy*, 78.

<sup>420</sup> E.g. Michael S. Driscoll, “The Conversion of the Nations,” in Wainwright and Westerfield Tucker, eds., *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*, 189.

<sup>421</sup> Hen, *The Royal Patronage of the Liturgy*, 65-95, n.b. 78-81.

areas, quite a number of prayers, feast-days and other Gallican usages prevailed.<sup>422</sup> These prayers in particular were markedly different from the Roman ones, as the Roman prayers tended to be of a very simple and elegant structure whereas the Gallican prayers were of a much more complex and wordy structure.<sup>423</sup>

Then as time progressed Rome fell on hard times, the city fell into decay, the population plummeted and the Bishop of Rome was sometimes not of the highest moral character. This led to a decline in the Roman Church as a whole, including the nature and quality of the liturgical celebrations.<sup>424</sup> Thus Rome was herself influenced by some new Cluniac monasteries staffed by diligent foreign monks who celebrated an elaborate liturgy, using the books from their native homes to the North of the Alps. This, along with the patronage of the Church of Rome by Frankish and Saxon leaders, which included the physical importation of French liturgical manuscripts to Rome, led to the adoption of a Gallicanised Roman Rite even within the City of Rome itself.<sup>425</sup> So by the year 1000 the liturgy of the Church of Rome would have resembled that in most of the rest of the West, even if a number of the elements of a stational liturgy were to persist there until the period of the Avignon papacy in the fourteenth century.

Many of the eleventh century popes desired to reform the Church, which led to what has been called the Second Gregorian Reform of Pope Gregory VII (1073-

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<sup>422</sup> Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 102-106 and Palazzo, *A History of Liturgical Books*, 54-56.

<sup>423</sup> Edmond Bishop's paper on "The Genius of the Roman Rite" (in *Liturgica Historica*, 1-19) is still the classic examination of this process of the melding together of the two Rites with particular attention given to the differences between the two styles of euchology or prayer composition.

<sup>424</sup> Baldovin, *The Urban Character of Early Christian Worship*, 116.

<sup>425</sup> Klauser, *A Short History of the Western Liturgy*, 72-77; Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 104-105.



1085). This had been prepared by Leo IX (1049-1054) and Nicholas II (1058-1061). Gregory took back into his hands the Roman liturgy from the rulers and bishops from north of the Alps. Although he was able only to work minor changes he promoted that bishops should follow the customs of Rome in a rigorous way. It was more important for the foundations it laid for future reforms: the reforms by which Ireland was brought even more fully into line with English and Continental practice. It promoted the view that Western Christianity as a whole should follow the uses of the Papal See as opposed to a particular diocese, religious order or secular order promoting this same ideal for their own purposes.<sup>426</sup>

While the Norman Invasion of Ireland was to have clear consequences also in the field of liturgy with the adoption of books and practices common to English dioceses, this was not as radical a change as has often been thought. Irish Churchmen had already for centuries been moving towards the adoption of Roman liturgical practices. The death of the native religious orders and St. Malachy's introduction of the Cistercians and the Augustinians into Ireland as part of the eleventh century reform were to effect the liturgy as celebrated in Ireland, making it more in line with the new Gallicanised Roman Rite used in the rest of Europe. St. Bernard of Clairvaux even tells us how Malachy introduced the "Customs of the Holy Roman Church" into Ireland.<sup>427</sup> While the remaining evidence for the period immediately after the Norman Invasion is still not as abundant as one might like, there are nonetheless three twelfth-century Irish missals, the Drummond, Corpus

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<sup>426</sup> Driscoll, "The Conversion of the Nations," 197-202.

<sup>427</sup> "Consuetudines sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae." *Vita Sancti Malachiae Episcopi* III.7 16 in Leclercq and Rochais, eds., *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, 316. English Translation from Meyer, *The Life and Death of Saint Malachy the Irishman*, 72.

and Rosslyn missals, that "have distinct affinities with early missals of the Sarum rite."<sup>428</sup>

## 2.5 The Participation of the Laity in the Eucharist

One of the first facts that needs to be noted about the laity's participation in this time is the role of language in the liturgy. The introduction of Latin into the liturgy of the Church in North Africa and later on in Gaul and Rome itself was carried out in order that people (or at least the presiders) could understand the language of the liturgy as the use of Greek in the West was in decline.<sup>429</sup> But while the faithful in Italy and Iberia continued to understand some Latin for a longer time, already by the sixth century Latin was unintelligible in France, and many Christians coming from the Barbarian tribes and the first Irish Christians would never have understood Latin. In general, by the ninth century throughout the West, Latin was a language exclusively of the clerical and educated classes.<sup>430</sup> This contributed to the Eucharist becoming more and more the realm of clerics, as little by little even the language of the liturgy became foreign to the ears of the laity. In fact the various reform movements tended to make the language of the liturgy even more incomprehensible to the laity:

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<sup>428</sup> Stevenson, *Liturgy and Ritual*, lxx

<sup>429</sup> However it is interesting to note that in the earlier shift from Greek to Latin in Western liturgy "does not seem to have been a burning problem, there is scarcely a hint of a discussion on the matter," see, Bastiaensen, "The Beginnings of Latin Liturgy," 278.

<sup>430</sup> Nathan Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy: The Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass* (New York: Pueblo, 1982), 68-70.

One of the paradoxes of 'Carolingian reform' is that the more successful it was in training the clergy in 'good Latin,' with a traditional syntax and carefully articulated in ways that serve to distinguish it from the 'Romance' vernaculars in a direct line of descent from earlier spoken Latin. . . the less accessible the liturgy of the mass and office became to the ordinary faithful in both Romance and Germanic regions.<sup>431</sup>

When people could no longer understand the words of the liturgy their spirituality was necessarily affected. To add to this problem between the seventh and the ninth centuries in the West (and even earlier in the East) the Canon became inaudible. First of all, it began to be whispered so that only the clergy could hear it and then later on to be whispered inaudibly so that nobody at all could hear it. Perhaps this took place to preserve the mystery of the Eucharist from being profaned by the unclean ears of the laity, although historically there is no evidence of anyone giving a clear reason for the adoption of the practice at the time.<sup>432</sup> The net result was that even if someone did happen to understand Latin it would have been of little use as they would have been unable to hear the central prayer of the Eucharist.

This necessitated a shift in the understanding of the function of the liturgy and led to a greater emphasis on allegorical interpretations of the liturgy. In the early Church the actions of the liturgy were nearly all pragmatic and functional. While the priest may have held the bread and the cup at different points of the celebration this

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<sup>431</sup> Donald Bullough, "The Carolingian Liturgical Experience," in Swanson, ed., *Continuity and Change in Christian Worship*, 52.

<sup>432</sup> Robert Taft, "Was the Eucharistic Anaphora Recited Secretly or Aloud? The Ancient Tradition and What Became of It." Paper read at the St. Neresess Armenian Seminary 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Symposium *Liturgy in Context: Worship Traditions of Armenia and the Neighboring Christian East*, New Rochelle, N.Y., September 25-28, 2002, in press in the *Congress Acta*. I am indebted to Fr. Taft for providing me with a pre-publication copy of this important article. Also see, Robert Cabié, *The Eucharist*, vol. 2 of *The Church at Prayer*, A.G. Martimort, ed., Matthew J. O'Connell, trans. (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1986), 133-134.

was either because the liturgical action demanded that he physically move them or to give emphasis to some part of the prayers. But, starting in the fourth century, an important shift in the understanding of the Eucharist was introduced:

the communal symbols of eating and drinking a meal with the Risen Lord are slowly being transformed into a ritual drama designed to edify and instruct people in the meaning of Jesus' passion and death. To put it in another way, the ancient symbols of eating and drinking a meal of sacred food are becoming allegories that remind people about Jesus' cross and burial.<sup>433</sup>

These works applied a hermeneutic of interpretation to the liturgy that earlier generations of Christians had used to interpret the Bible. While different allegorical interpretations of the liturgy can be found in the Fathers of the Church, they gradually gained more popularity with the *Expositiones Missae*, explanations of the Mass produced for devotion and catechetical purposes partly as a consequence of the Carolingian reform.<sup>434</sup> As there was a more or less standard form of the celebration of the rites of the Eucharist, it was possible to provide a common interpretation of these rites so as to "make people consider the events of the history of salvation by the rites" of the Eucharist.<sup>435</sup> Amalarius of Metz (d. 850), a member of Charlemagne's court and a fan of a particularly allegorical form of interpretation, was the most popular proponent of this method of interpretation. Perhaps he learned of this method on his journey to Byzantium as part of an embassy in 813-814. Using

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<sup>433</sup> Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy*, 51.

<sup>434</sup> However this new form of allegory was more than a development of early Christian interpretation, but, as will be seen below, was a reorientation of the genre. See, Enrico Mazza, *The Celebration of the Eucharist. The Origins of the Rite and the Development of its Interpretation*, Matthew J. O'Connell, trans. (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 163-164.

<sup>435</sup> "Moyen de remettre en memoir les événements de l'histoire du salut à travers les rites." Angelus Häussling, "Messe (Expositiones Missae)," in Charles Baumgartner, ed., *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité Ascétique et Mystique* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1980), 10:1084, my translation.

Amalarius' method the whole liturgy becomes a "drama which encompasses the life of Christ and, indeed, the whole history of salvation, from the Garden of Eden to the death of Christ on the Cross and his burial."<sup>436</sup> In this new form of interpretation, every action of the celebration of the Mass had a meaning and no movement could be understood simply at face value. In this Amalarius did not simply carry on the Patristic tradition of allegorical interpretation. He turned the traditional interpretation of the Eucharist on its head, because "whereas the Fathers see the Old Testament fulfilled in New Testament worship, [he] finds in Christian worship, not a fulfilment of Old Testament worship, but allusions to it."<sup>437</sup> The rites of the Mass are no longer "Mysteries" in and of themselves, but they rather now point to the divine "mysteries."<sup>438</sup> Yet another hermeneutical issue is that for Amalarius, and those who followed him, the key to understanding the Mass is no longer the Paschal Mystery of Christ's death and resurrection, now they concentrate solely on Christ's passion and death.<sup>439</sup>

This shift in interpretation also contributed to the decline in the Communion of the faithful as the Mass' understanding and value was independent of the people's reception of Communion (or of their participation or, for that matter, their very presence). The Eucharist eventually became something that was quite separate

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<sup>436</sup> "Un drame qui rejoue la vie du Christ, et meme l'histoire entière du salut, depuis le paradis terrestre jusqu'à la mort sur la croix et l'ensevelissement." Ibid., 1085, my translation.

<sup>437</sup> Kilmartin, *The Eucharist in the West*, 93.

<sup>438</sup> Ibid., 92. While there was a drastic shift in the understanding of the Eucharist, Snoek's criticism of this type of allegorical interpretation as being based on "pious and pseudo-historical meanderings of the ecclesiastical mind" is probably a little over-harsh, see G.J.C. Snoek, *Medieval Piety from Relics to the Eucharist a Process of Mutual Interaction*, Vol. 63, *Studies in the History of Christian Thought* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 35.

<sup>439</sup> Mazza, *The Celebration of the Eucharist*, 164.

from the daily life of regular Christians. It was an affair of the clergy; the laity could only watch the celebration.

Indeed, most of the Carolingian reforms were centred on reform of clergy. Not only was the use of correct Latin recommended, but there was also the introduction of complicated specialized pieces of music to liturgy which contributed even more to the liturgy becoming the preserve of a specialized clerical and monastic elite. The Eucharist was no longer an assembly participating in the saving mysteries, but people came to look upon a saving drama and the cultivation of a mystical consciousness. It was also a time of an individualistic spirituality and with the introduction of private Masses and the multiplication of votive Masses, people felt that the priest could act on their behalf.<sup>440</sup> In the Carolingian period alongside the adoption of Roman usage we also begin to see a multiplication of private prayers being prayed by the priest during the Mass. These prayers normally prayed in the singular are often penitential in tone and sometimes even directly address Christ present in the Eucharistic Species. Jungmann points to the introduction of the *Agnus Dei* into the Roman Eucharist by Pope Sergius I (d. 701) as the first instance of this practice of addressing Christ in the Eucharistic Species.<sup>441</sup> The rite of the Eucharist was gradually filled with these apologies with as many as seventy-five of them being prayed in a single celebration.<sup>442</sup> Indeed far from valuing the communal participation in the Eucharistic Liturgy, Western Christians generally felt that they

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<sup>440</sup> Driscoll, "The Conversion of the Nations," 192-193.

<sup>441</sup> Josef Jungmann, *The Place of Christ in Liturgical Prayer* (New York: Alba House, 1965), 259.

<sup>442</sup> Metzger, "The History of the Eucharistic Liturgy in Rome," 129.

could reap more spiritual benefit from a Mass that a priest had agreed to celebrate for their intentions to the exclusion of everyone else.<sup>443</sup>

As with many other developments this "principle of multiplying Masses arose without real theological reflection and was regarded as indubitably correct."<sup>444</sup> While not all of the root causes of this multiplication of Masses are known, the extant evidence indicates a strong monastic dimension to the multiplication of private Masses at the end of the sixth and start of the seventh centuries.<sup>445</sup> At its birth

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<sup>443</sup> Kilmartin, *The Eucharist in the West*, 113, see 112-115.

<sup>444</sup> Angelus Häussling and Karl Rahner, *The Celebration of the Eucharist* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), 1. For a detailed analysis of the theological issues involved with the multiplication of Masses see pp. 1-9. There is still some debate regarding the actual genesis of the *missa privata* or "Private Mass" (a term which does not occur much in the period but is often taken to be synonymous with *missa lecta* or *missa solitaria*). The ritual books really cannot provide explicit evidence that these liturgies took place without the presence of the faithful, but the fact that the priest now says every single word of the liturgy by himself (as opposed to the earlier practice of having a choir, lector, deacon and congregational responses) is taken as evidence that nobody else was present. Vogel is of the opinion that it developed as a consequence of taking the Roman papal stational liturgy and introducing it into the new setting North of the Alps with the necessary replacing of the various stational churches with side altars. Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 156-159; "La Multiplication des Messes Solitaires au Moyen Âge" *Revue des Sciences Religieuses* 55 (1981): 206-213. Häussling takes a different view that "private" must refer to a Mass for a group as opposed to the "public" Mass of Sundays. He says that these "private" Masses evolved from the ancient practice of celebrating the Eucharist on the tomb of the martyrs, of funeral and anniversary eucharists and of eucharists celebrated for devotional purposes such as those said for pilgrims at shrines. Angelus Häussling, *Moenchskonvent und Eucharistiefeier: eine Studie ueber die Messe in der Abendländischen Klosterliturgie des fruehen Mittelalters und zur Geschichte der Messhäufigkeit*, Vol 58., *Liturgiewissenschaftliche Quellen und Forschungen* (Muenster: Westfalen, 1973), 249, 252, 319. But regardless of the reasons why this practice started, the fact is that the practice of the priest celebrating the Liturgy by himself on a side altar became very common from this point onwards.

<sup>445</sup> Cyrille Vogel, "La Vie Quotidienne du Moine en Occident a l'Époque de la Floraison des Messes Privées," in *Liturgie, spiritualité, Cultures. Conférences Saint-Serge XXIX<sup>e</sup> Semaine d'Études Liturgiques Paris 1982*. Bibliotheca «Ephemerides Liturgicae» «Subsidia» 29 (Rome: Centro Liturgico Vincenziano: Edizioni Liturgiche, 1983), 345. In this line of thought the work of Daniel Callam is also relevant. He has studied the relationship between the daily celebration of the Eucharist and clerical celibacy. Callam concluded that in the West daily celebration of the Eucharist started in the fourth century. This developed from the earlier practice of Home Communion, in the fourth century as it had become impracticable for Christians to bring the Eucharist home due to the larger numbers of Christians and the fact that people in general were tending not to receive Communion even at Sunday Eucharist. At the same time there was a movement within asceticism and the nascent monasticism for monks to receive presbyteral ordination. This made it possible to change the practice of Home Communion to that of a daily celebration of the Eucharist in monastic circles. Gradually monastic and reform minded bishops also encouraged the enforcement of the discipline of celibacy among the secular clergy. As the priest had to be celibate on the night previous

monasticism did not have a strong priestly dimension, with the monks often attending the local parish church with other Christians on Sundays for the celebration of the Eucharist.<sup>446</sup> But in the Middle Ages, Benedictine Monasteries became places where monks performed the liturgy on behalf of the laity, but also very clearly apart from the laity. This was emphasised by the monastic renewal of Benedict of Aniane who is credited with providing Benedictine monasticism with the liturgical emphasis that characterises it to this day.<sup>447</sup> The Mass came to be seen as the *opus bonum par excellence* whereby it takes pride of place "among the other exercises through which the religious sanctify themselves."<sup>448</sup> In this context it is interesting to note that by the year 800, 23% to 32% of all monks were priests and by the tenth century 55% of monks were priests.<sup>449</sup>

From the eighth century onwards, patronage for monasteries often involved a return of the monks in the form of masses and by the ninth century there are many witnesses of monasteries undertaking Masses numbered in the thousands for their

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to the celebration of the Eucharist, these new disciplinary measures made it also practical for the extension of a daily celebration of the Eucharist to non-monastic circles. Thus monastic spirituality's emphasis on a daily Eucharistic celebration passed to the secular clergy and the laity. See, Daniel Callam, "The Frequency of Mass in the Latin Church ca. 400" *Theological Studies* 45 (1984): 613-650, n.b. 648-650, also see Daniel Callam, "Clerical Continence in the Fourth Century: Three Papal Decretals," *Theological Studies* 41 (1980): 3-50. Also see, Eoin de Baldrathe, "Daily Eucharist: The Need for an Early Church Paradigm" *American Benedictine Review* 41 (1990): 378-440 and Robert Taft, "The Frequency of the Eucharist throughout History," Chap. 5 in *Beyond East and West*.

<sup>446</sup> There is even good grounds to make the bold statement that the earliest monks were anti-liturgical! Eligius Dekkers, "Were the Early Monks Liturgical?" *Collectanea Cisterciensia* 22 (1960): 120-137.

<sup>447</sup> Susan A. Rabe, *Faith, Art and Politics at Saint-Riquier. The Symbolic Vision of Angilbert* (Philadelphia, PA: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 6-8. However, in Eastern monasticism a certain indifference towards the Liturgy remained and in some cases the monk is thought to be of a higher level than those in the world and as he can see Christ directly he has no need for the Eucharist. See, Taft, "Home-Communion," 4-7.

<sup>448</sup> Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 156.

<sup>449</sup> Vogel, "La Vie Quotidienne du Moine," 357.



royal patrons.<sup>450</sup> One of the most significant church buildings in the twelfth century was that of the abbey church of Saint-Denis. Abbot Suger, the man who masterminded its construction, has left an account of its consecration in 1144. The high point of the celebration was a harmonized celebration of the Mass by the nineteen consecrating bishops, each celebrating on a separate altar, placed in a semi-circle on two levels around the high altar. Suger tells us:

After the consecration of the altars all these [dignitaries] performed a solemn celebration of Masses, both in the upper choir and in the crypt, so festively, so solemnly, so different and yet so concordantly, so close [to one another] and so joyfully that their song, delightful by its consonance and unified harmony, was deemed a symphony angelic rather than human.<sup>451</sup>

While Dekkers may be correct in pointing out that in its origins monasticism was not always liturgical, in Abbot Suger's world, St. Benedict's pristine balance of *ora et labora* had been replaced with a specialized monastic elite, the majority of whom were ordained priests, whose work was the Liturgy. His new abbey church was to be the cradle of the Gothic style. St. Bernard of Clairvaux did try to start a new, simple style of monasticism, and, as was seen in Chapter 1, this renewal was to be of great importance in Ireland. But despite the objections of St. Bernard, and the weight of his sanctity and the influence of the Cistercian order, "within a half-century of Bernard of Clairvaux's death, the Gothic style and its accompanying

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<sup>450</sup> *Ibid.*, 347.

<sup>451</sup> "Qui omnes tam festive, tam solemniter, tam diversi, tam propinqui, tam hilariter ipsam altarium consecratione missarum solemnem vcelebratione missarum solemnem celebrationem superius inferiusque peragebant, ut ex ipsa sui consonantia et cohaerente harmoniae grata melodia potius angelicus quam humanus concentue aestimaretur." *De Consecratione ecclesiae Sancti Dionysii VII* in Erwin Panofsky, ed. and trans., *Abbot Suger on the Abbey-Church of Saint-Denis and Its Art Treasures* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1946), 118-121.

liturgical glitter could be found throughout the length and breadth of France; by the end of the thirteenth century, it had been replicated all over Europe."<sup>452</sup>

While economic reasons and an individualistic spirituality definitely played their parts in the multiplication of Masses, there were probably other reasons. The stationary liturgy of the city of Rome, whereby the liturgy was celebrated in different places on different days with great emphasis being placed on processions and solemnity,<sup>453</sup> perhaps also played its part in the development of the liturgy to the North of the Alps. But while on one level this was an imperfect copy of the Roman model, probably only directly affecting some feast days,<sup>454</sup> this desire to replicate the religious topography of Rome may have had a profound influence on the introduction of many altars in the monastic and cathedral churches of the Carolingian empire.<sup>455</sup>

The ninth century also marked the emergence of the first catechisms for the instruction of the laity. These catechisms deal with the reception of Communion. First of all they encourage the laity to receive Communion more often than the three times a year that seem to have been the norm (although married people are expected to abstain from sexual intercourse prior to receiving Communion this did

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<sup>452</sup> Timothy Thibodeau, "Western Christendom," in Wainwright and Westerfield Tucker, eds., *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*, 213. This would also be the case in Ireland, where the Cistercian monasteries quickly adopted both decorative elements and fortification works. See, Roger Stalley, *The Cistercian Monasteries of Ireland. An Account of the History, Art and Architecture of the White Monks in Ireland from 1142 to 1540* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 141-145; 179-180.

<sup>453</sup> The theme of stationary liturgy will be dealt with more fully in Chapter 4.

<sup>454</sup> Bullough, "Carolingian Liturgical Experience," 41. However, note that there are some examples of true stationary liturgy in the Carolingian domain, in a recent study of the monastery of Saint Riquier, an important monastery reformed under Charlemagne's patronage in the late eighth century, it is clear that the laity did indeed participate in the monastic liturgy particularly in important feast-days where they processed with the monks in the various elements of the stationary liturgy. See, Rabe, *Faith, Art and Politics at Saint-Riquier*, 122-132.

<sup>455</sup> Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 157.

not constitute a big problem in the mind of those who wrote these catechisms). The catechisms are free from the Eucharistic controversies that had begun to occupy the learned and in this time most parish priests and laity would have been ignorant of these controversies.<sup>456</sup> But it is also true that the Mass is now often seen principally as a special prayer that is very powerful. In the *Liber manualis* written in the early 840's by the Aquitane noblewoman Dhoua for her eldest son, she recommends that her son take advantage of going to Mass to pray for his dead father. She also recommends that he have Masses offered for him:

You should see to it that the solemnities of Masses and sacrifices are frequently offered for him and for all the faithful departed. There is no better prayer . . . It is said of the incomparable Judas [Maccabeus]: It is a holy and pious thought to pray for the dead, and to offer sacrifices for them so that they may be freed from their sins.<sup>457</sup>

The practice of praying for the dead in Masses blossomed into a veritable industry in the ninth century, with many monasteries earning their economic well being by having their monks offer Masses for the departed loved ones of the rich.

## 2.6 Frequency of Communion

Another fundamental element in the consideration of the lay participation in the Eucharist is the actual reception of the Eucharistic species. In the first three centuries it seems that the faithful received Communion every time they attended

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<sup>456</sup> Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy*, 186.

<sup>457</sup> "Missarum namque et sacrificiorum solemnities non solum pro eo, verum etiam pro omnibus fidelibus defunctis frequenter facias offerri. Nulla enim oratio in hac parte melior, quam sacrificiorum libamina. Dicitur de viro fortissimo Juda: *Sancta et salubris est cogitatio orare pro mortuis, et pro eis sacrificium offerre, ut a peccatis solvantur.*" PL 106:116 translated in Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy*, 102.

the Eucharist. The third century seems to be the high-point of frequent Communion: the faithful received Communion every Sunday and on any feast days that fell during the week, even infants received Communion and there was also the custom of bringing Communion home in order to receive it on the days before the next Eucharistic celebration.<sup>458</sup> This practice became common in both East and West. But while vestiges of this practice persisted for quite some time in the East, it soon died out in the West in general.<sup>459</sup>

In later centuries the manner of reception of Communion would come to be on the tongue. This was not yet the case:

Throughout the length and breadth of Early and Late-Antique Christendom, lay communicants and the minor clergy, like the clergy in major orders, used to receive the sacred species separately and in their hands. The people, standing, approached first the minister of the consecrated bread, then the minister of the cup. The consecrated bread was placed in each communicant's right hand, then, having kissed and consumed the Sacred Body, each one drank of the Precious Blood from

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<sup>458</sup> Louis de Bazelaire, "Communion Fréquente," in Charles Baumgartner, ed., *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité Ascétique et Mystique* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1953), ii/1:1237-1238; henceforth cited as DS. Perhaps this practice developed from the age of persecutions. As the *viaticum* was an important obligation for Christians, so in the time of the persecutions Christians, even the laity, were accustomed to bring the Eucharistic Bread home so that they could receive Communion if they were about to be captured and martyred. W.H. Freestone, *The Sacrament Reserved. A Survey of the Practice of Reserving the Eucharist, with Special Reference to Communion of the Sick, during the first Twelve Centuries*. Alcuin Club Collections 21 (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co. Ltd, 1917), 34. Freestone sees Home-Communion as having developed from this practice. *Ibid.*, 37-38. However it soon became apparent that this practice was open to abuses, the author of *De spectaculis* complains of Christians who go straight to pagan spectacles from the Liturgy, and as they are carrying the Eucharist with them they expose it to contact with all kinds of obscenity (*De spectaculis* 5, PL 4:784, cited in *ibid.*, 39). There was also a tendency for some Christians getting carried away in their devotional practices involving the Eucharist Species. St. Gregory Naziansen (d. 389) tells "how his seriously ill sister St. Gorgonia smeared her whole body with the eucharistic species and was cured." Robert F. Taft, "Is there Devotion to the Holy Eucharist in the Christian East? A Footnote to the October 2005 Synod of the Eucharist?" *Worship* 80:3 (2006): 215.

<sup>459</sup> Taft, "Home-Communion," 3, also see 13-14. However in the next two chapters the practice of the reservation of the Eucharist on the person of Irish ecclesiastics in vessels called *Chrismals* which were hung around their necks will be examined as perhaps an example of the development and perseverance of a custom based on the practice of domestic reservation by monks for later daily reception of Communion.

the chalice. The evidence for all this throughout East and West is abundant and beyond cavil.

Furthermore, the people communicated at an assigned place and according to a fixed order of precedence. First the clergy in major orders—bishops, presbyters, deacons—received the sacrament at the altar within the sanctuary, then brought the sacred gifts out to administer communion to the lesser ministers and laity lined up at the chancel doors.<sup>460</sup>

But in the fourth and fifth centuries, although the Eucharist was still considered to be very important, nonetheless the faithful lost some of their closeness to it. In this time, pastors insisted more and more on the fasting required in order to prepare for Communion and this, combined with the long penances, provoked a reluctance on the part of the faithful to approach the altar. In addition to this, many late fourth and early fifth century bishops insist “upon reverence towards the sacramental species at communion time.”<sup>461</sup> These bishops didn’t really invent this practice as, for example, St. Cyprian, the third century bishop of Carthage in North Africa, preached of unworthy reception of the Eucharist in a frightening way. Speaking of those who had lapsed in persecutions, he gives a number of examples of those whose sin was not public and yet God himself manifested these sins as they approached Communion. Among these is the example of a woman who had the Eucharist in her house and when she “tried with unclean hands to open her box in which was the holy [body] of the Lord, thereupon she was deterred by rising fire to touch it.”<sup>462</sup> These later bishops, however, often also had to scold their

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<sup>460</sup> Robert E Taft, “The Order and Place of Lay Communion in the Late Antique and Byzantine East,” in Maxwell E. Johnson and L. Edward Phillips, eds., *Studies in Church Music and Liturgy. Studia Liturgica Diversa. Essays in Honor of Paul F. Bradshaw* (Portland, OR: The Pastoral Press, 2004), 130-131.

<sup>461</sup> Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy*, 45.

<sup>462</sup> “Et cum quaedam arcam suam, in qua Domini sanctum fuit, manibus indignis temptasset aperire, igne inde surgente deterrita est ne auderet adtingere.” *De Lapsis*. 26 in M. Bévenot, ed.,

congregations for not receiving Communion.<sup>463</sup> But, in general, this type of preaching often had the exact opposite effect to that intended:

The aim of preaching such as this was of course not to discourage the reception of communion, but to motivate worshippers towards the amendment of their daily lives. But, as so often happens, the outcome was exactly the opposite of the intentions of the preachers. Many people preferred to give up the reception of communion than to reform their behaviour. Thus began the practice of non-communicating attendance at the Eucharist.

... This development also had a significant effect upon people's understanding of the Eucharist. It made it possible for them to think of the rite as complete and effective without the need for them to participate in the reception of the bread and wine, and thus helped to further the idea that the liturgy was something that the clergy did on their behalf, which ultimately did not even require their presence.<sup>464</sup>

In some senses, as time went by, pastors were not interested that their flocks receive Communion every week – for them it was too high an aspiration for simple lay-folk to possibly attain. In earlier centuries, in order to receive Communion the Christian had to be free from grave sin (usually meaning adultery, murder or apostasy).<sup>465</sup> However as it became more common for people to receive Communion only rarely, at specific times and feasts, more of an emphasis was placed on preparation for the reception of Communion. Taking advantage of the penitential seasons of Lent and Advent, pastors used these times of conversion to prepare their people for the reception of Communion. As well as general conversion

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*Sancti Cypriani Episcopi Opera. Pars I. Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 3* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1972), 235. English translation from Roy J. Deferrari, trans. and ed., *Saint Cyprian Treatises. The Fathers of the Church a New Translation. Vol 36* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1958), 79.

<sup>463</sup> de Bazelaire, "Communion Fréquente," 1243. Although, as Robert Taft notes, it is often these very same Pastors who so frighten their congregations and fill them with an appreciation of their unworthiness that it little surprise that they do not approach the altar; see *The Precommunion Rites*, Vol. 5 of *A History of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom* (Rome: Orientalia Christiana Analecta, 2000), 130.

<sup>464</sup> Bradshaw, *Eucharistic Origins*, 143.

<sup>465</sup> Pierre M. Gy, "Penance and Reconciliation," in *The Sacraments*, Vol. 3 of *The Church at Prayer*, A.G. Martimort, ed. Matthew J. O'Connell, trans. (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1988), 103.

and change of life the notion sometimes entered that "physical purity was procured through abstinence from marital relations in the period before the feast."<sup>466</sup>

But in certain regions, many Christians (and ecclesiastics in particular) did continue the practice of daily Communion. As time passed what was a tendency became a real problem and from the sixth century onwards many Christians tended not to receive Communion at all. A good indication of this is the practice within Rome itself in the fifth century. Baldovin has recently reinterpreted some of the earliest data from Rome which speaks of the rite of the *fermentum*, whereby a piece of the Eucharistic Bread is brought from the Pope's Eucharistic celebration to the liturgies that the priests celebrated in the different titular churches of the city. This piece was added by the priest to the chalice. Traditionally this has been interpreted as a way to unify the Eucharistic celebration of the titular, or parish, churches with that of the bishop of Rome. However Baldovin proposes that this may not have been the case and that the titular churches merely had a celebration of the Word without a Eucharist proper. This leads to two possibilities, either the *fermentum* is used to give Communion to the whole assembly or, more likely, that it was used exclusively for the priest. In this case

It may be necessary to revise our romantic notion of a time when the eucharist enjoyed a kind of organic integrity. It may be that not many baptized Christians at all ever participated regularly in holy communion – at least not until the encouragement of frequent communion by Pope Pius X at the beginning of the twentieth century. The small number of people receiving communion on a given Sunday may have

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<sup>466</sup> Beck, *The Pastoral Care of Souls in South East France*, 152-153.

made it possible for the bishop's celebration to be the only eucharistic celebration within the walls of the city of Rome.<sup>467</sup>

The fifth and sixth centuries were not periods of particular religious crisis. Yet perhaps the masses of new converts who were entering the Church at this time (many belonging to the Barbarian tribes or non-Roman people of the new Europe and entering the Church after having first passed through Arianism) often entered the Catholic Church for political or social motives. The Church's reaction to Arianism by emphasising the divinity of Christ may also have contributed to the fear of receiving Communion.<sup>468</sup> This combined with the gradual breakdown of the Catechumenate, and other forms of catechesis and formation, meant that many of these new converts could never appreciate the early Church's understanding of the Eucharist.<sup>469</sup> In this new mentality the reception of Communion became a sacred obligation, but an obligation that people were so afraid of fulfilling that the Church eventually had to threaten them with excommunication.<sup>470</sup> Time and again is the injunction for the faithful to receive Communion found in the local councils of this time:

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<sup>467</sup> John F. Baldwin, "The *Fermentum* at Rome in the Fifth Century: A Reconsideration," in *Worship* 79,1 (2005): 53. However, c.f. Metzger, "The History of the Eucharistic Liturgy in Rome," 108-109.

<sup>468</sup> Adrien Nocent, "Questions About Specific Points," in Chupungco, ed., *The Eucharist*, 311.

<sup>469</sup> de Bazelaire, "Communion Fréquente," 1255.

<sup>470</sup> There are even cases of injunctions to priests obliging them to receive, which probably implies that at some times a Eucharist may have been celebrated in which absolutely no one received. "Ad sacerdotes. Auditum est aliquos presbyteros missam celebrare et non communicare: quod omnino in canonibus apostolorum interdictum esse legitur." "To *sacerdotes*. It is understood that some priests celebrate mass and do not themselves partake in the sacrament, something which one reads in the apostolic canons to be utterly forbidden." *Admonitio generalis* 6 in Alfredus Boretius, ed. *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Legum Sectio II. Capitularia Regum Francorum* (Hanover: Impensis Bibliopolii Haniani, 1883), 1:54. English translation from P. D. King, *Charlemagne. Translated Sources*, (Kendal, Cumbria: Self-Published, 1987), 210.



For south-east Gaul, the synod of Agde in 506 had prescribed the reception of the Body of our Lord for the feasts of Christmas, Easter and Pentecost. Caesarius at Arles urged his flock to communicate somewhat more frequently, and he includes St. John Baptist's day (24<sup>th</sup> June) among the festivals at which Christ is to be received. But even Caesarius speaks only of the feast-days and has nothing to say of receiving the Eucharist on Sundays. The silence I take to be significant. And I get the impression that Communion was quite infrequent on the part of the laity of our period.<sup>471</sup>

As with all developments this was gradual and perhaps a glimpse of a halfway point can be seen in the following anecdote told by St. Gregory of Tours. In one of his pastoral works he offers the story of a woman in Lyons who had a Mass offered every day for a year for her deceased husband. As she never went to Communion herself during this year, she did not realize until revealed by a vision that the subdeacon had switched the good wine provided by her for the Mass for a far inferior type.

Some say that in the city [of Lyon] there were two people, a man and his wife, who were distinguished members of a senatorial family. Since they had no children when they were about to die, they left the cathedral as their heir. The man died first and was buried in the church of St. Mary. For an entire year his wife visited thus church; she diligently prayed, attended the celebration of mass every day, and made offerings on behalf of her dead husband. Because she never doubted that through

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<sup>471</sup> Beck, *The Pastoral Care of Souls in South East France*, 150-151. After the end of our period, all of this ferment culminated with the famous 21<sup>st</sup> canon of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215): "Omnis utriusque sexus fidelis, postquam ad annos discretionis pervenerit, omnia sua solus peccata saltem semel in anno fideliter cofiteatur proprio sacerdoti, et iniunctam sibi paenitentiam pro viribus studeat adimplere, suscipiens reverenter ad minus in Pascua Eucharistiae sacramentum, nisi forte de consilio proprii sacerdotis ob aliquam stiae sacramentum, nisi forte de consilio proprii sacerdotis ob aliquam rationabilem causam ad tempus ab eius perceptione duxerit abstinendum: alioquin et vivens ab ingressu ecclesiae arceatur et moriens Christiana careat sepultura." "All the faithful of either sex, after they have reached the age of discernment, should individually confess their sins in a faithful manner to their own priest at least once a year, and let them take care to do what they can to perform the penance imposed on them. Let them reverently receive the sacrament of the eucharist at least at Easter unless they think, for a good reason and on the advice of their own priest, that they should abstain from receiving it for a time. Otherwise let them be barred from entering a church during their lifetime and they shall be denied a Christian burial at death." Norman P. Tanner, ed. and trans., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 1: 245.

the mercy of the Lord her deceased husband would repose [in Paradise] on the day that she made an offering to the Lord on behalf of his soul, she always presented a pint of wine from Gaza to the sanctuary of the holy church. But the subdeacon was a sinful man and kept the wine from Gaza for his own drinking [pleasure]. Since the woman never came forward for the grace of communicating [during the celebration of the Eucharist], he instead offered very bitter vinegar in the chalice. When God was pleased to expose this fraud, the husband appeared to his wife [in a vision] and said: "Alas, alas, my beloved wife. How did the effort of my life in this world reach [such a point] that I now taste vinegar in my offering?" The woman replied to him: "In truth, I have not forgotten your charity and I have always offered the most fragrant wine from Gaza in the sanctuary of my God on behalf of your repose." She awoke, thought about the vision, and did not forget it. As was her custom, she got up for matins. After matins were over and mass had been celebrated, she approached the cup of salvation. When she sipped from the chalice, the vinegar was so bitter that she thought that her teeth would have fallen out if she had not swallowed the drink quickly. Then she rebuked the subdeacon, and what had been done sinfully and fraudulently was corrected.<sup>472</sup>

This passage can be taken to show three things. That it was not unusual for a very devout and saintly woman of high status and education to go to Mass every day for a whole year without receiving Communion (even on Christmas and Easter), that the only thing stopping her from receiving Communion was her individual piety and not a Church norm and that when she did decide to receive Communion that she approached the chalice and received the Precious Blood directly from it.

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<sup>472</sup> "Duos in hac urbe fuisse ferunt, virum scilicet et conjugem ejus, senatoria ex gente pollentes, qui absque liberis functi, haeredem Ecclesiam dereliquerunt; sed vir prius obiens, in basilica sanctae Mariae sepultus est. Mulier vero per annum integrum ad hoc templum degens, assidue orationi vacabat, celebrans quotidie missarum solemnias, et offerens oblationem pro memoria viri: non diffisa de Domini misericordia, quod haberet defunctus requiem in die qua Domino oblationem pro ejus anima delibasset, semper sextarium Gazeti vini praebens in sacrificium basilicae sanctae. Sed subdiaconus nequam, reservatum gulae Gazetum, acetum vehementissimum offerebat in calice, muliere non semper ad communicandi gratiam accedente. Igitur cum fraudem hanc Deo placuit revelare, apparuit vir mulieri, dicens: Heu, heu, dulcissima conjux, in quid defluxit labor meus in saeculo, ut nunc acetum in oblatione delibem! Cui illa: Vere, inquit, quia charitatis tuae non immemor, semper Gazetum potentissimum obtuli pro requie tua in sacrario Dei mei. Expergefata autem admirans visionem, eandemque oblivioni non tradens ad matutinum secundum consuetudinem surrexit. Quibus expletis, celebratisque missis, accedit ad poculum salutare: quae tam fervens acetum hausit ex calice, ut putaret sibi dentes excuti, si haustum segnius deglutisset. Tunc increpans subdiaconem, emendata sunt quae nequiter fuerant defraudata." *The Glory of Confessors* 65 in PL 71, 875-876. English translation from Raymond Van Dam, trans and ed. *Gregory of Tours. Glory of the Confessors* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1988), 70-7.

But as time went by the custom of receiving Communion under both Species became less and less common in the West. It is true that from the earliest times it was possible to receive just the Eucharistic Bread, but this was generally out of convenience when one had to bring the Eucharist to a sick person or brought some home for private communication.<sup>473</sup> However gradually the Chalice came to be denied to the people. There are undoubtedly many factors contributing to this, but one of the most important seems to have been the custom of daily Communion outside of the Eucharistic celebration. The monk or devout layperson would have brought the Eucharistic Bread home with him and every day at noon (until the next Liturgy) would have received Communion before eating his mid-day meal. This in turn contributed to the custom of receiving only the Eucharistic Bread in the actual liturgical celebration.<sup>474</sup> But by the time of St. Leo the Great and St. Gregory the Great in the West the incidental evidence from all parts of the West points to the fact that the laity rarely received from the Chalice.

By the ninth and tenth century this gradual denial of the chalice to the laity had become complete throughout much of the West. Also in this time the laity were expected to receive Communion directly in the mouth. Only the hands of the priest which had been anointed could handle the Eucharist.<sup>475</sup> *Ordo Romanus X*,

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<sup>473</sup> H. Leclercq, "Communion," in *DACL* iii/2:2463.

<sup>474</sup> *Ibid.*, 2464.

<sup>475</sup> Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy*, 90. Mitchell traces the changes in the practices of giving Communion in *ibid.*, 86-104. From an art history point of view, a recent survey of icons and other paintings of the Last Supper has no unambiguous pre-eleventh century evidence, but all of the post eleventh century Medieval iconography has Jesus administering the Eucharist to the Apostles on either a spoon or in the form of a host directly into the mouth. Julia Hasting, ed, *Last Supper* (London: Phaidon, 2000). However, some medieval liturgical manuscripts, dating from the tenth to the twelfth centuries and originating in Italy and France, provide liturgies for Communion Services

describing a cathedral celebration of the Eucharist (possibly in Mainz and definitely not in Rome), presided by a bishop, describes Communion in this way:

The presbyters and deacons, after kissing the bishop, receive the body of Christ from him in their hands; they will communicate at the left side of the altar. But the subdeacons, after kissing the bishop's hand, receive the body of Christ from him in their mouths.<sup>476</sup>

Here the difference between the presbyters and deacons who can take the Eucharist themselves and the other ministers who have it placed directly in their mouths is significant. The Communion of the laity is not mentioned in the *Ordo*, but it would be very surprising if they were receiving the Eucharist in their hands. By the eleventh century the use of bread in the form of wafer like hosts had also become common in the West. These were prepared by monks who used great care so that "the monks of Cluny washed themselves and combed their hair beforehand and picked out the wheat grains one by one and washed them. Even the millstone was cleansed. The monks were careful that neither their saliva nor their breath came into contact with the Hosts."<sup>477</sup> This in turn necessitated that the faithful also kneel to receive Communion as this was easier for the priest.<sup>478</sup> A further development was

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where an abbess could distribute Communion to her nuns when no priest was available to celebrate Mass for them. See, Jean Leclercq, "Eucharistic Celebration Without Priests In the Middle Ages," in R. Kevin Seasoltz, ed., *Living Bread Saving Cup. Readings on the Eucharist* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1987), 222-230. However while female monastics were important in Ireland and some female saints (Brigit in particular) are presented as handling chrismals etc., there is no Irish evidence for nuns distributing Communion. Christina Harrington, *Women in a Celtic Church. Ireland 450 – 1150* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 93.

<sup>476</sup> "Presbiteri ergo et diaconi, osculando episcopum, corpus Christi ab eo manibus accipiant, in sinistra parte altaris communicaturi. Subdiaconi autem, osculando manum episcopi ore accipiant corpus Christi ab eo." *Ordo Romanus X* 59-60 in Andrieu, *Les Ordines Romani*, 2:361. English translation from Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy*, 87.

<sup>477</sup> Snoek, *Medieval Piety*, 40.

<sup>478</sup> Cabié, *The Eucharist*, 135-136.

that the faithful could now only receive Communion after the celebration and not during the Liturgy itself. Overall the ninth century marked a changing point in the practice of the reception of Communion in the West:

During that period, communion in the mouth began to replace communion in the hand; communion after Mass began to appear as a pastoral solution for the large numbers of communicants on major feasts; the cup began to disappear as an integral part of the people's communion. It was a case, perhaps, of the extraordinary exception becoming the pastoral (though not theological) norm. Clinical forms of communion, such as intincted bread given to persons *in extremis*, gradually gained acceptability for all situations. And theological speculation about issues like concomitant presence of the whole Christ in each sacramental element, helped seal what had begun as an extraordinary pastoral procedure.<sup>479</sup>

## 2.7 Eucharistic Controversies

From the earliest liturgical sources it is apparent that there was a general understanding that during the Eucharistic Liturgy the bread and wine are consecrated and become the Body and Blood of Christ. However, in the first three centuries this is a generalized belief and probably didn't specify a particular instant of transformation, but saw it in the thanksgiving prayers that were to become the Christian anaphora or Eucharistic Prayer in general rather than in any particular words or parts of that prayer.<sup>480</sup> While there were some controversies in the first millennium these were mainly local and did not impinge much on the life of the Church, most Christians, even theologians, were simply "content to attend to the much more important task of living and celebrating the salvation wrought for

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<sup>479</sup> Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy*, 96.

<sup>480</sup> Johnson, "The Apostolic Tradition," 57-59.

them."<sup>481</sup> But this did not mean that there was absolutely no theological reflection on the Eucharist, in the pre-Nicene period a gradual consensus emerged so that:

First, the early Christians firmly believed that the risen Lord was present in the celebration of the Supper, and secondly, they believed that that presence itself was instrumental in bringing about the salvation of both the body and the soul of the believer. More than this, however, the early Christians spoke of the eucharist as forming the community of believers, that the eucharist both celebrated and effected the life of faith and love to which Christians dedicated themselves in the ceremony of sharing the life of the risen Lord. Finally, in the third century, the language originally reserved to discussions of animal sacrifices was applied metaphorically to the Supper as a reminder of the saving offering of Jesus' own life and of the similar pledge that each Christian makes in the celebration of the ritual meal.<sup>482</sup>

In the West the first steps towards a systematic theology of the Eucharist was the early development of the idea of the Eucharist as a sacrifice. Initially the participation of the faithful was seen as an "essential ingredient" of the Eucharistic sacrifice, but soon the laity's role was reduced to that of spectators. This eventually led to the so-called "private Masses" where no laity at all participated.<sup>483</sup>

Another side effect of the tendency to receive Communion only rarely was a heightened belief in the *presence* of Christ in the Eucharistic Species. While the Scholastic understanding of the "real presence" was a product of the High Middle Ages, these beliefs were to build on the attitudes of the first millennium. There developed what has been called a "ritual independence" of the Eucharist that has

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<sup>481</sup> Gary Macy, *The Banquet's Wisdom. A Short History of the Theologies of the Lord's Supper*, 2d ed. (Akron, OH: OSL Publications, 2005), 14.

<sup>482</sup> *Ibid.*, 31-32.

<sup>483</sup> Kilmartin, *The Eucharist in the West*, 22-23.

been defined as “the gradual separation, in the forms of devotion, of the bread and wine from their sacramental and liturgical context.”<sup>484</sup>

Initially the connection between Home Communion and the Eucharistic Liturgy was very clearly maintained; the earliest reference to the practice is in St. Justin where the deacons brought the Eucharist to those who were absent directly after the celebration.<sup>485</sup> Also the tradition of Home Communion shows the importance that the Eucharistic species had *per se* and not merely within the context of the actual celebration. But in these instances the value of the Eucharistic Species is clearly linked to the ecclesiastical celebration. Another element in this separation can be seen in the “Mass of the Presanctified” which first appears in the various incarnations of the Gelasian Sacramentary which could date to as early as the seventh century.<sup>486</sup> But while this is significant, it is an annual event and is also clearly linked to the actual Eucharistic celebration.<sup>487</sup>

As the Latin Church developed, its theological centre shifted from North Africa to the Transalpine areas of present-day France and Germany. In this new milieu the earlier symbolic understanding of the Eucharist and the form of Christ's presence gave way to an understanding which tended to be more realistic and material.<sup>488</sup> This new view was a departure of the earlier patristic vision, but it made sense to the newly evangelised Germanic peoples:

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<sup>484</sup> Snoek, *Medieval Piety*, xi.

<sup>485</sup> *First Apology* 67.5 quoted above.

<sup>486</sup> Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 67.

<sup>487</sup> Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 2:281.

<sup>488</sup> Aidan Nichols, *The Holy Eucharist. From the Old Testament to Pope John Paul II*. The Oscott Series 6 (Dublin: Veritas, 1991), 37.

In the early Middle Ages Western theology came under the influence of the German worldview. Introduced into the new cultural and historical situation, the ancient patristic understanding of reality was naturally "received" in a differentiated new way. In this milieu, thingly realism was contrasted radically with the symbolic. Whereas the idea of participation of the image in the prototype was taken for granted in the ancient Greek worldview, the image now took on the role of signalling a reality to which it can be related only externally. This resulted in a basically different approach to the understanding of the eucharistic mystery.

The cause of this new worldview can be assigned in some measure to the unsettled situation of migratory peoples throughout northern Europe from the fourth to the ninth century. From the experience of constant social changes and insecurity of life, there seemed to develop a kind of practical positivism, or practical materialism. In such situations, the one stronghold often turns out to be what is accessible, what can be concretely grasped. But in this particular situation, a deeply religious thinking went hand in hand with this "thingly realism": a vital and unique awareness of the divine presence that can be contrasted with that of Eastern Christians.<sup>489</sup>

In 831 Paschasius Radbertus (d. c. 860) published his treatise *De Corpore et Sanguine Domini*. This work was to be very important in the history of the Eucharistic theology of the Western Church. But it is also very important to understand that it was never meant to be a systematic treatment of the Eucharist in the manner of the later Scholastic theologians. Radbertus was in fact writing this treatise as a catechetical aid for Placidus Varnius, a former pupil of his who was abbot of the abbey of New Corbie in Westphalia. It was written to help in the missionary work among the Germanic tribes and the formation of young monks coming from these tribes. So it is a structured catechesis of twenty-two questions and answers which rather than dealing with the Eucharist as a whole dealt with the limited subject matter of "the salvific purpose of Eucharistic celebration and on the effecting of Christ's real presence in the eucharistic elements."<sup>490</sup>

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<sup>489</sup> Kilmartin, *The Eucharist in the West*, 79.

<sup>490</sup> Mary Collins, "Evangelization, Catechesis, and the Beginning of Western Eucharistic Theology," *Louvain Studies* 23 (1988): 127.



As the scope of his work was limited to the meaning of the Eucharistic species *per se* it did not deal with the Eucharist in its liturgical context as earlier authors had. Rather Radbertus, setting the context for many later theologians, approached the Eucharist with a number of specific questions:

- 1) What is the relation between the eucharistic body of Christ and the historical body of Jesus who lived, died, rose and ascended to the Father?
- 2) How can one explain the "real presence" of Christ in the eucharist – especially since the sacrament is often celebrated in many different places at the same time?
- 3) What is the difference in the bread and wine before and after the consecration?
- 4) What is the relation between the sacramental signs (bread, wine) and the realities which those signs signify (Christ's true body and blood)?<sup>491</sup>

Radbertus tended to see a total identification between the Eucharistic Species and the historical body of Christ. While his theology did have some nuances, Paschasius' concept of the Eucharist was very close to the myriad of stories of Eucharistic miracles when doubting monks or clerics are shown in a vision that during the celebration of the Eucharist the bread and wine become the actual Baby Jesus who is graphically slaughtered, the blood is drained into the chalice and the body is chopped up and distributed to the communicants.<sup>492</sup> Then they realize that this is what the Eucharist is and that as a concession to our weakness God allows us to participate in this exact same reality under the veil of bread and wine.<sup>493</sup> While his theology may have been a little over-simplistic, nonetheless it proved to be very successful, as it suited prevailing religious mentality and while it may never

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<sup>491</sup> Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy*, 74-75.

<sup>492</sup> Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi. The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 135-139.

<sup>493</sup> Mazza, *The Celebration of the Eucharist*, 184-185.

have been accepted as official teaching it “accrued authority in its milieu because of its fittingness.”<sup>494</sup>

In 844 he sent a revised copy of the treatise to the emperor Charles the Bald (d. 877). Charles then consulted with Ratramnus (d. ca. 868), who was actually a disciple of Radbertus from the same abbey of Corbie. The main question of Charles was whether Christ was present in the Eucharist in truth (*veritas*) or merely in symbol (*figura*), in other words, was the Eucharistic “Body” the same as the historic “Body” of Jesus which suffered and died on the Cross.<sup>495</sup> In his answer he counteracted the excessive realism of his master and tended towards a more symbolic view of the real presence. Here he was disagreeing with Radbertus, it would seem that neither party considered this to be a major disagreement as both men managed to live together in harmony in the same monastery and there is no record of any unpleasant disagreements between them.<sup>496</sup> Indeed both of their theologies are quite similar and both lack the dynamic quality of the earlier Patristic conception of the Eucharist.<sup>497</sup>

However here is not the place to analyse the different theological positions in the early Eucharistic Controversies,<sup>498</sup> what is more important for the present work is to appreciate how these controversies contributed to a view whereby the Eucharistic

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<sup>494</sup> Collins, “The Beginning of Western Eucharistic Theology,” 128.

<sup>495</sup> N.B. in modern theology this distinction is moot as most theologians would hold that it is incorrect to hold the “either or” view, but that Christ is present both in symbol and in truth.

<sup>496</sup> Macy, *The Banquet's Wisdom*, 90.

<sup>497</sup> Kilmartin, *The Eucharist in the West*, 82-83.

<sup>498</sup> A good summary of this can be found in Kilmartin, *The Eucharist in the West*, 117-126 and Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Growth of Medieval Theology (600-1300)*. The Christian Tradition. A History of the Development of Doctrine (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), 184-214.

Species became a theological *locus* which could be considered in total isolation from the Eucharistic Liturgy. These early Eucharistic controversies had been somewhat academic and took place without much popular involvement even among clerical circles. However, in the eleventh century this debate became much more prominent. Berengarius of Tours (d. 1088) revisited the theological problems tackled by Paschasius and Ratramnus. Berengarius tried to clarify the understanding of the Eucharist and to answer the question of exactly *how* Christ was present in the Eucharistic species. Unlike most of his contemporaries he did not admit the notion of change in the Eucharist, mainly for two reasons, firstly because his particular understanding of Christ's resurrection made it impossible to believe in any change in that body and an absolute identification with the host that is *broken* was therefore impossible for Berengarius. Secondly, he had difficulty on the simple philosophical level of believing that one material thing could physically take the place of another.<sup>499</sup> So for Berengarius it was not a matter of the bread and wine being transformed into the physical Body and Blood of Christ but of them becoming sacraments of this reality. Although Berengarius was to some degree maligned in later centuries, having many doctrines falsely attributed to him, and was branded as a heresiarch, it cannot be denied that his theology did, in fact, fall outside the boundaries of orthodoxy.<sup>500</sup>

Berengarius was taken to task by Lanfranc, the Norman abbot of the St. Stephen's in Caen (who would later become archbishop of Canterbury and who had some dealings with the Irish Church directly dealing with Irish Eucharistic practice –

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<sup>499</sup> Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy*, 142.

<sup>500</sup> Mazza, *The Celebration of the Eucharist*, 191.

these will be treated in the next chapter). Lanfranc had a more literal understanding of the transformation of the Eucharistic elements. There was a lot of public controversy between these two churchmen with the involvement of synods of bishops etc. Eventually Lanfranc prevailed (and was made archbishop of Canterbury) and Berengarius was forced to make public professions of faith which not only corrected his unorthodox views but probably went overboard in their graphic realism. These professions of faith were important for their realism and the influence they were to have on later dogmatic definitions:

I Berengarius, . . . acknowledging the true and apostolic faith, anathematize every heresy, especially that one for which heretofore I have been infamous: which [heresy] attempted to prove that the bread and wine which are placed on the altar remain merely a sacrament after consecration – and not the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; and further, that [the body and blood] are touched and broken by the hands of the priests and crushed by the teeth of the faithful in a sacramental manner only – and not physically (*sensualiter*). I assent to the Holy Roman Church and Apostolic See, and I confess with mouth and heart that . . . the bread and wine which are placed on the altar are not merely a sacrament after consecration, but are rather the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ – and that these are truly, physically, and not merely sacramentally, touched and broken by the hands of the priests and crushed by the teeth of the faithful.<sup>501</sup>

This oath of 1059 was the most graphic that Berengarius had to take (the later ones are a lot less colourful), but it is an important example of how the bishops themselves considered the manner of Christ's presence.

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<sup>501</sup> "Ego Berengarius . . . cognoscens veram et apostolicam fidem, anathematizo omnem haeresim, praecipue eam, de qua hactenus infamatus sum: quae adstruere conatur, panem et vinum, quae in altari ponuntur, post consecrationem solummodo, et non verum corpus et sanguinem Domini nostri Iesu Christi esse, nec posse sensualiter, nisi dentibus in solo sacramento, manibus sacerdotum tractari vel fangi vel fidelium dentibus atteri. Consentio autem sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae et Apostolicae Sedi, et ore et corde profiteor. . . scilicet panem et vinum, quae in altari ponuntur, post consecrationem non solum sacramentum, sed etiam verum corpus et sanguinem Domini nostri Iesu Christi esse, et sensualiter, non solum sacramento, sed in veritate, manibus sacerdotum tractari et fangi et fidelium dentibus atteri." Henricus Denzinger and Adolphus Schönmetzer, eds., *Enchiridion Symbolorum Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum* 36<sup>th</sup> ed. (Barcelona: Herder, 1976), number 690. English translation from Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy*, 137.

Parallel to these developments of Eucharistic theology was a change in the Church's ecclesiological self-understanding. Early Western texts refer to the Church as the Body of Christ but there was a gradual change in meaning of the phrase "Corpus Mysticum," or even "Corpus Christi," from referring to the Church to referring to the Eucharistic species.<sup>502</sup> While originally the "corpus mysticum" was used to refer to the Body of Christ on the altar as opposed to the physical body born of Mary, particularly in the theological fall out after the Berangerian controversy the "Corpus" became more and more identified with the Eucharistic Body.<sup>503</sup> Perhaps the new reading of the early scholastic writers and, according to De Lubac, Peter Lombard's highly influential *Sentences* (written between 1165-1170), in fact led to an impoverishment of Eucharistic theology vis-à-vis ecclesiology. Lombard's use of dialectic was partly responsible for the loss of the balanced symbolic understanding of the Eucharist of the patristic authors.<sup>504</sup>

## 2.8 Devotion to the Eucharistic Species

Evidence for popular devotion to the Eucharistic Species in the first millennium is quite scarce.<sup>505</sup> However, there is plentiful evidence that the cult of relics played an important role in the early Church and it is likely that later devotion to the Eucharistic Species developed from this initial devotion to the relics of the

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<sup>502</sup> Henri De Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum. L'Eucharistie et l'Église au Moyen Age. Étude Historique*. 2d. ed. (Paris: Aubier, 1949), 23, 288.

<sup>503</sup> *Ibid.*, 184-188.

<sup>504</sup> *Ibid.*, 117-118, see Gary Macy, *Treasures From The Storehouse. Medieval Religion and the Eucharist* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 5-7.

<sup>505</sup> Taft, "Devotion to the Eucharist in the Christian East," 217.

martyrs.<sup>506</sup> Initially the first Christian altars would not have contained any relics, and in the pre-Nicene period it is likely that in most churches the Eucharist would only have been celebrated on Sundays.<sup>507</sup> But in the age of the martyrs, as their cult started, it became customary for Christians to gather around their tomb on their *dies natalis* and to celebrate the Eucharist in close proximity to the tomb. After the peace of Constantine it became practical to do this in a more public way and soon Christians started to build *martyria* or little chapels enclosing these tombs with the altar often being fashioned on the actual tomb or placed directly over it. The next step was to move the tomb inside the city and to place the relics of the martyr (or saint) within an altar there.<sup>508</sup> Initially these would only have been in some churches (particularly in those churches that were able to obtain the relics of a famous local saint), but eventually relics came to be placed in every altar. Once again, initially this cult was closely linked to the liturgical action as these

relics were not significant for themselves alone. Following the usage of a later period of the early Church, their context was the celebration of the liturgy: their usual place had become the altar, and what pertained to the altar was the celebration of the liturgy, vigils built around the psalms and the celebration of the Eucharist. Surprisingly early the assembly of the community (on Sunday) was joined by pilgrimage to the tomb of a saint as an occasion for celebrating the Eucharist, and the early middle ages took up this practice with the intensity of those for whom the satisfaction of a profound need was here disclosed: celebrating the sacred rite in a sacred place.<sup>509</sup>

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<sup>506</sup> A good introduction to this practice is provided by Brown, *The Cult of the Saints* and Snoek, *Medieval Piety* gives an up to date study on the whole phenomenon of the place of relics in early Christianity.

<sup>507</sup> Jose Antonio Iñiguez Herrero, *El Altar Cristiano*. Vol 1. *De los Orìgins a Carlomagno*. (Pamplona: Eunsa, 1978), 64-65.

<sup>508</sup> Snoek, *Medieval Piety*, 9-14.

<sup>509</sup> Angelus Häussling, "Motives for the Frequency of the Eucharist," *Concilium* 152 (1982): 27.

Gradually the use of relics spread, particularly as the dismemberment of the saint's mortal remains became a legitimate practice, thus allowing for a saint's mortal remains to be placed under any number of altars. By the Carolingian period, most churches in the vicinity of the city of Rome had acquired their own relics and the placement of these relics in the altar had become an integral part of the liturgical rite of consecration of a church.<sup>510</sup> This was a fairly feasible practice in Rome where, due to the drastic fall in population and the various barbarian invasions, the catacombs were being emptied of the bones of the saints interred therein (most probably along with many other bones of dubious origins). But in the lands of the Carolingian domain, where there were far fewer local martyrs and saints than Rome, new foundations had trouble finding enough relics to meet their needs.<sup>511</sup> The resulting shortage was probably exacerbated by the need for enough relics to dedicate the many churches and abbeys that were built under royal patronage.<sup>512</sup>

In this context, the Eucharistic species were sometimes seen as a "relic" of Jesus Christ, and a relic of Christ could trump any saint's relic. In the first half of the eighth century *Ordo Romanus XLII* mentions that as part of the consecration of a church that "three particles of the body of the Lord are placed in the *confessio* (saint's tomb)" of the altar.<sup>513</sup> This is a rather extreme example of a practice that probably was not very widespread and never officially endorsed, but as late as the

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<sup>510</sup> Snoek, *Medieval Piety*, 18.

<sup>511</sup> But where enough relics were found, the desire to honour these relics with the celebration of the Eucharist may have been another contributing factor to the multiplication of Masses, see *ibid.*, 42.

<sup>512</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>513</sup> "Tres portiones corporis domini intus in confessione." *Ordo Romanus XLII*, 11 in Andrieu, *Les Ordines Romani*, 4:400. English translation my own.

fourteenth century some canonists still had to condemn it.<sup>514</sup> But less extreme versions of this tendency also developed. In earlier times the altar itself was the pre-eminent symbol of Christ in the church building, but gradually the Blessed Sacrament became associated with the altar outside of the time of the celebration itself. In the eighth century the practice of the Eucharistic Doves developed whereby the Eucharistic Bread was placed in a hollow metallic "dove" that was suspended above the altar.<sup>515</sup> Also the forerunners of tabernacles were developing whereby the Blessed Sacrament was being reserved on the altar itself. The ninth century local synod of Verona requires that:

The altar should be covered with clean linen; nothing should be placed on the altar except reliquaries and relics and the four gospel-books, and a pyx with the body of the Lord for the viaticum of the sick; other things should be kept in some seemly place.<sup>516</sup>

As time passed this practice became more and more common and eventually the altar became intimately associated with the reservation of the Eucharist. By the tenth and eleventh centuries this idea of the Eucharist as a relic of Christ was taken a further step and now in the rites of Good Friday the Eucharist was often buried in the altar or in some other "tomb," from which Christ would rise on Easter Sunday.<sup>517</sup>

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<sup>514</sup> Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy*, 108-109.

<sup>515</sup> Archdale A. King, *Eucharistic Reservation in the Western Church* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1965), 42-45. N.B. the texts cited by King contain references to metallic "doves" associated with altars perhaps even as early as the third century, however it is only in the eighth century that there is positive evidence of "doves" containing the Eucharistic species.

<sup>516</sup> "Altare coopertum de mundis linteis; super altare nihil ponatur nisi capsae et reliquiae, aut forte quatuor Evangelia et buxida cum corpore Domini ad viaticum infirmis; caetera in nitido loco recondantur." PL 136:559. English translation from Benedict Groeschel and James Monti, *In the Presence of the Lord. The History, Theology and Psychology of Eucharistic Devotion* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Books, 1997), 191.

<sup>517</sup> Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy*, 108-109.



In the tenth and eleventh century these tendencies became more explicit with the Eucharistic species beginning to receive worship in and of themselves displacing the other ritual representations of Christ in the Holy Week ceremonials.<sup>518</sup> One of the clearest witnesses to this is Lanfranc's eleventh century description of a Palm Sunday Procession where

The earlier objects of popular veneration – cross, relics or gospels – have been replaced by the eucharistic species. The liturgical gesture of reverence (lights, incense) accorded to the earlier cult objects in the procession have been transferred to the reserved sacrament. When did this ritual transference take place? It is difficult to assign a precise date, but there is evidence for such transference before the end of the tenth century.<sup>519</sup>

Obviously there were a lot of individual practices in different places throughout the West in these centuries. But at the end of the period we are dealing with four practices of popular devotion of the Eucharistic species which were becoming common:

- 1) Devotional visits to the reserved sacrament
- 2) Processions in which the sacrament, concealed in a container or exposed to public view, was carried about;
- 3) Exposition of the sacrament to the gaze of the faithful;
- 4) Benediction, in which a solemn blessing with the eucharistic bread was imparted to the people, often at the conclusion of a procession or a period of exposition.<sup>520</sup>

By the end of the twelfth century the Eucharistic species had become divorced from the liturgical celebration of the Eucharist. People only rarely received Communion and the language of the liturgy had become unintelligible. At the same

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<sup>518</sup> Taft, "Devotion to the Eucharist in the Christian East," 224-230.

<sup>519</sup> Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy*, 131-132.

<sup>520</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

time a very realistic Eucharistic theology became popular. This led the faithful to a particular devotion to the Host<sup>521</sup> as the locus of the humanity of Christ:

People wanted to gaze on the Body of Christ with their own bodily eyes, for, even though veiled by the appearance of bread, it was always the Body of Christ that was before the eyes of the faithful. It followed that the very host, thus hastily identified with the humanity of Christ, became the object of affection and feeling. There was a sensible and affective contact with the humanity of Christ, because to see the host was to see the Son of God with one's bodily eyes.<sup>522</sup>

So even on the level of popular devotion the Eucharist remained central.<sup>523</sup> It was still the privileged place of encounter with Christ. Despite the fact that the laity no longer received Communion with any frequency and when they did it was under one form, after the Eucharistic Liturgy proper had ended and was placed directly in their mouth, it was still vitally important to them. In hindsight we might wish that things had been different but this is of no importance, the reality is that things happened as they did and in any event in the minds of all eleventh and twelfth century Christians:

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<sup>521</sup> By the eleventh century the practice of using unleavened bread was universal in the West, the use of bread in the form of a white wafer added to the idea of the Host as an immaculate white object of devotion quite alien to what was found at the domestic table. Cabié, *The Eucharist*, 132-133.

<sup>522</sup> Mazza, *The Celebration of the Eucharist*, 195. This desire for ocular Communion was much more prevalent in the West than in the Christian East. Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 15.

<sup>523</sup> In this treatment we have followed Mitchell and other liturgical scholars in a somewhat minimalist reading of the evidence for popular Eucharistic Devotion. However for a (very) maximalist view see James Monti's treatment of the subject in Groeschel and Monti, *In the Presence of the Lord*, 187-208. However it is advisable to check the original sources that Monti refers to as his work is over-dependent on secondary materials. For a view of how the Eucharistic Celebration developed after this period (with some references to earlier history) see, John Bossy, "The Mass as a Social Institution, 1200-1700," *Past and Present*, 100 (1983): 29-61.

"The holy mystery of the Lord's body" was the greatest of all the benefits granted to mankind, "because the entire salvation of the world consists in this mystery."<sup>524</sup>

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<sup>524</sup> Pelikan, *The Growth of Medieval Theology*, 185. Internal quotations from Odo of Cluny *Collationum libri tres* 2.28. ("Hoc enim beneficium majus est inter omnia bona, quae hominibus concessa sunt, et hoc est quod Deus majori charitate mortalibus indulsit, quia in hoc mysterio salus mundi tota consistit." PL 133:572).

## CHAPTER 3

### WRITTEN SOURCES

#### **Introduction**

The first thing that needs to be noted about this chapter is that the written sources for the Eucharist in Pre-Norman Ireland are not as plentiful as might be desired. Indeed the discovery of another one or two liturgical manuscripts could totally transform our current understanding. But the *Stowe Missal* is a complete manuscript that is very interesting and can tell us quite a bit. This picture can be supplemented by a partially reconstructed palimpsest manuscript of an early Irish Sacramentary currently in Munich (*CLM 14429, Der Staatsbibliothek München*). Some material found in the *Antiphonary of Bangor*, the *Irish Liber Hymnorum* and various rites of Communion of the Sick and Viaticum can further supplement these liturgical texts. The first part of this Chapter will examine these texts.

But these are not the only documentary sources of the Eucharist. While not as important as liturgical texts, Monastic Rules and Penitentials bear witness to elements of Eucharistic practice. Another important source are the Irish saints' lives, some of which are quite early, and devotional material along with other incidental texts such as annalistic entries. The second part of this Chapter will examine these texts and try to see what light they shed on Eucharistic practice in Pre-Norman Ireland. As most of this material is far from systematic in its treatment of the Eucharist, some organization is needed when dealing with these documents.

Therefore an attempt will be made to gather the texts into different categories, such as texts dealing with the viaticum or chrismals.<sup>525</sup>

### 3.1 Liturgical Texts

#### 3.1.1 The *Stowe Missal*

The *Stowe Missal* is without doubt the most famous Irish liturgical manuscript. This tiny manuscript has survived more or less intact to the present day. While scholarly opinion is somewhat divided on its date, Warner's opinion that the Missal seems to have been originally written shortly after the year 800 can still be accepted as a conservative estimate today.<sup>526</sup> The name Stowe derives from the fact that the Missal was located for a time in the estate of the duke of Buckingham at Stowe, England (today it can be found in the library of the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin). Traditionally the Missal has been associated with the *Céli Dé* movement. However this attribution is largely based on the fact that in the Canon of the Mass mention is made of St. Maelruin, one of the founders of the *Céli Dé*.<sup>527</sup>

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<sup>525</sup> However, due to the lack of clear-cut divisions in the material, some of the written sources have been dealt with in other chapters. Chapter One examined the texts directly pertinent to pastoral care and Chapter Four will examine the texts that deal with the physical dimensions of the Eucharist (church buildings, bread and wine, etc.).

<sup>526</sup> George F. Warner, ed., *The Stowe Missal. MS. D. II. 3 in the Library of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin* (Suffolk: The Henry Bradshaw Society – The Boydell Press, originally published as two volumes in 1906 (Vol. I) and 1915 (Vol. II), Reprinted in One Volume 1989 ), xxxii. Warner discusses earlier opinions on the possible dates in xxii-xxiv and xxxii-xxxvii

<sup>527</sup> fol. 33 in *ibid*, 89. Botte also notes that in the *Te igitur* mention is made of “. . . et abate nostro N. episcopo. . .” (fol. 24r in *ibid*. 10) and not the more normal “. . . et Antistite nostro N. . .” Botte, *Le Canon de la Messe Romaine*, 32-33. However this is only an indication of a possible monastic provenance and does not really have any bearing on whether or not *Stowe* is associated with the *Céli Dé* movement.

