

## The *Arma Christi* in Medieval and Early Modern Ireland

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Devotion to the Passion and death of Jesus Christ, one of the hallmarks of medieval spirituality, underwent some profound changes over the course of the Middle Ages, not least in relation to the question of the suffering humanity of Christ. The transition from early medieval depictions of the crucified Christ as triumphant hero (the *Christus Victor* of Gustaf Aulen's famous study<sup>1</sup>) to the emaciated and tortured *Imago Pietatis* of the later Middle Ages was not absolute, however; the theme of Christ's victory on the cross over the powers of darkness would persist, albeit now ceding preeminence to its more recent usurper. This paper examines this broad shift in emphasis through the lens of the *arma Christi* or, more loosely, the instruments or symbols of Christ's Passion, as manifested in medieval and early modern Ireland. Representations of the *arma Christi* in iconography and literature of the period can quite usefully reflect in microcosm the evolving shape of medieval and early modern Passion devotion.

The occurrence of symbols of Christ's passion which would later form part of an expanding set of *arma Christi* were not unknown in early and high-medieval Irish art. In fact, crucifixion scenes on Irish high crosses from the ninth century onwards often include a small number of these. The west face of Muiredach's Cross, County Louth, (early tenth century) displays a rope binding Christ's feet and also the figures of Longinus with his lance and

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<sup>1</sup> I wish to sincerely thank Dr. Rachel Moss and Dr. Colmán Ó Clabaigh, who carefully read earlier drafts of this essay, made many valuable suggestions and preserved me from some simple errors. Dr. Rachel Moss also kindly drew my attention to suitable images and gave me permission to use some of her own.

Gustaf Aulen, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement*, trans. A.G. Herbert (New York: Macmillan, 1957).

Stephaton holding up a sponge on a pole.<sup>2</sup> A ninth-century bronze plaque found at St. John's Abbey, Athlone, and now housed in the National Museum, Dublin, similarly includes the lance and pole-bearers.<sup>3</sup> However, in most examples, it is not Christ's suffering but his triumph that is the prime focus; early Irish representations of Christ on the cross such as the figure of Christ on a ninth/tenth-century slab at Inishkea North, Belmullet, County Mayo, and a crucifixion scene on the Marigold stone at Carndonagh, County Donegal, depict Christ with his eyes open and wearing a broad smile, indicative of his victory.<sup>4</sup> Many of these depictions on early Irish crosses were influenced by images of the crucified Christ in Insular manuscripts.<sup>5</sup> The eighth-century Irish poet, Blathmac, exclaims in one of his compositions: "His crucified body was his victory / he suffered the shedding of wine-like blood."<sup>6</sup> The mid-twelfth-century "Market Crosses" of Tuam, County Galway, and Glendalough, County Wicklow, together with a number of Romanesque metal crucifix figures, depict Christ wearing not the crown of thorns but a kingly crown in his role as *Christus regnans*.<sup>7</sup> While some symbols of Christ's Passion, then, do appear in early Irish religious art, the context of their appearance is quite different from what it would later become. On a broader canvas, Gertrud Schiller draws attention to a single surviving example from the early Middle Ages in which five of the *arma Christi* appear together. According to Schiller, this illustration, which accompanies Psalm 22 in the Utrecht Psalter (c. 830), also presents the first instance in the West of a depiction of the dead Christ, with his eyes closed.<sup>8</sup> Yet the dead and the triumphant Christ were by no means mutually exclusive. An Irish late-twelfth-century bronze figure of the

<sup>2</sup> Peter Harbison, *The Crucifixion in Irish Art: Fifty Selected Examples from the Ninth to the Twentieth Century* (Harrisburg, PA and Dublin: Moorhouse Publishing and The Columba Press, 2000), 4.

<sup>3</sup> Harbison, *The Crucifixion*, 6–7. See also Harbison, "The Bronze Crucifixion Plaque said to be from St John's (Rinnegan), near Athlone," *Journal of Irish Archaeology* II (1984): 1–18.

<sup>4</sup> Harbison, *The Crucifixion*, 8–11. See also further examples at 12–15. For debate on the dating of the Carndonagh stones (ranging from the seventh to tenth centuries) see Conor Newman and Niamh Walsh, "Iconographical Analysis of the Marigold Stone, Carndonagh, Inishowen, County Donegal," in Rachel Moss, ed., *Making and Meaning in Insular Art* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), 167–83.

<sup>5</sup> Jennifer O'Reilly, "Seeing the Crucified Christ: Image and Meaning in Early Irish Manuscript Art" in Juliet Mullins, Jenifer Ní Ghrádaigh, and Richard Hawtree, eds, *Envisioning Christ on the Cross: Ireland and the Early Medieval West* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2013), 52–82.

<sup>6</sup> James Carney, ed., *The Poems of Blathmac, Son of Cú Brettan*, (Dublin: Irish Texts Society, 1964), 61, stanza 178.

<sup>7</sup> Harbison, *The Crucifixion*, 20–21. Ragnall Ó Floinn, "The 'Market Cross' at Glendalough," in Charles Doherty and Michael Kelly, eds, *Glendalough: City of God* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2011), 80–111; Ragnall Ó Floinn, "Irish Romanesque Crucifixion Figures" in Étienne Rynne, ed., *Figures from the Past: Studies on Figurative Art in Christian Ireland in Honour of Helen M. Roe* (Dublin: Glendale Press, 1987), 166–88.

<sup>8</sup> Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, 2 vols, trans. Janet Seligman (London: Lund Humphries, 1971), 2:184–85.

crucified Christ from Abbeyderg, Longford, is one of a number that depicts a dead Christ with his ribs showing who nevertheless appears to wear a crown of victory.<sup>9</sup> It should also be noted that while the aforementioned twelfth-century "Market Crosses" depict Christ as wearing a kingly crown, his eyes are nevertheless closed in death and his head inclined.<sup>10</sup> The paradox of Christ's Passion—the juxtaposition of victor and victim—would loom large over subsequent centuries.

In the Irish tradition, from as early as the eighth-century poetry of Blathmac, the appearance of a ruddy cross was expected in the sky on Judgment Day.<sup>11</sup> The Hiberno-Latin hymn *Altus Prosator*, traditionally attributed to Columcille but more likely to be a seventh-century composition, contains the lines: "Christo de celis domino descendente celsissimo prefulgebit clarissimum signum crucis et vexillum" [With Christ, the Lord, coming down from the highest heaven shall shine most clearly the sign and the standard of the cross].<sup>12</sup> The earliest dateable Irish iconographic example of the instruments of the Passion as Christ's own "coat of arms" is found on a small shield found on a box shrine called the *Domnach Airgid*. This forms part of the refurbishment of the shrine commissioned by John Ó Cairbre, Abbot of Clones (d. 1353). Fourteenth-century accounts of the shrine relate that it held relics of the holy apostles, Mary's hair, the holy cross of the Lord and of his tomb, among others.<sup>13</sup> The shield displays a cross, crown of thorns, nails and a scourge. Directly below the small shield is a crystal which enclosed fragments of the True Cross.<sup>14</sup> Other notable Irish shrines constructed to house relics of the True Cross include the Cross of Cong which the medieval *Annals of Tigernach*

<sup>9</sup> Harbison, *The Crucifixion*, 22–3. Ó Floinn, "Irish Romanesque Crucifixion Figures," 59.

<sup>10</sup> Jill Meghan Connaughton, "Art and Devotions to the Passion of Christ in Ireland, 1450–1650" (PhD dissertation, 2 vols, Trinity College Dublin, 2012), vol. 1, chapter 3. The influence of the famous Volto Santo crucifix of Lucca, Italy, may be seen in images of the crucified Christ such as the twelfth-century St. Patrick's Cross at Cashel and the Dysert O'Dea cross in County Clare.

<sup>11</sup> Diarmaid Ó Laoghaire, "Spioradáltacht na hÉireann, 1200–1500," in Máirtín MacConmara, ed., *An Léann Eaglasta in Éirinn* (Dublin: An Clóchomhar, 1988), 142.

<sup>12</sup> J.H. Bernard and Robert Atkinson, eds, *The Irish Liber Hymnorum*, 2 vols (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1898), 1:80.

<sup>13</sup> Cormac Bourke, "Medieval Ecclesiastical Metalwork from the Diocese of Clogher," in Henry A. Jefferies, ed., *History of the Diocese of Clogher* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), 35–7. For later refurbishment of relic shrines in south Ulster see Raymond Gillespie, "Relics, Reliquaries and Hagiography in South Ulster, 1450–1550," in Rachel Moss, Colmán Ó Clabaigh and Salvador Ryan, eds, *Art and Devotion in Late Medieval Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), 184–201.