After the manuscript ceased to be used as a liturgical book it was considered to be a relic and was encased in a valuable reliquary. Ó Riain has studied this reliquary and reaches the conclusion that the reliquary was made to enshrine the *Stowe Missal* sometime between 1026 and 1033 under the patronage of "Mathgamáin grandson of Cathal" at Lorrha (Co. Tipperary) and that it remained there at least until the fourteenth century when a new face was made for the shrine. Therefore the *Stowe Missal* has no connection with Terryglass or any *Céli Dé* centre in between these dates. He also plausibly points out that if the *Stowe Missal* was important enough to be considered as a relic in Lorrha in the tenth century that it must already have been in that church for sometime prior to this.<sup>528</sup> hence it is quite possible that the only connection between the *Stowe Missal* and the *Céli Dé* is that made by modern scholars.

The Missal itself contains an order of Mass, three "common" Masses: one for saints, one for penitents and one for the dead. It also contains texts for baptism and the visitation of the sick and a tract on the meaning of the Mass in Early Irish<sup>529</sup> (the present manuscript also contains a copy of the Gospel of John, but this seems to have been bound to the liturgical section at a later date). The *Stowe Missal* is also quite significant as it contains all the texts necessary for the celebration of the Eucharist, and is therefore perhaps the first book to which the title Missal (as

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<sup>528</sup> Pádraig Ó Riain, "The Shrine of the Stowe Missal Redated," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* (C) 91 (1991): 294-295.

<sup>529</sup> These will be dealt with later on in this Chapter.

opposed to Sacramentary) can be attributed.<sup>530</sup> The small size of the book, together with the variety of the "pastoral mix" it contains would suggest that this book would have been a sort of *vademecum* that a priest would have used as he made his rounds to the different churches that depended on his pastoral services:

Lacking only the ritual for a wedding ceremony (again, like the Brussels manuscript), a rite for which we have no early medieval Irish evidence for whatsoever, the Stowe Missal enabled its user to preside over a Sunday Mass, to design and perform votive services, to baptize catechumens and to administer the last rites to the sick. Furthermore, certain elements of the rituals recorded in the missal support the theory of its use by priests, such as the seemingly fixed lections. Perhaps because a lectionary would have been too bulky to carry easily, the missal proper supplied suitable lessons for every mass, focussing on the forthcoming sacrament and the reference to the Eucharistic service in the story of the Last supper. Their presence in the text can also be understood, as it was by Godel, as revealing the absence of any other cleric to read the lessons.<sup>531</sup>

In its original form it seems that the *Stowe Missal* contained no rubrics. This makes it hard to interpret the manuscript as prayers adjacent to each other may have been alternatives or it may have been that they were all prayed in each and every celebration. There is no direction for the preparation of the altar or for the exchange of peace.<sup>532</sup> Importantly the Missal is in fact one of the earliest witnesses of the Roman Canon.<sup>533</sup>

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<sup>530</sup> Marion J. Hatchett, "The Eucharistic Rite of the Stowe Missal" in J. Neil Alexander, ed. *NPN Studies in Church Music and Liturgy Time and Community in Honor of Thomas Julian Talley* (Washington, D.C.: The Pastoral Press, 1990), 154.

<sup>531</sup> Sven Meeder, "The Early Irish Stowe Missal's Destination and Function," *Early Medieval Europe* Vol. 13 Issue 2 (May 2005). 182-183. In this sense it seems to have been akin to the Bobbio Missal. Hen, "The Liturgy of the Bobbio Missal," 152-153.

<sup>532</sup> Hatchett, "The Eucharistic Rite of the Stowe Missal," 154.

<sup>533</sup> It is also interesting to note that another of the earliest witnesses is the *Bobbio Missal*, which is now classed as having a Gallican origin but may also has an Irish connection. When Dom Botte deals with the text of the Canon, Stowe and Bobbio are the first two sources he lists noting that the "famille irlandaise" is very important for any attempt to reconstruct the text. Botte, *Le Canon de la Messe Romaine*, 11-13. The Book of Armagh, which is a New Testament manuscript with some

Another important fact concerning the *Stowe Missal* is that shortly after its completion a man named Mól Cáich reworked it. We have no idea who he was but he inserted a lot of “*post-primam manum* alterations”<sup>534</sup> including rubrics and additional euchological texts. Many scholars find his work infuriating as at times he obscured the original text and it is often difficult to discern whether in a given instance he was simply adding rubrics or whether he also changed some of the prayers. Although it is generally held that he altered the *Missal* to be more in line with current Continental Gallican practices.<sup>535</sup> But this modification of the *Stowe Missal* shows that, even though later it was to become a relic, at this stage it was seen as “a book in which usefulness prevailed over authority and tradition,”<sup>536</sup>

An analysis of the original edition of the *Stowe Missal* shows that it was quite Roman in its structure:

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additions written in 807, also contains a portion of the Roman Canon. Warren, *Liturgy and Ritual*, 174.

In a comprehensive series of articles Bernard Capelle has placed the *Stowe Missal* in the centre of his analysis of the history of certain aspects of the Roman Mass. While Capelle should not be faulted for his examination of the evidence, it must be noted that in this period scholars are forced to deal with scattered manuscripts which have survived in various corners of Europe and come from radically different times and places. In his reconstruction of a linear model of liturgical development it is perhaps over-simplistic to treat the simple liturgical *vademecum* of a humble rural Irish cleric alongside some books which may have been used in Papal liturgies as if they were equals. However, while keeping this warning in mind, in general terms Capelle has shown, once again, how the Irish liturgical evidence is more mainstream than often thought. Bernard Capelle, “Le Kyrie de la Messe et le Pape Gélase” in *Travaux Liturgiques De Doctrine et d’Histoire. Volume II Histoire; la Messe* (Louvain: Centre Liturgique – Abbaye du Mont César, 1962), 116-134; “Alcuin et l’Histoire du Symbole de la Messe” in *ibid.*, 211-221 and “Le Rite de la Fraction dans la Messe Romaine” in *ibid.*, 287-318.

<sup>534</sup> I borrow the phrase from J.W. Hunwicke, “Kerry and *Stowe* Revisited,” *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 102 (2002): 2.

<sup>535</sup> Hatchett, “The Eucharistic Rite of the *Stowe Missal*,” 162. Breen is of the opinion that these revisions were carried out soon after the *Missal* was written, as they are in line with the Councils of Friuli (796/6) and Aachen (798), where a new version of the Creed was promulgated and on which these changes are based. Aidan Breen, “The Text of the Constantinopolitan Creed in the *Stowe Missal*,” in *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 90 (1990): 121.

<sup>536</sup> Meeder, “The Early Irish *Stowe Missal*’s Destination and Function,” 185.



This first edition of the Stowe rite is a heavily Romanized Rite: most of the prayers are in the concise Roman collect form, the Old Testament lesson has been dropped, the eucharistic prayer is the Roman Canon, and the peace has probably been moved to the Roman position after the breaking of the bread. This rite is very close kin to the *Missa Romensis cotidiana* of the Bobbio Missal. Yet a number of Gallican features have been retained: the apparently normative use of a canticle in the entrance rite, the Creed, the chant after the gospel and Creed), the *Post nomina* and *Ad pacem* prayers, the place of the Lord's Prayer, and the *Consummatio*. Other features normal in a Roman Rite at this point in time are missing: introit, *Kyrie*, psalm at the offertory, and *Agnus dei*. The rite also has several unusual, if not unique, features: the inclusion of prayers for use after (or possible during) epistle, gradual, and Alleluia; the place of the litany between epistle and gospel; texts related to the offering between epistle and gospel use of *N.* to indicate a place to insert names; and commemoration of Old Testament worthies within the eucharistic prayer. It contains relatively early forms of the *Gloria in excelsis*, the Nicene Creed, and the Roman Canon.<sup>537</sup>

The *Stowe Missal* is probably a typical witness to its period where the Gallican liturgy was adopting many Roman elements.<sup>538</sup> This period was examined in Chapter 2 when prior to the reign of Charlemagne it has been said that by the year 750 "at least half the churches in Gaul were using the gallicanized Roman rite, and the rest the romanized Gallican rite."<sup>539</sup> So here it is assumed that the *Stowe Missal* is a Gallican Missal written in Ireland around the year 800. Although written at a time when the Gallican rite in general was becoming more and more Roman in content, it seems that shortly after its composition M<sup>o</sup>el C<sup>a</sup>ich made some changes and additions which were perhaps more traditionally Gallican than the original Missal may have been. But while each and every church in Ireland at the time had a different form of the Liturgy, there is simply not enough evidence to be able to give

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<sup>537</sup> Hatchett, "The Eucharistic Rite of the Stowe Missal," 159.

<sup>538</sup> It is also possible that much of the Roman material in the *Stowe Missal* may have reached Ireland via present-day France as the forms and variations of the Roman prayers have parallels to other Gallican books as opposed to the pure Roman forms. Schneiders, "The Origins of the Early Irish Liturgy," 84.

<sup>539</sup> Porter, *The Gallican Rite*, 54.

any other interpretation to the “*post-primam manum* alterations” other than to say that M<sup>o</sup>el C<sup>a</sup>ich decided that the *Missal* would be of more use with the alterations.<sup>540</sup> And it also needs to be remembered that the amended version of the text was that which was actually used prior to the *Missal*'s enshrinement.

Here is not the place to carry out an in depth analysis of the euchology of the *Stowe Missal*.<sup>541</sup> In this analysis it will have to be sufficient to note the places where the *Stowe Missal* differs from contemporary Continental missals. Basically there are three main differences worth noting. These take the form of three texts without exact parallel elsewhere: the Eucharistic celebration begins with a long litany, there is a hymn for the fraction and a Communion chant of types that we do not find elsewhere.<sup>542</sup> The first of these is the long Litany:

We have sinned, O Lord, we have sinned: Spare us from our sins. Save us! You who guided Noah over the waters of the flood. Hear us. You who called back Jonah from the abyss with a word: deliver us. You who stretched out your hand to Peter as he sank: help us O Christ. O Son of God you showed the wonderful works of the Lord to our ancestors, be merciful to us in our times: put forth your hand from on high and deliver us.

Christ hear us!	[Christ graciously hear us].
Christ hear us!	[Christ graciously hear us].
Christ hear us!	[Christ graciously hear us].
Kyrie eleison,	[Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison,	Christe eleison, Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison,	Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison].
Saint Mary,	[Pray for us].

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<sup>540</sup> We do not deny that certain liturgical characteristics and practices may have marked out various sub-groups in Pre-Norman Ireland (churches influenced by the *Romani* or the *Hiberni*, or those serviced by monastics connected with the *Céli Dé* or Columban charisms). But with the possible exception of the calculation of the date of Easter, there is not enough evidence to say anything more concrete about these possible differences.

<sup>541</sup> A preliminary attempt at such an analysis can be found in King, *Liturgies of the Past*, 248-274 and Hatchett, “The Eucharistic Rite of the *Stowe Missal*,” 153-170. A more developed analysis can be found in Hugh P. Kennedy, *Tinkering Embellishment or Liturgical Fidelity? An investigation into Liturgical Practice in Ireland before the 12th Century Reform Movement as Illustrated in the Stowe Missal* (Unpublished DD Thesis, Pontifical University, St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, 1994).

<sup>542</sup> O'Loughlin, *Celtic Theology*, 136-137.

Saint Peter,	[Pray for us].
Saint Paul,	[Pray for us].
Saint Andrew,	[Pray for us].
Saint James,	[Pray for us].
Saint Bartholomew,	[Pray for us].
Saint Thomas,	[Pray for us].
Saint Matthew,	[Pray for us].
Saint James,	[Pray for us].
Saint Thaddeus,	[Pray for us].
Saint Matthias,	[Pray for us].
Saint Mark,	[Pray for us].
Saint Luke,	[Pray for us].
[*] Saint Stephen,	Pray for us.
Saint Martin,	Pray for us.
Saint Jerome,	Pray for us.
Saint Augustine,	Pray for us.
Saint Gregory,	Pray for us.
Saint Hilary,	Pray for us.
Saint Patrick,	Pray for us.
Saint Ailbe,	Pray for us.
Saint Finian,	Pray for us.
Saint Finian,	Pray for us.
Saint Ciaran,	Pray for us.
Saint Ciaran,	Pray for us.
Saint Brendan,	Pray for us.
Saint Brendan,	Pray for us.
Saint Columba,	Pray for us.
Saint Columba,	Pray for us.
Saint Comgall,	Pray for us.
Saint Cainnech,	Pray for us.
Saint Finbar,	Pray for us.
Saint Nessan,	Pray for us.
Saint Fachtna,	Pray for us.
Saint Lugaid,	Pray for us.
Saint Lachtain,	Pray for us.
Saint Ruadán,	Pray for us.
Saint Carthach,	Pray for us.
Saint Kevin,	Pray for us.
Saint Mochonne,	Pray for us.
Saint Brigid,	Pray for us.
Saint Ita,	Pray for us.
Saint Scetha,	Pray for us.
Saint Sínech,	Pray for us.
Saint Samthann,	Pray for us.
O [all] you saints,	Pray for us.
Be merciful to us,	Spare us.
O Lord be merciful to us,	Deliver us O Lord.
from every evil,	Deliver us O Lord.
Through your cross,	Deliver us O Lord.
Sinners,	We ask you to hear us.
O Son of God,	We ask you to hear us.

That you might give us peace, We ask you to hear us.  
 Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.  
 Christ hear us! [Christ graciously hear us].  
 Christ hear us! [Christ graciously hear us].  
 Christ hear us! [Christ graciously hear us].<sup>543</sup>

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<sup>543</sup> "Peccavimus, Domine, Peccavimus parce peccatis nostris et salva nos. Qui gubernasti Noe super undas diluvii, exaudi nos; et Jonam de abyssu verbo revocasti libera nos. Qui Petro mergenti manum porrexisti auxiliare nobis, Christe, Fili Dei.

Fecisti mirabilia, Domine, cum patribus nostris, et nostris propitiare temporibus. Emitte manum tuam de alto, libera nos.

Christe, audi nos; Christe, audi nos; Christe audi nos. Kyrie, eleison.

Sancta Maria,	[ora pro nobis]
Sancte Petre,	[ora pro nobis]
Sancte Paule,	[ora pro nobis]
Sancte Andrea,	[ora pro nobis]
Sancte Jacobe,	[ora pro nobis]
Sancte Bartholomaeae,	[ora pro nobis]
Sancte Thoma,	[ora pro nobis]
Sancte Matthaeae,	[ora pro nobis]
Sancte Jacobe,	[ora pro nobis]
Sancte Thaddaeae,	[ora pro nobis]
Sancte Matthia,	[ora pro nobis]
Sancte Marce,	[ora pro nobis]
Sance Luca,	[ora pro nobis]
Omnes sancti,	orate pro nobis.
Propitius esto,	parce nobis, Domine
Ab omni malo,	libera nos Domine
Per crucem tuam,	libera nos Domine
[*] Sancte Stephane,	ora pro nobis.
Sancte Martine,	ora pro nobis.
Sancte Hieronyme,	ora pro nobis.
Sancte Augustine,	ora pro nobis.
Sancte Gregori,	ora pro nobis.
Sancte Hilari,	ora pro nobis.
Sancte Patrici,	ora pro nobis.
Sancte Ailbei,	ora pro nobis.
Sancte Finnio,	ora pro nobis.
Sancte Finnio,	ora pro nobis.
Sancte Ciarani,	ora pro nobis.
Sancte Ciarani,	ora pro nobis.
Sancte Brendini,	ora pro nobis.
Sancte Brendini,	ora pro nobis.
Sancte Columba,	ora pro nobis.
Sancte Columba,	ora pro nobis.
Sancte Comgilli,	ora pro nobis.
Sancte Cainnichi,	ora pro nobis.
Sancte Findbarri,	ora pro nobis.
Sancte Nessani,	ora pro nobis.
Sancte Factni,	ora pro nobis.
Sancte Lugidi,	ora pro nobis.
Sancte Lacteni,	ora pro nobis.
Sancte Ruadani,	ora pro nobis.
Sancte Carthegi,	ora pro nobis.
Sancte Coemgeni,	ora pro nobis.

What is significant about this form of starting the Eucharistic celebration is not the fact of starting with a litany, as litanies of one form or another (particularly variations of the *Kyrie*) were common in other places.<sup>544</sup> What marks *Stowe* out is the sheer length of the Litany. It seems as if the original version of *Stowe* contained a shorter form of the litany and that the second section (containing the Irish saints) was added by Móel Cáich.<sup>545</sup> Irish devotional texts have many examples of litanies and litanic forms of prayer,<sup>546</sup> but here is an example that seems to be properly liturgical. The original list of saints only mention Our Lady, the Apostles and Evangelists. But the additions contain some other saints of the Universal Church (such as Martin of Tours and Augustine of Hippo). While Patrick and Columba are mentioned the list does seem to concentrate on saints venerated particularly in Leinster and North Munster. This may in fact be consistent with the earlier *Céli Dé*

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Sancte Mochonne,	ora pro nobis.
Sancta Brigita,	ora pro nobis.
Sancta Ita,	ora pro nobis.
Sancta Scetha,	ora pro nobis.
Sancta Sinecha,	ora pro nobis.
Sancta Samdine,	ora pro nobis.
Omnes sancti ,	orate pro nobis.
Propitius esto,	parce nobis, Domine.
Propitius esto,	libera nos, Domine.
Ab omni malo,	libera nos, Domine.
Per Crucem tuam,	libera nos, Domine.
Peccatores,	te rogamus audi nos.
Filii Dei,	te rogamus audi nos.
Ut pacem dones,	te rogamus audi nos.
Agne Dei qui tollis peccata mundi,	miserere nobis.

Christe, audi nos; Christe, audi nos; Christe, audi nos." *Stowe Missal* Fol 12a., Fol 28a., Fol 28b., Fol 29a., in Bartholomew MacCarthy, "On the *Stowe Missal*," in *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*, 27 (1886): 192-194. English translation from O'Loughlin, *Celtic Theology*, 137-139.

<sup>544</sup> Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 1:333-346.

<sup>545</sup> This is marked in the text by [\*]. At some stage the page containing these additions was bound in the wrong place at some later date. King, *Liturgies of the Past*, 249.

<sup>546</sup> Willibrord Godel, "Irish Prayer in the Early Middle Ages II," in *Milltown Studies* No. 5, (Spring 1980): 85-96.

identification of Stowe, but it could also be significant that no mention is made of the Archangel Michael who was particularly venerated in texts associated with Tallaght and other *Céli Dé* centres.<sup>547</sup> Whatever else may be understood from the litany it is clear that the Eucharist is seen as a communion with the saints in heaven. The saints are also very present in the Canon. Here over one hundred saints of both Old and New Testament along with many Irish and some non-Irish saints are included.<sup>548</sup> This is probably a preservation of the early custom of the reading of the diptyches during the Eucharist, which named the saints that the church was in communion with.<sup>549</sup>

The second important element of the *Stowe Missal* is the chant used at the *Fractio Panis*:

They knew it was the Lord, Alleluia;  
 in the breaking up of the bread, Alleluia.  
 The bread we break is the body of Jesus Christ, our Lord, Alleluia;  
 the chalice we bless is the blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord, Alleluia.  
 For the remission of sins, Alleluia.  
 Lord, let your mercy rest upon us, Alleluia;  
 who put all our confidence in you, Alleluia.  
 They knew it was the Lord, Alleluia;  
 in the breaking up of the bread, Alleluia.  
 O Lord, we believe that in this breaking of your body and pouring out of your blood  
 we become your redeemed people;

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<sup>547</sup> I am indebted to Dr. Colmán Etchingham for these insights.

<sup>548</sup> *Stowe Missal* Fol 30a., Fol 30b., Fol 31a., Fol 31b., in MacCarthy, "On the Stowe Missal," 216-218. This is also the place where the famous mention is made of St. Maelruin, the founder of the *Céli Dé* movement, along with the one hundred other saints. For a table of dates and other information of the Irish saints mentioned in the *Stowe Missal* see Warner, *The Stowe Missal*, xxiv-xxxii.

<sup>549</sup> King, *Liturgies of the Past*, 264-265. King also notes that while Laurence, Melitus and Justus, the three successors of Augustine of Canterbury are commemorated in this list, that he himself is not commemorated, which might hint at some antipathy towards the founder of Anglo-Saxon Christianity.

We confess that in taking the gifts of this pledge here, we lay hold in hope of enjoying its true fruit in the heavenly places.<sup>550</sup>

The original text of this prayer has been changed by Móel Cáich who has erased the last six lines of the prayer replacing them with the current ending. Here we find a *catena* of Scripture verses dealing with the reception of Christ in Communion. This text was said or sung as the priest broke the bread. In the next section of this Chapter we will examine the *Mass Tract of the Stowe Missal* which tells how the bread was sometimes broken in as many as sixty-five pieces. While the recitation of this prayer would give enough time to break the bread on less solemn occasions when there were few communicants, it is doubtful that the priest could have accomplished the intricate fraction rite as described in the *Mass Tract* during the time given. It is possible that the text may have been repeated as needs dictated.<sup>551</sup>

The third distinctive feature of Stowe is the presence of a very long series of prayers for use during Communion that could be called a "Communion antiphon":

My peace I give you, Alleluia;  
 my peace I leave you.  
 Those who love your law have great peace, Alleluia;  
 they do not stumble, Alleluia.  
 [Bless] the King of Heaven [who comes] with peace Alleluia;  
 full of the odour of life, Alleluia.

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<sup>550</sup> "Cognoverunt Dominum, *alleluia*, in fractione panis, *alleluia*. Panis quem frangimus Corpus est Domini nostri, Jesu Christi, *alleluia*. Calix quem benedicimus, *alleluia*, Sanguis est Domini nostri, Jesu Christi, *alleluia*, in remissionem peccatorum nostrorum, *alleluia*. Fiat Domine, *miser cordia tua super nos, alleluia quemadmodum speravimus in te, alleluia*. Cognoverunt Dominum, *alleluia*. Credimus, Domine, credimus in hac confractioe Corporis et effusione Sanguinis nos esse redemptos; et confidimus, sacramenti hujus assumptione muniti, ut quod spe interim hic tenemus, mansuri in celestibus veris fructibus perfruamur. Per Dominum." *Stowe Missal* Fol 32a., Fol 32b., Fol 33a., in MacCarthy, "On the Stowe Missal," 219-220. English translation from O'Loughlin, *Celtic Theology*, 142. (n.b I have slightly modified O'Loiughlin's translation).

<sup>551</sup> O'Loughlin, *Celtic Theology*, 142.

O sing him a new song, Alleluia;  
 come, all his saints, Alleluia.  
 Come, eat of my bread, Alleluia;  
 and drink the wine I have mixed for you, Alleluia.  
*Psalm 23 is recited.*

He who eats my body, Alleluia;  
 and drinks my blood, Alleluia;  
 abides in me and I in him, Alleluia.  
*Psalm 24 is recited.*

This is the living bread come down from heaven, Alleluia;  
 he who eats of it shall live forever, Alleluia.  
*Psalm 25 is recited.*

The Lord fed them with bread from heaven, Alleluia;  
 men ate the bread of angels, Alleluia.  
*Psalm 43 is recited.*

Eat, O friends, Alleluia;  
 and drink deeply, O beloved ones, Alleluia.  
 This is the sacred body of our Lord, [Alleluia];  
 the blood of our Saviour, Alleluia;  
 feast, all of you, on it for eternal life, Alleluia.  
 Let my lips declare your praise, Alleluia;  
 because you teach me your commandments, Alleluia.  
 I will bless the Lord at all times, Alleluia;  
 his praise always on my lips, Alleluia.  
 Taste and see, Alleluia;  
 how sweet is the Lord, Alleluia.  
 Where I am, Alleluia;  
 there shall my servant be, Alleluia.  
 Let the children come to me, Alleluia;  
 and do not stop them, Alleluia;  
 for to such belongs the kingdom of God, Alleluia.  
 Repent, Alleluia;  
 for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand, Alleluia.  
 The Kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, Alleluia;  
 and violent men have taken it by force, Alleluia.  
 Come O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom, Alleluia;  
 prepared for you before the foundation of the world, Alleluia.  
 Glory be to the Father [and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit];  
 come O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom;  
 as it was in the beginning, [is now, and ever shall be, world without end];  
 come O blessed of my Father, Amen, Alleluia.<sup>552</sup>

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<sup>552</sup> "*Pacem mandasti, pacem dedisti, pacem dereliquisti. Pacem tuam, Domine, da nobis de caelo, et pacificum hunc diem et caeteros dies vitae nostrae in tua pace disponas. Per Dominum. Conmixto Corporis et sanguinis Domini nostri, Jesu Crsto, sit nobis salus in vitam perpetuam. Amen. Ecce agnus Dei; ecce quo tollit peccata mundi.*



If we are right in assuming that the whole texts of the four Psalms are recited (only the *incipit* of each Psalm is actually given in the *Missal* but it is probable that at this time the reader would understand that the whole Psalm, which most clerics knew by heart, would be recited when only the *incipit* was written) then this rite would have lasted a long time. It would have given time for the assembly to receive the Eucharist. The text of this chant is again very much based on the physical consumption of the Eucharistic elements. The length and content of these chants would imply that many people communicated and not that they remained as spectators. Also the euchology is fully consistent with actual communication of the

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*Pacem meam do vobis, alleluia; pacem relinquo vobis, alleluia.*  
*Pax multa diligentibus legem tuam, Domine, alleluia; et non est in illis scandalum, alleluia.*  
*Regem caeli cum pace, alleluia,*  
*Plenum odorem vitae, alleluia,*  
*Novum carmen cantate, alleluia,*  
*Omnes sancti, venite, alleluia.*  
*Venite comedite panem meum, alleluia, et bibite vinum quod miscui vobis, alleluia.*  
*Dominus regit me.*  
*Qui manducat Corpus meum, et bibit meum Sanguinem, alleluia, ipse in me manet, [et] ego in illo, alleluia.*  
*Domini est terra.*  
*Hic est panis vivus, qui de caelo descendit, alleluia; qui manducat ex eo, vivet in aeternum, alleluia.*  
*Ad te, Domine, levavi animam meam.*  
*Panem caeli dedit eis Dominus, alleluia; panem angelorum manducavit homo, alleluia*  
*Judica me, Domine.*  
*Comedite, amici mei, alleluia; et inebriamini, charissimi, alleluia*  
*Hoc sacrum Corpus Domini,*  
*Salvatoris Sanguinem, alleluia,*  
*Sumite vobis*  
*In vitam aeternam, alleluia.*  
*In labis meis meditabor hymnum, alleluia; cum docueris me, et ego justitias respondebo, alleluia.*  
*Benedicam Dominum in omni tempore, alleluia; semper laus eius in ore meo, alleluia.*  
*Gustate et videte, alleluia, quam suavis est Dominus, alleluia.*  
*Ubi ego fuero, alleluia, ibi erit et minister meus, alleluia.*  
*Sinite parvulos venire ad me, alleluia, et nolite eos prohibere, alleluia; talium est enim regnum caelorum, alleluia.*  
*Penitentiam agite, alleluia; appropinquavit enim regnum caelorum, alleluia.*  
*Regnum celorum vim patitur; alleluia et violenti rapiunt illud, alleluia.*  
*Venite, benedicti patris mei, possidete regnum, alleluia, quoe vobis paratum est ab origine mundi, alleluia.*  
*Gloria. Venite. Sicut erat. Venite." Stowe Missal Fol 33b., Fol 34a., Fol 34b., Fol 35a., in MacCarthy, "On the Stowe Missal," 221-223. English translation from O'Loughlin, *Celtic Theology*, 143-144.*

full assembly (presuming that an assembly was present). However it is also quite possible that this text would have been used on those feast days when there were many communicants and that some shorter version would be used on other days.

### 3.1.2 The Old Irish Mass Tract of the *Stowe Missal*<sup>553</sup>

Along with the Eucharistic texts, the *Stowe Missal* contains a number of other texts, including a vernacular Mass tract, a rite for Baptism and for the Communion of the Sick and even some spells.<sup>554</sup> The most famous of these texts is what is often referred to as "The Old Irish Mass Tract of the Stowe Missal." This is an allegorical interpretation of the Eucharistic Liturgy and is quite significant. While this text is available in a number of sources and mentioned by many authors, it is not often mentioned that another version of this text is to be found in the *Lebar Breac*.<sup>555</sup> The fact that two versions exist, gives weight to the possibility that this text enjoyed some popularity.<sup>556</sup> Moreover it is very important as it provides a fascinating insight into how the Eucharist was *considered* by the Irish in this period.

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<sup>553</sup> Although the *Mass Tract* is not a liturgical manuscript *per se* and perhaps ought to have been treated in the second half of this chapter, it is treated here as it is so closely related to the *Stowe Missal*.

<sup>554</sup> Warner, *The Stowe Missal*, ix.

<sup>555</sup> The translation in Warner, *The Stowe Missal*, 40-42 is taken from Whitley Stokes and Strachan, *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*, 1903, ii. p. 252. This same translation seems to have been taken and modernized, Oliver Davies, *Celtic Spirituality*. The Classics of Western Spirituality (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1999), 311-313. Both versions are available in the 1886 edition of MacCarthy, "On the Stowe Missal," 245-265. Pádraig Ó Néill also mentions that there are two versions and introduces the reader to linguistic differences in the Irish originals. "The Old-Irish Tract on the Mass in the Stowe Missal: Some Observances on its Origin and Textual History," in Smyth, (ed), *Seanchas*, 199-204.

<sup>556</sup> Regarding a date for the actual composition of the original *Tract* MacCarthy calls attention to the fact that the *Gloria* and *Creed* are not mentioned (although they are present within the *Stowe Missal* itself) which might indicate an early date of composition. "On the Stowe Missal," 248.

As the text is quite long, a parallel of the two versions is included as Appendix 1. The fact that it is in Old Irish may imply that the text was used in the instruction of the laity or at the very least as homily preparation material for the priest (the fact that it was bound to the Stowe Missal which may have found a clerical *vademecum* may lend weight to this theory). However as vernacular learning and literature were also popular in clerical circles, it is also possible that this was simply for the instruction or personal edification of clerics.<sup>557</sup>

The *Tract* is very clearly within the lines of allegorical interpretation of the Eucharistic Liturgy as examined in Chapter 2. These interpretations see the Eucharistic celebration as making the whole of the History of Salvation and especially the death of Christ present again on the altar. These interpretations also give precedence to the actions of the celebrant over and above the actual words. However, while the interpretations that the *Tract* gives do bear the hallmark of the medieval allegorical method in line with Amalarius of Metz, they also retain some individual traits.

The *Tract* sees the Eucharist through a penitential lens (common to the West in general). Many different moments of the History of Salvation and the life of Christ are mentioned, but the weight of these references is to the Crucifixion and sufferings in general. In the *Stowe Missal* version the opening words are "the altar, a figure of

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However the fact that they are not mentioned does not necessarily mean that they were not part of the Liturgy at that time, and also given the differences that existed from one church to another, perhaps the author came from a church that retained older usages. The actual manuscripts date to the early ninth (Stowe) and early fifteenth (Lebar Breac) centuries. Ó Néill, "The Old-Irish Tract on the Mass in the Stowe Missal," 199.

<sup>557</sup> However MacCarthy is of the opinion that the scribe who transcribed the version in the *Lebar Breac* "displays complete illiteracy with respect to the Latin." As a cleric would be expected to have some knowledge of Latin, perhaps this suggests at least some use of this text in lay (albeit literate) circles. "On the Stowe Missal," 262.

the persecution that was inflicted.”<sup>558</sup> The *Lebar Breac* version is generally longer and gives an introduction “the church that shelters the people and the altar, a figure of the shelter of the Godhead divine, of which was said: you guard me under the shelter of your wings.”<sup>559</sup> This version seems to imply that the people were in the church during the celebration, adding to the evidence against the theory of the laity having to wait outside the church while only the clerics enter. Number 5 of the *Stowe Missal* version (which has no parallel in the *Lebar Breac*) mentions the Eucharist being above or on the altar seemingly at the start of the celebration.<sup>560</sup> MacCarthy translates this as “the oblation upon the altar.” However Stokes interprets it to mean “the Host, then, *super altare*, i.e. the turtle-dove,” thus perhaps referring to the possibility that it refers to a Eucharistic Dove containing a form of Eucharistic reservation before Mass.<sup>561</sup>

Reference is made to various examples of the private prayers that the priest would have said, these are generally of a penitential nature. We are told that water is first added to the chalice with the prayer, “I ask you, O Father; I beseech you, O Son; I implore you, O Holy Spirit” (“Peto te, Pater; deprecor te, Filii; obsecro te,

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<sup>558</sup> *Stowe Missal Tract 2*, in MacCarthy “On the Stowe Missal,” 245. N.B as the complete text is given in parallel columns in Appendix 2, here the Irish text will not be quoted.

<sup>559</sup> *Lebar Breac Tract 1* in *ibid.*, 259.

<sup>560</sup> “*Oblae iarum super altare*” in *ibid.*, 246.

<sup>561</sup> See Warner, *The Stowe Missal*, 40. For more information on the fifth centuries origins of the Eucharistic Dove see Iñiguez, *El Altar Cristiano*, 1: 105-110. However if this really is a reference to the practice of a Eucharistic Dove it would be quite significant as there is virtually no evidence for the use of the Eucharistic Dove between the seventh and eleventh centuries. *Ibid.*, 197. This text might then either constitute evidence of a practice being preserved in Ireland at a time when it was lost on the Continent, or point to an early date for the original *Tract*. For an alternative view of Eucharistic Doves in this period, cf. King, *Eucharistic Reservation in the Western Church*, 42-45. Michael Ryan is of the opinion that this could refer to a chrismal being hung above the altar. Personal communication, 15 October, 2002.

Spiritus Sancte.”)<sup>562</sup> Later on as the wine is placed into the chalice on top of the water another private prayer is cited, “May the Father forgive; may the Son be indulgent; may the Holy Spirit have mercy” (“Remittat Pater; indulgeat Filius; miseratur Spiritus Sanctus.”)<sup>563</sup> The *Lebar Breac Tract* specifies that there are three drops (“banna”) of both water and wine, this is probably evidence that normally not a lot of wine was used and that perhaps it was present in equal quantities to the water.

Godel (in one of the few scholarly treatments on early Irish spirituality) sees these prayers as being characteristic of Irish spirituality of the time:

Primary place among the early Irish expressions of sinfulness belongs to the great *Apologia*-prayers, best known of which is the *Confessio S. Patricii episcopi* (in an Irish fragment found at Basle this is used as a *confiteor* before Mass). Turning to Christ with a wide variety of prayerful phrases (often derived from holy Scripture) the penitent begs mercy, forgiveness and protection. Great emphasis is laid upon the detailed listings of one's sins, covering just about the whole range of possible human weakness. This phenomenon in early Irish Christianity cannot be lightly dismissed as a stylistic flourish (an instance of their love for numerical lists) or as a normal aid to examination of conscience. What strikes one about these prayers is their earnest, insistent quality; they reinforce the view we have already mentioned, that these petitioners perceived themselves as hopeless sinners.<sup>564</sup>

The consecration (which probably refers to the Institution Narrative) seems to be very important. The *Lebar Breac Tract* says that:

The time, now, *Accepit Jesus panem, stans in medio discipulorum suorum* is chanted, the priests bow thrice for sorrow for the sins they did, and they offer to God,

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<sup>562</sup> *Stowe Missal Tract 4*, in MacCarthy “On the Stowe Missal,” 245. The fact that *Stowe* says that this prayer is sung (“canar”) is taken by MacCarthy to mean that “the service was choral.” This is paralleled by *Lebar Breac Tract 4* in *ibid.* 260. However this version does not mention the prayer being sung, but uses the generic “dicis.”

<sup>563</sup> *Stowe Missal Tract 6*, in *ibid.*, 246-247. This is paralleled by *Lebar Breac Tract 6* in *ibid.* 261.

<sup>564</sup> Willibrord Godel, “Irish Prayer in the Early Middle Ages IV,” *Milltown Studies* No. 7, (Spring 1981): 28.

and they chant all this psalm: Have mercy on me, O God; and no sound is sent forth by them (the people) then, that the priest be not disturbed, for what is meet is that his mind separate not from God, even in vocable, at this prayer: for it is guilty of the spiritual order and of bad reception from God, unless it is like that it is done; wherefore it is from this that the name of this prayer is *Periculosa Oratio*.<sup>565</sup>

The Penitentials (which will be examined below) also speak of the *Periculosa Oratio*. This is very significant for a number of reasons. Firstly it does seem that Ireland is ahead of many other regions in assigning the Consecration to this particular moment of the Liturgy. This is in keeping with the theory of the development of a Eucharistic theology centred on these words as proposed by Jungmann who sees “a very lively sentiment in the Irish-Celtic tradition for a definitive meaning of the words of institution” at a time before so clear a doctrine developed in the West in general.<sup>566</sup> The congregation is portrayed as being prostrate on the floor, after having sung Psalm 50. While this seems strange to modern sensibilities, it does show that the assembly did have some idea as to what was happening in the Canon, and may even have been able to hear this section. But the actual prayer has nearly a magical quality as even the mispronunciation of a single syllable is seen as a serious offence.

The most important part of the *Tract* is the elaborate description of the *fractio panis* or rite of breaking of the bread prior to Communion. The *Stowe* version gives much more detail of this rite. The fact that the *Stowe Missal* itself (being bound in

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<sup>565</sup> *Lebar Breac Tract* 11 in MacCarthy “On the Stowe Missal,” 262-263. The parallel section in *Stowe* reads “When *Accepit Jesus panem* is chanted, the priest bows thrice for sorrow for their sins; he offers them [i.e., the bread and wine] to God; and the people prostrates; and there comes not a sound then, that it not disturb the priest; for it is his duty that his mind separate not from God whilst he chants this Lektion. It is from this that *Periculosa Oratio* gets its name.” In *ibid.*, 249.

<sup>566</sup> Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 2:205.

the same manuscript, but originally separate) has a very long antiphon to accompany this rite may be significant. This description in the *Tract* recounts that:

There are seven kinds upon the Fraction: that is, five parts of the common Host, in figure of the five senses of the soul. Seven of the Host of Saints and Virgins, except the chief ones, in figure of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. Eight of the Host of Martyrs, in figure of the octonary New Testament. Nine of the Host of Sunday, in figure of the nine folks of heaven and of the nine grades of the Church. Eleven of the Host of Apostles, in figure of the imperfect number of Apostles after the scandal of Judas. Twelve of the Host of the calends [of January, i.e. Circumcision] and of [last] Supper day, in remembrance of the perfect number of Apostles. Thirteen of the host of little Easter [Low Sunday] and of the feast of Ascension-at first; although they were distributed more minutely afterwards, in going to communion-in figure of Christ with his twelve Apostles.

The five, and the seven, and the eight, and the nine and the eleven, and the twelve, and the thirteen-they are five [and] sixty together; and that is the number of parts which is wont to be in the Host of Easter, and of the Nativity, and of Pentecost; for all that is contained in Christ.<sup>567</sup>

A number of points can be seen from this complicated description. First of all mention is made of a common host ("obi choitchinn"). This could imply a simpler (and probably) smaller host was used for daily Mass, or even for regular Sunday Mass, when there would have been fewer communicants, as opposed to the feast-days with the greater numbers. It also lists a few important feast-days: The Circumcision, Holy Thursday, the Ascension, Low Sunday, Easter, Christmas and Pentecost as well as some feasts of (unnamed) saints. These seem to be days when there were more communicants than normal. But it is on Easter, Christmas and Pentecost that the Host is broken into sixty-five pieces, a greater number than any other day. This would lend weight to the theory that many people only received Communion on a few select feast-days. But even if more did receive on these days,

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<sup>567</sup> *Stowe Missal Tract* 18, in MacCarthy "On the Stowe Missal," 251-254.

the number of sixty-five can't be seen as a great number especially when compared to the "numberless people" mentioned as attending a feast day in Kildare.<sup>568</sup>

Then the passage continues with this complicated description:

And it is in the form of a cross all is arranged upon the paten; and on the incline is the upper part on the left hand, as hath been said: Inclining his head He handed over His Spirit.

The arrangement of the Fraction of Easter and of the Nativity;- thirteen [fourteen] parts in the tree of the crosses; nine [fourteen] in their cross-piece; twenty parts in the circuit-wheel (five parts of each angle); sixteen between the circuit and the body of the crosses (that is, four of each portion).

The middle part, that is the one to which the celebrant goes [i.e. partakes of]: namely, a figure of the breast with the mysteries.

What is from there upwards of the tree to bishops.

The thwart-piece on the left-hand to the priests.

The portion [athwart] on the right hand, to all undergrades.

The portion from the thwart-piece downwards, to anchorites of . . .? penance.

The portion that is in the upper left-hand angel, to true clerical students.

The upper right-hand (portion), to innocent youths.

The lower left-hand (portion), to folk of penance.

The lower right-hand (portion), to folk of lawful wedlock and to folk who have not gone to hand [i.e., to Communion] before.<sup>569</sup>

The elaborate nature of the *fractio panis* continues in this section. It can be deduced from this that this rite was probably of some particular importance. It also gives the impression of a very ordered and hierarchical assembly. Not only do the different groups receive Communion by rank, but they also receive from a different part of the host. Prior to the distribution the pieces of the Eucharistic Bread are arranged on the paten in the form of a cross with a circuit wheel ("cuairtroth") around

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<sup>568</sup> "Innumerabiles populos." Cogitosus *Vita Brigitae* 32.9, PL 75: 790. English translation from Connolly and Picard, "Cogitosius's *Life of St. Brigit*," 26. This text will be treated in more detail in Chapter 4.

<sup>569</sup> *Stowe Missal Tract* 18, in MacCarthy "On the Stowe Missal," 254-257.



it.<sup>570</sup> This is usually taken to be a literary reference to a circle superimposed upon a cross as in the very famous High Cross examples.<sup>571</sup> If this interpretation is accepted it would be unique as no other contemporary text mentions the use of a shape similar to the High Crosses (although the *Mass Tract* does not make any explicit reference to these High Crosses). While it is quite conceivable that bigger hosts would have been prepared when more communicants were expected, it is hard to believe that the exact number of communicants could be determined with complete accuracy before the celebration. It would be possible that the numerological information given would give the celebrant the possibility of calculating an acceptable numerical interpretation for whichever number he needed to break.

But regardless of the actual number of pieces broken for a particular celebration, the significance of the *fractio panis* cannot be denied in this text.<sup>572</sup> This importance is echoed in the Derry-naflan Paten and the High Cross iconography of the *fractio panis* which will be examined in Chapter 4. The *Tract* finishes with a description of the reception of Communion, where Communion is to be taken simply without consuming too quickly or slowly and in all probability under both species:

Now the effect of this is, (to cause) a meaning to be in [these?] figures and that this be your meaning, as if the part which you receive of the Host were a member of Christ from off His Cross; and as if it were this Cross whence runs upon each one his own draught [lit. run], since it is united to the crucified Body.

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<sup>570</sup> For possible reconstructions of the pieces of Eucharistic Bread on the paten see *ibid.*, 256 and Thomas O'Loughlin, "The Praxis and Explanation of Eucharistic Fraction in the Ninth Century: The Insular Evidence," *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft* 45, (2003): 13.

<sup>571</sup> MacCarthy "On the Stowe Missal," 255.

<sup>572</sup> It is possible to find other mentions of similar practice in Gallican and Hispanic areas. Jose Antonio Iñiguez Herrero, *El Altar Cristiano. Vol 2. De Carlomagno al Siglo XIII* (Pamplona: Eunsa, 1991), 109-114 and O'Loughlin, "Praxis and Arrangement," 13. But these texts are not nearly as detailed as the *Tract*.

It is not proper to swallow it, the part, without tasting it; as it is not proper to pause in tasting the mysteries of God.

It is not proper to have it go under back teeth; in figure that it is not proper to dwell overmuch upon the mysteries of God, that hearsay be not forwarded thereby.<sup>573</sup>

### 3.1.3 The *Palimpsest Sacramentary*

This important manuscript, having been published only in 1964, is a relatively new element that can aid a modern day understanding of Pre-Norman Irish Eucharistic Liturgy.<sup>574</sup> The fact that it was not known to Warren has meant that much secondary literature makes no reference to it. Although it is fragmentary, it is an extremely important source for our knowledge for the Liturgy of early Ireland. This manuscript, now to be found in Munich, was taken to the Continent at some time in the first millennium and it ended up in Reichenau.<sup>575</sup> Unfortunately this vellum book was reused as a palimpsest in the second half of the ninth century when the original text was scraped off and a glossary (also in an Irish hand) was written on it. Through the labours of Dold and Eizenhöfer the text of the original Sacramentary has been partly reconstructed. David Wright has made a contribution to the critical edition where he has analysed the handwriting and given his opinion:

My conclusion is that the date of the palimpsest would probably lie within the third quarter of the seventh century, allowing about a decade on either side as probable

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<sup>573</sup> *Stowe Missal Tract* 18, in MacCarthy "On the Stowe Missal," 257-258.

<sup>574</sup> Alban Dold, and Leo Eizenhöfer, *Das Irische Palimpsestakramentar im CLM 14429, Der Staatsbibliothek München* (Beuron: Beuronener Kunstverlag, 1964).

<sup>575</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

maximum margins of error. It seems to me purely Irish work, though possibly done in Northumbria; I should definitely think not done in Bobbio.<sup>576</sup>

The approximate date of 650 A.D. means that it was written more than one hundred years before the *Stowe Missal*.<sup>577</sup> However due to the manuscript's reuse as a palimpsest it is not complete. As well as being in an incomplete state an earlier attempt to restore the original text removing the newer text with acid actually destroyed some portions (including a lot of material around Easter) that the more modern deciphering techniques using ultraviolet images would probably have been able to read.<sup>578</sup> Of the still extant pages 158 fragments have been deciphered. These are from 31 different Masses: "15 de Tempore, 14 de Sanctis, one unknown and one for the dead."<sup>579</sup> Of these 29 have parallels in the (Gallican) *Missale Gothicum* and another 15 in various Spanish *Libres Missarum*.<sup>580</sup> The parallels with the *Missale Gothicum* are not "confined to some scattered formulae, for there are whole sets of parallel formulae in both of these books."<sup>581</sup> Unlike the *Stowe Missal* or other later works which contain a variety of material, what remains of the *Palimpsest*

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<sup>576</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>577</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>578</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>579</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>580</sup> Schneiders, "The Origins of the Early Irish Liturgy," 79-80. For a very interesting alternative reading of this evidence see Yitzhak Hen, "Rome, Anglo-Saxon England and the Formation of Frankish Liturgy," *Revue Bénédictine* 112, 3-4 (2002): 301-322. Here Hen presupposes that the *Palimpsest Sacramentary* is not Irish, but comes from an Irish-influenced scriptorium in Northumbria. He then proposes that this type of Sacramentary was later revised under archbishop Theodore of Canterbury (or someone close to him) and from here it passed to the Continent in the company of some English ecclesiastic "most probably . . . from the circle of Boniface. A copy of this modified version, I believe, was one of the main sources used by the compiler of the Gothic Missal." (Ibid., 315-316). While this is a fascinating theory worthy of further study, I believe that until that study is carried out, it is better to maintain Irish provenance for this work, in line with the exhaustive scholarship of Dold and Eizenhöfer.

<sup>581</sup> Dold and Eizenhöfer, *Das Irische Palimpsestakramentar*, 127.

*Sacramentary* is actually a list of Masses for various feasts of the liturgical year along with a fairly extensive sanctoral.<sup>582</sup> Other than some small fragments of material for the Liturgy of the Hours for Christmas, the Epiphany and Easter, it contains no other texts not belonging to the Order of Mass, nor does it contain non-euchological texts or any vernacular material. The only element other than euchology is the presence of headings that describe where the prayer is used in the Liturgy. With these keys it is possible to reconstruct a Eucharistic Liturgy "of the Gallican type with the Praefatio missae, Collectio, Post nomina recitata, Collectio (ad pacem), Immolatio missae, Post sanctus, Post secreta (consisting of two formulae), Antae orationem dominicam, Prefatio post eucharistiam and Collectio post eucharistiam."<sup>583</sup> It is true that there is some Roman material, but these seem to be more in the form of individual borrowings of useful texts rather than representing the beginnings of the merging of the Gallican and Roman rites:

Roman influence is clearly indicated by the Preface for Peter and Paul, Nr. 108 which is nr. 285 in the Leonianum. There are some other small pieces of our texts identical with Roman expressions, also of the canon of the Mass. But the Roman Canon is not presupposed as the norm, as it is in the Stowe Missal or in the Bobbio Missal, for the sanctus is followed in Clm 14429 by a Vere sanctus which is always changing. Our *Sacramentary* is not romanized like the others.<sup>584</sup>

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<sup>582</sup> For an outline of the contents, including a comparison of the *Palimpsest Sacramentary's* sanctoral to that of other Gallican manuscripts, see *ibid.*, 90-99.

<sup>583</sup> Dold and Eizenhöfer, *Das Irische Palimpsestakramentar*, 127.

<sup>584</sup> *Ibid.*, 127. The significance of the presence of Roman material should be balanced by the traces of Gnostic texts. The *Palimpsest Sacramentary* contains traces of the Gnostic hymn *Veni Epiclesis* from the *Acts of Thomas*. However these take the form of quotations within a prayer and the Eucharistic Liturgy of the *Palimpsest Sacramentary* does not resemble that of Gnostic texts. G. Rouwhorst, "La Célébration de l'Eucharistie selon les Actes de Thomas," in *Omnes Circumadstantes. Contributions Towards a History of the Role of the People in the Liturgy*, ed. Charles Caspers and Marc Schneiders (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1990), 51-77.

Perhaps the greatest significance of this manuscript is that it constitutes “an important witness to the claim that there was no such thing as a specifically Irish or Celtic liturgy.”<sup>585</sup> This affirmation mainly refers to the strong parallels between the *Palimpsest Sacramentary* and (other) Gallican missals. However another contribution of the *Palimpsest Sacramentary* is to the debate as to whether there was a sanctoral in early Irish liturgy. Hennig maintained that the absence of a sanctoral was a very important characteristic of “Celtic” liturgy.<sup>586</sup> While the abundant evidence in the lives of the saints and the annals could not dissuade him, there is unequivocal evidence of the existence of a sanctoral in the *Palimpsest Sacramentary*.

These parallels clearly point to a Gallican liturgy and show “that the liturgy celebrated in Ireland in 700 AD did not differ greatly from that of Gaul.”<sup>587</sup> Although this manuscript is somewhat of an unwanted child of scholars of ancient Ireland, nonetheless it cannot be denied that not only is it the oldest surviving liturgical manuscript with strong Irish connections, it is also “amongst the oldest preserved books of Irish script and decoration and is a particular treasure of Old Ireland.”<sup>588</sup>

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<sup>585</sup> Richter, *Ireland and her Neighbours in the Seventh Century* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999), 173.

<sup>586</sup> John Hennig, “Old Ireland and Her Liturgy,” in Robert T. McNally, *Old Ireland* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1965), 68. Although the goal of the whole article, in fact, seems to be to try to prove “the absence of a *Sanctorale*” in Old Ireland than to actually introduce us to her liturgy.

<sup>587</sup> Schneiders, “The Origins of the Early Irish Liturgy,” 80.

<sup>588</sup> Dold and Eizenhöfer, *Das Irische Palimpsestakramentar*, 126. It is true that Klaus Gambler rejected the *Palimpsest Sacramentary* as being an imposition of the Gallican rite in Ireland. Quoted in Leo Eizenhöfer, “Zu Dem Irischen Palimpesakramentar im Clm 14429” *Sacris Erudiri Jaarboek voor Godsdienstwetenschappen* 17,1 (1966): 358-359. Jane Stevenson also rejected it as being “completely un-Irish in its contents” (*Liturgy and Ritual* lxvii). But I feel that we do not have enough other primary sources to be able to eliminate this source. As well as this, it has to be considered that this is not the only piece of evidence that Ireland was using a basically Gallican liturgy

### 3.1.4 Rites of the Sick

Many commentators have noted that the Church in Pre-Norman Ireland was especially concerned with pastoral care at the moment of death.<sup>589</sup> The non-euchological texts will be examined below, here we deal with liturgical manuscripts. It has been said that there are "more surviving witnesses to rites for the sick than to any other ritual of the early Irish Church."<sup>590</sup> While we really have only one complete Order of Mass, we have four rites for the sick. The *Stowe Missal* contains a rite of Visitation of the Sick. Along with this we have surviving examples in the *Scottish Book of Deer*,<sup>591</sup> the *Book of Dimma* and the *Book of Mulling*. Exactly how much can be read into this fact is hard to say. The survival of four rites of the sick in and of itself does not necessarily mean that this rite had a particular importance in Ireland. However, given that there is a lot of other evidence of the esteem in which this rite was held, perhaps it is significant that more of these manuscripts survive than any other type of liturgical text. Additionally if it is accepted that this rite was of particular importance in Pre-Norman Ireland, it could also be significant that there is a good deal of similarity between the forms of this rite in the four manuscripts:

The *Stowe* and *Dimma* are the longest and most complete, and agree very closely. The *Mulling* differs in the preliminary bidding prayers and in adding at the beginning a "Benedictio aquae" and "Benedictio hominis", the latter of which comes, in the

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<sup>589</sup> Paxton, F.S., *Christianizing Death* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 85.

<sup>590</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>591</sup> The short liturgical section from the *Book of Deer*, the manuscript is principally an Evangelarium, is the only remaining Scottish liturgical manuscript from this period. As the Scottish Church was so linked to the Irish at this time, and this remaining fragment is so related to Irish material, that it can safely be treated in this section. Warren, *Liturgy and Ritual*, 163-166.

Stowe and Dimma, at the end, though in a different form, and it agrees with the Dimma in inserting a recitation of the Creed, which is not in the Stowe. The Deer form has only the communion, which agrees substantially with the other three.<sup>592</sup>

Examining these rituals side by side, Jenner divided them into ten sections: 1. Blessing of Water; 2. *Prefatio*, a Gallican type prayer for the sick person; 3. Scripture readings, from Mt 22:23. 29-33, Mt 24:29-31 and (only in *Dimma*) 1 Cor 15:19-22;<sup>593</sup> 4. Anointing either preceded by a profession of faith in the Trinity or followed by the Creed; 5. Our Father; 6. Prayers for the Sick Person; 7. *Pax*; 8. Communion; 9. Thanksgiving and 10. Final Blessing. While helpful this schema is not perfect as none of the four examples fully conforms to this pattern.<sup>594</sup>

As these rites are similar (and all conveniently accessible in Warren) here we will simply look at the text of the *Book of Mulling* and note the significant differences offered by the other three:

*The beginning of the prayer of Communion for the sick*

Let us pray, dear brothers, for the spirit of our dearly beloved .N. who according to the flesh is suffering discomfort, that the Lord may have present the revelation of present pains, may grant him life and may fill him with every saving good thing in repayment for his good works, through [our] Lord.

*Beginning of the preface of communion*

Let us pray, dear brothers, for our brother .n. who in the discomfort of the flesh and vexing discomfort, that the Lord may have mercy by the heavenly medicine of the angels may [deign to] visit and strengthen, through [our] Lord.

[Fathe]r all powerful, keep your servant, .n., who has been [sancti]fied and redeemed by the great pri[ce] of your blood, for ever and ever.

BLESSING OF WATER

Let us pray to and beseech the almighty Lord, that he might deign to bless and sanctify this font with his heavenly spirit, through [our] Lord.

BLESSING OF MAN

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<sup>592</sup> Jenner, "The Celtic Rite," 503. Perhaps this similarity bears witness to a certain common format to this rite throughout this period.

<sup>593</sup> Two of the three Scripture passages deal with the Resurrection and the third with the Last Judgment.

<sup>594</sup> *Ibid.*, 503-504.

May the Lord bless and keep you, may the Lord always enlighten you with his face and have mercy upon you, may he turn his countenance towards you, and give you his peace and healing. May n. d. a. have mercy.

*While he anoints him with oil*

I anoint you with the oil of salvation in the name of God the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, that you may have health in the name of the Holy Trinity.

*At the same time [the following] is sung.*

I believe in God the Father.

*While he says this that all may be sent away*

#### COLLECT OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

Creator of all nature, God, and Father of everything in heaven and the origin of everything on earth, let the religious prayers of the people of the Trinity be accepted into the throne of light, and be clearly listened to together with the cherubim and seraphim who tirelessly stand around praising [you].

O[ur] Father.

*Now the collect follows.*

Free us from evil, Lord Jesus Christ, and guard us in every good work, author of all good, reigning and remaining for ever and ever. Amen.

*Then he receives the Body and the Blood*

May the Body with the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ be health for you unto eternal life.

*Prayer after the reception of the Euchari[s]t*

Guard within us, O Lord, the glory of your gift, that the Euchari[s]t that we have partaken of may keep us strong against all the evils of the present time, through our Lord.

Alleluia.

Let them offer sacrifices of praise, and announce his deeds in songs of joy, alleluia. I will take up the chalice of salvation and call on the name of the Lord.

Refreshed by the Body and Blood of Christ, let us always say, alleluia, unto you, O Lord.

Let all men praise the Lord.

Glo[ry be to the Father].

Offer a sacrifice of praise and hope in the Lord.

O God, we give you thanks, through the holy mysteries we have celebrated, and the gift of holiness we have received, through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, to him be glory for ever and ever.<sup>595</sup>

<sup>595</sup> *Oratio communis pro infirmo incipit*

Oremus, frateres carissimi, pro spiritu cari nostri .n. qui secundum carnem egritudinem patitur, ut dominus ei reuelationem dolorum presentet, uitam concedat, tutelam salutis remunerationem boborum operum impertiat, per dominum.

*Prefatio communis incipit.*

Oremus, fratres carissimi, pro fratre nostro .n. qui incommodo carnis et egritudine uexatur, domini pietas per angelum medicine celestisuisitare et corroborare dignetur, per dominum [*words missing from manuscript*]

[pate]r omnipotens, et consuera famulum tuum hanc .n. quem [sancti]ficasti et redemisti pre[tio] magno sanguinis tui, in saecula saeculorum.

BENEDICTIO SUPER AQUAM

Oremus et postulemus de domini misericordia, ut celesti spiritu hunc fontem benedicere et sanctificare dignetur, per dominum.

BENEDICTIO HOMINIS



In the care of the sick and dying<sup>596</sup> the reception of Communion was important. But it is not administered by itself but is given as the climax of a rite which has other elements. In the Mulling example there are *benedictio super aquam* and the *benedictio hominis* but the prayers in Stowe and Dimma mirror these with the opening euchology and the Biblical readings. The fact that three of the rites

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Benedicat tibi dominus et custodiat te; illuminet dominus faciem suam super te et misseriatur tui, conuertatque dominus uultum suum ad te, et det tibi pacem et sanitatem. Misere n. d. a.

*Tum ungens eum oleo.*

Ungo te de oleo sanctificationis in nomine dei patris, et filii, et spiritus sancti, ut salus eris in nomine sanctae trinitatis.

*simul canit.*

credo in deum patrem.

*Tum dicitur et ut dimittat omnia*

COLLECTIO ORATIONIS DOMINICAE

Creator naturarum omnium, deus, et pater uniuersarum in caelestibus et in terra originum haec trinitas populi tui reuerentibus precibus ex illo inaccessibili throno tuo suscipe, et inter hierophanum et seraphim in ineffabilibus circumstantiis laudes exuberantibus precationibus.

Pater noster.

*Collectio nunc sequitur.*

Libera nos a malo, domine ihesu, et custodies nos in omni opere bono, auctor omnium bonorum, regnans et regnans in saecula saeculorum, amen.

*Tum reficitur corpore et sanguine.*

Corpus cum sanguine domini nostri ihesu Christi sanitas sit tibi in uitam eternam.

*Oratio post sumptam eucharistiam.*

Custodi intra nos, domine, glorie tuae munus, ut aduersus omnia presentis saeculi mala eucharistiae quam percipimus uiribus muniamur, per dominum.

Alleluia.

Et sacrificium sacrificium laudis usque annuntiant opera eius in exultatione, alleluia.

Calicem salutaris accipiam et nomen domini inuocabo.

Refecti Christi corpore et sanguine, tibi semper, domine, dicamus, alleluia.

Laudate dominum omnes.

Gloria patri.

sacrificate sacrificium iustitiae et sperate in domino.

Deus, tibi gratias agimus, per quem mysteria sancta celebramus, et a te sanctitatis dona deprecamur, per dominum nostrum ihesum christum filium tuum, cui gloria in saecula saeculorum."

My own translation of the Communion of the Sick in the *Book of Mulling in Warren, Liturgy and Ritual*, 171-173.

<sup>596</sup> Gougaud labels these rituals as "saint viatique," presupposing that there is no chance that the individual will return to health, seeing them as a liturgical preparation for death. Gougaud, "Celtiques (liturgies)," 3021. However, while it is very possible (and judging from the other evidence dealing with the *viaticum* it is even probable) that these were rites of the *viaticum* used when somebody was clearly dying, the prayers of the rite itself do speak of healing. It is likewise possible that the rite may have been repeated if the sick person recovered and later became sick again, although the repetition of the Sacrament of the Sick was to be strictly forbidden later on in the High Middle Ages.

have the Creed or a Creedal formula prior to the reception of Communion is also important and this will later make its way into the Roman Rite of the Eucharist a number of centuries after these rituals were composed. The Creed was not originally part of the Mass of the Roman Rite. It was only to make its way into the Roman Mass in the year 1014 when Henry II (d. 1024) was in Rome in order to be crowned Holy Roman Emperor by Pope Benedict VIII (d. 1024) and insisted that the Creed be sung. From here it passed into common usage for all solemn Roman Masses (although it has never been used in weekday Masses).<sup>597</sup> The fact that all of these rituals of Communion, along with the Eucharistic Liturgy of the *Stowe Missal* contain the Creed (or a Creedal formula) is historically significant as it may indicate some Irish influence in the eventual adoption of the Creed in the Roman Mass.<sup>598</sup>

The formula for the administration of Communion is very similar in each of the rites:

*Stowe*: "Corpus et sanguis domini nostri ihesu christi fili Dei uiui altissimi." [The Body and the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the most high and living God].

*Dimma*: "Corpus et sanguis domini nostri ihesu christi fili Dei uiui conservat animam tuam in vitam aeternam." [May the Body and the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ guard your soul unto eternal life].

*Mulling*: "Corpus cum sanguine domini nostri ihesu Christi sanitas sit tibi in uitam eternam." [May the Body with the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ be health for you unto eternal life].

*Deer*: "Corpus cum sanguine domini nostri ihesu Christi sanitas sit tibi in uitam perpetuam et eternam." [May the Body with the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ be health for you unto perpetual and eternal life].<sup>599</sup>

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<sup>597</sup> Cabié, *The Eucharist*, 135-136, 131-132 and Eamon Duffy, *Saints and Sinners. A History of the Popes* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 84-86.

<sup>598</sup> Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 2:371.

<sup>599</sup> Warren, *Liturgy and Ritual*, 224, 170, 173, 164. English translations are my own.

Thus the reception of Communion is the centre of this rite of the sick. But rather than there being anything particularly special about this rite, it would seem that it is a fairly normal ritual of pastoral care of the sick and it compares with similar rituals of visitation, communion and the viaticum throughout the West. Also the formulae for the actual administration of Communion falls within the normal formulae of the rest of the West.<sup>600</sup>

### 3.1.5 Liturgical Music in Pre-Norman Ireland

There are many difficulties in trying to analyse the role of music in the Liturgy of Pre-Norman Ireland. Not least among these is the fact that it is virtually impossible to reconstruct musical practice in ancient times as "texts intended to be sung at Christian worship appear without any notation until about A.D. 800 worship texts with precise pitch notation appear in manuscripts about A.D. 1000, and definite rhythmic notation appears in manuscripts from about A.D. 1200 on."<sup>601</sup> This has led many to hold that apart from being able to believe that music was important in the early Irish Church nothing further can be said about it.<sup>602</sup> While few particulars of music in the early Irish liturgy can be known, it is very probable that the music used

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<sup>600</sup> For more on the general background of the Viaticum see Damien Sicard, *La Liturgie de la Mort dans l'Eglise Latine Des Origines à la Réforme Carolingienne*. Liturgiewissenschaftliche Quellen und Forschungen 63 (Muenster Westfalen, 1978), 34-39.

<sup>601</sup> Jan Michael Joncas, "Liturgy and Music" in Ansgar J. Chupungco, ed., *The Pontifical Liturgical Institute, Handbook for Liturgical Studies, Volume II, Fundamental Liturgy*, (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, A Pueblo Book, 1998), 283.

<sup>602</sup> On a typical note Warren claims that the only thing that can possibly be said about music in the early Irish Church is that it wasn't Roman! *Liturgy and Ritual*, 126-127.

in the liturgy would not have been very different from other Western liturgical music that would have come to Ireland with the other elements of the liturgical rites. In practice then, the first Irish liturgical chant would probably have resembled Old Gallican chant as used in Britain and the Frankish domains. In turn these practices would have had their roots in the early Church.<sup>603</sup> However very little is actually known about the music being used in the Eucharistic celebrations throughout the West in the first millennium. While there may well have been a common origin for some musical chants, melodies or styles of singing, the diversity of later evidence makes it hard to assert a single origin for later Western practices.<sup>604</sup>

In the period of Late Antiquity Churchmen were struggling with problems associated with the integration of musical styles and practices into Christian

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<sup>603</sup> Judaism probably influenced early Christianity's musical practice. This form of Jewish cultic music would have been quite unfamiliar to modern western listeners and been somewhat like a lyrical type of speech. Edward Foley, *Foundations of Christian Music: The Music of Pre-Constantinian Christianity*, (Bramcote: Alcuin/GROW Liturgical Study 22-23, 1992), 38-40. This simple type of music was in stark contrast to the music of the Roman and Greek religious traditions. The official cult of the pagan gods used a different type of music. Here a complicated grandiose style of music was employed which, unlike the Jewish and early Christian music, also made use of instruments. This was because music was seen as "a gift of the gods to men," and the gods were pleased on hearing music performed for them. Johannes Quasten, *Music and Worship in Pagan and Christian Antiquity*, trans. Boniface Ramsey (Washington, D.C.: National Association of Pastoral Musicians, 1983), 1, see 2-6. This was the case in public religious worship and it would seem that music played an even greater role in the liturgies of the Mystery Religions. *Ibid.*, 33.

But as many of the first Christians had come from the gentiles the early Christian musical tradition is not simply a continuation of Jewish practice. These Christians brought with them their pagan experience of cultic music. Therefore the Church Fathers tended to be stronger in their rejection of contemporary pagan practices associated with music than the Jewish rabbis. *Ibid.*, 61. Another aspect of early Christian music was its simplicity. We do not know if there was singing in parts in antiquity, once again hampered by the lack of musical notation; but many witnesses tell us that the early Christians were to sing "*in una voce dicentes*." *Ibid.*, 66-72. This unity of voice may even have been so important that it precluded the independent ministry of *cantor* or *psalmist* prior to the fourth century, in this period the *lector* seems to have assumed the roles of both reading and chanting/singing. Edward Foley, *Ritual Music. Studies in Liturgical Musicology*, *Studies in Liturgy and Music* (Beltsville, MD, The Pastoral Press, 1995, 78-81. However, Jean Leclercq claims to have found proof of a differentiated ministry of *cantor* in a Bythinian epitaph, which he dates to the second or third century ("Chantres" in *D.A.C.L.*, vol. 3 (1914) 345). But this claim does not seem to hold up to Foley's criticism (cf. *Ritual Music*, 77-78).

<sup>604</sup> David Hiley, *Western Plainchant: A Handbook*, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1993), 479.

liturgy.<sup>605</sup> While the festive and emotional elements of music were never done away with, Churchmen tended to value music as a means to an end. The main goal of music was to transmit a text. At this time liturgical ministers and ministries tended to become more specialized. The liturgical role of a cantor whose function was specifically to sing texts (as opposed to proclaiming them) developed.<sup>606</sup> Initially these cantors sang certain parts of the chants while the assembly sang the refrains. In Rome a *schola cantorum*, traditionally associated with Gregory the Great also began to develop. This gradually took on the same role. But with the loss of comprehension of Latin in the West these singers became totally professional singing all of a piece without any participation of the assembly and the music was now alien to the people.<sup>607</sup>

Although the liturgical singing of (Biblical) Psalms is a clear characteristic of the musical practice of later Latin Christianity and the Roman Rite in particular, the pre-Nicene Church seems not to have used the actual Psalms themselves for worship, preferring to compose newer works.<sup>608</sup> However, it happened that many of the early Christian composers of hymns were later judged to have been heterodox.<sup>609</sup> This eventually led to a general hesitancy towards the acceptance of non-Biblical

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<sup>605</sup> The two main problems to be dealt with are the interplay between Christians and the Pagan cult of the dead that, among other things, contained many musical elements, and the feasts of the martyrs which again made use of music as a part of a feast that the Fathers could not reconcile with Christian decorum. See Chapter Six of Quasten, *Music and Worship*.

<sup>606</sup> The other result of the emergence of a specialist class of singers was a split between music and text. This led to the possibilities of musicless Low Masses, which, in turn, contributes to the possibility of reciting the Canon in silence. Edward Foley, "Music, Liturgical," in Peter E. Fink, ed., *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*, (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1990), 859.

<sup>607</sup> *Ibid.*, 858.

<sup>608</sup> Joncas, "Liturgy and Music," 289.

<sup>609</sup> Hiley, *Western Plainchant*, 485.

hymns and even to Canonical legislation prohibiting their use.<sup>610</sup> In the East, St. Ephrem the Syrian rehabilitated the use of non-Scriptural hymnography. With his hymns he met the heretical composers on their own ground using theologically orthodox lyrics to counteract his opponents' heretical ones.<sup>611</sup>

In the West hymns, apart from some ancient hymns such as the *Te Deum* and the *Gloria in Excelsis*, hymns remained somewhat questionable.<sup>612</sup> Non-psalmsic hymns were still frowned upon. This hesitancy remained despite the rehabilitation of Western hymnography under Hilary and Ambrose in the fourth century.<sup>613</sup> Indeed Western hymnography was for the most part relegated to the Divine Office and not so welcome in the celebration of the Eucharist.<sup>614</sup>

While it has been argued in Chapter 2 that the Irish Church was basically Gallican regarding its celebration of the Eucharist, a regional variation is that Irish Christians took delight in the composition of distinctive hymns in the second half of the first millennium. These can be found in the *Antiphonary of Bangor*, and the distinctive hymns in the Stowe Missal. We also possess the Irish *Liber Hymnarum*.<sup>615</sup> All of these show a creative genius at work in the composers. There are very clear parallels particularly to Spanish and also to Ambrosian and Gallican material; but the

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<sup>610</sup> Ibid., 485-486.

<sup>611</sup> Quasten, *Music and Worship*, 78-79.

<sup>612</sup> The texts of these hymns in the *Antiphonary of Bangor* represents the earliest manuscript tradition. Ann Buckley, "Music in Ireland to c.1500," in Ó Cróinín, ed., *Prehistoric and Early Ireland*, 781.

<sup>613</sup> Foley, "Music, Liturgical," 858.

<sup>614</sup> Jane Stevenson, "Hiberno-Latin Hymns: Learning and Literature" in Próinséas Ní Chatháin and Michael Richter, eds., *Ireland and Europe in the Early Middle Ages: Learning and Literature* (Stuttgart 1996), 103.

<sup>615</sup> J.H. Bernard, and R. Atkinson, eds., *The Irish Liber Hymnarum*. 2 vols. Henry Bradshaw Society 13 and 14 (London: Harrison & Sons, 1898).

hymns are also quite unique and, in the words of Stevenson, “outstandingly interesting.”<sup>616</sup> There are basically two reasons for this. First of all, at a time when hymnography was just regaining its standing in the West in general with the use of the so-called *Old Hymnal*, a small standard collection of hymns in all the West, the Irish took the liberty of supplementing (or perhaps even replacing) this with a collection of their own. While clearly knowing and using the hymns of the *Old Hymnal* as models, the Irish managed to compose their own corpus of hymns.<sup>617</sup> The other very interesting point is that the Irish abandoned the traditional metrical quality of Latin hymnography; “they use the Classical forms of the iambic diameter (the *ambrosianum*) or the trochaic tetrameter catalectic, but re-interpret these forms as *syllabic* meters.”<sup>618</sup>

In the works of Bede (in the mid-eighth century) it is possible to discern perhaps the first push for uniformity in liturgical music. In the *Ecclesiastical History* the Roman style of chant is considered to be an important element in Augustine’s programme of evangelization and the correction of the existing Christian traditions in England. He tells us that:

Now Paulinus had left in the church in York a certain James, a deacon, a true churchman and a saintly man. . . He was very skilful in church music and when peace was restored in the kingdom and the number of believers grew, he also began to instruct many in singing after the manner of Rome.<sup>619</sup>

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<sup>616</sup> *Liturgy and Ritual*, lxxxiii.

<sup>617</sup> The main aim of Curran’s *Antiphonary of Bangor* is to prove this point.

<sup>618</sup> Stevenson, *Liturgy and Ritual*, lxxxvii.

<sup>619</sup> “Reliquerat autem in ecclesia sua Eburaci Iacobum diaconum, uirum utique ecclesiasticum et sanctum. . . Qui, quoniam cantandi in ecclesia erat peritissimus, recuperata postmodum pace in prouincia et crescente numero fidelium, etiam amgister ecclesiasticae cantionis iuxta morem Romanorum” *Ecclesiastical History*, ii. 20, Colgrave and Mynors, 206-207. Also see iv. 2 “Putta was especially skilled in liturgical chanting after the Roman manner, which he had learned from the

This desire to sing "after the manner of Rome" ("iuxta morem Romanorum") was brought by Boniface and other Anglo-Saxon missionaries to their evangelization of areas outside the territories of the former Roman Empire.<sup>620</sup> The trend to follow Rome's manner of chant was also taken up by the Carolingian empire:

In 760 Pepin's brother, Bishop Remigius (or Remedius) of Rouen, went to Rome to ask that a Roman teacher of chant be allowed to come north, while monks from Rouen learnt the chant in Rome under George, the primus scholae. Simeon, secundus of the Roman schola cantorum was sent by Paul I (737-68) to teach Remigius' clerics. After a while George died, and Paul had to recall Simeon to succeed him, while assuring Remigius that the Rouen singers in Rome would be brought to perfection under Simeon's instruction.<sup>621</sup>

However recent scholarship may call into question the whole concept of Romanization of the liturgy under the Carolingians.<sup>622</sup> Most authors quote a famous decree where Charlemagne instructed that:

To all the clergy. That they are to learn the Roman chant thoroughly and that it is to be employed throughout the office, night and day, in the correct form, in conformity with what our father of blessed memory, king Pippin, strove to bring to pass when he abolished the Gallican chant for the sake of unanimity with the apostolic see and the peaceful harmony of God's holy church.<sup>623</sup>

While this appears to be an impressive quotation, when it is seen in context it is less impressive. Charlemagne did not issue a royal decree on liturgical music. This is simply one of eighty-two separate chapters dealing with a multitude of

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disciples of the blessed Pope Gregory." "Putat, maxime autem modulandi in ecclesia more Romanorum, quem a discipulis beati papae Gregorii didicerat, peritum." in *ibid.*, 336-337.

<sup>620</sup> Hiley, *Western Plainchant*, 515.

<sup>621</sup> *Ibid.*, 515.

<sup>622</sup> This is the central thesis of Hen, *The Royal Patronage of Liturgy*.

<sup>623</sup> "Omni clero. Ut cantum Romanum pleniter discant, et ordinabiliter per nocturnale vel gradale officium peragatur, secundum quod beatae memoriae genitor noster Pippinus rex decertavit ut fieret, quando Gallicanum tulit ob unanimitatem apostolicae sedes et sanctae Dei aeclesiae pacificam concordiam." *Admonitio generalis* 80 in Boretius, ed. *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, 1:61. English translation from King, *Translated Sources*, 218.



issues.<sup>624</sup> There probably was a predilection for Roman chant; however, we cannot be sure just how much this style of chant was encouraged. Writing in the 820's, during the reign of Charlemagne's successor, Walahfrid Strabo claimed that he could still recognize the old Gallican melodies in the newly reconstituted 'Roman' chants.<sup>625</sup>

As stated at the beginning of this section, there are very real difficulties when trying to analyse the music used in the Eucharistic celebrations in pre-Norman Ireland. However recent scholarship has illuminated a number of points in this field. What is clear is that music did play an important role in the liturgy. From an iconographic vantage point we have quite a large corpus of manuscript illustration, details of metal reliquaries and carvings on High Crosses; these show monastic choirs, and various characters playing harps, lyres and horns.<sup>626</sup> From written sources, it would seem probable that these were clerics.

In Irish narrative literature there are references to travelling clerics who sang psalms and other sacred texts to the accompaniment of a small stringed instrument described as *ocht-tédach* ('eight stringed instrument'), which they carried about with them attached to their girdles. Gerald of Wales (?1146-?1220) also referred to the

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<sup>624</sup> Earlier on, he does make another mention of liturgical music. "Et ut scolae legentium puerorum fiant. Psalmos, notas, cantus, compotum, grammaticam per singula monesteria vel episcopia et libros catholicos bene emendate; quia saepe, dum bene aliqui Deum rogare cupiunt, sed per inemendatos libros male rogant. Et pueros vestros non sinite eos vel legendo vel scribendo corrumpere; et si opus est euangelium, psalterium et missale scribere, perfectae aetatis homines scribant cum omni diligentia." "Let schools for teaching boys the psalms, musical notation, singing, computation be created in every monastery and episcopal residence. And correct catholic books properly, for often, while people want to pray to God in the proper fashion, they yet pray improperly because of uncorrected books. And do not allow your boys to corrupt them, either in reading or in copying; and if there is need to copy the gospel or psalter or missal, let men of full age do the writing, with all diligence." *Admonitio generalis* 72 in Boretius, ed. *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, 1:60. English translation from King, *Translated Source*, 217. But while perhaps it might be possible to think that this refers again to Roman chant the text makes no explicit reference to it.

<sup>625</sup> *De rebus ecclesiasticis* ch. 22 (PL 114. 946) referenced in Hiley, *Western Plainchant*, 553.

<sup>626</sup> Ann Buckley, "Music and Musicians in Medieval Irish Society" in *Early Music* XXVIII/2 (May 2000), 167-1172.

practice of abbots and holy men in Ireland who in times past used to have a 'cithara' (undoubtedly a lyre, later probably a harp) on which they played pious music. Because of this, according to Gerald, St. Kevin's 'cithara' was regarded as a sacred relic and still held in reverence in Gerald's time.<sup>627</sup>

It is also quite possible that there would have been instrumental accompaniment to at least of some of the sung parts of the Eucharist.<sup>628</sup> We know from the *Stowe Missal* that many parts of the Eucharist would be sung. The various hymn texts from Pre-Norman Ireland as a whole "imply the presence of a trained choir or a soloist" for many liturgies.<sup>629</sup>

A close look at some post-Norman sources can also possibly cast some light on previous practices. Stephen of Lexington came to Ireland in 1228 to make a visitation of the Irish Cistercian monasteries. At the time simplicity was one of the hallmarks of Cistercian liturgy, and this extended to singing. One particular abuse that he enumerates is:

It is decreed that the rules of the Order in chanting and psalmody shall be followed according to the writing of Blessed Bernard. No one shall attempt to sing with duplicated tones against the simplicity of the Order. Otherwise anyone who transgresses in this, and the keepers of the chant unless they immediately restrain the aforesaid disobedient persons, shall be on bread and water on the day following and shall be flogged in chapter without dispensation for as often as he does so.<sup>630</sup>

Patrick Bannon sees this reference to "vocibus duplicatis" as possibly being a reference to the persistence of a pre-Norman tradition of harmony and notes that it

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<sup>627</sup> Ann Buckley, "Celtic Chant" in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.

<sup>628</sup> Buckley, "Music and Musicians," 185.

<sup>629</sup> Buckley, "Music in Ireland," 800.

<sup>630</sup> "Item precipitur, ut forma ordinis tam in cantu quam psalmodia teneatur secundum scriptum beati Bernardi. Nec aliquis contra ordinis simplicitatem uocibus duplicatis cantare presumat. Alioquin transgressor, quicumque fuerit, quotienscumque fecerit, et custodes cantus, nisi dictos presumptores cohibuerint in continenti, in crastino sint in pane et aqua et in capitulo uapulent absque dispensatione." Stephen of Lexington, Letter 80.76 in Bruno Griesser, ed., "Registrum Epistolarum Stephani de Lexington Abbatis de Stanlegia et de Savigniaco," *Analecta Sacri Ordinis Cisterciensis* 2 (1946): 105, English translation from O'Dwyer, ed., *Letters from Ireland*, 167.

“may be one of the earliest known references to liturgical polyphony in medieval Ireland.”<sup>631</sup>

Another area that is only beginning to be studied is that of the later Irish medieval manuscripts. In general these follow Anglo-Norman practices, but when dealing with the musical texts for the feast-days of Irish saints, they have no Anglo-Norman prototypes and so it is quite probable that they retain earlier Irish musical traditions. To these Irish texts the vast body of Offices of Irish saints from Continental sources can be added. An initial study of this material hints at a native style of chant, but as yet a lot of work needs to be done:

While research on insular manuscripts is as yet at an early stage, there are some signs of a stylistically distinctive kind of melodic structure in both Irish and Scottish sources, which suggests that some older elements may have survived the eleventh- and twelfth-century reforms. However, whether we can classify them specifically as Celtic chant-i.e. regionally distinctive- must remain open until more information emerges.<sup>632</sup>

### 3.1.6 The *Antiphony of Bangor*

The *Antiphony of Bangor* is a very important source for the study of the Liturgy of the Hours as prayed by the Irish in particular.<sup>633</sup> This manuscript, from the

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<sup>631</sup> “Medieval Ireland: Music in Cathedral, Church and Cloister” in *Early Music* XXVII/2 (2000): 195. Gerald of Wales, writing nearly half a century before Stephen of Lexington, also mentions the use of harmony in Ireland. However he is dealing with harp music in a passage that is more probable to be secular than liturgical, *The History and Topography of Ireland*, III, 94, in John O’Meara, trans., *Gerald of Wales, The History and Topography of Ireland* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), 103-104.

<sup>632</sup> Buckley, “Music in Ireland,” 798, see 783-798.

<sup>633</sup> Curran, *The Antiphony of Bangor*, is the most recent edition of the *Antiphony*. However, before consulting this work, the reader would be well advised to consult the review by Jane Stevenson. “The Antiphony of Bangor” *Peritia* 5 (1986): 430-37 [rev. of Michael Curran, *The Antiphony of Bangor* (Dublin 1984)]. An older version (the first volume of which is a facsimile) is that of Fredrick Edward Warren, ed., *The Antiphony of Bangor* 2 vols (London: Harrison & Sons,

monastic centre of Bangor, Co. Down between 680 and 691, would seem at first glance to be simply an antiphony and so have little to do with the Eucharist. However, it does contain an important hymn for use in the Celebration of the Eucharist. Given that we have so little evidence of the use of hymnography in the Eucharist at this stage, scholars would have been quite happy to assign all the texts in the *Antiphony* to use in the Liturgy of the Hours, albeit with the Eucharistic resonances in this particular hymn. However, this hymn has a very interesting title: "The hymn to be sung while the priests receive Communion." This clearly marks the hymn out as being used in the celebration of the Eucharist<sup>634</sup> and therefore "unprecedented in the seventh century."<sup>635</sup>

*Ymnum quando communicarent sacerdotes*

Come, you holy ones, receive the body of Christ,  
drinking the holy Blood by which you were redeemed.

You who were saved by the Body and Blood of Christ,  
let us praise God, by whom we are made anew.

By this sacrament of the body and blood,  
all have escaped from the jaws of hell.

Giver of salvation, Christ, the Son of God,  
has saved the world by his Cross and Blood.

The Lord has been sacrificed for all,  
Himself both priest and victim.

The law commanded the sacrifice of victims,  
foreshadowing the mysteries divine.

Bestower of light and Saviour of all,  
He granted most noble grace to His holy people.

Let all draw near with pure and faithful minds,

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1893, 1895). To situate this work within the Western tradition as a whole and to see how it relates to other Irish evidence, see Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West*. 113-115.

<sup>634</sup> Stevenson, "Hiberno-Latin Hymns," 102.

<sup>635</sup> Stevenson, *Liturgy and Ritual*, lxxxvi.

let all receive the protection of eternal salvation.

Guardian of the saints, you are leader, O Lord,  
and dispenser of life eternal to those who believe.

He gives heavenly bread to the hungry,  
and to the thirsty water from the living spring.

Christ the Lord himself comes, who is Alpha and Omega.  
He shall come again to judge us all.<sup>636</sup>

Curran dates the hymn to the sixth century.<sup>637</sup> This hymn, in keeping with the age and the style, is a catena of Biblical verses.<sup>638</sup> Once again we see the themes of holy fear, a Eucharistic piety centred on the Passion of Christ and the Eucharist as being a protection for final judgement. The importance of the actual reception of Communion is self-evident. Although the rubric that it is for use as the priests receive Communion would once again point to the possibility that the laity did not receive the Eucharist on a frequent basis. The Blood of Christ has a prominent place in the hymn appearing four times, as opposed to the Body of Christ which appears three. Also "heavenly bread" is juxtaposed to "water from the living spring" which is probably a reference to the Blood and Water which flowed from the side of the crucified Christ.

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<sup>636</sup> "Sancti uenite, Christi corpus sumite, sanctum bibentes, quo redempti sanguine. Saluati Christi corpore et sanguine, a quo refecti laudes dicamus Deo. Hoc sacramento corporis et sanguinis omnes exuti ab inferni faucibus. Dator salutis, Christus filius Dei, mundum saluauit per crucem et sanguinem. Pro uniuersis inmolari hostias, qua adumbrantur diuina mysteria. Lucis indultor et saluator omnium praeclaram sanctis largitus est gratiam. Accedant omnes pura mente creduli, sumant aeternam salutis custodiam. Sanctorum custos, rector quoque, Dominus, uitae perennis largitor credentibus. Caelestem panem dat esurientibus, de fonte uiuo praebebet sitientibus. Alpha et  $\Omega$  ipse Christus Dominus uenit, uenturus iudicare homines." A.S. Warpole, *Early Latin hymns With Introductions and Notes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), 345. English translation from Davies, *Celtic Spirituality*, 316-317.

<sup>637</sup> Curran, *The Antiphony of Bangor*, 47

<sup>638</sup> For a verse-by-verse analysis and comparison to other sources, see *ibid.*, 47-49 and 210-211.

Another very significant aspect of this hymn is that there is a reference to its use in another early Irish source. The seventh century hymn *Audite Omnes Amantes* which tells some stories of St. Patrick's ministry in verse form, makes an interesting reference to *Sancti Venite*:

As Patrick and Sechnall were walking around the churchyard, they heard a choir of angels singing around the eucharist in the church. They were singing the hymn which begins 'Come, you saints, to the body of Christ,' that is why that hymn has been sung ever since in Ireland at the time of approaching the body of Christ.<sup>639</sup>

Having a second reference to the same liturgical use of this text is important. While it may not be possible to attribute a universal usage of *Sancti Venite* it is at least possible to postulate that a number of Irish centres used it. Another incidental question that could be posed by *Audite Omnes Amantes* is why Patrick and Sechnall were "walking around the churchyard" while a Eucharist was being celebrated in the church? Perhaps this can be taken as evidence of a "Private Mass," or at least that some Eucharists would be celebrated for smaller groups at this time.

### 3.1.6 The *Corpus Missal* and other Liturgical Manuscripts

While there are relatively few liturgical texts from the Pre-Norman period, there are a number of texts from the period around the Norman arrival. These texts

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<sup>639</sup> "Doronsat tra síth and-sin, *Patraic ocus Sechnall; ocus cen batar [oc] tiachtain timchell na relgi, ro chualutar clais aingel oc cantain immo'n ídpert isin eclais; ocus issed ro chansat in n-immon di-a n-ad tossach, 'sancti uenite Corpus, etc.'* conid o-sein ille chantar I n-Eirinn in immune-sa in tan tiagar do churp Crist." *Praefatio in Hymnum S. Secundini*, 75-79 in Bernard and Atkinson, eds., *The Irish Liber Hymnorum*, 1:5. English translation from John Carey, trans. and ed., *King of Mysteries. Early Irish Religious Writings* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), 150.

were generally thought to be of the English Sarum use and therefore have been little studied.<sup>640</sup> They include three Missals: the *Corpus Missal*, the *Drummond Missal* and the *Rosslyn Missal*.<sup>641</sup>

Perhaps the most important significant of these is the *Corpus Missal*. This Missal was written in Ireland and is clearly decorated in traditional style.<sup>642</sup> This has been dated variously "from the ninth century to the fourteenth,"<sup>643</sup> although most scholars have followed Gwynn who dated it to the decade 1120-1130 on the basis of French studies on the style of its illumination.<sup>644</sup> But Gwynn also proposes that the missal may be the copy of an earlier Irish missal and may in fact reflect Irish liturgical practice in the early eleventh century, thus making it a Pre-Norman source.

He proposes that the *Corpus Missal* contains a pre-tenth century form of the *Memento* for the living (f. 2<sup>v</sup>).<sup>645</sup> He also sees a strong connection between the liturgy in Ireland and that at Winchester as there are strong textual similarities

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<sup>640</sup> For a general introduction to these works see Kenney, *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland*, 705-706. A more modern treatment can be found in Buckley, "Music in Ireland," 782-794, 809-810.

<sup>641</sup> Critical editions of these Missals were published in the nineteenth century. Fredrick E. Warren, ed., *The Manuscript Irish Missal Belonging to the President and Fellows of Corpus Christi College, Oxford* (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1879); G.H. Forbes, ed., *Missale Drummondense: The Ancient Irish Missal in the Possession of the Baroness Willoughby de Eresby* (Edinburgh: Pitsligo Press, 1882); Hugh Jackson Lawlor, ed., *The Rosslyn Missal: an Irish Missal in the Advocate's Library* (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1899). However, while Lawlor's edition of the *Rosslyn Missal* is still quite serviceable, the other two Missals need to have new critical editions prepared. Some modern work however, has been done on the *Drummond Missal* in an unpublished dissertation by Sarah Casey ("The Drummond Missal: a Preliminary Investigation into its Historical Liturgical and Musicological Significance in Pre-Norman Ireland," Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Pittsburgh, 1995) and images of the full contents of the *Corpus Missal* are available on-line from Oxford (<http://image.ox.ac.uk/show?collection=corpus&manuscript=ms282>)

<sup>642</sup> William O'Sullivan, "Manuscripts and Palaeography," in Ó Cróinín, ed., *Prehistoric and Early Ireland*, 543-544.

<sup>643</sup> Martin Holland, "On the Dating of the Corpus Irish Missal," *Peritia*, Vol. 15 (2001), 280.

<sup>644</sup> Gwynn, *The Irish Church in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, 20.

<sup>645</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

between the *Corpus Missal* and the *Winchester Troper* for a litany of Holy Saturday. The *Winchester Troper* can clearly be dated to the reign of King Aetheldred (978-1016).<sup>646</sup> This was a time when scholars from the South of Ireland, from the domain of Brian Boru, may have brought back to Ireland missals from the early Sarum tradition.<sup>647</sup> So, according to Gwynn, this Missal may well preserve a form of liturgy "that was used in Ireland in the eleventh, perhaps even the early eleventh century."<sup>648</sup>

A recent article which approaches the problems of dating the *Corpus Missal* from a different angle, comes to similar conclusions. Analysing it from the standpoint of euchology, a number of elements date to the early eleventh century: "first, the two concluding prayers from the *ordo baptismi*; second, the influence of the Gelasian and eighth-century Gelasian rites on the *ordo sponsalium*; and third, the occurrence of a non-Vulgate variant in both the epistle and gradual of the mass for the feast day of the Holy Cross."<sup>649</sup>

While some modern scholars today are tending to place these Missals within the Pre-Norman period, much critical work needs still to be done. However if these theories prove true then this would be quite significant for showing how the Eucharistic Liturgy in Ireland was quite similar to that of other parts of Europe in the early eleventh century. The fact that these Missals could conceivably be attributed

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<sup>646</sup> Ibid., 29-30.

<sup>647</sup> Ibid, 105.

<sup>648</sup> There are many other contacts between Ireland and Winchester in the tenth and eleventh centuries, Malchus, the first bishop of the Norse see of Waterford in 1074 had been trained as a monk there. Ibid., 31.

<sup>649</sup> Holland, "On the Dating of the Corpus Irish Missal," 282, see also p. 301.



both to periods before and after the Norman arrival points to a far greater continuity of Eucharistic practice than once thought. Apart from perhaps some pieces of chant for the feasts of Irish saints, there is little unusual in these Missals when compared to contemporary English Missals.<sup>650</sup> A final point worth noting is that in the Ireland of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the texts of the Eucharist gradually came to be celebrated in an environment very similar to that of the Continent. As the setting was so close to that of everywhere else (church architecture will be examined in Chapter 4) even if the odd feast or rubric were slightly different or the odd antiphon bore some traces of Pre-Norman Irish musical tradition, the overall effect of the liturgy was very close to that found in other parts of Western Europe.

## 3.2 Other Written Sources

### 3.2.1 The Penitentials

In liturgical text books the Penitentials are usually only mentioned when dealing with the history of the Sacrament of Penance.<sup>651</sup> Popular works on “Celtic

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<sup>650</sup> Although another problem that faces the student of these Missals is the convoluted origins of the Sarum use which in recent years has also been shown to be an over-simplistic category which cannot fully explain the nuances of early English liturgical history. For a general introduction to Medieval English liturgical practice see King, *Liturgies of the Past*, 276-374.

<sup>651</sup> These works do hold an important place in the history of the development of the Sacrament of Penance. In the early Church grave sins committed by Christians after Baptism posed a particularly difficult theological problem. In the wake of some persecutions when many Christians had lapsed and wished to return to the Church, Church leaders had to decide if and how these people could be received into the Church again. Initially the institution of a formal Order of Penitents gave a second chance. This was a very difficult process whereby one had to live a semi-monastic penitential routine, including sexual abstinence and public humiliation, for many years prior to formal reconciliation with the Church. This initial form of Penance was literally a second chance, there was no possibility of another chance if one fell again. Gy, “Penance and Reconciliation,” 104-108. The

spirituality" tend to give the Penitentials short shrift as their view of human sinfulness which has to be combated with mortification and sexual abstinence does not agree with the tendencies of many of these works.<sup>652</sup> It is probable that this form of literary genre developed in the British (or Welsh) Church after the fourth century and that the nascent Irish Church adopted the style. The earliest Irish example was composed before the late sixth century. The Irish then took this form, developed it and popularised it in England and the Continent.<sup>653</sup>

From the sixth to the eighth centuries various Penitentials were composed in Ireland and in those places under Irish influence.<sup>654</sup> Rather than being compendiums of detailed prescriptions these took the form of collections of guidelines. Some, like the famous Penitential of Cummean,<sup>655</sup> systematically treat each of Cassian's eight

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genius of the Irish contribution was its recourse to the native systems of law (and not to the standard Continental Church discipline based on Roman Law). When dealing with injuries this ancient code of law started from a principle of compensation. Reparation had to be made for each offence, and emphasis was placed on this reparation and not punishment *per se* – this led to two very important consequences, each and every sin could theoretically be compensated for and that there was no upper limit to the amount of times an individual could be forgiven. The *Penitential of Finian*, 47 says that "Nullam crime quod non potest ridimi per penitentiam quamdiu sumus in hoc corpore" "There is no crime which cannot be expiated through penance so long as we are in this body." Bieler, *The Irish Penitentials*, 92-93.

However it is also possible that the Irish Penitential discipline did contain an element of monasticisation of the lay penitents. Indeed, this may have been presented as something positive for the sinner and may not always have been seen as undesirable. Claire Stancliffe, "Red, White and Blue Martyrdom," in Dorothy Whitelock, Rosamond McKitterick and David Dumville, eds., *Ireland in Early Medieval Europe. Studies in Memory of Kathleen Hughes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 45. The idea of penitential discipline being a permanent "quasimonastic state" which was used by the higher echelons of society at the end of their lives and as one of the practical implementations of pastoral care is explored in Etchingam, *Church Organisation*, 290-318.

<sup>652</sup> O'Loughlin, *Celtic Theology*, 49.

<sup>653</sup> Bieler, *The Irish Penitentials*, 3-4.

<sup>654</sup> It is probable that the very first Penitentials were probably composed in Wales under the influence of St. David, but very soon afterwards the Irish took the genre, and developed and popularised it. John T. McNeill and Helena M. Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance. A Translation of the Principle Libri Poenitentiales*, Records of Western Civilization Series (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 23.

<sup>655</sup> Bieler, *The Irish Penitentials*, 108-135.

vices and prescribe remedies based on the contrary virtue (*contraria contraries curare*); however, most of the Irish Penitentials take the form of less systematically structured collections.<sup>656</sup> Obviously, we do not find a systematic treatment of the Eucharist in this literature. Nevertheless many of the Penitentials do mention the Eucharist. Here we are provided with valuable information as to some of the attitudes towards the Eucharist in the Church in Ireland at this time.

By far the most frequent treatment of the Eucharist in the Penitential literature are texts dealing with penances for particular sins involving the mistreatment of the Eucharistic Species. The word "*sacrificium*" often used by the Penitentials to refer to the Eucharistic Bread or host is itself evidence of a strong emphasis on the sacrificial dimension of the Eucharist.<sup>657</sup> The most basic offences deal with the consumption of the *sacrificium*. This means that at least in the circles governed by these texts, some people actually received the Eucharist, even if at times they did so unworthily.<sup>658</sup>

Not surprisingly, the first category of sin that is common to many of the texts is the case of a sinner receiving Communion unworthily. This is generally condemned, as one has to have expiated one's sins prior to receiving Communion.

A boy who communicates in the sacrament although he has sinned with a beast, shall do penance for a hundred days on bread and water.<sup>659</sup>

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<sup>656</sup> Hugh Connolly, *The Irish Penitentials and their Significance for the Sacrament of Penance Today* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1995), 21. Also see Thomas O'Loughlin, "Penitentials and Pastoral Care" in G.R. Evans, ed., *A History of Pastoral Care* (London: Cassell, 2000), 93-111.

<sup>657</sup> Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 1:170.

<sup>658</sup> A lot of the Penitential texts deal with monks. But it is hard to know just what percentage of the laity participated in the penitential discipline.

<sup>659</sup> "Puer qui sacrificium communicat pecans cum pecode .c. dies penitea cum pane et aqua." The *Penitential of Finnian* (1) in Bieler, *The Irish Penitentials*, 74-75. Also for Columbanus even the

But the Penitentials clearly see the reception of Communion as a necessary part of Christian life. It is true that sometimes they prescribe a long time of penance without the reception of Communion, but these are always temporary.<sup>660</sup> There is a clear concern that if a penitent is in danger of death that he has to be given Communion as the viaticum,<sup>661</sup> and that the norm is that the penitent be eventually joined to the altar once more:

If any man or woman is nigh unto death, although he (or she) has been a sinner, and asks for the communion of Christ, we say that it is not to be denied to such a person if that person promise God to take the vow, and do well and be received by Him. If he is restored to this world, let him fulfil the vow which he vowed to God, (the consequences) will be on his own head, and we will not refuse what we owe to him: we are not to cease to snatch prey from the mouth of the lion or the dragon, that is of the devil, who ceases not to snatch at the prey of the souls, even though we may have to follow up and strive (for his soul) at the very end of a man's life.

If one of the laity is converted from his evil-doing unto the Lord, and if he has wrought an evil deed, by committing fornication, that is, shedding blood, he shall do penance for three years and go unarmed except for a staff in his hand, and he shall not live with his wife, but in the first year he shall fast on an allowance of bread and water and slat and not live with his wife; after a penance of three years he shall give money for the redemption of his soul and the fruit of his penance into the hand of the

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daily "mental disturbances" had to be confessed before attending Mass. Penitential of Columbanus, B, 30 in Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, 181.

<sup>660</sup> E.g. *The Penitential of Finnian*, 35 in *ibid.*, 87. Although Stancliffe would propose a more stringent style of penitence which would basically turn the penitent into a quasi-monastic for the rest of his life, and might only finish with the viaticum on his death-bed. Stancliffe, "Red, White and Blue Martyrdom," 45.

<sup>661</sup> *The Rule of St. Carthage* even goes so far as to imply that the priest must force Communion on a penitent in danger of death who still does not wish to receive: "Ar ité do sacaruicc siu diaoi a coirp: nirb dillachtbin aitrige cen tintód on olc. Dia cuirter lám ar in grád ar is mór in bríg: co tairce toil da cech oen I mbriathan I ngním." "If you go to give Holy Communion at the very moment of death, you shall accept their confession without shame and without reserve. It is your sacrifice that he receives, even if he does so unwillingly. That repentance is unworthy which does not abandon evil." *The Rule of St. Carthage, The Duties of a Priest*, 4-5 in Mac Eclaise, "The Rule of St. Carthage," *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 27 (1910): 502. English translation from Uinseann Ó Maidín, *The Celtic Monk: Rules and Writings of Early Irish Monks*. Cistercian Studies Series: Number One Hundred Sixty-Two (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1966), 65. Unfortunately the text is slightly corrupt at this point of this Ninth century *Céli De* rule. This could also explain the passage in the *Communal Rule* of St. Columbanus, which states "Let none be compelled by force to receive the sacrifice, except in case of necessity." "Nullus cogatur coactus accipere sacrificium praeer necessitates." *Communal Rule* II. X in Walker, 158-159.

priest and make a feast for the servants of God, and in the feast (his penance) shall be ended and he shall be received to communion; he may then resume relations with his wife after his entire and complete penance, and if it is so decided he shall be joined to the altar.<sup>662</sup>

Here the Eucharist itself is presented as a "spiritual medicine" that in and of itself formed part of the cure of the penitent. The *Preface of Gildas on Penance* in its very first article mentions the case of a cleric who has committed fornication or sodomy. He is given three years penance, but at the half way point:

After a year and a half he may receive the Eucharist and come for the kiss of peace and sing the psalms with his brethren, lest his soul perish utterly from lacking so long a time the celestial medicine.<sup>663</sup>

This theme of the Eucharist as "celestial medicine" and the importance even for the penitent to receive it, is paralleled in some other sections of the penitential literature. The Second Synod of Patrick goes so far as to mandate that even those who are in penance must receive the Eucharist at Easter:

#### OF TAKING THE EUCHARIST AFTER A FALL

After a proving of the flesh it is to be taken, but especially on the eve of Easter; for he who does not communicate at that time is not a believer. Therefore short and strict are the seasons (of penance) in their ranks, lest the faithful soul perish, by abstaining

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<sup>662</sup> "Si qui(s) in ultimo spiritu constitutus fuerit uel si qua constituta sit licet peccatrix uel peccator fuerit ex exposcerit communionem Christi, non negandum ei dicimus si promiserit uotum suum Deo et bene agat et accipiatur ab eo. Si conuersus fuerit in hunc mundum, impleat quod uouerit Deo; si autem non impleat uotum quod uerit Deo in caput suum erit et nos quod debemus non negabimus ei. Non cessandum est eripere perdam ex ore leonis uel draconis, id est de ore diabuli, qui predam nostre anime deripere non desinit, licet in extremo line uite hominis adfectandum (et) nitendum sit. Si qui(s) autem laicus ex malis actibus suis conuersus fuerit ad Dominum et omne[m] malum egerit, id est fornicando et sanguinem effundeno, tribus annis peniteat et inermis existat nisi uirga tantum in manu eius et non maneat cum uxore sua, sed in primo anno cum pane et aqua et sale ieiunet per mensura et non maneat cum uxorem; post penitentiam trium annorum det pecunia(m) pro redemptionem anime sue et fructum penitentiae in manu[s] sacerdotis et cenam faciat seruis Dei et in cena consummabitur et recipietur ad communionem; intret ad uxorem suam post integram et perfectam penitentiam suam et si ita libuerit iungatur altario." The *Penitential of Finnian*, 34-35 in *ibid.*, 86-87.

<sup>663</sup> "Post annum et dimidium eucharistiam summat, ad pacem ueniat, psalmos cum fratribus canat, ne pernitus anima tanto etempore caelestis medicinae (ieiuna) intereat." The *Preface of Gildas on Penance 1*, in *ibid.*, 60-61.

from the medicine for so long a time, for the Lord saith: *Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, you shall not have life in you.*<sup>664</sup>

Another abuse that is mentioned quite often in the penitential literature is the sin of vomiting of the *sacrificium*:

He who vomits the host because of greediness, forty days. But if with the excuse of unusual and too rich food, and from the fault not of over-saturation but of the stomach, thirty (days). If it is by reason of infirmity, he shall do penance for twenty (days). Another (authority) says differently: If by reason of infirmity, seven days; if he injects it into the fire, he shall sing one hundred psalms; if a dog licks up the vomit, he who has vomited shall do penance for one hundred days.<sup>665</sup>

While far from a developed theology of Eucharistic presence, the fact that this was seen as a sin portrays the belief that the *sacrificium* ought to be considered as sacred. The presence lasts longer than the actual Liturgy and the *sacrificium* preserves its sacred character even if it is regurgitated. It is also worth noting the difference in Penance for vomiting the *sacrificium* into the fire where it was burned up (100 Psalms) and when dogs licked up the *sacrificium* (100 days penance). This

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<sup>664</sup> "DE SUMMENDA EUCHARISTIA POS LAPSUM. Post examinationem carceris sumenda est, maxime autem in nocte Pasche, in qua qui non communicat fidelis non est. Ideo breuia sunt et stricta apud eos spatia, ne anima fidelis interiat tanto tempore ieiunia medicinae, Domino dicente: *nisi manducaueritis carnem filii hominis non habebitis uitam in uobis.*" The *Second Synod of St. Patrick* XXII in *ibid.*, 192-193. However the Penitentals are not a fully consistent corpus and at times they contradict each other. So, for example, the *Bigotian Penitential* contradicts this saying that one should only receive after the completion of penance when one is "perfect, whole and not infirm," ("perfecta, sana et non infirma.") The *Bigotian Penitential* IV.7 in *ibid.*, 230-233. In another parallel, it even seems that sometimes a penance could be carried out by a dead persons' relatives. A *Céli Dé* document tells of the death of a virtuous layman who is married with ten sons dies. However his *anamchara* advises one of the sons to do seven years penance that his father should have done. That day seven years later the son and wife come to Communion, that night the dead father appears thanks them for he has now left hell for heaven. It is important to note that the son's penitence ended with a reception of Communion. "The Monastery of Tallaght," § 86 in Gwynn and Purton, 163-164.

<sup>665</sup> "Qui sacrificium euomit causa uoracitatis, .xl. diebus. Si uero obtentu insoliti cybi pinguioris et non uitio saturitatis sed stomachi, .xxx. Si infirmitatis gratia, xx peniteat. Aliter alius dicit: Si infirmitatis causa, .vii. diebus; si in ignem proiecerit, .c. psalmos canet; si canis lambuerit talem uomitum, .c. diebus qui euomit poeniteat. Qui accipit post cibum sacrificium, .vii. dies peniteat." *Bigotian Penitential*, 3,1-3 in Bieler, *The Irish Penitentals*, 214-215. This text has parallels in the *Preface of Gildas on Penance* 7, in *ibid.*, 60; the *Penitential of Columbanus* 6 and 12, in *ibid.*, 95 and 100; the *Penitential of Cummean* I.8 and XI.7 in *ibid.*, 112 and 130 and in the *Bigotian Penitential* 8 Chapters 3, in *ibid.*, 213.

again points to a Eucharistic presence that lasts and it is far preferable that the *sacrificium* be consumed by fire than by a dog. Another abuse that also appears in the Penitentials is the loss of the *sacrificium*.

He who fails to guard the host carefully, and a mouse eats it, shall do penance for forty days. But he who loses it in the church, that is so that a part falls and is not found, twenty days. But he who loses his chrismal or only the host in what place soever, and it cannot be found, three forty-day periods or a year. One who pours anything from the chalice upon the altar when the linen is being removed shall do penance for seven days; or if he has spilled it rather freely, he shall do penance with special fasts for seven days. If the host falls from one's hand on the straw, he shall do penance from the time of the accident. He who pours out the chalice at the end of solemn Mass, shall do penance for forty days.

One who vomits the host because his stomach is overloaded with food, and if he casts it into the fire, twenty days, but if not forty. If however, dogs consume this vomit, one hundred. But if it is with pain and he cast it into the fire, he shall sing one hundred psalms.

If anyone neglects to receive the host and does not ask for it, and if no other reason exists to excuse him, he shall keep a special fast; and he who having been polluted in sleep during one night, accepts the host, shall do penance likewise.

A deacon who forgets to bring the oblation until the linen is removed when the names of the departed are recited shall do penance likewise.

[...] He who acts with negligence towards the host, so that it dries up and is consumed by worms until it comes to nothing, shall do penance for three forty-day periods on bread and water. If it is entire, but if a worm is found in it, it shall be burned and the ashes shall be concealed beneath the altar, and he who neglected it shall make good his negligence with forty days (of penance). If the host loses its taste and is discoloured, he shall keep a fast for twenty days; if it is stuck together, for seven days.

He who wets the host shall forthwith drink the water that was in the chrismal; and he shall take the host and shall amend his fault for ten days. If the host falls from the hands of the celebrant to the ground and is not found, everything that is found in the place in which it fell shall be burned and the ashes concealed as above. If the host is found, the place shall be cleaned up with a broom, and the straw, as we have said above, burned with fire, and the priest shall do penance for twenty days. If it is only slipped to the altar, he shall keep a special fast. If the chalice drips upon the altar the minister shall suck up the drop and do penance for three days, and the linens which the drop has touched he shall wash three times, the chalice being placed beneath, and he shall drink the water used in washing. If the chalice drips when it is washed inside, the first twelve psalms shall be sung by the minister.

If the minister stammers over the Sunday prayer which is called 'the perilous' (*"periculosa"*), if once, he shall be cleansed with fifty strokes; if a second time, with one hundred; if a third time, he shall keep a special fast.<sup>666</sup>

This seventh century text contains the most detailed treatment of the Eucharist in the Irish Penitential literature.<sup>667</sup> However, there is little unique to this text as most of the themes are treated in other Penitentials, Cummean's value is that it gathers much of the material into one section titled "Of Questions Concerning the *Sacrificii*" (*De Questionibus Sacrificii*). He treats two different kinds of sin: abuses of the *sacrificium* and mistakes within the Eucharistic Liturgy itself.

Again there is an explicit expectation that the Eucharist is to be received. Initially the text seems to deal with the reception of Communion during the Eucharistic celebration. If someone "neglects to receive the host and does not ask

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<sup>666</sup> "Qui bene non custodierit sacrificium et mus comedit illud, .xl. diebus peniteat. Qui autem perdiderit in ecclesia, id est, ut part ceciderit et non inuenta fuerit, .xx. diebus. Qui autem perdiderit suum crismal aut solum sacrificium in regione qualibet et non inueniatur, tres xmas uel annum. Perfundens aliquid de calice super altare quando auferatur linteamen, .vii. diebus peniteat. Si cadentis de manu effuderit, superpositionibus .vii. diebus peniteat a quo ceciderit. Qui effudit calicem in fine sollempnitatis misse, .xl. diebus peniteat. Sacrificium euomens grauatus saturitate uentris, si in ignem proiecerit, .xx. diebus, sin autem, .xl. Si uero canes comederint talem uomitum, .c. Si autem dolore, et in ignem proiecerit, .c. psalmos canat. Si uero neglexerit quis sacrificium accipere et nec non interrogat nec aliquid nec aliquid causae excusabilis exsteterit, superponat; et qui acciperit sacrificium pollutus nocturno somno, sic peniteat. Diaconus obliuiscens oblationem adferre donec auferatur linteamen quando recitantur pausantium nomina similiter peniteat. [...] Qui neglegentiam erga sacrificium fecerit, ut siccans uermibusque consumptum ad nihilum deuenerit, tres xlm cum pane et aqua peniteat. Si autem integrum, sed inuentum fuerit in eo uermis, comburatur et cinis eius sub altari abscondatur, et qui neglexerit quater denis diebus suam neglegentiam saluat. Si cum consummatione saporis decoloratur sacrificium, .xx. diebus expleatur ieiunium; conglutinatum uero, .vii. diebus. Qui merserit sacrificium, continuo bibat aquam quae in crismali fuerit sumatque sacrificium et per .x. soles emendat culpam. Si sacrificium ceciderit de manibus offerantis terratenus et non inueniatur, omne quodcumque inuentum fuerit sacrificium, locus scopa mundetur et stramen ut supra diximus igne comburetur et sacerdos .xx. diebus peniteat. Si usque ad altare tantum fuerit lapsum, superponat. Si uero de calice aliquid per neglegentiam stillauerit in terra, lingua lambetur, tabula radatur, igni sumatur, ut supra diximus celatur, .i. diebus peniteat. Si super altare stillauerit calyx, sorbeat minister stillam et ternis peniteat diebus et linteamina quae tangerit stilla per tres abluat uices calice subter posito et aquam ablutionis sumat. Si quando intra luitur calix stillauerit, prima uice .xii. a minister canantur psalmi, si secunda uice, {...}, si tertia, .iii. Si titubauerit sacerdotes super oratione dominica quae dicitur periculosa, si una uice, .i. plagis emundatur, si secunda, .c., si tertia superponat." Penitential of Cummean, XI, 1-11. 19-29 in *ibid.*, 130-133. N.B. the section missing from the quotation contains duplicate material or material not related to the Eucharist.

<sup>667</sup> Bieler, *The Irish Penitentials*, 6.



for it," he has to do penance. So here it is seen as sinful not to receive Communion, however one might be forgiven for asking whether the reason for not receiving was always "negligence" (*neglexerit*) and not perhaps a feeling of unworthiness.

In addition the text (and its parallels) also show that there was a practice of taking the *sacrificium* and keeping it outside of the context of the Liturgy. When it refers to a mouse eating the *sacrificium* it is quite possible that this is referring to an abuse outside of the Liturgy (one would hope that the celebrant would stop a mouse eating the *sacrificium* as he was celebrating the Mass). Gildas mentions someone "by mishap through carelessness los[ing] a host, leaving it for beasts and birds to devour."<sup>668</sup> Again this is hardly a case of an abuse during the Liturgy. Perhaps this refers to a continuation of the Patristic practice of Home Communion. However while it is unlikely that a daily celebration of the Eucharist was common at the time these texts were written, it is nonetheless unlikely that Home-Communion was practiced in Ireland at this time,<sup>669</sup> and Home Communion was the only reason that the Eucharistic Species were reserved by individuals in the first four centuries of the Christian era. The text mentions that the *sacrificium* was kept in a "chrismal." While we are not sure exactly what an Irish chrismal looked like, scholars tend to think that it was a small reliquary-like pyx that was worn around the neck. The fact that the text mentions that the *sacrificium* might be eaten up by worms, dried up, lost its

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<sup>668</sup> "Si casu negligens quis sacrificium aliquod perdat, per .iii. xmas, reliquens illud feris et alitibus deuorandum." The *Preface of Gildas on Penance* 9, in *ibid.*, 62-63. The *Communal Rule* of St. Columbanus also mentions the possibility of loosing the sacrifice probably in the context of a journey saying that it may have "fallen from a boat or a bridge or a horse." "De cimba vel de ponte seu de equo." *Communal Rule XV* in Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, 162-163. The passage has parallels in the *Penitential of Columbanus* 12, in *ibid.*, 100 and the *Penitential of Cummean* IX.1, in Bieler, *The Irish Penitentials*, 126.

<sup>669</sup> Ryan, *Irish Monasticism*, 345-346 and Taft, "Home-Communion," 3.

colour or stuck together would seem to suggest that, even in the damp Irish conditions, we are dealing with a time-period of somewhat more than the maximum of a week between liturgies. Once again these penances for abuses point to a clear belief in some sort of a perduring Eucharistic presence in the Eucharistic elements.

The list of abuses at Mass is also significant. Referring to "the Sunday prayer which is called 'the perilous'" ("oratione dominica quae dicitur periculosa") implies to an element of fear and dread in the Eucharist.<sup>670</sup> Given that stumbling over a word of this prayer was considered sinful it can be taken that this prayer was somehow more important than the rest of the Liturgy. As was seen above when dealing with the *Mass Tract* this probably refers to the Institution Narrative.

Also it is worth noting that the abuses to the Eucharist could be to either species. The Eucharistic Wine was just as important as the *sacrificium*. Care is to be taken not to spill anything during the celebration, but again a presence is perceived to remain even after the end of the celebration. Even the cloths that had soaked in a "drop" from the chalice had to be purified and the water used in washing them had to be drunk. Obviously, as wine is much harder to store than bread and was therefore not reserved to the same degree, we have no real material in the

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<sup>670</sup> There is a parallel to this passage in the same Penitential (*Cummean IX.9* in Bieler, *The Irish Penitentials*, 126) and the earlier *Preface of Gildas on Penance* (20) likewise refers to it being sinful to "change any of the words where danger is noted." "Commotauerit aliquid de uerbis ubi periculum adnotatur," in *ibid.*, 62-63. Crehan, commenting on Gildas, points out that "this document, from the Welsh Church of the sixth century, has the support of the Welsh language, for the word there used for a Mass priest was *periglawr* (from the late Latin *periculator*), and this says much for the popular understanding of the priest as 'danger man,' who takes upon himself to pronounce without stumbling the words of consecration." Joseph H. Crehan, "The Theology of Eucharistic Consecration: The Role of the Priest in Celtic Liturgy" in *Theological Studies* 40 (1979): 335. MacCarthy lists a number of other parallels from Penitential material not included in Bieler's collection. "On the Stowe Missal," 186. However the Irish are not unique in treating the Eucharist with fear. For a good presentation of the evidence for this sentiment in both East and West throughout the Patristic age, see Taft, *The Precommunion Rites*, 130, n.b. footnote 7.

Penitentials dealing with the Eucharistic Wine after the Liturgy. This passage also provides evidence of prayer for the dead during the Eucharist. The practice of reading the diptyches after the offertory might be alluded to in number 11 (*quando recitantur pausantium nomina*).<sup>671</sup> The concept of a priest “offering a Mass” for a particular intention is also foreseen in the Penitentials:

For good rulers we ought to offer the sacrifice, for bad ones on no account. Presbyters are indeed not forbidden to offer for their bishops.<sup>672</sup>

There is also an instance where mention is made of offering Mass for a victim of suicide:

Anyone who kills himself while insane, prayers are to be said for him, and alms are given for his soul, if he was previously pious. If anyone has killed himself in despair or for any other cause, he must be left to the judgement of God, for men dare not offer prayers for him – that is a Mass – unless it be some other prayer, and almsgiving to the poor and miserable.<sup>673</sup>

Indeed, the whole concept of offering Mass for a particular intention seems to have been partly born in the Irish milieu:

The conception of the Mass as a gift to God which he would reciprocate arose not from a fall into the materialistic understanding of sin and penitence but from the natural tendency of northern Christians – Irish, Anglo-Saxons, Franks – to model

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<sup>671</sup> Bieler, *The Irish Penitentials*, 247, n.b. footnote 29.

<sup>672</sup> “Pro bonis regibus sacra debemus offerre, pro malis nequaquam. Presbyteri uero pro suis episcopis non prohibentur offerre.” The *Preface of Gildas on Penance* 23-24, in *ibid.*, 62-63. This passage has an almost exact parallel in the *Penitential of Cummean* IX.11-12, in *ibid.*, 126. The early ninth century *Book of Armagh*, tells us that Patrick is entitled to have a Mass offered for him on his feast day in all the monasteries he founded. *Tírechán* III 57 in Ludwig Bieler, ed., *The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh*. With a contribution by Fergus Kelly. *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* Vol. 10 (Dublin: School of Celtic Studies, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1979), 167.

<sup>673</sup> “Nech nothoirc fadesin tria dasacht ernaigti aire 7 almsana hara hanmain mad craibdech riam. Mad ar derchainiuth ronoirnecht fadesin nó ar nach tuait ali is lecti immessair ndé ar ni lamther ernaigti airi .i. oifred acht mad nach n-ernaigti aile 7 almsan do thruadaib 7 do bochtaib.” The *Old-Irish Penitential* V, 5 in E. J. Gwynn, “An Irish Penitential,” *Ériu* 7 (1914): 166. English translation from Bieler, *The Irish Penitentials*, 272.

their religious behavior on the structures of their social life, in which gift giving played a central role.<sup>674</sup>

Paxton shows how the tendency to offer Mass for the dead in particular spread from Irish missionaries and the Irish influenced English missionaries to the Franks, and from the Franks to the whole Continental Church.<sup>675</sup> In later medieval Europe the practice was common of having Masses offered for one's intentions in order to fulfil penances. Some scholars think that this too started in Ireland,<sup>676</sup> and indeed there is one example of this "substitution" of Mass for a penance that survives in the literature:

A commutation of seven years' strict penance consisting of expiatory prayers in order to rescue a soul from the pain of hell: a hundred Masses, a hundred and fifty psalms, a hundred *Beati*, a hundred genuflections with each *Beati*, a hundred Credos, a hundred Paters, a hundred soul hymns.<sup>677</sup>

Here the goal of the Eucharist is to remit sin and is a lot easier than seven years of penance or (as the next commutation for only one year's penance) "one night spent in water, another naked on nettles, the third on nutshells!" But this is an isolated instance and it really doesn't seem that this practice originated in Ireland or was ever popular there (although Irish ecclesiastics on the Continent may well have encouraged these practices there). Cyrille Vogel has examined the texts of all penitential (Continental and Irish) with reference to Masses being celebrated to

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<sup>674</sup> Paxton, *Christianizing Death*, 99.

<sup>675</sup> *Ibid.*, 67-68.

<sup>676</sup> E.g. Mitchell, *Cult and Controversy*, 109-110.

<sup>677</sup> "Arra .uii. mblíadna durlpende di ernaigtib glanaib du thesarcain anma duini a pianaib hifirnn .i. cet n-oiffrend cét coica(i)t salm cét mbieti cét slechtan *cacha* beit cét pr cét credo cét imna n-anma." *The Old-Irish Table of Commutations*, 36 in D. A. Binchy, "The Old-Irish Table of Penitential Commutations," *Ériu* 19 (1962): 6. English translation from Bieler, *The Irish Penitentals*, 279. This work seems to date from the second half of the eighth century and originate in the *Céli Dé* monastery of Tallaght. While not a Penitential *per se*, it belongs to the general Penitential literature.

commute penances. He notes that the vast majority of such cases come from the Continental Penitentials and that, while there is abundant British and Continental evidence, there is very little evidence in the Irish material for this practice.<sup>678</sup>

### 3.2.2 Monastic Rules

The picture of the Eucharist in the various monastic rules is comparable to the Penitentials. While these rules are perhaps of more importance liturgically for describing the Liturgy of the Hours as celebrated in the monasteries, once again the Eucharist does figure in them. These various rules are spread over a number of centuries and they should be seen as guidelines for an abbot who will modify them to best suit his monastery and the temperament of the individual monks. The *Rule of the Céili Dé*, which is in the *Leabhar Breac* may be as early as the ninth century.<sup>679</sup> It contains a very interesting picture of the formation of novices regarding the reception of Communion:

Someone who attends the midnight liturgy for the first time receives the Body of Christ but not the chalice. He is not allowed to receive again until the end of the next year.

The second year he receives at the midnight liturgy and also at the *Corpus paschae* on the following day. The third year he will receive at midnight, Easter and Christmas. The fourth year he may receive at Christmas, Easter Sunday, Low Sunday (the two Easters), and Pentecost. The fifth year at the solemn festivals and at the end of the forty nights. After six years he is allowed to receive every month, and in the seventh year every two weeks. On the completion of the seven years he is allowed to receive every Sunday, saying *Pater Sair* and 'O God come to my aid, Lord make haste to help me' while holding both hands extended towards heaven. Afterwards he makes the sign of the cross with the right hand in every direction, thus + down and up.

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<sup>678</sup> Vogel, "La Vie Quotidienne du Moine," 347-351.

<sup>679</sup> Ó Maidín, *The Celtic Monk*, 81.

They regard this as the shrine of devotion, but the cross-vigil must precede it. It is called the 'Breastplate of Devotion.'

When a monk does not receive Communion [*teit do láim*]<sup>680</sup> on Sunday, he may do so on the following Thursday; otherwise, were he to wait until the following Sunday, the interval would be too long for one accustomed to receive weekly. These two days are celebrated in a special way at Mass.<sup>681</sup>

The main conclusion that can be drawn from this text is that ideally the monk was initiated into weekly Communion.<sup>682</sup> This initiation took seven years and in the first year he only received the Eucharistic Bread at a midnight Liturgy that may well have been the Paschal Vigil.<sup>683</sup> It would seem that the monks attended a community

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<sup>680</sup> This Early Irish technical term for receiving Communion *teit do láim* (stretching out one's hands) would imply that the recipient received on the hand and not directly in the mouth. The Early Irish rubrics of the *Stowe Missal* also have a similar phrase *oc teacht do láim*, for receiving Communion.

<sup>681</sup> "Inti teti pruis do midnocht do sacarbhaicc nama theit, acas ni theit iterum usque de finem anni. Teit iaram do midnocht dibliadna acas do churp na casc ara barach. Tertia uice di midnocht acas di churp na casc acas notlac. Tertia uice ar notlaic acas di chairc acas cingcedir. Quinto anno ar sollamnu acas cind .xl. oidche beos. Sexto anno cind cech mis. Septimo anno cind cec coeathgír. Post .uii. anno is and teit cech domnaig. Pater siar prius acas Deus in adiutorium usque festina acas da dhí láim suas fria nem acas airrdhe na croiche cot laim ndeiss iaram similiter in cech aird sic + ris acas suass. Is hi tra comrair chrábuid leosaide, acht is crosfigell prius, luirech léire din a ammhíde. In tan na tiagar do láim dia domnaig tiagar dia dhardain ina dhegair, ar is ro fhata anad cu domnaig; uair is aurdhalta leosom do grér in dí lá sin fri hoifrend." *The Rule of the Céili Dé* in William Reeves "On the Céili Dé commonly called the Culdees," *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy* 24, 3 (1873): 204-205. English translation from Ó Maidín, *The Celtic Monk*, 85-86.

<sup>682</sup> One might ask how often lay people received Communion? If the novice starts off at once a year, as a layperson prior to monastic life had he been accustomed to receive at all? On top of this it cannot simply be assumed that the laity were always prepared to receive Communion. Aside from questions of morality, we see that St. Columbanus had to legislate against monks biting the chalice, striking the altar and spitting at the altar by mistake! If these were normal behaviour for monks we can only imagine what the laity were like. Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, 149, 143 and 163. However the Irish were not the only people to spit in church, John Cassian chides the western monks in his *Institutes* by telling them that unlike Gaul in Egypt during the Offices "no one spits, nor hawks, nor cough is heard." "Non sputum emittitur, non exscreatio obstrepit, non tussis intersonat." *Institutes* 2.10 in PL 49:98. English translation from Jerome Bertram, trans., *St. John Cassian, The Monastic Institutes. On the Training of a Monk and the Eight Deadly Sins* (London: the Saint Austin Press, 1999), 21.

<sup>683</sup> There is a very close parallel of this scheme of a "novitiate" towards weekly Communion in the ninth century *Rule of Tallaght*, but this one takes nine years to reach weekly Communion. Regarding the monk not receiving from the chalice the *Rule of Tallaght* gives the impression that the monk could not receive from it for the full nine years. In the next verse it adds an interesting detail that "those guilty of shedding blood and those who sinned seriously were allowed to receive the Body of Christ, but denied the chalice, even though they had made expiation through penance." *The Rule of Tallaght*, 4-5 in Ó Maidín, *The Celtic Monk*, 101.

Eucharist on Sundays and Thursdays. It was preferable to receive Communion at the Sunday Eucharist, but the monk could choose to wait until Thursday. This is paralleled by a prescription in the ninth century *Rule of Carthage* which also recommends a Sunday and Thursday community Eucharist. But it adds that this is a minimum if the Eucharist is not celebrated "on every day, so that all evil might be banished."<sup>684</sup> Later on the same rule mentions that every monk must go about his work every day between terce and none, specifying that during this time "those in holy orders go to prayer or to celebrate Mass as is right."<sup>685</sup> For the regular monks, not surprisingly, one of the rules mentions that they must be spiritually prepared to receive Communion:

When each person goes to Mass, what a wonderful gift we offer; we should have compunction of heart, the shedding of tears, and the raising of the hands to God, without hilarity, without whispering, but with gentleness, in silence, and with forgiveness of all past, present and future evils. When you go to communion [*tam tiager do láim*] you should go with great fear, confessing your sins, and in peace with all your neighbours . . . The Body you approach is pure, so must you be holy when you receive it.<sup>686</sup>

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<sup>684</sup> "Menibe cech én lathi iar digi cech cláin." *The Rule of St. Carthage, The Duties of the Anam-Cara*, 12 in Mac Eclaise, "The Rule of St. Carthage," 504. English translation from in Ó Maidín, *The Celtic Monk*, 66.

<sup>685</sup> "An toes graid don ernaigthi don oifriind co cert." *The Rule of St. Carthage, The Duties of the Céili Dé*, 8, in Mac Eclaise, "The Rule of St. Carthage," 510. English translation from Ó Maidín, *The Celtic Monk*, 70.

<sup>686</sup> "Intan tiastan don aifriind is uasal in dán: congain cride telcud dén turcabál na lám. Cen fáilte cen folabrad co cendsa co coi: con dilgud cech aincríde fil bias rotoboi. Co sid dria cech coimnesaim co imecla máir: co fóistin duailche tan tiagar do láim. . . óir is glan an coirp dia téis rob glan no téir dá." *The Rule of Carthage, Anam-Cara*, 16-18. 21 in Mac Eclaise, "The Rule of St. Carthage," 504-506. English translation from in Ó Maidín, *The Celtic Monk*, 67.

A document known as "The Monastery of Tallaght" coming from the *Céli Dé* circles also gives some details of the Eucharist.<sup>687</sup> Once again, the importance is again that the Eucharist actually be celebrated rather than having a lot of people attend:

It is all one whether one person or a number is present at the *Beati* or the Mass; for there is no less efficacy in his prayer than if it be appropriated to himself alone—just as the light of the sun is no greater for one man only than for a number.

He makes much of going the thousand paces, or more, to visit the tenantry on Sunday; and the thousand paces have been left as an ordinance for watching a sick man, and for administering the communion to him, and to the young, and to the laity who are under spiritual direction who come to wait for the Mass, and to hear preaching, and for urgent matters besides, etc.<sup>688</sup>

The *Rule of the Céli Dé* which is related to "The Monastery of Tallaght" has another important section on the Eucharist. Follett thinks that both documents are later derivatives of a document now lost which he names *Tecosc Máilruain*. He identifies the *Rule of the Céli Dé* as being a tenth century recension of earlier material.<sup>689</sup>

A Church is not entitled to the tenth cow or the third part of the revenue payable by another church, nor has it any right to the other dues payable to its monks, unless it is faithful to its obligation. These duties are the administration of baptism, the distribution of Holy Communion, and prayers which are offered by the monks for both the living and the dead. The rightly established church should be properly furnished

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<sup>687</sup> This document was probably written between 831 and 840 and it comes from the *Céli Dé*. Gwynn and Purton, "The Monastery of Tallaght," 122. For a detailed examination of this text, which is perhaps the most important of the *Céli Dé* works see Follett, *The Celi De Movement*, 132-148.

<sup>688</sup> "IS cumme dano forich in biat nó an offrend in oen oculus in sochaidhe ar ni luga cumung naernaighthi dosom cit lir quam si sibi soli assignetus amail nach moa soillsi na grene don oenfer for leith indas don sochaidhe. IS mor leisim in mile cemenn nó eo amplius do aithidhigh in deissi l domnuch is foracbadh in mile cemind fri torrome fir galair fri tabhairt comne do 7 do ocaib 7 tuathibh biti fo anmchairtes dotiagat do airsemh offrind 7 do etsecht procepti 7 do rætaibh triuibh cene 7cetera:-" "The Monastery of Tallaght," § 70 – § 71 in Gwynn and Purton, 156-157.

<sup>689</sup> Follett, *The Celi De Movement*, 145-148.



with altars, and Mass should be celebrated on those altars each Sunday and solemnity. Any church lacking any of these essentials is not entitled to the full tribute payable to the Church of God, and is to be regarded by Christians as a den of thieves and robbers.

A priest of the class of the laity, no matter what church he may be attached to, is not entitled to the dues payable to the priestly order. These dues consist of a house, garden, and bed, all of which are to be as good as the church can provide. In addition, he is to have a sack of meal and its condiment, a milch cow every quarter, together with all his just requests. In return he is to provide baptism and communion, that is, the Eucharist; he is to make intercession for the living and the dead; and on Sundays, solemnities, and other major feasts, he is to offer Mass. He is to celebrate all the daily hours of prayer, chanting one hundred and fifty psalms each day unless instruction or spiritual direction prevents him from doing so. Any ordained man, then, who is ignorant of the law and unable to carry out the functions of his office, who is unable to chant the hour of prayer, or to offer the Eucharist in the presence of king or bishop, is not entitled to his rank in the eyes of church or state.

[...] The person with whom a lad consecrated to God and Patrick studies is entitled to recognition and reward at the proper times. He is to be given a milch cow when he has taught the one hundred and fifty psalms together with the hymns, canticles and readings, and also the correct method of administering Baptism and Communion, the manner in which the intercessions are to be sung, and in general everything pertaining to the priesthood, until such time as the student is ready to receive holy orders. Each year by way of reward for these blessings he is to be paid a calf, a pig, three sacks of malted meal, and one sack of grain together with a reasonable supply of clothing and food. The milch cow is to be handed over as soon as the psalms and hymns have been taught, while the remainder are paid when the obligations of holy orders have been explained. The sage or bishop before whom the psalms are recited by the young man is entitled to a supper, of food and beer, for a party of five that night.<sup>690</sup>

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<sup>690</sup> "Ni dligid dechmhadu, nab o chendaith, na train annoti, na dire seoit do mhainib mina bet a frithfholaoid thechta na heclaisi innte do bathis acas chomnai, acas gabail necnairce a manach etir biu acas marbu, acas corroib oifrend for altoir i ndhomnaighib acas sollamnaib, acas corrabut aidme oga cech altoir dib. Nach eclair Dé, acht is uaim thagut acas latrand a hainm la Crist. Cech eclais tra i mbi fer graid domhieclaisib tuaithe ni dligh tuarastul auird .i. tech acas airlisse acas dergub, acas deceltt cecha bliadna amuil bias hi cumang na heclaisi. Miach cona indud, bo blicht in cech raithe acas airier imm cech coir an chena. Bathis din uadesium acas comna .i. sacarbaic, acas gabail necnairce beo acas cech primshollaman acas cech domnaig acas cech primshollaman acas cech primfheli. Celebrad cach tratha; na .III. do checul cech die acht mina toirmesci forcetul no anmchairduis. Nach fer graid din lar na bi tualaing celebrad acas oifriund for belaib rig acas epscop, nis dlíg saire fir ghraidh hi thuaithe no i n-eclais. . . Nach oen tra las a legait na meic audparthar and do Dia acas Patric dlegairside fochraic acas dulchinde i n-aimseraib corib .i. loilgech i fochraice na .III. co na nimnaib acas cantacaib acas liachtanaib acas combathir acas comna, acas gabail n-ecnarci acas co neolar a n-orraighe olchena com ba tualaing airiten grad: ag acas mucc acas tri meich bracha, acas miach arba bid ina duilchinde cecha bliadna cenmotha gaire acas ailgine do étiud acas biathad illog mbendactain. Acht iar tiasfenad na salm acas na nimond fo chetóir dorenar in loilghech, iar taisfenad din in ordusa dlegar in duilchinde acas in decelt. Dlighid imorro in thsui ni in tesroc dia tairfentar na sailm proind cuicir de chormaimm acas buid in oidche sin." *The Rule of the Céli Dé* in Reeves "On the Céli Dé," 211-214. English translation from Ó Maidín, *The Celtic Monk*, 92-94.

If a church does not provide a bare minimum of pastoral care it is not entitled to receive any dues or financial support. This pastoral care is very similar to that outlined in the documents examined in Chapter One. An important element of this is being able to give Communion (perhaps referring to the viaticum) and celebrating the Eucharist on Sundays and feast days. If this is not fulfilled then the priest has no right to a living from the church. The section on the preparation of a candidate for Ordination is also interesting. While it practically repeats the requirements for a parish priest, it is significant as it is the only text I have found dealing with the liturgical formation of ministers in Pre-Norman Ireland. The great emphasis on memorisation is noteworthy. If the candidate had to memorize all one-hundred and fifty psalms it would not have been particularly difficult to learn some basic Eucharistic Liturgies by heart. There is no actual requirement that he understand the Latin of the prayers he memorizes. So it is possible that these priests trained in apprenticeship to an older priest may have performed the Liturgy quite poorly, only copying what had been taught to them and never actually understanding the ritual.

### 3.2.3 Saints' Lives

Saints' lives are one of the most important sources for the study of Pre-Norman and Gaelic Ireland. Today there survive some one hundred Irish saints' lives in Latin and fifty in Irish which were written mainly in the Middle Ages.<sup>691</sup> However, it always needs to be remembered the hagiography is not the same as

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<sup>691</sup> Richard Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives. An Introduction to Viatae Sanctorum Hiberniae*. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1991), 5-6.

modern historic biography. The interests of the medieval hagiographer were different to the contemporary biographer.<sup>692</sup> This means that the saints' lives are usually more important as sources for the times they were written rather than when the saint they portray was active.<sup>693</sup> Regarding the study of the Eucharist in particular, many saints' lives provide absolutely no details whatsoever on Eucharistic practice even though it is most probable that the Eucharist would have occupied a significant place in the historical life of the saint portrayed. This is probably because "the focus on the holy man is likely to mean that these stories do not shed light on the norms of pastoral care in local communities."<sup>694</sup> Also the medieval saint's life could be described as "a response to the present in terms of the past."<sup>695</sup> For this reason there is often a greater desire to establish a "tradition" of ownership of a particular property or of the rights of a particular local Church or monastery rather than concentrating on liturgical practices.

So while there are many saints' lives, most of these were written after the arrival of the Normans. Indeed, there was an intense burst of hagiographical activity in the fifty years after the Normans arrived. This can perhaps be best interpreted as the attempts of the local Gaelic ecclesiastics and rulers to establish their rights when faced with the challenges posed by the Normans. Conversely, there is little evidence that reform movements, such as the *Céli Dé*, produced any hagiographical

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<sup>692</sup> For an introduction to the cares and concerns of the medieval authors of Irish hagiography see Ludwig Bieler, "The Celtic Hagiographer" in *Studia Patristica* V (1962): 243-265.

<sup>693</sup> Kenney, *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland*, 297.

<sup>694</sup> Sharpe, "Towards a Pastoral Model," 83.

<sup>695</sup> I take this definition from Pádraig Ó Riain's public lecture on "Recent Work on Saints' Lives and Martyrologies" given at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth on April 25, 2006.

material at the time of the reform.<sup>696</sup> In the twelfth century two of the most important biographies, that of Malachy and Lawrence O'Toole, were from France, written by St. Bernard of Clairvaux and an anonymous Canon of Eu.<sup>697</sup> Nonetheless, there is some very valuable material pertinent to the study of the Eucharist, particularly in the earlier hagiographical material which will be studied in this section.

### 3.2.3.1 St. Adomnán of Iona: *The Life of St. Columba*

In the last years of the seventh century St. Adomnán of Iona, the ninth abbot of Iona, and a descendent of St. Columba's grandfather wrote *The Life of St. Columba*.<sup>698</sup> This is one of the most important works of Irish hagiography and an extremely important source for the history of Ireland, Scotland and England in this time. Here too we find some important references to the Eucharist. Once again we find many references to the practice of celebrating the Eucharist in the morning. It seems that the Eucharist was not celebrated on every morning but only on Sunday's and feast days, and occasionally upon receiving news of the death of a friend.<sup>699</sup>

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<sup>696</sup> Ibid.

<sup>697</sup> Gwynn, *The Irish Church in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, 193.

<sup>698</sup> Richard Sharpe, ed. and tr., *Adomnán of Iona: Life of St. Columba* (London: Penguin, 1995).

<sup>699</sup> "Likewise, one day, the holy man was living in Iona when in the early morning, he called for his servant Diarmait, whom we have often referred to, and gave him these instructions, saying: 'have everything made ready for the sacred mystery of the Eucharist as quickly as possible. For today is the feast of St. Brendan.' 'Why,' said his servant, 'do you give orders for the celebration of this solemn feast today? No one has come from Ireland bringing news that this saint has died.' 'Go,' said St Columba, 'you must do what I have ordered. For last night I saw heaven opened and choirs of angels descending to meet the soul of St. Brendan. In that hour the whole world was lit up by the peerless light of their brightness.'" "Allia itidem die, dum uir uenerandus in Ioua conuersaretur insula,

Two particular passages are cited quite a lot in the secondary literature. One interesting story is often used to explain the small size of some early Irish churches:

When the sacred mysteries of the Eucharist were to take place, with one accord they chose St. Columba to act as celebrant. He obeyed their command, and with them he entered the church as usual on the Lord's day after the Gospel had been read. There, while the sacrament of the mass was celebrated, St. Brendan moccu Altae saw a radiant ball of fire shinning very brightly from St. Columba's head as he stood in front of the altar and consecrated the sacred oblation. It shone up like a column of light and lasted until the mysteries were completed.<sup>700</sup>

As Columba is said to enter the church to celebrate the Eucharist *post euangelii lectionem*. This is taken to mean that the Liturgy of the Word or the beginning of the Liturgy was celebrated outside the oratory and then for the Liturgy of the Eucharist only the clerics went inside.<sup>701</sup> This is an attractive theory and there may well be some truth in it. However, it would be perhaps a little rash to build such a theory on a single text which is not very clear on the point. It must also be noted that this is a very special celebration and St. Columba is accompanied by a number of other monastic founder saints. Perhaps such an august assembly of saints would

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mane primo suum aduocat sepe memoratum ministratorem, Diormitium nomine, eique praecipit, inquires: 'Sacra celeriter eucharistiae ministeria praeparentur. Hodie enim natalis beati Brendini dies.' 'Quare,' ait minister, 'talia misarum sollempnia hodierna praepaari praecipis? Nullus enim ad nos de Scotia sancti illius uiri obitus peruenit nuntius.' 'Vade tum,' ait sanctus, 'meae obsecundare iusioni debes. Hac enim nocte praeterita uidi subito apertum caelum, angelorum chorus sancti Brendini animae obuios descendere, quorum luminosa et incomparabili claritudine totus eadem hora inlustratus est mundi orbis.'" *Life of St. Columba*, III.11 in Adamnán of Iona *Life of Columba*, trans. and ed. Alan Orr Anderson and Marjorie Ogilvie Anderson, 2d ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 196-198. English translation from Sharpe, *Life of St. Columba*, 215. Also see *ibid.*, III.12.

<sup>700</sup> "Hi uno eodemque consensus elegerunt ut sanctus Colum coram ipsis in ecclesia sacra eucharistiae consecraret misteria. Qui eorum obsecundans iusioni simul cum eis die dominica ex more post euangelii lectionem ecclesiam ingreditur. Ibidemque dum misarum sollempnia celebrarentur sanctus Brendenus mocu Alti, sicut post Comgello et Cainnecho intimaui, quendam crinosum igneum globum et ualde luminosum de uertice sancti Columbae ante altare stantis et sacram oblationem consecrantis tamdiu ardentem et instar alicuius columnae sursum ascendentem uidit donec eadem perficerentur sacrosancta ministeria." *Life of St. Columba*, III.17 in Anderson and Anderson, *Life of Columba*, 206. English translation from Sharpe, *Life of St. Columba*, 219.