<sup>14</sup> H.M. Roe, "Instruments of the Passion," *Old Kilkenny Review* 2.5 (1983): 530; Ragnall Ó Floinn, *Irish Shrines and Reliquaries of the Middle Ages* (Dublin: Town House and Country House in association with the National Museum of Ireland, 1994), 28.

record as having been constructed for this purpose in Roscommon in 1123 on the orders of Turlough O'Conor, king of Connacht and high king of Ireland.<sup>15</sup>

The appearance of a number of instruments of the Passion in addition to the cross became more frequent in Irish iconography through the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but with a growing emphasis on the physical sufferings of Christ, it became more difficult to square the image of victorious conqueror with ever more graphic depictions of his tortured and emaciated form. The transformation of the "warrior Christ" into the "lover-knight," as discussed by Rosemary Woolf in an English context,<sup>16</sup> in which Christ's "battle" on Calvary was now motivated by an intense love for his people, affected the way in which Christ's "armor" or battle instruments were understood. Previously trained on his enemies (the devil or sinners), Christ's armor was now turned against himself, rendering his body ever more bloody and broken in the process.<sup>17</sup> The image that confronted late medieval Christians in Ireland was now that of the "Man of Sorrows" surrounded by the instruments of his Passion, often emblazoned on a standard, inviting those who behold them to return to Christ's heart in repentance.<sup>18</sup> These images, in which Christ displays his five wounds to the viewer while surrounded by the symbols of his Passion, gained great popularity, especially on account of the enormous indulgences attached to them, having spread from Italy to France and then to England and Ireland in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

It is principally in fifteenth-century Ireland that the *arma Christi* begin to appear on tomb iconography, becoming increasingly associated with related imagery such as that of the Man of Sorrows or Mass of Saint Gregory.<sup>19</sup> The ever-widening range of instruments of Christ's Passion functioned also as visual aids to remind viewers of the Passion story (both canonical and apocryphal) of which they were essentially the "props." Various, they consisted of the cross, the spear or lance of Longinus, the scourges, pincers, nails, hammer, ladder, crown of thorns, seamless garment, dice, flagellation column, sponge held on a hyssop stick or cup and pole, the *titulus* board (INRI), the faces of those who spat at Christ, the thirty pieces of silver of Judas, the jug and basin

<sup>15</sup> See Pádraig Ó Riain and Griffin Murray, "The Cross of Cong: Some Recent Discoveries," *Archaeology Ireland* 19.1 (2005): 18–21.

<sup>16</sup> See Rosemary Woolf, "The Theme of Christ the Lover-Knight in Medieval English Literature," *Review of English Studies* 13 (1962): 1–16.

<sup>17</sup> Rosemary Woolf, *The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 54.

<sup>18</sup> Salvador Ryan, "Weapons of Redemption: Piety, Poetry and the Instruments of the Passion in Late Medieval Ireland," in Henning Laugerud and Laura Katrine Skinnebach, eds, *Instruments of Devotion: The Practices and Objects of Religious Piety from the Late Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2007), 120. This earlier article comprises an introduction to the instruments of the Passion in late medieval Irish iconography and literature, which is greatly expanded upon here.

<sup>19</sup> Roe, "Instruments," 529.

in which Pilate washed his hands, the cock (or cock and pot), the cloth or Mandylion of Veronica, and the ear of the high priest's servant, Malchus.<sup>20</sup>

As noted above, the ongoing development of meanings invested in the *arma Christi* rendered the instruments themselves polysemic. It must be remembered, however, that the varying interpretations of the instruments did not simply succeed each other in turn (although some were more prevalent at times than others); rather, they frequently co-existed, signifying different things to different people. For instance, the appearance of the *arma Christi* on Doomsday was not regarded as a harbinger of condemnation in every instance; much in the same way as the Five Wounds of Christ functioned as heralds of salvation and harbingers of damnation on Judgment Day (the distinction being literally in the eye of the beholder)<sup>21</sup>, so too did many medieval Christians place their trust in the symbols of the Passion and what they represented: the saving sacrifice of Christ. Caroline Walker Bynum helpfully terms the complex theme of the *arma Christi* an "interweaving of soteriological concepts," allowing them to function simultaneously as shields of defense for sinners and offensive weapons of accusation.<sup>22</sup>

Representations of the various symbols of Christ's Passion from the high Middle Ages onwards received significant impetus from increasing "discoveries" of Passion relics, which confirmed their existence and, frequently, their power. Many of the Passion relics—including the reed, sponge, *titulus* board, and the nails of crucifixion—were thought to have been venerated in the Holy Sepulcher church in Jerusalem until its destruction in 614 AD.<sup>23</sup> The Irish abbot, Adomnán of Iona (d. 704), certainly showed a great interest in this church, leaving a detailed account of it which he jotted down from a shipwrecked Gallican bishop named Arculf.<sup>24</sup> Many of these Passion relics were "rediscovered" over the course of the tenth and eleventh centuries, a development which accelerated with the rise of the crusading movement.<sup>25</sup> It mattered little, for instance, if the lance which pierced Christ's side was already housed in Constantinople; its famous discovery by the Provençal

<sup>20</sup> Ryan, "Weapons," 112.

<sup>21</sup> Salvador Ryan, "Fixing the Eschatological Scales: Judgment of the Soul in Late Medieval and Early Modern Irish Tradition," in Peter Clarke and Tony Claydon, eds, *The Church and the Afterlife: Studies in Church History* 45 (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2009), [184–96].

<sup>22</sup> Caroline Walker Bynum, *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 201.

<sup>23</sup> Siobhán de hÓir, "Instruments of the Passion on Some Kilkenny Headstones," in John Kirwan, ed., *Kilkenny: Studies in Honour of Margaret M. Phelan* (Kilkenny: The Kilkenny Archaeological Society, 1997), 152 [152–58]. I wish to thank Siobhán de hÓir for passing on a copy of this article to me and for her assistance during a visit to the Royal Society of Antiquaries in Dublin.

<sup>24</sup> Peter Harbison, *Pilgrimage in Ireland: The Monuments and the People* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1992), 29.

<sup>25</sup> Schiller, *Iconography*, 2:189–90.

peasant Peter Bartholomew when the crusaders were surrounded during the second siege of Antioch in 1098 resulted in a rejuvenation of the Western forces who were convinced of its power.<sup>26</sup> Irish interest in the crusading movement must have been great, if only on account of the influence of the Order of the Temple (or, more commonly, Knights Templar) that was allowed to enter Ireland between 1172 and 1177 and that went on to acquire a large number of manors and parcels of land. The Templars were permitted to visit churches in the country once a year to make a collection for the Holy Land.<sup>27</sup> A native Irish chronicle known as the *Annals of Inisfallen* records the journey of an Irish king called Ua Cinn Fhaelad to Jerusalem in 1080, presumably on pilgrimage, and it is reasonable to assume that there must have been many more who undertook similar journeys to see the holy places.<sup>28</sup> The extensive account of the journey of two Anglo-Irish Franciscan friars, Simon Fitzsimon and Hugh the Illuminator, to the Holy Land in 1323–1324 is unique in an Irish context. While journeying through France, Fitzsimon recorded seeing in the Sainte-Chapelle, Paris, the crown of thorns, part of the true cross, two of the nails of crucifixion and Longinus' lance. Upon arrival in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, he observed some of the Lord's blood which had run through the fissures of Mount Calvary and also a large part of the flagellation column, the remainder being located in Rome.<sup>29</sup>

News of the translation of ownership or the discovery of important Passion relics generated much interest among the Irish through the later Middle Ages as the following entry from another Irish chronicle for 1492 illustrates:

A portion of the wood of the Holy Cross was found in Rome, buried in the ground i.e. the board that was over the head of the Cross on which was written Jesus Nazareus Rex Judaeorum and it was found written in the same place that it was St Helena that buried it. The head of the lance with which Longinus wounded the body of Christ was sent to Rome in this year by the sovereign of the Turks.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup> For an account of this event see Thomas Asbridge, *The First Crusade: A New History* (London: The Free Press, 2004), 221–32.

<sup>27</sup> Herbert Wood, "The Templars in Ireland," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, Section C, 26.14 (1907): 331–35. See also Kathryn Hurlock, "The Crusades to 1291 in the Annals of Medieval Ireland," *Irish Historical Studies* 37.148 (2012): 517–34.

<sup>28</sup> Harbison, *Pilgrimage*, 29.

<sup>29</sup> *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis ab Hybernia ad Terram Sanctam*, ed. Mario Esposito (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1960), 31, 109.

<sup>30</sup> W.M. Hennessy, ed., *The Annals of Loch Cé*, 2 vols. (London: Longman, 1871, reprint Dublin: Stationery Office, 1939), entry for the year 1492, page 189. For a helpful introduction to the native Irish annals see Bernadette Cunningham and Raymond Gillespie, *Stories from Gaelic Ireland: Microhistories from the Sixteenth-Century Irish Annals* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003), 13–28.

The wording of this entry appears to stress the vindication of the *Inventio Sanctae Crucis* account of St. Helena. Surviving native Irish late medieval devotional manuscript collections commissioned by wealthy lay patrons and compiled by hereditary scribes attest to the enduring popularity of this tale, which was often followed by the legend of Charlemagne and the giant Fierabras.<sup>31</sup> The inscription on the *titulus* board was sometimes given a particularly native slant in the Irish tradition, the INRI being understood to spell "in ri," which in Old Irish translates as "the king."<sup>32</sup> Continuing Irish interest in the lance of Longinus is attested by the fact that the northern Irish earls, who fled Ulster for the Continent in 1607, viewed the head of the lance mentioned in the *Annals of Loch Cé* and also the handkerchief of Veronica while in Rome, a point highlighted by Tadhg Ó Cianáin (d.1614) who compiled a diary of the earls' itinerary in Europe. Upon viewing two thorns of the crown of thorns which were held in the church of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, Ó Cianáin observed that "one would think they had not been cut longer than fifteen days."<sup>33</sup> The significance of seeing these first hand should not be underestimated; as Martha Rust suggests elsewhere in this volume (Chapter 5), lists of *arma Christi* were largely understood as inventories of actual items thought to exist in churches across Europe.