<sup>701</sup> Sharpe, ed. and tr., *Life of St. Columba*, 368-369.

have inspired a larger than average number of people at that Liturgy. It could be that on that special occasion that they decided to hold the start of the celebration outside as an exception to the normal practice for pastoral reasons. If in the future more texts come to light on the practice of the laity attending outside, then this text could accompany them, but until then it has to remain as a tantalizing passage on which little can be built.

Another section from this work that is cited by virtually every author who deals with Irish liturgy is about the *Fractio Panis*:

Once there came to the saint a stranger from the province of Munster who, so far as he was able, concealed his identity out of humility, for he did not want people to know that he was a bishop. But such a thing could not be hidden from St. Columba, for on the Lord's day, when he was bidden by the saint to perform the sacrament of the body of Christ, he called on the saint that as two priests they should together break the Lord's bread. As Columba approached the altar, he suddenly saw into the man's face and spoke to him thus, 'Christ's blessing on you, my brother. Break this bread alone according to the rite of a bishop. For now we know that this is what you are. But to what end did you try to conceal your identity until now, so that you have not had from us the reverence due to you?' The humble pilgrim was much surprised by the saint's words, and revered Christ in him, while all present were struck with wonder and glorified God.<sup>702</sup>

Some have interpreted this passage to mean that in Columban circles it was the practice for two priests to break the bread, except when a bishop was a

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<sup>702</sup> "Alio in tempore quidam de Muminensium prouincia proselytus ad sanctum uenit qui se in quantum potuit occultabat humiliter, ut nullus sciret quod esset episcopus. Sed tamen sanctum hoc non poterat latere. Nam alia die dominica a sancto iusus Christi corpus ex more conficere sanctum aduocat, ut simul quasi duo prespiteri dominicum panem frangerent. Sanctus proinde ad altarium accendens repente intuitis faciem eius sic eum compellat: 'Benedicat te Christus, frater. Hunc solus episcopali ritu frange panem. Nunc scimus quod sis episcopus: quare hucusque te occultare conatus es, ut tibi a nobis debeta non redderetur ueneratio?' Quo audito sancti uerbo humilis perigrinus ualde stupefactus Christum in sancto ueneratus est. Et qui inerant praesentes nimis ammirati glorificarunt deum." *Life of St. Columba*, I.44, in Anderson and Anderson, *Life of Columba*, 80. English translation from Sharpe, *Life of St. Columba*, 147, also see III.12.

celebrant, in which case he broke the bread by himself.<sup>703</sup> Again this is an interpretation, but it is not the only one. We do know that the *fractio panis* was most likely a particularly important moment in the popular understanding of the Eucharistic Liturgy in Pre-Norman Ireland. The fact that Columba tells him to do the breaking *episcopali ritu* is significant. But once again, just how much can be read into these two words. It is unlikely that if a given Eucharist had only a limited number of communicants in attendance that two priests would have performed the breaking (saving time by an expedient performance of the Liturgy was not as big a concern in the early Middle Ages as it is today). However if large crowds were in attendance (which would be consistent with many people only receiving on a particular holy day or while on pilgrimage), there could well have been work for more than one priest. While it may be the case that there was a special episcopal form of the Eucharistic Liturgy, this story could just as likely be understood that Columba is surprised to see the illustrious bishop's humility and steps back from the altar so that all can appreciate just who it is that had joined them.

Another interesting reference to the Eucharist, deals with Librán, a noble penitent who comes to Columba for penance. He has murdered a man and then escaped from his brother, who had bailed him out of gaol where he was awaiting execution in return for his becoming his brother's slave. Columba gives him a seven-year penance and tells him, "when a term of seven years is completed, you shall come to me here during Lent so that at the Easter festival you may approach

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<sup>703</sup> Warren, *Liturgy and Ritual*, 128-130.

the altar and receive the sacrament."<sup>704</sup> After completing his penance, receiving the Eucharist and going home to be reconciled with his brother, he comes back to Columba who receives his profession as a monk. This text, taken with the Penitentials and some of the monastic rules that were examined above, lends weight to the theory that a lot of pastoral care was actually centred on the social elite of the laity, as presented by Etchingham:

The broader picture, however, is that the penitential purgation offered the sinful laity renunciation of the world as the gateway to true Christian living, in a quasi- or paramonasticism of one kind or another, involving an on-going regime of austerity. The penitential system was the means by which the truly Christian elect in early medieval Ireland was set apart from the rest and by which the limits of regular pastoral ministrations were defined.<sup>705</sup>

Perhaps it is also possible to see a reference to the Eucharist in the *Life of St. Columba* II. 4. Here Columba comes to learn of a plague-bearing rain that is going through the East of Ireland around the river Delvin. He sends his monk Silnán there to cure the people and livestock. He instructs him as follows:

You shall take from here the bread that I have blessed in the name of God, you shall dip this bread in water and then sprinkle that water over both people and livestock, and they will soon recover health.<sup>706</sup>

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<sup>704</sup> "Post septenorum sicut tibi dictum est expletionem annorum, diebus ad me huc quadragensimalibus uenies, ut in pascale sollemnitate ad altarium accedas, et eucharistiam sumas." *Life of St. Columba*, III. 39, in Anderson and Anderson, *Life of Columba*, 156. English translation from Sharpe, *Life of St. Columba*, 189.

<sup>705</sup> Etchingham, *Church Organisation*, 317.

<sup>706</sup> "Tu ergo Silnane nunc mecum descendens de monte nauigationem praepara crastina die, uita comite et deo uolente, a me pane accepto dei inuocato nomine benedicto; quo in aqua intincto homines ea consparsi et pecora celerem recuperabunt salutem.." *Life of St. Columba*, II. 4, in Anderson and Anderson, *Life of Columba*, 98. English translation from Sharpe, *Life of St. Columba*, 157.



Silnán carries out his master's instructions bringing the "healing bread" [*salubri pane*], dipping it in water to form the "water of blessing" [*aqua benedictionis*], and the cure is granted as promised.<sup>707</sup> While this is a significant text for this study, the bread is not presented, at least in Adomnán's account, as being the bread of the Eucharist. While it is probably not the Eucharist, this passage does have Eucharistic overtones. It would seem it makes reference to the practice of the *eulogia*. This involved baking more bread than is necessary for the communicants at a given Eucharistic celebration. The celebrant says the offertory prayers over all of this bread, but removes some of it prior to the anaphora for consumption in a meal that will take place at a later time. In this way the *eulogia* joins the following meal to the Eucharist, also allowing those who did not receive the Eucharist itself at that celebration to participate in a lesser, but still tactile and gustatory, way. In this time-period in the West in general, partly because there was not yet a clear distinction between what is now referred to as Sacrament and Sacramental, there was somewhat of a linguistic confusion between the *eulogia* and the Eucharistic elements so that in some texts we cannot be sure which is being referred to.<sup>708</sup> This could also be due to some residual memory of earlier times when Christians took Communion home for later consumption.<sup>709</sup> There is a similar mention of the *eulogia*

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<sup>707</sup> Another similar miracle can be found in Bede's *Life of Cuthbert* 31. Here a layman is visiting a sick friend and remembers that in his pocket he has some bread blessed by St. Cuthbert. He breaks off a small piece of the bread, places it in a cup of water and gives it to the sick man who, on drinking it, is cured. D.H. Farmer, ed., *The Age of Bede* (London: Penguin, 1988), 82-83. The *Communal Rule* of St. Columbanus IV, also mentions monks receiving the Eulogia with dirty hands ("Eulogias inmundus accipiens"). Walker *Sancti Columbani Opera*, 148.

<sup>708</sup> H. Leclercq, "Eulogie," in *DACL* V. 733-734.

<sup>709</sup> Taft, "Home-Communion," 1-3.

a little later in the book. Adomnán tells of St. Cainnech at Aghaboe who, by his intercession, saves St. Columba and some monks who are caught at sea in a storm.

Nones was already over and the saint was beginning to break the bread of the blessing in the refectory. But he instantly left the table and ran to the church, one shoe on his foot and the other left behind in his hurry. 'We cannot have dinner at this time,' he said, 'for St. Columba's boat is even now in peril on the sea.'<sup>710</sup>

### 3.2.3.2 Cogitosus' *Vita Brigitae*

As this document has been dated to the seventh-century document it is of great importance. It is one of only four hagiographical texts from this time, alongside Adomnan's *Vita Columbae*, Tirechan's *Collectanea* on St. Patrick, and Muirchu's *Vita Particii* and it may well be the earliest of these documents.<sup>711</sup> One of the main themes of this work is to use the life of Brigit to support the pretensions of the see of

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<sup>710</sup> "Et cum forte post nonam coepisset horam in refectorio eulogiam frangere, ocius deserit mensulam, unoque in pede inherente calceo et altero pro nimia festinatione relicto festinanter perguit hac cum uoce ad ecclesiam: 'Non est nobis nunc temporis prandere quando in mari periclitatur nauis sancti Columbae.'" *Life of St. Columba*, II. 13, in Anderson and Anderson, *Life of Columba*, 112. English translation from Sharpe, *Life of St. Columba*, 164.

It is important to note that the bread spoken of here is specifically called "*eulogia*." Another parallel passage in the *Life of Columba* speaks of Columba sending a "blessing" [*benedictio*] to Mogain to cure her broken hip "When Lugaid was ready to set out, Columba handed him a little pinewood box with a blessing inside it, and said: 'When you arrive to visit Mogain, the blessing contained in this box should be dipped in a jar of water and then the water of blessing should be poured over her hip. Then call on the name of God and at once her hipbone will be joined and knit together and her full health will be restored.'" "Quid plura? Lugaido obsecundanti et consequenter emigranti sanctus pineam tradit cum benedictione capsellam, dicens: 'Benedictio quae in hac capsellula conteneretur quando ad Mauginam peruenies uisitandam in aquae uasculum intinguatur; eademque benedictionis aqua super eius infundatur coxam. Et statim inuocato dei nomine coxale coniungetur os et densebitur; et sancta uirgo plenam recuperabit salutem.'" *Life of St. Columba*, II. 5, in Anderson and Anderson, *Life of Columba*, 102. English translation from Sharpe, *Life of St. Columba*, 158. Here we are even less sure exactly what the Saint placed in the box, but as it immediately follows the account of the blessed bread curing the plague it is at least possible that here also the *eulogia* was used. If this is the case the little pinewood box [*capsella*] carved by Columba could be related to the chrismals that will be examined below.

<sup>711</sup> Sean Connolly and J.M. Picard, "Cogitosius's *Life of St. Brigit* Content and Value," *JRSAI* Vol. 117 (1987): 5

Kildare for supremacy against the see of Armagh. Cogitosus informs his readers that Kildare "is the head of almost all the Irish Churches with supremacy over all the monasteries of the Irish and its *paruchia* extends over the whole land of Ireland, reaching from sea to sea."<sup>712</sup>

The work deals with the Eucharist in a number of places. Perhaps the most important passage deals with the cathedral of Kildare. This text will be examined in Chapter 4. While St. Brigit is portrayed as a monastic foundress of the first order, and while she has a lot of power, there is no suggestion that she could preside over a Eucharistic celebration.<sup>713</sup> In fact she is portrayed as having a bishop as her personal chaplain:

And by her wise administration she made provision in every detail for the souls of her people according to the rule, as she vigilantly watched over the Churches attached to her in many provinces and as she reflected that she could not be without a high priest to consecrate churches and confer ecclesiastical orders in them, she sent for Conleth, a famous man and a hermit endowed with every good disposition through whom God wrought many miracles, and calling him from the wilderness and his life of solitude, she set out to meet him, in order that he might govern the Church with here in the office of bishop and that her Churches might lack nothing as regards priestly orders.<sup>714</sup>

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<sup>712</sup> "Caput pene omnium Hiberniensium Ecclesiarum, et culmen praecellens omnia monasteria Scotorum, cujus parochia per totam Hibernensem terram diffusa, a mari usque ad mare extensa est." Cogitosus *Vita Brigitae* Preface 4, PL 75: 775-777. English translation from Connolly and Picard, "Cogitosius's *Life of St. Brigit*," 11.

<sup>713</sup> Harrington, *Women in a Celtic Church*, 92-93.

<sup>714</sup> "Prudenti dispensatione de animabus eorum regulariter in omnibus procurans, et de Ecclesiis multarum provinciarum sibi adhaerentibus sollicitans, et secum revolvens, quod sine summo sacerdote, qui ecclesias consecraret, et ecclesiasticos in eis gradus subrogaret, esse non posset; illustrem virum et solitarium, omnibus moribus ornatum, per quem Deus virtutes operatus est plurimas, convocans eum de eremo et de sua vita solitaria, et ibi sibi obviam pergens, ut Ecclesiam in episcopali dignitate cum ea gubernaret, atque ut nihil de ordine sacerdotali in suis deesset Ecclesiis, accersivit." Cogitosus *Vita Brigitae* Preface 4, PL 75: 777. English translation from Connolly and Picard, "Cogitosius's *Life of St. Brigit*," 11.

From a later story we learn that this Conleth owned some foreign vestments which he used when presiding the Eucharist:

Once she generously gave away to the poor the foreign vestments from overseas belonging to his distinguished eminence Bishop Conleth, which he was wont to use on the solemnities of the Lord and on the vigils of the Apostles, when offering the sacred mysteries on the altar and in the sanctuary.<sup>715</sup>

### 3.2.3.3 *Vita Prima Sanctae Brigitae*

This *Vita Prima Sanctae Brigitae* is another very early document which is related to Cogitosus' *Vita Brigitae*. It probably comes from the middle of the eighth century.<sup>716</sup> This provides more details about the Eucharist. In a parallel to Cogitosus, St. Patrick himself is said to assign Brigit a priest chaplain after she converts a pagan who had refused to convert for Patrick:

Next day Patrick said to Brigit, 'From this day on you may not travel without a priest. Your charioteer is always to be a priest.' So he ordained a priest named Nathfroich who was Brigit's charioteer all his life.<sup>717</sup>

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<sup>715</sup> "Nam vestimenta transmarina et peregrina episcopi Conleath decorati luminis, quibus in solemnitatibus Domini et vigiliis apostolorum sacra in altaribus offerens mysteria utebatur, pauperibus largita est." Cogitosus *Vita Brigitae* 28.2, PL 75: 786. English translation from Connolly and Picard, "Cogitosius's *Life of St. Brigit*," 23. Mention is also made of a silver chalice which Brigit breaks into three pieces as alms for three lepers, this was probably not for liturgical use. Cogitosus *Vita Brigitae* 27.2.

<sup>716</sup> Sean Connolly, "*Vita Prima Sanctae Brigitae*," *JRSAI* Vol. 119 (1989): 8. Printed in the Bollandists *Acta Sanctorum* Februarii I Brussels 1658.

<sup>717</sup> "Sequenti autem die dixit Patricius ad Brigida; ex hac die non licet uoi ambulare sine sacerdote; Auriga tuus semper tuus sacerdos fiat. Ordinavit autem sacerdotem nomine *Nathfroich*: & ipse in tota vita sua auriga S. Brigidae fuit." *Vita Prima Sanctae Brigitae* 40.6 in John Colgan, *Trias Thaumaturga* (Louvain: Cornelius Coenesteius, 1647; reprint, Dublin: Edmund Burke Publisher, 1997), 531. English translation from Connolly, "*Vita Prima Sanctae Brigitae*," 24.

Once St. Brigit goes on a journey with some of her nuns to look for corn during a famine. She meets the bishop St. Ibor. However, due to the famine, he has no corn but only dry bread and pork. Two of St. Brigit's nuns refuse to eat the meal due to their scruples for the Lenten fast regulations, and their portions were turned into serpents. When she hears of this St. Brigit reprimands them and sends them out to fast and pray. Then St. Brigit and St. Ibor also go out to fast and pray with them:

And so they did, and the two serpents were changed into two hosts of the purest and whitest bread and one host was given to bishop Ibor and the other was offered to saint Brigit, and they were the hosts for the Eucharist and Christmas.<sup>718</sup>

The mention of Christmas and Easter could just mean that this miraculous bread was preserved for these two feasts. But as these days are mentioned as possible days for the Communion of the faithful, this could be a reference to the use of a bigger host on those days as more people would receive Communion. In another story, St. Brigit blesses a big bucket of water for two men, they later drop it on its side and none of the water escapes and so:

St. Patrick ordered the water to be kept and shared out among all the churches of that part of the country that it might be used for the Eucharist of the blood of Christ and that the sick might be sprinkled with it to make them well.<sup>719</sup>

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<sup>718</sup> "Et ita fecerunt, & versi sunt isti duo serpents in duos Eucheas in pascha & in nataliis Domini." *Vita Prima* 52.4 in Colgan, *Trias Thaumaturga*, 532. English translation from Connolly, "*Vita Prima Sanctae Brigitae*," 27.

<sup>719</sup> "Iussit autem S. Patritius aquam illam asseruari, & in Ecclesiis omnibus illius regionis diuidi, vt ad Eucharistiam sanguinis Christi mitteretur, & vt aspergerentur agri de illa aqua in fanitatem." *Vita Prima* 60.3 in Colgan, *Trias Thaumaturga*, 534. English translation from Connolly, "*Vita Prima Sanctae Brigitae*," 30.

Presumably this refers to the water mixed with the wine in the chalice. One might wonder that with wine being a luxury item whether more than the now customary little drop would have been added (today in our time of plenty, one still hears of priests adding copious amounts of water to the chalice to economise!).

On one of her journeys an angel warns St. Brigit at night to evacuate the building as it is about to burn down. Her nuns later question her as to whether the angel normally speaks to her. St. Brigit admits that the angel is normally at her side and among the other things he does is "thanks to him too I can hear the masses of holy men which they celebrate to the Lord in distant lands as if they were close by."<sup>720</sup> St. Brigit's experience of these celebrations leads to her desire to introduce Roman practice to Ireland:

'I heard masses in Rome at the tombs of Sts. Peter and Paul and it is my earnest wish that the order of this mass and of the universal rule be brought to me.' Then saint Brigit sent experts to Rome and from there they brought the masses and the rule. Again after some time she said to the men, 'I discern that certain things have been changed in the mass in Rome since you have returned from there. Go back again.' And they went and brought it back as they had found it.<sup>721</sup>

Whether or not an Irish envoy went to Rome at Brigit's bidding is not what is important here and there is no historical proof one way or the other. What is

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<sup>720</sup> "Quoque missas, quae domino procul in terra celebrantur, quasi prope ipsas essem ." *Vita Prima* 88.8 in in Colgan, *Trias Thaumaturga*, 538. English translation from Connolly, "*Vita Prima Sanctae Brigitae*," 40.

<sup>721</sup> "In vrbe Romana iuxta Petri & Pauli corpora audiui missas: & nimis desidero, vt ad me istius ordo & vniuersa regula feratur a Roma. Tunc misit Brigida viros sapientes & detulerunt inde missas, & regulam. Item dixit post aliquantu tempus Brigida ad illos viros; ego sentio quod quidam commutautauerunt in Roma missas postquam venistis ad ea. Exite iterum. Et illi exierunt & detulerunt vt inuenerunt." *Vita Prima* 90.4-5 in Colgan, *Trias Thaumaturga*, 539. English translation from Connolly, "*Vita Prima Sanctae Brigitae*," 41.

important is that the Roman form of Eucharistic Liturgy was important for the eighth century author. Also it can be noted that the author is not perturbed by the fact that the Roman Mass changed at this time as this is simply fixed by an envoy returning there to bring back the updated version.

The text also bears unequivocal witness to a non-ordained person (albeit of the exalted status of Brigit) receiving the Eucharistic Wine directly from the chalice:

After that saint Brigit went to stay in the territory of the Connachtmen with two bishops who accompanied her and they lived there in Mar Aí.

So one day she approached the altar to receive the eucharist from the hand of the bishop and as she gazed down into the chalice she saw in it a hideous monster, that is, she saw the outline of a goat in the chalice, for one of the bishop's attendants was holding the chalice.

Then Brigit refused to drink from the chalice and the bishop said to her, 'Why aren't you drinking from the chalice?' Brigit disclosed what she had seen.

Whereat the bishop said to the attendant, 'What have you done? *Confess to God.*' The attendant confessed that he had committed a theft against the goatherd and killed one of his goats and eaten part of its meat.

The bishop said to him, 'Repent and shed tears of sorrow.' And the attendant obeyed his orders and repented.

On a second invitation Brigit came to the chalice and this time saw no trace of the goat in the chalice, for the tears had atoned for the fault.<sup>722</sup>

In the *Vita Prima* parallel of the story of Conláed's vestments some more details are added.

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<sup>722</sup> "Post haec exiuit S. Brigida vt peregrinaretur in regione quadam cum simul secum comitantibus, & habitauerunt in campo Air. Quadam ergo die accessit ad altare vt eucharistiam sumeret de manu Episcopi, & calicem desuper intuens, vidit in eo deforme prodigium, id est vmbram hirci vidit in calice: vnus quippe de pueris Episcopi tenebat calicem. Tunc Brigida noluit ex hoc calice bibere. Dixitque Episcopus; cur non bibis ex hoc calice. Brigida autem ei manifestauit quod in calice vidit. Tunc Episcopus puero dixit; quid fecisti? da gloriam Deo. Puer autem confessus est se fecisse furtu in capario, & vnus occidisse hircorum suorum, & ex parte comedisse. Dixit ei Episcopus; paenitentiam age, & fuce lachrymas cum fletu. Et iussis obediuit & paenitentiam egit. Iterum vocata Brigida, venit ad calicem & nihil in calicem & nihil in calice vidit hirci Lachrymae enim illius culpam foluerunt." *Vita Prima* 92.1-6 in Colgan, *Trias Thaumaturga*, 539. English translation from Connolly, "*Vita Prima Sanctae Brigitae*," 42.

Another time saint Brigit gave Bishop Conláed's Mass vestments to the poor because she had nothing else to give them. And just at the time of the sacrifice Conláed asked for them and said, 'I won't offer up the body and blood of Christ without my vestments.'

Thereupon at Brigit's prayer God provided similar vestments and all who were witnesses gave glory to God.

Another time too saint Brigit put vestments on the sea in a shrine that they might go a very long distance over the sea to Bishop Senán who was living on another sea-girt island and as the Holy Spirit revealed it to him he said to his brethren, 'Go as fast as you can to the sea and bring here with you whatever you find.' They went and found the shrine containing the vestments as we have said.

When he saw it Senán gave thanks to God and Brigit, for where human beings cannot go without the greatest difficulty, the shrine went by itself with God to guide it.<sup>723</sup>

While this text bears witness to the use of vestments to celebrate and Conláed refuses to celebrate without them, it could be asked whether he was being cantankerous or if there is something more to the story. The value of these vestments could simply be that they came from abroad. But it could also be that at this period vestments (or at least similar vestments) were not in normal use.<sup>724</sup> Likewise the story about Senán could simply mean that these vestments were now a relic, but it could also be possible that his church did not have vestments. But while it may have been true that many Irish clerics didn't use vestments in this early

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<sup>723</sup> "Alio tempore S. Brigida missalia Conlaidi episcopi pauperibus dedit; quia aliud quod daret non habebat, & statim in hora sacrificij Conlaidus suum vestimentum quaesuit dicent; corpus & sanguinem Christi non immolabo sine meis vestimentis. Tunc brigida orante similia vestimenta Deus praeparavit. 7 omnes videntes glorificabunt Deum. Alio tempore Sancta Brigida vestimenta in scrinio super mare misit, vt deuenirent per longissimum maris spatium ad Senanum Episcopum in alia insula in mari habitantem. Et ille revelante spiritu subito fratribus dixit; Ite quantocyus ad mare, & quidquid illic inveneritis, huc voniscum ducite. Illi autem exeuntes, invenerunt scrinium cum vestimento, vt diximus. Senanus ergo videns gratias egit deo & Brigidae. Quo enim homines ire non possunt sine maximo labore, ibi serinium solo, deo gubernante perrexit." *Vita Prima* 111.1–112.2 in Colgan, *Trias Thaumaturga*, 540-541. English translation from Connolly, "*Vita Prima Sanctae Brigidae*," 46.

<sup>724</sup> In a slightly later work we are told that "the chasuble [cassula] of holy Patrick" was miraculously preserved from fire. But this reference is somewhat ambiguous and it is not altogether clear if this refers to a liturgical vestment or simply Patrick's clothes. *Muirchú* I 20 in Bieler, *The Patrician Texts*, 97.



period, they had definitely adopted the practice by the end of the Pre-Norman period as the testimony of Gille of Limerick (below) shows.

### 3.2.3.4 The *Bethu Brigitte*

This vernacular life of Brigit probably dates to the early ninth century.<sup>725</sup> Part of the life deals with an Easter Week (i.e. the week between Easter Sunday and Low Sunday). Having first miraculously produced eighteen vatfuls of ale from a single sack of malt, Brigit and her nuns start to celebrate Easter Week with “no lack of feasting.”<sup>726</sup>

There is no actual mention of a Eucharist on Easter itself, but the account continues with the rest of Easter Week:

On the following day, Monday, Mel came to Brigit to preach and say mass for her between the two Easters. A cow had been brought to her on that day also and it was given to Mel the bishop, the other cows having been taken. Ague assails one of Brigit's maidens and she was given Communion. “Is there anything else you might desire?”, said Brigit. “There is,” said she. “If I do not get some fresh milk, I shall die *at once*.” Brigit calls a maiden and *said*: “Bring me my own mug, out of which I drink, full of water. Bring it without anyone seeing it.” It was brought to her then, and she blessed it so that it became warm new milk, and *the maiden was immediately completely cured when she tasted of it*. So that those are two miracles *simultaneously, i.e. the changing of water to milk and the cure of the maiden*.<sup>727</sup>

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<sup>725</sup> *Bethu Brigitte*, Corpus of Electronic Texts Edition: G201002. <http://www.ucc.ie/celt/published/G201002/index.html>. Internet accessed 25 May, 2006.

<sup>726</sup> “7 nibo thesbaid fleth.” *Bethu Brigitte* 21, in Donncha Ó hAodha, ed., *Bethu Brigitte* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1978), 7. 25.

<sup>727</sup> “Do-luid Mél dia Luain arabarach doc[h]um *Brigite* do precept 7 do ofriund di eter di C[h]aisc. Tucad bó di-si dano a laa n-i-ssin. Do-breth dano d'epscup Mél iar mbreith na bó aili. Do-fobair crith-galar ingin de muntir *Brigite* co tabrath coman di. 'In fil nib eth mian duit?', ar *Brigit*. 'Fil,' olsi, 'manam-thi lemlacht at-bel nunc.' Con-gair Brigit cuci ingin, 7 dixit: 'Tuc dam mochuvad feisin lán, isi n-ibim linn, de uisce, Du-n-uc for choim.' Do-breth di-di iarum, 7 sensi combo lemnacht inbrothach, 7 ba ógslan statim filia ubi gustavit. Condat da firt sin simul, id est lactis de aqua factis, sanitas filia[e].” *Bethu Brigitte* 24, in *ibid*, 8. 25-26.

It is difficult to draw too many conclusions from this text. We are told that bishop Mel celebrates the Eucharist and that the sick sister received Communion. What it does not tell us is whether the other sisters received or whether she received because she was sick and perhaps dying. It is also interesting that what cures her is not the Eucharist but Brigit's miraculous milk. The passage continues:

On the following day, Tuesday, there was a good man nearby who was related to Brigit. He had been a full year ailing. "Take for me today," said he, "the best cow in my byre to Brigit, and let her pray to God for me, to see if I shall be cured." the cow was brought, and Brigit said to those who brought it: "Take it immediately to Mel." They brought it *back* to their house and exchanged it for another cow unknown to the sick man. That was related to Brigit, who was very angry at the deceit practiced on her. "Between a short time from now and the morning," said Brigit, "wolves shall eat the good cow which was given into my possession and which was not brought to you," said she to Mel, "and they shall eat seven oxen in addition to it." that was related to the sick man. "Go," said he, "take to her seven of the choice of the byre." it was done thus. "*thanks be to God,*" said Brigit. "Let them be taken to Mel for his church. he has been preaching and saying Mass for us these seven days between the two Easters; a cow each day to him for his labour, it is not greater what he has given; and take a blessing with all eight, a blessing on him from whom they were brought," said Brigit. when she said that he was healed immediately.

[...] Low Sunday approached. "I do not think it fortunate *now*," said Brigit to her maidens, "not to have ale on Low Sunday for the bishop who will preach and say Mass." as soon as she said that, two maidens went to the water to bring in water and they had a large churn for the purpose, and Brigit was not aware of this. When they came back again, Brigit saw them there, "*Thanks be to God,*" said Brigit. "*God has given us beer for our bishop.*" the nuns became frightened then. "May God help us, O maiden." "Whatever foolish thing I have said, I have not said anything evil, O nuns." "The water which was brought inside, God did what you desired and *immediately* it was changed into ale with the smell of wine from it, and better ale was never set to brew in the [whole] world." The one churn was sufficient [for them] with their guests and the bishop.<sup>728</sup>

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<sup>728</sup> "Dia Mairt arabarach baí fer maith i fochraib cobdelach do Brigit. Bliadainlan dó I siurc. 'Berid dam,' ol suidi, 'Boin bes dech bes ima indesi indiu do Brigiti, 7 gudeth Dia n-erum dus im slan.' Bret[h]a[e] in bó, 7 is-bert Brigit fri cach noda-bert.' 'Berid fo chetuair do Mel.' Nus-mbertata iterum dia tig 7 conoimcloisi boin I n-ecmais a fir galair. At-fes do Brigit, 'isait coin altai in deg-boin do-ratad formu seilb 7 nat rucad duit-siu,' ol sisi fri Mel, '7 isait .vii. n-os impi.' At-fes iarum dond fiur galair a n-i-sin. 'Arcib tra.' ol suide, 'berid di .vii. n-os de forclu na indesi.' Do-gnith samlaith. 'Deo gratias,' ar Brigit. 'Bertar tra do Mél dia reclus. Ata .vii. laa eter di Cháisc oc precept 7 oc oifriund dún; bó cech lace dau dano ara opair, ní mó a dán; 7 berid bennacht leu .viii. hule bennacht for cach o tuctha,' ar Brigit. Deth as-bert-se(n) a focul n-i-sin ba slan-side fo c[h]etuair. [...] Ta(i)nic doib iarum co

Once again this passage does not deal exclusively with the Eucharist. But what it does tell us is that the Eucharist was celebrated seven times between Easter Sunday and Low Sunday and that each of these liturgies included preaching. It also tells how Brigit gave a cow to Mel for each Eucharist. While this might seem like an excessive stipend today, Brigit thinks that she has gotten a good deal for this price is “not greater than what he has given.” Brigit turns water into beer on Low Sunday so that the bishop, the guests and the nuns can feast. However, there is no mention of Brigit or any of her sisters, other than the sick sister, actually receiving Communion.

This passage could lead one to ask exactly how usual daily Mass was. Is Brigit generous because of her devotion or holiness, or would a bishop or priest have required a substantial payment to go to a given church to celebrate there? Other passages speak about a cow being given to a church every quarter, which may be related to the periodic days of Communion.<sup>729</sup> This could lead to one possible interpretation of this passage being that because Brigit was so much more pious than normal Christians that, rather than having a solemn Eucharist with the possibility of Communion of the faithful celebrated every few months, she actually had a bishop celebrate it every day during Easter week and even went so far as to give him the customary quarterly payment of a cow every day.

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Minchaisc. ‘Ni beoda[e] lem nunc,’ ar Brigit fria ingena, ‘cen chorim aran Minchaisc dond epscup pridchabus 7 of-.’ Dan as-bert-sí a n-í-sin, lotar di ingin dond usciu do t[h]abairt usque isi tech 7 mundi mór leu do ergnam, 7 ni fitir Brigit. In tan do-lotar a frithisi, ata-condairc Brigit i(n) suidiu. ‘Deo gratias,’ ar Brigit. ‘Celiám dedit nobis Deus episcopo nostro.’ Gabit[h] faitches na caillecha la sodain. ‘Don-fair Dia, ammo ingen.’ ‘Cia bet as-rubart ni erbart na olc, a c[h]aillecha.’ ‘Uisci tucad issa tech, acht huairi ro-mbennachais-[s]is do dighni Dia erat, statim ro-soad ho 7 bolad fina fair, 7 ni rolad for descdu isin domun choirm ba ferd.’ Ro-fer iarum cona n-oegeduib 7 ind epscup int oenmudi.” *Bethu Brigte* 25. 28, in *ibid*, 8-9. 26-27.

<sup>729</sup> As, for example, in *The Rule of the Céli Dé* in Reeves “On the Céli Dé,” 212 which is quoted above.

### 3.2.3.5 The Book of Armagh

This manuscript today preserved in Trinity College Dublin has been described as “the most important historical manuscript of Ireland prior to the twelfth century.”<sup>730</sup> The present manuscript was assembled at an early date from a number of other texts including some material on St. Patrick, the Life of St. Martin by Sulpicius Servus and some books of the New Testament. What is of interest here is the Patrician material, and this section of the manuscript has been dated to the year 807.<sup>731</sup> Like the Brigit material, these texts mainly concern the cult of St. Patrick in the context of the struggle for ecclesial primacy. It is of a great importance for historical study of this time-period in general, but it also provides some additional material for the study of the Eucharist in early Ireland.<sup>732</sup>

When describing Patrick’s preparation for return to Ireland as a missionary Muirchú tells how he went to Rome to learn the “holy mysteries.”

[Patrick] set out to visit and honour the apostolic see, the head, that is, of all the churches in the whole world, in order to learn and understand and practice the divine wisdom and the holy mysteries to which God had called him, and in order to preach and bring divine grace to peoples beyond the Empire, converting them to belief in Christ.<sup>733</sup>

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<sup>730</sup> Kenney, *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland*, 337.

<sup>731</sup> Bieler, *The Patrician Texts*, 3.

<sup>732</sup> However many of the details of this work, have actually been used in the descriptions of Chapter 4.

<sup>733</sup> “Egressus ad sedem apostolicam uisitandam et honorandam, ad caput utique omnium ecclesiarum totius mundi, ut sapientiam diuina(m) sanctaque misteria ad quae uocauit ilium Deus ut disceret atque intellegeret et impleret, et ut praedicaret et donaret diuinam gr(aci)am in nationibus exter[n]is conuertens ad fidem Christi.” *Muirchú* I 15 in *ibid.*, 70-71.

Once again this is more important for showing pre-ninth century concern for learning the Roman way to celebrate the Eucharist than for any historical value vis-à-vis the actual clerical training of Patrick.

*Tírechán*, the author of another section of this manuscript mentions some more details. He gives a reference to the inventory needed for a typical new church to function: "Patrick took with him across the Shannon fifty bells, fifty patens, fifty chalices, altar-stones, books of the law, books of the Gospels, and left them in the new places."<sup>734</sup> When recounting how once Patrick ministered at the well of Stringell, he tells how the people there "received the Mass of Patrick."<sup>735</sup> But rather than implying that the Mass of Patrick was different to that of Rome or another liturgical rite, this probably is in contrast to pagan practices.

*The Sayings of St. Patrick* are to be found as part of a short addition to *Tírechán's* Memoir in one manuscript.<sup>736</sup> They contain one interesting passage which might be dealing with the Eucharist:

The church of the Irish, which is indeed that of the Romans; if you would be Christians, then be as the Romans, and let that the song of praise be sung among yourselves at every hour of prayer: Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy. Every church that follows me, let it sing: Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Thanks be to God.<sup>737</sup>

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<sup>734</sup> *Tírechán* II 1 in *ibid.*, 123.

<sup>735</sup> "Missam Patricii acceperunt." *Tírechán* III 37 in *ibid.*, 152-153.

<sup>736</sup> Kenney, *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland*, 334.

<sup>737</sup> "Aeclessia Scottorum immo Romanorum ut Christiani ita ut Romani sitis ut decantetur uobiscum oportet omni hora orationis uox illa laudabilis Curie lession Christe lession. Omnis aecl[esia] quae seqitur me canet Cyrie lession Chriest lession Deo gratias." Bieler, *The Patrician Texts*, 124. English translation from *The 'Sayings' of Patrick* 3 in Thomas O'Loughlin, *Discovering St. Patrick*. (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2005), 184-185.

Obviously this dictum has been much used on the Roman Catholic part of post-Reformation polemics. But what interests us here is that this refers to an early Western use of the *Kyrie* as a liturgical formula. However, there is no reason to think that this refers to the use of the *Kyrie* in the Eucharistic Liturgy. The inclusion of this invocation in the Eucharistic Liturgy of the West is famously attributed to Pope Gelasius during the last decade of the fifth century.<sup>738</sup> But prior to this it was to be found in various euchological formulae of the Liturgy of the Hours, and there is no reason to believe that this text is referring to anything other than its use in such a context.<sup>739</sup>

### 3.2.3.6 The *Navigatio of St. Brendan*

*The Voyage of St. Brendan* is an important work of Irish hagiography. It was very popular in the Middle Ages, not only do we possess 116 Latin manuscripts but there were also vernacular translations "in Middle English, French, German, Flemish, Italian, Provençal and Old Norse."<sup>740</sup> This miraculous travel log of a voyage by St Brendan (486-575) was probably written in the late ninth or early tenth century.<sup>741</sup> It is still very readable today and is also the basis of the claim that St. Brendan actually was the first to discover America!

There are many examples of the Eucharist as *viaticum* in the *Navigatio*. Each time before one of his monks is about to die, St. Brendan has a supernatural

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<sup>738</sup> Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 1:336.

<sup>739</sup> O'Loughlin, *Discovering St. Patrick*, 108.

<sup>740</sup> D.H. Farmer, ed., *The Age of Bede* (London: Penguin, 1988), 11.

<sup>741</sup> *Ibid.*

foreknowledge of his sudden impending death. He invariably advises the monk to receive the Eucharist as viaticum. But the fact that there is no mention of the celebration of the Eucharist in these episodes could well mean that at least some members of his monastic party carried the Eucharistic Bread on their person using a *chrismal*:

Turning to the monk, Brendan said, 'You must receive the Body and Blood of the Lord, for your body and soul are soon to part company. You will be buried here.' [...] The monk received Communion, his soul left his body and was borne heavenwards by angels of light, as the brethren stood looking on. Brendan buried him where he had died.<sup>742</sup>

There are also references to the celebration of the Eucharist. Here we find clear evidence of the practice of private Mass:

When morning came, he told the monks who were priests each to say his own Mass, and this they did. After Brendan had sung Mass in the boat, the monks took out of the coracle joints of raw meat and fish which they had brought with them from the other island, and sprinkled them with salt.<sup>743</sup>

It is also interesting to note that Brendan sings his own Mass in the boat. In another place, when they are at sea and being chased by a monstrous fish the

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<sup>742</sup> "Iterum conuersus uir Dei ad predicum fratrem ait: 'Sume corpus et sanguinem Domini, quia anima tua modo egredietur de corpore. Hic etenim habes locum sepulture tue [...] itaque accepta eucharistia, anima fratris egressa est de corpore, suscepta ab angelis lucis uidentibus fratribus. Corpus autem eius conditum est in eodem loco a predicto sancto patre.'" *Navigatio*, 8 in C. Selmer, ed., *Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1959), 16. English translation from Farmer, *The Age of Bede*, 217.

<sup>743</sup> "Mane autem facto precepit sacerdotibus ut singuli missas cantarent, et ita fecerunt. Cum sanctus brendanus et ipse cantasset tarent, et ita fecerunt. Cum sanctus brendanus et ipse cantasset [missam] in nauī, ceperunt fratres carnes crudas portare foras de nauī ut condirent sale [illas], et etiam pisces quos secum tulerunt de alia insula." *Navigatio*, 10 in Selmer, *Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis*, 20-21. English translation from Farmer, *The Age of Bede*, 219.

monks go to beg St. Brendan not to sing so loudly!<sup>744</sup> St. Brendan's Mass is still more important than the private Masses of the other monks, it is a "community Mass" which all the monks, ordained or not, attend.<sup>745</sup>

*The Voyage of St. Brendan* also contains reference to some mystical events, which obviously do not relate to real practice. At one point they find a crystal church with altars, chalices and patens made of crystal or glass.<sup>746</sup> Later on some scholars will point to this as evidence of the use of glass chalices in Ireland. There is also an interesting re-interpretation of the Meeting of Paul and Antony from St. Jerome's *Life of St. Paul the First Monk*. Here Brendan takes the place of Antony and St. Paul the Hermit is actually a disciple of Patrick! In this meeting the sharing of a mystical water is a symbol of the Eucharist.<sup>747</sup>

### 3.2.3.7 The *Viaticum* in the Saints' Lives and the Annals

Earlier in this chapter rites for the *viaticum* and Communion of the sick have been examined. Here the hagiographical material will be examined. On the one hand an emphasis on the Eucharist as *Viaticum* (or "food for the journey" to the next world) is perfectly normal and keeping with Western liturgical tradition. On the other hand, it should also be noted that the many cases of *viaticum* in the Irish material would seem to suggest that this reception of the Eucharist at the end of the

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<sup>744</sup> *Navigatio*, 21.

<sup>745</sup> *Navigatio*, 11.

<sup>746</sup> *Navigatio*, 12.

<sup>747</sup> *Navigatio*, 25. N.B. this image of Paul and Antony will be fully treated in Chapter 4 in the section on High Crosses.



Christian's life received even more prominence in Ireland than elsewhere. *Muirchú*, writing about Patrick in the early ninth century, tells how "when the hour of [Patrick's] death was approaching he received the sacrament from the hands of the bishop Tassach for his journey to a blessed life."<sup>748</sup> In this and virtually every other text that mentions death in an ecclesial context the reception of the Eucharist is almost a *sine qua non* of dying.

The most important surviving *Céli De* text gives great importance to the *viaticum* with an interesting combination of Old Testament imagery. While the *viaticum* is important the priest needs to depart from the house before the actual moment of death so as not to become ritually unclean.

Now, to eat a meal with a dead man (though saintly) in the house is forbidden; but instead there are to be prayers and psalm-singing on such occasions. Even one in orders who brings the sacrament to a sick man is obliged to go out of the house at once thereafter, that the sick man may not die in his presence; for if he be present in the house at the death, it would not be allowable for him to perform the sacrifice until a bishop should consecrate him. It happened once upon a time to Diarmait and to Blathmac mac Flaind that it was in their hands that Curui expired. When he died, they were about to perform the sacrifice thereafter, without being reconsecrated, till Colchu hindered them from doing so. The authority is Leviticus; and Diarmait also, the Abbot of Iona, was with him on that occasion.<sup>749</sup>

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<sup>748</sup> *Muirchú* II 9 in Bieler, *The Patrician Texts*, 119.

<sup>749</sup> "Praind dano do tomait la marb hi tig ceth naob is a hurcul *acht sailmchetal* 7 aurnaigti occo. Cid ind fer geaid dobeir *sacrafic* dond fir galir dlegair dó dual astig statim *iarum* ne presenti illo moritur. Ar diambe hi fiadnaisi ind bais istig nicotaldad dó oifrenn do denam *conid* cisrecad epscob. Tocaomnacair do diarmaid 7 do blathmac mac flaind fecht robói *conid* eiter a lamaib rothathamir cú rui *quando mortuus est* tarmartsom oifrend do denam *iarum* cen a coiscrad *conditoirmesc* colcu díob uctaras ind leuitic 7 diarmait dano abb ía lais occo." "The Monastery of Tallaght," § 65 in Gwynn and Purton, 153. In another section of the same document it allows for those still undergoing penance to receive the Viaticum: "This is what Colchu approves, to give the sacrament [*sacrafic*] to those that are lying sick at the hour of death, provide they have made a renunciation of every vanity. Leave it, however, to God to judge the mind of such, whether it be true conversion; and if it be so [be sure that] the sacrament can bring salvation to them in that moment. It is not proper, however, to repeat the sacrament thereafter *in extremis*." "Is *sed dano* is choir la colchin *sacrafic* do tabirt dond aos bis illobrae fri huar mhábais acht doratat fretech *cech* espi. Lecsiú immurgo ildeth nde mess for a *menmainsom* dúis ind *fircomtúd acus* mad ed ón rombeir ind *sacrafic* sláne doib den chursin. Ni dóig

In a later text, when St. Brendan of Clonfert foresees in a vision that he is about to be martyred (by mice!), he is told in the vision:

Arise and take the body and blood of Christ, and depart to eternal life, for I hear the song of angels calling to thee.<sup>750</sup>

This is like a refrain in the Irish hagiographical literature. In one instance when King Brandub is suddenly murdered and dies without the benefit of the Eucharist, St. Maedoc temporarily resurrects him so that he can receive the Eucharist and he can die again and "go to heaven forthwith."<sup>751</sup>

Starting in the tenth century the Annals begin to give notices of deaths mentioning that individuals died having received the *viaticum*. The first reference to this in the *Annals of Ulster* reads:

Murchad son of Flaithbertach went on a foray in Cenél Conaill and took a great spoil; and one dart struck him, and he died thereof at Dún Clóitige, with communion and penance.<sup>752</sup>

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*immurgu sacrific doatarrachtar iterum fri degenca iarsin.*" "The Monastery of Tallaght," § 56 in *ibid.*, 148.

<sup>750</sup> "Eirigh 7 caith corp Crist 7 a fhuil, 7 eircc docum na bethad suthaine, uair achluinim si claiscettal aingel 'guad gairm ara nammus." *Betha Brenainn Clúana Ferta* in Plummer, *Bearha Náem nÉrenn*, 1:52-53. Also see *Betha Ciarán Saigre II* in *ibid.*, 1:120. The texts edited by Plummer in two books one containing a collection of Irish saints' lives in Latin the other in Early Irish, are, strictly speaking, outside of our period. The manuscripts were compiled mainly by Irish Franciscan scholars in the Irish seminaries on the Continent in the period of the Counter Reformation. However many of these were copied from earlier manuscripts that are no longer extant and oftentimes, other than linguistic modernization, reflect texts and situations from Pre-Norman Ireland. For more on Plummer's methods of editing these collections see Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*, 78-88.

<sup>751</sup> "Dochaidh dochum nimhe focéttoir." *Betha Máedóc Ferna II*, lii, 143 in *ibid.*, 1:224-225.

<sup>752</sup> "Murchad h. Flaithbertaich do dhul for creich I Cinel Conaill co tuc gabail mór conid] tarraidh oenghai 7 con erbailt de oc Dun Cloitighe do cummain 7 aithrighe." *The Annals of Ulster* 974 §1 in Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill, eds., *The Annals of Ulster*, 410-411.

The fact that the annals do not mention the *viaticum* earlier doesn't necessarily mean that it wasn't common - the later annalistic entries tend to be more detailed than the earlier ones. While one ought to be wary of reading too much into these annalistic entries, it is significant that not every death mentioned has this detail. The *Annals of Inisfallen* recount simply that "Céile son of Donnacán, the most pious man in Ireland, rested in Christ in Glenn dá Locha."<sup>753</sup> A little further on an entry reads that,

Sadb, daughter of Ua Conchobuir Chiarraige, rested in Les Mór after a victory of pilgrimage and penance.<sup>754</sup>

While so many kings die "after victory of penance," or "having received the sacrifice," and some prominent ecclesiastics are simply recorded as dying, could it be that the nobles would live their life in the world and then finish their days in a semi-monastic state as proposed by Staincliffe?<sup>755</sup> There are many other parallels to this concept of dying in the later middle ages with many Continental nobles receiving a monastic habit prior to death. Also in this vein, in the twelfth century *Irish Life of Colum Cille* one of the blessings Columba imparts on King Domnall mac Aodh is that

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<sup>753</sup> "Céile mc. Donnacáin, cenn crabuid Herend, quieuit in Christo hi Glind da Locha." *The Annals of Inisfallen* 1076 §4 in Mac Airt, ed., *The Annals of Inisfallen*, 232-233.

<sup>754</sup> "Sadb ingen U Conchubuir Ciarraigi quieuit i ILis Mór fo buaid ailtre acus aterge." *The Annals of Inisfallen* 1126 §6 in *ibid.*, 286-287.

<sup>755</sup> Stancliffe, "Red, White and Blue Martyrdom," 21-46. The eighth-century *Bretha Nemed Toísech* speaks of ex-layman (*athláech*) who are under the direction of a confessor and, although he initially cannot receive Communion, gradually reaches the degree of being able to receive. Etchingam, "The Ideal of Monastic Austerity," 21-22.

“a year and a half would be the duration of his final illness, and he would receive the body of Christ every Sunday during that time.”<sup>756</sup>

If this hypothesis is true, and in the higher levels of society great hope was placed in repentance with the reception of the Eucharist at the moment of death, then the emphasis on the *viaticum* in Pre-Norman Ireland is understandable. While the reception of the Eucharist may not have been a regular event (and one might even ask whether these nobles received Communion on those few recommended days of Communion throughout the year) it was nonetheless the crown of the life of the Christian.

### 3.2.3.8 *Chrismals in the Saints' Lives*

The use of a chrismal to carry the Eucharist on one's person is a peculiarity to pre-Norman Ireland.<sup>757</sup> In a parallel to the Penitential literature, which was examined above (the physical remains of chrismals will be examined in Chapter 4), there are many instances of the use of a chrismal in the lives of the Irish saints and other written sources. Chrismal has a particular meaning in an Irish context, since in general a chrismal was a container for holding the oil of Chrism that is used in the anointings associated with Christian Initiation, Ordination and the Consecration of churches. From the remaining chrismals in Continental holdings, we can see that the chrismal was a small box that was carried around the neck. These chrismals

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<sup>756</sup> “Bliadan co leith isin ngalar a n-eibelad 7 corp Cristí do caitheam do gacha domnaig frisin re sin.” *Irish Life of Colum Cille: Appendix 5*, in Máire Herbert, *Iona, Kells and Derry. The History and Hagiography of the Familia of Columba* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1988), 245, 267.

<sup>757</sup> Perhaps this was the persistence and transformation of the earlier practice of Home-Communion in Ireland. Freestone, *The Sacrament Reserved*, 55.

were of a certain value (the remaining examples are of worthy materials) and it is probable that in the saints' lives we are also dealing with chrismals that had a certain economic value and were therefore worth stealing.<sup>758</sup>

Another important evidence of the use of the chrismal comes from a tenth century copy of the *Pontifical of Egbert*. Egbert was archbishop of York from 732 to 766 and a copy of his pontifical is in the Imperial Library of Paris (No 138). Possibly this book was brought to France by Alcuin.<sup>759</sup> This text contains two blessing formulae for a chrismal

*Prefatio chrismalis*

Let us pray, most beloved and dearest brothers, that almighty God my deign to accomplish this ministry of the bodies of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, in the bearer by the blessing of holiness, the safety of protection...praying for us. Through the same...

*Alia*

Almighty God, inseparable Trinity pour into our hands the riches of your blessing so that by our blessing this small vessel may be sanctified and a new tomb of the Body of Christ may be accomplished by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Through...<sup>760</sup>

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<sup>758</sup> Otto Nußbaum, *Die Aufbewahrung der Eucharistie* (Bonn: Hanstein, 1979), 111. The *Three Irish Canons* mentions the case of someone "breaking into the place of the keeping of the chrismal of any saint" ("refugium crismalis alicuis sancti") to steal it. The *Three Irish Canons* 1 in Bieler, *The Irish Penitentials*, 182-183. While it is unclear from the text, if this was simply the storage place where a living monk stored his chrismal or a reliquary for a deceased saint, nonetheless it does seem that the chrismal was worth stealing.

<sup>759</sup> *The Pontifical of Egbert, Archbishop of York A.D. 732-766* (The Publications of the Surtees Society, Vol XXVII Published in the Year 1854 for the Year 1853), xvii-xviii. While the manuscript does contain some fragments in Anglo-Saxon, which would suggest an English origin, and while Alcuin was most definitely an important English churchman in his day and was active on the Continent, there probably isn't anything more than weak circumstantial evidence linking this manuscript to him.

<sup>760</sup> "Prefatio chrismalis. oremus, dilectissimi et fraters karissimi, ut Deus Omnipotens hoc ministerium corporum Filii sui Domini nostri Jesu Christi gerulum benedictione sanctificationis, tutamine defensionis, donationis implere dignetur orantibus nobis. per eudem. Alia. Omnipotens Deus, trinitas inseparabilis, minibus nostris opem tue benedictionis infunde, ut, per nostram benedictionem, hoc vasculum sanctificetur, et corporis Christi novum sepulchrum Spiritus Sancti gratia perficiatur. Per." *The Pontifical of Egbert*, 48. English translation is my own.

It is clear that these prayers are not speaking of a chrismal in the normal sense, the oil of chrism is not mentioned. Whereas both versions of the prayer make explicit reference to the Body of Christ. It is also significant that these prayers request "the blessing of holiness, the safety of protection" for the bearer of the chrismal are in keeping with the concept of the chrismal offering divine protection.

The *Vita Prima* of St. Brigit, one of our earliest Christian texts from Ireland, mentions pagans "wearing sinister amulets."<sup>761</sup> There is no formal connection between this and the Irish practice of wearing a chrismal. But today it is hard not to see the chrismal as having a talismanic association.<sup>762</sup> Later on in this document we are given one of the first mentions of a chrismal:

The holy bishop Brón returned to his part of the country and took with him a chrismal from saint Brigit. Now he lived by the sea.

One day the bishop was working on the shore and a boy with him. And this chrismal was left on a rock on the shore and the tide came in up to high water mark.

Then the boy remembered the chrismal and began to cry. But the bishop said, 'Don't cry. I'm confident that saint Brigit's chrismal won't get lost.'

And so it turned out. For the chrismal was on the rock dry and had not been shifted by the waves of the sea and when the tide went out they found it just as it had been left.<sup>763</sup>

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<sup>761</sup> "Habentes stigmata diabolica." *Vita Prima Sanctae Brigitae* 65.1 in Colgan, *Trias Thaumaturga*, 534. English translation from Connolly, "*Vita Prima Sanctae Brigitae*," 32, also see 67.1, in *ibid*, 33.

<sup>762</sup> Neither Ambrose nor Augustine saw anything wrong with using the Eucharistic Bread as a talisman. Ambrose, *De excessu fratris* i. 43 and Augustine, *Op. impf. contra Julian*. iii. 162 cited in Freestone, *The Sacrament Reserved*, 39. N.B. these texts have been examined in Chapter 2.

<sup>763</sup> "Sanctus Episcopus Broon feuersus est ad suam regionem, & portauit secum chrisma a S. Brigida; ille autem habitabat iuxta mare. Quadam autem die Episcopus Broon laborabat in litore maris, & vnus puer secum, & venit mare ad plenitudinem suam. tunc puer recordatus est Chrismatis, & fleuit. Dixitque Episcopus; noli flere: credo enim quod chrisma S. Brigidae non peribit, & fic completum est. chrisma enim siccum super saxum fuit & non mutatum est fluctibus maris: & decrescente mari inuenerunt illud sicut positum est." *Vita Prima Sanctae Brigitae* 86.1-4 in Colgan, *Trias Thaumaturga*, 538. English translation from Connolly, "*Vita Prima Sanctae Brigitae*," 39.

In general two possible purposes for the reservation of the Sacrament can be discerned. The first one is to be able to receive the *viaticum*.<sup>764</sup> While this is part of the liturgical tradition of the Universal Church, it also seems that this was of particular importance in Ireland. The Lives of the saints seem to imply that the *viaticum* was taken from the chrismal that was ordinarily on the person of the saint and that it wasn't necessary to fetch the Sacrament from the Church. When St. Comgall is dying he is visited by the abbot Fiachra. When he realizes that Comgall is dying he is able to give him the *viaticum* on the spot – “*dedit statim communionem dominicam*.”<sup>765</sup> In another instance St. Molua, who *thought* he was about to die, was able to ask St. Cronan to give him the *viaticum* and St. Cronan, who was with him, was also able to give him Communion, again on the spot.<sup>766</sup> In the slightly later *vita* of St. Laurence O'Toole, archbishop of Dublin (d. 1180) we are told that bandits once attacked him, while he was on a journey, and desecrated the Host he carried on his person “as *viaticum* and as a safe guide on the journey, as was then the custom.”<sup>767</sup>

However the main use of the chrismal seems to be to provide divine protection. Much like a relic, or an image of the cross or a saint it was carried on

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<sup>764</sup> Snoek, *Medieval Piety*, 94.

<sup>765</sup> *Vita S. Comgalli* lvii in Charles Plummer, *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae Partim Hactenus: Ineditae ad Fidem Codicum Manuscriptorum Recognovit Prolegomenis Notis Indicibus Instruxit*, (Dublin: Four Courts, 1997), 2:20.

<sup>766</sup> *Vita S. Moluae* lii in *ibid.*, 2:223.

<sup>767</sup> Snoek, *Medieval Piety*, 95.

### 3.2.4 Homiletic Material

Homilies would have been very important in transmitting an understanding of the Eucharist to the laity at large. Many of the texts on pastoral care and the rights and responsibilities of a particular church stress the importance of preaching.<sup>773</sup> However, “surprisingly few specimens of sermons composed in Ireland between the early and the late medieval period are to be found.”<sup>774</sup> Of course it is quite possible that homilists preferred to commit their homilies to memory rather than write them.<sup>775</sup> In general Irish homilists tended, unsurprisingly, to be relatively mainstream. In his conclusion to study of the few texts that remain (which as a whole do not contain very many mentions of the Eucharist), O’Loughlin notes that:

The preaching of early Irish clergy, in its written expression in Latin, in the period before the ninth century, shows that the religious culture sustaining it was neither consistently trail-blazing nor backwaterish, but that it played an integral part in the contemporary developments in theology, homiletics and liturgy of the Latin Church.<sup>776</sup>

#### 3.2.4.1 St. Columbanus’ Sermon on the Eucharist

This was one of the few homiletic texts on the Eucharist connected with Ireland (even though Columbanus was ministering far from Ireland when he

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<sup>773</sup> Introduction to Alan J. Fletcher and Raymond Gillespie, eds. *Irish Preaching 700-1700* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), 12.

<sup>774</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>775</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>776</sup> Thomas O’Loughlin, “Irish Preaching before the End of the Ninth Century: Assessing the Extent of our Evidence” in Fletcher and Gillespie, eds. *Irish Preaching 700-1700*, 39.



composed it). Of the few remaining relics of Irish sermons still extant, perhaps the collection of St. Columbanus is the most important.<sup>777</sup> This series of thirteen sermons was probably preached by St. Columbanus in Milan or Lombardy between late in 612 and his death in 615.<sup>778</sup> At this time he was attempting to promote “practical religion” and a general religious formation as part of his struggle with the Arians at the Lombard Court.<sup>779</sup> The last sermon, which is the high point of the collection deals with the Eucharist. It is true that these sermons were preached far from Ireland, and there must be some influence from Continental sources in the works of St. Columbanus.<sup>780</sup> However, St. Columbanus was of the opinion that his duty was to bring Continental Christians back to true Christianity and to fight against any hint of laxity. This rigorist view was what caused the local bishops to drive him out of first France and then Switzerland, so that he ended up in the North of Italy.<sup>781</sup>

Here in this last sermon we do not see the rigorist St. Columbanus. Instead we see St. Columbanus exhorting his listeners to find in the Eucharist a remedy for their spiritual thirst. In this beautiful sermon what is stressed again and again is that

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<sup>777</sup> Davies, *Celtic Spirituality*, 53.

<sup>778</sup> Claire Stancliffe, “The Thirteen Sermons Attributed to Columbanus and the Question of their Authorship,” in Michael Lapidge, ed., *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings*. Studies in Celtic History XVII (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1997), 199.

<sup>779</sup> Walker *Sancti Columbani Opera*, xliii.

<sup>780</sup> Although these sermons have circulated as a collection attributed to Columbanus from an early date in modern times their attribution to Columbanus has been questioned. The doubts arise principally from a reference that is made to Faustus as the teacher of the author. This was often understood to refer to Faustus of Riez who died over a hundred years before Columbanus. But Stancliffe’s in depth analysis has successfully defended the traditional authorship.

<sup>781</sup> Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 357-358. An example of Columbanus’ rigorism can be seen in his prescriptions for the Liturgy of the Hours. In his analysis of the various forms of the Monastic Office, Robert Taft comments that St. Columbanus’ “staggering *pensum*” “comes closer to this presumed ancient ideal [of praying the whole Psalter every day] than any early source I know of.” Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West*, 115, 114.

the Eucharist is the "fountain" which the Christian must approach. It is unusual that he speaks of the Eucharist as being the Body of Christ and the fountain where the faithful may quench their thirst and omits any mention of the chalice or the Blood of Christ.<sup>782</sup> Nonetheless this sermon is still an eloquent appeal to Christians to approach Christ in the Eucharist:

Observe whence that Fountain flows; for it flows from that place whence also the Bread came down; since He is the same Who is Bread and Fountain, the only Son, our God Christ the Lord, for Whom we should ever hunger. For though we eat Him in loving, though we feast on him in desiring, let us still as hungering desire Him. Likewise as the Fountain, let us ever drink of Him with overflow of love, let us ever drink of Him with fullness of longing, and let us be gladdened by some pleasure of His loveliness. For the Lord is lovely and pleasant; though we eat and drink of Him, yet let us ever hunger and thirst, since our food and drink can never be consumed and drained entire; for though He is eaten he is not consumed, though he is drunk he is not lessened, since our Bread is eternal, and our Fountain is perennial, our Fountain is sweet.<sup>783</sup>

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<sup>782</sup> Perhaps this is due to the influence of St. Jerome's *Life of St. Paul The First Hermit* that was extremely influential in Irish monastic circles. The Meeting of Anthony and Paul was one of the most important images of the Eucharist for the Irish monks and, as we shall see in the next chapter, this scene was very important for early Irish depictions of the Eucharist. However in the account of Jerome, the saints shared bread and water and not bread and wine. While there are no overt parallels in St. Columbanus, there may well be an underlying appeal to this account. The influence of this story will be examined in the section dealing with high Crosses in Chapter 4.

<sup>783</sup> "Videte unde iste fons manat; inde enim unde et panis descendit; quia idem est qui Panis et Fons, Filius unicus, Deus noster Christus Dominus, quem semper esurire debemus. Licet eum edamus amando, devoremus licet desiderando, adhuc eum quasi esurientes desideremus. simili modo ut fontem, eum semper dilectionis nimietate bibamus, eum semper desiderii plenitudine bibamus, et suavitate quadam eius dulcedinis delectemur. Dulcis enim est et suavis Dominus; licet eum edamus et bibamus, tamen semper esuriamus et sitiamus, quia cibus noster et potus non totus umquam sumi potest est bibi; qui licet sumitur non consumitur, licet bibitur non admittitur, quia panis noster aeternus est, et fons noster, perennis est, fons noster dulcis est." St. Columbanus Sermon 13.2, as found in Walker *Sancti Columbani Opera*, 116-119.

### 3.2.4.2 Homilies from the *Leabhar Breac*

These homilies, composed in Early Irish but with extensive passages in Latin, probably date to the eleventh century.<sup>784</sup> They are very similar to Continental material and so are not important for any new evidence of independent traditions and theologies of the Eucharist in Pre-Norman Ireland. Rather their importance is to show how mainstream the Irish were. If they were destined for use in vernacular preaching to the faithful or as formational materials for clerics, then they would have helped to nourish and foster a fairly typical attitude towards the Eucharist.

In these homilies a fairly main-stream vision of the Eucharist as a representation of the Passion of Christ emerges:

Jesus Christ, the Son of the King of Heaven and Earth, the Third Person of the Trinity, is coeval and coequal with the Father and the holy Ghost, true God and true Man, the High Priest and High Bishop, who offered Himself on the altar of the cross to redeem and ransom the human race; it is He who, on the night before his crucifixion, offered up His blood and body, and gave them to His apostles to partake thereof. And He left with those Apostles, and with His whole Church, to the end of time, the custom of making the same oblation to commemorate the first oblation when He subjected Himself to the cross and to death in obedience to the Heavenly Father, and to fulfil his will.

This is the oblation in which is the full satisfying of God and the appeasing of His anger against the accursed seed of Adam; for in it was the full-growth of humility and lowliness, the full-growth of charity and heart-pity, and perfect sympathy for the wretchedness of the human race in general.<sup>785</sup>

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<sup>784</sup> Kenney, *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland*, 739. A general introduction to Irish homiletic material in the medieval period, where the Homilies from the *Leabar Breac* are the most important source, can be found in Brian Murdoch, "Preaching in Medieval Ireland: the Irish Tradition" in Fletcher and Gillespie, eds. *Irish Preaching 700-1700*, 40-55.

<sup>785</sup> "Isu Crist Mace Rig nime 7 talman, in Tres Persu na Trinóti is comoesa 7 is cutruma frisin athair 7 frisin Spirit Nóeb, in Fir-Dia 7 in Fírduine, int Uasalsacurt 7 int Ard-epscop roedpá(i)r he fén for altoir na crochi do cendach 7 do fuaslucud in chinedu doenna-is é roedpair isin oidche ria n-a c(h)ésad a fuil 7 a feoil, 7 dorat dia apstalaib dia caithium. Ocus forácaib oc na hapstalaib sin 7 icon eclaís uile cu forba in tsaegail gnáthugud dénma na hedparta cetna do cuimniugud na cét-edparta dia rothairbir he fén fri croich 7 bás ar umalóit don Athair némnda do comallud a tholi. Is hé in édpairt a raibe lánbuidecus Dé 7 féthnugud a fergi fri sil n-Ádaim escainte. Ar is innte robui forbair umalóti 7 inisle, forbair deirci 7 cridircisechta, 7 lán-chomaiditiu fri trógi in chineda doenna cu coiteend.."

The idea that the Eucharist is to be received in a penitential manner is perhaps an Irish trait in the homilies as this is paralleled in the penitential dimension of other Irish material:

Every person, then, who desires life perennial, let him take part in this oblation, and partake of the heavenly food faithfully, opportunely, penitentially. For everyone who partakes of it with penance and tears, and with steadiness of faith, and with reverence for it in his heart, will be the abode and consecrated temple of God; but it (the Eucharist) will be lasting destruction to every one who shall partake of it unworthily, that is, without repentance of his sins, and without having a firm conviction that it is the true body and true blood of the Saviour that he partakes of, and without due honour to Him in his heart, merely taking it as any other food.<sup>786</sup>

But there are traces of another Eucharistic theology. In a later section the homilist sees the Eucharist as a heavenly food that has the role of bringing the faithful to heaven. Those who will go to heaven with Christ are those who "partake of his body and blood, or has an earnest desire to partake thereof if he could get (it)."<sup>787</sup> However, once again there is an instance of an *inverted* Eucharistic theology

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Homilies from the *Leabhar Breac* 27-28 in Edmund Hogan, ed. and trans., *The Irish Nennius from L. Na hUidre and Homilies and Legends from L. Breac. Alphabetical Index of Irish Neuter Substances*. Todd Lecture Series 6 (Dublin: Academy House, 1895), 17-18. Also see Homilies from the *Leabhar Breac* 30 in *ibid.*, 19.

<sup>786</sup> "Cech duine tra risnad ail in bethu suthain cuitiged in edpa(i)rt-si 7 caithed in sásad némda co hirisech 7 co trathagtech 7 co haithrigech. Ar cech oen chaithes hé con a airmitin in in a chride, bid aittreb 7 bid tempul coisecartha do Dia hé; bid malairt bithbluan *imorro* hí dá cech oen noseathfe co heceomadais .i. cen aithrlilgi dia peodaib 7 cen colma aice conid fírful in tSlainccedu caithes, 7 cen anoir ndlestenaig dó in a *críde acht* a gabail amal cech mbiad archéna." Homilies from the *Leabhar Breac* 37 in *ibid.*, 23-24.

<sup>787</sup> "Cech oen caithes a chorp 7 a fuil, no ren-a duthracht a caithem dia fagbad." Homilies from the *Leabhar Breac* 32 in Hogan, 20. The Eucharist as nourishment is mentioned in another section dealing with the Sacraments in general. Using the image of nourishment it says that as "the child after birth needs food to support its life, so after regeneration the food of the body and blood of Christ is needed to keep (him) up as regards the spiritual life which was got in baptism." "*Ocus amal* ric a less *imorro* in náidiu iarna túsmiud biad do fulang a bethad, is *amlaid* sin recar a less iarsin athgene(m)ain sásad chuirp *Crist* 7 a fola dia *cong*bail *immon* mbiethiaid *spirit*alda frith isin bathis." Homilies from the *Leabhar Breac* 42 in *ibid.*, 27. This might lend support to the reception of Communion with Baptism, but the text does not explicitly say this.

as it says that God "could convert His body and Blood into bread and wine."<sup>788</sup> The role of the priest is again mainstream:

For the universal Royal Priest, Jesus Christ Himself at first offered up that sacrifice for mankind, so every priest of His race, by the virtue and power of words offers up that oblation. Not the same is what He did before them, and what He instructed them to do; but yet indeed in truth it is Jesus Christ Himself, the real Priest, who, though invisible, is blessing and sanctifying the oblation every day, though the other priest be ministering as his deputy.<sup>789</sup>

The homilist (again in a fully mainstream Western manner) outlines that the holiness and efficacy of the Eucharist does not depend on the priest or the recipient. It is valid and efficacious in and of itself due to the grace of Christ:

Not inferior is the little part to the great part of this body of Christ; neither is its part less than its totality, for the perfect whole and entire of the body of Christ is in each particle thereof; and the full virtue and power of the healing and saving of every man abides in them. Not better, then, nor worse, one than another, O man, that pure mystery of the body of Christ and of His blood, for man's sin cannot defile it or make it bad; it is not by the goodness of any man, or on account of his holiness, that its

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<sup>788</sup> "Co fétfad comsód a chuirp 7 a fola im mbaingin 7 hi fin." Homilies from the *Leabhar Breac* 39 in *ibid.*, 24-25. For more on this see Martin McNamara, "The Inverted Eucharistic Formula *Conversio Corporis Christi in Panem et Sanguinis in Vinum*: the Exegetical and Liturgical Background in Irish Usage," in *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 87C (1987): 573-593. This builds on insights in Jean Rittmueller, "The Gospel Commentary of Máel Brigte Ua Maelruanaig and its Hiberno-Latin background," *Peritia* 2 (1983): 185-214. In an early Irish Bible Commentary the *Liber Questionum in Evangeliiis*, an anonymous early eighth century commentary written in Ireland, but popular in many British and Continental sources this idea is also found. When commenting on the Last Supper (Mt 26:27) it mentions that "the body was transfigured within the bread" ("transfigurato corpore 'in' panem"). Jean Rittmueller, ed., *Liber Questionum in Evangeliiis*. Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 108F Scriptorum Celtigenae (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 411. However there is little else of interest for Eucharistic practice or spirituality in this commentary. But the fact that this Irish commentary was accepted without question in a number of foreign centres and was even attributed to Alcuin in some later studies shows, yet again, how close some Irish material is to the general Western synthesis of the time.

<sup>789</sup> "Ar amal roedpair in Rígscart coitchend, .i. Isu Crist fodessin, in edpairt sin artus darcend in chinedu doenna, is amlaid édprais cech sacart dia sil apersain 7 a nerit briathar, in edpairt sin. Ní hinand doré amal dorinde-sium rompu, 7 amal rothescaisc doib conadernatís; acht iar fir cena didiu is esium fén .i. Isu Crist in Sacart cínnte oc bendachad 7oc noemad na nemaicside na hedparta cech lathi cia beth in sacart ele co haicside oc timthirecht fria laim." Homilies from the *Leabhar Breac* 31 in Hogan, *Homilies and Legends from L. Breac*, 19-20.

good and sanctification grows greater, since it is it that makes good and sanctifies every one, both lay and clerical.<sup>790</sup>

Finally, there is one other Eucharistic image that remains from the these Homilies that is striking. The beasts in the grotto of Bethlehem realise that the baby Jesus is the Creator of the universe who will later give himself to humanity as food in the Eucharist. Therefore they lick him in adoration:

Then was filled the cave with a very great fragrance as is (exhaled) from a (precious) ointment, and from wine, and from the true-perfume of the whole world; the cave was filled (with it), so that all were satisfied therefrom for a long time; and the very great and conspicuous star was seen above the cave from morning till evening, and its like was not seen before or after, nor (aught) that was equal to it. Mary set her Son to rest thereafter with (swaddling) clothes of white linen about Him in the stall of the ass and the young ox for no other place was to be found for Him in the guest-house. And the irrational creatures then recognised their Creator, for they were licking Him and adoring Him, both the ass and the young ox, He being in the middle between them. Then was fulfilled what the prophets said of old, namely, Esaias, son of Amos.<sup>791</sup>

### 3.2.5 Tract on the Real Presence

This text in Early Irish comes from the end of our period, when the Irish Church was increasingly coming into contact with Continental spirituality and the

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<sup>790</sup> "Ni messu didiu a bec inas a mor in chuirp-si Crist, 7 ní mó is airberu a rand oltás a thoitt, at ata ulídetaid 7 toitt chómlan chuirp Crist in cech errandus dé; agus ata lánnert legis 7 slánaigthe cech duine inntiblegis 7 slánaigthe cech duine inntib. Ni ferr didiu, nó ní messa, o duine, sech araile in glanrúin sin chuirp Crist 7 a fhola; ar ní thic do peccad duine no ar a nóime fásus a maith-si 7 a noemad; ar is íse maithiges 7 noemas cách iter thuaithe 7 eclais." Homilies from the *Leabhar Breac* 41 in *ibid.*, 26.

<sup>791</sup> "Is annsin rolínad in úaim do boltnugud amal bid o u(n)gain 7 o fín 7 o firchumra in betha uli rolínta in uama cor sássta iad uli desin fri re fota co nfacus in rétlú dermáir derscaigthech os cind na huamad o matain co fescor, 7 ni factus a macsamla riam na iarom na bud chutruma fria. Rochóraig tra Muiri a mac in a lige iarsin co mbréitib lín gil imbe .i. hi crú ind assain 7 ind ócdaim, ar ni frith inad ele do istin tig óiged. Agus tucsat na dúile indligtecha annsin aichne for a nDuilemain, uair batar oca lige 7 oc(a) adrad .i. int assan 7 int ócdam, 7 se amedon etorru. Is annsin rocomallad andepert in fáid noem ochéin .i. Ezecias mac Amois." Homilies from the *Leabhar Breac* 70 in *ibid.*, 48.

Second Gregorian Reform.<sup>792</sup> We know from St. Bernard of Clairvaux that Ireland experienced controversies over the Real Presence that were comparable to the more famous Eucharistic controversies examined in Chapter 2. In his *Vita Sancti Malachiae Episcopi* he tells us about “a certain cleric in Lismore, good in character, they say, but not in his faith:”

In his own eyes a knowledgeable man, he had the presumption to say that in the Eucharist there is only the sacrament and not the *res sacramenti*, that it is only the sanctification and not the true presence of the Body. He had often been called up on this by St. Malachy in secret, but to no purpose. Then he was summoned into the open and the lay people were excluded, so that if possible he could be cured of this malady rather than be confuted. So it was that in an assembly of clerics the man was given the opportunity to defend his own viewpoint. Although he attempted to set forth and defend his error with every point of ingenuity – which he was not unskilled in, with Malachy arguing against and refuting him, he was worsted in everyone’s opinion.<sup>793</sup>

When the cleric refused to listen to any admonition of St. Malachy or anyone else, he was excommunicated and declared a heretic. He then decided to leave his monastery and on his way was struck down with a sickness, came to his senses and returned to St. Malachy

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<sup>792</sup> Driscoll, “The Conversion of the Nations,” 197-202 and Gwynn, *The Irish Church in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, 84-98.

<sup>793</sup> “Fuit quidam clericus in Lesmor, probabilis (ut fertur) vitae, sed fidei non ita. Is sciulus in oculis suis, praesumpsit dicere, in Eucharistia esse tantummodo sacramentum, et non rem sacramenti, id est solam sanctificationem, et non corporis veritatem. Super quo a Malachia secreto, et saepe conventus, sed incassum, vocatus ad medium est, seorsum tamen a laicis, ut, si fieri posset, sanaretur, et non confunderetur. Itaque in conventu clericorum data facultas homini est pro sua sententia respondendi. Cumque totis ingenii viribus, quo non mediocriter callebat, asserere et defendere conaretur errorem, Malachia contra disputante et convincente, iudicio omnium superatus, de conventu confusus quidem exiit, sed non correctus.” *Vita Sancti Malachiae Episcopi* XXVI.57 in Leclercq and Rochais, eds., *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, 360. English Translation from Meyer, *The Life and Death of Saint Malachy the Irishman*, 71.

He confessed that he had been wrong and was absolved. Then he asked for the *Viaticum* and reconciliation was effected. At practically the same moment that his lips renounced all his faithless wrong-doing he was dissolved by death.<sup>794</sup>

This probably took place in the 1140's.<sup>795</sup> While we cannot know the content of St. Malachy's argumentation, we do possess a contemporary *Tract on the Real Presence*. This document, composed by one Echtgus Ua Cuanáin.<sup>796</sup> Echtgus Ua Cuanáin, perhaps to be identified as Bishop Isaac Ua Cuanáin of Ros Cré (d. 1161) who was a contemporary of St. Malachy. The Tract has been dated on linguistic grounds to around the year 1090, which (give or take a few years) would allow this identification of the author.<sup>797</sup> Apart from this biographical information we know little else about the reasons behind authorship of the Tract. However it is easy to imagine that if it wasn't used in the actual controversy that St. Bernard tells us about that it would have been used in a similar context.

The Tract consists of 86 paragraphs in Early Irish opening with the invitation:

O you who do not have true belief regarding the feast you enjoy at the altar will be subject to a severe and painful judgment. Woe to the one who gave birth to you.<sup>798</sup>

The tract then goes on to outline what exactly *true belief* is; this is done mainly by making reference to scriptural passages. Not only are the more normal

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<sup>794</sup> "Eadem hora accitur Episcopus, agnoscitur veritas, abjicitur error. Confessus reatum absolvitur, petit Viaticum, datur reconciliatio: et uno pene momento perfidia ore abdicatur, et morte diluitur." *Vita Sancti Malachiae Episcopi* XXVI.57 in Leclercq and Rochais, eds., *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, 361. English Translation from Meyer, *The Life and Death of Saint Malachy the Irishman*, 72.

<sup>795</sup> Gerard Murphy, "Eleventh or Twelfth Century Irish Doctrine Concerning the Real Presence," in J.A. Watt, J.B. Morrall and F.X. Martin, eds., *Medieval Studies Presented to Aubrey Gwynn, S.J.* (Dublin: Colm O'Lochlainn, 1961), 19.

<sup>796</sup> Ó Maidín, *The Celtic Monk*, 143.

<sup>797</sup> *Ibid.*, 143-144.

<sup>798</sup> "A dhuine nach creit íar cóir in fleidh caithe 'con altóir, fogébhá brieth ngairbh co ngail, maircc do ghein do gheineamain." *Treatise on the Eucharist* 1, in A. G. van Hamel, "Poems from Brussels Ms. 5100-4," *Revue Celtique* 37 (1919): 345. English translation from Ó Maidín, *The Celtic Monk*, 147.



New Testament accounts of the Last Supper referred to, the tract also makes ample use of the Old Testament:

If God, out of nothing, created all there is in heaven and on earth, surely he will make body and blood of the bread and wine. Just as God turned the rod of Moses into a real serpent, and as he immediately made a rod of that serpent.<sup>799</sup>

The Tract is very scriptural in its content but it is a far cry from Scholastic theology. It reiterates time and again that the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ "the King of Heaven."<sup>800</sup> Mention is made of the fact that the unworthiness of the minister has no effect on the validity of the sacrament and even "if Judas, though he was an evil priest, had given the body of Christ to a devout man who believed and who had repented of his sins, it would have been an absolutely pure sacrifice."<sup>801</sup> The tract is very pastoral in tone, warning against unworthiness of the minister and of the one who receives, yet inviting the faithful to take the Eucharist seriously.

There are some elements characteristic of later Eucharistic piety in the Tract. There is mention of bishop Flagellus who sees the Christ-child in the host, this parallels the many stories of visions granted to unbelieving priests from both East

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<sup>799</sup> "Ma dorigine cen adbar dúile nimhe *acus talman*, doghéna d'abhlaínn is d'fin corp *acus fuil* cen anfir. *Amal* dorighne Día dil do fleiscc Moysi derbh-nat[h]raigh, *amal* dorighne in fleiscc fóili don nathraigh sin fochédóir." *Treatise on the Eucharist* 17-18, in van Hamel, "Poems from Brussels," 346. English translation from Ó Maidín, *The Celtic Monk*, 147.

<sup>800</sup> In Irish texts the title "King" is one of the favourite title for Christ.

<sup>801</sup> "Iúdas, gerb olc in fer gráidh, da tucadh corp *Críst*, d'fir cháidh iar creidimh iar cói cinad ropad edbairt ógh-idhan." *Treatise on the Eucharist* 25, in van Hamel, "Poems from Brussels," 346. English translation from Ó Maidín, *The Celtic Monk*, 149.

and West.<sup>802</sup> There is a preoccupation with the possibility of dividing the Host without at the same time dividing the Body of the risen Lord.<sup>803</sup>

It sees the wine as representing Christ and the water added to the wine sinful humanity. Then it says how good this wine is, it is beautiful as it represents Christ, and therefore it must be "Sweet."<sup>804</sup> While it does still mention the *fractio panis* it says that there can be "many hosts on the paten."<sup>805</sup> Perhaps this signals the end of big patens such as the Derrynaflan example. The treatise finishes on an eschatological note warning that:

The outcome of the reception of that body is beyond all question: eternal judgment will mean either heaven or cold stormy hell.<sup>806</sup>

### 3.2.6 The *Cáin Domnaig*

In the early Church Sunday was the Lord's Day and not the Christian Sabbath. Christ himself was understood to be the Christian Sabbath and Sunday was the day to celebrate the resurrection. However as time went by some other themes were introduced into the popular understanding of Sunday so that it

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<sup>802</sup> *Treatise on the Eucharist* 56-66.

<sup>803</sup> *Treatise on the Eucharist* 67-73.

<sup>804</sup> "Mbláith." *Treatise on the Eucharist* 32, in van Hamel, "Poems from Brussels," 346. English translation from Ó Maidín, *The Celtic Monk*, 150.

<sup>805</sup> "Pars forsin teisc." *Treatise on the Eucharist* 72, in van Hamel, "Poems from Brussels," 348. English translation from Ó Maidín, *The Celtic Monk*, 153.

<sup>806</sup> "Is áirithe a mbí de sin do áiritin in c[h]uirp sin, fogébhá nemh, búan in breath, no ifren úar ainbhtenach." *Treatise on the Eucharist* 78, in van Hamel, "Poems from Brussels," 349. English translation from Ó Maidín, *The Celtic Monk*, 154. N.B. the idea that damnation entails "cold stormy hell" is very typical of Irish spirituality, and upon visiting the windswept island monasteries it is easy to realize how the monks came to that conclusion!

gradually became the Christian Sabbath.<sup>807</sup> By the sixth century this concept was widespread and Pentateuchal legislation forbidding work on Sunday become common.<sup>808</sup> In Ireland in particular this idea of Sunday as Sabbath implied that the Old Testament laws of the Sabbath Rest were applied to Sunday.<sup>809</sup>

This leads many Irish texts to mention that Christians are forbidden to work on Sunday. In Muirchú's *Life of Patrick*, he puts a curse on pagans working on Sunday.<sup>810</sup> Patrick himself, when he is on a journey, will not travel "from the evening of the Lord's night (i.e. Saturday night) until Monday morning" so he spends the night in a field when a great rain storm comes, but Patrick is miraculously kept dry.<sup>811</sup>

The *Cáin Domnaig* is an Irish adaptation of a famous apocryphal work the *Carta dominica* "which claims to have been written by Christ and dropped on one of the great centres of Christendom, [it] is a tract strictly commanding the keeping of the Lord's day by abstinence from earthly work or involvements."<sup>812</sup> A version of the *Carta dominica* is found in Irish: the *Epirtil Isu* (Epistle of Jesus) which forms part of

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<sup>807</sup> Although Sunday encompasses the whole Christian reality, Sunday has tended to pick up other themes in the West. However for Eastern Christians "such thematization, far from seeming an enrichment, would appear to limit the inexhaustible symbolic richness of the Sunday celebration to some topic of our choosing . . . [for Sunday] serves no purpose beyond itself." Taft, "Sunday in the Byzantine Tradition," 53.

<sup>808</sup> Michael Maher, "Sunday in the Irish Church," *Irish Theological Quarterly* Vol. 60 (1994): 161.

<sup>809</sup> For the European context and the Irish role in the spread of this document and its sabbatarian view of Sunday see Robert E. McNally, ed., "Preface to *Dies Dominica*," in *Scriptores Hiberniae Minores Pars I. Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 108B Scriptores Celtigenae* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1973), 175-179.

<sup>810</sup> Muirchú I 24 in Bieler, *The Patrician Texts*, 107.

<sup>811</sup> "Ut a uespera dominicae noctis usque ad mane secundiae feriae." Muirchú II 3 in Bieler, *The Patrician Texts*, 114-115.

<sup>812</sup> Thomas O'Loughlin, "The Significance of Sunday: Three Ninth-Century Catecheses," *Worship* Vol. 64, N<sup>o</sup> 6, November 1990, 535.

a larger Irish work, the *Cáin Domnaig* (the Law of Sunday).<sup>813</sup> The Annals of Ulster for 886 tell how pilgrims brought it to Ireland.<sup>814</sup>

The *Cáin Domnaig* is written in Old Irish and probably dates from the early eighth century, it lays down rules for Sunday imposing fines on those who do not obey:

Now these are the fines for transgressing Sunday: An ounce of silver on a man who travels with a load on that day, and his clothes to be burned, and his load to be forfeited. A half-ounce on a man travelling without a burden on that day, and his clothes to be burned. Whosoever rides a horse on Sunday shall forfeit his horse and his clothes. Grinding in a mill on Sunday after the swearing of the law, if it be a mill of the laity, an ounce of silver [is the fine on the first occasion] for it, and five *seas* from that out. If, however, it be a church mill, a *cumhal* is the fine for grinding in it on Sunday. Whatsoever quern is ground with on Sunday shall be broken, and a half-ounce of silver [imposed] on the man or woman who grinds with it. If it be a man-servant or woman-servant who grinds with it, his clothes shall be burned, and he himself driven out of the place.<sup>815</sup>

Strangely enough there is no mention of the Eucharist in the document, there are whole lists of important Old Testament events which are said to have taken place on Sunday as well as many of the New Testament miracles. These include the Manna and the multiplication of the loaves, but the Eucharist is missing.

The Céili De are often credited with the introduction of Sabbatarianism into Ireland.<sup>816</sup> But, while they probably were influenced by this type of spirituality, they were simply continuing earlier traditions and understandings, as Sabbatarianism

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<sup>813</sup> O'Loughlin, "The Significance of Sunday," 535.

<sup>814</sup> J. G. O'Keeffe, "Cáin Domnaig. I. The Epistle of Jesus," *Ériu* 2 (1905): 190.

<sup>815</sup> "Ité féich thairmthechta in domnaig .i. unga arcait for fer imthéit co n-eri and 7 a thimthach do loscad 7 dílsi a eri. Leth n-unga for fer n-dilmáin imt[h]éit and 7 a thimthach do loscad. Nech imrét ech l n-domnach dílsi a eich 7 a thimthaig. Mleth l muilind l n-domnach iar luga chána, mad muilend túathí, unga arcait ind 7 cóic suidiu anund. Mad muilend ecalsa tra, is cumal díra l mbleith ann l n-domnach. Nach bró melar l n-domnach, a brisiud 7 leth n-unga argait for fer nó mnái nodamela. Mad fer-amus nó ban-amus nodamela, loscad a thimthaig 7 a indarba asin mendut." *Cáin Domnaig*, 23 in O'Keeffe, "Cáin Domnaig," 204-205.

<sup>816</sup> Maher, "Sunday in the Irish Church," 163.

predates them by at least a generation.<sup>817</sup> This said, the *Monastery of Tallaght* does contain some texts clearly in this vein:

A herb that is cut on Sunday, or kale that is cooked, or bread that is baked, or blackberries or nuts that are plucked on a Sunday, it is not his [Maelruain] practice, nor the practice of true clerics, to eat these things.

[...] Now the gathering of apples on a Sunday or lifting a single apple from the ground is not allowed among them.<sup>818</sup>

But while there are many texts forbidding the most trivial works on Sunday, it is not known if Mass attendance was mandatory in Ireland. In his rule St. Columbanus requires that the Monks be present in the church, but the porter and cook are excused:

But before the sermon on the Lord's Day let all, except for fixed requirements, be gathered together, so that none is lacking to the number of those who hear the exhortation, except the cook and the porter who themselves also, if they can, are to try to be present, when the gospel bell is heard.<sup>819</sup>

However there is one text that does prescribe a penance for missing the Eucharist:

Someone who is unfaithful to the Sunday Mass is to chant fifty psalms standing behind closed doors and with eyes shut. This is the price of the Mass, and he shall also make one hundred genuflections and cross-vigils with the *Beati*.<sup>820</sup>

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<sup>817</sup> Donnchadh Ó Corráin, "Ireland c.800: Aspects of Society," in Ó Cróinín, ed., *Prehistoric and Early Ireland*, 606-607.

<sup>818</sup> "Luss bongar ind domnuch nó braisech nó arán fonither nó mérai nó cnoi bongar dia domnaich ní fogní leisim a cathim na ráod sin nach Lasna firclerchiu. . . Teclaim ubald dano dia domnaich no gluasacht cen ubuild díob de lar ní fogni leusom." *The Monastery of Tallaght*, §13, 49 in Gwynn and Purton, 132.145.

<sup>819</sup> "Ante praedicationem uero die dominica toti exceptis certis necessitatibus simul sint conglobati, ut nullus desit numero praeceptum audientium excepto coco ac portario; qui et ipsi si possint sati agant, ut adsint quando tonitruum euangelii auditur." *The Penitential of St. Columbanus* B:29 in Bieler, *The Irish Penitentials* 106-107.

<sup>820</sup> "In tí na bui oc tairisim offroind dia domnaig .i. do chetul do ina shessam hi tig dúnta, acas a shuile senta: ir e a luag in oifroind issed delece .i. cét slechtaim acas crosfhigill fri bliait." *The Rule*

From these texts it can be seen that Sunday was indeed important. The legal texts have shown us that the priest was expected to celebrate the Eucharist on Sundays and the fact that he celebrated in their church and mentioned their need and their dead does seem to have been important to the people of the time. However, it might also be true that clerics considered it more important that Christians rested in an Old Testamentarian sense than actually going to church on Sundays. Indeed while it is preferable for the cook and the porter to go to the Eucharistic Celebration, they are permitted to miss it for (presumably not life-threatening) duties.

### 3.2.7 The Poems of Blathmac Son of Cú Brettan

These poems are preserved in a single seventeenth century manuscript now in the National Library of Ireland. While the manuscript is very late it seems to be the work of an antiquarian who copied it from an early manuscript that is no longer extant.<sup>821</sup> Carney is of the opinion that the scribe copied this manuscript from the Book of Glendalough, a now lost twelfth century codex.<sup>822</sup> Carney was unable to place Blathmac's genealogy, and simply proposes that he was probably a cleric,

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of the *Céli Dé* in Reeves "On the *Céli Dé*," 208. English translation from Ó Maidín, *The Celtic Monk*, 88.

<sup>821</sup> James Carney, ed., *The Poems of Blathmac Son of Cú Brettan Together with The Irish Gospel of Thomas and A Poem on the Virgin Mary*, Irish Texts Society, vol. XLVII (Dublin: Irish Texts Society, 1964), ix.

<sup>822</sup> *Ibid.*, xi. However, cf. Pádraig Ó Riain, "The Book of Glendalough or Rawlinson B502," *Éigse* 18 (1981): 171-174 and "Rawlinson B502 alias Lebar Glinne Dá Locha: a Restatement of the Case," *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* 51 (2000): 141-142. Here Ó Riain disagrees with Carney and posits that The Book of Glendalough actually survives in part as Rawlinson B502.

perhaps involved in the *Céli Dé* working, at the latest, sometime between 750 and 770.<sup>823</sup> However others have connected Blathmac to the Fir Rois and possibly to their territories in Co. Louth.<sup>824</sup>

The poems are in Early Irish and place a lot of emphasis on Marian devotion and devotion to the Passion of Christ. Various Biblical scenes from the life of Christ and Old Testament prefigurations are recounted in verse. However these contain no account of the institution of the Eucharist. But there is an interesting interplay between blood and wine in the poem.

The King of the seven holy heavens, when his heart was pierced, wine [*fin*] was spilled upon the pathways, the [*fuiil*] blood of Christ flowing through his gleaming sides.

The flowing blood from the body of the dear Lord baptised the head of Adam, for the shaft of the cross of Christ had aimed at his mouth.

By the same blood (it was a fair occasion!) quickly did he cure the fully blind man who, openly with his two hands, was plying the lance.<sup>825</sup>

In another place Blathmac speaks of *finfolo* or "wine-like blood."<sup>826</sup> This is interesting as here the Gospel texts are dealing with the physical blood of Jesus

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<sup>823</sup> Carney, *The Poems of Blathmac*, xiv-xv. Although account must be made for mid-twentieth century tendencies to ascribe any religious text that came from certain centuries to the *Céli Dé*. For more on the possible *Céli Dé* connection see Brian Lambkin, "Blathmac and the *Céli Dé*: A Reappraisal," *Celtica* 23 (1999): 132-154.

<sup>824</sup> Diarmuid Maclomhair, "The History of Fir Rois," *County Louth Archaeological Journal* 15 (1964): 338-342 and Diarmuid Maclomhair, "The Poems of Blathmac," *County Louth Archaeological Journal* 15 (1964): 358 [rev. of James Carney, ed., *The Poems of Blathmac Son of Cú Brettan Together with The Irish Gospel of Thomas and A Poem on the Virgin Mary*, (Dublin, 1964)]. 321-348

<sup>825</sup> "Ó fu-rócbath a chride, mac rí na secht noebnime, do-rórtad fin fu roenu, fuil Críst triä geltoebu. Toesca toebraith coimdeth dil ro-bathais mullach nÁdaim, dég ad-rumedair int eú cruchae Críst ina béulu. Dond fuil chétnai – ba cain n-am! – is trait ron-icc in n-ógdall, ossé dib dorraib co glé oc imbeirt inna láigne." *The Poems of Blathmac* 56-58, in Carney, *The Poems of Blathmac*, 20-21. The canonical Gospels do not mention any details about the Roman soldier who pierced the side of the dead Christ so that blood and water flowed out. However some apocryphal texts mention that this soldier was blind and was healed of his blindness by the blood and water which fell on his face. This particular story seems to have been popular in Pre-Norman Ireland. Ó Duinn, *Where Three Streams Meet*, 91.

shed on the Cross and the Eucharistic blood is not mentioned. It would be normal to use blood and wine interchangeably when dealing with the Last Supper, but the fact that this is dealing with the Crucifixion and Blathmac mentions wine could show how important the Eucharistic Wine was for him.<sup>827</sup> Later on he deals with the Eucharistic Wine itself. Here the emphasis is also on the blood as the source of the Eucharist's efficacy, forgiveness and, indeed, the blood is portrayed as that which gives life to the human body of clay that Christ takes:

It is your son's body that comes to us when one goes to the Sacrament [sacarfaic]; the pure wine [firfin] has been transmuted for us into the blood of the Son of the King.

It is your son's body (well that it came!) from which comes an eternal kingdom, eternally happy; and without doubt it is in his blood that every saint washes his bright garment.

The blood of the Son of the King reddens a body of clay in the brightness of gore; the blood of your son, the son of the living God, from it is made its (i.e. the body's) resplendence.<sup>828</sup>

While this is poetry and, does not give a literal description of the Eucharistic Liturgy nor does it say whether anybody other than the presiding cleric received from the chalice, it is still important for its communication of the attitudes surrounding the Eucharist. The fact that it is in the vernacular and not Latin could also mean that it is closer to lay spirituality, even though a lot of clerical learning also was composed in the vernacular and the very fact that it is a written text would remove it from the

<sup>826</sup> The *Poems of Blathmac* 178, in Carney, *The Poems of Blathmac*, 60-61.

<sup>827</sup> Perhaps this text can find parallels in the other texts that Body and Blood of Christ become bread and wine in the Eucharist. McNamara, "The Inverted Eucharistic," 573-574.

<sup>828</sup> "Is corp do maic imman-ric dia tiagar do sacarfaic, is I fuil maic ind ríg do-roád dúnn a fífin. Is corp do maic – mad-tulaíd!- dia mbi bithflaith bithsubaid; is inna fuil cen acht do-nnig cach noeb a geltacht. Fuil in maic ríg corp do chrí roindid hi crú rogili; fuil do maic-siu, maic Dé bí, do-gní dí a étrachtai." *The Poems of Blathmac* 203-205, in Carney, *The Poems of Blathmac*, 68-71.



population at large. The fact that this poetry gives a lot of emphasis to the wine-blood of Christ, however, is yet another isolated piece of evidence that lends support to the view that the Eucharistic cup held a special place in pre-Norman Irish spirituality.

### 3.2.8 *De Statu Ecclesiae* of Gille of Limerick

Gille (d.1145) was an important Churchman of the twelfth century reform in Ireland. And, although a significant treatise of his has survived, until recently this has received little attention. A new critical edition of this work has lately been published and this combined with a new understanding of this period in Irish ecclesiastical history probably means that Gille will receive more attention in the future.<sup>829</sup> We know little of Gille's early life, even his name displays great variety in the different sources. The first definite reference to him was his 1106 letter to Anselm of Canterbury. Here he presents himself as the newly ordained bishop of the Hiberno Viking city of Limerick and, from the tone of the letter and of Anselm's reply, it seems that they had personally known each other in Normandy.<sup>830</sup> However, in a time when some of his contemporaries were travelling to England for Episcopal Ordination from Canterbury, Gille had not followed suit. This despite the fact that he was at least an acquaintance if not an actual friend of the current incumbent at Canterbury. Perhaps this signalled a rejection of Canterbury's attempt to exercise jurisdiction in Ireland even on the part of those Irish reformers closest to the

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<sup>829</sup> This first critical edition of Gille's works was published in 2001, John Fleming, *Gille of Limerick (c.1070-1145). Architect of a Medieval Church* (Dublin: Four Courts Press).

<sup>830</sup> Anselm *Epistola XXXI* in Fleming, *Gille of Limerick*, 166-169.

Continental Gregorian reforms.<sup>831</sup> By the time of the Synod of Rathbreasail in 1111 Gille had also become Papal Legate in Ireland, a role which, in 1138, Malachy of Armagh inherited.<sup>832</sup>

His treatises *De Usu Ecclesiastico* and *De Statu Ecclesiae* were probably presented at the Synod of Rathbreasail. Originally these two treatises formed parts of a single treatise that were separated by a diagram of the structure of the Church and when they were copied into manuscripts and early printed versions that did not contain the diagram, they came to be considered as two distinct treatises.<sup>833</sup>

Gille was a reformer of the Church and laboured to implement a Continental model of the Church in Ireland, although in some aspects he agreed with the earlier *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis* as opposed to Amalarius of Metz, whom he much admired.<sup>834</sup> So in his canonical treatise he was more interested in proposing the current Continental models of the Eucharist than in preserving the older traits of liturgy (be they Irish or from anywhere else). There is no way of knowing how widespread an influence Gille's directives on the Eucharistic Liturgy had, nor even if they were actually observed anywhere. But the very fact that he had to legislate on liturgical matters would seem to imply that things were not always done in what in his view was the correct way.<sup>835</sup> However, once again, it is hard to discern whether he was combating against what he considered to be wrong ritual practices inherited

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<sup>831</sup> Fleming, *Gille of Limerick*, 43.

<sup>832</sup> Fleming, *Gille of Limerick*, 47.

<sup>833</sup> See the convincing argument put forward in Fleming, *Gille of Limerick*, 115-116.

<sup>834</sup> Michael Richter, "Gilbert of Limerick Revisited," in Smyth ed., *Seanchas*, 344.

<sup>835</sup> Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship*, 18-19.

from the former liturgical traditions or simply legislating against poorly performed liturgy.

Gille presents a very organized Liturgy; he speaks of the roles of porters, lectors, exorcists, acolytes, subdeacons, deacons, priests and bishops. There is a church building that is guarded by the porter whose job it is "to ensure that no Jew, pagan, or catechumen may be in the church during the hour of sacrifice, that a dog or anyone unclean or stained with blood may not enter and to exclude the excommunicated."<sup>836</sup> The acolyte must "light and extinguish the candles at certain hours."<sup>837</sup> The church is a sacred place, a number of whose elements must be dedicated by the bishop, namely, "the porch, the sanctuary, the altar and the table of the altar." The bishop also has to consecrate the things used in the church, including "the ciborium, that is the canopy over the altar, the cross and the bell."<sup>838</sup>

Not surprisingly, Gille provides us with more details about the priest than anyone else, "it is his duty to offer; to sacrifice bread and wine with water each day ... before the Sacrifice he is to incense above and around the altar and sacrifice. However, before the gospel the deacon should incense the altar."<sup>839</sup> He goes on to provide a detailed description of the priest's vestments and the elements necessary for the celebration of the Eucharist:

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<sup>836</sup> "Ut nulus Judaeus vel Gentilis sive catechumenus hora sacrificii intersit nec omnio canis aut aliquis immundus sive sanguinolentus in eam intret" *De Statu Ecclesiae* 101-104 in Fleming, *Gille of Limerick*, 152-153.

<sup>837</sup> "Luminaria certis horis accendere et extinguere" *De Statu Ecclesiae* 110 in *ibid.*, 152-153.

<sup>838</sup> "Cimbarium id est, altaris umbraculum, crucem, tintinnabulum" *De Statu Ecclesiae* 1259-260. 266 in *ibid.*, 160-161.

<sup>839</sup> "Offere autem ejus est; panem et vinum cum aqua singulis diebus immolare ... et ante sacrificium thus super et circa altare et sacrificium." *De Statu Ecclesiae* 139-144 in *ibid.*, 154-155.

Just as there are seven steps by which a priest is elevated so also there are seven vestments in which he is ordained; his everyday clothes, an amice, alb, cincture, maniple, stole and chasuble. Otherwise the offices can be performed without a chasuble and sometimes only with a stole. Each day at Mass he wears at least the following four vestments: a linen gown, a tunic, breeches and shoes. The Romans wear boots. Amalarius says that the priest should wear sandals and a dalmatic but among us only pontiffs use these.

[...] A priest should use the sprinkler for holy water, the book of the holy Gospels, the Psalter, the missal, the book of hours, the manual and the book of the synod. He should have the veil, the candelabra and candles, a wardrobe of vestments, a pyx with the offering and their irons, a flask for wine and a bottle for water, a basin and a towel for washing hands, a tree trunk or a carved stone into which the water used for washing sacred things may be poured away, the concealed base for a candle and a lectern for the lectionary.<sup>840</sup>

Subdeacons and deacons also wear vestments, the subdeacons read the epistle and "pour water and wine into the chalice."<sup>841</sup> "It is the duty of deacons to say: 'Let those who are not in communion leave,' 'Bow down for the blessing,' 'Bow your heads to God,' 'Go, it is ended,' 'Let us bless the Lord,' to read and proclaim the Gospel, to place the sacrifice on the corporal, and to minister to the priest."<sup>842</sup>

Gille also recommends when the priest should give communion to the faithful:

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<sup>840</sup> "Sicut ergo septem gradus sunt quibus sacerdos elevatur ita septem sunt vestes quibus ordinatur: indumentum quotidianum, amicta, alba, cingulum, fanon, stola et casual. Et caetera quidem omnia official sine casual, et cum stola sola aliquando potest. Quotidianiana ad Missam ut paucissima sunt quatuor: camisia, tunica, femoralia, calceamenta, addunt tamen Romani caligas. Dicit quoque Amalarius sacerdotem debere indui sandaliis et dalmatica: sed pontifices apud nos his utuntur. [...] Haec autem sunt utensilia sacerdoti oportuna quae sine benedictione episcopi sufficient: aqua benedicta aspergit, textus sancti Evangelii, psalterium, missale, horarius, manuale et synodalis liber, vela, candelabra cum candelis, arca vestimentorum, pixis cum oblates et ferrum eorum, ampulla cum vino et altera cum aqua, pelvis ad manus lavandas cum manutergio, truncus aut lapis cavus ubi aqua unde sacra lavantur effunditur, absconsa etiam sub candela et lecturiale sub libro." *De Statu Ecclesiae* 215-221. 229-236 in *ibid.*, 158-161.

<sup>841</sup> "Aquam et vinum calici infundere" *De Statu Ecclesiae* 116-117 in *ibid.*, 152-153.

<sup>842</sup> "Diaconorum est dicere *Exeant qui non communicant et Humiliate vos ad benedictionem et Humiliate capita vestra Deo et Ite missa est et Benedicamus Domino* et evangelium legere et pronuntiare, sacrificial super corporalia statuere, sacerdoti ministrare." *De Statu Ecclesiae* 123-126 in *ibid.*, 154-155.

He ought to give communion to the baptised immediately and to all the faithful three times a year, at Easter, at Pentecost and at Christmas and to those near death if they should seek it by word or by sign or if in the evidence of a faithful witness they have already sought it. Praying, he ought to commend the souls of the faithful as they leave their bodies and celebrate their memory at Mass and in prayer.<sup>843</sup>

Here is yet another text, this time from the end of our period, which recommends that the laity receive Communion on only a few of the major feasts, as well as the ever-present viaticum. He also recommends that the reception of the Eucharist accompany the rite of Baptism.

### 3.2.9 Gerald of Wales *The History and Topography of Ireland*

Gerald of Wales was a Cambro-Norman ecclesiastic who visited Ireland in 1183. While this is most definitely a Post-Norman text, it was written before the Anglo-Norman and Gaelic traditions had had much chance to interact. He wrote a treatise describing this visit partly as a work of propaganda to defend the Norman mission in Ireland. Although it is very derogatory of the Irish and is full of fantastic tales, it is valuable as it given the impressions of an educated foreigner of the ecclesiastical situation in Ireland. Moreover it does mention the Eucharist a few times.<sup>844</sup>

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<sup>843</sup> "Communicare statim debet baptizatos et fideles omnes ter in anno in Pascha, in Pentecoste et natali Domini et prope mortem positos si quaesierint verbo vel signo vel teste fideli qui prius quaesissent. Commendare debet orando animas fideles de corporibus egredientes et earum memoriam in Missa et orationibus frequentare." *De Statu Ecclesiae* 192-197 in *ibid.*, 156-157.

<sup>844</sup> Gerald is familiar with Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* and he takes it to task in its geographic description of Ireland. This passage which deals with the possibility of the cultivation of grape-vines in Ireland will be examined in Chapter 4 in the section on wine.

Gerald relays a number of stories about the Eucharist. The first of these is about the island monastery which is commonly identified as Skellig Michael:

In the South of Munster near Cork there is a certain island which has within it a church of Saint Michael, revered for its holiness from ancient times. There is a certain stone there outside of, but almost touching, the door of the church on the right-hand side. In a hollow of the upper part of this stone there is found every morning through the merits of the saints of the place as much wine as is necessary for the celebration of as many Masses as there are priests to say Mass on that day there.<sup>845</sup>

If this passage was not invented by Gerald, and there is little reason for him to invent this story, it gives a number of clues about the Eucharist (although it would be dangerous to build a whole theory on Gerald). First, not surprisingly, it shows that wine was somehow hard to come by (although even today Skellig Michael is an isolated place that can be impossible to reach in bad weather). Even if it were possible to procure wine by normal means, it is an appreciated miracle to be given it without anyone having to bring it onto the island. This passage also recounts that one Mass per priest was celebrated there every day. This actually is in agreement with the archaeological record, as the Skellig Michael monastery was a relatively small monastery, and yet the site contains a number of churches.<sup>846</sup>

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<sup>845</sup> "In australia Momonia circa partes Corchagie est insula quedam, ecclesiam continens sancti Michaelis, antique nimis et autentice religionis. Vbi lapis quidem est extra hostium ecclesiae a dextris, ipsi fere coherens hostio; in cuius superioris partis concauitate, cotidie mane, per merita sanctorum loci illius, tantum uini reperitur quantum ad missarum sollempnia, iuxta numerum sacerdotum qui ibidem eodem die celebraturi fuerit, conuenienter sufficere posit." *The History and Topography of Ireland* II, 63, in John J. O'Meara, "Giraldus Cambrensis in Topographia Hibernie. Text of the First Recension," in *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 50c (1949): 149. English translation from O'Meara, *Gerald of Wales*, 80.

<sup>846</sup> Ann O'Sullivan and John Sheehan, *The Iveragh Peninsula: An Archaeological Survey of South Kerry* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996), 278-290.

In another passage (which is probably not historical) he mentions the use of a chrismal when speaking of a priest giving the viaticum to a dying woman who had been changed by a curse into a wolf:

She then received from the priest all the last rites duly performed up to the last communion. This too she eagerly requested, and implored him to complete his good act by giving her the viaticum. The priest insisted that he did not have it with him, but the wolf, who in the meantime, had gone a little distance away, came back again and pointed out to him a little wallet containing a manual and some consecrated hosts, which the priest according to the custom of his country carried about with him, hanging from his neck, on his travels.<sup>847</sup>

The value of this passage is that it is an independent witness to the use of the chrismal as a particularly Irish practice. Although he does not use the word chrismal, but refers to a little wallet ("perulam"), the fact that he says that this was carried "according to the custom of his country" and not that the priest was going to bring viaticum or Communion shows that in all likelihood this was in fact the use of the chrismal.

Besides this there are two other stories that deal with the Eucharist. These stories do not really add anything to our knowledge. Both portray the Irish as being very superstitious regarding the Eucharist. It is probably true that Gerald needs to portray the Irish in a bad light for the political purposes of supporting the Norman invasion, but it is also probably that Ireland had its fair share of superstitious practices on the borders of the official form of Christianity:

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<sup>847</sup> "Et sic usque ad extremam communionem a sacerdote cuncta rite peracta suscepit: quam et ipsa constanter efflagitans, attentius supplicavit ut viatici largitione beneficium consummaret. Quo sacerdos cum se carere firmiter asseruisset, lupus qui parumper abscesserat iterum accessit, ostendens ei perulam, librum manuealem et aliquot hostias consecratas continentem; que more patrie presbiter itinerans a collo suspensa deferebat." *The History and Topography of Ireland II*, 52, in O'Meara, "Giraldus Cambrensis in Topographia Hibernie," 144. English translation from O'Meara, *Gerald of Wales*, 71.

There is a well in Munster, and if one touches or even looks at it, the whole province is deluged with rain. The rain will not cease until a priest who is a virgin both in mind and body and specially chosen for the purpose, celebrates Mass in a chapel not far from the well and known to have been erected with this end in view, and appeases the well with a sprinkling of holy water and the milk of a cow of one colour. This is certainly a barbarous rite, without rime or reason.

Among the many other tricks devised in their guile, there is this one which serves as a particular good proof of their treachery. Under the guise of religion and peace they assemble at some holy place with him whom they wish to kill. First they make a treaty on the basis of their common fathers. Then in turn they go around the church three times. They enter the church and, swearing a great variety of oaths before the relics of saints placed on the altar, at last with the celebration of Mass and the prayers of the priests they make an indissoluble treaty as if it were a kind of betrothal. For the greater confirmation of their friendship and completion of their settlement, each in conclusion drinks the blood of the other which has willingly been drawn especially for the purpose.<sup>848</sup>

### 3.2.10 Infant Communion

In the early Church reception of the Eucharist often accompanied Baptism. It is probable that infants received Baptism in many areas from the beginnings of Christianity, and quite possible that they received Communion as part of the Baptismal rite (either in the form of a tiny piece of the Eucharistic Bread or a drop from the chalice). After this they may even have continued to receive Communion on a regular basis with their parents. Our first explicit testimony to infant

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<sup>848</sup> "Est fons in Momonia, qui si tactus ab homine, uel etiam uisus fuerit, statim tota prouincia pluuiis inundabit. Que non cessabunt, donec sacerdos ad hoc deputatus, qui et uirgo fuerit tam ente quem corpore, misse celebratione, in capella que non procul a fonte ad hoc dinoscitur esse fundata, et aque benedicite, lactisque uacce unius coloris aspersione, barbaro satis ritu et ratione carente, fontem reconciliauerit." "Inter alia multa artis inique figmenta, hoc unum habent tanquam precipuum argumentum. Sub religionis et pacis obtentu ad sacrum locum aliquem conueniunt, cum eo quem opetere cupiunt. Primo compaternitatis federa iungunt: deinde ter circa ecclesiam se inuicem portant: postmodum ecclesiam intrantes, coram altari reliquiis sanctorum appositis, sacramentis multifarie prestitis, demum misse celebratione, et orationibus sacerdotum, tanquam desponsatione quadam indissolubiliter federantur. Ad ultimum uero, ad maiorem amicitie confirmationem, et quasi negotii consummatione, sanguinem sponte ad hoc fusum uterque alterius bibit." *The History and Topography of Ireland* II, 40 and III, 101 in O'Meara, "Giraldus Cambrensis in Topographia Hibernie," 138 and 167. English translation from O'Meara, *Gerald of Wales*, 63 and 108.



Communion is St. Cyprian. In *De Lapsis* 9 he speaks of infants being carried to the idolatrous sacrificial meal in their parents arms during the Decian persecution. After they have died and are sent to Hell they protest, "we have done nothing; we have not abandoned the Lord's bread and cup and of our own accord hastened to profane contaminations. The perfidy of others has ruined us."<sup>849</sup> Here "abandoning the Lord's bread and cup" can probably be interpreted as proof that the infants had already received Communion prior to their being taken to the pagan sacrifice in their parents' arms.<sup>850</sup> Later on in the same work, Cyprian talks of a young girl who was abandoned by her parents during the same persecution. Her wet-nurse took her to partake in the pagan sacrifice, where she was given bread and wine as she was too young to consume meat. Less than eighteen months later, still before the little girl has learned to speak, after the persecution had ended and she had been found again by her parents, she is taken to Communion by her mother, who is unaware of what has happened to her daughter.<sup>851</sup> Cyprian, who was presiding the Eucharist himself, describes the scene:

But when the solemnities were completed and the deacon began to offer the cup to those present, and when as the rest were receiving, her turn came, the little girl with an instinct of divine majesty turned her face away, compressed her mouth with tightened lips, and refused the cup. The deacon, however, persisted and poured into the mouth of the child, although resisting, of the sacrament of the cup. Then there followed sobbing and vomiting. In the body and mouth which had been violated the

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<sup>849</sup> "Nos nihil fecimus, nec derelictio cibo et poculo Domini ad profana contagia sponte properauimus: perdidit nos aliena perfidia, parentes sensimus parricidas." Bévenot, *Sancti Cypriani Episcopi Opera*, 225. English translation from Deferrari, *Saint Cyprian Treatises*, 65.

<sup>850</sup> Mark Dalby, *Infant Communion. The New Testament to the Reformation* (Cambridge: Grove Joint Liturgical Studies, 2003), 10.

<sup>851</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

Eucharist could not remain; the draft consecrated in the blood of the Lord burst forth from the polluted vitals.<sup>852</sup>

Later on St. Augustine of Hippo (d. 430) also writing in North Africa again "seemed to affirm categorically that communion was necessary to infants for eternal life."<sup>853</sup> But it needs to be remembered that the rite of baptism to which he was accustomed considered Communion to be a constitutive part of the rite and it was unthinkable for a child to have received the water baptism without Communion also. In any case, Augustine posed a problem that even he had difficulty answering sometimes:

Augustine repeated his argument monotonously, but despite his continuing ambiguity it is clear that infant communion was the norm for him, and that he normally associated the partaking of Christ's flesh and blood with the eucharist. But he also saw baptism as a partaking of Christ's flesh and blood, and his thought could pass from baptism to the eucharist-and back again-in the course of a single sentence. Even if at times he contradicted himself, his consistent exposition of the positive benefits of baptism and of its relation to the Eucharist makes it extremely unlikely that he intended to teach the absolute necessity of infant communion.<sup>854</sup>

The perception of the need for the newly baptised infant to receive the Eucharist almost as indispensable for entrance travelled from Augustine in North Africa to other regions and it received important encouragement from Pope Gelasius

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<sup>852</sup> "Vbi uero sollemnibus adimpletis calicem diaconus offerre praesentibus coepit, et accipientibus ceteris locus eius aduenit, faciem suam paruula instinctu diuinae maiestatis auertens, os labiis obdurantibus premere, calicem recusare. Perstitit tamen diaconus et reluctanti licet de sacramento calicis infudit. Tunc sequitur singultus et uomitus: in corpore adque ore uiolato eucharistia permanere non potuit, sanctificatus in Domini sanguine potus de pollutis uisceribus erupit." *De Lapsis* 25 in Bévenot, *Sancti Cypriani Episcopi Opera*, 235. English translation from Deferrari, *Saint Cyprian Treatises*, 79.

<sup>853</sup> Dalby, *Infant Communion*, 13.

<sup>854</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

at the end of the fifth century.<sup>855</sup> A description of the Baptism in *Ordo Romanus XI*<sup>856</sup> says that after baptism “they go in to Mass and all the infants receive communion. Care is to be taken lest after they have been baptised they receive any food or suckling before they communicate.”<sup>857</sup>

It is probable that the custom of including the reception of Communion as part of the baptismal rite was introduced at the earliest stage of the evangelisation of Ireland. One of the earliest witness to this practice is from the early 800's when *Tírechán* tells the story of how Patrick baptised the two daughters of King Loíguire:

And Patrick said: 'Do you believe that through baptism you cast off the sin of your father and mother?' They answered: 'We believe.' 'Do you believe in penance after sin?' 'We believe.' 'Do you believe in life after death? Do you believe in the resurrection on the day of judgement?' 'We believe.' 'Do you believe in the unity of the Church?' 'We believe.' And they were baptized, with a white garment over their heads. And they demanded to see the face of Christ, and the holy man said to them: 'Unless you taste death you cannot see the face of Christ, and unless you receive the sacrament.' And they answered: 'Give us the sacrament so that we may see the Son, our bridegroom,' and they received the eucharist of God and fell asleep in death, and their friends placed them on one bed and covered them with their garments, and made a great lament and great keening.<sup>858</sup>

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<sup>855</sup> Kilmartin, *The Eucharist in the West*, 31-34.

<sup>856</sup> *Ordo XI* may well have appeared around 650-700 and is therefore one of the oldest *ordines* to have survived. Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 164-165.

<sup>857</sup> “Post hoc ingrediuntur ad missas et communicant omnes ipsi infants nam hoc praevidendum est ne, postquam baptizanti fuerint, ullum cibum accipiant neque ablactentur antequam communicent.” *Ordo Romanus XI*, 103 in Andrieu, *Les Ordines Romani*, 2:446. English translation from E.C. Whitaker, *Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy. Revised and Expanded Edition*. 3d ed. Maxwell E. Johnson, ed. (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2003), 251.

<sup>858</sup> “Et dixit Patricius: ‘Si creditis per baptismum patris et matris iecere peccatum?’ Responderunt: ‘Credimus.’ ‘Si poenitentiam creditis post peccatum?’ ‘Credimus.’ ‘Si creditis uitam post mortem? Si creditis resurrectionem in die iudicii?’ ‘Credimus.’ ‘Si creditis unitatem aeclesiae?’ ‘Credimus.’ Et baptizatae sunt et cadida ueste in capitibus earum. Et postulauerunt uidere faciem Christi, et dixit eis sanctus: ‘Nissi mortem gustaueritis, non potestis uidere faciem Christi, et nissi sacrificium accipietis.’ Et responderunt: ‘Da nobis sacrificium, ut possimus Filium, nostrum sponsum, uidere’, et acciperunt euchariziam Dei et dormierunt in morte, et posuerunt illas in lectulo uno uestimentis coopertas, et fecerunt ulutatum et planctum magnum amici earum.” *Tírechán III 26* in Bieler, *The Patrician Texts*, 144-145.

This is a very early Irish text that refers to the practice of giving Communion with Baptism. However, it might also be that the author considers this Communion to be the viaticum and not part of the Baptismal rite. The next important source is the rite of baptism in the *Stowe Missal*. Here the Communion of the infants forms part of the rite of Baptism. Straight after the *Pedilavium*<sup>859</sup> *Stowe* continues:

The Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ: may it avail to you unto eternal life.

Refreshed with spiritual food, restored with the heavenly food of the Body and Blood of the Lord, let us give due praise and thanks to our Lord Jesus Christ, and ask his unwearied mercy that we may possess the sacrament of the divine gift unto the increase of faith and the advancement of eternal salvation. Through. . .<sup>860</sup>

Here it is clear that the Eucharist is an integral part of Baptism, indeed coming at the end of the rite, it could be interpreted to be the crowning moment of the ceremony. The fact that at this time people usually received Christian initiation as infants, it is very clear that this rite foresees infants receiving Communion.<sup>861</sup>

The *Stowe Tract* also mentions children receiving Communion, as the instructions for the breaking of the Host instructs that "the upper right-hand (portion),

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<sup>859</sup> The *Pedilavium* was a ritual washing of the feet that was practiced in various ancient baptismal liturgies in many places including Milan, North Africa, Spain, Gaul and Syria. Maxwell E. Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation. Their Evolution and Interpretation*. (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 20. The fact that in the West Rome was the only place that did not practice this rite shows that *Stowe* is in keeping with the Ambrosian, Hispanic and Gallican sources on this point.

<sup>860</sup> "Corpus et sanguinis domini nostri iesu christi sit tibi in uitam aeternam amen. Redecti spiritalibus escis cibo caelesti corpore et sanguine domini recreati deo domino nostro iesu christo debitas laudes et gratias referamus orantes indefessam eius misericordiam ut diuini muneris sacramentum ad incrementum fidei et profectum aeternae salutis habeamus: per." *Stowe Missal* Fol 58v. and Fol 59r. in Warner, *The Stowe Missal*, 32. English translation from Whitaker, *Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy*, 283.

<sup>861</sup> Maxwell Johnson is of the opinion that the *Stowe Missal's* order of Baptism dates from the ninth century and that the infants did in fact receive Communion and that this is not an unused anachronistic rite (whereas if the manuscript gave the full texts of a Mass at this stage it would have been). Personal communication, January 12, 2005.

to innocent youths.<sup>862</sup> Centuries later Gille of Limerick recommends that the priest “ought to give communion to the baptised immediately.”<sup>863</sup>

But eventually this developed into a theological problem. On the one hand the Communion of infants was gradually removed from the rite of Baptism,<sup>864</sup> on the other hand some theologians maintained that if a baptised child died without having received Communion that child could not enter heaven.<sup>865</sup> There are traces of this discussion in Ireland. The *Corpus Missal* contains a Rite of Baptism that has no trace of the infant's receiving Communion.<sup>866</sup>

But it seems that this Communion of infants wasn't simply omitted from Baptismal rituals in Ireland, but that the gradual omission caused some discussion (perhaps between the Gaelic-Irish and the Hiberno-Vikings, who may have been closer to English practice). In 1080/1081 Lanfranc answers a question on this matter posed by Bishop Domhnall Ua hÉnna:

You may be assured that it is absolutely beyond question that neither the continental churches nor we English hold the view that you think we hold concerning infants. We do all universally believe that it is of great benefit to the people of all ages to fortify themselves by receiving the body and blood of the Lord during their lives and when they are dying. But should it happen that baptized infants leave this world at once, before they receive the body and blood of Christ, we do not in any sense believe-God forbid!-that on this account they are lost for eternity. Were that so, the

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<sup>862</sup> *Stowe Missal Tract 18*, in MacCarthy “On the Stowe Missal,” 257.

<sup>863</sup> “Communicare statim debet baptizatos.” *De Statu Ecclesiae* 192 in Fleming, *Gille of Limerick*, 156-157.

<sup>864</sup> This was probably due to a fear that the child could vomit the Communion and thus “sin” and also it has to be seen in the context of the end of the first millennium when Christians received Communion always less frequently. For more on this see Chapter 2.

<sup>865</sup> At the time this posed a particularly complex theological problem and it should be noted that “if Augustine himself could not sustain his position consistently, it was hardly to be expected that lesser minds could do so.” Dalby, *Infant Communion*, 16.

<sup>866</sup> Holland, “On the Dating of the Corpus Irish Missal,” 294.

Truth would be untrue in saying, 'He who has believed and been baptized shall be saved. And according to the prophet, 'I shall pour water upon you and you will be cleansed from all your filthiness.' All the commentators on this passage are unanimous in maintaining that it refers to baptism. The Apostle Paul says, 'As many of you as have been baptised in Christ have put on Christ. To 'put on Christ' is to have God dwelling in you through the remission of sins. For that text which the Lord utters in the Gospel, 'Unless you shall eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have life in you, 'cannot be applied to all men universally in the sense of eating in the mouth. Many of the holy martyrs, racked by various tortures, departed from the body without even being baptized. Yet the Church reckons them to be saved, following the Lord's assurance that 'He who shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my father who is in heaven.' Again canon law directs that an unbaptised infant at the point of death be baptized by a lay believer if no priest is available; nor does it cut him off from the community of the faithful if he dies immediately after. Therefore the Lord's saying must be understood in this way. Let every believer who can understand what is a divine mystery eat and drink the flesh and blood of Christ not only with his physical mouth but also with a tender and loving heart: that is to say, with love and in the purity of a good conscience rejoicing that Christ took on flesh for our salvation, hung on the cross, rose and ascended; and following Christ's example and sharing in his suffering so far as human weakness can bear it and divine grace deigns to allow him.<sup>867</sup>

Here it seems that the practice of not including Communion was causing some doubts in Ireland. Lanfranc gives a very reasonable answer and while he

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<sup>867</sup> "Reura et procul pulsa omni ambiguitate sciatis neque transmarinas aecclesias neque nos Anglos hanc de infantibus tenere sententiam quam putatis. Credimus enim generaliter omnes omnibus aetatibus plurimum expedire tam uiuentes quam morientes Dominici corporis et sanguinis perceptione sese munire. Nec tamen, si prius quam corpus Christi et sanguinem sumant contingat baptizatos statim de hoc in aeternum petite. Alioquin Veritas non esset uerax quae dicit: 'Qui crediderit et baptizatus fuerit, saluus erit.' et per prophetam: 'Effundam super uos aquam / mundam, et mundabimini ab omnibus inquinamentis uestris. Quod de baptismo esse dictum omnes huius sententiae expositors concorditer asseuerant. Et Petrus apostolus: 'Et uos nunc similes formae saluos facit baptisma. Et Paulus apostolus: 'Quotquot in Christo baptizati estis, Christum induistis.' Christum est enim induere, habitorem Deum per remissionem peccatorum in se habere. Nam sententia illa quam Dominus in euangelio dicit: 'Nisi manducaueritis carnem Filii hominis et biberitis eius sanguinem, non habebitis uitam in uobis', quantum ad comestionem oris non potest generaliter dicta esse de omnibus. Plerique etenim sanctorum martirum ante baptismum quoque diuersis excruciatu poenis de corpore migrauerunt. Eos tamen in numero martirum computat et saluos credit aecclesia, per illud testimonium Domini quo dicitur: 'Qui me confessus fuerit coram hominibus, confitebor et ego eum coram Patre meo qui est in caelo.' Infantem quoque non baptizatum, si morte imminente urgeatur, a fideli laico si praesbiter desit baptizari posse canones precipiunt; nec eum tamen si statim moriatur a consortio fidelium seiungunt. Necesse est ergo predictam Domini sententiam sic intelligi, quatinus fidelis quisque diuini misterii per intelligentiam capax carnem Christi et sanguinem non solum ore corporis sed etiam amore et suauitate cordis comedat et bibat: uidelicet amando et in conscientia pura dulce habendo quod pro salute nostra Christus / carnem assumpsit, pependit resurrexit ascendit, et imitando uestigia eius, et communicando passionibus ipsius in imitando uestigia eius, et communicando passionibus ipsius in quantum humana infirmitas patitur et diuina ei gratia largiri dignatur." Letter 49, 13-49 in Helen Clover and Margaret Gibson, eds., *The Letters of Lanfranc, Bishop of Canterbury* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 156-159.

certainly does not condemn the practice of infants receiving Communion, neither does he recommend that this practice be adopted where it has already been omitted.

This is one of the few cases when we also have a Scottish parallel. A letter survives from Pope Paschal II to Bishop Turgot of the Scots. Here Paschal answers a number of questions, including one about infant Communion. Bishop Turgot had asked these at the request of King Alexander. The letter probably dates to about 1112-1114. It was originally a cover letter accompanying a (now-lost) book. Speaking on infant Communion Pope Paschal says:

From ancient times the Roman Church has given the Body and Blood to those capable of receiving them. To those not capable [of receiving them] an infusion of the Blood alone is given to revive and conserve them. Therefore what the Lord said in the Gospel, "unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood you do not have life within you," applies only to those who are capable [of receiving them].<sup>868</sup>

Here the Pope seems to advocate that infants be given Communion in the form of a drop from the chalice as they were "not capable" of receiving in the normal way (i.e. the host).<sup>869</sup>

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<sup>868</sup> "Corpus et sanguinem Domini Romana ecclesia ex antiquo tempore capacibus tribuit. Non capaces solius sanguinis infusione reficere consuevit. Denique quod Dominus dicit in evangelio, 'Nisi manducaveritis carnem meam et biberitis sanguinem meum non habebitis vitam in vobis,' de capacibus dicit." Robert Somerville, *Scotia Pontificia: Papal Letters to Scotland Before the Pontificate of Innocent III* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982) 21. English translation my own. For a good introduction to the historical background of this problem see David Bethel, "Two Letters of Pope Paschal II to Scotland," *Scottish Historical Review*, 49 (1970), 33-45, n.b. 39-40. Bethel notes that in the Scottish manuscript tradition this letter or Pope Paschal II is sometimes joined to that of Lanfranc's that was examined above. he also points out that Lanfranc gives a clearer answer. However, Bethel's treatment of the liturgical context is confused as he seems to indiscriminately take elements from different millennia and continents and apply them to the Scottish situation.

<sup>869</sup> Holland, "On the Dating of the Corpus Irish Missal," 295.

## CHAPTER 4

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND ICONOGRAPHIC SOURCES

#### Introduction

It would be easy to reduce the study of the Eucharist in Pre-Norman Ireland to a study of those surviving texts that deal with the Eucharist. However this would be a mistake and greatly impoverish such a study. Obviously texts are of great importance in this study, but even different Eucharistic liturgies celebrated with the celebrant using the exact same ritual text can be vastly different. As an example of this we can note that the four hundred years after the liturgical renewal of the Council of Trent was the period which saw the least change and greatest uniformity in the liturgical texts dealing with the celebration of the Eucharist. Yet in his history of the liturgy in this time James White states that his “central historical thesis is that the worship life of Roman Catholicism was in constant transition during this period despite the intransigence of liturgical texts.”<sup>870</sup>

Today any study of the Eucharist in Pre-Norman Ireland can, and, indeed, must, benefit from the multitude of studies being carried out in the fields of archaeology, history of architecture and art history in Pre-Norman Ireland which have flourished in the last number of years. This Chapter will attempt to survey the vast corpus of work being carried out in this field and attempt to apply this directly to

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<sup>870</sup> *Roman Catholic Worship: Trent to Today*, 2d ed. (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2003), xiii.



the Eucharistic Practice of the Pre-Norman Irish Church. As the physical setting of the liturgy is of such great importance we will naturally start by looking at the church buildings in use in Ireland in this period, studying both wooden and stone churches as well as additional structures such as Round Towers and high Crosses. We will also consider the subject of stational liturgy and then continue with the Irish Romanesque period which set the scene for the Norman Arrival. The second part of the Chapter will examine surviving altar plate, and taking occasion of this the subjects of bread and wine in early Ireland will be examined. The idiosyncratically Irish use of chrisms will be examined, this time from the point of view of physical survivals. This Chapter will conclude with a consideration of the use of the *flabellum* and the Book of Kells which contains a unique corpus of Eucharistic iconography.

Obviously it is impossible to make a clear-cut distinction between textual and physical sources, so I have reserved textual treatment to church buildings for this chapter. Also once again the closer one gets to the Norman arrival the more physical evidence pertaining to Eucharistic practice remains. This is perhaps also influenced by sociological factors involving the specialisation of master-craftsmen and other professionals in the ecclesiastical arts involved in the production of ecclesial buildings and furnishings. Indeed as time passes one is more likely to find that individual ecclesiastics were scribes, carpenters and master-craftsmen in their own right.<sup>871</sup>

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<sup>871</sup> Richardson, "Visual Arts and Society," in Ó Cróinín, ed., *Prehistoric and Early Ireland*, 699, and Stalley "Ecclesial Architecture Before 1169," in *Ibid.*, 734.

## 4.1 The Architectural Setting for the Celebration of the Eucharist in Pre-Norman Ireland

### 4.1.1 Pre-Romanesque Irish Churches

The principal functions of churches<sup>872</sup> are as buildings where the Eucharist may be celebrated (although throughout this period it was also common for the *Liturgy of the Hours* to be celebrated in churches). While, particularly in recent years, much new study has been carried out about early Irish churches, nonetheless it is still the case that "our knowledge of early Irish churches is still very far from complete."<sup>873</sup>

Within the Roman Empire, church buildings had taken on the form of existing buildings. Houses and temples were converted into Christian churches and finally the Basilica was adopted for Christian usage.<sup>874</sup> It is significant that the basilica form was chosen as "unlike traditional temples, whose main feature was the enshrining of a cult object, the basilica (the word comes from the Greek for king: *basileus*) was a

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<sup>872</sup> N.B. the word "Church" needs to be understood as referring to the Universal Church or the local Church in a particular diocese or area whereas the word "church" refers to an individual church building (however the forms of the individual quotations have been respected.) The word "oratory" is often used in English translations of texts and has passed from this to the relevant literature (n.b, this usage is respected in quotations). However, this use of oratory in current English has implications of small size that the original texts do not have and, therefore, in this work the less ambiguous term of "church" is preferred.

From a theological point of view the church building obtains its principal dignity and importance through the fact that it is the physical place where the Church of God (i.e. his people) meet together. Hence the early Christian term for the building as the *domus ecclesiae* (house of the Church) is particularly apt. It is only in the High Middle Ages, the period after the end of this thesis, that the importance of the church as the place of reservation of the Eucharistic Species gains prominence. For the principal theological meaning see Edmund Hill, "Church" in Joseph A. Komonchak, Mary Collins and Dermot A. Lane, eds., *The New Dictionary of Theology* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1987), 185-201.

<sup>873</sup> Ann Hamlin "The study of early Irish churches" in Ní Catháin and Richter, eds., *Ireland und Europa*, 117.

<sup>874</sup> Louis Bouyer, *Liturgy and Architecture* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1967), 39-60.

large building originally meant to house the conduct of public business, whether a law court, an imperial audience chamber, or even a market."<sup>875</sup>

But Ireland was not part of this Empire and at the time Christianity reached Ireland it is hard to say much about the architectural setting of the first Eucharistic liturgies, although a hint at early church buildings may be found in Patrick's *Confessions* where he mentions pious women throwing their gifts onto the altar.<sup>876</sup>

There are many textual references to the use of wood in church building as a characteristic of the Irish Church. The erstwhile standard work on Irish ecclesiastical architecture states that the first mark of early Irish ecclesiastic construction is the "well-authenticated tradition that timber was the material normally used for several centuries by the Irish in church building."<sup>877</sup> Stone churches were typically seen by Leask (and the many scholars who follow his theories) as a particular adaptation made by those building on the "exposed and treeless coast lands of Ireland, remote from the woodlands of the interior."<sup>878</sup> But this view is not completely accurate as, particularly in the tenth and eleventh centuries, there is a wide distribution of stone

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<sup>875</sup> Baldovin, "The Empire Baptized," 80. This new setting for Christian worship encouraged the introduction of processions into the liturgy. *Ibid.*, 78-84. The concrete manifestation of this phenomenon in the Irish context will be examined below in the section on stational liturgy.

<sup>876</sup> R.P.C. Hanson, "The Mission of St. Patrick," in Mackey, ed., *An Introduction to Celtic Christianity*, 39. Although I consider it somewhat anachronistic to maintain with Hanson that this reference necessarily implies that Patrick himself constructed purpose-built wooden church buildings! "Although I am unskilled in every way I have tried somehow to keep my reserve even from the Christian brethren and the virgins of Christ and the religious women who used to offer me little presents unasked. They would even leave some of their jewellery on the altar and when I insisted on giving them back they were offended." "Nam 'esti imperitus sum in omnibus' tamen conatus sum quippiam seruare me etiam et fratribus Xpisti et mulieribus religiosis, quae mihi ultronea manuscula donabant et super altare iactabant ex ornamentis suis et iterum reddebam illis et aduersus me scandalizabantur cur hoc faciebam." *Confessio* 49 in Duffy, *Patrick in His Own Words*, 122-123.

<sup>877</sup> Harold G. Leask, *Irish Churches and Monastic Buildings I The First Phases and the Romanesque* (Dundalk: Dundalgan Press, 1955), 1.

<sup>878</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

churches even in areas where wood was plentiful.<sup>879</sup> And already in the year 840 the annals give examples of stone being used for construction of churches even in places with no shortage of wood.<sup>880</sup>

Nonetheless, in general timber and a type of wattle building was the form of secular construction in Ireland. The building was outlined with wooden posts, these were joined together by woven reeds and the result was probably plastered in clay.<sup>881</sup> Obviously little remains today of these structures. Ancient farmsteads and dwellings constructed of this material would often have been surrounded by an enclosure, and these forms of construction may have been taken over into ecclesial usage.<sup>882</sup> However in pre-Christian Ireland houses were normally round, unlike houses in contemporary Britain, Scandinavia and the Continent. The first churches were always rectangular and this new form eventually took root in most domestic architecture. This could show the idea of sacred space.<sup>883</sup>

But while the shape of the buildings may have changed with the coming of Christianity, the traditional Irish use of wood and posts and wattle as the main materials for construction remained in use in Ireland throughout the pre-Norman

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<sup>879</sup> Peter Harbison, "Early Irish Churches," in Heinz Löwe, ed., *Die Iren und Europa im früheren Mittelalter* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1982), 2: 620. Also, the *Book of Armagh* tells how in Foirrgea Patrick "made there a square earthen church of clay because no timber was near." "et fecit ibi aeclesiam terrenam de humo quadratam, quia non prope erat silua." *Tírechán* III 44 in Bieler, *The Patrician Texts*, 158-159. In this text when there is no wood, clay is used and it seems that the possibility of using stone was not contemplated.

<sup>880</sup> Manning, "References to Church Buildings in the Annals," 38. The first reference to a stone church is the entry for 789 (§8) in the *Annals of Armagh* that mentions an *oratorii lapidei* (stone church) in Armagh.

<sup>881</sup> Edwards, "The Archaeology of Early Medieval Ireland," 245-246.

<sup>882</sup> Hughes and Hamlin, *The Modern Traveller to the Early Irish Church*, 54.

<sup>883</sup> Jenny White Marshall and Grellan D. Rourke, *High Island, An Irish Monastery in the Atlantic*, (Dublin: Townhouse, 2000), 51-55.

period. This was one of the features of Irish building even for important buildings. Even when Henry II visited Ireland in 1171 a wooden palace was built for him.<sup>884</sup>

Bede provides us with one of the most famous literary references to this practice:

[Finan] constructed a church on the Island of Lindisfarne suitable for an episcopal see, building it after the Irish method, not of stone, but of hewn oak, thatching with reeds; later on the most reverend Archbishop Theodore consecrated it in honour of the blessed Apostle Peter. It was Eadbert, who was Bishop of Lindisfarne, who removed the thatch and had the whole of it, both roof and walls, covered with sheets of lead.<sup>885</sup>

Indeed, up until the Norman invasion of the twelfth century, Ireland maintained its own unique building style. Even St. Bernard himself approvingly informs us of how the young St. Malachy built a church of “polished boards, firmly and tightly fastened together –an Irish work finely wrought.”<sup>886</sup>

As virtually no trace remains of the pre-Norman wooden structures the various studies have concentrated on the stone churches. Nonetheless, the general assumption that the early Irish stone churches would have been structurally and

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<sup>884</sup> Flanagan, *Irish Society, Anglo-Norman Settlers, Angevin Kingship*, 172.

<sup>885</sup> “Qui in insula Lindisfarnensi fecit ecclesiam episcopali sedi congruam, quam tamen more Scottorum non de lapide sed de robore secto totam composuit atque harundine textit; quam tempore sequente reuerentissimus archiepiscopus Theodorus in honore beati apostoli Petri dedicauit. Sed et episcopus loci ipsius eadberet ablata harundine plumbi lamminis eam totam, hoc est et tectum et ipsos quoque parietes eius, cooperire curauit.” *Ecclesiastical History*, iii.25, Colgrave and Mynors, 294-295.

<sup>886</sup> “Porro oratorium intra paucos dies consummatum est de lignis quidem laeuigatis, sed apte firmiterque contextum, opus Scoticum, pulchrum satis.” *Vita Sancti Malachiae Episcopi* VI.14 in Leclercq and Rochais, eds., *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, 323. English Translation from Meyer, *The Life and Death of Saint Malachy the Irishman*, 32.

architecturally comparable to their wooden counterparts still stands.<sup>887</sup> A modern description of these churches describes them as

A gabled building with strong corner posts, the walls built with planks or planed logs. The buildings were evidently rectangular in plan, sometimes with a side chamber or portico attached to the walls. The steeply pitched roofs were usually covered with shingles though there were occasions when sheets of lead were used. There are suggestions that the shingles were sometimes cut in decorative patterns and ornamental finials embellished the tops of the gables. Inside there were wooden floors, evidently fashioned out of boards.<sup>888</sup>

While there are no archaeological remains of Irish wooden churches we do have some textual evidence. An oft-quoted text from Cogitosus' *Life of St. Brigit* about the cathedral church of Kildare is of the greatest significance:

Neither should one pass over in silence the miracle wrought in the repairing of the church in which the glorious bodies of both – namely Archbishop Conleth and our most flourishing virgin Brigit – are laid on the right and left of the ornate altar and rest in tombs adorned with a refined profusion of gold, silver, gems and precious stones with gold and silver chandeliers hanging from above and different images presenting a variety of carvings and colours.