In late medieval Ireland, a growing devotional emphasis on contemplating the mysteries of Christ's Passion and death in an affective manner—in Angela Lucas' words, to "feel the pain and see the blood"<sup>34</sup>—increased the need for suitable images on which to meditate. A mid-fifteenth-century Irish translation of the pseudo-Bonaventuran *Meditationes vitae Christi*, by a choral canon in Killala, County Mayo, encouraged its audience to "raise the eyes of your mind now and you will see a band of them thrusting the cross into the ground, and another group preparing a sign and another gang readying a hammer and another crew preparing a ladder and other instruments."<sup>35</sup> A surviving library catalogue from the Franciscan friary at Youghal in County Cork that was compiled between 1490 and 1523 demonstrates that popular works of affective devotion were circulating in Ireland: among the collection

<sup>31</sup> For an account of the appearance of this legend in Irish manuscripts see Salvador Ryan, "Wily Women of God in Breifne's Late Medieval and Early Modern Devotional Collections," in Brendan Scott, ed., *Culture and Society in Early Modern Breifne / Cavan* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2009), 31–47.

<sup>32</sup> This tradition was passed on to me by the late Irish scholar, Rev. Dr Diarmaid Ó Laoghaire. I have not yet been able to trace its provenance.

<sup>33</sup> Nollaig Ó Muraíle, ed., *Turas na dTaoiseach nUiltach as Éirinn: from Ráth Maoláin to Rome: Tadhg Ó Cianáin's Contemporary Narrative of the Journey into Exile of the Ulster Chieftains and their Followers, 1607–8* (Rome: Pontifical Irish College, 2007), 309, 335.

<sup>34</sup> Angela M. Lucas, ed., *Anglo-Irish Poems of the Middle Ages* (Dublin: Columba Press, 1995), 195.

<sup>35</sup> Caineach Ó Maonaigh, ed. *Smaointe beatha Chríost: innsint Ghaeilge a chuir Tomás Gruamhá Ó Bruacháin (fl.1450) ar an Meditationes Vitae Christi* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1944), 146.

held at Youghal were copies of the *Meditationes vitae Christi*, Ludolph of Saxony's *Vita Christi* and, by 1523, Thomas à Kempis' *Imitatio Christi*.<sup>36</sup> It is in fifteenth-century Ireland that Passion imagery, including that of the *arma Christi*, begins to make its most profound impact in art and literature.

Gertrud Schiller draws a link between the contemplation encouraged by the *Meditationes vitae Christi* text and the proliferation of instruments of the Passion from the end of the thirteenth century, which acted as accompanying symbols as the devotee followed the course of the Passion.<sup>37</sup> The instruments would become popular both in secular and religious settings in Ireland in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. They are found, for instance, among other religious carvings on the window embrasures of two floors of a sixteenth-century tower at Ballinacarraiga, County Cork, as well as at several surviving monastic and mendicant sites, including the Cistercian foundation of Kilcooly abbey in County Tipperary, where they appear on the abbot's seat in the nave of the church, and also at the Augustinian priory of St. Mary at Clontuskert, County Galway, on two shields carved on the western façade doorway.<sup>38</sup> The only surviving wall painting depicting the instruments from this period is found at the Franciscan friary at Askeaton, County Limerick, where it is located in the friars' dormitory.<sup>39</sup> Its location in the dormitory may hint at a *memento mori* theme, reminding the friars of the prospect of facing the instruments on Judgment Day, for good or for ill.<sup>40</sup> The appearance of the instruments in secular and religious households during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries should be seen in the broader context of an increasing demand to behold scenes of Christ's Passion and enter into its mysteries, often with the promise of enormous indulgences attached. The diverse reach of this burgeoning interest is reflected in a room which the prominent O'Shaughnessy family devoted to wall paintings depicting the Passion cycle in their sixteenth-century tower house at Ardamullivan, near Gort in County Galway, and also in the increasing proliferation of cheap images and engravings of the Man of Sorrows or *Imago Pietatis* for the mass market.<sup>41</sup> A fifteenth- or early sixteenth-century stone panel at the east end of the nave of the Franciscan friary, Ennis, County Clare, depicts the Man of Sorrows surrounded by the Instruments of

<sup>36</sup> Colmán Ó Clabaigh, *The Friars in Ireland, 1224–1540* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2012), 192–93. For the Youghal catalogue see Ó Clabaigh, *The Franciscans in Ireland: From Reform to Reformation* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), 158–80.

<sup>37</sup> Schiller, *Iconography*, 2:190–91.

<sup>38</sup> Colum Hourihane, *Gothic Art in Ireland, 1169–1550: Enduring Vitality* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), 12, 95, 76.

<sup>39</sup> Fergus O'Farrell, "Passion Symbols in Irish Church Carvings," *Old Kilkenny Review* 2.5 (1988): 535–41; also Karena Morton, "Aspects of Image and Meaning in Irish Medieval Wall Paintings," in Moss, Ó Clabaigh, and Ryan, eds, *Art and Devotion*, 51–71.

<sup>40</sup> Ryan, "Weapons," 114.

<sup>41</sup> Karena Morton, "A Spectacular Revelation: Medieval Wall Paintings at Ardamullivan," *Irish Arts Review* 18 (2002): 105–12; Ryan, "Weapons," 111.

the Passion (Plate 9.1). The Christ figure appears emaciated with his rib cage clearly showing. This image relates to a parallel image of St. Francis, "the other Christ," displaying his stigmata on the other side of the nave. While clearly influenced by the style of similar woodcuts, the sculptor of the Ennis Man of Sorrows includes the cock and pot as instruments of the passion, a feature almost exclusively associated with Irish examples. As Shannon Gayk observes elsewhere in this volume (Chapter 10), the ubiquity of these images sometimes led to the separate circulation of texts of the indulgences which accrued from their veneration. This expectation that the devotee could recall these images at will from memory is also hinted at in the lines of a fifteenth-century Irish bardic poem included in an anthology known as the Book of the O'Conor Don (1631). Recalling the fifteen sorrows of Christ's passion the poet remarks "ye have surely seen before your eyes the image of Christ [yet] ye remember not the tortured body."<sup>42</sup>

The association of the *arma Christi* with death and judgment becomes much clearer from the fifteenth century with the arrival of carvings of the instruments of the Passion on mostly Anglo-Norman tombstones of eastern counties such as Meath, Kildare, Louth, and Dublin, in which cases they are included with personal coats of arms. There are also a relatively large number of tomb chest survivals from Kilkenny, Tipperary, and Waterford which display the instruments.<sup>43</sup> The quality of workmanship and the range of instruments depicted suggest that Irish masons were already quite familiar with English and continental models.<sup>44</sup> The tomb of the abbot Philip O'Molwanayn (d.1463) at Kilcooly Abbey, County Tipperary, contains a shield which includes two nails, a crown of thorns on a cross, a ladder, pincers, a cock on a pot, a spear, a pillar, a seamless garment, three dice, two scourges and a hammer.<sup>45</sup> Secular tombs could also include a wide variety of instruments; the FitzEustace, Baron of Portlester's tomb at New Abbey, Kilcullen, County Kildare (ca.1496) (Figure 9.1), displays two angels holding a shield which includes a tau cross with a crown of thorns hanging from its right arm, three scourges, the pillar, the sponge on a pole, the lance, a ladder, pincers, a hammer and two nails, and a cock on a pot.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Salvador Ryan, "Florilegium of Faith: Religious Verse in the Book of the O'Conor Don," in Pádraig Ó Macháin, ed., *The Book of the O'Conor Don: Essays on an Irish Manuscript* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2010), 74 [61–87].

<sup>43</sup> Roe, "Instruments," 530; also De hÓir, "Instruments," 152.

<sup>44</sup> Diarmuid O'Keeffe, "Instruments of the Passion on the Gravestones of South Tipperary," *Tipperary Historical Journal* (2001):161 [155–74].

<sup>45</sup> O'Keeffe, "Instruments," 161.

<sup>46</sup> Ryan, "Weapons," 114.



Figure 9.1 FitzEustace, Baron of Portlester tomb (c. 1496). Kildare, New Abbey, Kilcullen. The Edwin Rae Collection, TRIARC, Irish Art Research Centre.

One of the finest examples of Irish memorial tombs bearing the instruments is the McCragh tomb in Lismore Cathedral, County Waterford, constructed for John McCragh and his wife, Catherine Prendergast, in 1557. Here the *arma Christi* shield is paired with an *arma Virginis* shield in which the heart of Mary is depicted as pierced by seven swords, indicative of her sharing in Christ's passion.<sup>47</sup>

The cock and pot, not usually found in the medieval European range of the instruments of the Passion, is nevertheless quite a popular feature in Irish examples from the fifteenth century onwards.<sup>48</sup> The feature ultimately derives from a tale in the so-called "Gospel of Nicodemus" text of the early fifth century, which relates how, after Christ has died, Judas returns home to procure a rope with which to hang himself and finds his wife roasting a cock on a fire of coals. Requesting that she find a rope for him and explaining that he has betrayed Jesus, who will surely rise again, an anxious Judas is confronted by his wife who dismisses his concerns, opining that the roasting

<sup>47</sup> See John Ribton Garstin, "On the McCragh Tomb in Lismore Cathedral," *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, Fifth Series 34.4 (1904): 295–312.