Thus, on account of the growing number of the faithful of both sexes, a new reality is born in an age-old setting, that is a church with its spacious site and its awesome height towering upwards. It is adorned with painted pictures and inside there are three chapels which are spacious and divided by board walls under the single roof of the cathedral church. The first of these walls, which is painted with pictures and covered with wall hangings, stretches width wise in the east part of the church from one wall to the other. In it there are two doors, one at either end, and through the door situated on the right, one enters the sanctuary to the altar where the archbishop offers the Lord's sacrifice together with his monastic chapter and those appointed to the sacred mysteries. Through the other door, situated on the left side of the

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<sup>887</sup> Studies have been made comparing the surviving Irish stone churches with manuscript illustrations and stone carvings and with contemporary surviving Scandinavian wooden and wattle buildings. These have come to the conclusion that the early Irish churches were probably related to their wooden counterparts in size as well as form, the *antae* and the *finial* being two of the more common characteristics of wooden structures that, although they serve no function in stone buildings, nonetheless are very common in the surviving early Irish stone churches. Hughes and Hamlin, *The Modern Traveller to the Early Irish Church*, 59-67

<sup>888</sup> Stalley, "Ecclesiastical Architecture Before 1169," 722-723.

aforesaid cross-wall, only the abbess and her nuns and faithful widows enter to partake of the banquet of the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

The second of these walls divides the floor of the building into two equal parts and stretches from the west wall to the wall running across the church. This church contains many windows and one finely wrought portal on the right side through which the priests and the faithful of the male sex enter the church, and a second portal on the left side through which the nuns and congregation of women faithful are accustomed to enter. And so, in one vast basilica, a large congregation of people of varying status, rank, sex and local origin, with partitions placed between them, prays to the omnipotent Master, differing in status, but one in spirit.<sup>889</sup>

Although this may be the most famous of the early Irish literary descriptions of churches, it needs to be noted that this was not a typical church. It was a cathedral church, and the description comes from a time when Kildare was struggling with Armagh for primacy of the Irish Church. Cogitosus composed his *Life of St. Brigit* as part of this campaign. Unfortunately today there are no archaeological remains of the church described by Cogitosus, the Church of Ireland cathedral stands on the traditional site. While there was an obvious interest on Cogitosus' part to emphasize the grandeur of the cathedral of Kildare, he was probably correct in his description of the extending and modification of the monastic church to accommodate the great

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<sup>889</sup> "Nec et de miraculo in reparatione ecclesiae tacendum est, in qua gloriosa amborum, hoc est episcopi Conleath et hujus virginis sanctae Brigidae corpora a dextris et a sinistris altaris decorati, in monumentis posita ornatis, vario cultu auri et argenti et gemmarum, et pretiosi lapidis, atque coronis aureis et argenteis desuper pendentibus requiescunt. Ecclesia namque crescente numero fidelium et utroque sexu, solo spatiosa, et in altum minaci proceritate porrecta, ac decorata pictis tabulatis, tria intrinsecus habens oratoria, ampla et divisa parietibus tabulatis, sub uno culmine majoris domus, in quo unus paries decoratus, et imaginibus depictus, ac linteamini tectus, per latitudinem in orientali ecclesiae parte, a pariete ad alterum parietem ecclesiae se tetendit; qui in suis extremitatibus duo habet in sua ostia; et per unum ostium in externa parte positum intratur ad sanctuarium ad altare summus pontifex cum sua regulari scola et his sacris sunt deputati ministeriis, sacra ad dominica et immolare sacrificia. Et per alterum ostium in sinistra parte parietis supra dicti et transversi positum, abbatissa cum suis puellis et viduis fidelibus tantum iverat [*Leg. intrat*], ut convivio corporis et sanguinis fruantur Jesu Christi. Atque alius paries pavementum domus in duas aequales dividens partes, a parte orientali usque ad transversum in latitudine parietem extensus est. Et haec tenet Ecclesia in se multas fenestras, et unam in latere dextro ornatam portam, per quam sacerdotes et populus fidelis masculini generis sexus intrat Ecclesiam; et alteram portam in sinistro latere, per quam virgines et fidelium feminarum congregatio intrare solet. Et sic in una basilica maxima, populus grandis in ordine, et gradibus, et sexu, et locis diversis interjectis et inter se partibus, diverso ordine et uno animo Dominum omnipotentem orat." Cogitosus *Vita Brigitae* 32.1-3., PL 75: 788-789. English translation from Connolly and Picard, "Cogitosius's *Life of St. Brigit*," 25-26.

number of the faithful and to house the relics of the two saints.<sup>890</sup> These relics were particularly important in contrast to Armagh which did not possess the body of Patrick.<sup>891</sup>

Another textual description of an early wooden church comes from the *Hisperica Famina*. This is a very complicated work that still poses many unanswered questions. It seems that it comes from an Irish milieu and was probably a text associated with a Christian school. It contains many obscure words and may have had its value as a compilation of difficult words and phrases for the student to master and it seems to have been written some time between the mid-sixth to the mid-seventh century.<sup>892</sup> The text doesn't have a coherent whole, but rather is made up of individual pieces. One of these deals with a church:

This wooden oratory is fashioned out of candle-shaped beams;  
 it has sides joined by four-fold fastenings;  
 the square foundations of the said temple give it stability,  
 from which springs a solid beamwork of massive enclosure;  
 it has a vaulted roof above;  
 square beams are placed in the ornamented roof.  
 It has a holy altar in the centre,  
 on which the assembled priests celebrate the Mass.  
 It has a single entrance from the western boundary,

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<sup>890</sup> It would be important to consider whether this church in Kildare was thronged all the time by multitudes of local lay folk or whether they only travelled there for the great feast days. Further consideration of this problem will be made below in the section of stational liturgy.

<sup>891</sup> Various modern reconstructions of the cathedral can be seen in Neuman De Vegvar, "Romanitas and Realpolitik in Cogitosus' Description of the Church of St. Brigit, Kildare," in Martin Carver (ed.), *The Cross Goes North. Process of Conversion in Northern Europe, AD 300-750*, (Suffolk: York Medieval Press, 2003), 153-170. She sees a strong Roman influence, particularly with the style of liturgy as described by *Ordo Romanus I*, in the design of this church. However there is no evidence of direct influence of the *Ordines Romani* in Ireland, as no manuscripts of the *Ordines* remain from Ireland or British or Continental Irish centres. Nonetheless, as was seen in Chapter 2, these documents and their style of liturgy were to become very common in France between 700-750. Vogel, "Les Échanges Liturgiques," 217-229.

<sup>892</sup> Michael W. Herren, *The Hisperica Famina: I. The A-Text. A New Critical Edition with English Translation and Philological Commentary* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1974), 38-39.



which is closed by a wooden door that seals the warmth.  
 An assembly of planks comprises the extensive portico;  
 there are four steeples at the top.  
 The chapel contains innumerable objects,  
 which I shall not struggle to unroll from my wheel of words.<sup>893</sup>

While this is an interesting text, it is hard to interpret it. Herren's translation would suggest a wooden building with the altar in the centre and having four steeples. However this is not the only interpretation. Niall Brady points out that centre need not be the "geometrical centre" but could refer, rather, "to anywhere on the central axis."<sup>894</sup> He also posits that the building may be on the same scale as the Cathedral in Kildare and that the four "steeples" would be better understood as the *finials* which are at the terminals of some stone churches and in some representations of churches, such as the Book of Kells.<sup>895</sup>

However we interpret these texts, they do give the impression that an early Irish wooden church could be something bigger than is normally imagined.<sup>896</sup>

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<sup>893</sup> "Hoc arboreum candelatis plasmatum est oratorium tabulis, gemellis conserta biiug[u]is artat latera; quadrigona edicti stabilitant fundamenta templi, quis densum globoso munimine creuit tabulatum, supernam compaginat camaram, quadrigona comptis plextra sunt sita tectis. Ageam copulat in gremio aram, cui collecti cerimoniant uates missam. Unicum ab occiduo limite amplectitur ostium, quod arborea strictis fotis cluditur regia. Extensum tabulosa stipat porticum collectura, quaternas summo nectit pinnas. Innumera congellat plasmamina, quae non loquelofo explicare famulor turno." *Hesperica Famina* 547-560 in *ibid.*, 108-109.

<sup>894</sup> "De Oratorio: *Hesperica Famina* and church building," *Peritia* xi (1997): 329-330.

<sup>895</sup> *Ibid.*, 333, see Plate 2.

<sup>896</sup> An interesting theory has been proposed by Patrick Wallace on the basis of his study of tenth and eleventh century buildings of Viking Dublin. In Viking construction the posts were not placed at the corners of the building but in the centre and a roof frame was placed on these so that walls were not weight bearing and might have left no trace. If this were the case it would dramatically increase the size of the early churches so that the area enclosed by a roof could be up to three times greater than others have projected. However, this theory rests on shaky grounds as it is unlikely that early Irish church-builders would have used later Scandinavian construction techniques, the iconographic portrayals of early Irish churches show steep pitched roofs (a style that was carried over in many later stone churches) which would have been difficult to reconcile with this construction technique and the general lack of hard archaeological evidence on these earlier wooden constructions. See Patrick Wallace, "Irish Early Christian 'Wooden' Oratories – a Suggestion," *North Munster Antiquities Journal* 24 (1982): 19-23.

Another literary indication of a large wooden church is an entry for the year 850 in the *Annals of Ulster*:

Cinaed son of Conaing, king of Cianacht, rebelled against Mael Sechnaill with the support of the foreigners, and plundered the Uí Néill from the Sinann to the sea, both churches and states, and he deceitfully sacked the island of Loch Gabor, levelling it to the ground, and the oratory of Treóit, with two hundred and sixty people in it, was burned by him.<sup>897</sup>

In order to fit that many people in the church, even if they were huddled together and more people than would normally attend a Eucharist in the church were present, the church "must have measured at least 12 by 8 meters, and probably much more."<sup>898</sup>

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<sup>897</sup> "Cinaedh m. Conaing, rex Ciannachtae, du frithtuidecht Mael Sechnaill a nneurt Call cor indridh Ou Neill o Sinaind co mm[uir] etir cella 7 tuatha, 7 cor[o] ort innsi Locha Gabur dolose corbo comardd fria lar, 7 coro loscad leis derthach Treoit 7 tri .xx. dec di doinibh ann." *The Annals of Ulster* 850 §3 in Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill, eds., *The Annals of Ulster*, 308-309. Note that I have emended the translation of Mac Niocaill and Mac Airt. The number of people in the church was actually 260 and not 70. The original text at this point reads "coro loscad leis derthach Treoit 7 tri .xx.it dec di doinibh ann," The number is given as "tri .xx.it dec." Mac Niocaill and Mac Airt have expanded this as "tri fichit dec," which translates as  $3 \times 20 + 10 = 70$ . However this is not a correct reading of the syntax of the Irish phrase, which actually means "thirteen times twenty," i.e. 260. I am indebted to Dr. Colmán Etchingham for his help in reconciling the various translations of this passage.

<sup>898</sup> Stalley, "Ecclesiastical Architecture Before 1169," 721. While there is little archaeological evidence for the size of the wooden churches, a Middle Irish manuscript, probably dating to the end of our period when stone churches were more common, "establishes a rate of payment for construction of a *dairthech* or wooden church based on its width, starting with a base design of 10 feet working up to a large church, defined as more than 15 feet wide." De Vegvar. "Romanitas and Realpolitik," 161. By way of comparison the famous small stone church of Gallarus Oratory (Plate 1) has the dimensions of 6.86 by 5.74 meters. Judith Cuppage, *Archaeological Survey of the Dingle Peninsula. A Description of the Filed Antiquities of the Barony of Corca Dhuibhne from the Mesolithic Period to the 17<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.* (Ballyferriter: Oideracht Chorca Dhuibhne, 1986), 286.

There are many different mentions of churches in the annals, the four main words being used in them are *oratorium*, *dairthech*, *damliac* and *teampall*.<sup>899</sup> Unfortunately most English translations of the annals mistranslate some of these words, in particular *dairthech* is translated as “oratory,” which gives the false impression that these were small structures, whereas this was not necessarily the case. In his analysis of the references to church buildings in the annals Conleth Manning reaches the conclusion that:

In the earlier period (760-965) *dairthech* is very strong with 51.35% of the references as against *damliac* with only 18.9%. In the second period (965-1170) *dairthech* has dropped to 21.3% but *damliac* has not risen greatly, amounting to only 27.87% of the references. This surprisingly low figure for stone churches is largely due to the use of the word *teampall* probably indicating in most cases a stone church. After 1060 it becomes the most commonly used word for a church, accounting for 45.9% of all references in the second period. The use of the word *oratorium*, probably mainly for wooden churches for the earlier period while the use of *teampall*, probably mainly for stone churches, would greatly increase the proportion of stone churches for the second period. Therefore the majority of churches referred to in the annals up to AD 965 were of timber while from then up to 1170 the majority are likely to have been of stone.<sup>900</sup>

But until any new evidence is uncovered, study of early Irish churches must pay a greater attention to the remains of the stone churches. While there are some early stone churches, it seems that as time progresses a larger percentage of stone

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<sup>899</sup> Manning, “References to Church Buildings in the Annals,” 37. For more on another less used term *Reiclés* see A. Mac Donald, “Reiclés in the Irish Annals to AD 1200” *Peritia*, xii (1999): 259-275.

<sup>900</sup> Manning, “References to Church Buildings in the Annals,” 41. However care needs to be taken in assigning too rigid an interpretations to these terms over the centuries. It could well be the case, for example, that *dairthech* might have lost its wooden connotation in later texts and may well simply mean church.

churches are built.<sup>901</sup> The gradual replacing of earlier wooden structures with stone ones could be borne out by the fact that archaeologists have found at least "five instances where traces of wooden structures have been uncovered beneath stone churches,"<sup>902</sup> and, as recent studies in dendrochronology<sup>903</sup> have shown, this change in material may also have been spurred on as a pragmatic response to a scarcity of large oaks at the beginning of the tenth century.<sup>904</sup> But in the twelfth century, St. Bernard reports of Malachy's monastic community at Bangor reacting to his proposal to build a stone church with the rejoinder that "we are Irishmen not Frenchmen,"<sup>905</sup> thus showing, perhaps, the continuation of a popular association of wooden churches as being traditionally Irish.<sup>906</sup>

Harbison divides the surviving stone pre-Romanesque churches into four categories: 1. Rectangular oratories built in the corbelling technique (as Gallarus, Plate 1), 2. Simple rectangular structures with upright walls (with 2 sub-groups, a.

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<sup>901</sup> Although we are reminded that "contrary to the prevailing impression, the stone church (or *daimhliag*) was not fireproof, since such buildings were generally covered by timber-framed roofs." Stalley, "Ecclesiastical Architecture Before 1169," 725.

<sup>902</sup> Harbison, "Early Irish Churches," 627.

<sup>903</sup> Dendrochronology is the "science of dating events and environmental variations by means of the comparative study of the growth rings in (ancient) timber." Pershal, ed., *The New Oxford Dictionary of English*, s.v. "Dendrochronology."

<sup>904</sup> Edwards, "The Archaeology of Early Medieval Ireland," 300.

<sup>905</sup> "Scoti sumus, non Galli." *Vita Sancti Malachiae Episcopi* XXVIII.61 in Leclercq and Rochais, eds., *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, 365. English Translation from Meyer, *The Life and Death of Saint Malachy the Irishman*, 77.

<sup>906</sup> However Ireland was not the only place where wood was used in the construction of churches. The only surviving wooden church from the British Isles is in Essex and there are many wooden churches in Scandinavia and excavations after the destruction of World War II have also unearthed a number of examples of wooden churches under later stone churches in the Netherlands and Germany. Christie Håkon, Olaf Olsen and H.M. Taylor. "The Wooden Church of St. Andrew at Greensted, Essex." *The Antiquaries Journal* 59 (1979): 105.

with roof originally made of thatch or shingles<sup>907</sup> and b. with stone roof) 3. Simple rectangular structure with the addition of antae and 4. Churches consisting of a rectangular nave with a contemporary but smaller rectangular chancel.<sup>908</sup>

In the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries many churches with "coeval nave and chancel" were built and chancels were added to older churches also at this time.<sup>909</sup> The fact that earlier churches did not have a separate chancel was not due to any architectural problems in their construction and their introduction at this time may have been under the influence of a desire at this time to bring the spatial setting of the liturgy more into line with Continental practices.<sup>910</sup> The early single-celled churches seem to have exhibited very little variety in their construction so that "most stone churches of the pre-Romanesque age must have looked remarkably similar."<sup>911</sup> But before this time most Irish stone churches were built as a single-chambered structure, oftentimes with a length to breadth ratio of 3:2.<sup>912</sup>

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<sup>907</sup> In the Isle of Man archaeological evidence suggests that the churches there may have been thatched. A. M. Cubbon, "The Early Church in the Isle of Man," in Susan M. Pearce, ed., *The Early Church in Western Britain and Ireland. Studies Presented to C. A. Raleigh Radford Arising From a Conference Organised in his Honour by the Devon Archaeological Society and Exeter City Museum* (Oxford, BAR British Series 102, 1982), 276. The twelfth century *Irish life of Colum Cille* (33) speaks of St. Columba sending his monks "into the wood to cut wattles to roof a church of his in Derry" ["*isincoillid do buain choelaig do cúmtach eclaisi accai i nDaire.*"] in Herbert, *Iona, Kells and Derry*, 230, 256

<sup>908</sup> "Early Irish Churches," 618-619.

<sup>909</sup> Leask, *Irish Churches and Monastic Buildings*, 76. It seems not unreasonable to assume that the earliest churches with coeval nave and chancel may belong to the tenth century and that the addition of chancels to single-chamber churches has an equal antiquity.

<sup>910</sup> Stalley, "Ecclesiastical Architecture Before 1169," 730. It could also be symptomatic of a new emphasis of actual regular attendance to the Eucharist by the laity.

<sup>911</sup> *Ibid.*, 729.

<sup>912</sup> *Ibid.*, 728.

The west wall of the early churches invariably contained a lintelled doorway with inclined jambs, framed in some cases by an 'architrave' band projecting from the surface in thin relief, as at Tuamgraney. Though deceptively simple in form, the doorways are built of well-dressed stone, robust and imposing in appearance.<sup>913</sup>

The most famous and, incidentally, the largest surviving church from early Ireland is the so-called Cathedral of Clonmacnoise. The present structure "consists of a simple rectangular church measuring 18.8 m by 8.7 m internally, with antae at all four corners and an attached sacristy with accommodation above on the south side."<sup>914</sup> The church has been rebuilt on a number of occasions, and it seems that the original church was slightly wider than the modern one measuring "internally 10.7m north-south and 18.8m east-west"<sup>915</sup> so that the west doorway would not have been off-centre as it is today. Due to the absence of surviving features it is hard to give it any definite date. Documentary sources point to an early tenth century date. Manning accepts the *Chronicum Scotorum* date of 909<sup>916</sup> and sees its construction as marking "the culmination of a successful partnership between Clonmacnoise and the Clann Cholmáin dynasty in whose territory it lay."<sup>917</sup> This building is large enough for a fair-sized congregation, and would not have been very out of place on the Continent.

When looking at the remains of Irish churches from this period, there is a danger of, almost unconsciously, comparing the present-day remains of the earliest surviving Irish churches with those of England or the Continent and being unduly

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<sup>913</sup> Ibid., 729.

<sup>914</sup> Conleth Manning, "Clonmacnoise Cathedral" in Heather A. King, ed., *Clonmacnoise Studies Volume 1 Seminar Papers 1994*, (Dublin, Dúchas: The Heritage Service, 1998), 57.

<sup>915</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>916</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>917</sup> Ibid., 72.

influenced by the fact that the Irish remains are, in general, significantly smaller than the others. This is because the extant Irish church ruins often date to a period earlier than those from England and on the Continent, where early churches were often replaced by later structures. In Gaul, for example, "if a monastery was at all important, its buildings were restored and rebuilt again and again over the centuries and were inhabited, perhaps down to 1789 and beyond."<sup>918</sup> But this is not to say that the pre-Carolingian monastic church in Gaul was that different to what would have existed in Ireland at the same time:

Not only were monastic churches small, but also their plans were very simple. In most cases they were single-aisled, rectangular buildings, occasionally with a small hemispherical, rectangular or polygonal apse. Real elaboration of church plans, as far as monasteries were concerned, did not come until the Carolingian period. It was then that the size of church buildings increased dramatically, in one case at least beyond the limits of endurance of the monks who had to build them, when the monks of Fulda rebelled and complained to Charlemagne about the 'oversized and superfluous building' being planned by Abbot Ratger.<sup>919</sup>

This is, in fact, supported by an analysis of the actual Irish church buildings that remain from this period. The dimensions of these surviving churches, which are generally simple unicameral building, would not have been unusual dimensions when compared with Continental churches:

Take, for instance, the six extant principal churches of known area which appear to have been mentioned in the annals before c.1050. Of these Ardfert (61.2m<sup>2</sup>) Tuamgraney (67.7m<sup>2</sup>) and Dulane (probably 68.9m<sup>2</sup>) are at middle-ranking sites. Significantly they are dwarfed by those at top-ranking sites, namely Glendalough (131.56m<sup>2</sup>), Lorrha (129.9m<sup>2</sup>) and Clonmacnoise (200.9m<sup>2</sup>). Furthermore, it would appear that there was not a dramatic size discrepancy between the average mainland church in Ireland (see below) and those in England. According to Morris,

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<sup>918</sup> E. James, "Archaeology and the Merovingian Monastery" in Clarke and Brennan, eds., *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, 34.

<sup>919</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

tenth-century English naves average just twenty to thirty metres squared, while from the later eleventh century sixty and eighty metres squared was typical.<sup>920</sup>

It could also be pointed out that churches that later became parish churches tended to be bigger than those that eventually fell out of use, and that, on average, the remains of stone churches on islands are half the size of those on the mainland, again pointing to the factor of pastoral use increasing the size of the structure.<sup>921</sup> Population density, which was fairly sparse throughout the Pre-Norman period would also have discouraged the construction of very big churches. Sharpe's view of Ireland as having "the most comprehensive pastoral organisations in northern Europe,"<sup>922</sup> was somewhat nuanced in Chapter One. Nonetheless Sharpe is to be credited with drawing attention to the fact that there were probably a good number of churches in use throughout this period. These pre-existing buildings would have discouraged newer constructions. It is also unclear whether the early churches were true parishes in the later sense that the entire local populace was required to actually attend the Sunday Eucharistic celebration.<sup>923</sup> But, as will be seen below, the Irish Romanesque style, the twelfth century reform and the Norman arrival did usher in the construction of bigger churches. Whatever arguments are made for Irish churches being bigger than is often credited; it is undeniable that after the twelfth century church size did increase, in some cases dramatically so. Newer studies

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<sup>920</sup> Tomás Ó Carragáin, "Church Buildings and Pastoral Care in Early Medieval Ireland" in Gillespie and FitzPatrick, eds. *The Parish in Medieval and Post-Medieval Ireland*, 108-109.

<sup>921</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>922</sup> Sharpe, "Towards a Pastoral Model," 109.

<sup>923</sup> Tadhg O'Keefe, "The Built Environment of Local Community Worship Between the Late Eleventh and Early Thirteenth Centuries," in Gillespie and FitzPatrick, eds. *The Parish in Medieval and Post-Medieval Ireland*, 127-128.



have also pointed out the possibility of a Viking influence in the increase in church size as late eleventh century examples of churches in the Hiberno-Viking towns tend to be bigger than the native Irish counterparts.<sup>924</sup>

But the Pre-Romanesque Irish churches would have been dark and “services were conducted in semi-darkness.”<sup>925</sup> There is also evidence of hanging bowls, which were often highly ornate. These may well have been used as lamps for lighting the churches.<sup>926</sup> The liturgy may have taken advantage of this semi-darkness to portray a mysterious liturgy:

In metal work some of the techniques were devised to add brilliance and sparkle to the dim interior. The materials were bright in themselves-gold, gilt bronze, and silver-and to them were added, crystals, amber, glass, and many decorative devices. Chipcarving was a metalworking technique borrowed from Germanic contacts and widely used from the time of its introduction because it made the most of metal. Usually in cast bronze, the surface was designed in a myriad of sharply angled facets which reflected light from all sides. When this was gilded, as on the stem of the Ardagh chalice, the effect was spectacular.<sup>927</sup>

#### 4.1.2 Round Towers

Many early Irish ecclesiastical sites possess a round tower. To this day many still stand in various states of repair and, counting both extant and documented round towers, we know that at least 100 once existed in Ireland.<sup>928</sup> Unfortunately the early sources do not say much about these buildings and their function. The

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<sup>924</sup> Ibid., 128-132.

<sup>925</sup> Stalley, “Ecclesiastical Architecture Before 1169,” 729.

<sup>926</sup> Richardson, “Visual Arts and Society,” 694.

<sup>927</sup> Ibid., 705.

<sup>928</sup> Tadhg O’Keeffe, *Ireland’s Round Towers*, (Stroud: Tempus, 2004), 17.

documentary sources tell us that they were built during a three hundred year period from the start of the tenth to the end of the twelfth centuries (therefore straddling the Irish Romanesque period that will be examined below). Also this form seems to be uniquely Irish as, apart from two Scottish examples and one on the Isle of Man, both areas under a heavy Irish influence, there exist no such buildings anywhere else.<sup>929</sup> There is no indication where the first Round Tower was built, but it is probable that a “prestigious exemplar” existed in one of the famous monasteries and that the form was copied from there.<sup>930</sup> As the Round Towers are by far the tallest buildings from Pre-Norman Ireland, and had they been built to half the height they would still have been comparatively much higher than everything else, it would seem that the average height of 97 feet (29.53 meters) of the still complete towers might suggest a desire to reach 100 feet as a symbolic number. The fact that the Round Tower at Glendalough is exactly 100 feet tall and has a circumference of 50 feet 2 inches “is unlikely to be a coincidence.”<sup>931</sup>

Round Towers have always evoked the fascination of scholars and in the nineteenth century a number of bizarre theories for their function were advanced, including the theory that the Round Towers were actually remnants of sun temples from the druids where a perpetual fire was kept burning to the sun god!<sup>932</sup> But since the work of George Petrie in the mid-nineteenth century there has been a more rational approach to the study of Round Towers. Petrie showed how these buildings

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<sup>929</sup> Roger Stalley, *Irish Round Towers* (Dublin: Country House, 2000), 35.

<sup>930</sup> Stalley, “Ecclesiastical Architecture Before 1169,” 733.

<sup>931</sup> *Ibid.*, 734..

<sup>932</sup> Stalley, *Irish Round Towers*, 10.

had an ecclesiastical origin and proposed an idea of them as bell-towers based on their designation in the annals as *cloigtheach* or bell-house.<sup>933</sup>

The annals are the main contemporary source for information on the Round Towers, where there are twenty-five references to events relating to the Round Towers.<sup>934</sup> Unfortunately the annals remain silent on the exact function of the Round Tower and these entries record the destruction or other tragedies associated with towers along with notes on the construction and dedication of others. The following entry is typical:

The bell-house of Sláine was burned by the foreigners of Áth Cliath. The founder's episcopal staff, and the best of all bells, the lector Caenachair and a large number with him, were *all* burned.<sup>935</sup>

Announcements like this combined with the fact that the Round Towers made their debut at roughly the same time as the first activity of the Vikings in Ireland, led many scholars to make a connection between them. The theory was that the Irish monasteries devised the Round Tower as a variant on the Continental bell-tower in answer to raids by marauding Vikings. These towers were used as watchtowers with a sentry positioned with a bell. When he saw the approaching Viking long-ships

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<sup>933</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>934</sup> O'Keeffe, *Ireland's Round Towers*, 15-28.

<sup>935</sup> "Cloichtech Sláine do loscadh do Ghallaibh Ath Cliath. Bachall ind erlama 7 cloc ba dech di cloaibh Caenechair fer leigind, soschaide mór imbi do loscadh." *The Annals of Ulster* 950 §7 in Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill, eds., *The Annals of Ulster*, 394-395.

N.B. this is also the first entry in the annals which mentions a Round Tower and hence, the period shortly before this 950 date is taken as the date of the building of the first Round Tower. This may well be the case, but there is no reason to take this date as an absolute starting point. It is during this same period that the annals become more detailed, and this first mention may be simply because the annalist is providing more detail, or because this is the first event of note to happen in connection with a Round Tower.

he would ring the bell. The monks then would take refuge in the tower along with their most precious treasures. The Vikings who could only stay a limited time away from their ships would be unable to get into the tower as the door was raised from the ground.<sup>936</sup>

If this is the case then there is only a marginal connection between the Round Towers and the Eucharist. However today there are some challenges to the accepted theory. The first problem is with the bells themselves: we possess over seventy bells from the period of the early Irish church and hagiography and sculpture points out that these are essential elements for an Irish monastic founder, these bells do not seem to be associated with bell-ringing activities in the Round Towers. The extant bells were made before the Towers were built, are very small for conceivable use at the top of a Round Tower, and, indeed, bear little marks of any use at all. Stalley has claimed that perhaps the towers had hanging bells.<sup>937</sup> While possible, there is no textual, architectural or archaeological evidence that supports this theory.<sup>938</sup> This and other problems with the accepted theory has led O'Keeffe to challenge the theory itself:

The use of the towers as bell-houses – with bell-ringers either racing up ladders several times a day or simply pulling dangling ropes – does not preclude multi-functionality. On the contrary, there is strong evidence that the towers served other purposes. The circumstances of destruction at Slane in the mid-tenth century, combined with some annalistic evidence that other towers were similarly attacked or that individuals perished inside them, has created the popular interpretation of these monuments as refuges in times of attack. The raised doorways and narrow windows

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<sup>936</sup> A typical example is Liam de Paor, "The Age of the Viking Wars. 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Centuries" in Moody and Martin eds., *The Course of Irish History*. 75.

<sup>937</sup> *Irish Round Towers*, 33.

<sup>938</sup> O'Keeffe, *Ireland's Round Towers*, 97,

which are characteristic have reinforced that interpretation. We must surely dismiss, however, the idea that these were primarily places of retreat, or that they doubled-up as such in circumstances other than the most exceptional; their very conspicuousness alone made them singularly ill-suited destinations for terrified populations fleeing attack, and if those populations had any inkling of approaching danger they surely ran for their lives rather than huddle in the claustrophobic darkness of what were effectively enormous chimneys-in-waiting.<sup>939</sup>

He proposes that these towers were used as a part of the ritual space of major ecclesiastical sites. These towers appear first in the early tenth century and seem usually to have two associations: royalty and relics. We are told of kings being killed in these towers and of relics being destroyed there. This information fits well with the traditional view of these towers as defence sites. However, it is also possible that the towers were in fact a type of church that was used as part of the stationary liturgy where the relics could have been displayed.<sup>940</sup> These towers then could have been a place of legal sanctuary rather than actual fortification. This would offer an alternative explanation for both the destruction of relics and the killing of people in the various raids; rather than providing physical refuge, they provided legal and spiritual sanctuary (albeit unsuccessfully in the incidents noted in the annals).<sup>941</sup> Perhaps even, as O'Keeffe suggests, the Eucharist may have been celebrated at the summit of the Round Towers.<sup>942</sup>

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<sup>939</sup> O'Keeffe, *Romanesque Ireland*, 74.

<sup>940</sup> Harbison, *Pilgrimage in Ireland*, 238. Also note Plate 17, the reconstruction of early twelfth century Cashel (from O'Keeffe, *Romanesque Ireland*, 137).

<sup>941</sup> However it cannot be denied that the principal identification as these buildings as *cloigtheach* or bell-houses in the annals must allude to at least one of their functions. Stalley, *Irish Round Towers*, 11.

<sup>942</sup> O'Keeffe, *Ireland's Round Towers*, 106. However while intriguing, O'Keeffe's theories have not been accepted by many scholars, cf. Roger Stalley, "Sex, Symbol, and Myth: Some Observations on the Irish Round Towers," in Colum Hourihane, ed., *From Ireland Coming. Irish Art from the Early Christian to the Late Gothic Period and its European Context* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton

It should however be noted that while the position of round towers doorways tends to fit a common pattern, some caution must be exercised for it is not a universal pattern. For instance the doorways at Kilmacduagh and Roscam (both Galway) do not face toward any known church, while at Kilkenny (Co Kilkenny) the doorway is only a short distance from a terrace falling away sharply toward the River Nore.<sup>943</sup>

The idea of the Round Tower as a church may seem strange at first sight. Most dwellings in ancient Ireland, whether of the rich in crannogs or ringforts, or of the poor in palisaded or open settlements, were in the form of round houses.<sup>944</sup> However, the earliest Irish church-builders seem to have made a very deliberate rejection of the round structural form in church design. This rejection is all the more significant given the fact that the same Irish church-builders found themselves under little constraint to mimic continental forms of church architecture and style.<sup>945</sup> It could be that by the time that the Round Towers were being built whatever cultural problems suggested by the use of round buildings for the Eucharistic Liturgy were no longer an issue in the programming of a new type of ecclesial building.<sup>946</sup>

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University Press, 2001), 40-42 and for a more balanced summary of the current scholarly consensus see Stalley, "Ecclesiastical Architecture Before 1169," 731-734.

<sup>943</sup> Michael Hare and Ann Hamlin, "The Study of Early Church Architecture in Ireland: an Anglo-Saxon Viewpoint," in L.A.S. Butler and Morris R.K., eds., *The Anglo-Saxon Church; Papers on History, Architecture and Archaeology in Honour of Dr. H.M. Taylor*, Council for British Archaeology Research Report 60 (London: Bond Hall, 1986), 137.

<sup>944</sup> Edwards, "The Archaeology of Early Medieval Ireland," 297. However, from the ninth century onwards the use of rectangular houses gradually became more popular, see *ibid.*, 299.

<sup>945</sup> Even in ecclesiastical sites where round buildings were the norm, this form has been rejected for churches. In Skellig Michael the round *clochaun* (cell or hut) is the preferred form for construction and the site contains six of these round buildings, but there are three rectangular churches. O'Sullivan and Sheehan, *The Iveragh Peninsula*, 278-290. Indeed, it would seem that from the ninth century rectangular houses began to replace round ones, perhaps as an influence of church architecture. Edwards, "The Archaeology of Medieval Ireland," 248.

<sup>946</sup> Paradoxically, there are indications that the [square] north tower in Cormac's Chapel at Cashel did contain a chapel, see Stalley, "Ecclesiastical Architecture Before 1169," 738.

In the contemporary church of St. Gall in France, there are records of two round towers with altars to the archangels St. Michael and St. Gabriel. But the form of these towers bears no similarity with the Irish round towers and there is no known connection between these towers and Ireland. Nonetheless, this does show that in other parts of the Christian West the idea of altars in towers did occur.<sup>947</sup> Although, while this is an attractive theory, and the Round Towers may well have played a role in a stational liturgy at early church sites, the possibility that the Eucharist was celebrated in them remains a theory and it would be a little hypocritical to accept this theory while rejecting that of the Round Towers being a variant on the belfry.

If there was a desire to recreate the heavenly Jerusalem in the ecclesial sites then there was a definite argument for the use of a round form of church and this was to be found in Adomnán of Iona's *De Locis Sanctis*. In the early 680's the Gaulish bishop Arculf was shipwrecked in Iona. He was returning from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Adomnán took advantage of his presence in Iona to receive first hand information on the holy places, *De Locis Sanctis* is the result of these conversations. Adomnán used his notes from his conversations and the books available to him and produced this work which was popular in the early Middle Ages and accurately portrayed the topography of the Holy Land.<sup>948</sup> While it may be the case that there is no evidence of a direct link between the Round Towers and those round churches described by Adomnán's work, which was about two hundred years old when the first Round Tower was built, nonetheless, this work may well have

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<sup>947</sup> Walter Horn and E. Born, *The Plan of St. Gall*. Volume I (Berkeley, CA: the University of California Press, 1979), 129, 166.

<sup>948</sup> Kennedy, *Sources*, 285-286; also see John Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims Before the Crusades*, 2d ed. (Warminster: Aris and Phillips 2002), 18-19.

influenced the programming of the ecclesiastical sites in Ireland, as those who designed these worship complexes would naturally have desired to re-create some elements of the Holy Land. Perhaps of special significance in any attempted reconstruction of the sacred geography of Jerusalem is Adomnán's description of the *Anastasis* or the Church of the Resurrection:<sup>949</sup>

This extremely large church, all of stone, and shaped to wondrous roundness on every side, rises up from its foundations in three walls. Between each two walls there is a broad passage, and three altars too are in three skilfully constructed places of the centre wall. Twelve stone columns of wondrous magnitude support this round and lofty church, where are the altars mentioned, one looking south, the second north, the third towards the west.<sup>950</sup>

He mentions another three round churches, and his description of the Church at the site of the Ascension adds some more interesting details:

On the western side of the above-mentioned round church there are eight windows, constructed high up, with glass shutters. Now near these windows and straight opposite them on the inside, there burn eight lamps hanging by ropes. The lamps are so placed that each lamp hangs, not above or below, but so as to seem fastened to a particular window, opposite to which it is hung at close quarters, one observes, on the inside. So radiant is the brightness of the lamps, that as their light pours out copiously through the glass from the high vantage point on mount Olivet, not alone that area of the mountain which adjoins the round stone basilica on the western side,

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<sup>949</sup> The main church in Jerusalem was a special building as it contained both the Anastasis, the place of the tomb and resurrection of Christ, Golgotha, or the place of the crucifixion and a basilica. These three sites were linked within one complex comprising a separate, round, church of the Anastasis linked by an open colonnade, which had a chapel at Golgotha and then the big basilica. For more information on the layout and the liturgical life of post-Constantinian Jerusalem see, *Egeria's Travels*, 3d ed., trans. and ed. John Wilkinson (Warminster: Aris and Phillips Ltd., 1999), 16-22.

<sup>950</sup> "Quae utique ualde grandis ecclesia tota lapidea mira rotunditate ex omni parte conlocata, a fundamentis in tribus consurgens parietibus, inter unum quemque parietem et alterum latum habens spatium uiae, tria quoque altaria in tribus locis parietis medii artifice fabricates. Hanc rotundam et summam ecclesiam supra memorata habentem altaria, unum ad meridiem respiciens, alterum ad aquilonem, tertium ad occasum uersus, duodecim mirae magnitudinis sustentant columnae." Adomnán of Iona *De Locis Sanctis*, (trans. and ed. Denis Meehan in *Adamnan De Locis Sanctis*, *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae*, vol. III [Dublin: The Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1983], 42-45), I.ii.3-4.



but the stairway mounting steeply up to the valley of Jerusalem from the valley of Josaphat, is illuminated with a wondrous clarity on nights however dark. Indeed the greater portion of the city, the portion in the foreground straight opposite, is likewise illuminated with equal clarity. The bright and remarkable glow from the eight lamps shining by night from the holy mount and the place of the Lord's ascension, as Alculf relates, pours into the hearts of the faithful who behold it greater eagerness for divine love and imbues them with a sense of awe coupled with great interior compunction.<sup>951</sup>

Whether or not these accounts inspired the construction of the Irish Round Towers, these buildings did constitute an important element in the sacred space of the ecclesiastical site.

The preoccupation of generations of scholars with explaining the function of Round Towers has drawn attention away from what may be remarkable about them, which is the fact that tenth-century Irish builders, inspired by some Ravennate or Carolingian element in the repertoire of European Christian architecture, were capable of conceiving and constructing tall cylindrical towers without exact parallel elsewhere. Yet, despite being comparatively exotic structures, Round Towers were not built as the centerpieces of church-sites, but were placed with their elevated doorways facing the doorways of the small, unsophisticated churches, which they serviced. Moreover, the clockwise ascent of the windows in most of the Round Towers suggests that they were integrated symbolically – and probably also physically – into the *deiseal* pattern of liturgical or pilgrimage procession. Put another way, Round Towers were accommodated within an existing hierarchy of sacred space and the pattern of movement around the church-sites; once introduced into the landscape of Irish Christianity, they were put at the service of maintaining

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<sup>951</sup> "Illius itaque supra memoratae rotundae ecclesiae in occidentali parte bis quaternales superne fabrefactae habentur finistralia ualens habentes uitreas; quibus utique finistris eiusdem numeri uicinae lampades intrinsecus e regione positae in funibus pendentes ardent, quae uidelicet lampades sic collocatae ut unaquaeque lampas nec superius nec inferius pendeat sed quasi adherens eidem finistrali uideatur cui interius e regione positae propinqua specialiter cernitur. Quarum utique lampadum in tantum claritas refulget ut earum lumine quasi de superiore Oliueti montis loco coruscantium per uitrum habundanter effuso non tantum ea eiusdem montis pars quae occasum uersus eidem adheret rotundae et lapideae basilicae sed etiam ciuitatis Hierusolimae de ualle Josaphat ascensus per quosdam gradus in altum sublimatus clare quamlibet in tenebris noctibus mirabiliter inlustretur et maior eiusdem pars urbis anterior e regione positae similiter eadem inluminetur claritate. Haec fulgida et praedicabilis octenarium magnarum coruscatio lucernarum de monte sancto et de loco Dominicae ascensionis noctu refulgentium maiorem, ut Arculfus refert, diuini amoris alacritatem credulorum respicientium cordibus infundit quendamque pauorem mentis cum ingenti interna compunctione incutit." Adamnán *De Locis Sanctis* I.xxiii.11-13, in Meehan, 67. The other two round churches mentioned by Adamnán are the Church of the Dormition of Mary (II.xii) and the "Church in which is the Cross of the Lord" (III.III), but, other than the implications of an increased corpus of hagiopolite round churches, these provide no more information than those of the two examples given.

tradition. Significantly, Round Towers were still being built when the Irish Romanesque tradition emerged, and the two centuries which had passed since the first examples had appeared gave the concept of the Round Tower sufficient antiquity that Irish Romanesque masons treated them with the same respect as they recorded the churches: newly built Round Towers were provided with portals embellished in the Irish Romanesque style, as is most spectacularly in evidence at Timahoe (Co. Laois), but the towers were otherwise as unadorned as they had been in the tenth century.<sup>952</sup>

#### 4.1.3 High Crosses

As with the Round Towers, High Crosses are a typical feature of early Irish ecclesiastical sites and from the point of view of art history constitute a very important portion of early Irish iconography. Today the remains of about two hundred of these early medieval sculpted stone crosses are scattered throughout Ireland.<sup>953</sup> Being built with a great effort at a time when stone carving was not widely practiced on the Continent, even today these High Crosses are recognised a distinctive characteristic of the early Irish Church.

The actual form of a stone cross on a base with a stone ring surrounding the arms of the cross is instantly recognizable today and a visit to any cemetery where Christians of Irish or Scottish descent are buried will usually yield a few modern adaptations of this form. However two characteristics that may not be appreciated from contact with modern varieties of the Celtic Crosses are their sheer size and the detailed sculpture on the originals (Plate 10).

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<sup>952</sup> O'Keefe, "Romanesque as Metaphor," 319. For an example of how the sacred geography of Cashel would have looked prior to the construction of the later high medieval cathedral see Plate 17.

<sup>953</sup> Roger Stalley, *Irish High Crosses* (Dublin: Country House, 1996), 5.

In general the High Cross is composed of a base stone, the shaft of the cross is fitted into the base stone, although the base stone is usually bigger than would be necessary to simply support the cross. The main part of the High Cross is usually between three to four and a half meters, although in some cases it can be six meters high. The High Cross is crowned with a cap-stone. This cap-stone often is made in the form of a miniature church. The whole structure is usually carved, both with figurative art and also with interlacing patterns. The resulting High Cross is an imposing structure, weighing a few tons and would have required great talent to construct. It is also likely that the crosses would have been painted in vivid colours. Early Irish monastic sites abound in carved stone slabs. These are usually in the form of decorative crosses on a rectangular stone slab that are occasionally inscribed either in the Latin or Ogham alphabet. It would seem that the High Crosses developed from this simpler form of carving and that the majority of the surviving High Crosses would have been carved in the ninth to tenth centuries.<sup>954</sup> By the eleventh to twelfth century the custom of building High Crosses died out and the last Crosses show much more Continental influence in style than the earlier ones.<sup>955</sup>

Regarding the origin of this form, an analysis of the form of the early High Crosses would indicate that they possibly evolved from earlier wooden prototypes. This theory is grounded on an examination of the construction techniques of the

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<sup>954</sup> As this was the height of the Viking period, perhaps patrons thought it better to invest in stone monuments that were of no interest to the raiders than more portable works of art in precious metals, see *ibid.*, 39.

<sup>955</sup> Hilary Richardson and John Scarry, *An Introduction to Irish High Crosses* (Cork: Mercier Press, 1990), 19.

earlier High Crosses which mirror those of wood.<sup>956</sup> These wooden prototypes possibly were first constructed in the first half of the seventh century and then “probably evolved in wood in the period from the late seventh century and were translated from wood into stone from the eighth to the early ninth century.”<sup>957</sup>

While there is still no consensus as to the exact purpose of the High Crosses it would seem that they were not principally seen as funerary monuments. It is certain that the massive undertaking of building a High Cross would have been very expensive and have involved the patronage of important individuals. Some of the High Crosses bear inscriptions and we know the names of their royal patrons. It may well be that they were carved after the death of these patrons, but it is just as likely that they were carved as memorials when they were still alive. In many instances more than one High Cross survives at the same site and these may have marked out the boundaries of the monastic enclosure where one could look for sanctuary.<sup>958</sup> It also seems to be the case that in some instances the High Cross marked the site of a miracle performed by the saint who founded the monastery. Adomnán reports one such instance with Columba where two crosses were erected, “in the place where Ernán died, in front of the door of the corn-kiln, a cross was set up, and another on the spot where Columba was standing at the moment of Ernán’s

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<sup>956</sup> Eg. See the analysis of the North Cross at Aheeny, Co. Tipperary in Dorothy Kelly, “The Heart of the Matter: Models for Irish High Crosses.” *JRSAI* Vol 121 (1991): figure 42 (page 133) and figure 43 (page 134)

<sup>957</sup> *Ibid.* 143. This longstanding theory of the High Crosses having characteristics of metal crosses has recently received strong archaeological support in the discovery of the Tully Lough Cross an eighth or ninth century altar cross discovered in Tully Lough, Co. Roscommon, see Eamon P. Kelly, “Recovered Celtic Treasure: The Tully Lough Cross,” *Irish Arts Review* Vol. 20 (2004) no. 3: 67.

<sup>958</sup> Stalley, *Irish High Crosses*, 39.

death. These are still standing today.<sup>959</sup> Muirchú likewise reports that at Slíab Miss the site of Patrick's earlier slavery, "to the present day a cross stands there to mark (the spot of) his first view of the district."<sup>960</sup>

These remembrances of events in saints' lives also played their role in a stational aspect of the liturgy of a church site and whether a High Cross commemorated an event or simply was positioned in a site in reference to the other elements of the sacred geography, it is almost beyond doubt that a High Cross was a place of prayer, and more importantly a place of liturgical prayer. The Cross is one of the most central Christian symbols and from an early time it occupied an important place in Christian liturgy. Historically this was partly due to the importance of Jerusalem and the influence of hagiopolite liturgy on the whole Christian world.<sup>961</sup> The rock of Golgotha was one of the central monuments in Jerusalem and it seems that this was iconographically reproduced in the Irish High Crosses. The fact that the base of the Cross was very big in comparison to the function of support has led commentators to identify it with the rock of Golgotha.<sup>962</sup> In this aspect parallels have also been drawn between the Irish High Crosses and early Armenian and Georgian Crosses.<sup>963</sup> Again it bears remembering that the Irish High Crosses were icons of

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<sup>959</sup> "Vnde in eodem loco ante ianuam canabae crux infixā est; et altera ubi sanctus restitit illo exspirante similiter crux hodieque infixā stat." *Vita Columba* I, 45 in Anderson and Anderson, *Life of Columba*, 82. English translation from Sharpe, *Life of Columba*, 148, see note in Sharpe, *Life of Columba*, 309-310.

<sup>960</sup> "Ubi nunc usque crux habetur in signum ad uisum primun illius regionis." *Muirchú* I 12 in Bieler, *The Patrician Texts*, 80-81.

<sup>961</sup> For more information on this see. Baldovin, *The Urban Character of Early Christian Worship*, 45-54

<sup>962</sup> Richardson and Scarry, *An Introduction to Irish High Crosses*, 24-26 and Stalley, *Irish High Crosses*, 10-11.

<sup>963</sup> Richardson and Scarry, *An introduction to Irish High Crosses*, 26.

the wooden Cross of Christ on Golgotha and this is the primary symbolism that these monuments try to portray

We see [the importance of materiality] it again, albeit in a different form, in the near-contemporary 'imitation' in stone of High Crosses of wooden type, as at Ahenney, for example. These stone crosses surely do not reflect a limited imagination among stone-carvers taking over a cross-making industry which hitherto relied on carpentry skills, but fulfil a desire (from the eighth century at least) to preserve, or even construct, a memory of timber crosses, of which Jesus' cross at Calvary was the originator.<sup>964</sup>

Many of the High Crosses are totally covered in figurative carvings. Here intricate iconographical programming has been worked out drawing mainly from scriptural sources. Some works point to these High Crosses as an instrument used to catechise the illiterate lay folk, but this view is somewhat simplistic and does not do justice to the complexity of these monuments.<sup>965</sup> Given the specialist knowledge necessary it is more probable that these were more executed with educated clerics and monastics in mind:

Throughout Christendom a shared language of symbols was widely understood. Medieval thought was pervaded by mystical symbolism which was used to explain and expound the Scriptures. Philosophers following Pythagoras and the Neo-Platonists had established a system of celestial arithmetic allied to scriptural exegesis. A divine plan for the universe was expressed in numbers, measurements and geometry. No branch of medieval thought can have escaped the influence of number symbolism. It was endemic to the age.<sup>966</sup>

The High Crosses that are engraved with Scriptural scenes are usually centred on the Crucifixion at the centre of the Cross and ring on one side and the Final Judgment on the other. Other Biblical scenes from both the Old and the New

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<sup>964</sup> O'Keeffe, *Romanesque Ireland*, 65.

<sup>965</sup> Stalley, *Irish High Crosses*, 42.

<sup>966</sup> Hilary Richardson, "Celtic Monks and the Culdee Reform," in Mackey, ed., *An Introduction to Celtic Christianity*, 373-374. E.g. the Cross of Moone is "a monument which has been conceived in mathematical terms, with the proportions and measurements of each shape carefully worked out," *ibid.*, 376.

Testaments abound.<sup>967</sup> There doesn't seem to be a canonical arrangement of scenes, other than having the Crucifixion of Christ in the centre, each High Cross is arranged in a different way, but the Biblical scenes on the different panels while in a different order are usually of the same scenes.

it is remarkable that the Last judgment here, with St Michael weighing the souls, was carved soon after 900, some two centuries before the same scene filled the tympana of Romanesque churches on the Continent.<sup>968</sup>

There is an intricate iconographic programme for the High Crosses and one aspect of an expert analysis of the whole body of High Cross iconography suggests that "the arrangement of scenes from the Old Testament to parallel the New Testament are not randomly selected but often gives importance to the two sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist."<sup>969</sup> The Biblical scenes that have particular Eucharistic overtones in their iconography that is most prevalent in the High Crosses is the Marriage Feast at Cana (7 instances),<sup>970</sup> the Multiplication of the Loaves and the Fishes (9 instances)<sup>971</sup> and the Sacrifice of Isaac (22 instances).<sup>972</sup>

However there is also another non-Biblical scene that is of great Eucharistic significance and that often appears on the Irish High Crosses: the Meeting of Paul and Antony. Indeed "the frequent illustrations of Paul and Anthony on the Irish crosses stands in stark contrast to the rarity of their representations surviving

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<sup>967</sup> However these scenes generally are chosen from an biblical-artistic corpus that "continues a programme found in the earliest Christian art in the catacombs and on sculptured sarcophagi," Richardson, "Visual Arts and Society," 709.

<sup>968</sup> *Ibid.*, 711.

<sup>969</sup> Peter Harbison, *The High Crosses of Ireland. Volume I: Text* (Bonn: Habelt, 1992), 334-335.

<sup>970</sup> *Ibid.*, 252.

<sup>971</sup> *Ibid.*, 256.

<sup>972</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

elsewhere from the first millennium.<sup>973</sup> This is one of the few non-Biblical scenes to appear on the High Crosses, and the only non-Biblical scene to appear on a number of High Crosses. This image is inspired by an incident in the *Life of Paul, the First Hermit* written by St. Jerome. There is a scene when St. Antony the Great is shown as not after all the first monk and is inspired to go on a journey even further into the desert where he meets St. Paul. He stays with him a while and then accompanies St. Paul as he dies. One particular incident in this story was seen to have Eucharistic connotations, and it is precisely this scene that is portrayed on many Irish High Crosses:

Accordingly, having returned thanks to the Lord, they sat down together on the brink of the glassy spring. At this point a dispute arose as to who should break the bread, and nearly the whole day until eventide was spent in the discussion. Paul urged in support of his view the rites of hospitality, Anthony pleaded age. At length it was arranged that each should seize the loaf on the side nearest to himself, pull towards him, and keep for his own the part left in his hands. Then on hands and knees they drank a little water from the spring, and offering to God the sacrifice of praise passed the night in vigil.<sup>974</sup>

Luckily a comprehensive study has been published on the Paul and Anthony Panels on the High Crosses.<sup>975</sup> This almost unique corpus of iconography is very significant. First of all it clearly places us within the bounds of Latin Christianity. The images are inspired by a work of the Latin Church Doctor, St. Jerome. Here the

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<sup>973</sup> *Ibid.*, 332. Note there is also an incidence of a Paul and Antony scene from a High Cross in the Isle of Man dating from around the ninth century. But this was also within a context that was markedly Irish, see Cubbon, "The Early Church in the Isle of Man," 262.

<sup>974</sup> St. Jerome, *The Life of Paul, the First Hermit*, 11 in W.H. Fremantle, trans., *Jerome: Letters and Select Works*, vol. 6 of *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. Second Series*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (New York: Christian Literature Publishing Company, 1893; reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 301. N.B. this St. Paul the Hermit is not to be confused with the Apostle St. Paul of Tarsus.

<sup>975</sup> Éamonn Ó Carragáin, "The meeting of Saint Paul and Saint Anthony: visual and literary uses of a Eucharistic motif" in G. Mac Niocaill and P.F. Wallace (eds.) *Keimelia: Studies in Medieval Archaeology and History in Memory of Tom Delaney* (Galway: Galway University Press, 1988): 1-58.



debate over the historicity of St. Paul the First Hermit is irrelevant. What is important is that he was part of Western Monastic tradition.<sup>976</sup> On the basis of this corpus of iconography, this event was particularly important in Irish monastic tradition, remembering that Ireland had a non-Benedictine Western Monastic tradition.<sup>977</sup> Another indication of the importance of this story in Irish spirituality is the fact that Chapter 26 of the *Navigatio* of St. Brendan takes Jerome's story and rewrites it making Paul into one of the original monks in St. Patrick's monastery who meets Brendan and not Antony. While true that there is no mention of bread at all in this version of the story of Jerome,<sup>978</sup> nonetheless this use of the story underlines its importance and further helps the attribution of the iconography.

The panels usually feature the bread *between* the two saints. This *between* is important as for medieval iconography and Irish iconography Christ is often framed by two characters, inspired by the Vulgate text of Habakkuk 3:2 where Christ is *in medio duorum animalium*.<sup>979</sup> Although the original context of two animals is pejorative and this was taken over into popular exegesis as signifying the two thieves who were crucified with Christ, in Celtic art many manuscript illustrations and crucifixion scenes on the High Crosses and in other places give greater importance to the fact that Christ is framed than to the negative quality of the framers.<sup>980</sup> This suggests an identification between the bread and the Eucharistic presence of

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<sup>976</sup> For more on the historicity of St. Paul the First Hermit see Kelly, *Jerome*, 60-61.

<sup>977</sup> Ó Carragáin, "The meeting of Saint Paul and Saint Anthony," 44.

<sup>978</sup> However Ó Carragáin discerns clear Eucharistic resonances in this passage, *ibid.*, 35-38.

<sup>979</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>980</sup> *Ibid.*, 20-22.

Christ.<sup>981</sup> There may also be references to the Irish practice of the co-fraction practiced by two priests and thus the image of the two saints reflects liturgical practice.<sup>982</sup>

Another possible Eucharistic motif in the Irish High Crosses, and Irish iconography in general, is the presence of a high number of chalices on the crosses themselves and particularly in the Crucifixion scene. Obviously crosses and chalices are two universal and ancient Christian objects that are common throughout the world. However if we compare the incidence of occurrence of chalices in Irish art as compared to Anglo-Saxon art, for example, there is a higher rate of occurrence in the Irish iconography.<sup>983</sup>

Also uniquely Insular is the combination of chalice and cross in Irish Crucifixion scenes, a characteristic feature of these scenes being the substitution of a cup or chalice for the sponge offered to Christ. The motif occurs in both metalwork and stone sculpture, with two of the clearest example to be found in Muiredach's Cross and the West Cross at Monasterboice. The vessels on both these crosses show the wide bowl and arched foot characteristic of surviving Irish chalices. In their proportions both are very close to the bronze Ardagh and Ulster Museum chalices. The portrayal of the chalice in these scenes emphasizes the direct connection between the Crucifixion and the eucharist, and exemplifies the concern with eucharistic imagery that runs throughout early Irish art and literature. While the crosses are likely to be 10<sup>th</sup>-century, the motif continues in use into the 12<sup>th</sup> century on metalwork Crucifixion plaques, items which would originally have been attached to objects such as book-shrines or processional crosses. The chalice also appears in scenes of Saints Paul and Anthony in the desert on high crosses at Kells and Monasterboice.<sup>984</sup>

The association between the cross and a chalice could be part of a trend to give particular value to the blood of Christ shed from the Cross and present in the

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<sup>981</sup> We can also see this principle at work in the Cross of Moone, Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes, which has the loaves and fishes *between* stylised monsters (Plate 11).

<sup>982</sup> *ibid.*, 31.

<sup>983</sup> Catherine Karkov, "The Chalice and the Cross in Insular Art," in R. Michael Spearman and John Higgitt, eds., *The Age of Migrating Ideas. Early Medieval Art in Northern Britain and Ireland* (Gloucester: Sutton and Edinburgh: National Museum of Scotland, 1993), 239.

<sup>984</sup> *Ibid.*, 238.

Eucharistic chalice. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the great Irish chalices contain many more crosses than comparable ornate chalices from other places.<sup>985</sup>

As with the Round Towers, the Irish High Crosses represent an attempt to recreate the Holy Places in the local Church. Perhaps this influence of the Holy Land may have been mediated through Rome as there is some suggestion that the High Crosses may have paralleled the tombs that Irish pilgrims would have seen in Rome and thus have been a way of forming a *local* Rome at home.<sup>986</sup> While typically Irish this form is also a witness to the commonality of all Christian spiritualities and local Churches:

The same fundamental themes linked to the shrine of the Holy Sepulchre and to the True Cross were shared in common over a wide area among different Christian communities. The same motifs were used and understood in Byzantium, Georgia and Ireland. They were individual in their own way yet their presence shows the same basic outlook, although so far-flung. Fashions changed and early beliefs and ideas were submerged and were totally forgotten in time. New circumstances affected every section of Christendom in a different way. Yet the underlying strata of the early centuries of Christian culture still remained, enough to show the dimensions of a wide, interconnecting world of the same religious values.<sup>987</sup>

#### 4.1.4 Altars

The altar is the central, and indeed often the only, furnishing in the typical church. The first Christian altars were probably small and they may well have been portable. The earliest iconography often portrays the altar as a very small three-

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<sup>985</sup> Ibid.

<sup>986</sup> Dorothy Hoogland Verkerk, "Pilgrimage *Ad Limina Apostolorum* in Rome: Irish Crosses and Early Christian Sarcophagi," in Hourihane., *From Ireland Coming*, 9-26.

<sup>987</sup> Hillary Richardson, "The Jewelled Cross and its Canopy," in Cormac Bourke, ed, *From the Isles of the North. Early Medieval Art in Ireland and Britain* (Belfast: H.M.S.O., 1995), 185.

legged table (barely big enough to hold the bread and chalice).<sup>988</sup> But it seems that stone altars were to replace these earlier structures (which were made of wood or metal) very soon after the Peace of Constantine. The use of stone altars may have come from the cult of the martyrs. There is archaeological evidence that the tomb of St. Peter in the Vatican had a stone altar as early as the third century.<sup>989</sup> As the Church was to emerge triumphantly in the fourth century, the tombs of the martyrs became focuses of popular devotion and, relatively small, stone altars became part of the shrine built over these tombs. In the fifth century the custom of having stone altars was transferred to the church (often accompanied by the transfer of the actual body of the martyr, or with the development of a church over the tomb).<sup>990</sup> In the sixth century the altar began to occupy a definite place in the spirituality of Christians as being the most sacred part of the church, and also in the churches that were built at this time, the altar began to become physically distant from the faithful.<sup>991</sup>

However due to the vagaries of history, there is no extant pre-Norman altar in any Irish church. It is probable that, like the first Irish churches that housed them, the first Irish altars would have been simple affairs. It is probable that some, perhaps even the majority, of these altars would have been of wood and the rest of stone. During the fifth and sixth centuries, as Christianity was being introduced into Ireland, some of the more important Continental churches had developed elaborate

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<sup>988</sup> Iñiguez, *El Altar Cristiano*, 1:33-35.

<sup>989</sup> *Ibid.*, 38-46.

<sup>990</sup> *Ibid.*, 64-65.

<sup>991</sup> *Ibid.*, 131-138.

altar frontals to give it grandeur.<sup>992</sup> However it is unlikely that style would initially have been possible in Ireland.<sup>993</sup> Another phenomenon that was probably present in Ireland was the use of the portable altar.<sup>994</sup> When archaeologists examined the tomb of St. Cuthbert in England they discovered a small portable seventh century altar (which had been covered in silver in the mid-eighth century, as it was now a relic of the saint and was later placed in his tomb).<sup>995</sup> The altar itself was small, wooden and inscribed on top with five crosses, one in the centre and one at each corner. Along one side ran the inscription "In honour of St. Peter."<sup>996</sup> One would imagine that the earliest Irish portable altars would have resembled this.

While it is quite probable that Irish altars would have resembled the English examples such as the above-mentioned altar of St. Cuthbert, it is likely that there were some differences. Some recent scholarship has advanced an interesting theory that in some Anglo-Saxon English churches the altar may have stood between the sanctuary and nave with a bench for the clergy in the centre of the apse. This would imply that the priest would have celebrated the Eucharist facing the people.<sup>997</sup> This theory is quite intriguing and is based mainly on archaeology study of some of the oldest English churches where the position of the ablution

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<sup>992</sup> Henri, Leclercq, "Autel," in *DACL*, i/2: 3155-3189.

<sup>993</sup> However given the elaborate altar plate and manuscripts in use in Pre-Norman Ireland it is not impossible that there would have been similarly elaborate altar frontals. The Manx stone example (Plate 19) may have mirrored metal examples on the Irish mainland.

<sup>994</sup> Iñiguez, *El Altar Cristiano*, 1:211-214.

<sup>995</sup> Elizabeth Coatsworth "The Pectoral Cross and Portable Altar from the Tomb of St Cuthbert" in Gerald Bonner, David Rollason and Clare Stancliffe, eds., *St Cuthbert, His Cult and His Community to AD 1200* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1989), 300.

<sup>996</sup> *Ibid.*, 295-296.

<sup>997</sup> David, Parsons *Liturgy and Architecture in the Middle Ages*, (Deerhurst: Friends of Deerhurst Church, 1989), 18-21.

drains, the foundation of ancient altars at the centre of the church (at the edge of the sanctuary facing the nave) and the clergy bench being positioned behind the altar.<sup>998</sup> However a lot of work needs to be done to clarify these matters and the archaeological evidence of these English churches is not repeated in Ireland.

While wooden altars were common enough until the Carolingian period throughout Europe, it would seem that the use of wooden altars continued in Ireland longer than it did in other areas. At the very end of our period, John Cumin, the first Norman Archbishop of Dublin held a diocesan synod there in 1186.<sup>999</sup> Here there is evidence that wooden altars were still in use in Dublin in the late twelfth century.

#### The first canon

Prohibits priests from celebrating Mass on wooden tables, according to the usage of Ireland; and enjoins that in all monasteries and baptismal churches altars should be made of stone; and if a stone of a sufficient size to cover the whole surface of the altar cannot be had; that in such a case a square entire and polished stone be fixed in the middle of the altar, where Christ's body is consecrated, of a compass broad enough to contain five crosses and the foot of the largest chalice. But in chapels, chantries or oratories if they are necessarily obliged to use wooden altars, let the Mass be celebrated on plates of stone, of the before-mentioned size, firmly fixed in the wood.<sup>1000</sup>

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<sup>998</sup> For a summary of the evidence as the state of study now stands, see David Parsons, "Sacarium Ablution Drains in Early Medieval Churches," in L.A.S. Butler and Morris R.K., eds., *The Anglo-Saxon Church; Papers on History, Architecture and Archaeology in Honour of Dr. H.M. Taylor*, Council for British Archaeology Research Report 60 (London, 1986), 105-120. This theory has been more recently supported by Carol F. Davidson, "Change and Change Back: the Development of English Parish Church Chancels" in R.N. Swanson, editor, *Continuity and Change in Christian Worship. Papers Read at the 1997 Summer Meeting and the 1998 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1999), 75-76. For a general study on the practice of celebrant of the Eucharist facing East see Cyrille Vogel, "L'Orientation vers l'Est du Célébrant et des Fidèles Pendant la Célébration Eucharistique," *L'Orient Syrien* Vol IX Fasc 1 (1964): 3-38

<sup>999</sup> For more on this synod see Watt, *The Church in Medieval Ireland*, 152-157.

<sup>1000</sup> James Ware, *The Whole Works of Sir James Ware Concerning Ireland*. Walter Harris, ed. and rev. (Dublin: Printed for R. Bell in Stephen-Street, opposite Aungier Street; and John Fleming, in Sycamore-Alley, 1764), 1:316. Note I have modernized the eighteenth century English spelling.

It is interesting to note that a description of St. Brigit's consecration as a virgin, written in the seventh century makes reference to an altar remarkably similar to the one mandated by the 1186 synod: "Kneeling humbly before God and the bishop as well as before the altar and offering her virginal crown to almighty God, she touched the wooden base on which the altar rested."<sup>1001</sup> In the parallel mid-eighth century *Vita Prima* of St. Brigid, Brigid tells her nuns, "when I was a little girl, I made a stone altar as a child's game and the angel came and perforated the stone at the four corners and put four wooden legs under it."<sup>1002</sup>

The *Lebar Breac* contains a tractate on the consecration of a church which was probably composed in the present form in the eleventh or twelfth century.<sup>1003</sup> Here the consecration of an altar is described:

The first subdivision of the consecration of the Altar is this: the Host, the water and the wine are mixed together in one vessel, and consecrated according to the rite of consecration in the Bishop's Book. The reason why those three things are consecrated at first is because they are offered continually at the Mass. The second subdivision that grows out of the Altar is the consecration of the Table of the Altar itself. The Bishop himself marks four crosses with his knife on the four corners of the Altar, and he marks three crosses over the middle of the Altar, namely, a cross over the middle on the east at its edge, and a cross over the middle on the west at its edge, and a cross over the middle on the west at its edge [*sic*], and a cross over the centre. And he washes the Table of the Altar down with the water and with the wine and with the Host. And he spills what remains of the water round the base, and wipes the Altar with his small linen cloth until it is dry, and he kindles

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<sup>1001</sup> "Quae coram Deo et episcopo ac altari genua humiliter flectens, et suam virginalem [F. virginitatem] coram Domino Omnipotente offerens, fundamentum ligneum, quo altare fulciebatur, tetigit." Cogitosus *Vita Brigitae* 2.2, PL 75: 779. English translation from Connolly and Picard, "Cogitosius's *Life of St. Brigit*," 14.

<sup>1002</sup> "Item cum ego parua puella esse in feci altare lapidem ludo puellari, venitque angelus domini, & perforavit lapidem in quator angulis: & supporuit quatuor pedes ligneos." *Vita Prima Sanctae Brigitae* 88.11 in Colgan, *Trias Thaumaturga*, 538. English translation from Connolly, "*Vita Prima Sanctae Brigitae*," 40.

<sup>1003</sup> Kenney, *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland*, 688. However this is not the earliest reference to the practice of consecrating churches as the *Book of Armagh* tells how Patrick in the course of his ministry consecrated a church at the well of Stringell. *Tírechán* III 37 in Bieler, *The Patrician Texts*, 153

incense in the small vessel on the Altar, and he sings, 'Let my prayer be set forth in thy sight as the incense' down to 'evening sacrifice,' as it enumerates in the Bishop's Book', and he anoints with consecrated oil the seven crosses which he marked on the Altar et dicit '*Ungere Altare de oleo sanctificato*', with the form which follows it in the Bishop's Book.<sup>1004</sup>

This is an interesting text. However it is not very clear. Sometimes one finds interpretation of the use of a knife as proof that the altars were made of wood.<sup>1005</sup> However if the altar was of stone, the bishop could be using the knife to symbolically trace over the already existing grooves. Indeed even if the altar was of wood, which may well have been the case, it is unlikely that such an important feature would be chiselled out by an untrained bishop during a complicated rite and not by an expert carpenter either before or after the consecration. Again it is unclear whether the bread and wine used in the consecration had been first Consecrated or whether they had been simply blessed. Finally this is the only Pre-Norman Irish text which makes unambiguous reference to the use of incense.<sup>1006</sup>

It is impossible to say how the Irish altars would have been throughout this period. One would imagine that the majority were fairly simple affairs inscribed by a

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<sup>1004</sup> "§17. IS hi in cè/na fodal coisecartha na haltora -i- ablu 7 usce 7 fín comes[c]tar a noenlestar immalle 7 coisecartha amal rogab tinctul a coisecartha isin libur escuip, 7 is aire coisecartha in[n]ja trí sin l tosach, fobith it e adopretar *fuirri* dogres ic oiffrind. §18 IS hi in fodal tãna/si àsas asin altoir -i- coisecrad clair na haltora budessin -i- doforni in [t]epscop fessin cetheora crossa *cona* scín l *cethri* hardaib in[n]ja altaora, 7 dofomi tri) crossa tar a medon ina altaora -i- crosstar a medon tai roc a hor, 7 cross tar a medon tiar oc a hor, 7 cross tar a firmidon fessin, 7 doing clar na altaora anuas *cusin* usce 7 *cusin* fín 7 *cusin* abluind, 7 inni a mbi don *usci* dofórti im fortha, 7 doderna in altoir dia anart becco mbi trim, 7 adanna inchís il-lestar bec forsin altoir, 7 canaid 'Dirigat[ur] oratio mea sicut incensum' usque 'uespertinum', amal doríme isin libur escuip, 7 ongaid *con-ole* choisecartha na -uui- crossa tóraind isin altoir, et dicit: uncore altare de oleo sanctificato, cosin tinctul dot-coisc) isin libur escuip." Whitley Stokes, "The *Leabhair Breac* Tractate on the Consecration of a Church" in *Miscellanea Linguistica in Onore de Graziadio Ascoli* (Turin, 1901), 370-373.

<sup>1005</sup> Stokes himself follows this interpretation in his notes for this section.

<sup>1006</sup> *Tírechán* mentions incense (or literally "blessed smoke" *fumum benedictum* in the *Book of Armagh*, when Patrick is fighting with King Loeguire and his druids. However while Bieler tends to see this as incense, he also leaves open the possibility that it could have been the smoke of the paschal fire. *Tírechán* III 8 in Bieler, *The Patrician Texts*, 131.



number of crosses. Some priests may have brought portable altars on their travels similar to that of St. Cuthbert. But it may also be the case that judging by the opulence of the contemporary Eucharistic vessels and shrines some Irish altars may have been covered with intricate decorated altar frontals. No metal ones survive (if indeed they ever existed). However there are "at least five examples" of decorated altar fronts from the Isle of Man, including the magnificent carving of the "Calf of Man Crucifixion" (see plate 19).<sup>1007</sup> These make present the Cross of Christ as the central decoration of the altar, also being in tune with the medieval Western understanding of the Eucharist as making present the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary.

A recent find of an eighth or ninth century cross at Lough Tully, Co. Roscommon has been identified as an altar cross. This cross (which unlike the later and more famous Cross of Cong did not house a relic) is made of oak. "The cross-arms are cusped and a number of cast and gilt bronze bosses and flat mounts are attached to the front and the back, contrasted by plain tinned-bronze backing sheets."<sup>1008</sup> There is no corpus *per se* on the cross but a figure towards the bottom has been identified as either Daniel in the Lions' Den or Christ between the two beasts, perhaps a Eucharist image.<sup>1009</sup>

While there may not be any indoor Irish altars, recent archaeological work by Tomás Ó Carragáin claims that there may be some outdoor altars still in place. He gives a number of examples in a forthcoming essay, the most important of these is the Ballydarrig example.

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<sup>1007</sup> Cubbon, A. M., "The Early Church in the Isle of Man," 262.

<sup>1008</sup> Kelly, "Recovered Celtic Treasure," 66.

<sup>1009</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

In Ballydarrig townland near a now disused route to [Mt. Brandon's] summit is a massive, flat-topped, cross-inscribed boulder, which is best interpreted as a outdoor altar. The design on its upper surface is simple but meaningful (Fig. 9.3). In particular the line dividing the lower left-hand quadrant of the main cross-head into two segments may be a reference to the Eucharist, for the Stowe Missal specifies that before breaking the host for communion the priest must first break a piece from its lower left-hand quadrant in order to recall the wounding of Christ's side with a lance on Calvary.<sup>1010</sup>

He also lists another close by example:

A parallel for the Ballydarrig boulder occurs in Drom West on the Dingle Peninsula. This massive boulder is (like Ballydarrig) not directly associated with a church settlement but it may have had a role in the Mt. Brandon pilgrimage, for it is quite near Cloghane church where the eastern pilgrimage route to the mountain's summit began. The rather crude design that occurs on one of its broad sides may represent an altar inscribed with the requisite central crosslet surrounded by four corner crosslets. A larger ringed cross seems to surmount the altar proper and its design is similar to that of the processional cross depicted on the base of the north cross at Aheny. It is tempting to see the seven small irregular shapes at the base of this cross and the eleven at the base of the design as representing particles of the host after the fraction.<sup>1011</sup>

Supposing these identifications to be true, it is probable that these altars were used in connection with the famous pilgrimage to Mount Brandon. This identification would show that stone altars were used in Ireland and the etching of crosses on these altars would be in keeping with typical practice elsewhere. But while intriguing these altars are more than likely for exceptional use and would only have been used when a group of pilgrims was participating in a Liturgy held to mark a special event such as the pilgrimage to various sites like Croagh Patrick and Mount Brandon on the last Sunday in July.<sup>1012</sup>

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<sup>1010</sup> Ó Carragáin, "Church Buildings and Pastoral Care in Early Medieval Ireland," 133. Ó Carragáin's illustration of the surface of this "Mass Rock" has been reproduced as Plate 18.

<sup>1011</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>1012</sup> Harbison, *Pilgrimage in Ireland*, 73. However in the *Book of Armagh* when Patrick ordains Ailbe as a priest he "pointed out to him a marvellous stone altar on the mountain of the Uí Ailello, because he was among the Uí Ailello." Perhaps this pre-ninth century text is simply telling of

#### 4.1.5 Monastic Cities and Stational Liturgy

The earliest Eucharistic Liturgies would have been confined to a domestic setting. Before long, purpose built structures were erected as churches, or pre-existing houses would have been fully converted from domestic use into churches. But this was still on a small scale and while Christianity remained an underground (albeit often tolerated religion) there would have been very little public manifestations of Christian worship. After the Peace of Constantine, however, pilgrimages to Jerusalem became popular and crowds of Christians travelled there from all corners of the world. Many monastic communities also developed so that Christians could spend the rest of their days in the Holy Land. This led to the development of a particular style of liturgy whereby the Holy Places associated with the earthly life of Jesus became the stage for the liturgy. The liturgy of the day was celebrated in the particular Holy Place that was associated with that day's liturgical memorial so that the liturgy and its setting was always "suitable, appropriate, and relevant to what is being done."<sup>1013</sup> An important recent study has defined stational liturgy as:

A service of worship at a designated church, shrine, or public place in or near a city or a town, on a designated feast, fast, or commemoration, which is presided over by

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the miraculous appearance of an altar. But it might also point to the use of ready made boulders as out-door altars which may well make sense. *Tirechán* III 19 in Bieler, *The Patrician Texts*, 139.

<sup>1013</sup> *Egeria's Travels*, 25.5, in Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 120. This travel log kept by Egeria from her late fourth or early fifth century visit to Jerusalem is the most important witness to this form of hagiopolite stational liturgy. Older works tend to criticize this form of liturgy, but for a newer interpretation see Taft, "Historicism Revisited," Chap. 2 in *Beyond East and West*.

the bishop or his representative and intended as the local church's main liturgical celebration of the day.<sup>1014</sup>

This form of liturgy soon passed to Rome and Constantinople. The many shrines and tombs of saints and martyrs in these cities allowed the liturgy to "spill over" from the church building into the environs. Thus by the seventh and eighth centuries a new style of liturgy had developed in the city of Rome whereby the whole city was the "theatre du déploiement" for the liturgy.<sup>1015</sup>

Unfortunately little work has been done on stational liturgy apart from Baldovin's work on Rome, Jerusalem and Constantinople. This type of liturgy is important for the Irish context as it is probable that Irish ecclesiastics and returning pilgrims brought some form of this liturgy back to Ireland.<sup>1016</sup> But in Ireland this is somewhat difficult to study as ancient Ireland had nothing comparable to the city of the Roman Empire. The non-urban reality of pre-Norman Ireland prior to the arrival of the Vikings was examined in Chapter One. In the early Middle Ages most people lived ring-forts and not in urban centres. Reference is sometimes made to the monasteries as possible "Monastic Cities" yet this identification needs to be treated with care as none of the monastic centres has been able to provide documentary or archaeological evidence for its consideration as a city (or town, or big village) as

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<sup>1014</sup> Baldovin, *The Urban Character of Early Christian Worship*, 37.

<sup>1015</sup> Victor Saxer, "L'utilisation par la Liturgie d'Espace Urbain et Suburbain: l'Exemple de Rome das l'Antiquité en le Haut Moyen Âge" in *Collection de l'École Française de Rome 123. Actes Du XI<sup>e</sup> Congrès International D'Archéologie Chrétienne*, Volume II: 983-986.

<sup>1016</sup> The phenomenon of the importation of the stational liturgy North of the Alps in the *ordines Romani* and the possible influence of stational liturgy on the development of the private Mass were examined in Chapter 2.

would normally be understood.<sup>1017</sup> However the notion of Monastic Town is still to be found in modern historical and architectural literature. One recent definition of this so-called Monastic Town is that of Bradley:

The monastic town is an enclosed settlement, typified by having a major group of ecclesiastical buildings (including dwellings, monuments such as crosses, and ceremonial areas) at its core, lived in by a hierarchically organised society, with a dependent population (generally consisting of craftsmen, students, traders and providers), and which functioned as a political capital and as a focus for religious trade.<sup>1018</sup>

An examination of this hypothesis is once again hampered by the lack of archaeological excavation of most of the purported sites of monastic towns.<sup>1019</sup> However, while Swift agrees with Bradley about the problematic of a general lack of archaeological excavation, when she looks at the evidence from recent small-scale excavations she concludes that "there does not appear to be good evidence for postulating a densely built-up environment within large, outer ecclesiastical enclosures in the seventh and eighth centuries."<sup>1020</sup> Bradley maintains that Clonmacnoise meets the definition of a monastic City with an ecclesiastical core, artisans' workshops, districts for the laity to live and even a suburb around the Nun's

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<sup>1017</sup> Charles Doherty "The Monastic Town in Early Medieval Ireland" in H.D. Clarke and Anngret Simms, *The Comparative History of Urban Origins in Non-Roman Europe: Ireland, Wales, Denmark, Germany, Poland and Russia from the Ninth to the Thirteenth Centuries*. Part I BAR International Series 225 (i) (Oxford: BAR, 1985), 68

<sup>1018</sup> John Bradley, "The Monastic Town of Clonmacnoise" in Heather A. King, ed., *Clonmacnoise Studies. Volume 1. Seminar Papers 1994* (Dublin: Dúchas The Heritage Service, 1998), 45.

<sup>1019</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>1020</sup> Catherine Swift, "Forts and Fields, 118.

Chapel.<sup>1021</sup> But Swift strongly argues that there is no evidence of any type that a Monastic City ever existed in Ireland.<sup>1022</sup>

While the concept of Monastic City is difficult to accept in Pre-Norman Ireland, nonetheless the concept of stational liturgy might help in our understanding of many of the bigger ecclesiastic sites. Many of these sites do contain a number of churches and other features that can be explained by thinking that the liturgy used to “spill out” of the bounds of the churches in a local form of stational liturgy. Baldovin points out how the Carolingian liturgy of northern Europe was very influenced by hagiopolite and Roman practices and liturgical geography.<sup>1023</sup> And of all the various features of Roman liturgy the feature which was most impressive to Northern Europeans was “the centrality to it of processional movement.”<sup>1024</sup> He also says that the structure of many medieval monastic churches with the multiplication of side-altars was, paradoxically, based on Roman stational liturgy, showing that the public liturgy *par excellence* was transformed into the custom of Private Masses.<sup>1025</sup>

Given that Irish monks and scholars were involved in the Carolingian reform and that Adomnán wrote a famous account on the Holy Places is it any surprise to find a similar stational liturgy in Ireland? Rome and its elaborate stational liturgy, also held its own appeal to some Irish ecclesiastics, for example the *Vita Prima* of

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<sup>1021</sup> Bradley, “The Monastic Town of Clonmacnoise,” 50.

<sup>1022</sup> Swift, “Forts and Fields,” 106.

<sup>1023</sup> Baldovin, *The Urban Character of Early Christian Worship*, 249.

<sup>1024</sup> *Ibid.*, 413.

<sup>1025</sup> *Ibid.*, 250.

St. Brigid, written between 650 and 750, says that St. Brigid sent envoys to Rome to see how Mass was celebrated there.<sup>1026</sup>

Whether or not envoys were sent to Rome by St. Brigid is not what concerns us, what concerns us is the fact that in the seventh or eighth century when this Life was written, the author regarded Roman liturgy as being important. We know that some Irish ecclesiastics did travel to Rome, as, for example, the delegation from the Synod of Mágh Léine who were in Rome at Easter 631 to have the decrees of the synod confirmed by the Pope.<sup>1027</sup> As seen above the base of the High Crosses, in particular, was influenced by the accounts of Golgotha. Also the Book of Kells and Ardagh and Derrynaflan chalices may well have been inspired by the high liturgy of some Continental cathedral, perhaps of Rome itself.

Today when people visit an early Irish ecclesiastical site they are often impressed by the number of small churches and think this to be a particular Irish feature. But this is not quite true, because,

Between the sixth and ninth centuries most of the major Christian sites of Europe included several different churches, the group of seventh century churches at Canterbury being among the best-known. The Carolingian renaissance encouraged a trend towards integrating the main liturgical activities of a monastery or cathedral into a single large building, usually a basilican structure containing many different altars. This process had no impact in Ireland where the clergy proudly adhered to their fragmented approach.<sup>1028</sup>

What is peculiar to Ireland is that the basilica-type great church did not start to replace these smaller structures until the construction of Mellifont in the 1140's at the

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<sup>1026</sup> *Vita Prima Sanctae Brigitae* 90.4-5 quoted in Chapter 3.

<sup>1027</sup> Baldovin, *The Urban Character of Early Christian Worship*, 407-408.

<sup>1028</sup> Stalley, "Ecclesiastical Architecture before 1169," 719-720.

tail end of our period. In order to understand these sites, it is first of all important to note that the layout of most of these sites is often influenced by the claim of some association with a founding saint. Although very little can be historically said of these saints, most are reputed to have lived in the fifth and sixth centuries.<sup>1029</sup> Excavations at church sites in Ireland, Wales and Celtic Britain have shown that these special graves were marked by early Christian inscribed stones.<sup>1030</sup> Prior to the Norman period there was a reluctance in Wales to disturb the graves of the saints. This was not the case in Ireland where "we have a much earlier hagiographical tradition than in Wales and examination of the seventh-century Irish sources indicates that the translation of saints' bodies was already being carried out at this time (about the same time as the first official translations in Rome)."<sup>1031</sup> The cult of the martyrs in particular, had played an important role in the Christianisation of the former Roman Empire where "the martyr took on a distinctive late-Roman face. He was the *patronus*, the invisible, heavenly concomitant of the patronage exercised palpably on earth by the bishop."<sup>1032</sup> In Ireland this experience was transferred to the founding saints of particular Churches where, even after centuries, the head of that Church was the founder's *Comarba* or successor. Initially there is little evidence for local pilgrimages. But, from the ninth century onwards the Irish Church began to encourage local pilgrimages to places associated with the cult of important local saints. It is possible that these initiatives were inspired by the

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<sup>1029</sup> Edwards, "Celtic Saints and Early Medieval Archaeology," 226.

<sup>1030</sup> *Ibid.*, 230

<sup>1031</sup> *Ibid.*, 238.

<sup>1032</sup> Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints. Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 38.



example of Rome.<sup>1033</sup> The lives of these saints made up another important element in the sacred geography of ecclesiastical sites:

The landscape, with its lesser churches, holy wells, man-made and natural landmarks, acted, in the absence of many real facts about the saint's life, as a setting for his or her miracles and for other episodes which appear in the hagiographical literature, stories which were probably taken over from oral tradition. In turn some of these sites also became foci for those wishing to venerate the saint and became part of the pilgrimage ritual culminating in a visit to the most important site associated with the saint.<sup>1034</sup>

A twelfth century vernacular life of St. Columba provides a good example of the importance that the physical presence of the remains of holy founders had for an ecclesiastical site:

The Colum Cille said to his company: 'It would benefit us if our roots were put down into the ground here,' and he said to them: 'Someone among you should go down into the soil of the island to consecrate it.' Then the obedient Odrán rose up and said: 'If I be taken, I am prepared for it,' said he. 'Odrán,' said Colum Cille, 'you will be rewarded for it. No one will be granted his request at my own grave, unless he first seek it of you. Then Odrán went to heaven.'<sup>1035</sup>

Hagiographical material seems to suggest an ideal of seven churches, and while this only rarely occurs it is quite normal to have a number of churches some of them considerably smaller than the others. These churches are scattered over a site in a seemingly random way, but in some cases the cell of the founder may have had

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<sup>1033</sup> Harbison, *Pilgrimage in Ireland*, 236-237.

<sup>1034</sup> Edwards, "Celtic Saints and Early Medieval Archaeology," 226.

<sup>1035</sup> "At-bert Colum Cille ind sin rá muntir: 'Is maith dún ar fréma do dul fó thalmain súnd,' 7 at bert friu: 'Is cet díb nech écin uaib do dul fo úir na hinnsi-se dia coisecrad.' Atracht suas Ódran erlattad 7 is ed at-bert, 'Dianam-gabtha,' olse. 'is erlo, le, sin.' A Odrain,' ol *Colm Cille*, 'rot-bia a lóg sin .i. ni tiberthar a itghe do nech icom ligesi mina fortsa shirfes ar thus.' Luid iarum Odran docum nime." *Irish Life of Colum Cille* 52, in Herbert, *Iona, Kells and Derry*, 237, 261.

a small oratory built over it<sup>1036</sup> and sometimes a special church for women was built a little apart from the other churches.<sup>1037</sup> But it is hard to make many conclusions about the actual appearance of these sites as the majority of the structures would have been built of perishable materials and little evidence remains of them. After a detailed study of Aomnán's *Life of Columba* Aidan Mac Donald reaches the conclusion that:

it has to be admitted that a clear picture of the physical appearance of a later seventh-century monastery, Columban in particular or Irish in general, does not emerge [. . .] Adomnán was not concerned, after all, to describe explicitly and in detail what would have been perfectly familiar to the majority of his readers, as Iona and elsewhere.<sup>1038</sup>

Another way to approach an understanding of these centres is to look at the physical boundaries within the sites. Many early ecclesiastical sites are surrounded by a wall or earthen barrier and it seems that these played an important liminal role in the sacred geography of these sites, as often these walls were too low to provide any real protection from attack.<sup>1039</sup> In an archaeological survey of the Dingle Peninsula, a remote area in the South Western corner of Ireland where there are many remains of early ecclesiastic sites, the conclusion was reached that:

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<sup>1036</sup> However while there are a number of important examples of these shrine chapels they were by no means an essential element in the development of an Irish saint's cult. See, Tomás Ó Carragáin, (forthcoming), "The Architectural Setting of the Cult of Relics in Early Medieval Ireland," *JRSAI*.

<sup>1037</sup> Hughes and Hamlin, *The Modern Traveller to the Early Irish Church*, 68.

<sup>1038</sup> "Aspects of the monastery and of monastic life in Aomnán's *Life of Columba*," *Peritia*, 3 (1984): 299-300.

<sup>1039</sup> Stalley, "Ecclesiastical Architecture Before 1169," 717.

These small church sites were generally located within a stone-wall or earthen-banked enclosure which would have served not only as protection but also to define the termon or area of sanctuary of the church. Usually circular or oval in plan, though occasionally D-shaped or rectangular, these enclosures are generally larger than the average ringfort, the majority ranging between 30 and 70m in maximum dimension. They survive at about 30 ecclesiastical sites in the Dingle Peninsula. . . The cemetery area and church are usually sited in the E part of the enclosure and it may have been usual for these to have been separated from the remainder of the site by an internal dividing wall or terrace.<sup>1040</sup>

This evidence from the Dingle Peninsula is supported by a more general study of the larger ecclesiastical sites in early Medieval Ireland.<sup>1041</sup> Also an analysis of modern aerial photography has pointed to this form of a church surrounded by a double enclosure:

In summary, this analysis of a selection of Irish monastic sites demonstrates a marked consistency in dimension, layout, structures and features. This consistency would justify the conclusion that these sites were designed in conformity with an accepted and planned arrangement. At these sites, which generally had both an inner and an outer enclosure, the inner enclosure contained the most important ecclesial buildings and burial ground. The entrance was towards the east and was marked by a special cross. The positioning of the main structures, both in the orientation and in their relationship to each other, was consistent and orderly. The fact that sites that to all intents and purposes had ceased to exist by the end of the twelfth century nevertheless possess the above characteristics indicates that this planning and organization took place at an early period in their development. Many of the sites that did continue to develop now form the cores of modern towns and cities. The various stages of development by which this came about are by no means clear, but there appears to be an essential link in the occurrence of a market-place that grew up around the entrance to the enclosure. This may mark the merging of the purely ecclesiastical activity of the monastery and the secular activity which it generated and which was essential for its survival. Perhaps further research on this point will elucidate the transformation of these monastic communities into centres of trade and commercial activity and ultimately into focal points of administrative units and political power.<sup>1042</sup>

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<sup>1040</sup> Cuppage, *Archaeological Survey of the Dingle Peninsula*, 257.

<sup>1041</sup> Nicholas B. Aitchison, *Armagh and the Royal Centres in Early Medieval Ireland, Monuments, Cosmology and the Past* (Suffolk: Cruithne Press/Boydell & Brewer, 1994), 224-225. See Plate 16, reproduced from *ibid.*, 221.

<sup>1042</sup> Leo Swan, "Monastic Prototowns in Early medieval Ireland: The Evidence of Aerial Photography, Plan Analysis and Survey," in Clarke and Simms, eds., *The Comparative History of Urban*, 100-101

Looking at the smaller of the enclosures in many ecclesiastical sites, some authors have proposed that the early unicameral churches may, in fact, have served as a sanctuary into which only the clerics entered while the laity attended Mass outside within the first wall.<sup>1043</sup> However while this theory might be intriguing there is little hard evidence to back it up.<sup>1044</sup> There may have been cases when the congregation was more than the church could hold and in this case some may have had to stay outside. This may have been the case in the text from Adomnán, where the great Columba is celebrating in the company of three other founding saints and more people may well have come than was normal!<sup>1045</sup> This might also have been the case when the Eucharist was celebrated in the small chapels over the founder's grave on particular anniversaries. But these are exceptional cases that still occur to this day. The Second Synod of St. Patrick gives a reference to bringing the Eucharist outside to the faithful, which it forbids at the Easter Vigil, which might be read as referring to some instances, apart from the Easter Vigil, when the Eucharist

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<sup>1043</sup> This theory is expressed in Leask, *Irish Churches and Monastic Buildings I*, 60 and Sharpe, ed. and tr., *Life of St. Columba*, 368-369. For a possible example of this consult Plate 2 which shows the Temptation of Christ, Jesus is on top of the Temple being put to the test by Satan, however the *Temple* is in fact in the form of an early Irish church, the figure coming out could just easily be a Christian priest as a Jewish Old Testament one (or perhaps may represent both). As an aside it could also be pointed out that in the period of Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages Ireland experienced a much warmer climate than today and it would not have been as uncomfortable to attend Mass outside as it would be today, see H. H. Lamb, *Climate, History and the Modern World* (London: Methuen, 1982), 170-171.

<sup>1044</sup> Ó Carragáin, "Church buildings and pastoral care in early medieval Ireland," 16. A recent article has tried to build on an older proposal by Francoise Henry that the "church" would have only been used as a sacristy and a tabernacle while the whole Eucharistic celebration would have taken place outside, Hunwicke, "Kerry and Stowe Revisited," 1-19. However the article tries to construct too much from very little evidence freely calling on present day Byzantine practice as much as early Irish evidence! On the basis of our current knowledge (and excepting the possibilities of pilgrimage and particular feast days) I do not believe that it is possible to propose a habitual celebration of the Liturgy with the people participating outside.

<sup>1045</sup> *Life of St. Columba*, III.17. This text is quoted in Chapter III.

was brought outside the church to the laity waiting outside, but the text is somewhat ambiguous and it would be best not to read too much into it.<sup>1046</sup>

Yet again the study of the symbolic and special organisation of these church sites is hampered by a lack of evidence. A recent work by Nicholas Aitchison has proposed a cosmological interpretation of these centres. However, his analysis tends to read a lot back into the pre-Christian past and posits a great symbolic role to the ancient division of Ireland into five provinces and claims that this division is reflected in the architectural programming of Armagh in particular as well as other major sites.<sup>1047</sup> While interesting these theories are hard to sustain due to lack of clear evidence. Nonetheless, it may well be that in his analysis of the division of church sites that he is correct in attributing symbolic divisions to the enclosures and other features of the monasteries such as High Crosses and Cogitosus' literary references to the divisions of the Church in Kildare.<sup>1048</sup>

But the main reason that the sites boast more than one church is probably so that more than one Eucharist could be celebrated per day. Ancient tradition held that only one Mass could be celebrated per day on each altar<sup>1049</sup> and yet by the seventh and eighth centuries in the West in general many more monks were ordained to the priesthood so as to be able to meet the spiritual demands for more

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<sup>1046</sup> "OF THE SACRIFICE. On the even of Easter, whether it is possible to carry it outside. *It is not to be carried outside*, but to be brought down to the faithful. What else signifies it that the Lamb is taken *in one house*, but that Christ is believed and communicated under one roof of faith?" "DE SACRIFICIO. In nocte Paschae, si fas est ferre foras. *Non foras feretur, sed fidelibus deferatur. Quid aliud significant quod in una domo sumitur agnus quam: sub uno fidei culmine creditur est communicatur Christus?*" *Second Synod of St. Patrick Xill in Bieler, The Irish Penitentials*, 188-189.

<sup>1047</sup> Aitchison, *Armagh and the Royal Centres in Early Medieval Ireland*, 198-295.

<sup>1048</sup> *Ibid.*, 230-267, *passim*.

<sup>1049</sup> Taft, "The Frequency of the Eucharist throughout History," 96.

Eucharistic celebrations.<sup>1050</sup> The multiple Irish churches could be understood in this Western context. However here a particular local architectural adaptation was made so that each altar was within its own small church rather than building a bigger church with multiple altars as was done on the Continent:

Though private, these masses were seen as apotropaic actions that contributed to the spiritual well being of the community as a whole and therefore remained notionally, though not physically, communal. Thus a multiplicity of altars became one of the defining traits of an important church site. This often meant multiple churches, but from the Carolingian period onwards, the favoured solution on the Continent was the elaboration of church plans to allow for the provision of several altars under one roof. In Ireland, however, single-altar churches remained the norm; and so at important sites several small churches were erected.<sup>1051</sup>

This evidence is borne out by Skellig Michael where a small monastic community built a number of churches that far exceeded their material needs for buildings to celebrate the Eucharist.<sup>1052</sup>

Pilgrimage is another important point to be considered. Just because a site is big and we have records of large numbers of people attending Mass there on some particular day does not necessarily mean that these people usually lived there. Cogitosus' mid-seventh century description of St. Brigid's monastery in Kildare is often used as an example of a monastic city:

And who can express in words the exceeding beauty of this church and the countless wonders of the monastic city we are speaking of, if one may call it a city since it is not encircled by a surrounding wall.

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<sup>1050</sup> M. Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism: From the Desert Fathers to the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 189-190.

<sup>1051</sup> Ó Carragáin, "Church Buildings and Pastoral Care in Early Medieval Ireland," 14.

<sup>1052</sup> See Gerald of Wales *The History and Topography of Ireland II*, 63 (quoted in Chapter 3) and Ó Carragáin, "Church Buildings and Pastoral Care in Early Medieval Ireland," 14-15.

And yet, since numberless people assemble within it and since a city gets its name from the fact that many people congregate there, it is a vast and metropolitan city. In its suburbs, which saint Brigit had marked out by a definite boundary, no human foe or enemy attack is feared; on the contrary, together with all its outlying suburbs it is the safest city of refuge in the whole land of the Irish for all its fugitives, and the treasures of kings are kept there; moreover it is looked upon as the most outstanding on account of its illustrious supremacy.

And who can count the different crowds and numberless peoples flocking from all the provinces – some for the abundant feasting, others for the healing of their afflictions, others to watch the pageant of the crowds, others with great gifts and offerings – to join in the solemn celebration of the feast of saint Brigit who, freed from care, cast off the burden of the flesh and followed the lamb of God into the heavenly mansions, having fallen asleep on the first day of the month of February.<sup>1053</sup>

Even allowing for a certain amount of exaggeration, it might seem that Cogitosus is describing a large settlement in Kildare at this time. However a close reading of the text would notice that he is not describing a normal Sunday assembly. He is describing the crowds that came on the first of February, the feast-day of St. Brigit.

In early Ireland travel was a complex business as most people lost their legal rights as soon as they left their native place. But pilgrimage, along with military service and attending a fair, was one of the few opportunities to do so legally.<sup>1054</sup> So it is quite possible that these people came on pilgrimage from a great distance to participate in the celebration of a feast-day and did not normally live there. Smyth

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<sup>1053</sup> "Et quis sermone explicare potest, maximum decorem hujus ecclesiae, et innumera illius civitatis qui dicemus miracula? si fas est dici civitas, de qua vita in se multorum nomen accepit. Maxima haec civitas et metropolitana est, in cujus suburbanis, quae sancta certo limite designavit Brigida, nullus carnalis adversarius, nec cursus timetur hostium. Sed civitas est refugii tutissima de foris suburbanis in tota Scotorum terra, cum suis omnibus fugitivis in qua servantur thesauri regum, et decorati culminis excellentissima esse videntur. Et quis enumerare potest diversas turbas et innumerabiles populos de omnibus provinciis confluentes: alii ob epularum abundantiam, alii languidi propter sanitates, alii ad spectaculum turbarum; alii cum magnis donis venientes ad solemnitatem nativitatis sanctae Brigidae, quae in die Kalendarum Februarii mensis dormiens secure sarcinam deiecit carnis, et Agnum Dei in coelestibus mansionibus secuta est?" Cogitosus *Vita Brigitae* 32.8-10, PL 75: 790. English translation from Connolly and Picard, "Cogitosius's *Life of St. Brigit*," 26-27.

<sup>1054</sup> Kelly, *Early Irish Law*, 4.

has noted that Viking raiders preferred to raid certain monasteries on particular feast days when they could be sure of taking large numbers of slaves.<sup>1055</sup> Also Harbison has identified the many *clochauns* (stone huts) at the base of Mt. Brandon on the Dingle Peninsula as the remains of shelter for pilgrims who came there for some particular feast day.<sup>1056</sup>

If we accept the textual evidence as pointing to lay people only receiving Communion on a few feast days every year, it could well be that one of these receptions was on the occasion of a pilgrimage to a particular centre for a feast day. The various churches, round towers, High Crosses, etc. could have provided the context for a stationary liturgy which culminated in one of the three or four annual receptions of Communion. Thus a possible solution to the debate on Monastic Cities is provided: there may have existed substantial groups of buildings in the various important ecclesial centres, but these may have only been actually inhabited by large numbers of people during a few annual pilgrimages. In this context Ó Carragáin has detected the remains of many outdoor altars on Inishmurray. These could have been used on the days of pilgrimage when there were many more communicants than normal. He proposes this in his overall analysis of the site:

This suggests that some early medieval outdoor ritual involved formal eucharistic celebrations of a sort not normally characteristic of the modern pilgrimage rounds. While the official mass of the day was probably celebrated at the high altar of Temple Molaise, the main congregational church in the cashel, the various *leachta* may have been used for private masses to mark saints' feastdays and votive masses for the sick and the dead.<sup>1057</sup>

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<sup>1055</sup> Smyth, "The Effect of Scandinavian Raiders on the English and Irish Churches," 21.

<sup>1056</sup> Harbison, *Pilgrimage in Ireland*, 182.

<sup>1057</sup> Tomás Ó Carragáin, (forthcoming) "The Saint and the Sacred Centre. Characterising the Early Medieval Pilgrimage Landscape of Inishmurray, Co. Sligo," in Nancy Edwards, ed., *The Archaeology of the Early Medieval Celtic Churches* (London, 2006)



## 4.2 Irish Romanesque churches and the Norman Arrival

Romanesque is a new architectural concept developed about two hundred years ago to describe the work of Western European artists and masons in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.<sup>1058</sup> Irish Romanesque is not a homogeneous style but rather comprises “a hybrid of stylistic ideas of Insular, Hiberno-Scandinavian, and overseas Romanesque origin.”<sup>1059</sup> There was a building boom in twelfth-century Ireland making use of this style, perhaps given its impetus by the Synod of Kells.<sup>1060</sup> Until recently most commentators, following Leask and Henry, believed that Cormac’s Chapel on the Rock of Cashel was the source of the Irish Romanesque style and that German, or German-trained, masons built something so radically different from everything else that served as the exemplar for Irish Romanesque. Today a number of other theories have been advanced about the origins of Irish Romanesque positing contacts with the English North Country or France. However in spite of many other disagreements, the vast majority of scholars are in agreement that Cormac’s Chapel “is absolutely *not* typical of what was built in Ireland in the

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<sup>1058</sup> O’Keeffe, *Romanesque Ireland*, 25.

<sup>1059</sup> Tadhg O’Keeffe, “Romanesque as Metaphor: Architecture and Reform in Early Twelfth Century Ireland,” in Alfred Smyth, ed., *Seanchas. Studies in Early and Medieval Irish Archaeology, History and Literature in Honour of Francis J. Byrne* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), 313.

<sup>1060</sup> *Ibid.*, 315.

1100's."<sup>1061</sup> O'Keefe points out the connection of the emergence of this style with the struggles surrounding the emergence of the twelfth century diocesan structure:

Recent research, however, suggests that the Irish Romanesque architectural tradition did not make its first appearance in Cormac Mac Carthaig's small chapel at Cashel in 1127, but that the early twelfth-century façade at Ardfert, Co. Kerry, should be assigned a date as early as the late 1110's or early 1120's, and that the comparable façade at Roscrea, Co. Tipperary, could also be of that vintage. While there is no record of the construction of these early twelfth century façades, by 1120 both Ardfert and Roscrea had claimed diocesan status, having been denied it in 1111, and it is surely no coincidence that these two sites possess the only churches in Ireland with five-bay façades.<sup>1062</sup>

These new churches were in stone and not wood, and sometimes were of a grander scale than earlier churches, at least in style and embellishments if not in actual dimensions. One of the notable characteristics of the Irish Romanesque style is the importance that it places on door-ways and portals, so that oftentimes there is a very ornate doorway on a plain wall.<sup>1063</sup> The best among many examples of this is Clonfert Cathedral and in total "six lintels with actual figure sculpture survive."<sup>1064</sup>

While these embellished portals might have been installed during the inter-Church struggles due to the claims for diocesan status in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, it would be too limited a view to consider this style to be simply an architectural folly created for power hungry kings and monastics who desired that their own túath have an episcopal see for socio-political and economic reasons.

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<sup>1061</sup> O'Keefe, *Romanesque Ireland*, 39.

<sup>1062</sup> O'Keefe, "Romanesque as Metaphor," 316.

<sup>1063</sup> O'Keefe, *Romanesque Ireland*, 92. However, the idea of the doorway being somehow special may not have been unique to this time-period, as archaeologists have identified a spectacular "eighth-century cast bronze decorated door-handle from Donore, County Meath, and the elaborately designed fittings that accompanied it." Richardson, "Visual Arts and Society," 692-693.

<sup>1064</sup> O'Keefe, *Romanesque Ireland*, 93.

Although these reasons were undoubtedly important factors in Irish Romanesque church construction, once again it needs to be pointed out that these churches were built to be churches and not just show pieces; their primary purpose was still to have the Eucharist celebrated in them. The grandeur of the rites celebrated in them was reflected in the architectural style. In this time the liminal boundaries were transferred to the church itself. The low earthen or stone walls that enclose the earlier ecclesiastical sites are absent from this style, so the portal assumes a clearer iconic role as the focus for processions. While it is hard to know about the interior decoration of pre-Romanesque Irish churches, there is no early evidence of internal stone sculpture.<sup>1065</sup> But the Irish Romanesque churches are generally bi-cameral structures with highly decorated archways separating the sanctuary from the nave. Here again there is a clear example of the use of this style to emphasize a liminal Eucharistic boundary.

Today certain modern stereotypes of architecture of ecclesiastical sites in both Ireland and England have tended to emphasise differences rather than similarities,<sup>1066</sup> and studies in both countries still tend to be handicapped by "the use

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<sup>1065</sup> There may, perhaps, have been some wooden sculpture, this has not been preserved and while there is evidence of stained glass in England in the seventh and eighth centuries there is none for Ireland. Hare and Hamlin, "An Anglo-Saxon viewpoint," 135. The earliest archaeological evidence surviving for stained or painted glass in Ireland is dated to between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, well within the Norman period. Josephine Moran, "The Shattered Image: Archaeological Evidence for Painted and Stained Glass in Medieval Ireland," in Rachel Moss, Colmán Ó Clabaigh and Salvador Ryan, eds., *Art and Devotion in Late Medieval Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2006), 125. Regarding the use of flowers as decorative elements in churches in pre-Norman Ireland, Kelly informs us that "the tradition of cultivating flowers for ornament, though of high antiquity in the Middle East and Mediterranean areas, seems to have taken a long time to become established in northern Europe and the British Isles. I know of no literary or archaeological evidence that early Irish houses, even those of kings or nobles, had flower-gardens or flower-beds," Kelly, *Early Irish Farming*, 270-271.

<sup>1066</sup> J. Blair and Richard Sharpe, eds., "Introduction" to *Pastoral Care before the Parish*, 2.

of the word 'monastery' with all its Benedictine connotations to translate the Latin *monasterium* or to describe British or Irish church communities."<sup>1067</sup> There was more similarity than difference between the Irish and English church structure throughout the Pre-Norman period, even though certain differences did exist. Principal among these is the Irish tendency to build very simple churches. While it is not so clear why they did so, it is certain that this was a decision of choice "not because they were incapable of building anything better."<sup>1068</sup> Plenty of time, effort and both economic and artistic resources were expended in the execution of magnificent works of ecclesiastical art and if it had been desired this could have been spent in church construction.<sup>1069</sup>

Despite the similarities, Continental and English churchmen coming to Ireland in the twelfth century were struck by the differences in architecture in general and not just ecclesiastical architecture:

One of the first differences to strike twelfth-century visitors to Ireland was the appearance of the buildings. In 1142 there were few domestic dwellings built of stone and even kings were satisfied with houses of timber and wattle. So traditional was this style of building that when Henry II visited Dublin in 1171 he ordered a wattle palace to be erected for himself in order not to offend the native rulers. A few years later Gerald of Wales was struck by the absence of stone castles and explained that to the Irish 'woods are their forts and swamps are their ditches.' Walls of wattle laced with mud and clay, were a fast and a cheap method of building, and the excavations of Dublin have yielded whole streets of houses erected in this way. . .

In religious architecture the contrasts between the Celtic monasteries of Ireland and the Benedictine houses of Europe were acute. The ordered sequence of stone buildings, placed around an enclosed cloister girth was a concept virtually unknown in Ireland before the Cistercians arrived. The Celtic church had refused to indulge in

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<sup>1067</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>1068</sup> Tadhg O'Keeffe, *Medieval Ireland, An Archaeology* (Stroud: Tempus, 2000), 128.

<sup>1069</sup> O'Keeffe, "Romanesque as Metaphor," 318.

elaborate architecture, maintaining a policy of architectural austerity which had continued since the days of Bede. Even the monastic cities of Glendalough, Armagh and Clonmacnoise had no great church as the focus of their religious life. The largest church known, the tenth-century cathedral of Glendalough, was a mere sixty-two feet (nineteen meters) in length. It had no aisles and no transepts; nor was there a clearly defined chancel. The stark interiors of these buildings were once enlivened by wooden screens and painted panels, but in architectural terms they were of the utmost simplicity. Design remained almost untouched by European Romanesque until well into the twelfth century.<sup>1070</sup>

The Cistercians, arriving in Ireland a few decades before the Norman invasion, constituted a type of religious colonisation. They brought what was “essentially a cultural package, of which a specific architectural style was but one element.”<sup>1071</sup> However for this element St. Bernard did send the French monk Robert to oversee the construction of the new monastery at Mellifont. On the level of importation of architectural style the Cistercians were by far the most significant innovators in Ireland. They introduced churches, cloisters and monasteries fully in keeping with Continental and English Cistercian style. It is, perhaps, no coincidence that Mellifont, the first Cistercian foundation in Ireland, came to be known as *an Mainistir Mór*, or the Great Monastery.<sup>1072</sup> However Irish Cistercian style did develop some of its own characteristics, partly due to local conditions and economic constraints, but also due to a less rigorous concern for a strict interpretation of the Cistercian architectural canon.<sup>1073</sup>

In its account of the consecration of the church of Mellifont, the Annals of the Four Masters tell that Derbforgaill “the wife of O’Ruairc, the daughter of Ua

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<sup>1070</sup> Stalley, *The Cistercian Monasteries of Ireland*, 7-9.

<sup>1071</sup> O’Keeffe, *An Anglo-Norman Monastery*, 107.

<sup>1072</sup> Stalley, “Ecclesiastical Architecture Before 1169,” 735.

<sup>1073</sup> Stalley, *The Cistercian Monasteries of Ireland*, 235-238.

Maeleachlainn, gave as much more, and a chalice of gold on the altar of Mary, and cloth for each of the nine other altars that were in that church."<sup>1074</sup>

Also this Cistercian form of monasticism was not always successful even on the architectural level and not everybody was impressed by the magnificence of the Cistercian monasteries. One of the abuses that Stephen of Lexington encountered in his 1228 visitation of the Irish Cistercian monasteries was that "few [of the monks] are living in community, but they live in miserable huts outside the cloister in groups of threes or fours."<sup>1075</sup> While he complains against this abuse on occasion he himself seems to have been convinced of the appropriateness of this in some cases and recommended dispensation for certain monks to live outside the monastery.<sup>1076</sup>

On the other hand the Rule of St. Augustine, also introduced into Ireland by St. Malachy brought something of mainstream Western religious life without the colonial cultural package.<sup>1077</sup> While many of these monasteries were established (or native communities were re-established as Augustinian Canons), there was no

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<sup>1074</sup> "Ro rad ben Tighearnain Uí Ruairc inghean Uí Mhaoileachlainn an ccomatt cedna 7 caileach óin ar altoir Mhairi, 7 edach ar gach naltóir do na naoi naltoraibh oile bátan isin tempall isin." *The Annals of The Four Masters* 1157 §9 in John O'Donovan, ed., *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters from the Earliest Period to the Year 1616*, 2d ed. (Dublin: Hodges Smith and Co., Grafton Street, 1856), 2:1124-1125.

As the *Annals of the Four Masters* was only completed in the seventeenth century, its historical accuracy for earlier periods is debated by historians (now-lost earlier sources were used, but it is also sure that editorial changes were introduced to favour a Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation view). So this cannot be regarded as inconclusive proof for the presence of ten altars in the Great Church of Mellifont. The parallel entry in the *Annals of Ulster* mentions the same bequest, but does not specify that there were ten altars. But it is possible that this is a genuine historical detail and has been accepted by Flannagan, *Irish Society*, 92-93.

<sup>1075</sup> "Pauci sunt habitantes in communi, sed per ternarium aut quaternarium in paruis casellis extra claustrum cateruatim constitut." Stephen of Lexington Letter 21 in Griesser, ed., "Registrum Epistolarum," 35. English translation from O'Dwyer, ed., *Letters from Ireland*, 44.

<sup>1076</sup> Letter 10 in *ibid.*, 29.

<sup>1077</sup> O'Keeffe, *An Anglo-Norman Monastery*, 108.

particular architectural importation so that “the earliest Augustinian buildings which do survive reveal the lack of a fixed architectural identity.”<sup>1078</sup>

But stress must be laid on the importance given to continuity by those who founded new monastic and other ecclesiastical sites in the post-Norman period. Tadhg O’Keeffe points out that “of some 160 buildings or building fragments known to me, 13% were cathedrals, another 13% were associated with reformed monastic orders other than the Cistercians, and virtually all (95%) are on sites with histories of Christian use stretching back before the twelfth century.”<sup>1079</sup>

## **4.2 The Physical Objects Associated With the Eucharist in Pre-Norman Ireland and their Eucharistic Iconography**

### **4.2.1 Communion Vessels**

It is most fortuitous that two of Ireland’s most important national treasures are magnificent chalices, one from the eighth century the other from, at the latest, the tenth. These chalices are now exhibited in the National Museum of Ireland in Dublin. It seems that both of these chalices were deliberately hidden in the Middle Ages and were only discovered nearly a millennium later.

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<sup>1078</sup> O’Keeffe, *Romanesque Ireland*, 104.

<sup>1079</sup> Tadhg O’Keeffe, “The Built Environment of Local Community Worship between the Late Eleventh and Early Thirteenth Centuries,” unpublished paper. N.B. this is an earlier version of a paper which later was revised for publication in Gillespie and FitzPatrick, eds., *The Parish in Medieval and Post-Medieval Ireland*. However I have taken the statistic from the unpublished version (for which I am grateful to Dr. O’Keeffe).

#### 4.2.1.1 The Ardagh Hoard and The Derrynaflan Hoard

The Ardagh Hoard was found near the village of Ardagh, Co. Limerick in 1868.

It contained a beautifully decorated silver chalice, now known as the Ardagh chalice, a bronze example damaged during the finding and four gilt silver brooches, one probably of eighth-century, two of ninth-century and one of later ninth-tenth-century dates.<sup>1080</sup>

The Ardagh Chalice (Plate 3) is a handled chalice 17.8 cm high and 19.5 cm in diameter (excluding the handles) at the rim. It is made up of more than 300 individual pieces assembled around a central bronze pin. The main body of the chalice is of beaten silver. It is decorated with cast glass “jewels” and some very high quality filigree ornaments. At this time beauty was achieved by the judicious use of material of the highest quality. It bears some very fine engraving, including a band below the rim with the names of the twelve apostles. The chalice itself probably dates to the second half of the eighth century (this date is based on comparisons to contemporary brooches). This is not the place to go into all its details, but this chalice represents a “highpoint” in Irish metalwork, that has not been surpassed to this day.<sup>1081</sup>

The Derrynaflan hoard (Plate 4) was found in 1980 at *Doire na bhFlann*, Co. Tipperary. While the hoard would indicate an important ecclesiastical site, in fact

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<sup>1080</sup> Michael Ryan, *The Irish Treasures Series, Early Irish Communion Vessels* (Dublin: Country House, Dublin, in association with The National Museum of Ireland, 2000), 12.

<sup>1081</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.



there is little or no contemporary mention of the monastery at this place.<sup>1082</sup> However some have proposed that this may have been the monastery which was founded under the patronage of Feidlimid mac Crimthann, the king-bishop of Munster who lived at nearby Cashel.<sup>1083</sup> This hoard had been concealed in the tenth century and contained:

A silver chalice, a fragmentary paten (now restored), a hoop of silver, probably at one time attached to the paten as a foot, a bronze strainer and a bronze basin.<sup>1084</sup>

The Derrynaflan Chalice is slightly higher and wider (19.2 x 21 cm) than the Ardagh Chalice (see Plate 5 for a picture of the two chalices side by side). It is quite similar to the Ardagh Chalice and is also built of about 300 pieces assembled around a bronze pin, but, whereas the Ardagh Chalice had to be reinforced, this is of a much solidier construction. The chalice uses amber rather than the glass "jewels," and has more decoration, filigrees etc., but these tend to be of a lesser quality than the Ardagh Chalice. Again, by comparison to contemporary brooches, it seems to have been made in the ninth century, and it had very little use prior to its being hidden.

Both these chalices have two handles, which may, perhaps, have been modelled after the Holy Grail (the Chalice supposedly used by Christ himself in the Last Supper). In his *De Locis Sanctis* Adomnán mentions the Holy Grail, saying that

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<sup>1082</sup> F.J. Byrne, "Derrynaflan: the Historical Context" *JRSAI* 110 (1980): 116.

<sup>1083</sup> Michael Ryan, "The Derrynaflan Hoard and Early Irish Art" in Michael Ryan, *Studies in Early Irish Metalwork* (London: The Pindar Press, 2002), 539-540.

<sup>1084</sup> Ryan, *Early Irish Communion Vessels*, 12.

"the chalice is silver, has the measure of a Gaulish pint, and has two handles fashioned on either side."<sup>1085</sup>

The Derrynaflan Paten (Plate 6) is also very big, 35.6-36.8 cm in diameter. While there are a number of chalices, it is the only intact surviving Irish paten from the Pre-Norman period.<sup>1086</sup> It is very heavily decorated and was designed to stand on its own, perhaps being attached to the stand at one time (Plate 7). It had a very elaborate construction, "consisting of over three hundred separate components. It is a beaten shallow silver dish stitched with wire and soldered to a bronze rim. It was spun on a lathe to polish it."<sup>1087</sup> As with the chalices, the centre of the paten is void of decoration and the edge and sides are heavily decorated.<sup>1088</sup> Coincidentally, the Derrynaflan Paten seems to be of the same period and style as the Ardagh Chalice and indeed may have originated in the same workshop.<sup>1089</sup> Documentary references point to both large and small ("*inter maiores et minores*") patens on the Continent.

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<sup>1085</sup> "Argentus calix sextarii Gallici mensuram habens duasque in se ansulas ex utraque parte altrinsecus continens compositas." *De Locis Sanctis* II.vii.1, Meehan, 50-51.

<sup>1086</sup> One pre-ninth century Irish text does mention a particular type of square paten made on the order of Patrick. "Assicus the holy bishop was a coppersmith (in the service) of Patrick, and he made altar-plates and square casks for the patens of our holy saint in honour of bishop Patrick, and three of these square patens I have seen, that is, a paten in Patrick's church at Armagh and another in the church of Ail Find and a third in the great church of Seól on the altar of the holy bishop Felartus." "Asicus sanctus episcopus faber aereus erat Patricio et faciebat altaria (et) bibliothicas qua(drata)s faciebat in patinos sancti nostri pro honore Patricii episcopi, et de illis tres patinos quadratos uidi, id est platinum in aelessia Patricii in Ardd Machae et alterum in aelessia Alo Find et tertium in aelessia magna Saeoli super altare Felarti sancti episcopi." *Tírechán* III 22 in Bieler, *The Patrician Texts*, 140-141. Here the paten is seen as an important relic of Patrick and is also treated in isolation from any accompanying chalice.

<sup>1087</sup> Ryan, *Early Irish Communion Vessels*, 39.

<sup>1088</sup> Close scientific examination of the Derrynaflan Paten has revealed that it contains a minuscule engraving of an anagram whose letters are less than 1 millimetre high. However, unfortunately, it has not been possible to deduce what words these letters stand for. Michelle P. Brown, "Paten and Purpose: the Derrynaflan Paten Inscriptions" in Spearman and Higgitt, eds., *The Age of Migrating Ideas*, 162-167.

<sup>1089</sup> *Ibid.*

But apart from the Irish example, no Western examples have been preserved of what may once have been a quite popular style.<sup>1090</sup> However, as the general design of the Derrynaflan Paten entailed its complex assembly from many pieces, this suggests that it represents "an attempt to approximate in local technique and with the local constraints of supply of materials, the sort of plate one might have seen in a great western basilica or in Rome itself."<sup>1091</sup> Therefore this artefact is very important and provides an interesting parallel to the importance that the Stowe Missal and other literary and artistic sources which place an emphasis on the *fractio panis*. In this context, the different markings on the rim of the Paten may even have had a function more than being simply decorative:

It is not unconceivable that the decorative scheme on the rim of the Derrynaflan Paten might have provided a key for the placing of the host upon the altar plate, in accordance with a variable pattern of disposition.<sup>1092</sup>

The Derrynaflan Strainer is a bronze ladle 38 cm long with a deep bowl 11.5 cm in diameter.<sup>1093</sup> It would have been used to purify the altar wine, by pouring the wine into one side of the strainer and then out of the other.

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<sup>1090</sup> Ryan, *Early Irish Communion Vessels*, 311. For some other textual references see O'Loughlin, "Praxis and Explanations," 7.

<sup>1091</sup> Ryan, "The Derrynaflan Hoard and Early Irish Art," 569.

<sup>1092</sup> Brown, "Paten and Purpose," 165.

<sup>1093</sup> Ryan, *Early Irish Communion Vessels*, 43.

#### 4.2.1.2 Other Finds

Three other chalices and one paten are still extant from approximately the same period. The Lough Kinale Chalice from Co. Longford (Plate 8) is a lot smaller and plainer than the bigger chalices, 7.6 x 6.5 cm. However, plain as it is, it was constructed in a very similar fashion to its bigger cousins.<sup>1094</sup> It was found with a badly decomposed footed copper paten.

The second, smaller, bronze chalice from the Ardagh hoard was damaged in the discovery. After reconstruction it seems to have been originally the same size as the Lough Kinale Chalice, although of inferior workmanship.<sup>1095</sup> Another chalice, the River Bann Chalice (Plate 9), has also been dated to around the same period, and, although it bears no markings, it is assumed (from its form alone) that it was a Eucharistic chalice. This cup has approximately the same dimensions as the Lough Kinale Chalice, but it would have had a much shorter stem and so seems rather "squat" when compared to the others.<sup>1096</sup>

A question that can never be fully answered is how typical were the Ardagh and Derrynaflan Chalices or if it is by a pure quirk of fate that of the five remaining pre-Norman Irish Eucharistic chalices two belong to a very small group of show-pieces. But, as will be examined below, it seems that there was a definite Irish

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<sup>1094</sup> Michael Ryan, "The Formal Relationship of Insular Early Medieval Eucharistic Chalices" in Ryan, *Studies in Early Irish Metalwork*, 286.

<sup>1095</sup> *Ibid.*, 284.

<sup>1096</sup> *Ibid.*, 285.

particularity about the style of chalice used in the Eucharist and that once there would probably have existed other luxury chalices.<sup>1097</sup>

A recent article by Cormac Bourke examines two twelfth century Irish hand bells and proposes that these bells may, in fact, have originally been chalices. he proposes that both these chalices had, coincidentally, been refashioned as bells.<sup>1098</sup>

Bourke offers the following analysis:

The bells of Caillín and Cuana can be shown to date to the twelfth century; they are thin-walled and circular in cross-section and differ fundamentally from the quadrangular hand-bells of early medieval tradition. They are adjuncts to that tradition, having been revered as saintly relics and, in all probability, preserved by hereditary keepers, but neither was designed to serve its ostensible function. One, at least, was made by raising and lathe finishing, which is the technology of vessel-making, rather than by casting, which is appropriate to bells. Both are to be understood as cups or chalices from which the stem and foot have been removed and which have been adapted, inverted, to serve as bells. Both were skilfully made, whereas the attachment of handles and suspension loops declares itself by its very crudity to be secondary. Their half-ovoid form is typical of chalices and cups and no comparable hand-bells are known.<sup>1099</sup>

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<sup>1097</sup> Here the possibility of the use of glass chalices in Pre-Norman Ireland is not foreseen. Some older works make references to archaeological finds of glass chalices in Ireland. However the sources are somewhat vague and, as the finds have mysteriously disappeared again in the nineteenth century they cannot be credited with any real historical value. Warren lists a number of examples of chalices that were found and then lost in earlier centuries but he is unable to provide a detailed description for any of them, see *Liturgy and Ritual*, 143-144. Some saints' lives do mention glass chalices, but these are usually associated with miraculous visions and given that "there is no evidence that glass was produced in Ireland in the Early Christian period, and it is likely that all glass objects were made from imported glass" (Mytum, *The Origins of Early Christian Ireland*, 221) it is not very likely that there were many glass chalices in Pre-Norman Ireland, Ryan, "Insular Eucharistic Chalices," 344-346. For an accessible account of the use of glass in general in Ireland in the first millennium see, Edward Bourke, "Glass Vessels of the First Nine Centuries A.D. in Ireland," *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 124 (1994): 163-209. He deals with the possibility of glass Eucharistic chalices on pages 174-175, however I am unable to agree with his analysis as there is too strong a dependence on symbolic elements in the texts.

<sup>1098</sup> "The Bells of Saints Caillín and Cuana: two twelfth-century cups,' in Smyth, ed., *Seanchas*, 331-340.

<sup>1099</sup> *Ibid.*, 332.

The “cup” of the bell of St. Callín is associated with Fenagh, Co. Leitrim. It is of a half-ovoid shape, is 130mm high and 117mm in upper diameter, and has a capacity of about 1.5 pints.<sup>1100</sup> It is of a high standard of workmanship and is seated in a decorated mount, which is of fine quality and bears striking similarities to the Cross of Cong and the shrine of St. Manchán, both work of the early twelfth century Cross of Cong school at Roscommon.

The cup of the bell of St. Cuana is associated with Kilshanny, Co. Clare. It is also half-ovoid in shape and 109 mm high and 129 mm in upper diameter.<sup>1101</sup> While not as elaborate as the St. Callín “bell,” this vessel also compares with twelfth-century Irish metal-work.

It must be remembered that Bourke's suggestion that these may originally have been chalices is only a hypothesis, and even if it were true, there is also the possibility that the chalices may have been for secular and not liturgical use. However, given that the “bells” have a definite ecclesiastical association, it is likely that if they were indeed chalices that they functioned as liturgical chalices. If further studies prove these to be true Eucharistic chalices, they would add important details to our knowledge of the period. An additional two chalices would bring the corpus of pre-Norman Irish chalices from five to seven. Most significantly these chalices are of the half-ovoid shape, traditional in Western Europe as a whole and different from the famous Ardagh and Derrynaflan chalices as well as the other insular chalices. Although, once again, very hampered by the lack of remaining evidence, that

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<sup>1100</sup> Ibid., 335.

<sup>1101</sup> Ibid., 336.

evidence which does remain points to Irish liturgical practice vis-à-vis chalice design, once again moving in the direction of conformity with Continental practice.

#### 4.2.1.3 Viking Evidence

However one wants to read the impact of the Viking raids on Irish ecclesial sites, a significant amount of insular material has been found in Norway:

[Recent finds] include some complete shrines and reliquaries but normally consist of fragments such as mounts of different shapes, sizes and functions, which may also have decorated altars and crosses, crosiers, mounts and clasps from bindings of ecclesiastical books, parts of chalices, sprinklers and other liturgical objects. A detailed discussion would be out of place here but it may be noted that, apart from the penannular brooches and the fragmentary harness and belt mounts, nearly all insular ornaments in Scandinavia derive from ecclesiastical contexts.<sup>1102</sup>

Many of these finds are fragmentary and many "show traces of being cut and hacked,"<sup>1103</sup> and indeed "no complete chalice has, however been preserved amongst the Scandinavian material. Chalices obviously did not continue to be used as drinking vessels by the Vikings, but, like most of the other Viking loot, were destroyed or disassembled."<sup>1104</sup> The Ardagh and Derrynaflan chalices were made by attaching a multitude of small, highly decorative pieces to a fairly plain basic vessel. Given the fragmentary nature of the insular remains found in Norway and the tendency of Viking craftsmen to reuse the decorative elements of Irish metalwork for

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<sup>1102</sup> Egon Wamers, "Insular Finds in Viking Age Scandinavia and the State Formation of Norway" in Howard Clarke et. al., eds., *Ireland and Scandinavia*, 42. In a personal communication Dr. Wamers told me [January 2005] that to his knowledge there has been no definite attribution of a chalice or Eucharistic vessel in any of the Norwegian material that he has studied.

<sup>1103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1104</sup> Egon Wamers, "Some Ecclesiastical and Secular Insular Metalwork Found in Norwegian Viking Graves," *Peritia* vol. 2 (1983): 277-306.

their own luxury items, it is quite possible that among the recycled insular material are some elements of high-quality Eucharistic vessels which would have been on a par with those in the National Museum.

The possibility of other luxury Eucharistic vessels having existed is further boosted by looking at the remains of a Viking raiding party's loot that was found in Ulster. Among the dismembered elements the archaeologists found:

A bronze strainer with perforations forming a cross, which served to purify liturgical wine. A U-shaped mount decorated with the eucharistic motif of quaffing peacocks belonging to the satchel of a paten and an arch-shaped mount which may be from a paten rim. A splendid casting with birds in high relief may be from a conical ring uniting the stem and foot of a chalice, perhaps a chalice with a specific dedication if the birds represent the eagle of St. John. The chalice, strainer and paten were essential adjuncts to the Eucharist and have been found together in the hoard from Derrynaflan, Co. Tipperary.<sup>1105</sup>

Once again, it seems that all that remained from the Communion vessels are the decorative details. It is perhaps significant that we have evidence of another strainer. If it were purely a matter of straining the impurities from the wine then this could be accomplished before the liturgy began.<sup>1106</sup> Perhaps it had become part of an elaborate ceremonial that Irish pilgrims might have witnessed at Rome or some other great Cathedral.<sup>1107</sup> Indeed *Ordo Romanus Primus* also makes reference to the use of a strainer at the papal Mass: "when the altar is ready, the archdeacon

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<sup>1105</sup> Cormac Bourke, *Patrick: The Archaeology of a Saint* (Belfast: H.M.S.O. Ulster Museum, 1993), 32.

<sup>1106</sup> Although purely utilitarian actions have sometimes been preserved in later liturgies with a spiritual meaning attached to them, see Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship*, 19-20.

<sup>1107</sup> Ryan, "The Derrynaflan Hoard and Early Irish Art," 550.



takes a flask from the oblationary sub-deacon and pours it through a strainer into the chalice, and then the deacons' flasks."<sup>1108</sup>

#### 4.2.1.5 Analysis

A lot of very useful work on early Irish Eucharistic vessels has been done by Dr. Michael Ryan in recent years. However, there are still a number of problems in trying to analyse this information. First of all, while the corpus of Irish chalices have been well studied using X-rays and other modern technologies, even the most famous of the Continental finds from the same period have not been studied to the same scientific standard!<sup>1109</sup> Another problem is the general lack of evidence. In the whole of Western Europe (including Ireland), prior to the twelfth century, only fifty-three chalices are extant and this includes ministerial chalices, votive chalices, chalices for travel, chalices for daily use, and "grave" chalices.<sup>1110</sup>

In comparison with other contemporary chalices, the two great Irish chalices stand on their own. In proportions they resemble Byzantine chalices,<sup>1111</sup> but while Byzantine chalices were not unknown in the West, sometimes being introduced in

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<sup>1108</sup> "Ornato vere altare, tunc archidiaonus summit amulam pontificis de subdiacono oblationario et refundit super colum in calicem, deinde diaconorum." *Ordo Romanus* I, 79 in Andrieu, *Les Ordines Romani*, 2:93. English translation from Jasper and Cuming, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, 169.

<sup>1109</sup> Ryan, "Insular Eucharistic Chalices," 313. Ryan himself provides a useful summary of the state of scholarship on the study of the non-Irish Western European chalices in *ibid.*, 288-334.

<sup>1110</sup> *Ibid.*, 279-281.

<sup>1111</sup> The Ardagh and Derrynaflan Chalices are slightly larger than the norm for early Byzantine chalices, although later Byzantine chalices were even larger than these, and the Derrynaflan Paten was within the normal dimensions for early Byzantine patens. See, Taft, "The Order and Place of Lay Communion," 147-149.

the form of gifts from the Byzantine emperors to the pope,<sup>1112</sup> no direct influence of these can be traced to the Irish chalices.<sup>1113</sup> It would seem more likely that the Irish examples are a subgroup of the general type of Chalice that was present in both East and West, but of which, due to the ravages of time and war and changing styles of chalices, few other examples survive in the West. Another fact that emerges is that the Derrynaflan Chalice, although very similar (on first look) to the earlier Ardagh Chalice, was not directly influenced by it.<sup>1114</sup> This, plus the strong possibility that some of the Viking material was originally from similar chalices, would point to the existence of other similar chalices.

Nonetheless, simply analyzing the evidence that is available, it is possible to see some clear outlines in the Irish chalices that make up about ten per cent of the total Western examples of chalice. The Irish chalices tend to have "broad, near-hemispherical bowls with everted rims which are very striking in appearance and are not closely matched on Continental vessels."<sup>1115</sup> Another stylistic characteristic of the Irish chalices is the form of the foot which is large in relation to the cup.<sup>1116</sup> Yet another element is the fact that the two luxury Irish chalices are assembled from hundreds of individual pieces, the Irish artisans were unable to cast or produce big pieces and so painstakingly assembled them from a multitude of small pieces, paying a lot of attention both to the individual pieces and to the whole. Ryan is also

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<sup>1112</sup> Ryan, "Insular Eucharistic Chalices," 338-339.

<sup>1113</sup> *Ibid.*, 340.

<sup>1114</sup> Michael Ryan, "The Derrynaflan and Other Early Irish Eucharistic Chalices" in *Studies in Early Irish Metalwork*, 178.

<sup>1115</sup> *Ibid.*, 328.

<sup>1116</sup> *Ibid.*

of the opinion that both the Derrynaflan and the Ardagh Chalice and the Derrynaflan Paten may have been votive offerings. This might explain why they received so little use prior to being hidden and suggests that even if they had not been lost it is possible that they would have been used only on great feastdays. He also thinks that of the three vessels only the Derrynaflan Chalice may have been used as a ministerial chalice for the actual distribution of Communion. Other, less ornate, vessels would have been used normally for the celebration of the Eucharist outside of the highest holy days, and even on these the Vessels may have played a symbolic and not a practical function.<sup>1117</sup> As the Blood of Christ had a special place in Irish devotional and iconographical sources, these beautiful chalices might have been made in fact to help people appreciate the liturgical presence of this Blood.<sup>1118</sup> It is even possible that precisely because people did not receive the Communion often that these large chalices could have functioned as a focus for devotion to the Blood of Christ in a similar way that the Monstrance would focus attention on the Host in the High Middle Ages.

Later on in Ireland, as in the rest of Western Europe, the Chalice was gradually denied to the laity.<sup>1119</sup> This contributed to a change in the style of chalice in order to favour a chalice styled as a small beaker on a tall stem. It is quite probable that any surviving chalices of the old style would have been melted down to

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<sup>1117</sup> Ryan, "The Derrynaflan Hoard and Early Irish Art," 550-552.

<sup>1118</sup> See Ó Duinn, *Where Three Streams Meet*, 91-92 and Salvador Ryan, "'Reign of Blood': Aspects of Devotion to the Wounds of Christ in Late Medieval Ireland," in Joost Augusteijn and Mary Ann Lyons, eds. *Irish History: A Yearbook*, Number 1: 2002 (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), 138.

<sup>1119</sup> Edward Foley, *From Age to Age. How Christians Have Celebrated the Eucharist* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1991), 109. In most of the East the laity were given the Eucharistic bread on a spoon which had been dipped in a chalice. Stefano Parenti, "The Eucharistic Celebration in the East: The Various Orders of Celebration" in Chupungco, ed., *The Eucharist*, 66.

be recast as newer “modern” vessels. Likewise, with the advent of the Normans and the Religious Orders, some local liturgical uses died out in Ireland (as they did in every other region at that time). Therefore the “*fractio panis*” became less important and so smaller patens would have been adopted in Ireland also.

#### 4.2.2 Wine

The study of chalices needs to be complemented by the study of their primary use. The liturgical chalice is a vessel to contain grape-wine. Today the climate of Ireland is not very suitable to the growing of grapes. It is hard to say with certainty whether or not grapes were cultivated in pre-Norman Ireland. The fact that olive oil was not produced locally and was therefore scarce, led to some controversy,<sup>1120</sup> however there is no mention of the lack of wine. There are a number of stories in the saints' lives, where water is changed into wine so that the Eucharist can be celebrated.<sup>1121</sup> But this is not a necessary proof that wine was particularly hard to come by; many saints' lives also have the saint change water into beer which presumably could have been produced locally. In England wine was produced at this time, and Bede mentions in his Ecclesiastical History that Ireland “abounds in

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<sup>1120</sup> Stevenson, *Liturgy and Ritual*, liii-lvii

<sup>1121</sup> For example in the vernacular life of St. Columba we are told: “*Fechtus an testa fin (bairgen) ar Finden on aiffrind. Bennachais Colum Cille in usce cor soad hi fhìn co tartad isin coilech n-aiffrind.*” “On one occasion, Finnén lacked wine for the Mass. Colum Cille blessed the water, and it was changed into wine and placed in the Mass-chalice.” *Irish Life of Colum Cille* 24, in Herbert, *Iona, Kells and Derry*, 227, 254.

milk and honey, nor does it lack vines, fish and birds."<sup>1122</sup> Four hundred years later Gerald of Wales, who, unlike Bede, was familiar with Ireland, takes it on himself to explicitly refute this passage of Bede:

The island is rich in pastures and meadows, honey and milk, and wine, but not vineyards. Bede, however, among his other praises of the island says that it is not altogether without vineyards. On the other hand, Solinus says that it has no bees. But if I may be pardoned by both, it would have been more true if each of them said the opposite: it has no vineyards, and it is not altogether without bees. For the island has not, and never had, vines and their cultivators. Imported wines, however, conveyed in the ordinary commercial way, are so abundant that you would scarcely notice that the vine was neither cultivated nor gave its fruit there. Poitou out of its own superabundance sends plenty of wine, and Ireland is pleased to send in return the hides of animals and the skins of flocks and wild beasts. Ireland, as other countries, has bees that produce honey; but the swarms would be much more plentiful if they were not frightened off by the yew-trees that are poisonous and bitter, and with which the island woods are flourishing. It is possible, of course, that in Bede's time there were, perhaps, some vineyards in the island; and some people say that it was Saint Dominic of Ossory who brought bees into Ireland – that was long after the time of Solinus.<sup>1123</sup>

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<sup>1122</sup> "Diues lactis et mellis insula nec uinearum expers, piscium uolucrumque sed et ceruorum caprearumque uenatu insignis." *Ecclesiastical History*, i.1 in Colgrave and Mynors, 20-21. However it is very unlikely that Bede was speaking from first-hand experience (particularly given that in the sentence just before this he has informed how scrapings from Irish manuscripts cure people suffering from poisonous snake bite).

<sup>1123</sup> "Pascuis et pratis, melle et lacte, unius, non uineis, diues est insula. Beda tamen inter alias insule laudes dicit eam uinearum expertem non esse. Solinus uero apibus eam career asserit. Sed salua utriusque uenia, circumspectius e diuerso scripsissent: uineis ipsam carere, et apium expertem non esse. Uineis enim et earum cultoribus semper caruit et caret insula. Vina tamen transmarine ratione commertii tam habunde terram replent, ut uixpropaginis prouentusque naturalis in aliquo defectum percipias. Pictauiam namque de plenitudine sua ei copiose uina transmittit. Cui et animalium coria et pecudum ferumque tergora. Hybernia non ingrata remittit. Apes quidem sicut alie regions hec mellificas habet. in maiori tamen, ut arbitror, copia scaturirent, si non uenenosas et amaras, quibus siluescit insula, fugerent examina taxos. Verisimiliter autem dici potest temporere Bede nonnullas forsitan in insula uineas fuisse; et longe post Solini tempora sanctum Dominicum Ossiriensem, ut asserunt quidam, apes in Hiberniam detulisse." *The History and Topography of Ireland*, I, 2, in O'Meara, "Giraldus Cambrensis in Topographia Hibernie," 144. English translation from O'Meara, *Gerald of Wales*, 35.

From a climatological and horticultural point of view it was probably possible to grow grapes in Ireland throughout the Pre-Norman period.<sup>1124</sup> Fergus Kelly likewise adds that:

Modern experience in Ireland has shown that hardy varieties of grape can ripen outdoors in good summers, particularly in the south of the country. It is therefore quite possible that monks successfully introduced vines into Ireland on a small scale along with the many other agricultural innovations of the early Christian period. However the claim by Bede in the eighth century that Ireland had 'no lack of vines' must be greatly exaggerated. Giraldus Cambrensis – who had firsthand acquaintance with the county in the late twelfth century – takes the contrary view, and remarks on their absence.<sup>1125</sup>

Nonetheless there is no archaeological or textual evidence for domestic wine production in pre-Norman Ireland. In both monastic and secular texts mention is made of the consumption of wine as a festive and exclusive drink,<sup>1126</sup> although this exclusive nature doesn't necessarily mean that it wasn't produced locally given that the type of flour for the production of Eucharistic bread was produced locally and was also a luxury item.

While wine growth may have been feasible it is also true that wine was imported into Britain and Ireland and while still needing scholarly work and comparison with (the largely un-catalogued) Continental finds the archaeological remains of pottery at Irish sites of the first millennium bear witness to the practice of

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<sup>1124</sup> See Lamb, *Climate, History and the Modern World*, 151.

<sup>1125</sup> *Early Irish Farming*, Early Irish Law Series Volume IV, School of Celtic Studies Dublin Institute for Celtic Studies, (Dublin, 2000), 262-263.

<sup>1126</sup> Kelly, *Early Irish Farming*, 358.

the importation of wine.<sup>1127</sup> Nancy Edwards posits that the majority of wine would have been imported in wooden casks, which would have left little evidence in the archaeological record.<sup>1128</sup> There are also textual references to the importation of wine:

There must have been regular imports of the wine required for the celebration of the Eucharist, and also featured as a luxury drink at feasts. The lost Old Irish law-text *Muirbretha* 'sea-judgments' evidently referred to the wine trade, as Cormac states in his *Glossary* that the phrase *escop fina* 'wine-jar' occurs in this text. He explains it as 'a vessel for measuring wine among Gaulish and Frankish traders' (*escra tomais fina la ceandaighaib Gall ⁊ Franc*). The importance of the wine-trade is also indicated by the prominence of Bordeaux (Latin *Burdigala*) – the centre of the wine-trade in early Irish texts. The name of this town was borrowed into Irish in the form *bordgal* and is used in the eighth-century *Féilire Óengusso* in the meaning meeting-place, city.<sup>1129</sup>

Any attempt of an analysis of how often wine was distributed in the Eucharist. exactly who received and how much wine was used is, once again, hampered by a lack of evidence. There are a number of texts dealing with Eucharistic Wine, but these are often unclear, and it is difficult to know whether they refer to monastics, a special assembly or the lay community at large. Columbanus assigned a penance to a monk who bites the chalice with his teeth,<sup>1130</sup> although as this is a monastic rule it is probable that here he is dealing with monks and not the regular lay Christians (also given that monks could not be trusted not to bite the chalice, it would be even

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<sup>1127</sup> Charles Thomas, "Imported pottery in Dark-Age western Britain," *Medieval Archaeology* 3, (1959), 89-111.

<sup>1128</sup> Edwards, "The Archaeology of Medieval Ireland," 290.