<sup>48</sup> A.T. Lucas, "Penal Crucifixes," *County Louth Archaeological Journal* 13.2 (1954–55): 152 [145–74].

cock was as likely to begin to crow as Jesus was to rise from the dead. Of course, the inevitable happens—the cock crows three times and Judas hastily departs the house to take his own life.<sup>49</sup> In Irish folklore versions of the tale, the cock is made to crow not "cock-a-doodle-do" but "Mac na hóighe slán" [(the) Virgin's son is safe and well], which approximates to an onomatopoeic rendering of the former. The bardic poem *Críost Rochrochad* ("Christ was crucified"), found in the Book of Uí Mhaine (c.1394) relates the tale of the cock and the pot, but in this version it is Judas who scorns his wife's belief in Christ's resurrection.<sup>50</sup> The "Gospel of Nicodemus" was a hugely popular source in the later Middle Ages and appears prominently in Irish manuscript collections of the period. A marginal note from around 1400 in an Irish abridged version of this text attests that it was once owned by the Dominicans in Limerick and was still circulating in the same area in the late sixteenth century, being in the possession of one of the earls of Thomond.<sup>51</sup>

The increasing popularity of the *arma Christi* sometimes resulted in shields becoming too crowded with symbols and thus the visual narrative occasionally continued on the outside. This is the case with the tomb of Piers Butler, Eighth Earl of Ormond and his wife, Margaret Fitzgerald, c.1539, found in St. Canice's cathedral, Kilkenny (Figure 9.2). The shield displays scourges, the spear, Christ's seamless garment, a cross, half of which is encircled within a large crown of thorns, a hammer, pincers, three nails, a ladder and dice. Outside the shield is a large depiction of Christ bound to the column, with his face inclined towards the viewer.<sup>52</sup> On other tombs, such as that of unknown Butler knights at Gowran, Kilkenny (Figure 9.3), dating from the first half of the sixteenth century, the instruments are carved on two separate shields; in this case, there is no risk of overcrowding, as only six instruments appear (four on one shield—the cross, scourges, spear and ladder on one, and two on the other—a large seamless garment with three dice below).<sup>53</sup>

The tomb of Richard Butler, Viscount Mountgarrett (1571), located in St. Canice's cathedral, Kilkenny, is more elaborate, juxtaposing a shield with the Butler coat of arms with clearly defined passion instruments such as the pillar, seamless robe, scourges, ladder, cup on pole, hammer, pincers, and a heart surrounded by thorns which is pierced by two daggers.

<sup>49</sup> Lucas, "Penal Crucifixes," 163; for a detailed discussion of this tradition see Iona Nagy, "The Roasted Cock Crows: Apocryphal Writings and Folklore Texts," *Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore* 36 (2007): 7–40. Available at: [www.ceeol.com](http://www.ceeol.com).

<sup>50</sup> See Tomás Ó Máille, "Críost Rochrochad," *Ériu* 3 (1907): 195–9.

<sup>51</sup> See Martin McNamara, *The Apocrypha in the Irish Church* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1984), 68–71. Also David J.G. Lewis, "A Short Latin Gospel of Nicodemus Written in Ireland," *Peritia* 5 (1986): 263 [262–75].

<sup>52</sup> Ryan, "Weapons," 115.

<sup>53</sup> Ryan, "Weapons," 116.



Figure 9.2 Tomb of Piers Butler and Margaret Fitzgerald (c. 1539). Kilkenny, St. Canice's Cathedral, west end of south side. The Edwin Rae Collection, TRIARC, Irish Art Research Centre.

The survival of *arma Christi* on late medieval and early modern Irish tomb sculpture far exceeds what one might expect through the Reformation period and beyond; for instance, when Cromwellian soldiers attacked the cathedral of St. Canice in Kilkenny in the mid-seventeenth century, most of the tombs survived, despite the fact that its stained glass windows were smashed, parts of the roof were torn down and the church aisles were turned into stabling for horses.<sup>54</sup> While the tombs were largely spared the destruction of such ideological upheaval, however, the portrayal of the *arma Christi* on these tombs was anything but static during this time. First, as the sixteenth century progressed, it became less common to see the instruments associated with a shield—they

<sup>54</sup> John Bradley, "The Medieval Tombs of St Canice's" in Adrian Empey, ed., *A Worthy Foundation: The Cathedral Church of St Canice, Kilkenny, 1265–1985* (Portlaoise: Dolmen Press, 1985), 49 [49–103].

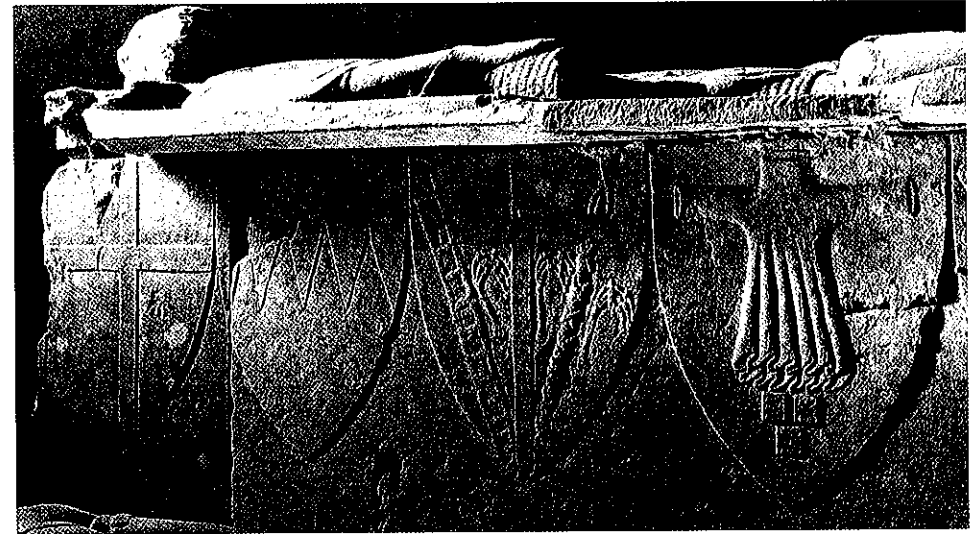


Figure 9.3 Tomb of unknown Butler knights (1st half of 16th century). Kilkenny, Gowran. The Edwin Rae Collection, TRIARC, Irish Art Research Centre.

thus become loose from their packaging and return to a more independent state which they enjoyed individually before their incorporation into Christ's medieval heraldry.<sup>55</sup> The tomb of William Donoghue (d.1597) in St. Canice's cathedral has a central cross around which the instruments are displayed, but without a shield.<sup>56</sup> The late sixteenth century surely marks the apogee of Irish tomb carving, especially of Passion symbols, as it is during this period that the *arma Christi* begin to replace saints as the most common motifs on tombs. Yet this was, in fact, quite a localized phenomenon which was particularly focused on the Kilkenny area and associated with the O'Kerin family, a renowned school of sculptors.<sup>57</sup> It should be remembered, however, that stone was only one medium among many in which the *arma Christi* appeared. Others, such as stucco (example found at Quin Franciscan friary, County Clare), woodcuts, cloth, paint, wood carving and stained glass, were more ephemeral and, in most cases, have not survived. As noted by Rachel Moss, "stone sculpture was only one component of a much more complex visual programme."<sup>58</sup>

<sup>55</sup> See Clodagh Tait, "Irish images of Jesus, 1550–1650," *Church Monuments: Journal of the Church Monuments Society* 16 (2001): 44–57.

<sup>56</sup> Bradley, "The Medieval Tombs," 91.

<sup>57</sup> Roe, "Instruments," 531. Margaret Phelan, "The O'Kerin School of Monumental Sculpture in Ossory and its Environs in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 126 (1996): 167–81.

<sup>58</sup> Rachel Moss, "Permanent Expressions of Piety: the Secular and the Sacred in Later Medieval Stone Sculpture," in Moss, Ó Clabaigh, and Ryan, eds, *Art and Devotion*, 73 [72–97].

It has been argued that in the wake of legislation outlawing the blatant display of Roman Catholic imagery during the Reformation period, persistent placing of the *arma Christi* on tombs functioned as a declaration of defiance by the Irish gentry in the face of Protestantism.<sup>59</sup> Here the *arma Christi* became an emblem of a rebellion of sorts, just as in England banners of the Five Wounds had been carried in revolt into Durham cathedral in November 1569 by the northern Catholic peers Northumberland and Westmorland and had enjoyed a prominence during the Pilgrimage of Grace some thirty-three years earlier.<sup>60</sup> In many cases, the *arma Christi* were used to highlight religious distinction, as argued in respect to six seventeenth-century tombs from the south Tipperary area, which display them.<sup>61</sup> It was not at all unusual for Catholics to continue to request burial in churches and grounds that were now in Protestant hands, yet the persistent appearance of Catholic imagery in these tombs suggests that a remarkable degree of accommodation prevailed in this area. At a local level, the degree of toleration afforded Catholic images on tombs may have arisen from the view that respect for the dead superseded secular laws or indeed out of a fear of desecrating the tombs of powerful local families.<sup>62</sup> One wonders, however, whether tolerant attitudes were stretched to their limit on occasion when Catholic families decided to push the boundaries with especially provocative symbolism. In the case of the 1616 monument of Nicholas Kenan and Margaret Fyan in St. Patrick's cathedral, Dublin, for example, the instruments of the Passion appear in addition to the words "Ecce Homo," the IHS, the heart and nails, and the letter M representing the Virgin Mary emblazoned on a shield.<sup>63</sup> The William Galway tomb slab in the Galway chapel of St. Multose church, Kinsale, County Cork, dating from 1628, also displays a wide variety of instruments, including the five wounds, Veronica's veil, the pincers clutching three nails, the hammer, palm, dice, ladder, lance, sponge on pole, seamless robe, cock and pot, crown of thorns and skull and crossed bones (Figure 9.4).

It is also more than curious to find the *arma Christi* appearing on the tomb of a Protestant bishop of Limerick, Bernard Adams, as late as 1625. One suspects that he did not consciously choose this imagery himself and that it was fashioned after his death by less vigilant craftsmen. After all, the Latin

<sup>59</sup> Roe, "Instruments," 532.

<sup>60</sup> Robert Bucholz and Newton Key, *Early Modern England, 1485–1714: A Narrative History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 130.

<sup>61</sup> O'Keeffe, "Instruments," 166.

<sup>62</sup> Raymond Gillespie, "Local Lives: The Social Context of Religious Allegiances in Seventeenth-Century Ireland," in Fred Van Lieburg, ed., *Confessionalism and Pietism: Religious Reform in Early Modern Europe* (Mainz: Philip Von Zabern, 2006), 170–71 [168–82].

<sup>63</sup> Clodagh Tait, *Death, Burial and Commemoration in Ireland, 1550–1650* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 79.

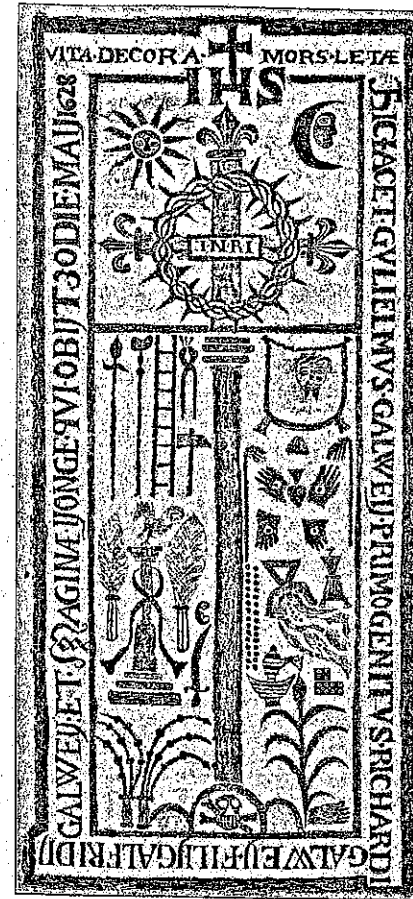


Figure 9.4  
Rubbing of William Galway tomb slab (1628). Galway Chapel, St. Multose Church, Kinsale, County Cork. Reproduced in *Journal of the Association for the Preservation of the Memorials of the Dead* 3 (1895–1897): 46. Image courtesy of Dr. Rachel Moss, Trinity College, Dublin.

verse on his tomb instructing that "to me, since I have met my doom, let no one erect a marble tomb or monument" was also clearly ignored.<sup>64</sup>

During the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the *arma Christi* were to move on to smaller objects that could be carried on one's person, such as the so-called "penal crosses" particularly associated with the pilgrimage to St. Patrick's Purgatory, County Donegal, where they were widely sold, and "penal rosaries," which display some of the *arma Christi* around their crucifixes.<sup>65</sup> With the advent of the penal cross, only a select number of *arma Christi* make the transfer from the more expansive late

<sup>64</sup> Connaughton, "Art and Devotions," chapter 6.

<sup>65</sup> See Connaughton, "Personal Devotional Objects and the Influence of the Franciscans, 1500–1800" in Ragnall Ó Floinn, ed., *Franciscan Faith: Sacred Art in Ireland AD 1600–1750* (Dublin: Wordwell, 2011), 59–70. I wish to thank Jill for allowing me to read this article in its pre-published form. For a comprehensive account of penal crosses see A.T. Lucas, "Penal Crucifixes." The following discussion of the prevalence of *arma Christi* on penal crosses is



medieval set, principally for reasons of space, but also, perhaps on account of popularity or suitability. Only the following symbols are to be found on penal crosses: the sun and moon, jug, cords, scourges, reed, the Mandylion or cloth of Veronica, the ladder, spear, hammer, pincers, nails, dice, skull and crossed bones and, of course, the ubiquitous cock and pot.<sup>66</sup> In some parts of the country, however, larger representations of the instruments of the Passion continued to be commissioned and constructed. One notable example is that of the Castlegar plaque, situated at St. Cuan's Well, Castlegar, County Galway, which depicts a well-carved figure of Christ surrounded by *arma Christi*: hammer, pincers, cock and pot, spear, scourges, skull and crossed bones, a ladder partly concealed by a flowing and elaborate *perizonium* (loincloth) which is almost four times the width of his body, and the pieces of silver Judas received for betraying Jesus, arranged in the form of a rosette. An inscription details that the work was commissioned by Edmond French Fitzstephen, possibly the son of Patrick French Fitzstephen (d. 1667) of Dungar, Frenchpark, County Roscommon.<sup>67</sup> The French family mausoleum at Cloonshanville Dominican priory near Frenchpark also contains a crucifixion plaque complete with nine of the *arma Christi*, which stands above the French family crest and coat of arms and an inscription asking for prayers for the soul of Patrick French Fitzstephen.<sup>68</sup>

Iconographic depictions of the *arma Christi*, regardless of whether they date from the late medieval or early modern periods, can, however, only convey a relatively restricted sense of how these symbols were understood to function. In order to obtain a clearer picture of the instruments in animation, something more is needed. And it is here that the rich literary material of medieval Ireland can illuminate what we have heretofore viewed only dimly; and predominant among all literary sources for the period is surely the surviving corpus of bardic religious poetry.<sup>69</sup> From the thirteenth through seventeenth centuries, professional poets, belonging to a hereditary caste of learned Gaelic Irish families, were routinely employed by the native Irish aristocracy to compose *encomia* (eulogies) in their honor. Some 2,000 bardic poems from this period survive, out of which around 400 are devoted to

prompted by their relatively high survival rate through a period traditionally characterized by its "penal" legislation, which restricted many Catholic practices.

<sup>66</sup> Lucas, "Penal Crucifixes," 152.

<sup>67</sup> Martin A. Timoney, "Two Stone Crucifixion Plaques from East Connacht," in Harman Murtagh, ed., *Irish Midland Studies: Essays in Commemoration of N.W. English* (Athlone: Old Athlone Society, 1980), 143–44. My thanks to Martin Timoney for providing me with a copy of this article.

<sup>68</sup> Martin A. Timoney, "Roscommon Crucifixion Plaques: A Detective Story," *Roscommon Association Yearbook* (Roscommon, 1982): 8 [8–9].

<sup>69</sup> See especially Salvador Ryan, "No milkless cow': The Cross of Christ in Medieval Irish Literature," in Peter Clarke and Charlotte Methuen, eds, *Studies in Church History 48: The Church and Literature* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2012), 83–106.

strictly religious or devotional themes. Traditionally, professional versifiers dedicated a tithe of their art to God; oftentimes, the measure of religious poetry composed greatly increased towards the end of a poet's life when he (and these poets were almost always male) might retire to a monastery, agreeing to compose devotional poetry or works to be performed on certain feast days in return for bed and board.<sup>70</sup> The religious sentiments found in this native Irish corpus reflect, more often than not, broad European devotional themes rather than strictly insular concerns; the secular and religious patrons who commissioned them may well have wished to demonstrate that they were *au fait* with the latest continental fashions and thus, in cases where the poems can be reasonably accurately dated, they function as very effective markers, in conjunction with iconographic evidence, of the adoption and dispersion of new devotions from Europe. Among the many manifestations of Passion devotion which appear in bardic religious poetry, the *arma Christi* loom large in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It is here that the meaning behind much of the iconography on contemporary tomb sculpture bearing the instruments can be best appreciated.<sup>71</sup> Here too many layers of Passion tradition from Christian apocryphal, patristic and literary sources coalesce; thus one can find side by side (and sometimes in the same poem) the crucified Christ as both victor and victim, warrior and wounded lover; and these wounds of Christ and the instruments of his Passion simultaneously present themselves as signs of hope and tokens of doom.

The early tradition of Christ the warrior riding into battle against the devil who has taken his people hostage retained its popularity in the religious poetry of Irish bards, right into the sixteenth century. The sixteenth-century poet Diarmuid Ó Cobhthaigh describes Christ as a Gaelic prince riding a steed (the cross), taking a "shield of love" in his hands and paying no heed to death. The wounds he receives only make him more furious and he charges his foes, advancing upon the enemy fort as his wounds become increasingly inflamed.<sup>72</sup> A second sixteenth-century poet, Maolmhuire, son of Cairbre Ó hUiginn, places Christ's heroism and endurance far above the average warring Gaelic chieftain by making reference to the wound dealt by Longinus's lance; "No man wounded in the heart / could have recovered as Christ did / scarce

<sup>70</sup> For a more comprehensive introduction, see Salvador Ryan, "A Slighted Source: Rehabilitating Irish Bardic Religious Poetry in Historical Discourse," *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 48 (Winter, 2004): 75–100.

<sup>71</sup> Ryan, "Weapons," 116. Although the majority of surviving examples of tomb sculpture pertain to families of Anglo-Norman background, the evidence suggests that there was a high degree of devotional cross-over across native Irish and Anglo-Norman communities, at least where broad continental devotions were concerned.

<sup>72</sup> Salvador Ryan, "Reign of Blood: Aspects of Devotion to the Wounds of Christ in Late Medieval Gaelic Ireland," in Joost Augusteyn and Mary Ann Lyons, eds, *Irish History: A Research Yearbook* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), 139 [137–49]. For the use of arms in Gaelic Ireland see Peter Harbison, "Native Irish Arms and Armour in Medieval Gaelic Literature, 1170–1600," *The Irish Sword*, 12:48–49 (1976): 173–79 and 270–84.

anyone survives a heart-wound / it was always dreaded."<sup>73</sup> For Diarmuid Ó Cobhthaigh too, the piercing of Christ with the lance marks a decisive moment, indeed the occasion of Christ's assumption of power and kingship: "The world's Lord (O God!) had his side pierced / and thus entered on his power / vast was the harvest of humanity saved / when it beheld thy only Son's wounded breast."<sup>74</sup> Just as newly-inaugurated Gaelic Irish chieftains would routinely do, Christ follows his crowning on the cross with a celebratory *creach* or raid on enemy territory, which is represented in the Passion sequence by the harrowing of Hell. The unidentified composer of the poem *Crann toruidh croch an Choimhdhe* ("A fruitful tree is the Lord's Cross") relates how "this was the cross with which he broke down the doors on the demons / with this cross he broke down our foe's door / and took us from him / and marched off with us as his booty on Sunday."<sup>75</sup> The friar-poet Philip Bocht Ó hUiginn (d. 1487), in a poem devoted to the four trees which comprised the cross of Christ, addresses the cross as follows, detailing its recovery of humanity from the devil's clutches: "Hell, alas, owned us / but then the darkness was dispelled / and—was attack ever fiercer?—/ thy great breach was made on hell's fence, O royal standard."<sup>76</sup> A time of feasting usually followed the *creach*, and so Christ hosts a banquet in his heavenly castle which, according to Maolmhuire, son of Cairbre Ó hUiginn, was built with only three nails; "with three nails Heaven's Lord fortified for us / a castle large enough for us all."<sup>77</sup> Here, then, three of the *arma Christi*—Longinus' lance, the cross itself, and the nails of crucifixion—work towards the salvation of humanity. However, these same instruments could function quite differently on Judgment Day before those who did not properly invoke them, and this fear also gripped bardic poets.