<sup>1129</sup> Kelly, *Early Irish Farming*, 319. Cf. Mytum, *The Origins of Early Christian Ireland*, 51, here Mytum proposes that wine was not imported directly from Gaul to Ireland but that British merchants brought the wine to Ireland acting as middle men.

<sup>1130</sup> "Him who has bitten the chalice of salvation with his teeth, it is ordained to correct with six blows." "Similiter qui pertunderit dentibus calicem salutaris, vi percussionibus." Communal Rule II, IV in Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, 148-149; also see the parallel section in I. III, p. 142-143.

less likely that it would be entrusted to non-monastics!). The *Rule of the Céli Dé* from the *Lebar Breac* speaks of the gradual initiation of monks for receiving Communion and foresees that after seven years they might receive from the chalice every Sunday.<sup>1131</sup> In another parallel text it is stated that those who have undergone penance for shedding blood may receive the Body of Christ but may never again receive the Chalice, thus further proof both of some reception of the chalice and the high regard that the chalice had.<sup>1132</sup> The *Vita Prima* of St. Brigit, in a story quoted in chapter 3, also explicitly refers to Brigit going to receive Communion first from the hand of the bishop and then approaching the bishop's attendant who administered the chalice to her.<sup>1133</sup>

In all likelihood it would have been an economic challenge for everybody to receive from the chalice at each and every Eucharistic Celebration. On the other hand, the fact that wine was used by the nobles in their feasts means that quantities of wine far greater than necessary for the distribution of the Eucharist under both species was theoretically available. In conclusion, perhaps the use of wine can be solved if one accepts that the laity did not receive Communion each and every time they went to Mass. But on the few annual occasions that they received Communion (perhaps those mentioned in the Tallaght document) they may well have received from the chalice. The dues that were paid at those times of the year may have

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<sup>1131</sup> *The Rule of the Céli Dé* in William Reeves "On the Céli Dé," 204-205, quoted in Chapter 3.

<sup>1132</sup> *The Rule of Tallaght*, 5 in Ó Maidín, *The Celtic Monk*, 101. Perhaps this text might refer to individuals who have entered a semi-monastic state in repentance for some serious sin, but again these individuals were neither fully lay nor fully monastic, see Stancliffe, "Red, White and Blue Martyrdom," 45.

<sup>1133</sup> *Vita Prima Sanctae Brigitae* 92.1-6.



helped cover the cost of the wine for the celebration. At regular occasions when only the priest received as little as a symbolic drop of wine may have sufficed for the priest's Communion.<sup>1134</sup>

#### 4.2.3 Bread

Bread is the other element needed for the celebration of the Eucharist. In Pre-Norman Ireland Eucharistic bread was made from *Cruithnecht* (Bread-wheat or *Triticum aestivum*, subspecies *vulgare*). This element was definitely available in pre-Norman Ireland, however wheat was grown less than other cereals and had a high status in society and was a luxury foodstuff, as well as having a religious and political symbolism.<sup>1135</sup> This was probably because refining wheat into quality flour required a lot of work so even nobles often used wheat as a part of a gruel rather than as bread.<sup>1136</sup> Not only was it difficult to refine, it was also difficult to grow due to

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<sup>1134</sup> On this note, the *Lebar Breac Mass Tract 6* specifies that there are three drops ("banna") of both water and wine, in the chalice. Depending on the size of each drop this could be quite a little amount of wine which was mixed with an equal part of water. MacCarthy "On the Stowe Missal," 261. On a similar note, Canon 5 of Bishop Cumin's 1186 Dublin Synod forbids that "the wine in the Sacrament be so tampered with water, that it be deprived either of the natural taste or colour." Ware, *The Whole Works of Sir James Ware Concerning Ireland*. Harris, ed. and rev., 1:316

<sup>1135</sup> Mary Regina Sexton, *Cereals and Cereal Foodstuffs in Early Historic Ireland*. (Unpublished MA Thesis, University College Cork), 1993, 91.

<sup>1136</sup> *Ibid.*, 93-95.

the dampness of the Irish climate.<sup>1137</sup> Sometimes saints perform miracles of transforming lesser grains into wheat.<sup>1138</sup>

As to the actual form that the Eucharistic bread took, early Ireland probably used a round loaf of bread for the Eucharist.<sup>1139</sup> The question is whether or not this bread was leavened. In general most Christians used leavened bread in the first millennium, although at the end of the ninth century many Western Churches began to use unleavened bread.<sup>1140</sup> But usually the fact of the bread being leavened or not was not an issue before the eleventh century controversies between Eastern and Western Christians.

Although there would be little difference to modern eyes and taste buds between what constituted leavened bread and what constituted unleavened bread in the early medieval world (the modern distinction between Western unleavened pre-cut, bleached wafers and the leavened bread used by the Eastern Churches is much more evident), it is likely that the bread used in pre-Norman Ireland was unleavened. From a horticultural point of view the climate in Ireland would naturally have produced a wheat not very given to rising. From a technological point of view, suitable ovens for leavened bread seem to have been first introduced on a widespread basis by the Mendicant Orders which arrived in the wake of the

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<sup>1137</sup> Kelly, *Early Irish Farming*, 220-221.

<sup>1138</sup> Sexton, *Cereals and Cereal Foodstuffs*, 92. Gerald of Wales also recounts how a miracle was performed by the bishop of Cork who changes a field of *Suillech* (Spelt Wheat or rye) into *triticum* (wheat), see *The History and Topography of Ireland*, II, 78, in O'Meara, *Gerald of Wales*, 89.

<sup>1139</sup> Plate 11 of the High Cross of Moone clearly shows round breads and the illustrations of the Book of Kells (Plates 12, 13 and 14) also show round bread.

<sup>1140</sup> Reginald Maxwell Wooley, *The Bread of the Eucharist*. Alcuin Club Tracts X (London: Mowbray, 1913), 1-23. Wooley imagines that Ireland was probably typical in this respect using first leavened and then unleavened as anywhere else in Western Europe, however cf. Warren, *Liturgy and Ritual*. 131-132, which Wooley dismisses on pages 17-18.

Normans.<sup>1141</sup> There is one textual reference which Sexton cites to as evidence of the use of unleavened bread in the Eucharist. The penitential of Cummean prescribes that "if the host loses its taste and is discoloured, he shall keep a fast for twenty days; if it is stuck together, for seven days."<sup>1142</sup> She interprets this text "refers to the host becoming tasteless or discoloured, a trait characteristic of wafer-like breads, which subsequent to baking become dry and unpalatable. That the hosts were delicate and small can be gathered from the fact that they were liable to stick together."<sup>1143</sup>

#### 4.2.4 Chrismals

Usually a chrismal refers to some type of vial or recipient to carry the holy oil of chrism that is used in some of the various anointings of Christian Initiation, in Ordinations and the consecration of churches. While today there exist no examples of chrismals of undisputed Irish provenance, there are a number in England. Among these is a "cast copper-alloy two-handled vessel with a rounded base" from East

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<sup>1141</sup> Sexton, *Cereals and Cereal Foodstuffs*, 106-107. In this sense another canon of the 1186 Dublin Synod is significant. This mandates that "the Host, which represents the Lamb without sot, the Alpha and the Omega, be made of white and pure, that the partakers thereof may thereby understand the purifying and feeding of their souls, rather than their bodies." Ware, *The Whole Works of Sir James Ware Concerning Ireland*. Harris, ed. and rev., 1:316

<sup>1142</sup> "Si cum consummatione saporis decoloratur sacrificium, .xx. diebus expleatur ieiunium; conglutinatum uero, .vii. diebus." Penitential of Cummean, XI, 21 in Bieler, *The Irish Penitentials*, 132-133.

<sup>1143</sup> Sexton, *Cereals and Cereal Foodstuffs*, 106-107.

Clandon in Surrey which has been dated to “before 1200.”<sup>1144</sup> This type of chrismal must also have been familiar in Ireland. Indeed a small (2x2½ inch) “cast bronze vessel of 11th-century date from Ballypriormore, Islandmagee, Co Antrim”<sup>1145</sup> which is today in the Ulster Museum may indeed have been a chrismal used for storing chrism, given that its dimensions would be more suited to a liquid than a solid.<sup>1146</sup>

In Chapter Three the textual evidence referring to chrismals was examined, and there the particular Irish or “Celtic” nature of this practice was examined, and how on the linguistic level, the use of this term seems to have been unique to Celtic areas:

*Chrismal* “the use of this term has, on the whole, a Celtic *provenance*. The reason for the transition from its original meaning is to be found, perhaps, in the similarity of shape that existed between the vessels employed for these two purposes.”<sup>1147</sup>

The carrying of the Eucharist on one’s person as a devotional practice (as opposed to simply transporting it for later domestic reception) was virtually unknown outside the Irish milieu. However, the carrying of relics of the saints on one’s person did take place. Bede tells us that the Gaulish bishop Germanus of Auxerre carried a bag of relics around his neck a “little bag which hung down close to his side,

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<sup>1144</sup> Helen Geake, “Medieval Britain and Ireland, 2003” in *Medieval Archaeology. Journal of the Society for Medieval Archaeology* Volume XLVIII (2004): 244-246.

<sup>1145</sup> Personal Communication from Cormac Bourke, Curator of Medieval Antiquities, Department of Archaeology & Ethnography, Ulster Museum, January 7, 2005.

<sup>1146</sup> For more information on this object see George Petrie, *Christian Inscriptions in the Irish Language*, Volume II, Dublin, Printed at the University Press for the Royal Historical and Archaeological Association of Ireland, 1878, 119-120 and R.A.S. Macalister, *Corpus Inscriptionum Insularum Celticarum* Volume II (Dublin: Stationary Office, 1949), 111.

<sup>1147</sup> Freestone, *The Sacrament Reserved*, 206. It is true that there are some Continental occurrences of the word as “the vessel in which the Eucharist was kept in churches;” but these are rare and appear exclusively in non-Irish sources, *ibid.*, 207. See Anthony Harvey and Jane Power, eds., *Non-Classical Lexicon of Celtic Latinity* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy and Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), s.v. “c(h)rismal/c(h)rismale.”

containing relics of the saints."<sup>1148</sup> Gregory of Tours in sixth century Gaul tells how his father always carried a gold medallion filled with relics of saints as protection.<sup>1149</sup> On the other hand there are some pyxes from this date in different parts of Western Europe. These seem to have been usually in the form of ivory (and later) metal cylindrical boxes, along the lines of earlier pagan boxes.<sup>1150</sup> From the textual evidence it seems that the Irish chrismsals were more akin to the Continental *encolpia*<sup>1151</sup> than pyxes.

While we possess no Irish chrismsals both Irish and non-Irish reliquaries still exist from this period. Some of these Irish reliquaries were designed to hang around the neck.<sup>1152</sup> The chrismsal probably resembled this. King also notes that there are in fact two chrismsals extant on the Continent. One of them is a "leather chrismsal overlaid with gold dating from the seventh or eighth centuries in the cathedral church of Chur in Switzerland."<sup>1153</sup>

The Mortain Chrismsal is dated from the eighth century. It is in the form of a house shaped reliquary made of copper-alloy and gilding over a beechwood base

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<sup>1148</sup> "Adherentem lateri suo capsulam cum sanctorum reliquiis collo auulsam." I.18 in Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, ed. and trans. McClure and Collins, 58-59.

<sup>1149</sup> Gregory of Tours, *Glory of the Martyrs* Translated Texts for Historians. Latin Series III. Raymond Van Dam, ed. and trans. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1988), 83, see also 108.

<sup>1150</sup> H. Leclercq "Pyxide" in *DACL* 14, 2 parte, 1983-1995.

<sup>1151</sup> *Encolopia* were "small round containers suspended on a chain about the neck and worn upon the breast," J.M. Franik, "Reliquaries" in *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XII (New York: McGraw Hill, 1967), 335.

<sup>1152</sup> Bourke, *Patrick, the Archaeology of a Saint*, 11.

<sup>1153</sup> King, *Eucharistic Reservation in the Western Church*, 39. While probably of no direct bearing on this artefact, a modern reconstruction of the life of St. Columbanus has placed Columbanus in Chur on two occasions during his life. Donald Bullough, "The Career of Columbanus," in Michael Lapidge, ed., *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings*. Studies in Celtic History XVII (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1997), 20n. 22.

with dimensions of 13.5 by 11.5 by 5 cm and had rings on the sides so that it could be carried around the neck by chains.<sup>1154</sup> The iconography "with figures of Christ Pantocrator, St. Michael and St. Gabriel on the outside, and a seraphim with outstretched wings surrounded by birds on the lid"<sup>1155</sup> bears many similarities to the Book of Kells and the High Cross of Moone, however the work also bears some similarities to some Anglo-Saxon art. But the fact that it contains a runic inscription in Old English definitively marks this out as an Anglo-Saxon and not Irish work.<sup>1156</sup>

While the Chur Chrisimal (Plate 15) is of unproven provenance and the Mortain Chrisimal is probably of Anglo-Saxon origin, they do provide some idea as to what an Irish chrisimal may have looked like.<sup>1157</sup> Therefore I would make bold to suggest that some Irish artefacts which have up until now been classified as reliquaries may instead have been chrisimals and that their re-examination in the light of the plentiful Irish testimony to the uses of chrisimals may result in their identification as chrisimals. In particular I think the tiny house-shaped shrines resembling the church of the Book of Kells or High Crosses and which were worn around the neck and are peculiar to Ireland may possibly be chrisimals and not normal reliquaries.<sup>1158</sup>

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<sup>1154</sup> Otto Nußbaum, *Die Aufbewahrung der Eucharistie* (Bonn: Hanstein, 1979), 88.

<sup>1155</sup> King, *Eucharistic Reservation in the Western Church*, 39.

<sup>1156</sup> Leslie Webster, "England and the Continent," in *The Making of England. Anglo-Saxon Art and Culture AD 600-900* Leslie Webster and Janet Backhouse (London: British Museum Press, 1991), 175-176.

<sup>1157</sup> It is also noteworthy that the Irish textual sources which deal with chrisimals imply that these chrisimals were of a certain economic value as they were therefore worth stealing. See Nußbaum, *Die Aufbewahrung der Eucharistie*, 111.

<sup>1158</sup> Edwards, "Celtic Saints and Early Medieval Archaeology," 246-247. Richardson, "Visual Arts and Society," 697.

#### 4.2.5 *Flabella*

Another Eucharistic symbol of the Book of Kells is the presence of illustrations of liturgical fans or *flabella*. Today the *flabellum* is used exclusively in the Eastern rites. While Byzantine liturgical commentaries now spiritualise its usage,<sup>1159</sup> originally the *flabellum* was an ancient form of fly swatter. Our earliest (secular) representations of *flabella* are in the ancient Egyptian carvings of the Pharaoh who is accompanied by slaves carrying *flabella* to protect him from insects.<sup>1160</sup> They are also mentioned by the Classical Greek and Roman authors as something carried by a slave to help their master or mistress.<sup>1161</sup>

It is possible that the *flabellum* came to be used in the ceremonial of the Eucharistic Liturgy along with "the considerable number of elements in our liturgy [such as incense and candles] which have their roots in the imperial privileges granted in the fourth century."<sup>1162</sup> However, particularly in warmer climates they may have been more than simple decorative status symbols, but were put to a practical use in the celebration. Indeed, the first explicit reference to a liturgical usage of *flabella* is in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, a composite Church Order generally held to have been written in Syria towards the end of the fourth century.<sup>1163</sup> Here the *flabellum* is seen precisely as an aid to protecting the chalice from flies:

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<sup>1159</sup> Ken Parry and Archimandrite Ephrem, "Rhipidion" in Ken Parry, et al., *The Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity*, (Malden: MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1999), 404-405.

<sup>1160</sup> H. Leclercq "Flabellum" in DACL, v: 1610.

<sup>1161</sup> *Ibid.*, 1611-1612.

<sup>1162</sup> Klauser, *A Short History of the Western Liturgy*, 35.

<sup>1163</sup> Bradshaw, *The Origins of Christian Worship*, 84-86.

When this is done, let the deacons bring the gifts to the bishop at the altar; and let the presbyters stand on his right hand and on his left, as disciples standing before their master. But let two of the deacons, on each side of the altar, each hold a fan, of thin membranes, or of feathers of the peacock, or of fine cloth, and let them silently drive away the flying insects, that they may not come near the cups.<sup>1164</sup>

While the *flabellum* was more prevalent in the East it is possible to find some references to them also in the West. The earliest Western reference to a liturgical *flabellum* is in 837 at the abbey of Cysoing in Hainaut,<sup>1165</sup> and the eleventh century *Customs of Cluny* instruct that the *flabellum* is to be used in a way similar to the *Apostolic Constitutions*.<sup>1166</sup> However, the *flabellum* was never widely used in the West and eventually they were dropped from use altogether. Today a few extant *flabella* are to be found in some Western museums, cathedral sacristies, etc. These seem to have formed two main groups. A more primitive group that are made of light materials and actually would be suitable for keeping flies away from the altar (only four of this type survive in the West, one in France and three in Italy). A second, later and much more numerous, group are made of metal disks surmounted by a cross, and were used, often in pairs, as processional crosses or altar crosses.<sup>1167</sup>

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<sup>1164</sup> "Ὡν γενομένων οἱ διακονοὶ προσάγετ'ωσαν τὰ δῶρα τῷ ἐπισκοπῷ πρὸς τὸ θυσιαστήριον, καὶ δῶρα τῷ ἐπισκοπῷ πρὸς τὸ θυσιαστήριον, καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐξ εὐωνυμῶν στηκετώσαν, ὡς ἀν μαθηταὶ παρεστῶτες διδασκαλῶ δύο δὲ διακονοὶ ἐξ ἑκατέρων τῶν μερῶν τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου κατεχετίζσαν ἐξ ὑμνῶν λεπτῶν ριπίδιον ἢ πτερον τῶνας, καὶ ἠπέμα ἀποσοδεῖτωσαν τὰ μικρὰ τῶν ἰπταμένων ζῶων, ὅπως ἀν μὴ ἐγχριμπτῶνται εἰς τὰ κύπελλα." *Apostolic Constitutions* VIII, II, 12,3 in Marcel Metzger, ed., *Les Constitutions Apostoliques III: Livres VII et VIII. Sources Chrétiennes* 336 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1987), 178. English translation from *The Liturgical Portions of the Apostolic Constitutions: A Text for Students*, translated, edited, annotated and introduced by W. Jardine Grisbroke. Alcuin/GROW Liturgical Study 13-14 (Bramcote: Grove, 1990), 31.

<sup>1165</sup> Leclercq "Flabellum," 1615, cf. Ragnall Ó Floinn, "*Insignia Columbae I*" in Bourke, ed., *Studies in the Cult of Saint Columba*, 157.

<sup>1166</sup> Leclercq "Flabellum," 1615-1616.

<sup>1167</sup> Ó Floinn, "*Insignia Columbae I*," 158.



In an Irish context, the earliest literary reference to a *flabellum* is in a mid-ninth century gloss on the Karlsruhe *Soliloquia* of St. Augustine.<sup>1168</sup> It is significant that this reference is contemporary with the earliest Western occurrence of 837. It may also be significant that Early Irish has its own translation for *flabellum*: *cuilebad*, "it is not a loan word. It derives from the word *cuil* – a fly, and *bath*, meaning destruction or death."<sup>1169</sup> The etymology of *cuilebad* places it firmly within the earlier practical usage of the *flabellum*.

Unfortunately, we are not in possession of any extant *flabellum* connected with Ireland.<sup>1170</sup> Apart from the illuminations of the Book of Kells, our main literary reference is to the relic *Cuilebad Coluim Cille*, which is first mentioned in the Annals of Ulster in 1034.<sup>1171</sup> There are a number of literary references to this relic from the Ninth to the Eleventh Centuries and many of them are connected with the Columban foundation of Kells.<sup>1172</sup> However, as the Annals tell us, unfortunately this relic was lost:

Maicinia ua hUchtáin, lector of Cenannas, was drowned coming from Scotland, and Colum Cille's fan [*cuilebad*] and three relics of Patrick and thirty men [were lost] as well.<sup>1173</sup>

These Annals also provide us with another intriguing reference to a *cuilebad*:

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<sup>1168</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>1169</sup> Hillary Richardson, "Remarks on the Liturgical Fan, Flabellum or Rhipidion," in Spearman and Higgitt, eds., *The Age of Migrating Ideas*, 30.

<sup>1170</sup> It is theorized that "three cones and silver pommel" from the Scottish St. Ninian's Isle treasure may be the remains of an insular *flabellum*, but there is no way to substantiate this claim. Stevenson, *Liturgy and Ritual*, xc-xci.

<sup>1171</sup> Ó Floinn, "*Insignia Columbae I*," 155.

<sup>1172</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

<sup>1173</sup> "Maicnia H. Uchtan fer leiginn Cenannsa, do bathad ic tiachtain a hAlbain, 7 culbead Coluim Cille 7 tri minna do minnaib Patraicc 7 tricha fer impu." *The Annals of Ulster* 1034 §9 in Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill, eds., *The Annals of Ulster*, 472-473.

A detestable and unpredicted deed of evil consequence, that merited the curse of the men of Ireland, both laity and clergy, [and] of which, the like was not previously found in Ireland, was committed by Tigernán ua Ruairc and the Uí Briúin, i.e. the successor of Patrick was insulted to his face, that is, his company was robbed and some of them killed, and a young cleric who was under a *cuilebadh* was killed there. The aftermath that came of that misdeed is that there exists in Ireland no protection that is secure for anyone henceforth until that evil deed is avenged by God and man. The insult offered to the successor of Patrick is an insult to the Lord, for the Lord Himself said in the Gospel: "He who despiseth you despiseth me, He who despiseth me despiseth Him who sent me." [Luke 10,4]<sup>1174</sup>

It seems that the *Comarba* or Successor of Patrick and his retinue were attacked as they were on their way to make a visitation. This young cleric was killed and the crime was rendered more grievous as he was carrying the *Comarba's cuilebad*. Although the text is somewhat obscure, nonetheless it offers a number of points worth noting. Firstly it is a textual evidence for a *cuilebad* from a non-Columban source. It also would seem to suggest that the *cuilebad* was in use in the twelfth century. Perhaps it formed part of the episcopal insignia of the Archbishop of Armagh as he made his visitations. It may also have been considered as something of honour that an attacker would have been afraid to violate (however, unfortunately for the young cleric this wasn't the case). Maybe this was an ancient relic, although the Annals make no reference to this, or perhaps it was a continental import given to the reform minded archbishop who was the immediate predecessor of St. Malachy.

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<sup>1174</sup> "Gnim granna anaithnigh ainiarmartach ro thoill escoine fer nErenn eter loech 7 cleirech do nach frit macsamhla l nErinn riam do dhenamh do Thigernan H. Ruairc 7 do hUi[b] Bruin .i. comarba Patraic do nocht-sharughadh ina fhiadhnúise .i. a chuidechta do shlat 7 dream dibh do marbadh ann. Ise imorro an iarmuirt do fhass don mbignimsa conach fuil in Erinn comuirce is tairisi do dhuine fodhesta ho curo dhighailter o Dhia 7 o dhoeinibh in t-olc-sa. In dinsemh-a tra tucadh for comarba Patraic iss amal 7 dinsim in Comdhegh uair adrubart in Coimdheo fein isin tshoiscéla: Qui uos spernit me spernit, qui mé spernit spernit eum qui mé misit." *The Annals of Ulster* 1128 §5 in Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill, eds., *The Annals of Ulster*, 574-575. N.B. I have emended McÁirt and Mac Niocaill's translation of the central line, his gives the translation "a young cleric of his own household that was *in* a *cuilebadh* was killed." The original Early Irish reads: m ḡ"accleirech dia mhuintir fein do bi fo chuilebadh do marbadh ann." While somewhat unclear this carries the meaning that the individual was "under," "holding" or "carrying" the *cuilebadh* and not "in" it. I am indebted to Dr. Colmán Etchingham for alerting me to this occurrence.

On the iconographic level the most significant depictions are to be found in some of the picture pages in the Book of Kells. In the *Madonna and Child* (fol. 7v) and the *Symbols of the Four Evangelists* (fol. 129v), as well as in the various evangelist pages, angels hold *flabella* in the background.<sup>1175</sup> Once again these depictions form a very early Western witness and seem to portray the more primitive type of *flabellum*. Again, their connection to the Columban foundation of Kells must be noted. There are also a number of depictions of *flabella* on standing stones.<sup>1176</sup> The most famous of these is to be found on a standing stone, located at Carndonagh, Co. Donegal, which is, yet again, a site associated with the cult of St. Columba.<sup>1177</sup>

From a look at both the Irish and other (especially the Welsh) examples, it seems clear that the flabellum was adopted as a symbol fairly early. Later, many less complex versions began to appear, until the original significance had been lost, and it became reduced to what was to become a type of cross-form consisting of a cross within a circle with a long stem or shaft representing what was originally the handle of the flabellum.<sup>1178</sup>

Some scholars have pointed to this evidence as proof that the early Irish Church used *flabella* as a regular part of the Eucharistic liturgy.<sup>1179</sup> Although there is a body of evidence for *flabella* in an Irish context, it can be noted that many of the references (the Book of Kells, the Annals and the standing stone of Carndonagh)

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<sup>1175</sup> Bernard Meehan, *The Book of Kells: an Illustrated Introduction to the Manuscript in Trinity College, Dublin* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1994), 48.

<sup>1176</sup> However, the identifications of *flabella* in stone carvings are modern identifications and it is impossible in every case to be certain that these are not simply somewhat stylised crosses, cf. Ó Floinn, "Insignia Columbae I," 157-158, cf. J.G. Higgins, *The Early Christian Cross Slabs, Pillar Stones and Related Monuments of County Galway*. Volume 1 (Oxford: BAR International Series, 1987), 109-113.

<sup>1177</sup> Richardson and Scarry, pl 33, page 66, see Peter Harbison, *Ireland's Treasures, 5,000 years of Artistic Expression* (Westport, CT: Hugh Lanter Levin Associates, Inc., 2004), 87-88.

<sup>1178</sup> Higgins, *Early Christian Cross Slabs*, 113.

<sup>1179</sup> Richardson, "Remarks on the Liturgical Fan," 27-34.

have a connection with Columba and his foundations. It could be that the proportionally high number of references to St. Columba's flabellum is only a coincidence.<sup>1180</sup> But it might also be true that St. Columba's may well have owned a *flabellum* that constituted an exotic novelty in the Irish context, so much so that it became somewhat of an emblem of the saint. Indeed this famous *flabellum* may well have been presented to St. Columba by a returning pilgrim as a prestige item obtained on pilgrimage to Gaul or Italy and thus may not be indicative of any liturgical link with the East. If this is the case we are not dealing with a widespread element in Irish liturgical practice but some peculiar local liturgical uses. However, these variations had a symbolic value and remained in the popular imagination of artistic programmers where, much like the later Byzantine commentators, the *flabellum* came to signify the heavenly dimension of the liturgy.

#### 4.2.6 The Book of Kells

The Ogham alphabet was introduced into Ireland shortly before the advent of Christianity, but it is unlikely that anything other than inscriptions was ever written in this alphabet. Therefore literacy and the coming of Christianity were intrinsically connected in Ireland. Many of the lives of Irish saints and annalistic entries make reference to saints "wielding their own pens," indeed the association of sanctity with writing may be connected to the apocryphal work of *Carta dominica* where it is Christ

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<sup>1180</sup> Indeed perhaps the clearest sculpture of a *flabellum* is to be found on a standing stone at Caherlehillian on the Iveragh Peninsula, Co. Kerry on a site that has no Columban connections, see Peter Harbison, *The Golden Age of Irish Art. The Medieval Achievement 600-1200* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1999), Plate One, page 9.

himself who writes.<sup>1181</sup> This can help explain the importance given to books in Pre-Norman Ireland. In contrast to the plain churches, books were lavishly illustrated and Irish scribes (as well as scribes from Irish influenced scriptoria in Britain and the Continent) made a significant impact on the art of illumination in the early Middle Ages.<sup>1182</sup>

Of the different manuscripts belonging to early Ireland, the Book of Kells is undoubtedly the most famous and beautiful. However it also possesses a unique corpus of Eucharistic iconography.<sup>1183</sup> The celebrated manuscript is from a Columban foundation, probably Iona itself and can be dated to around the year 800.<sup>1184</sup> Today it is known by the title of the Book of Kells, but the annals probably refer to it as the "Great Gospel of Colum Cille." Kells was built in the early ninth century as a new monastery under the auspices of the monastery of Iona. However it did not originally serve as a new site for the Iona monastery, but rather as a place of safekeeping for its treasures which were now at risk from Viking raids. Nonetheless it did eventually assume a permanence in the federation of Columban federation of monasteries in the early eleventh century.<sup>1185</sup> This Viking destruction of Iona may also explain the fact that the Book of Kells was never finished. However even in its new home the Book was not safe as in the year 1007 it was stolen and by

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<sup>1181</sup> Lawrence Nees, *Early Medieval Art. Oxford History of Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 166-167.

<sup>1182</sup> For details of this contribution see *ibid.*, 153-171.

<sup>1183</sup> The uniqueness of this Eucharistic iconography in insular sources was confirmed by Dr. Bernard Meehan, the Keeper of Manuscripts in Trinity College Library, Dublin (personal e-mail communication 12, 2002).

<sup>1184</sup> Carol Farr, *The Book of Kells, Its Function and Audience* (London: The British Library Press, 1997), 14.

<sup>1185</sup> Herbert, *Iona, Kells and Derry*, 68, 88.

the time it was recovered the thief had torn off its precious metal cover and left the Book in "with a sod over it."<sup>1186</sup>

The Book is a lavishly illuminated copy of the Gospels. However it is unlikely that it was used often as a working manuscript, "the book was intended for display during liturgical ceremonies."<sup>1187</sup> Having included an extremely beautiful copy of the Eusebian Canon Tables at the beginning of the manuscript the numbers themselves are only sporadically inserted into the text itself.<sup>1188</sup> It is likely that the manuscript would have been used in processions and for display, perhaps on the altar, during the solemn feasts of the Church year.<sup>1189</sup>

The complex iconography of the Book of Kells is, among other things, "a resounding statement of faith in salvation through the Church, the Eucharist, through monastery and sacrament."<sup>1190</sup> The main source of the Eucharistic symbolism in the Book of Kells is that within many bigger illustrations Eucharistic Hosts seem to be present (e.g. Plate 14). This is the only logical explanation for these small white disks marked with the cross.<sup>1191</sup> There are also illustrations of grapes in different

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<sup>1186</sup> "Fot tairis." *The Annals of Ulster* 1007 §11 in Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill, eds., *The Annals of Ulster*, 3438-439

<sup>1187</sup> Éamonn Ó Carragáin, "'Traditio evangelorum' and 'Sustenatio'". The Relevance of Liturgical Ceremonies in the Book of Kells" in Felicity O'Mahony, ed., *The Book of Kells: Proceedings of a Conference at Trinity College Dublin, 6-9 September 1992* (Aldshot, Hampshire: Scholar Press, 1994), 398. Later on the records of some land grants were inscribed on blank spaces. Perhaps this was because the manuscript was seen as being a particularly sacred place to record these.

<sup>1188</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1189</sup> Farr, *The Book of Kells, Its Function and Audience*, 141.

<sup>1190</sup> Suzanne Lewis, "Sacred Calligraphy: the Chi Rho page in the Book of Kells," *Traditio* 36 (1980): 159.

<sup>1191</sup> Meehan, *The Book of Kells*, 44.

places (e.g. fol. 188r) and about forty chalices throughout the Book (e.g. fol. 201v).<sup>1192</sup>

But perhaps the most intriguing image of the Eucharist in the Book of Kells is that of cats chasing after mice (or rats!) who have the Host in their mouths (folios 34r and 48r; Plates 12 and 13). In later scholastic treatments of Eucharistic theology the problem of a mouse eating the Host was a favourite "worst case scenario."<sup>1193</sup> Also the cat was an important animal in the ancient Irish monastery, cats were often kept as pets by the monks and there are even a number of cats sculpted on the bases of the High Crosses. It has been proposed that "in popular Irish lore cats were specially created by God to keep down the number of mice which swarmed Noah's ark and threatened to consume the food needed to sustain its passengers."<sup>1194</sup>

Here we can see the playfulness of the early Irish monks. By invoking horror at mice eating the Eucharistic Host they underline its importance. Rather than emphasizing a disdain for the Eucharist it is a powerful reminder of its importance! Analysis of this and other features show that the Book of Kells is very rich in its details, and that these details constitute "a stream of permutations on the Eucharistic theme."<sup>1195</sup> This attention to the small details seems to be a hallmark of the Irish worldview. As chalices and manuscripts, High Crosses and churches are made up of smaller, highly detailed parts, which fit together into a harmony, so the Eucharistic

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<sup>1192</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>1193</sup> Macy, *The Banquet's Wisdom*, 98.

<sup>1194</sup> Lewis, "Sacred Calligraphy," 147.

<sup>1195</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

imagery of the Book of Kells fits together with other elements as a vital part of Christian life.

In her analysis of Folio 114r: The Taking of Christ, a page that, at first glance, doesn't seem to have great Eucharistic significance, Jennifer O'Reilly concludes:

The dominant visual image of folio 114r of the *Book of Kells* is literally the body of Christ. This communicates directly with the devotional intensity of an icon. It is also a great metaphor, holding in tension many-layered and simultaneous allusions which provide a focus for meditation on Christ's Body, incarnate, glorified, sacramental and mystical. This mystery, beyond all words and images, demands the language of paradox which conceals as it reveals.<sup>1196</sup>

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<sup>1196</sup> Jennifer O'Reilly, "The Book of Kells: Folio 114r: a Mystery Revealed yet Concealed," in Spearman and Higgitt, eds., *The Age of Migrating Ideas*, 113-114.



## CONCLUSION

Robert Taft states at the close of one his articles that his “conclusions may seem banal in the extreme. But the history of liturgy is a mosaic of reconstruction, a work-in-progress, and it is not guesswork but only the recovery, cleaning and repositioning of each small tessera that renders this reconstruction possible.”<sup>1197</sup> The same observation could be made at the end of this thesis. There is little innovation in any of our findings. However it is our hope that as a result of this work that it is possible to approach the Eucharist in Pre-Norman Ireland with a fresh perspective based on modern scholarship. Indeed the only sure way forward for liturgical studies of the early Irish Church is to be anchored in what the remaining texts and material objects can really tell us, to consider these in their proper contexts and to avoid theoretical and ideological concepts of how the Church and liturgy of this period should have been.

One of the problems facing any student of liturgy in Pre-Norman Ireland is that any serious study must take an interdisciplinary approach. But many authors working within these various disciplines rely on somewhat outdated secondary sources. Therefore it is not surprising to find a work by a liturgist using historical scholarship that is fifty years old, or to find work by a historian or archaeologist using liturgical scholarship that may even be over one hundred years old. Therefore one of our main aims has been to provide enough information for accurate

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<sup>1197</sup> Taft, “The Order and Place of Lay Communion,” 130.

contextualization of the various types of data pertaining to the Eucharist in Pre-Norman Ireland.

On the basis of the evidence presented, it is possible to see that the Pre-Norman Irish experience of the Eucharist was much more mainstream than has often been proposed. There is little hard evidence to imply the existence of a separate Celtic or Irish Eucharistic Rite. It is much more probable that the first Irish Christians used a form of the Gallican Rite. Although, it would likewise be foolish to expect to find the exact same type of Gallican uses in Ireland as in some Continental centre; nonetheless, I believe that the liturgical experience in Ireland would have been quite similar to that of present-day France or Germany. Minor regional differences in practice would not have obliterated this commonality.

We have seen the concern of the laity (or at least the higher levels of society) that the Church provide pastoral care in many localities. This pastoral care ideally included at least weekly celebration of the Eucharist. Tithes and other subsidies of the Church were paid in order to guarantee these celebrations. But, the concern for the celebration of the Eucharist seems not always to have included the attendance of the laity. It may have been the case that the laity placed more importance on having the Eucharist celebrated and themselves and their dead prayed for, than on being physically present at that Eucharistic celebration. In common with much of the rest of Christendom, the laity ideally received the Eucharist on a small number of set occasions each year (such as Easter, Christmas, Low Sunday). These occasions would have involved a much higher attendance at the Eucharist than on regular days, and therefore some adaptations, such as allowing a large number of the laity

to remain out of the church for the celebration, may have been made to cope with the crowds.

While we hold that the Church in Pre-Norman Ireland was fairly typical for the trans-Alpine Europe of its day there were, undoubtedly, some regional characteristics in her Eucharist practice. Perhaps the clearest example of these was the use of the chrismal whereby the Eucharistic Species were carried on the person of an ecclesiastic in an almost talismanic sense. But apart from this it would seem that the Irish were sometimes slightly ahead of the Continent regarding certain practices and other times behind it. Judging on the basis of fragmentary evidence (both from Ireland and the Continent), the Irish were at the forefront regarding the adoption of the Roman Canon. As they were likewise at the forefront in attributing the exact moment of the Eucharistic transformation to the institution narrative. The rehabilitation of Western hymnography may also have been encouraged by the Irish. Whether or not, the practice of private Masses as well as the offering of Masses for various intentions were born in an Irish milieu, they did fit in well with the Irish mentality and were adopted by them at an early stage. However, it would seem that the practice of offering Masses in order to expiate penances was not an Irish innovation. The tradition of Christians receiving the Eucharist as a viaticum at the end of their earthly lives was also very important for Irish Christians of the Pre-Norman period.

A particularly strong devotion to the Passion of Christ is evident in certain texts, especially with reference to the Blood of Christ. It is also quite possible that the *fractio panis* occupied a special place in Irish devotion, as evidenced both in

euchology, iconography, catechesis and altar plate. Great and distinctive works of art were created for the celebration of the Eucharist, although their individuality may have more to do with local technological limitations and innovations rather than to any particular aspect of Eucharistic practice.

By the time of the Norman arrival in Ireland the religious climate was probably closer to the Continent than ever before. While it is impossible to know how the history the Irish Church would have turned out if the Normans hadn't come, it is probable that at least in the area of Eucharistic practice there would have been anything other than superficial differences. The introduction of the Continental religious orders was what accomplished many of the changes and this was independent of the Normans. The fact that today there is confusion about the date of the *Corpus*, *Rosslyn* and *Drummond* Missals (just as there was confusion about the origins of the *Bobbio Missal* a generation ago) and the fact that they might well be Pre-Norman shows just how mainstream the Eucharistic practice of the Pre-Norman Irish Church was. Other than accelerating certain processes such as the growth of the new religious orders and the appointment of Norman bishops as well as the importation of Norman clergy, there was probably little change in actual Eucharistic practice accomplished by the Norman arrival. Perhaps the only area that may have been affected was the construction of larger churches after the Norman arrival to facilitate the participation of larger numbers of the faithful in the Eucharist; although once again this development may have already been taking place in the Hiberno-Viking towns prior to the Norman arrival.

Appendix 1: THE OLD IRISH MASS TRACT<sup>1198</sup>

Stowe Missal	Lebar Breac
<p>2. The altar, a figure of the persecution that was inflicted.</p>	<p>The figure of the incarnation of Christ from [His] conception to His Passion and to His Ascension, that explains the Order of Mass.</p> <p>1. The church that shelters the people and the altar, a figure of the shelter of the Godhead divine, of which was said: you guard me under the shelter of your wings.</p> <p>2. The altar in the Temple, a figure of the persecution of the Christians, wherein they bear tribulation in union with the Body of Christ. As the Holy Spirit said from the person of Isaiah: I have trodden the winepress alone; that is, him with his members.</p>
<p>2. Ind altoir, fugor ind ingrimme immabred .</p>	<p><i>De figuris et spiritualibus sensibus obaltionis sacrificii ordinis</i></p> <p>Figuir tra inchollaighi Crist o chompert co a chesad, ocus co a fresgabail-inchoiscid sin ord innaifrind.</p> <p>1. In tempul ditnes in popul ocus ind altoir-figuir inna nditem diadacda, dianebrad: sub umbra alarum tuarum protégé me.</p> <p>2. Ind altoir isin tempul-figuir ingrema na Cristaide imofolgnat fochaide inellach cuirp Crist. Prout Spiritus sanctus ex persona Isaiae dixit: Torcular conculcavi solus; id est, ipse cum membris suis.</p>

<sup>1198</sup> The texts and translation are taken from MacCathy, "On the Stowe Missal," 245-265. However in McCarthy's edition the *Stowe Missal* version is given first and followed by the *Lebar Breac* version, here they have been placed in parallel columns. In McCarthy's translation, the Latin is un-translated, here I have translated these passages into English.

Stowe Missal	Lebar Breac
<p>3. The chalice, it is a figure of the Church which was set and founded upon the persecution and upon the martyrdom of the prophets and others.</p> <p>4. Water first into the chalice, and what is chanted by them is: I ask you, O Father; I beseech you, O Son; I implore you, O Holy Spirit; that is, a figure of the people that was poured into the Church</p>	<p>3. The chalice of the Mass, [a figure] of the Church which was placed and founded upon the persecution and martyrdom of the prophets and elect of God besides. As Christ says: Upon this rock I will build my Church; that is, upon the firmness of the faith of the first martyrs who were laid in the foundation of the building, and of the last martyrs up to Elias and Enoch.</p> <p>4. Water into the chalice at first by the minister, it is what is meet. And he says I ask you, O Father,-a drop with that; I beseech you, O Son,-a drop with that; I implore you, O Holy Spirit,-the third drop with that; a figure of the people that was poured into knowledge of the new law through the unity of the will of the Trinity and through the presence of the Holy Spirit. As it is said: I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh and they shall prophesy and it will remain. And, as it is said: They will come from the East and the West and from the North and recline with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God; that is, the first in the earthly Church, will be last in the kingdom of heaven.</p>
<p>3. In cailech, is figor inna eclaise foruirmed ocus rofothaiged for ingrimmim ocus for martri inna fathe et aliorum.</p> <p>4. Huisce prius in calicem, ocus issed canar occo: Peto te, Pater; deprecor te, Filii; obsecro te, Spiritus Sancte; idon, figor in phopuil toresset in ecclesia.</p>	<p>3. In cailech aifrind -[figuir] inna heclaise rofuirmed ocus rofothaiged for ingreim ocus marta na fhatha ocus tuicse nDe archena. Sicut Christus dixit: Super hanc petram edificabo ecclesiam meam, i. for sonairti irsi na martirech toisech rolaitea I fotha in chumtaig ocus inna martirech ndedinach conice hElii ocus Enoc.</p> <p>4. Usci isin cailech artus icon timthirid, ised istechta. Et dicis: quaeso te, Pater, banna lassin; deprecor te, fili, banna lassin; obsecro te, Spiritus Sanctae, in tres banna -figuir in populi doroiiset in eolus in rechta nui tre oentaid thoile na Trinoti, ocus tria erlathar in Spirta Noib. ut dictum est: Effundam de Spiritu meo super omnem carnem et prophetabunt, et reliqua. Et, ut dictum est: Venient ab Oriente et ab Occidente et ab Aquilone, et recumbent cum Abraham et Isaac et Jacob in regno Dei; id est, in ecclesia terrena primo, ultimo in regno caelesti.</p>

Stowe Missal	Lebar Breac
<p>5. The oblation afterwards upon the altar, that is it enters. What is chanted by them is: Jesus Christ, Alpha and Omega: that is beginning and the end. A figure of the body of Christ, which was placed in the linen cloth of the womb of Mary.</p> <p>6. Wine afterwards upon water in the chalice, namely, the divinity of Christ upon his humanity, and upon the people, at the time of the Incarnation. It is what is chanted hereat: May the Father forgive; may the Holy Spirit be indulgent; may the Holy Spirit have mercy.</p>	<p>6. Wine afterwards into the chalice upon the water, to wit, the Divinity of Christ upon the humanity [and] upon the people at the time of his begetting and of the begetting of the people. That is: The Angel spoke, Christ was conceived by the Virgin; namely, it was then the Divinity came to meet the humanity. It is of the people however he said: I did not conceive this people in my womb. And again: in sadness and pain you will conceive your children. The Church said that. As the Apostle said: My little children, whom I am again giving birth to, so that Christ may be formed in you.</p> <p>What is chanted in putting wine into the Chalice of the Mass is: May the Father forgive, a drop with that; may the Holy Spirit be indulgent, another drop with that; may the Holy Spirit have mercy, the third drop with that.</p>
<p>5. Oblae iarum super altare, id est, intrat. Issed canarocco, idon, Jesus christus, A et Ω: hoc est, principium et finis. Figor cuirp Crist, rosuidiged hi linannart brond Marie.</p> <p>6. Fin iarum ar huisce hi caelech, idon, deacht Crist ar a doenacht, ocus ar in popul, in aimsir thuisten. Issed canar oc suidiu: Remittat Pater; indulgeat Filius; miseratur Spiritus Sanctus.</p>	<p>6. Fin iarum isin cailech ar in usce .i. deacht Crist ar doenacht [ocus] for in popul, in aimsir a thusten ocus tusten in popuil. Ut est: Angelus sermonem fecit, Christum virgo concepit .i. is annsin tanic in deacht ar cend na doenachta. Is don popul dino atbert: namquid ego in utero concepi omnem populem istum. Et iterum: In tristitia et in dolore concipies filios tuos. In eclais atbert sin. ut apostolus dicit: Filioli mei, quos iterum parturio, donec Christus formetur in vobis.</p> <p>ised chanair ic tabairt fina isin cailech nofrind: [Re]mittat Pater, banna annsin; indulgeat Filius, banna aile andsin; miseratur Spiritus Sanctus, in tres banna andsin.</p>

Stowe Missal	Lebar Breac
<p>7. What is chanted of the Mass after that-both Introit and Prayers and Augment-up to the Lection of the Apostles and the bigradual Psalm, it is a figure of the law of Nature, wherein was renewed [the knowledge of] Christ through all his members and deeds.</p> <p>8. The Lection of the Apostles, moreover, and bigradual Psalm and from that to the Uncovering, it is a memorial of the law of the Letter, wherein was figured Christ, who was not known as yet, though he was figured therein.</p> <p>9. The Uncovering as far as half, of the oblation and of the chalice, and what was chanted by them-both Gospel and benediction, as far as <i>Oblata</i>, it is a memorial of the law and the Prophets, wherein Christ was foretold clearly, but was not seen until he was born.</p>	<p>7. Now what is chanted in the Mass after that, both Introit and Orations and Augment, as far as the Lection of the apostles and bigradual Psalm, that is a figure of the Law of nature, wherein was renewed the knowledge of Christ through mysteries and deeds and convulsions of nature. As it is said: Abraham saw my day and rejoiced. For it was through the law of nature Abraham saw.</p> <p>8. The Lection of the Apostles and the bigradual Psalm, and from that to the uncovering of the Chalice of Mass, that is a figure of the letter..? Wherein was figured Christ; and he was not known as yet [although] he was figured therein, and the thing [i.e., the reality] came not, and perfection was not wrought through it. Nobody is brought to perfection by the Law.</p> <p>9. The uncovering, as far as half, of the chalice of the Mass and of the host, and what is chanted by them, both Gospel and Benediction, a figure of the Law of the letter [is] that, therein Christ was proclaimed manifestly, but he was not seen until he was born.</p>
<p>7. A canar dind offriund forsen, inter introit ocus Orthana ocus Tormach, corrigi Liacht nApstal ocus Slam ndigrad, is figor recto aicnith insin, in roaithnuiged [aithgne] Crist tria huili baullo ocus gnimo.</p> <p>8. Liacht nApostol, immorro, ocus Salm digrad ocus ho shuidiu co Dinochtad, is foraimet rechta litre in rofiugrad Crist, nadfess cadacht, cid rofiugrad and.</p> <p>9. In dinochtad corrici leth inna oblae ocus in cailich ocus a canar occo, iter Soscel ocus Ailloir, corrici <i>Oblata</i>, is foraimet rechta fathe, hi tarc(h)et Crist co follus, acht nathnaicess co rogenir.</p>	<p>7. Acanar dino icon ofrind iarsin, itir Intrait ocus Orthanaib ocus Imthormach, corice Liachtain nan Apstal ocus Psalm digraid .i. figuir rechta aicnid sin, in rohathnuiged aichne Crist tria runaib ocus gnimaib ocus tomoltod naicnid. Ut dictum est: Vidit abraham diem meum et gravisus est. Uair is tria recht naicnid itconnairc Abraham.</p> <p>8. Liacht nan Apstal ocus in Salm digraid [ocus] oshein co dinochtud choilig ofrind-is figuir sin rechta litri inbertar in rofiugrad Crist; ocus ni fes cadacht, [cid] rofiugrad ann, ocus ni roacht inni, ocus ni roforbthiged trit. Neminem ad perfectum duxit lex.</p> <p>9. In dinochtad coleth in cholig oifrind ocus inna hablainne ocus icantar occu, itir Shoscel ocus Alleoir-figuir rechta litri sin, in roterchanad Crist cofollus, acht na facus ha cein congenir.</p>



Stowe Missal	Lebar Breac
<p>10. The raising of the Chalice after its full uncovering, when <i>oblata</i> is chanted, that is a memorial of the birth of Christ and of His exaltation through signs and miracles.</p> <p>11. When <i>Accipit Jesus panem</i> is chanted, the priest bows thrice for sorrow for their sins; he offers them [i.e., the bread and wine] to God; and the people prostrates; and there comes not a sound then, that it not disturb the priest; for it is his duty that his mind separate not from God whilst he chants this Lection. It is from this that <i>Periculosa Oratio</i> is its name.</p>	<p>10. The raising up of the chalice of Mass and of the paten after fully uncovering them, whereat is chanted this verse: Offer God a sacrifice of praise, [is] a figure of the birth of Christ and of His glory through deeds and marvels. The beginning of the New Testament [is] that.</p> <p>11. The time, now, <i>Accipit Jesus panem, stans in medio discipulorum suorum</i> is chanted, the priests bow thrice for sorrow for the sins they did, and they offer to God, and they chant all this psalm: Have mercy on me, O God; and no sound is sent forth by them (the people) then, that the priest be not disturbed, for what is meet is that his mind separate not from God, even in vocable, at this prayer: for it is guilty of the spiritual order and of bad reception from God, unless it is like that it is done; wherefore it is from this that the name of this prayer is <i>Periculosa Oratio</i>.</p>
<p>10. Tocbal in cailich iarn a landiurug, quando canitur <i>Oblata</i>, is foraimet gene Crist insin [ocus] a indocbale tre airde ocus firto.</p> <p>11. Quando canitur: <i>accipet jesus pacem</i>, tanaurnat in sacart fet(h)ri du aithrigi dia pecthaib; atnopuir Deo; ocus slecthith in popul: ocus ni taet guth isson ar</p> <p>-na tar   masca in sacardd; ar issed a thechta ar na rascra a menme contra Deum, cene canas in liachtso. is de is <i>Periculsu Oratio</i> a nomen.</p>	<p>10. Comgabail in choilig oifrind ocus na mesi iarn a landirgaid. icanair infersa .i. Immola Deo sacrificium laudis –figuir gene Crist ocus a inocbala tria fertaib ocus mirbulib. Novi Testamenti initium sin.</p> <p>11. Intan tra chanar: <i>Accipit Jesus panem, stans in medio discipulorum suorum</i>, - usque in finem, dotoirnet fotri na sacairt do aitrige do na pecthaib doronsat, ocus idprait do Dia, ocus canait in salmsa uli <i>Miserrers mei, Deus</i>; ocus ni theit guth ison leo, co na tairmescthar in sacart, uair ised is techta co na roscara a menma fri Dia, cid in oen vocabulo, icon ernaighisea: uair is bidbu in uird spiritalla ocus mihairtin fri Dia, menip amlaid sin is denta. Conid desin ise ainm na hernaighisea .i. <i>Periculosa Oratio</i>.</p>

Stowe Missal	Lebar Breac
<p>12. The three steps which the ordained man steps backwards and which he steps in return, that is the triad wherein sinneth every person, to wit, in word, in thought, in deed; and that is the triad through which he is renewed again, and through which he is moved to the Body of Christ.</p> <p>13. The examination wherewith the priest examines the chalice and the Host, and the assault which the fraction implies, a figure of the contumelies and of the stripes and of the capture (is) that.</p> <p>14. The Host upon the paten, the body of Christ upon the tree of the Cross.</p> <p>15. The fraction upon the paten, the Body of Christ being broken with nails upon the Cross.</p> <p>16. The meeting whereby the two halves come together after the fraction, a figure of the integrity of the Body of Christ after the Resurrection.</p>	<p>12. The three steps the man of order takes backwards and takes again forward-that is the triad wherein man falls, to wit, in thought, in word in deed. And that is the triad through which man is renewed again to God.</p> <p>13. The aim which the priest aims at the chalice of Mass and at the paten, and the attack which he makes upon the Host to break it, that is a figure of the contumelies and of the stripes and of the capture which Christ underwent. And that is its literal explanation.</p> <p>14. And the Host upon the paten, the Body of Christ upon the Cross.</p> <p>15. The confraction upon the paten, the Body of Christ being broken against the tree of the Cross.</p> <p>16. The meeting wherein the two halves come together after the confraction, a figure of the integrity of the body of Christ after the resurrection.</p>
<p>12. na tri chemmen cinged in fergraith for a culu, ocus tpcing afrithisi. ised a trede in imruimdethar cach duine, idon, himbrethir, hi cocell, hingnim; ocus ised trede tressanaithnuigther iterum, ocus trisatoscigther do Chorp Crist.</p> <p>13. In mesad mesas in sacart in cailech ocus in obli, ocus int ammus adminidethar a combach, figor nan aithisse ocus nan esorcon ocus inna (aur) gabale insen.</p> <p>14. Ind oblae forsin meis, coland Crist hi crann cruche.</p> <p>15. A combag forsin meis, Corp Crist do chombug co cloaib forsin c(h)roich.</p> <p>16. in comrac conrectar in da (l)leth ' iarsin chombug, figor oge chuirp Crist iarn esergo.</p>	<p>12. na tri ceimend chindes in fer graid for a chula, ocus chinnes iterum for a gnuis-ise sin tredi ituitend in duine .i. in imradud, imbrehir, ingnim. Ocus ise sin tredi tresanathnuidigther in duine iterum co Dia.</p> <p>13. Int aimsiugud aimsiges in sacart in cailech oifrind ocus in meis ocus in ablaind, ocus int amus dosbeir forsin ablaind dia combach-figuir sin inna haitise ocus inna hesoircne ocus inna nergabal forfhulaing Crist. Ocus ise sin a thaithmech sianside.</p> <p>14. Ocus in abland forsin meis- coland Crist forsin croich.</p> <p>15. A combach forsin meis-coland Crist dochombach fri crand crochi.</p> <p>16. In comrac chomracithir in da leth iarsin cmbach-figuir oige Chuirp Crist iarn esergi.</p>

Stowe Missal	Lebar Breac
<p>17. The submersion wherewith the other half is submerged, a figure of the submersion of the Body of Christ in His Blood, after the wounding on the Cross.</p> <p>18. The part that is taken from the bottom of the half that is wont to be on the left-hand, a figure of the wounding with the spear in the armpit of the right side; for it is westward the face of Christ was on the Cross, namely towards the city: and it is eastward the face of Longinus was; what was left for this person was right for Christ.</p>	<p>17. The submersion whereby the other half is submerged afterwards, that [is] a figure of the submersion of the blood which the Jews drained from the Body of Christ.</p> <p>18. The portion which is taken from the lower part of the half that is in the left hand of the priest, that is a figure of the wounding with the spear in the hand of Longinus, in the armpit of the right side of Jesus: for westward was the face of Christ on His Cross, to wit, towards the city, Jerusalem, and eastward was the face of Longinus; and the thing that was left for this person the same in deed was right for Christ.</p>
<p>17. In fobdod fombaiter indalled, figor fobdotha cuirp crist inna fhuil, iarn aithchumbu hi croich.</p> <p>18. In pars benar a hichtur ind lithe bis for laim cli, figor ind aithchummi cosind lakin in oxil in tuib deiss; ar is siar robui aiged Crist in cruce, id est, contra civitatem: oculus i[s] sair robui aigeth Longini; ar robo thuairse do shuidiu, issed ropo desse do Crist.</p>	<p>17. In fodbugud fhodbaigther indalleth iarum-figuir sin fhodbaigiti inna fuile dothebrensat Iudaide a Colaind Crist.</p> <p>18. In rand benair a hichtar in lethi bis I laim cli in sacairt-figuir sin ind athcumai cusin lakin I laim Longini, isind achsaill toibe deiss Isu: uair is siar boi aiged Crist in a chroich .i. frisin caraig, ierusalem, oculus is siar roboi aiged Longini; oculus inni ropu tuathbel dosum, issed on robo dess do Crist.</p>

Stowe Missal	Lebar Breac
	<p>For the face of Christ was towards us coming to us as it is said: in those days, for you who fear the name of the Lord, the sun of justice shall arise. And God comes from the East.</p> <p>His back, however, toward us, in going from us, and He calling each and every one to Himself after him, saying: Come all of you to me and after me.</p> <p>The simultaneous holding wherewith the hand of the priest holds the chalice of Mass-that [is] a figure of the assembling of the people of heaven and of earth into one people: to wit, the people of heaven by the paten, the people of earth by the chalice.</p>
	<p>Uair issed boi aiged Crist frinde, oc tidecht chucaind, ut dictum est: orietur in diebus illis vobis, timentibus nomen Domini, sol justitiae. Et: Deus ab Oriente veniet.</p> <p>A chul, immorro, frind, ic tocht uaind, ocus se ic togairm chaich uli chuci in a diaid, dicens: Venite omnes ad me, post me.</p> <p>In chongbail congbus lam int shacairt in mias ocus in coilech aifrind-figuir comthinoil sin muintire nime ocus talman in oen muintir: .i. muintir nime per mensam, muintir thalman per calicem.</p>

Stowe Missal	Lebar Breac
<p>There are seven kinds upon the Fraction: that is, five parts of the common Host, in figure of the five senses of the soul. Seven of the Host of Saints and Virgins, except the chief ones, in figure of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. Eight of the Host of Martyrs, in figure of the octonary New Testament. Nine of the Host of Sunday, in figure of the nine folks of heaven and of the nine grades of the Church. Eleven of the Host of Apostles, in figure of the imperfect number of Apostles after the scandal of Judas. Twelve of the Host of the calends [of January, i.e. Circumcision] and of [last] Supper day, in remembrance of the perfect number of Apostles. Thirteen of the host of little Easter [Low Sunday] and of the feast of Ascension-at first, although they were distributed more minutely afterwards, in going to communion-in figure of Christ with his twelve Apostles.</p>	
<p>Ataat secht ngne forsin chombug: idon, cuic parsa de obi choitchinn, hi figur cuic sense animae. A secht di obli noeb ocus huag, acht na huaisli, hi figuir ind nui fhiadnisi ochti. A noe di obli domnich, hi figuir noe montar nimae ocus noe ngraith aecalsa. A oen deac di obli Apstal, hi figuir inna airme anfuir[b](h)e Apostolorum iarn immamus iudae. A di deac di obli calann ocus c(h)enlai, hi foraithmut airmae foirbte inna nApstal   A teora deac di obli minchasc ocus fregabale-prius, ce fodailter ni bes miniu iarum, oc techt do laim-, hi figuir Crist cona dib nApstalaib deac.</p> <p>Inna cuic, ocus inn scht, ocus inna ocht, ocus deac, ocus inna teora deac-ithe a cuic sescot samliith; ocus is hae lin pars insin bis in obli Casc, ocus Notlaic, ocus Chenncigis; ar congaibther huils hi Crist insin.</p>	

Stowe Missal	Lebar Breac
<p>The five, and the seven, and the eight, and the nine and the eleven, and the twelve, and the thirteen-they are five [and] sixty together; and that is the number of parts which is wont to be in the Host of Easter, and of the Nativity, and of Pentecost; for all that is contained in Christ.</p> <p>And it is in the form of a cross all is arranged upon the paten; and on the incline is the upper part on the left hand, as hath been said: Inclining his head He handed over His Spirit.</p> <p>The arrangement of the Fraction of Easter and of the Nativity;- thirteen [fourteen] parts in the tree of the crosses; nine [fourteen] in their cross-piece; twenty parts in the circuit-wheel (five parts of each angle); sixteen between the circuit and the body of the crosses (that is, four of each portion).</p> <p>The middle part, that is the one to which the celebrant goes [i.e. partakes of]: namely, a figure of the breast with the mysteries.</p> <p>What is from there upwards of the tree to bishops.</p>	
<p>ocus is hi torrund cruise suidighir huile forsin meis; ocus is for cloen in pars ochtarach for lam cli, ut dictum est: Inclinato capite, tradidit spiritum.</p> <p>Suidigoth combuig Casc ocus Notlaic;-teora pars a deac in eo na cros; a noe inna tarsno; fiche pars inna cuairtroth (cuic parsae cache oxile); a se deac iter in cuairt ocus chorp na cros (idon, a cetheora [ca]cha rainne).</p> <p>In pars medonach, is hi diatet in tii oifres; idon, figor in bruinni cosna runaib.</p> <p>Ambis ho shen suas dind eo, do epscopbaib.</p>	

Stowe Missal	Lebar Breac
<p>The thwart-piece on the left-hand to the priests.</p> <p>The portion [athwart] on the right hand, to all undergrades.</p> <p>The portion from the thwart-piece downwards, to anchorites of . . .? penance.</p> <p>The portion that is in the upper left-hand angle, to true clerical students.</p> <p>The upper right-hand (portion), to innocent youths.</p> <p>The lower left-hand (portion), to folk of penance.</p> <p>The lower right-hand (portion), to folk of lawful wedlock and to folk who have not gone to hand [i.e., to Communion] before.</p>	
<p>A tarsno for laim cli, do sacardaib.  ani for laim des, do huilib fogradaib.  ani ond tarsno sis, do anchordaib . . . aithirge  Ani bis isinid oxil ochtarthuaiscerdaig, do firmacclerchib.  Ind ochtardescerdach, do maccaib enngaib.  An ichtarthuaiscerdach, do aes lanamnassa dligthig, ocus do aes na tet do laim riam.</p>	

Stowe Missal	Lebar Breac
<p>Now the effect of this is, (to cause) a meaning to be in [these?] figures and that this be your meaning, as if the part which you receive of the Host were a member of Christ from off His Cross; and as if it were this Cross whence runs upon each one his own draught [lit. run], since it is united to the crucified Body.</p> <p>It is not proper to swallow it, the part, without tasting it; as it is not proper to pause in tasting the mysteries of God.</p> <p>It is not proper to have it go under back teeth; in figure that it is not proper to dwell overmuch upon the mysteries of God, that hearsay be not forwarded thereby.</p> <p>The End. Amen. Thanks be to God.</p>	
<p>Issed tra as brig lades[in], menmae dobuith hi figraib in . . . , ocus co rop -he tomenme   ind rann arafoemi din bli, amail bith ball di Crist assa chroich, ocus arambe croch [a] sa [rit?] hir for cach a rith fhein, hore noenigethir frisin chorp crochte.</p> <p>Ni techte a shlocod in[na] parsa cen a mlaissiuth; amal nan coer cen saigith mlas hirroruna De.</p> <p>Ni coir a techt fo culfhiachli; hi figuir nan coir rosaegeth forruna De, na forberther heres nocco.</p> <p>Finit. Amen. Deo gratias.</p>	



## Appendix 2: Plates



Plate 1: Gallarus Oratory, Dingle Peninsula.  
Photograph courtesy of Peter Zöller, Insight Cards Limited.



Plate 2: The Book of Kells, Folio 202v, The Temptation.  
Reprinted from Meehan, *The Book of Kells*, 11.



Plate 3: The Ardagh Chalice.  
Photograph courtesy of The National Museum of Ireland.



Plate 4: The Derrynaflan Hoard.  
Photograph courtesy of The National Museum of Ireland.





Plate 5: The Ardagh and the Derrynaflan Chalices.  
Photograph courtesy of The National Museum of Ireland.



Plate 6: The Derrynaflan Paten.  
Reprinted from Ryan, *Early Irish Communion Vessels*, 25.



Plate 7: The Derrynaflan Paten reconstructed as mounted on its stand. Reprinted from Ryan, *Early Irish Communion Vessels*, 25.

Plate 8: The Lough Kinale Chalice. Reprinted from Ryan, *Early Irish Communion Vessels*, 12.



Plate 9: The River Bann Chalice. Reprinted from Ryan, *Early Irish Communion Vessels*, 13.



Plate 10: The West Cross at Monasterboice, Co. Louth, as illustrated in Henry O'Neill's book on Irish Crosses (1857). Reprinted from Stalley, *Irish High Crosses*, 6.



Plate 11: High Cross at Moone: The Loaves and Fishes. Reprinted from Stalley, *Irish High Crosses*, 29.



Plates 12 and 13: Two details of mice or rats holding the host, on folios 48r. (top) and 34r (bottom). Reprinted from Meehan, *The Book of Kells*, 44.





Plate 14: Eucharistic symbols in the mouth of a lion (The Book of Kells, folio 29r). Reprinted from Meehan, *The Book of Kells*, 44.

Plate 15: The Chur Chrial. Reprinted from Nußbaum, *Die Aufbewahrung der Eucharistie*, 182.



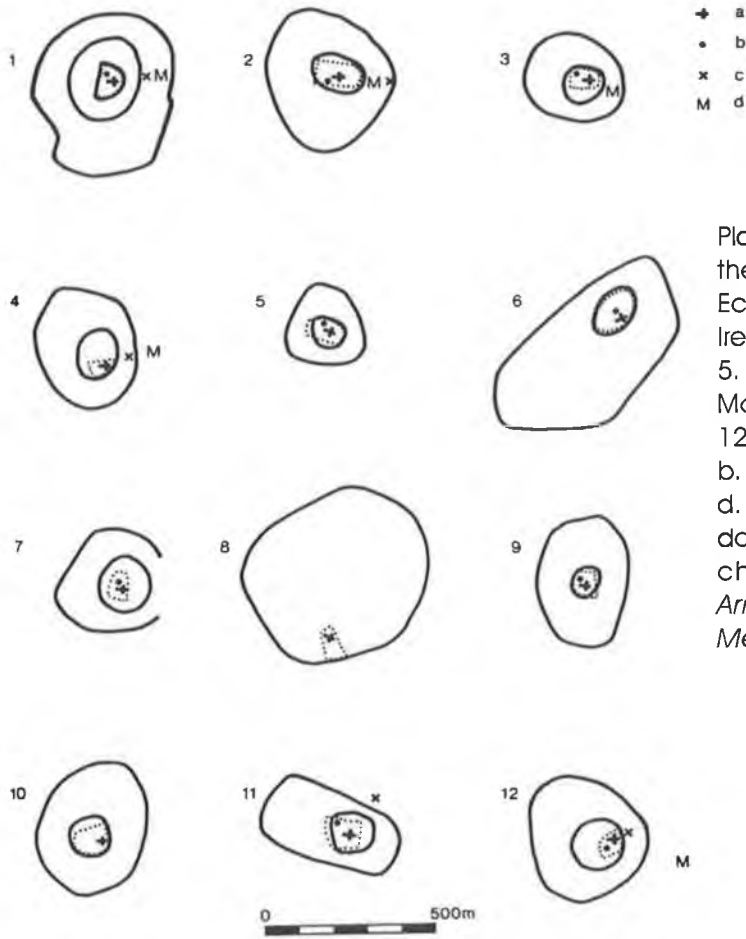


Plate 16: Proposed outline reconstructions of the enclosures for twelve of the larger Ecclesiastical settlements of early medieval Ireland: 1. Armagh; 2. Kells; 3. Kildare; 4. Tuam; 5. Lusk; 6. Cashel; 7. Killala; 8. Finglas; 9. Monasterboice; 10. Lorrha; 11. Glendalough; 12. Downpatrick. Key: a. church or church site; b. round tower or site; c. market/high cross site; d. market house/place/square/street. The dotted lines define the present extent of the churchyards. Reprinted from Aitchison, *Armagh and the Royal Centres in Early Medieval Ireland*, 221.

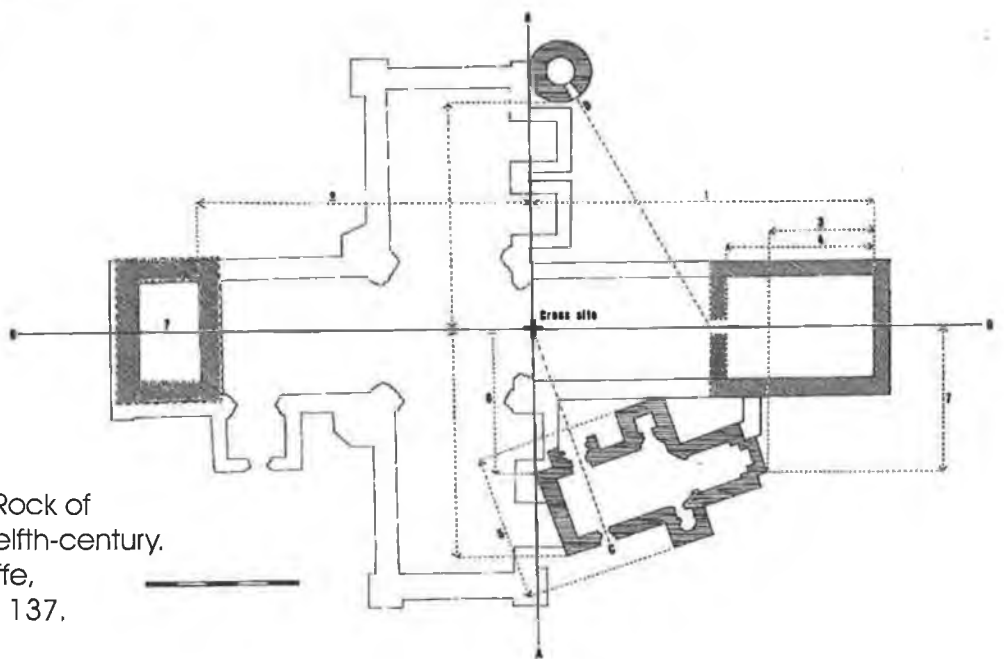


Plate 17: Suggested reconstruction of the Rock of Cashel in the early twelfth-century. Reprinted from O'Keefe, *Romanesque Ireland*, 137.



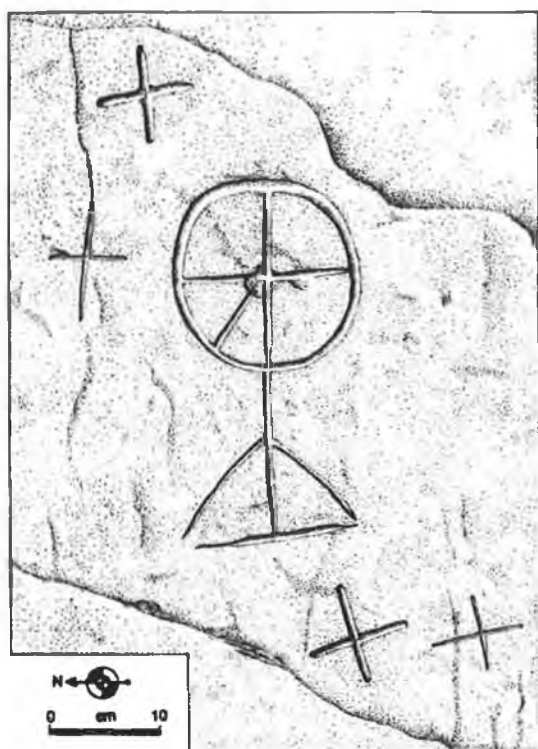


Plate 18: Inscribed area on upper surface of a boulder in Ballydarrig townland, Iveragh. Reprinted from Ó Carragáin, "A Landscape Converted," 134.



Plate 19: The Calf of Man Altar Frontal. Photograph courtesy of Manx National Heritage Library.

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