Gaelic Irish poets used some fifteen different terms to refer to the Day of Judgment, each of which denoted a particular aspect of the process; what is clear, however, is that the event is given significant consideration in the corpus of surviving poems. The fifteenth-century poet Tadhg Óg Ó hUiginn remarks that "uncovered shall be thy cross at the Sessions / whenever his pardon is about to be given us / his wrath, though slow, must break forth /

<sup>73</sup> Lambert McKenna, ed., *Aithdioghluim Dána*, 2 vols, (Dublin: Irish Texts Society, 1939–40), Vol. 2, poem 77, stanza 37.

<sup>74</sup> McKenna, ed., *Aithdioghluim Dána*, poem 63, stanza 7. In stanza 5, the poet refers to Christ assuming his crown on the cross.

<sup>75</sup> McKenna, ed., *Aithdioghluim Dána*, poem 88, stanza 6.

<sup>76</sup> Lambert McKenna, ed., *Philip Bocht Ó hUiginn* (Dublin: Talbot Press, 1931), poem 5, stanza 31.

<sup>77</sup> McKenna, ed., *Aithdioghluim Dána*, poem 77, stanza 15. For a detailed study of Gaelic conceptualisations of the post-passion feast in heaven, see Salvador Ryan, "Exchanging Blood for Wine: Envisaging Heaven in Irish Bardic Poetry," in Carolyn Muessig and Ad Putter, eds, *Envisaging Heaven in the Middle Ages* (Abingdon: Routledge Press, 2007), 209–21.

as the red cross points me out to him."<sup>78</sup> The reference to the uncovering of the cross on Doomsday is reminiscent of the Good Friday ritual of "creeping to the cross," during which a veiled crucifix was uncovered in three stages as the *Improperia* or "Reproaches" were sung, detailing mankind's ingratitude to God, after which priests and people would approach the cross on their knees to venerate it with a kiss. As the cross was being unveiled, the people were invited to "Behold the wood of the cross on which hung the Saviour of the world."<sup>79</sup> In another poem, the same poet states that "The red blood drawn by the lance / for you, O children of Eve / and his flesh all torn / shall be avenged on the Last Day."<sup>80</sup> Elsewhere, he pleads for the evidence against humanity to be put aside: "Hide from us thy red cross / so that thy wrath be not seen / close thy gaping side ..."<sup>81</sup> Yet it was not just the wounds caused by the instruments of Christ's Passion that seemed to cry out for vengeance; the instruments themselves were also feared, as shown in the verse of sixteenth-century County Clare poet Domhnall, son of Dáire Mac Bruaidealha: "We should fear too the flashing reddened spear / tempered in the Lord's blood / and the rope that dragged out his bright arms / so that neither of them was left unwounded."<sup>82</sup> In one poem, the fifteenth-century poet Cormac Ruadh Ó hUiginn, petitions the Virgin Mary to save him from the spear and thus release him from his share in the spear-wounding of Christ, which he has not yet requited.<sup>83</sup> Likewise the late sixteenth/early seventeenth-century poet Aonghus Fionn Ó Dálaigh refers to the pleading of the lance as witness for the prosecution and asks Mary to "speak, defending me against that shaft."<sup>84</sup> In several poems of Ó Dálaigh, he raises concerns about various instruments of the Passion which are about to assail him and invariably seeks the protection of Mary, for "Christ will bring up against his children / his stigmata, the three nails / the painful point of the ruddy thorn / the throbbing anger of his sore foot."<sup>85</sup> His graphic reference to the re-enactment of the sights and sounds of the Passion on Judgment Day, with its observation that "dread shall sound the riveting of the blunt nails,"<sup>86</sup> is vividly evocative. The *arma Christi*, then, functioned as witnesses to mankind's iniquity on the last day, exhibiting

<sup>78</sup> Lambert McKenna, ed., *Dán Dé*, (Dublin: The Educational Company, 1922), poem 3, stanza 18.

<sup>79</sup> Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400–1580* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 29.

<sup>80</sup> McKenna, ed., *Dán Dé*, poem 6, stanza 20.

<sup>81</sup> McKenna, ed., *Dán Dé*, poem 16, stanza 17.

<sup>82</sup> McKenna, ed., *Aithdioghluim Dána*, poem 58, stanza 21.

<sup>83</sup> McKenna, ed., *Dán Dé*, poem 22, stanza 38.

<sup>84</sup> Lambert McKenna, ed., *Dánta do chum Aonghus Fionn Ó Dálaigh* (Dublin: Maunsell and Co., 1919), poem 22, stanza 9.

<sup>85</sup> McKenna, ed., *Aonghus Fionn Ó Dálaigh*, poem 5, stanza 8.

<sup>86</sup> McKenna, ed., *Aonghus Fionn Ó Dálaigh*, poem 18, stanza 9.

themselves as the murder weapons by which the Son of God was tortured and killed in what the Gaelic Irish regarded as *fingal* or kin-slaying (Christ being related to humanity on his mother's side).<sup>87</sup>

The above portrait, however, only illustrates one side of the role of the *arma Christi* at Judgment. Conversely, the instruments of the Passion were invoked, often by the same poets, as protective talismans against God's wrath. Philip Bocht Ó hUiginn captures the paradox at the heart of the symbols of the Passion in the line "the marks of the cross accusing us / till, owing to it, we enjoy the next life / we are not exempt from tithes on woods" [my emphasis].<sup>88</sup> In the poem *Mairg nach doirteann a dhéara* ("Woe to him who sheds not tears") the early-seventeenth-century poet Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird describes how, owing to his sin, he flees to the crown of thorns, the draught of gall which Christ drank on the cross, and the red hand of the Lord.<sup>89</sup> Here, then, the *arma Christi* function as refuges to which sinners flee. Mac an Bhaird goes on to speak of the tree which Christ mounted, the deep grave and the shroud, all of which shared in his work of salvation, and then remarks that "the love Christ showed in saving me / God's lasting love for me / is placed by him about me / as a protecting coat of armour."<sup>90</sup> In the verse following, he proceeds to ask that Mary "be as a coat of mail for me."<sup>91</sup> The language of arming oneself with spiritual weapons can be traced back to New Testament writings and particularly those of St. Paul, who asks the Thessalonians to put on a breastplate of faith and love and hope of salvation as a helmet (1 Thessalonians 5:6, 8). Similarly, he asks the Romans to put on the armor of light (Romans 13:12) and speaks to the Corinthians of the "weapons of righteousness" (2 Corinthians 6:7); perhaps the best known and most extensive of these texts, though, is Ephesians 6:11-17. This sort of language also has its antecedents in the Old Testament as found, for example, in Isaiah 42:13.<sup>92</sup> Early Irish poetry employed the language of the *lúirech* (breastplate) and *cathbarr* (helmet) to describe spiritual benefits as exemplified in the eighth-century poetry of Blathmac, for instance.<sup>93</sup> The thirteenth-century bardic poet, Donnchadh Mór Ó Dálaigh also speaks of spiritual weapons, referring to the eight virtues to conquer the eight deadly sins (of John Cassian, c. 360-435, whose thought greatly influenced the early Irish penitential system) followed by additional weapons such as sermons and the psalter. However, the weapons gradually become more Passion-centered in

<sup>87</sup> Ryan, "Fixing the Eschatological Scales," 187.

<sup>88</sup> McKenna, ed., *Philip Bocht*, poem 7, stanza 4.

<sup>89</sup> Lambert McKenna, ed., "Sorrow for Sin," *Irish Monthly* (1928): 439, stanza 25.

<sup>90</sup> McKenna, ed., "Sorrow for Sin," stanza 31.

<sup>91</sup> McKenna, ed., "Sorrow for Sin," stanza 32.

<sup>92</sup> Gerald O'Collins, *Jesus our Redeemer: A Christian Approach to Salvation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 130-31.

<sup>93</sup> Carney, ed., *The Poems of Blathmac*, 49, stanza 140.

succeeding verses, including "God's dark-stone cross with his image," which he asks to stand between him and "fierce-hosted hell" and then the wounded foot, hand and side of Christ (covering all the areas to which the Five Wounds were applicable).<sup>94</sup> One very interesting verse asks that "God's flowing hair cut by their shears" save him from "Devil's folk."<sup>95</sup>

As demonstrated by James Marrow, the appearance of incidents of the pulling of Christ's hair and beard in late medieval Passion literature has a rich prophetic and typological background.<sup>96</sup> Marrow notes how, as early as the mid-fourteenth century, depictions of hands tugging at Christ's hair or beard appear among the *arma Christi* set.<sup>97</sup> While Ó Dálaigh refers not specifically to hair-pulling but to hair-shearing (perhaps evoking the passage in Isaiah 53:7 which refers to the Suffering Servant being led as a lamb before its shearer), nevertheless the flowing hair which he does mention functions in the same manner as an instrument of the Passion might be expected to. Furthermore, the fifteenth- or early sixteenth-century Man of Sorrows in the Franciscan friary, Ennis, County Clare, includes, among the other *arma Christi* surrounding Christ, a hand clutching a tuft of hair.<sup>98</sup>

While the red cross of Judgment Day was widely regarded as portending the condemnation of sinners, this same cross of crucifixion was also conceived as their greatest hope. The fact that the cross was awash with Christ's blood is also important in this regard, as some poets understand the flow of Christ's blood onto its wooden beams as cultivating its saving power; thus it is Christ's blood which has stained the cross, and which becomes the true instrument of salvation. In a poem on the four woods that constitute the cross of crucifixion, Philip Bocht Ó hUiginn suggests that Christ's blood transforms the cross and gives it glory: Ó hUiginn characterises its four woods as "battle-weapons"<sup>99</sup> and then states "Glory was given (?) the Cross / by the blood of his dying limbs / the bluntness and the hardness of the nail — could torture be greater? — / burning his white hand which unlocked his grace."<sup>100</sup> Later in the poem Ó hUiginn makes his point more explicitly still, stating that on the cross the Lord warmed justice with his love (and, by implication, his blood) so that justice is transformed and will never be the same again, making it possible

<sup>94</sup> McKenna, ed., *Dán Dé*, poem 24, stanzas 7-13.

<sup>95</sup> McKenna, ed., *Dán Dé*, stanza 14.

<sup>96</sup> James H. Marrow, *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance: A Study of the Transformation of Sacred Metaphor into Descriptive Narrative* (Kortrijk, Belgium: Van Ghemert, 1979), 68-75.

<sup>97</sup> Marrow, *Passion Iconography*, 75. However, there are some examples from much earlier, most notably on the Buxheim altarpiece discussed above. See Schiller, *Iconography*, 2:195.

<sup>98</sup> Fergus O'Farrell, "Our Lord's Pity in Ennis Friary," *North Munster Antiquarian Journal* 22 (1980): 33-7.

<sup>99</sup> McKenna, ed., *Philip Bocht*, poem 5, stanza 7.

<sup>100</sup> McKenna, ed., *Philip Bocht*, stanza 9.

now for mankind to approach God with confidence.<sup>101</sup> The transformation of justice is completed when the cross is made to drink the blood of Christ; Ó hUiginn, addressing the cross, states "He heeded not the smart of the two nails in his hands / His grace, though plenteous now, was in bonds / till thou didst drink, while it was warm / the blood of his feet."<sup>102</sup> In the following verse, the metaphor of the blood-drinking cross is heightened as Ó hUiginn addresses the cross once again: "owing to love ruling him / at his death no drop of his body's blood tarried on thee / but thou didst slake thy thirst with it."<sup>103</sup> There may well be an allusion here to the Irish ritual of "keening" or lamenting women drinking the blood of their slain husbands or sons, which is frequently attested in native literary works and even some historical sources.<sup>104</sup> Here, then, is found a representation of the cross as a woman, imbibing the blood of Christ. Elsewhere, we find the cross portrayed as a nursing mother, as in a poem by sixteenth-century bard, Tadhg, son of Dáire Mac Bruaideadha.<sup>105</sup> Indeed, there are many other similarities to be found between the cross and the figure of the Virgin Mary; in the Anglo-Saxon *Dream of the Rood* poem, for instance, the speaking cross likens itself to Mary in its selection from the trees of the forest.<sup>106</sup> In the poetry of Philip Bocht Ó hUiginn, the cross is asked to display its four wounds to Christ on Judgment Day, imitating the gestures of both Christ and Mary before the Father in the medieval iconography of double intercession (Christ displaying his five wounds and Mary her exposed breast).<sup>107</sup>

The lance of Longinus was thought to play a particularly important role in unlocking Christ's mercy on the cross. This is primarily due to the fact that it pierced his heart; consequently this wound was widely regarded as the most efficacious of the Five Wounds and became a symbol of refuge in his love.<sup>108</sup> This wound was often depicted on its own as one of the *arma Christi*: depictions of the measure of the side or heart wound of Christ circulated in Ireland in the seventeenth century with a myriad of promises pledged to all

<sup>101</sup> McKenna, ed., *Philip Bocht*, stanza 19.

<sup>102</sup> McKenna, ed., *Philip Bocht*, stanza 21.

<sup>103</sup> McKenna, ed., *Philip Bocht*, stanza 22.

<sup>104</sup> For an extended discussion of this tradition see Salvador Ryan, "Popular Religion in Gaelic Ireland, 1445–1645," PhD dissertation, 2 vols. (National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 2002), 1:172–79.

<sup>105</sup> Laimhbhartach Mac Cionnaith, ed., *Dioghluim Dána*, (Dublin: Oifig an tSoláthair, 1938), poem 2, stanza 3.

<sup>106</sup> Miri Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), 105–6.

<sup>107</sup> McKenna, ed., *Philip Bocht*, poem 1, stanza 25. For a detailed discussion of this motif see Salvador Ryan, "The Persuasive Power of a Mother's Breast: the Most Desperate Act of the Virgin Mary's Advocacy," *Studia Hibernica* 32 (2002–03): 59–74.

<sup>108</sup> Duffy, *Stripping*, 244.

who carried them on their person.<sup>109</sup> In the poetry of Diarmuid Ó Cobhthaigh the lance is depicted as an oar "empurpled in his breast-blood" by which Christ rows humanity to safety.<sup>110</sup> A contemporary, Muirchertach Ó Cionga, likens it to a plough which tills Christ's flesh in preparation for the sowing of new seed in his heart, seed that will ultimately be soaked by blood-rain in order that it might grow and yield a rich harvest.<sup>111</sup> The role that the lance played in unlocking Christ's love is found in the Middle English *Ancrene Wisse*, which depicts the way "his side opened to show her his heart, to show her how openly, how deeply he loved her, and to draw out her heart."<sup>112</sup> In a poem by the sixteenth-century poet Tadhg Ó Dálaigh, the lance acts as a signpost of sorts: "God wished not us to be kept out of his heart / the spear in his breast points the way in for us."<sup>113</sup> In an unattributed poem entitled *Leigheas an bheatha bás Dé* ("The death of Christ is life's healing") even the lance is shown to fall short of plumbing the depths of Christ's love: "Deep as the spear was plunged in thy breast / deeper still, deeper than those gory points in the heart / went thy excessive love for me."<sup>114</sup> Similar sentiments are found in the poetry of Philip Bocht Ó hUiginn.<sup>115</sup> The activation of Christ's love and mercy by means of the lance-piercing also precipitated immediate and plentiful favour for Longinus, the perpetrator, according to the bardic poet Ó Leannáin (fl.1320)<sup>116</sup>; Diarmuid Ó Cobhthaigh some two centuries later opined that "never was (the infliction of) a wound so well rewarded."<sup>117</sup> The lance also played an important role in the English "Charter of Christ" allegory, which was well known in Ireland, appearing in bardic poetry from the fifteenth century; here it was conceived as the pen which, when dipped into the inkwell of Christ's heart cavity, wrote a Charter of Peace for humanity on the parchment of Christ's body.<sup>118</sup> Given the rich symbolism of the lance or spear, then, one gains some impression of why such interest in both the relic and its portrayal as part of the *arma Christi* was so pervasive in the later Middle Ages, giving rise to the introduction of a feast in its honor in 1354.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>109</sup> Nicholas Bernard, *The Whole Proceedings of the Siege of Drogheda* (London: Printed by A.N. for William Bladen, 1642), 85.

<sup>110</sup> McKenna, ed., *Aithdioghluim Dána*, poem 63, stanza 35.

<sup>111</sup> McKenna, ed., *Aithdioghluim Dána*, poem 63, stanza 29; also poem 77, stanza 4.

<sup>112</sup> Bernard McGinn, *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism, 1200–1350* (New York: Crossroad, 1998), 189.

<sup>113</sup> McKenna, ed., *Aithdioghluim Dána*, poem 71, stanza 35.

<sup>114</sup> McKenna, ed., *Aithdioghluim Dána*, poem 95, stanza 6.

<sup>115</sup> McKenna, ed., *Philip Bocht*, poem 8, stanza 9.

<sup>116</sup> McKenna, ed., *Aithdioghluim Dána*, poem 79, stanza 18.

<sup>117</sup> McKenna, ed., *Aithdioghluim Dána*, poem 63, stanza 13.

<sup>118</sup> Ryan, "Weapons," 120.

<sup>119</sup> Schiller, *Iconography*, 2:194.

Other instruments of Christ's Passion were also understood to be efficacious in protecting individuals from the wrath of God on the Last Day. The *Mors Pilati* legend, which was popular in medieval and early modern Ireland, relates how the gravely ill emperor Tiberius sends a messenger to Pontius Pilate to seek Jesus of Nazareth's intervention on his behalf. However, Pilate, who has just had Christ put to death, fails to admit this fact and attempts to buy some time for himself. The emperor is healed through the intervention of Veronica, who sends him the Mandylion, and she proceeds to tell him the truth about Christ's execution; on hearing this he is enraged and summons Pilate to appear before him. However, on each occasion that Pilate stands in his presence, the wrath of Tiberius subsides and he cannot act against him. Baffled by this, it is only when Veronica notices that at each session Pilate clothes himself with Christ's seamless garment, that the cause for this is revealed. The seamless garment, then, acts as a shield against Tiberius' anger and he is powerless to dispense justice. This tale, which appears in many Gaelic Irish devotional collections from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, underlines the efficacy of the seamless garment as one of the *arma Christi* and renders the case for its frequent appearance on Irish tomb iconography more compelling: just as the tunic of Christ shielded Pilate from the justice of Tiberius, so too could the invocation of the garment on behalf of lesser sinners be expected to protect against divine justice on Judgment Day.<sup>120</sup> An Irish version of the Fierabras legend, found in a number of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century devotional compilations, where it usually follows the story of Helena's discovery of the true cross, takes as its point of departure the theft of some of the instruments of the Passion from Rome. In the tale, even the Saracen giant, Fortibras, is portrayed as placing confidence in a Passion relic, the balsam which was rubbed on Christ's dead body, which he offers to the knight Oliver to cure his wounds, before the two begin to fight.<sup>121</sup>

Recourse to the *arma Christi* was not always primarily concerned with one's fate on Judgment Day. Far in advance of that day of reckoning, one was expected to experience sorrow for sin, and meditating on the instruments of the Passion, with a view to awakening an appreciation of Christ's self-sacrificing love, could achieve this. As early as the fifteenth century, the poet Cormac Ruadh Ó hUiginn noted how Christ "would not mind the nail in his foot / if only I concealed not my sin [in Confession]."<sup>122</sup> Tridentine catechetical and devotional works produced in the Irish language by Irish Franciscans at St. Anthony's College, Louvain, in the seventeenth century continued to utilize the instruments of the Passion in their recommendations

<sup>120</sup> For a more detailed discussion of this tale and its popularity in Ireland see Ryan, "Wily Women of God," 31–47.

<sup>121</sup> Whitley Stokes, "The Irish Version of Fierabras," *Revue Celtique* 19 (1898): 33 [14–57, 118–67, 252–91, 364–93].

<sup>122</sup> McKenna, ed., *Dán Dé*, poem 22, stanza 29.

for daily living. Antoin Gearnon's *Parrthas an Anma* ("Paradise of the Soul") published in 1645, for instance, advises readers and hearers to meditate on the instruments of Christ's Passion when dressing each morning: when putting on shoes, to consider the nails in Christ's feet; when closing one's buttons, the scourging of Christ; and so on.<sup>123</sup> Identification with the sufferings of Christ experienced through the instruments of the Passion would not only help avoid condemnation on Judgment Day but would also lead one directly into the Passion event. An unidentified bard requests in one poem that he be allowed to become "an anvil struck by the hammers which struck thee" and that "the pincers that seized thy flesh bite me and tear the tender part of each of my limbs / so that my sin's pardon might be assured."<sup>124</sup> The poet then asks to be wounded as Christ was: "The points piercing his head, the spike in his feet / the spear in his breast, the nail in his hands / may these wound me, O God / though my wound is small payment for thy blood."<sup>125</sup> It is not clear whether there is an allusion here to the acquisition of the *vulnus amoris* or "wound of love" referred to by medieval mystics; what is certain, however, is that the poet wishes to unite himself more closely to the suffering Christ.<sup>126</sup> Of course, for many, this could most effectively be achieved through attendance at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Here too, however, spectators were reminded of the Passion event and its symbols.<sup>127</sup> *Parrthas an Anma* explained the symbolism of each of the various vestments worn by the priest: the amice represented the blindfold placed on Jesus by the Jews who beat him; the alb, the white robe placed on Christ in Herod's house before he was jeered; the cincture, maniple, and stole the ropes with which he was bound and the chasuble the cross.<sup>128</sup> The same work includes a list of the instruments of Christ's Passion,

<sup>123</sup> Antoin Gearnon, *Parrthas an Anma*, A. Ó Fachtna, ed. (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1953), 17–18; see also Salvador Ryan, "A Wooden Key to Open Heaven's Door: Lessons in Practical Catholicism from St Anthony's College, Louvain," in Edel Bhreatnach, Joseph McMahon, and John McCafferty, eds, *The Irish Franciscans, 1540–1990* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2009), 221–32.

<sup>124</sup> McKenna, ed., *Aithdioghluim Dána*, poem 92, stanzas 13–14. In the fourteenth-century *Speculum humanae salvationis* the nailing of Christ is juxtaposed with a blacksmith's hammering of anvils. See Marrow, *Passion Iconography*, 166.

<sup>125</sup> McKenna, ed., *Aithdioghluim Dána*, poem 92, stanza 16.

<sup>126</sup> We know, for instance, that the writings of the fourteenth-century English mystic, Richard Rolle, circulated in fifteenth-century Ireland and are found in the Franciscan catalogue at Youghal and also in a fifteenth-century manuscript written for the Augustinian canons at Duleek, County Meath. See Ó Clabaigh, *The Friars*, 193.

<sup>127</sup> Priests also often had the *arma Christi* before their eyes as they celebrated the Eucharist; the instruments continue to appear on chalices in the seventeenth century; see, for example, the Limerick chalice of John Farrell, dating to 1619, housed at the National Museum of Ireland.

<sup>128</sup> Gearnon, *Parrthas an Anma*, 134. This list mirrors that of William Durandus' *Rationale divinarum officiorum* of the late thirteenth century, departing from it, however, in its explanation of the chasuble which in Durandus represents the purple robe (Marrow, *Passion Iconography*, 174–75).

divided into two parts (twelve in each): those which pertained to Christ's body and those which did not.<sup>129</sup> Thus the stamp of approval was granted by continentally educated Irish Franciscan friars who were at the forefront of the production of Tridentine material in the Irish language, for the continued contemplation of the *arma Christi* into the early modern period.

The *arma Christi* played a crucial role in the late medieval and early modern Irish devotional world. Part of their appeal, surely, was their malleability: individually and collectively they could be utilized to instill terror into the reprobate while equally offering shelter and refuge to those who invoked them with confidence and love. That could only be done, however, by identifying with the instrument par excellence of Christ's Passion: the cross.<sup>130</sup> Crucially, they could just as easily be employed in the service of a victorious and triumphant Christ as a tortured and emaciated one. Their iconographic power, and thus their ubiquity, can also be attributed to their ability to attach themselves to other devotional hosts: the Man of Sorrows or Mass of Saint Gregory images, for instance, and their intimate connection with that other great and more senior cult of the Middle Ages: the Five Wounds of Christ. So much of the meaning of the *arma Christi* in medieval and early modern Ireland, as elsewhere, remains elusive outside of this relationship. Just as in the case of the Five Wounds, the *arma Christi* could appear in many guises, for example, as a complete set (akin to the Five Wounds writ large)<sup>131</sup> or individually; ultimately, however, in each case their signification depended on who actually beheld them and how. While the relative paucity of extant representations of the *arma Christi* from late medieval and early modern Ireland presents significant challenges to scholars, the rich corpus of devotional poetry bequeathed to us by the bardic order is of inestimable importance; it enables us to appreciate to a significant degree the deep layers of meaning invested in what does survive of these most vivid examples of Passion piety. The pleas of Irish poets for the mercy of the crucified Christ, invoked through the symbols of his Passion, essentially put in words what was elsewhere etched in stone, stucco, woodcuts, and other media.

<sup>129</sup> Gearnon, *Parrthas an Anma*, 171–72.

<sup>130</sup> Eamonn Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood: Liturgical Images and the Old English Poems of the Dream of the Rood Tradition* (London and Toronto: The British Library and University of Toronto Press, 2005), 329.

<sup>131</sup> See Ryan, "Reign of Blood," 137–49.

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## Early Modern Afterlives of the *Arma Christi*

Shannon Gayk

Bound up as they are with late medieval Passion piety, relic veneration, and papal indulgences, one might expect the *arma Christi* to have been a desirable target of the iconoclasts' hammers and whitewash in the English Reformation. After all, images associated with pardons, as Robert Swanson points out, were especially susceptible to iconoclasm.<sup>1</sup> As instruments of Christ's suffering, the *arma Christi* embody the fine line between mnemonic device and relic, encouraging veneration, affective meditation, and penitential response. As instruments of Christ's victory, they may function as "shields" against sin and material means of redemption, offering protection not only from the pains of hell but also from earthly suffering.<sup>2</sup> Many late medieval literary treatments of the instruments reinforce these salvific and protective powers. A poetic addendum to the Middle English lyric, "O Vernicle," explains:

Ȝese instrumentus þat here pertend bep  
 In memori of þi bittur deyt,  
 Pey hulpun hem to do þi passioun,  
 Pey help us to oure sauacioun.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Robyn Malo, Kathleen Tonry, and Penelope Anderson, who each read and helpfully commented on early drafts of this essay. I would also like to thank this volume's editors, Lisa H. Cooper and Andrea Denny-Brown, for their invitation to submit the essay and their insightful feedback on it. Swanson notes that "[c]arvings of the instruments of Christ's Passion, the *arma Christi*, were perhaps widely distributed on bench ends and rood screens, as stimulants to prayer. Few survive" (*Indulgences in Late Medieval England: Passports to Paradise?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 108–109). On the association of the *arma* with relics and indulgences, also see, Flora Lewis, "Rewarding Devotion: Indulgences and the Promotion of Images," in Diana Wood, ed., *The Church and the Arts: Papers Read at the 1990 Summer Meeting and the 1991 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society* (Blackwell, 1992), 183 [179–94].

<sup>2</sup> On the paradox embodied by the *arma Christi*, see John C. Hirsh, "Two English Devotional Poems of the Fifteenth Century," *Notes and Queries* (1968): 7 [4–11].

<sup>3</sup> Richard Morris, ed., "The Symbols of the Passion," in *The Legends of the Holy Rood; Symbols of the Passion and Cross-Poems*, EETS o.s. 46 (London: N. Trübner, 1871), 195 [171–96], lines 179–82.